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Perceptual Vignettes. Phenomenological Reflective Thinking and Professional Attitude

A Study and Practice Guide

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Barth / Wiehl

Perceptual Vignettes. Phenomenological Reflective Thinking and Professional Attitude

Ulrike Barth
Angelika Wiehl

Perceptual Vignettes. Phenomenological Reflective Thinking and Professional Attitude

A Study and Practice Guide

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Preface to the English edition

Perceptual vignettes are short phenomenological descriptions which capture individual perceptions of affective events. They direct our attention to inconspicuous or surprising occurrences in daily pedagogical situations, asking us to change our perspective and keep reorientating our attitudes and actions. Since the publication of the German original, the underlying methodology has been applied increasingly in teacher education, practical teaching and research.

We hope that this methodology will be used internationally, facilitating a new approach to individuality and diversity, and that its users will draw from their own experiences to support sustainable developments and changes in the children, young people and adults entrusted to them.

We are grateful to Margot Saar for her sympathetic and profound translating of this complex subject-matter into English. We also thank all sponsors of this English edition, in particular the Anthroposophic Council for Inclusive Social Development, the German Waldorf School Association's Education Research Centre and Waldorf Foundation for funding the professional translation and the Emil Molt Foundation for making the open access publication possible.

We wish to make the phenomenological work with perceptual vignettes available for the practice and research in education worldwide and are very interested in an exchange with you on this methodology in order to develop it further.

Ulrike Barth and Angelika Wiehl, Juli 2024

1 Perceptual vignettes in teacher education. Introduction

Whenever we interact with others, we express a mood and display an attitude, although we may not necessarily be conscious of this. Presence, actions and personal expressions impact the social atmosphere in multiple ways in general life situations and in education in particular. This means two things for pedagogical encounters with children, young people and adults: it points to opportunities for influencing and shaping situations and it underlines the need for awareness and responsibility. Both in teacher education and in the pedagogical practice of teachers and educators, developing sensibility for human relationships and developing a professional pedagogical attitude are immensely important. When we carefully attend to and participate in the needs and situations of others, we enhance and unfold our capacity to act in ways that do justice to each person and situation. Professional attitude and pedagogical actions are rooted in a complex of individual competences, life and professional experience, self-reflection and professional training and development. Various theories and concepts exist as to how we can reflectively engage with our own role as future or practising teachers. Although this is often not made explicit, they imply that the recognition and understanding of children, young people and adults – for whom suitable and supportive developmental and learning situations need to be created – are central aspects of professionalism in education. The methodology underlying the work with perceptual vignettes aims to devote perceptive attention to every person and to reflect on the experiences gained in this process.

Perceptual vignettes are descriptive texts that capture phenomena perceived in the encounter with a child, young person or adult. We locate our method in the context of pedagogical phenomenology, which provides both a theoretical framework and aspects for its application in the pedagogical practice. Future and current teachers practise the phenomenological perception and observation of special moments they experience with a person or a group of people and record these in short descriptive texts, which we decided to call 'perceptual vignettes'. Perceptual vignettes condense and enlarge the observed moments and form the basis of a series of subsequent reflective phases. Working practically with perceptual vignettes requires three levels of reflection, starting with spontaneous and immediate reflection which calls awareness to ways of acting, feeling and thinking that

become apparent in the perceptual vignette. In the second phase of reflection, the students and teachers derive a deeper pedagogical understanding from the special moments experienced by consulting scientific knowledge in disciplines such as anthropology, developmental psychology, sociology and others. This phase, which is guided by certain criteria and oriented to the content of the perceptual vignette, is followed by a third phase that focuses on self-development and may prompt changes of attitude and behaviour or result in new diagnostic insights. Together, the three modes of working – the phenomenological *perception and observation* of a person in a pedagogical context, the *writing down* of observed phenomena in the form of perceptual vignettes and the *phases of reflection* – add up to a method that is suited to both teacher education and the pedagogical practice.

The authors developed their phenomenological method over a period of four years, working with the students and lecturers at the Institute for Waldorf Education, Inclusion and Intercultural Studies of Alanus University in Mannheim, Germany, and with the research team of the VignA Network. This monograph is the first full account of the results of this collaboration. Work on the perceptual vignettes was initially inspired at a colloquium on pedagogical phenomenology organized in 2019 by Malte Brinkmann at Humboldt University in Berlin, at which Michael Schratz was also present. Following an in-depth study of the methodology of vignettes (Schratz 2009; Schratz et al. 2012; Agostini et al. 2018; Agostini 2019b among others), which was new to us, we introduced the work with (perceptual) vignettes to the Bachelor course at Alanus University's Institute for Waldorf Education, Inclusion and Intercultural Studies in Mannheim. This course includes a three-year practical placement, during which the students work for one to three hours per week with a child, young person or adult with special support needs. This practical work experience is accompanied by seminars which offer the opportunity to discuss pedagogical and anthropological questions arising from the practical work, to work on phenomenological descriptions of children, young persons and adults and, for students from year 2 onwards, to record their weekly observations of affective moments in the form of perceptual vignettes and talk about them.

The first task given to the students was to replace the conventional documentation and guided observations with descriptions of moments encountered in the pedagogical practice that caught their interest. We initially suggested that students write the kind of vignettes used by VignA Network for their lesson research. But the students brought various kinds of texts to the seminars, including poetry or anecdotes that were written from a first- or third-person perspective, usually from the point of view of the pedagogical practitioner and that included references to their personal feelings. Not many of these contributions met the ideal of the VignA vignettes, although many descriptions referred to moving, unexpected or perplexing moments arising from personal experiences in the pedagogical context.

The authors realized that they would have to explore what the students brought to the seminars without changing these texts. This marked the beginning of a journey through phenomenology to find ways of categorizing and precisely formulating what was expected of the students.

Although this was not originally intended, the students ended up also using the writing of perceptual vignettes for their written reflections on their work experience blocks in schools, day care centres and other organizations. In the subsequent Master's programme we asked them to reflect on perceptual vignettes under specific criteria. On the basis of the collected reflections we developed a structured process consisting of a three-stage reflective spiral: spontaneous reflection, criteria-guided reflection and attitude- and action-sensitive reflection. Eventually a number of Bachelor and Master theses were written on questions of (special needs) education and developmental psychology in which a series of perceptual vignettes were evaluated and reflected on under various premises. Thanks to these working processes of the past four years we were not only able to collect many perceptual vignettes, reflections and positive feedback from students regarding our method, but we also received many interested and critical comments at scientific conferences and colloquia where we presented individual aspects of our methodology, above all at the events organized by the VignA Network, Birgit Engel's research colloquia on art teaching, conferences on inclusion and scientific colloquia on pedagogical reflection, attitudinal development and professionalization. Our colleagues there made us aware of methodological possibilities and areas of application, facilitated a number of publications and helped us to clearly identify early on in our work with the perceptual vignettes how they differ from vignettes, anecdotes, memory pictures and other phenomenological descriptions. It was not possible to adapt our students' ways of writing and their successful practice to the existing tried-and-tested formats. Their particular qualities and the perceptual sensitivity for special moments in the pedagogical practice expressed in them showed us that they constituted a separate kind of text for which a suitable designation needed to be found. These considerations led to the conception of the term *perceptual vignette* for a method that has since been anchored in the guidelines for scientific working at our Institute and that is presented here in depth for the first time.

Our monograph is intended as a study and practice guide that covers both the theoretical foundations and the practical application of perceptual vignettes and includes theme-based exercises on perception, writing and reflection. We provide examples of perceptual vignettes to explain theoretical considerations and illustrate the diversity or our methodology. Part I is devoted to the origin and development of perceptual vignettes. We locate our method in the context of pedagogical phenomenology inasmuch as we use certain key elements of phenomenology to

provide structure and orientation (chapter 2). This is followed by a detailed discussion, illustrated by examples, of atmosphere as the first object of perception that is crucial for the entire process, and of the transition from open perception to attentive and focused observation (chapter 3). We look at wonder as the initiator of perceptual activity. The students' oral descriptions and written perceptual vignettes have shown time and again that it was their capacity for wonder which enabled them to open up to affective and meaningful phenomena (chapter 4). To find ways of adequately verbalizing and writing about observed phenomena, we follow Graham Wallas' (1926/2014) four stages of creative writing and demonstrate how this method, which underlies every creative process, evolves naturally and how it can be used for practice (chapter 5).

Part II deals with the practical application of perceptual vignettes. As well as self-reflection, the development of a professional pedagogical attitude requires a capacity for perception and observation that is subject to continuous scrutiny. In the field of education, professionalization is an ongoing process of self-development and innovation (chapter 6) that requires intensive reflection. We collected many examples of experiences, above all in our seminars for Master students, that we were able to gradually develop into a structured method. The three phases of reflection evolved with the spontaneous, criteria-guided and attitude- and action-sensitive engagement with the content of perceptual vignettes (chapter 7). This method constitutes an expansion of the phenomenological work which starts with the perception of a phenomenon and its exploration in preparation for writing about it. However, only reflection can yield the pedagogical potential that is required to do justice to the growing individualization in all areas of development and learning. It is also apparent in the sensitive observations of children, young people and adults captured in the perceptual vignettes that expert knowledge of anthropology and developmental psychology is required for a deeper understanding. Finally, the reflection phases used in working with perceptual vignettes can enhance diagnostic competence, not in the sense of providing diagnostic guidelines but as elementary exercises for practising the open and value-oriented perception of special, conspicuous or inconspicuous moments (chapter 8).

Since one of the intentions of this practice guide is to initiate learning processes in the fields of self-development and practical teaching, each chapter contains exercises and examples of *journaling* – a guided writing method developed by Otto Scharmer (Scharmer & Käufer 2014; Schneider 2017) as part of his Theory U concept to activate learning and practising. It is important to us that this practice guide is not only read but used as a basis for experimentation and research; the *journaling* exercises merely provide inspiration for this. Write your own perceptual vignettes, in your family, among friends or on journeys; they can teach you to see and understand yourself, others and the world from ever new perspectives.

In two chapters (3.4 and 6.6) we also include exercises given by Rudolf Steiner which we adapted to our working context as an enriching path of self-education and self-development. They add a new and future-oriented dimension to the fundamental exercises for pedagogical professionalization.

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We are grateful to all the students who write perceptual vignettes and entrust them to us:

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Ulrike Barth and Angelika Wiehl, June 2023

Part I
Perceptual vignettes as phenomenological method in education

2 Phenomenological-methodological foundations of working with perceptual vignettes

Phenomenology and phenomenological methods have become increasingly established as pedagogical phenomenology in education studies and research. Our decision to base the methodology of perceptual vignettes on *phenomenological methods* and to explain these in selected contexts was primarily prompted by their potential for pre-reflective and bias-sensitive work and research. Phenomenology requires the 'deliberate suspension of metaphysical and other presumptions in favour of prioritizing precise descriptions of phenomena and their experiential context' (Alloa et al. 2023, p. 4), which is the reason why it is applied widely and in multiple ways in different sciences (ibid.). Phenomenology 'is characterized by the fact that it scrutinizes every phenomenon in its interrelation with subjective experiential acts which originally allow the phenomenon in question to be perceived' (ibid.); it is therefore also referred to as a 'philosophy of experience' (ibid.). In essence, to work phenomenologically means to engage with phenomena and their relationships from a first-person point of view and describe the object of perception or intuition in as much detail as possible.

Pedagogical phenomenology goes back to the philosophical phenomenology originated by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger and developed further by Aron Gurwitsch, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Lévinas, Jean-Luc Marion, Paul Ricoeur, László Tengely, Bernhard Waldenfels and others. It sees itself as a methodology that as well as retaining the basic principles of its founders and their successors also specifies them depending on the context of application. Consequently, phenomenological theories and methods are described differently depending on perspective, observational content and research context. Countless publications, are devoted to individual topics, basic methods and principles of pedagogical phenomenology as well as to their spheres of application in education research and practice (c.f. Brinkmann et al. 2015; Brinkmann 2017). An anthology edited by Malte Brinkmann (2019b) contains contributions from the period between 1914 and 2013, mapping a centenary of engagement with phenomenological approaches in education. In addition to basic considerations on phenomenological pedagogy, more specific questions are pursued in the individual fields of practice. As is apparent from subsequent publications by Brinkmann and others, the phenomenological method brings to light new and more nuanced observations and interpretations in various research contexts. Recent studies conducted by the

VignA Network (of which the authors of this book are cooperative partners) also reflect this development (c.f. Agostini 2020; Peterlini et al. 2020, Rathgeb 2019; Symeonides & Schwarz 2020).

Aspects that are relevant to the methodology of perceptual vignettes include atmosphere, perception, observation, wonder, sensation, attention, practice, body, alienness, otherness, being-with and compassion, as well as phenomenological principles such as reduction, givenness and description, and 'participating experience' or 'observing participation' as an overarching method (Brinkmann 2015b, p. 531). They are what distinguishes the research approaches of pedagogical phenomenology fundamentally from those of empirical and reconstructive social research. The latter captures, analyses and evaluates data through 'participating observation', surveys and experiments. In contrast, the phenomenological approach (here with particular focus on perceptual vignettes) does not collect data on previously formulated questions but explores fields of action in the lifeworld and particularly in (special needs) education on the basis of 'observing participation' which is always subject-related (ibid.). The researching subject's presence on the scene, their sensing of the atmosphere, awareness of time, capacity for perception and observation and experience of resonance and attention have an effect on the experiences in a phenomenological field. 'Subjective experiences are therefore both the starting point and object of phenomenological methodology' (ibid.)

Phenomenological research in the context of education examines 'the bodily, spatial and temporal dimensions of pedagogical experiences in practice both theoretically and empirically' (Brinkmann 2020a, p. 1). Based on philosophical phenomenology and as a basis for working phenomenologically in educational and social contexts, methodologies have evolved which explore, access and process (pedagogical) phenomena that are rooted in perception, bodily experience, responsiveness and speech- or video-based description. In these approaches, subjectivity and bodily presence play a central part, for only when a person who is aware of their situation and the phenomena is physically present will phenomenological perception and observation – two different activities (chapter 3) – occur and the phenomena enter *that person's* horizon of attention.

The respective publications tend to emphasize the dimensions of bodily experience and subject-relatedness of (pedagogical) phenomenology as factors that determine the field of research and the choice of research object. We will therefore devote some sections (chapters 2 and 3) to the consideration of the *body as the centre of subjective and phenomenological experience*. It is, after all, the subject who carries out the oral, written or video-based description of the phenomenon, even if that description is handled variously in the phenomenological methodologies and in some cases – in the work of the VignA Network, for example (c.f. Agostini et al. 2023) – subjected to further processing, reading and reflection in a team. It is relevant to the research content whether the perceived and experienced phe-

nomena occur in an everyday situation, in private or in an institution such as a day-care centre or school. It is equally relevant which particular events we focus on. We use the term 'event' contextually for something that takes place or happens to someone *and* phenomenologically for an 'encounter with the other' that affects 'the self or subject' (Pirktina 2019, p. 29). In all fields of practice where we work with and encounter other people, an unbiased attitude to otherness, open perception and above all sympathetic description are necessary conditions for events to show themselves as 'given' (Marion 2016) and as recreations, for instance verbal ones, that can be examined.

When we work phenomenologically with perceptual vignettes, we adhere to these foundations which are borrowed from philosophical phenomenology and develop them further into a *method of pedagogical phenomenology*. For this, we distil from the broad field of phenomenological theories and methods the key elements that are suited as an underlying theory for the work with perceptual vignettes. Our selection is determined by approaches used in the pedagogical practice with perceptual vignettes that have led to the formulation of methodical criteria. These approaches include self-directed pedagogical actions or/and observation of a person or group, phases of perception and observation (chapter 3) and of wonder (chapter 4) 'triggered by moments that transcend the boundaries of the ordinary towards the unexpected' (Gess 2019, p. 15), a writing process that aims to document and be creative at the same time (chapter 5), different phases of reflection (spontaneous, thematic or guided by specialized knowledge) as well as the professionalization of pedagogical attitude and practice and the development of diagnostic competence (chapters 6, 7, and 8). In our search for a theoretical underpinning of our phenomenological methodology we consequently focus on key elements to be derived from the approaches mentioned and connect this with the pedagogical practice rather than pursue the general elaboration of phenomenological foundations that can be found in many publications on pedagogical phenomenology. Our task is therefore to process certain phenomenological aspects and turn them into a theoretical framework for the way we work with perceptual vignettes. An examination of the existing literature on applied phenomenology reveals that some basic concepts need to be discussed by consulting selected primary works of philosophical phenomenology, but that our main orientation in this needs to be the context of education and the pedagogical practice.

The methodological approaches to be derived from the approaches listed above refer essentially to four activities: first, the *approximation* to the object, which is discussed in depth in the chapters on perception, observation and wonder (chapters 3 and 4); second, the detailed *visualization* of the phenomenon, which is dealt with in connection with attentive observation in the chapter about the writing process (chapter 5); third, the *reflective work* that supports pedagogical actions and the development of a professional attitude (chapters 6 and 7), and lastly, *deepened*

understanding in the context of pedagogical diagnosing (chapter 8). The following *key elements* of phenomenology are considered to be essential for the perceptual vignettes: 1 phenomenological reduction and givenness, 2 being given to intuition, 3 'being-with' and bodied existence, 4 horizon and attention, 5 understanding and recognition of alienness and otherness, 6 the capacity for empathy in working phenomenologically, 7 the Goethean path of development.

Phenomenological *reduction* raises one particular phenomenon from the multitude of phenomena to the focus of attention so that it can be condensed into words in a perceptual vignette. Phenomena that are directly accessible to *perception* articulate themselves in intuition or as 'given'. *Being with* refers to the bodied presence of a perceiving subject; in *attentive observation* one phenomenon stands out against all others and therefore against a determinate or indeterminate *horizon;* and finally, perception and observation mean that one engages with something alien or other and explores it *empathetically* and openly. *Empathy* encompasses all the perspectives that *currently* give orientation both to our phenomenological work and research and to the application of perceptual vignettes in training and research and in the pedagogical practice with children, young people and adults; they provide a structure for the professionalization of education.

An excursus into Goethean phenomenology completes the series of relevant methods. At the Institute for Waldorf Education, Inclusion and Intercultural Studies in Mannheim, Germany, Goethean phenomenology is a central subject in the basic seminars on natural science and it is applied, largely independently of philosophical phenomenology, in Goethean research (Holdrege 2005, 2014) and in the science lessons of Waldorf schools (c.f. Knöbel 2022; Rohde 2022). It is based on Goethe's principle of 'intuitive judgement (1989a, p. 30) which enables the meaning inherent in a phenomenon to express itself immediately as knowledge. As an exercise in developing 'intuitive thinking' (Hennigfeld 2021), cultivated by Goethe, it can complement the descriptive phenomenology.

Given the diversity of research on pedagogical phenomenology, our task here can only be to examine its basic aspects for our own work and research and to follow Husserl in 'going back to the things themselves' (Vetter 2020, p. 468), to concentrate on certain *key elements* without attempting a comprehensive discussion of phenomenological foundations and their far-reaching reception. Examples of journaling exercises substantiate the individual methodical principle in each case in the following sections.

2.1 The 'things themselves': phenomenological reduction and givenness (Husserl, Marion)

Edmund Husserl gave five lectures on *The Idea of Phenomenology* on which this section is based. In these lectures and in other writings Husserl poses the basic epistemological question as to whether the givenness of an object of perception can be assumed with any certainty. By means of 'reduction', a method he introduced, we examine how an object can appear in the subjective mind without anything being added to it from another sphere. Husserl is not content with exposing himself to a phenomenal perceptual context: he is interested in the 'things themselves' or the *original source* of a phenomenon. Pursuing this basic topic further in *Being and Time* (2006), Heidegger examines the phenomenon as a way of appearing in general (Zahavi 2018, p. 13). But from all the different ways in which an object can appear as 'perceived, imagined or remembered, as established, doubted or communicated' (ibid., p. 13f.), Husserl only acknowledges the mode of appearance whereby an object presents itself immediately, that is to say, without being clothed in thought or anything else (ibid., p. 14). More recently, Jean-Luc Marion (2015) went a step further by looking for the *originally* given in order to 'derive and articulate all qualities of the phenomenon as such from the fact of its being given' (ibid., p. 19). Some aspects of Husserl's and Marion's phenomenological studies will be consulted here as we examine the suitability and reflection of phenomenological givenness for the work with perceptual vignettes and the exploration of pedagogical phenomena.

Cognitive processes are always triggered by events or occurrences that are present either as percepts, mental representations or memories; this means that the object and content of cognition meet in the cognitive act. Right at the beginning of his phenomenological studies Husserl asks, 'How can cognition be certain that it coincides with the cognized object; how can it reach beyond itself and reliably coincide with its objects?' (Husserl 2016, p. 20). He questions here an event that 'natural thinking' views as 'a matter of course' and in doing so creates a riddle that needs to be resolved by a 'critique of knowledge' (ibid., p. 20f.). Husserl refers to this 'critique of knowledge' that investigates the 'essence of cognition and of the fact of cognition' as *the* 'method and way of thinking' of phenomenology (ibid., p. 23). It is part of phenomenological observation and description because in practice one needs to ask again and again about the objects and the sources of cognition. We are using the 'method and way of thinking' as a lens for looking more closely at phenomenological 'givenness' to find out if it is suitable for our work with perceptual vignettes. While perceptual vignettes refer to previously perceived phenomena, these are, due to the verbalization process involved, separated from their original primary givenness and appear in a new givenness in that they are being described. We need to investigate therefore whether this event is immanent to

phenomenology and whether the phenomena that light up in perceptual vignettes and that are the result of the merging and overlapping of perceived and then recalled and finally written down observations also turn out to be given 'things themselves'. Husserl demands that we go back to the 'things themselves', that we remain with them and question their 'self-givenness' (Vetter 2020, p. 468), without 'mixing up these problems with entirely different ones' (Husserl, 2016, p. 6). For this, he says, it is necessary to clarify how 'the absolute self-givenness of cognition [can] meet non-self-givenness' (ibid. p. 7).

In everyday experience we see 'a thing before us' (ibid., p. 20) to which we apply judgements and comments. We express what happens to us and are certain of the facts, perceptions and judgements. But we do not know for sure whether our judgements apply to the perceived objects. Our perception initially dwells only on the given object: 'In perception, the perceived object is said to be immediately given. The thing appears to my perceiving eye: I behold and grasp it. But the perception is merely my experience, the experience of the perceiving subject' (ibid.). The same is true for 'experiences' and 'acts of thinking' (ibid.): they appear to belong to the subject because they are perceived from the subject's *perspective* and are represented in the subject's *conscious mind*. 'It is the actual subject, the bodily subject to be more precise, which provides the perspective from which the object is perceived' (Zahavi 2018, p. 19).

This is true for every phenomenological method because the perceiving subject experiences itself as central to the perceptual and cognitive process and therefore relates everything to itself. In the act of perception and observation, sentiments, feelings, judgements and thoughts appear and we draw conclusions regarding the current experience from previous experiences (Husserl 2016, p. 18). Recognition of this fact alone makes it possible to distinguish between given events and subjectively added interpretations, statements and judgements. The ability to abstain from these consciously and to suspend judgement altogether Husserl calls 'epoché' (ibid., p. 29). It 'marks the method of 'bracketing', 'elimination' or 'suspension of judgement' as a preliminary step towards the phenomenological reduction that relies on it' (Vetter 2020, p. 145). Phenomenological reduction means

> 'the restriction to the sphere of *purely self-given things,* to the sphere of things that are not merely spoken of, meant or perceived, but rather to the sphere of things that are given in precisely the sense in which they are meant, and that are self-given in the strictest sense so that nothing of what is meant is not given' (Husserl 2016, p. 60f.)

Phenomena as *given* or *self-given* events are imparted to intuitive knowledge which suspends judgement and does not permit 'reason to interfere' (ibid., p. 62). One tries, in other words, to let 'the seeing eye speak' (ibid.).

Phenomenological reduction lets an object of cognition stand out against an indeterminate ground of appearance so that its essence becomes discernible. How-

ever, according to Husserl it can only stand out as a pure phenomenon 'when all transcendent postulations are excluded' (Husserl 2016, p. 5). In order to gain an indubitable basis for cognition, it is essential to 'see, directly grasp and have the *cogitatio*', or thought (ibid., p. 4). In opposition to the transcendence of the objective sciences, the 'intuitive knowledge' of the cogitatio is, as Husserl points out, 'immanent' (ibid., p. 5). He refers to this 'genuine immanence' as doubtlessly and 'adequately self-given' (ibid.). This is why 'phenomenological reduction' requires the exclusion of 'all transcendent postulations' (ibid.). Husserl also proposes to forego the 'systems' of science (ibid., p. 6) since they are in themselves *merely* phenomena.

Phenomenological reduction ensures the givenness of the phenomena because it separates the immanently given from the transcendent which includes everything that transcends the pure phenomenon and is not immediately evident to intuition. Immanence (belonging to the phenomenon) and transcendence (going beyond the phenomenon) as well as evidence and existence (being-in-itself) are fundamental criteria for assessing givenness or being-given in Husserl's sense. Ideally, phenomenological reduction looks for the pure phenomena 'as acceptable existence' (Husserl 2016, p. 9) and excludes 'everything that is not evidently given in the genuine sense, that is not absolutely given to pure seeing' (ibid.) Husserl therefore demands that inquiry needs to restrict itself to 'pure seeing', that it occurs 'as research into the essence in the sphere of pure evidence' (ibid.). '*Intuitive consciousness*' grasps '*formed acts of thinking*'; and 'the things that are not acts of thinking are nonetheless constituted in these acts and attain givenness in them. Only in that they are so constituted do they show themselves as what they are' (ibid., p. 72) All facts can be grasped in acts of thinking; as thoughts (cogitations) they exist; as facts they are evident. 'However, the underlying foundation of all of that is *to grasp the meaning of absolute givenness, the absolute clarity of being given* that excludes any meaningful doubt: in a word, to grasp the *absolutely intuitive, self-grasping evidence*' (ibid., p. 9f.) In using concepts such as 'absolute givenness' and 'absolute clarity' Husserl directs our attention to the qualities of the 'thing itself' and its 'self-givenness' as the focus that needs to be maintained in any thinking concerning the topic. What becomes apparent – and this is important for our work with perceptual vignettes – is that 'the concept of the thing […] does not only refer to empirical actualities but [extends to] pure essence, to categorial realities etc., in other words it needs to be related to everything that is originally given in the act of seeing' (Vetter 2020, p. 468).

Marion's approach to phenomenology is even more radical in that it strives 'to meet the appearance of things in their very first originality, in their moment of birth as it were, where they manifest unconditionally as and of themselves' (Marion 2015, p. 29). The things constitute themselves as meaningful even as they manifest: the phenomena give meaning 'to themselves as themselves and of themselves' (ibid.).

According to Marion, the reduction that needs to be performed again and again in this process fulfils the purpose of making this possible, of removing all hindrances caused by potential adumbrations and of facilitating the manifestation (ibid., p. 31). Marion uses an interesting comparison to describe reduction: he says it opens the curtain for a show 'performed by the phenomenon' which ultimately dominates the stage to the point where it can no longer be distinguished from it. Then a turn ensues and the proving and showing of a phenomenon becomes the 'letting a phenomenon show itself in its appearance' (ibid., p. 32). We could also say that the reduction makes itself superfluous as the absolute givenness shows itself. 'What is purely given, what gives itself, once it has been reduced, is only subject to itself' (ibid., p. 42).

Phenomenological reduction therefore means attention to and concentration on the 'things themselves'. This is what we aspire to in perception and observation in order to give expression in the spoken or written word to something special that has shown itself. In summary we can, based on Husserl and Marion, identify four aspects of the phenomenological reduction of a given actuality:

- a *phenomenon* shows itself in perception as given
- it is observed and described according to the process of reduction
- in the act of thinking it constitutes itself as a meaningful givenness to which nothing needs to be added
- seeing thinking (intuition) and attention grasp it in itself as a pure, reduced phenomenon.

Marion also exposes what is being given as 'the *connecting element* that plays *between* intentional supposition and intuition' (Staudig 2020, p. 19).

In education and other observational contexts, the practice does not necessarily meet the ideal of philosophically based phenomenological reduction. It tends to only approximate it because previous experiences and aspects interfere that appear to transcend the given rather than be immanent to it. This points to the old theory-practice problem of an epistemologically based method, for example, being able to provide direction and orientation but requiring for its implementation a degree of focus and practice. We include this self-critical comment because one might initially conclude that the ideal of phenomenological reduction could serve as a foundation for working with perceptual vignettes, analogously to other formats of phenomenological description (chapter 5); however, in practice varying forms with different qualities appear and one can therefore not infer from the practice to the theory without further explanation. Phenomenological reduction can consequently only be used when it is understood as a cognitive process and practised in concrete steps to show the given actualities themselves. In working with the perceptual vignettes, phenomenological reduction requires us to examine the examples and to constantly scrutinize whether the perception and observation

of a phenomenon or event given in the context of education or everyday life lead to its being noticed, attended to and described as such.

Journaling

Read some of the perceptual vignettes in chapter 5 (PV 5.1 to 5.16); choose three examples, note down words and phrases that refer either to observations or to feelings and thoughts.

Find examples of givenness in the sense of Husserl and Marion and describe them.

2.2 The givenness of bodily selfhood in intuition (Husserl, Marion)

The basic principles of phenomenology demand that the 'object is there itself', that it is not 'only mentally represented (Vetter 2020, p. 207) but grasped in intuition in 'full clarity' as being given. We need to find out, how givenness presents itself to intuition without being experienced as representation or imagination.

The concepts of 'intuition' (*Anschauung*) and 'given, givenness, being given or self-givenness' are used variably in publications on phenomenology. According to Husserl, 'being given' refers to the phenomenon appearing immediately in our perceptual field, being present to the subject's intuition. When we write perceptual vignettes, we must certainly ask about the scope of givenness: what does and does not belong immediately to the event or matter to be described and what modes of being determine self-givenness. In phenomenology we must distinguish 'pure self-giving from original givenness in which the object is bodily present. This suggests a different quality of self-giving that depends on the concreteness of objects and therefore on the different kind of evidence that is, for instance, not possible for objects of external perception' (ibid.). The difference of givenness through 'different evidence' (ibid.) of purely external phenomena casts light on the fundamental question as to how we perceive and observe objects and living beings phenomenologically. In our method, the given is initially something we accept unconditionally, something we experience primarily in space and time. However, perception and observation are directed at all the phenomena, not only those that appear in bodily-sensory form or objects that are free from anything transcendent; we always 'see' all the phenomena, including atmospheres, moods, behaviours, expressions and, above all, persons.

'Given' therefore includes everything that appears within our perceptual horizon and is subsequently visualized in 'intuition' (ibid.). The Kantian term 'intuition' (*Anschauung*) 'means knowledge of a thing by the presence of the thing itself' (ibid., p. 30); it encompasses 'as spiritual vision the apperception of supersensible

essence and as sensory experience the perception of sensory objects, for example' (ibid.). For Husserl intuition is the 'immediate, full givenness of an arbitrary thing' in opposition to the 'empty, indefinite idea of the thing' (ibid.). Even though he concedes that fantasies and memories can also be *given* (Husserl 2016, p. 71ff.), they differ from actual intuitive experience in that they originate in the pure act of perception which tends to be associated with the bodily-sensory appearance of objects. Marion therefore points out that – unlike intuition – only the givenness that is immediately given to perception can be reduced to itself (Marion 2015, p. 44). Due to this prior radical reduction, the pure phenomenon shows itself to intuition as evident, without any separation between the sensory and the mental or the objective and the subjective levels. Since Husserl, phenomenology has aimed to think beyond the dichotomy of sensory and mental or 'of subject and object' (Zahavi 2018, p. 19) and to examine 'the only real world as it appears to us, be it in perception, in actions or in scientific analyses' (ibid., p. 14f.). However, it hardly ever refers to Goethe who also sought to overcome the dichotomy of cognition (details in chapter 2.7). Goethe's research findings are based on the ideas that present themselves immediately to 'intuitive judgement' in the phenomena themselves (Goethe 1989a, p. 30). According to Husserl, Goethe's 'ideating intuition' amounts to 'eidetic intuition' and is the act through which the universal (the idea) achieves its current givenness. 'Eidetic intuition' therefore refers to intuition […] that grasps the essence in its bodily selfhood' (Vetter 2020, p. 30). 'Embodied selfhood' means that the 'body' is always the 'point of reference' and the 'centre of orientation' for sensory perceptions, sensations, moods, atmospheres and resonances with others and the surrounding world (Fuchs 2018, p. 88ff.; chapter 3); bodily experience is accordingly viewed (by VignA Network for instance) as the starting point of phenomenological description and inquiry.

Perceptual vignettes do not only contain resonances of the perceptual experience but also expressions of its inner intuition since they describe phenomena intuitively. 'Important modes of intuition in sensory experience include perception, memory and all forms of imagination' (Vetter 2020, p. 30); they merge and represent the multiplicity of givenness, directly mixing bodily, emotional and mental impressions and resonances. Depending on the object we perceive, either our spatial, temporal or subjective sensitivity is more pronounced; this means that our focus is more or less attentively directed to the external phenomena, the fabric of colours, tones and moods, the unfolding events, the atmospheres or a person's expressions, utterances and actions, to events in the general or the pedagogical context. Subjective perception (the central point of reference in the work with perceptual vignettes that therefore needs to be considered) always includes *one* subjective impression and *one* segment of an event or meaningful context; both are being recalled and then described in a condensed or enlarged manner in the perceptual vignette (chapter 5) because recall consists in the 'mere visualization of

the object' and 'imagination [as] its neutralization' (ibid., p. 30f.). Any perception including its retention or recognition in memory therefore forms an 'originally giving intuition' which, according to Husserl, seeks to grasp 'the object in its "original" state, in its "bodily" selfhood' (ibid.) and in this sense in its immediate way of being (Sosein), as we will demonstrate for the pedagogical context in particular but also for other experiences in life.

Journaling

Let your eyes wander in nature or across a group of people; focus for a few minutes on one detail; close your eyes and find out what part of the scene just observed appears or has been retained as an inner image.
Think back to this moment a day or two later. What comes up in your memory? What does having an intuition (in the Husserlian sense) mean to you?

2.3 'Being-with' and bodily existence (Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Böhme)

The process of developing perceptual vignettes and the subsequent reflective work presuppose 'being-with' or 'existing together' (Heidegger 2006, p. 101ff.) and the bodily presence of a subject in space. 'Being-with' means existing in the world in general; 'existing together' (Mitdasein) suggests the presence of others (ibid.). Husserl holds that the appearance of an object or another always depends on perspective and the subject's relationship to and in space (Zahavi, p. 58). For Heidegger, existence (Dasein) means *bodily* given (ibid., p. 56) and present in spatial proximity (Heidegger 2006, p. 105). Spatial proximity and subject-relatedness refer to bodily existence. Husserl introduced the distinction between 'lived body' (body from a first-person perspective; *Leib* in German) and 'objective body' (Körper) (Fuchs 2018, p. 43ff.). According to Thomas Fuchs, 'embodiment is fundamental to human experience – inasmuch as the body is not seen as a corporeal thing but as the *centre of spatial existence* from which directed fields of perception, movement, behaviour and a relationship to the surrounding world emanate' (ibid., p. 15). The objective body as a physical foundation on the other hand 'shows itself to us not only in the experience of outer resistance but also through the "inner resistance" that the body through its inertia, gravity, fatigue or exhaustion offers to any impetus or movement' (ibid., p. 123). In this context we examine the 'relationship to the surrounding world' as 'being-with' due to *bodily presence* and *spatial proximity* which show themselves in and co-determine a subjective perspective.
In the context of education, we work phenomenologically through perception, wonder, observation, writing and reflection in personal presence and proximi-

ty to other participants. Our relationship to things, spaces, moods, atmospheres and people, which gives rise to perceptual experience, is in each case specific and unique and depends on our (the subjects') attention to and interest in the surroundings we explore. As subjects we experience both the existence of others and ourselves as 'being with'. This 'being with' as 'being in the world' that needs to be explored first (Vetter 2020, p. 361) guarantees 'the way of being' (ibid.) of both the experiencing subject and the other or others that show themselves to the subject.

The dimensions of being with and embodiment or bodily presence play a crucial part in the work with perceptual vignettes. The method as such only has meaning if there are real bodily and interpersonal encounters. After all, phenomenological experience and the description of something given would not be possible without a concrete relationship with the reality of life, without concrete perception and without the internalizing intuition of a phenomenon that shows itself in space, time and as human being, in other words without the bodily experience of being- with. Because 'what is in the *world* is also in space' and 'space constitutes the world in a sense that is still to be determined', Heidegger views being *spatially* as 'ready-to-hand' in close proximity, occupying – as 'equipment' (*Zeug*) – a certain place and oriented towards a particular 'region' (Heidegger 2006, p. 101ff.) 'Space is split up in places' (ibid., p. 104); a place exists due to the ready-to-hand things and is by direction and distance […] already oriented towards and within a region' (ibid., p 103). The conditions of what is 'ready-to-hand' in a 'region' are relevant to a method of pedagogical phenomenology in that it strives to demarcate or limit spatially given events and directs the observing attention towards exemplary elements.

What spatial modalities belong to a phenomenological description and how much spatial detail is included? Does the space constitute a framework and to what extent is it relevant for a behaviour or situation? The experience of space is not only determined by objects and coordinates. Heidegger therefore distinguishes the way of being of three-dimensional, physical space which can be geometrically measured from the 'primary' and 'action-oriented' space in which things are available for familiar use (Zahavi 2018, p. 52ff.). The spatial conditions of either geometrical or action-oriented space need to be assessed in relation to the persons and objects that can be perceived and observed in such spaces and in relation to the subject's own presence, because what counts is always what is 'ready to hand' and in direct proximity to the observing subject, never what is more remote and potentially or assumedly present. Certainty and familiarity with the given characterize the shared real proximity and can initiate phenomenological work and description.

Phenomenological research focuses on the subject's spatial presence and bodily dimension. The 'incarnated subject constitutes a point of reference for all the

[…] objects' (ibid., p. 60) and that consequently predetermines the perspective (ibid., p. 61). As mentioned earlier, the body serves as a 'centre of orientation' in phenomenology (Fuchs 2018, p. 88ff.) that according to Husserl makes every experience of the world possible and to which, according to Merleau-Ponty, all objects show their face (Zahavi 2018, p. 60). Experiences not only realize themselves inwardly, where they are hidden from immediate sensory perception, but also outwardly in the body; they 'manifest in bodily behaviour and actions' (ibid., p. 70). According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2021, p. 213ff.) the meaning of a thing, as that of gestures, movements and behaviours, is not hidden but can be directly read off the exterior. For example, 'the gesture of the hand that moves towards an object […] contains a reference to the object, not as mentally represented but as this very specific thing towards which we project ourselves, with which we already are in anticipation and that we hover around as it were. Awareness is being with the thing by means of the body' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 167). This means that we don't understand the 'thing' or the 'gestures of the other' by some act of intellectual interpretation, but due to a 'movement in which I devote myself to a spectacle and make myself part of it in a kind of blind recognition […]' (ibid., p. 220). In empathetic 'being-with' I grasp the intention of gestures and read them like spoken words. 'I engage with the things bodily; they co-exist with me as an incarnated subject' (ibid.); they not only constitute my environment but the world of which I am a part' (Fuchs 2018, p. 15), whose meaningful structure shows itself to perception.

Again, this yields a central aspect for our method: perceptual vignettes describe all sensory impressions, including individual expressions such as gestures, actions or appearances because they are – to subjective observation – evident and make on us, as bodied beings, an impression. They excite inner experiences and their intentionality seems evident. Human interactions in specific personal situations, which may be caused by fortunate or difficult occurrences or sentiments, touch or affect us; they are part of a resonant 'being-with'. In applying phenomenology in practice, we therefore need to gauge to what extent 'inner realities' (Merleau-Ponty as quoted by Zahavi 2018, p. 70) are given to sense perception in the body as outer human 'nature' or as 'enactments in life' (Böhme 2019, p. 20f.), or whether their perceptibility is owed to subjective affection and inner sympathy.

Following Merleau-Ponty, Waldenfels, Meyer-Abich and Schmitz, Gernot Böhme regards 'the body as the nature that we ourselves are' (ibid., p. 21). 'Our way of being nature' (ibid., p. 20) manifests in 'life processes such as breathing, eating, walking or swimming' (ibid., p. 21). 'They reflect what it means to be human' (ibid.). Böhme distinguishes between the physical and the lived body: as physical body we exist 'from a natural-scientific, medical perspective' (ibid., p. 25) and are subject to the laws of space and mechanics; we experience our own body in its spatial extension (ibid., p. 27). Unlike being in the physical body which is deter-

mined by its position in relation to other physical bodies, 'bodily sensing [reveals] a given absolute "here"' (ibid., p. 28) in which the 'affectedness of our bodily existence originates: through our body we are in a particular place and time and inescapably affected by the inescapability of our existence which we experience in a radical singling out as this body' (ibid., p. 29). The perceiving and observing subject experiences itself in bodily sensing, in the existential experience of the I in the here-and-now'; the 'phenomena of bodily sensing' (ibid.) show themselves to this subject, certain that it is able to perceive something specific, for 'when I see red, I cannot sensibly doubt that I'm seeing red' (ibid., p. 29f.). Like Schmitz, Böhme views this certainty as rooted in being bodied: 'When we give in to the body, it reveals itself as something that happens to us, that is to say, in pathic modes of existence. But these turn out to be more than mere ways to knowledge: they are about seeking out experiences of self-assurance' (ibid., p. 30).
Working phenomenologically in the context of education means exploring these 'pathic modes of existence' (ibid.) of 'being with' and 'existing with'. Perception includes the subject's bodily 'self-assurance' in the same way that the subject presupposes the bodily existence of others. This means that 'being with' can happen as the shared experience of life enactments, utterances, actions, moods and atmospheres. They can be described in a phenomenological language and contribute in many ways to the attraction of perceptual vignettes.

Journaling

The phenomenological study of bodily existence can be enhanced with exercises that practise the precise and detailed perception and observation (chapter 3) of something that is 'in close proximity'.
Observe how you perceive people and objects in your immediate surrounding. Note down what comes to your attention first.
Let your gaze sweep a second time and write down your bodily sensations.

2.4 Attention generates horizon (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Waldenfels)

Reduction raises one particular object from a multiplicity of objects to consciousness and makes it stand out against all others. Once we turn our attention to one event, scene, object or person, the surroundings or background become a kind of backdrop for our perception (Vetter 2020, p. 264). These additional objects are meant by the 'phenomenological concept of *horizon*' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 68); it denotes 'everything we experience along with something we experience as such' (ibid.). In Husserl's phenomenology 'the "living horizon" stands for the infinite openness of unaddressed co-actualities, adumbrations and appresentations whose implications are integrated in the given phenomenon's claim to validity with its "structure of expectation and fulfilment"' (Vetter 2020, p. 264). The phenomenon that initially appears as definable constitutes the given 'core', while 'horizon' refers to the changeable and variable 'boundary of givenness' (ibid.). Our task is to explain *attention* as the conscious attending to and engaging with an occurrence and the ensuing *horizon* experience. The becoming aware in the moment of transition from perception to focused observation is discussed in the chapter that discusses 'two phenomenological approaches' (chapter 3.3).

Phenomenology views attention (attentionality) as the 'intentional interest' (Vetter 2020, p. 51) that occurs within the spectrum of sensualist, emotional and cognitive dispositions (ibid., p. 51 ff.). Husserl refers to attention as a '*distinguishing function* […] that belongs to acts of "intentional" experiences' (Husserl 2009, p. 423). Intentionality and intentional experience mean that the conscious mind can extend beyond self-perception and relate directly to 'objects and situations' which in turn are realized in sensation as 'subjective modes of givenness' (Vetter 2020, p. 292). He concludes that we therefore are, and can only be, attentive to 'intentional objects' (Husserl 2009, p. 424). Attention, he says, occurs when 'we are consciously aware of something we are attentive to' (ibid.).

Following on from Husserl, Merleau-Ponty views attention as an 'act' that is rooted in consciousness and performed by thinking itself (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 52). Waldenfels on the other hand locates it in the 'arc of tension that stretches from the occurrence that happens to us and affects us to the way we respond (Waldenfels 2019, p. 9). Attention is consequently regarded as a more or less active act of thinking which shows itself above all in the 'dual act of attracting attention and taking notice' (Breyer 2011, p. 138): when we take notice, 'we respond to something that enters the horizon of the given as a centre of attraction, as a question or action that asks for a reaction and that precedes the response both in a temporal and relational sense' (ibid., p. 138f.). When something 'attracts attention' it simply shows itself, while the subjective 'taking notice', particularly of something extraordinary or fascinating, is controlled by 'drives, aspirations,

preferences and interests' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 14) that is to say, by the subject's 'dispositions' (Breyer 2011, p. 139). In this 'dual act', attention merely reveals something 'like a searchlight that shows up objects that are already there in the dark' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 46). The fact that attention can 'turn any moment to any arbitrary content of consciousness' makes it a 'general and unconditional capacity' (ibid.). As soon as we become consciously aware of an object, our open and searching perception becomes attentive and focused on it (chapters 3.2, 3.3); the object now stands out against all other phenomena and is no longer 'indeterminate' but 'determinate' (ibid., p. 52). This is an everyday occurrence that can repeat itself in any given moment: something emerges from the multiplicity of perceptions and vanishes again unnoticed, or it imprints itself in our consciousness, be it just for a moment or lastingly. This is how we notice things and experience them as meaningful and expressive. Merleau-Ponty refers to this 'explicit perception of something as something' as 'attention' (ibid., p. 134).

Attention is 'about something being experienced *in the first place;* that *precisely this appears rather than something else* and that it appears *in a specific context*' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 16). Our attention can be awakened by occurrences that affect *us*, when we search, explore, show interest, engage with or 'fully concentrate on something' (ibid., p. 14). The occurrence or object appearing in our consciousness or showing itself may trigger curiosity or questions in us. However, attention as such 'does not contribute to explaining what something is or how it can be known' (ibid., p. 16), because it is not 'productive' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 47). It appears as a quality of consciousness that unfolds its effect when we selectively focus on or continually and dynamically attend to, as well as when we turn away from sensory or mental perception (Wehrle & Breyer 2015, p. 371ff.). The object of attention concerns me, its first appearance offers me orientation that I can either pursue or disregard – in other words it directs my attention; my experience of an object's presence is determined by my attentive perception and my perspective. The moment of becoming attentive – of noticing – does not yet provide explanations or indications that transcend the object; there is the possibility, however, of pausing inwardly, of concentrating and contemplating, even of meditative deepening. The following example shows how, in the work with perceptual vignettes (chapter 3.5), becoming attentive and pausing can raise a phenomenon and its horizon to consciousness.

As we walk along a yellow rape field, we become aware of the outline of a forest in the distance and of something moving in front of it. We fleetingly follow the moving something with our eyes, sometimes losing sight of it, then finding it again; we try to focus on it and to recognize it, to give it a name or associate a concept with it. While the initial *pure perception* consists in searching and scanning, *attentive observation* pauses, directs our gaze and possibly our curiosity and interest towards the object that moves along the edge of the wood until we finally

recognize it as a cyclist with a dog on a leash, distinguishing person and dog from everything else that is going on in our field of perception. Only through our attention and our attending to the object do we separate it from its surroundings, the trees, shrubs and branches at the edge of the wood. We notice this backdrop of the phenomenon, to which we have grown increasingly attentive and 'experience it alongside the phenomenon as its horizon' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 68). The experience of the phenomenon with its horizon determines the perceptual context as such. We discern on the one hand the details of and the differences between the phenomena we focus on and their background, from which they stand out; on the other hand, the forest edge, the cyclist with dog and the yellow rape field in the foreground also form a coherent whole. We no longer let the object that moves along the forest out of our sight; it is the object of our attentive perception within its surroundings which we 'experience alongside it'.

In phenomenology, the concept of 'horizon', which in this example stands for the context that co-determines the phenomenon, is subject to further differentiation (Vetter 2020, p. 264ff.). When attention follows a particular object whilst 'indications of the non-given' (Gurwitsch 1974, p. 193) appear in our consciousness, Husserl, Gurwitsch and Merleau-Ponty speak of 'an *inner and an outer horizon* of perception' (Breyer 2011, p. 136). The inner horizon, which encompasses all 'modes of appearance of an object of perception' in relation to the observing subject's standpoint (ibid.), 'can itself only become an object [of attention] if the surrounding objects become horizon' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 92). 'However, if I focus my gaze on a detail within its surroundings, this detail comes to life and grows more distinct, while the other objects become secondary and blurred, without ceasing, however, to be there' (ibid.). They form the outer horizon which constitutes itself from the also-present elements of the experiential field' (Breyer 2011, p. 136). This context that is experienced alongside the phenomenon exists 'noematically' as objective context (forest edge, rape fields) or 'noetically' as subjectively connoted intentions and meanings (Wehrle & Breyer 2015, p. 377ff.).

Attention can be focused on the objective or connoted phenomena simultaneously, alternately or temporarily. In each case its focus determines the horizon. This is why the *first-person perspective* is essential for the attentive direction of the gaze, the act of perceiving and the 'reference structures' (Breyer 2011, p. 136) of the inner and the outer horizon. It constitutes the starting point and point of reference for the experience. The inner horizon of the phenomena and the outer horizon of the context in which they appear *show* themselves to the attentive subject, potentially giving meaning to the occurrence.

> 'In exploration, the horizon therefore guarantees the identity of the object; […] In other words: looking at an object means inhabiting it and seeing from this angle the sides all

other things present to it […]. Thus, the object is seen from all sides at all times by the same means: the structure supplied by the horizon' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 92f.)

Precisely because we tend to let previous knowledge direct our attention in everyday life to, for instance, an event with another person, their actions and utterances, we hardly notice whether this event does in fact exist in itself or whether and how it is co-constituted by its *noematic* and *noetic horizon*. The differentiation between what enters our consciousness with the corresponding internal horizon and what is, primarily or incidentally, seen or heard in addition to that, determines both the perceptual act itself and above all the description of phenomena and the writing of perceptual vignettes. Phenomenological description aims at one event, devoting itself to a greater or lesser extent to the inner and outer horizon.

Journaling

Turn your attention to an object (similar to the forest edge above) that is at first indeterminate and gradually becomes more clearly visible. Note how you concentrate on it increasingly, looking for an explanation.
Forget about the object for a moment and pay attention to how your mind moves between attention (looking at the cyclist) and open, soft perception (wandering gaze taking in the surroundings).

2.5 Understanding and recognition of alienness and otherness (Heidegger, Husserl, Lévinas, Waldenfels)

According to Heidegger 'being-with' (Mitsein) in the primary space relates to 'human ways of being' (Vetter 2020, p. 361); the concept of 'co-existence' (Mitdasein) on the other hand illustrates the dichotomy between the other and the self. The other person or object appears vis-a-vis the self; it is new, other, unique, known or unknown and definitely distinct from the perceiving subject that can and must openly confront the other's otherness. The insight that the other is potentially not only a subjective impression or a subjective view, but an existence in itself leads to recognition based on its appearance. Any encounter with another can in itself be regarded 'as a response to its alienness' (Rödel 2015, p. 201) that strives towards interpretation. However, in working with perceptual vignettes, we initially *only* recognize how the other – object, person or situation – shows itself to us; the way they reveal themselves in each case can flow as experiential traces into a phenomenological description.
Persons or events that, depending on conditions or personal situations, show or hide all their facets and their entire potential, can enter our awareness as alien or other. Unlike otherness, alienness is experienced as an unknown quality that originates in a different life context; it characterizes a person or event as not be-

longing and not fitting in, as hostile or exotic. Waldendorf suggests three 'ways of using' the notion of alienness as the 'opposite of ownness': alien place, alien possession and alien ways – the expression of a person's 'foreignness' (Esterbauer 1998, p. 134). Everything I meet that is not me, be it spatial or behavioural, can be perceived and experienced as alien or other, without valuation, judgement or preconception.

Experiences of and reflections on *otherness* and *alienness* are fundamental in the current discourse on the 'pedagogy of recognition' (Siep et al. 2021). Referring to Paul Ricoeur's phenomenological *Course of Recognition* (2005), Christiane Micus-Loos describes the asymmetry of recognition that 'educational processes' rely on (2012, p. 317) and that asks for mutual recognition of those who are separated by their otherness (ibid.). Otherness and alienness lead to experiences of difference. While alienness or alien describe daily phenomena of not-belonging, exclusion, distance and unfamiliarity that are discussed or examined in literature, philosophy, sociology, religion and phenomenology (c.f. Heiter & Kupke 2009), the concept of *the other* evokes the idea of someone or something as 'not I'. 'Other' can mean separate and different from self, but it can also designate something alien 'that is excluded from the "specialness" of the one' (Esterbauer 1998, p. 134). However, denying this otherness would be tantamount to an elimination or killing of the other; every encounter with something or someone other therefore requires unconditional recognition (Micus-Loos 2012, p. 306) – a central topic in the work of Emmanuel Lévinas (2003, 2013).

In Lévinas' usage alienness can have various meanings: in his early work the child 'is the alien'; later he uses 'alien' as meaning 'the absolute other as alien, the alienation and the being-alien-to-oneself'; finally, he is concerned with the 'alienness towards every place and towards being that characterizes the ethical I' (Esterbauer 1998, p. 146). Alienness as the 'basic determination' of the modern human is thought from the point of view of the other and manifests initially as an experience of difference between the 'I' and the 'absolute other' (ibid.). In distinguishing itself from the other, the I emerges in its self-being: it finds its identification, the 'origin of the very phenomenon of identity' (Lévinas 2013, p. 209). At the same time, the 'I' longs for a 'relationship' with 'the other, which is our social being itself' (ibid., p. 193). 'Relating to another' calls me into question, empties me of myself […] uncovering 'ever new resources' for me (ibid.); the abundance of the whole, of the 'totality' discloses itself to the 'I' (ibid., p. 220).

> 'The other emerges in the concept of the totality to which she or he is immanent and that, according to Merleau-Ponty's apt analyses, is expressed and disclosed by our own cultural initiative, by our bodily, linguistic and artistic gesture. […] The other does not only come to us out of a context but directly, the other has meaning of her- or himself. […] The phenomenon, which is the apparition of the other, is also a face' (ibid., p. 220f.).

Unlike a phenomenon that manifests in an image, the face is 'alive' and undoes the form 'in which every being is already concealed when it enters into immanence, that is, when it presents itself as a theme' (ibid., p. 221). 'The other who manifests in the face breaks through their own formed essence like someone opening a window in which their form is outlined. […] The face speaks' (ibid.).

Lévinas refers to the moment in which the face voices its presence as an 'opening of the openness' (ibid.): the face reveals itself in its 'nudity', coming from 'an absolutely alien sphere' (ibid., p. 222); it is imposed on me and I cannot 'cease to be responsible' for it (ibid., p. 223) because no one other than me can respond to it (ibid.). 'The wonder of the face originates in the elsewhere from which it comes and to which it is already withdrawing' (ibid., p. 227). In an encounter I can hide from the face of the other, but I can also inquire about its origin. Lévinas refers to this as 'trace', as the 'beyond' or 'forever bygone transcendence' (ibid., p. 228). For 'the face shines in the trace of the other: what presents itself in this trace is about to detach itself from me and seeks me out as something already detached' (ibid., p. 234). This is why I feel 'infinitely responsible' for the other (ibid., p. 225); because I cannot escape it. Lévinas points out, however, that the other 'who provokes this ethical movement' (ibid.) grows beyond their own intentionality. This surplus that cannot be assimilated, ultimately constitutes my relationship with the other as 'the idea of infinity' (ibid.). The 'I', by relating to and feeling responsible for the other, assumes an '*attitude that cannot be reduced to a category*' (ibid.).

Lévinas' important concept of attitude forms the bridge from his philosophy of the other to the phenomenology of the perceptual vignettes: we strive to perceive the phenomena like the face of another person that presents itself to perception as (absolutely) alien and points beyond itself, whose intentionality consists in the subject-bound relation and is not reduced to categories. In other words: viewed from a broader perspective, the other and the alien is immanent in the dimensions of givenness and being-with; as such it appears both as distinct from and as related to me. New nuances of understanding otherness and alienness keep coming up in the different examinations. While Lévinas is also concerned with protecting the other (Kapsch 2009, p. 11) in order to retain its otherness, Husserl thinks that 'understanding the other consists largely in understanding the difference between my own concept of understanding, my own expectations and what the other brings to the table' (ibid., p. 21).

Expectations bring out the alien more than anything else because experiences of alienness are above all experiences of difference. In contemporary literature, this is often addressed in descriptions of how migrants encounter another, foreign culture and how this leads to existential experiences. 'We left our country behind in familiar darkness and approached the foreign light.' This is the beginning of Irena Brežná's (2016, p. 5) novel *Die undankbare Fremde* [the thankless stranger], which

is about dealing with the challenges of arriving in a foreign culture, because the 'glaring light of the foreign land also devoured the stars' (ibid.).

The experience of alienness is an evolving basic motif in Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenology (2002, 2018b, 2029, 2020). Prompted by the question of how to deal with foreignness without neutralizing or denying it, Waldenfels (2018b, p. 9) looks for an 'heuristic diversity of approaches' (ibid., p. 15). Alienness, he suggests, is a 'real boundary phenomenon' (ibid., p. 15) that depends on the 'quality of the order in which our life, experience, language and actions take shape' (ibid.). If these conditions change, the expression, appearance and impression of the alien will also change. Its relational determination keeps changing because it depends on the self that becomes aware of it and is its counterpart. Waldenfels speaks of a 'diastasis, the separation of the *own* and the *foreign* that is not mediated by a third' and that belongs 'to another dimension than the distinction between *self* and *other*' (ibid., p. 20). Experiencing the alien or alienness therefore means becoming conscious of 'relating to something other in relating to ourselves' (ibid., p. 28), for the 'I is another because alienness starts at home' (ibid.). The alien seems to us to exceed the 'potential dimension of an order', as the '*boundary of our own capacity*' and as calling into question what is our '*own*' (ibid., p. 31f.). Waldenfels responds to his radical distinction between own and alien by exploring the boundaries between them without feeling the need to 'remove' them (ibid., p. 36) and by examining the experience of alienness as a balancing act between 'pathos', the compassionate awareness of an event, and the 'response' to it (ibid., p. 34ff.): 'Pathos means we are affected *by something* that is neither founded in a preceding "what" nor balanced out by a subsequent "what for"' (ibid., p. 43). 'The "by what" of the affectedness is transformed into the "to what" of the response when someone refers to it in word or action, rejects it, welcomes it or talks about it' (ibid., p. 44f.). Accordingly, response is for him 'engaging with the alien that eludes us' (ibid., p. 45) but to which we owe our 'ownness' (ibid.). The response – in the full presence as it were of what is immediately occurring or showing itself – is 'above intentionality' or exhaustive interpretation (ibid.). This is due to the almost simultaneous experience of 'pathos' and 'response' that do not 'follow one another like two events' (ibid., p. 50) but merely mark the 'time-place' (ibid.) where a subject is confronted by something unexpected or surprising. The 'surplus' contained in this, which cannot be used up or 'utilized' (ibid.) constitutes the essence of what phenomenological descriptions or perceptual vignettes aim to express as otherness or alienness.

We often experience situations where the other or otherness touch or affect us (Kapsch 2009, p. 27); what is alien to us can be surprising, unsettling or confusing; otherness we tend to experience as belonging to life and we tend to accept it more readily and with less bias than we do alienness. And yet, our understanding of otherness and alienness can meet boundaries because, according to Husserl's

thesis of 'appresentation' (Kapsch 2010, p. 70) in the understanding of alienness (ibid., p. 85), every 'I is originally given its own inwardness, not that of another. We can therefore never be entirely certain of understanding another or their motivational structure' (ibid.).
Irrespective of these dimensions of understanding, alienness and otherness can open up or prevent new experiences and therefore initiate reflection on or even the development of attitude.

> *Journaling*
> Remember meeting someone for the first time. Did you feel alienated in some way be this encounter? How did that affect you?
> Think back to other encounters with the same person. What changed? Is there still something alien about them or not? How do you see them today?

2.6 Intentional or misleading empathy? (Fuchs, Breithaupt, Breyer)

When we work phenomenologically in practical contexts, all our perceptual and observational processes are influenced by more or less empathetic intersubjective behaviours and interests. We can read people's empathetic capacity from the way they deal with and influence each other bodily, emotionally and intellectually, a fact that must not be excluded as an influential quantity in the phenomenological process. Unlike the sympathy we experience when we have a positive impression of people, or the antipathy we experience when we have negative sentiments towards them that can lead us to become defensive, 'empathy occupies an area between ourselves and others – an area where affectedness, the pathos that lives in movement, unites with our own willingness to understand' (Breyer 2013, p. 13). Empathy is like a mediator; it conveys the emotional, moral or cognitive mood of another person to us or allows us to experience this mood. However, since we never, when we attend to someone empathetically, 'experience their thoughts and feelings but can – on the basis of what is given, that is, their bodily behaviour – merely assume their more or less likely existence' (Zahavi 2018, p. 69f.), phenomenology discusses this critically as a 'problem of intersubjectivity'. A weighing up is required regarding the empathetic capacity of the first-person perspective and the 'asymmetry between the subject and the other' (ibid., p. 68). For the phenomenological work we will therefore look in greater depth at the observing person's empathetic attending to another or others.
Thomas Fuchs describes three kinds of empathy: 'primary empathy' is based on 'the immediate, bodily encounter with the other, or interbodily interaction' (Fuchs 2012, p. 266); 'extended empathy' enables us to 'become consciously

aware of the situation of the other' (ibid., p. 267); 'fictional empathy' in which 'inanimate objects' for instance 'stimulate bodily resonance in us' (ibid.) or inspire us to assign 'intentionality' to them' (ibid.). Similarly, Thiemo Breyer (2013) categorizes the many theories on empathy 'in order to grasp empathy more precisely as a multidimensional experiential structure' (p. 32): the transcendental (Husserl) and reflective (Merleau-Ponty) interbodily 'intersubjectivity' which precedes the distinction between self and others, the '(inter-)affectivity' triggered by emotional contagion, for instance, and the 'intentionality' of empathy that draws from sharing the mental experiences of another (their feelings, perceptions, ideas and thoughts) (ibid., p 32ff.).

In our daily interaction with others, above all in affective situations or actions (situations and actions that directly affect our emotional and imaginative capacity), we tend to not consciously differentiate these dimensions of empathy. But they illustrate how a phenomenological approach, which encompasses both the immediate bodily encounter and the emotional and intellectual experiences resonating in it, strives to hold back anything fictional, assumed or thought out. Awareness of the pull or risk of empathy is among the basic criteria of phenomenological perception, observation and description. In education an empathetically open and affective attitude is clearly required to capture impressions of special moments experienced with others.

Unlike 'wonder' (chapter 4), which is evoked when something strikes us as conspicuous or special and initiates a search for knowledge, empathy is not inspired by an external affective occurrence, although empathetically perceptive subjects will carry their attitude and mood into a situation. Unlike modes of behaviour, which can elicit positive or negative resonances in others, empathy is the ability to enter into another's thoughts, feelings and intentions *compassionately* and be made resonant *oneself*. Empathetic persons sense or assume that they and the other(s) share a similar experience, behaviour or mood (Breithaupt 2012, p. 15ff.). Breithaupt hypothesizes that this 'similarity' is rather *assumed* or *overstated* if one looks at it more closely because 'any excessive similarity […] will support a special form (or multitude of forms) of projections and subjective sensations of empathy' (ibid., p. 25): this is meant by the tendency towards 'fictional empathy' (Fuchs 2013, p. 267). Because empathy is inspired primarily by 'emotional contagion' and because we believe that we see or understand something in others by *rashly* inferring from our knowledge and experience to their attributes and abilities, Breithaupt even speaks of a 'mistakenly assumed similarity' that is used to 'legitimize projections' (Breithaupt 2012, p. 26f.).

This critical assessment of the capacity for empathy raises the question as to whether special moments can be noticed and examined at all without subjective feelings or presuppositions. According to Breithaupt a 'targeted limitation of similarity' is required so that empathy is not only awakened by similarity but also by

non-similarity or difference (ibid., p. 21). It is therefore crucial that the 'emotional unity' between the observing I and the observed other is not disrupted in the moment when a difference is perceived, that is, when the observed does not behave as expected (ibid., p. 53).

> 'This separation […] refers observers back to themselves. In this disruption the I does not appear as identity but as a function of the difference or the withdrawal of the observing person from their role of empathetic observer. When this happens, the I is not recognized as I, the other not as the other; rather, the temporal process of anticipation and prediction is interrupted and the I is nothing other than this function of disrupting the empathetic equality. The act of the 'I' consists in wonder at the unexpected actions' (ibid.).

In the corresponding footnote Breithaupt adds:

> 'We keep being open to others because we know that we can free ourselves from them again and that we won't be overwhelmed by excessive identification. Or to put it more strongly: we empathize and "identify" with persons who indicate to us that we will be set free again from this assimilation. The assimilation, the concurrence of expectation, already contains the offer of separation' (ibid.)

As soon as we feel called upon by something to be empathetic and as soon as we engage with it empathetically or, as Waldenstein would say, as soon as we are affected by it because someone seems to do something to us – which is the literal meaning of *afficere* (Waldenfels 2002, p. 16) – it becomes necessary to empathically step back and disrupt the assimilation. Although empathy means coming closer to others in order to adapt their perspectives and recognize them as autonomous beings (Breithaupt 2012, p. 10), the phenomenological process is not, as Breithaupt concludes, about influencing others and their behaviour (ibid.) but specifically about accepting givenness.

Journaling

Resolve to meet a person you don't know yet *with empathy*.
In what ways can you express this towards this person? How do they respond to your empathetic behaviour?

2.7 Goethean phenomenology – a path of development. Excursus

In 2000 Horst Rumpf and Ernst-Michael Kranich described a phenomenological approach for teachers to implement as part of their pedagogical practice. They should no longer impart preset knowledge from textbooks or other pertinent sources, but teachers and students should gain their own insights into a sub-

ject based on wonder, curiosity and interest. The two scientists ignored *both* the long-established philosophical and the pedagogical phenomenology and sought to develop, based on Goethe and Wagenschein, a method that would make students interested in learning. Inspired by Rudolf Steiner's Goethean studies (1924/2003; 2009c) Rumpf and Kranich (2000) contemplated how teachers could explore the learning content phenomenologically and let their learners actively participate in this process. Kranich had conducted in-depth research into Goethean natural science for many years (2000), while Rumpf (2004) had critically scrutinized general approaches to teaching including teaching practices that focused on knowledge acquisition and teacher-led lessons. The application of Goethean phenomenology in teacher education for example (Rumpf & Kranich 2000) and in science teaching and research projects (Knöbel 2022; Rohde 2022; Schad 2007a-c, 2016, among others) illustrates that wonder, as an experience where we notice a meaningful phenomenon, must be followed by a methodical cognitive process in order to prevent incidental thoughts and concepts arising from previous knowledge from interfering with the interpretations. The aim is a cognitive process that combines the (sensory) phenomena and the ideas and allows teachers and students to independently attain 'living' concepts that create coherence and perspectives (Wiehl 2022b).

The approach is based on Goethe's method of 'intuitive judgement' where, by contemplating ever-creative nature, we make ourselves worthy to spiritually participate in its productions' (Goethe 1989a, p. 30f.). 'When we are engaged in sensory-concrete thinking, which includes contemplation, and vice versa, in contemplation which includes thinking' (Hennigfeld 2021, p. 38), the idea of the sensory percept is formed 'through exact imagination' (ibid., p. 40). In conformity with Goethe, Iris Hennigfeld concludes from this that his phenomenological method constitutes a 'delicate empiricism' – in opposition to 'common sensory empiricism'. Delicate empiricism 'makes itself profoundly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory' (ibid., p. 41; Goethe 1982, p. 435); it needs to be pointed out, however, that *theory* derives from the Greek word '*theoria*' meaning contemplation or observation (Schad 1986, p. 10).

It was essential for Goethe to 'justify his methodological procedure and to develop a methodology of a finite intuitive intellect' (Förster 2011, p. 256). In his experiments he realized that 'there is a chasm between idea and experience' (Goethe cited in Förster 2011, p. 260) which needs to be overcome by 'observing what *connects* the parts or qualities that have been separated, that is, by observing the *transitions* between the parts' (ibid.). The following example by Eckart Förster can illustrate what is meant here by *connection*: we are watching a movie but only understand individual episodes and not the general underlying idea, which is only disclosed in one of the final scenes. When we watch the same movie again, the knowledge of how it all hangs together is continually present, helping us to under-

stand the whole (ibid., p. 261). There are consequently two instances of cognition, one around the ideas of the individual experiential units or parts, the other around the idea that connects them. They need to be found through intellectual activity and become one with the sensory experience in our intuitive activity.

We can accordingly, in our process of perception and observation, have an immediate experience of the idea and the thought, the meaning and essence of the matter. This process must never be excluded; as a repeatable method, which underlies the research methods of Goethean science, it is a path to knowledge that requires conscious practice (Holdrege 2005, 2014; The Nature Institute, New York), primarily in relation to natural phenomena (Sonnenberg 2023, p. 62). Wolfgang Schad points out that Goethe 'was fully aware of the super-personal effect of his cognitive steps'. For Goethe, 'thinking was not conceiving but producing' and 'perception and thinking needed to first be practised in separation as a matter of principle' (Schad 2007c, p. 40).

Steiner examined the chasm Goethe identified between sensory perception (experience) and idea for the cognitive process itself, in which perception and concept are not experienced as separate cognitive elements but as belonging together (Steiner 1924/2003); for 'as if springing from a beyond unknown to us, reality at first presents itself to our sensory and intellectual comprehension' (ibid., p. 27). But according to Steiner, only 'sensory comprehension' is 'pure experience' (ibid.), since 'we meet it without bringing anything of ourselves to it' (ibid., p. 28). Thinking is initially '*contemplation*' and would meet 'a void if something did not confront it' (ibid., p. 28). However, before thinking can help us to 'penetrate the world more deeply, it must itself become experience' (ibid., p. 30). Steiner ultimately applies Goethe's principle of *experience* to thinking itself (ibid., p. 45): 'Goethe seeks to give nature the opportunity […] to demonstrate its own laws' (ibid., p. 56).

Intuitive and *holistic* (in the sense just explained) thinking is seen as the foundation of Goethean phenomenology, a cognitive method that focuses on both sensory and mental phenomena. The importance of suspending preconceptions, judgments or explanations drawn from other backgrounds, as described in previous sections for some key elements of phenomenology, is relevant to the phenomenological approach that Steiner transfers to cognition itself. For thinking – and this is relevant for the writing of perceptual vignettes – can form concepts that direct our attention and enable mental representation and verbalization (ibid., p. 40). On the other hand, as has been shown by the movie example, the perception of individual sensory phenomena does not initially provide any '*lawful relationship*'; but in thought, this relationship 'is present from the very beginning' (ibid., p. 43); it is included in the thinking activity and therefore *experienced* by the subject.

We propose to use the approach described at the beginning of this chapter for practising. It will mean integrating Goethean phenomenology as a foundation

into the methodology of perceptual vignettes, their application and research. The approach goes back to the phenomenology developed by Kranich (2000) for science lessons; its main premise is that teachers and learners don't absorb ready-made knowledge but acquire knowledge together in exploring content actively. This cognitive path starts with wonder because awe and wonder focus our attention, ignite interest and unfold in further working phases:

1) *perceiving with wonder* a phenomenon: a cultural content, natural phenomenon or scientific experiment,
2) *remembering and representing* the phenomenon through 'reverent contemplation in thinking',
3) *imagining* the phenomenon as an experience in 'wise harmony with reality' or the 'phenomena of the world',
4) *right judgement* which means that 'thinking is not made the judge of things' but 'the tool for giving expression to them' (Rumpf & Kranich 2000, p. 132ff., Steiner 2009c, p. 120ff.; Wiehl 2015, p. 159ff.)

When we work with perceptual vignettes, we realize the same cognitive qualities: *wonder* which inspires us to attend to a special event and begin to observe it (chapters 3 and 4); *intuitive thinking and remembering and representing* in order to experience the primary phenomenon in mental images and thoughts (*imaginations*) and unlock it for the writing process (chapter 5); and finally, rather than judging directly from intuition, *suspending judgement* and only engage with the meaning of the perceptual vignettes in the subsequent phases of reflection in order to interpret them for practical purposes in education and life in general (chapters 7 and 8). Goethean phenomenology can be transferred to the methodology presented here because education is about perceiving and describing the sensory givenness of phenomena without bias or premature judgment. There is a difference, however, in that judgement is suspended altogether in the primary perception and intuition of phenomena and, unlike in natural science, no ideas or meanings are derived from sensory perception or from the experimental and comparative observation of individual or serial phenomena.

In the context of education all occurrences are unique, including a person's actions, behaviour, utterances, gestures and appearance. Pedagogical phenomenology respects this fact and derives an 'intuition' (chapter 2.2) from the specific given situation. This is documented as a phenomenological description and leads only later to reflective conceptualization when criteria are observed that appear as secondary phenomena in the perceptual vignettes. Unlike the philosophical phenomenology based on Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Waldenfels, Marion and others, who analyze the givenness of phenomena and raise basic aspects of it to consciousness in order to lay the basis of a phenomenological procedure that includes body-relatedness (chapters 2.1 to 2.5), the Goethean method proposes

a *holistic course of practice* that unites perception and cognition and that can be a broader context for the phenomenological approach represented here for the verification of phenomenological processes in education. More research into this is required for our work.

Journaling

Choose a phenomenon, an object in nature or a special encounter with a person to practise the four cognitive qualities:

1) wonder
2) recall and representation of the moment
3) experience of the qualities in inner vision (imagination).
4) What essence or idea comes to expression?

3 Perception and observation: two phenomenological approaches

Perception and observation are fundamental faculties when we engage with pre-reflective experiences of reality as we aim to do with the methodology of perceptual vignettes. The processes of perception and observation need to be scrutinized, as does the experiential content, which is initially experienced as given but then requires closer examination. *Perception* is such an elementary and fundamental aspect of everyday life that we often only become consciously aware of it when we ask specific questions; it is nonetheless a key topic in philosophy, phenomenology, psychology and neurobiology. *Observation* on the other hand is applied in the empirical sciences and above all in education, social work, therapy and medicine and therefore less relevant to phenomenology. The psychologist Carl Friedrich Graumann (1923-2007) makes an important distinction between *perception* and *observation,* especially in the context of education and teaching. Some more recent scientific publications refer to his work (Heinzel & Prengel 2002; Reh 2012). Since his considerations are relevant to the work with perceptual vignettes, we include some of them in the sections dedicated to perception and observation (chapters 3.2 and 3.3).

Graumann considers – specifically with reference to 'psychological analysis' (Graumann 1960, p. 5) – that the 'phenomenology of perception makes use of […] perspective-related approaches (such as adumbration, horizon, aspect, standpoint)' (ibid., p. 72) which, like all phenomenological experiences, have their starting point and point of reference in bodily presence. As explained in connection with 'givenness' (chapter 2.2) and 'being-with' (chapter 2.3), the body constitutes the centre of the I-world relationship; it is also the *living and lived*, the *perceiving and perceived*, the *sensing and sensed* dimension of our existence. Subjective bodily experience occurs in physical processes and functions, in (sensory) perceptions, sensations, thoughts and ideas. When we *perceive* and *observe* other persons, objects, our environment or an occurrence, the body always remains the 'latent point of reference, the centre of orientation' (Fuchs 2018, p. 89). When I move in space and carry out actions, these activities always originate in the body as my centre and are always related to it (ibid.). Attention, perspective and the visualization of perceived phenomena including their 'horizon' (chapter 2.4), depend on how I relate to or forget about my body (ibid. p 27). Realizing, perceiving and observing something require a bodily present person awakening from a more or

less unconscious state. Any change in the experiential field, whether it is external or internal, concerns the body as the existential foundation of human existence and communication.

As soon as we expose ourselves *bodily* to a new experience by entering another room or joining a group of people, we sense a familiar or an alien *atmosphere* even before we become conscious of the objects and events around us and of our perceptual horizon. This precedes the experiences of perception and attentive observation; it can be brought to attention and then constitutes the first object of perception. Whether atmosphere precedes phenomenological description and research or whether it initiates the further process of perception and observation depends on the situation and on the person exploring it. Since in the study of perceptual vignettes or their verbal analysis both pleasant and unpleasant atmospheres have been addressed, we devote a section to this phenomenon (chapter 3.1). In the context of perception and observation, atmosphere is a basic element that we explore in our search for a theoretical foundation and with a view to the applicability of our methodology in teacher education and in the pedagogical practice. In the following chapters we consider the processes of perception (chapter 3.2) and observation (chapter 3.3) in more detail, keeping in mind that the *way* we perceive, attentively consider and consciously observe a given phenomenon is crucial for concrete and concise phenomenological description.

We only experience an event as it is and in its given immediacy when we are conscious of these phenomenological processes and when we practise them. Implementing them in working with perceptual vignettes therefore requires competence in these activities. We offer elementary exercises to practise this (chapter 3.4), similar to the four-stage model of creative writing in chapter 5. These exercises have been successfully used in preparation for phenomenological work in seminars, pedagogical meetings and social-art interventions (Wiehl 2021b, p. 221). Following this, an analysis of perceptual vignettes chosen for their relevance to this chapter, includes individual aspects of phenomenological approaches (chapter 3.5). For this, we subject the perceptual vignettes to a hermeneutic reading to unlock specific semantic contexts of these phenomenological descriptions.

Although one can clearly distinguish between phenomenological and other scientific methods, phenomenology is increasingly being adapted to other branches of science, including education. In our study of the elementary capacities of perception and observation, we draw on various directions in research but locate our methodology generally in pedagogical phenomenology. In addition to the obvious phenomenological sources, we include central insights from various branches of science – aesthetics, philosophy and anthropology above all – in order to cast light on aspects we consider important for the phenomenological method of the perceptual vignettes.

3.1 Atmosphere as the primary object of perception

In every environment, room or situation involving human interaction we experience a particular atmosphere that has to do with the concrete objects present, with appearance or behaviours, actions and utterances. Any situation in life, in the pedagogical context in particular, is determined by atmospheres, of which we find traces in the spatial and temporal phenomena, behaviours and moods that are described in perceptual vignettes. A distinction needs to be made between atmospheres that are externally given through weather, nature, interiors and surrounding objects, that are in other words considered from the point of view of the object (Böhme 2013, p.33), and atmospheres that are experienced in human relationships and encounters, including pedagogical situations (Bollnow 1970, 2013), and that are continuously generated by the subjects involved (Böhme 2013, p. 33). Unlike the 'aura' (Benjamin 1977, p. 15) or the 'auratic' (Mersch 2002, p. 106ff.), a similarly fluid and elusive occurrence that can be perceived in the presence of a person, object or natural phenomenon, atmosphere relates to the in-between that we expose ourselves to and that we cannot usually escape.
In architecture, interior and urban design (Böhme 2013; Zumthor 2022), aesthetics (Böhme 2001, 2017) in artistic, medical, social and virtual contexts (Wolf & Julmi 2020a), atmosphere – often with reference to the body philosophy of Hermann Schmitz (1998; 2020, p. 10) and the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1966) – is viewed as a powerful phenomenon that no one can possibly escape. We are always surrounded by atmospheres whether we are aware of them or not. 'Wherever we look, atmospheres are a determining, maybe even the most important element in human life' (Wolf & Julmi 2020b, p. 11). Atmosphere appears as a primary object of perception (Böhme 2017, p. 15): it 'speaks to our emotional perception, the kind of perception that happens incredibly quickly and that humans seem to have in order to survive' (Zumthor 2022, p. 13). Bodily presence is required for the perception of atmospheres. They are not 'free-floating' (Böhme 2017, p. 33) but expanded in space, belonging to things without being things; they manifest through their 'qualities' but they also belong 'to subjects inasmuch as they are sensed through the embodied presence of people and this sensing is at the same time the embodied presence of the subjects in space' (ibid., p. 34). We immediately notice an atmosphere when we walk into a building or when we walk in nature; it fills the space around us, changes with the seasons and depends on the feel of things and on the moods of the people present. All the dimensions in which atmospheres might spread out or be noticed need to be included in the description of a pedagogical field of action and in reflecting on how to address it; because education happens in space, time and above all in moments of human interaction and communication; it depends on mood, it creates and shapes both the social climate and personal experience.

It was Otto Friedrich Bellnow (1970, 2013) who, in the 1970s, inspired the study of atmosphere as an effective influence in education. By atmosphere he means 'the totality of emotional conditions and human attitudes that exist between educators and children and that form the background to each individual educational behaviour' (Bollnow 1970, p. 11). Bollnow differentiates these conditions in 'the child's emotional attitude towards the adult' and the 'attitude the adult brings towards the child' (ibid., p. 15f.). The 'pedagogical atmosphere' is for him a feeling or mood (ibid., p. 108), in which a sense of safety, trust and love unfold, and which is therefore largely related to emotions, the child-adult relationship and the educational processes. More recent descriptions, for instance by Eric vom Hövel and Ingeborg Schüssler (2005), include the findings of phenomenological research and ask about the effect of 'atmosphere and embodiment' (according to Schmitz) in learning processes (ibid., p. 65). For them, 'successful embodiment' (ibid.) means that the organism is in harmony with the surrounding world and able to unfold (ibid.). This basic principle of experiences of resonance or dissonance describes the interaction between the surrounding world and the embodied being, in other words the effective outer framework. Barbara Wolf goes further in pointing out that the 'powerful effect' of atmospheres as 'a ubiquitous phenomenon in schools' was underestimated and that the fact that we are bodily affected by atmospheres was to be seen 'as an *a priori* of sociality' (Wolf 2020, p. 396). 'Atmospheres form the important background to what is experienced and learned at school' (ibid., p. 398). Wolf discusses the topic in relation to 'diversity, integration and inclusion', which are ideally enabled by an '*inviting and widening atmosphere*' but which can be negatively influenced or prevented – as in the case of distress in threatening or tense situations – by an '*excluding and constrictive atmosphere*' (ibid., p. 404ff.). These references to the importance of atmosphere in education may suffice for now; they are relevant to the reflections on perceptual vignettes (chapter 7).

From an aesthetic perspective, the atmosphere prevailing in education or in human interactions can be extended beyond aspects of space and time by including influences and behaviours of participating persons as essential factors. Atmosphere constitutes the basic mood that is perceived by a newly arriving person in a room inhabited by others and which changes in the moment when the newcomer appears and enters. Every individual person contributes to the atmosphere 'purely by their bodily presence', charisma and voice, behaviour, speech and gestures (Böhme 2013, p. 38) and, consciously or unconsciously, creates, influences and shapes the atmosphere. The perceived atmosphere forms the 'sounding board for one's own sentiments' (ibid.). When the external or inner mood changes, the whole atmosphere will change. Similarly, atmospheres can be destroyed by foreign interference, destructive actions or (un)considered utterances. Atmospheric disturbances manifest as disruption, alienation or disenchantment (ibid.). Unexpected incidents or the 'appearance of a stranger' (ibid.) bring about an experience of

discrepancy because the previously felt mood no longer agrees with the change in the climate (Böhme 2001, p. 48f.). Like the 'auratic', the atmospheric discrepancy appears as an abrupt 'event' that 'concerns or affects us and that sweeps us away before "something" appears or an expression occurs' (Mersch 2002, p. 49); but the experience of discrepancy also enables a more conscious perception of the atmosphere and its recognition as part of a pedagogical sphere of action and creation.

The work of Gernot Böhme, from which we have already quoted, is essential to the phenomenological way of working with perceptual vignettes. Böhme views atmospheres as 'spheres of sensed bodily presence' – unlike Elisabeth Ströker, for whom atmospheres are 'mooded spaces', or Hermann Schmitz, who describes them as 'quasi-objective feelings' (Böhme 2013, p. 49). In his research, Böhme combines different perspectives and contexts by studying atmospheres in architecture, nature and aesthetics (Böhme 2013, p. 32ff.) or in communicative processes and utterances. Every speech act, he concludes, can affect the climate, trigger feelings in the persons present through earnest, threatening, provocative, relaxing moods and thus create communicative and social constellations (ibid., p. 35f.). Content, choice of words, tenor and tone of spoken utterances engender atmospheres that in written descriptions are mainly described by adjectives. In analyzing poems, Böhme notices that often only few words are required (Böhme 2017, p 66 ff.) to describe an atmosphere that permeates and changes space and time. The adjectives used to characterize atmospheres mostly refer to seasons, weather, spatial qualities, colours and forms, or they are words for personal moods such as joy, grief, affection, dislike, lightness or heaviness and related behavioural attitudes such as doing something gladly, unexpectedly, sullenly or keenly. Every act of perception and observation is preceded by the more or less conscious awareness of an atmosphere. Atmosphere is the primary object of sensory perception (Böhme 2017, p. 15); it is sensed as the first impression of an environment, occurrence or meeting with other people but only rises to consciousness later. 'For atmospheres are evidently what is experienced in bodily presence with things and people or in rooms' (ibid., p. 30). Bodily presence is the condition for sensing an atmosphere as the first moment of any perceptual and observational experience.

The following perceptual vignette, which was written by a Bachelor student who was looking after a child, contains atmospheric qualities of time and space, of interactions and sensitivities. It therefore represents a range of atmospheric dimensions that are relevant to the phenomenological work and that can be most easily recognized in the course of events and in the disruptions and changes that impact on the relationship of the two protagonists.

Christmas baking in September

We are making biscuits with Irina, as you wished. The sun is shining on this mild September day. You asked to make cut-out biscuits and I suggest cookies. You don't seem particularly keen on this at first but accept my proposal. Sugar pearls are rolling all over the floor, flour flurries around the kitchen, there is icing sugar all over the hob. You want to crack open the eggs. You carry the egg you just opened at the other end of the kitchen towards the bowl, but … it lands in the butter, calling a cheeky smile to your face. After a moment's thought I ask you: 'Say, Dana, do you know how Pipi Longstocking makes pancakes?' 'Sure, she makes them on the bare floor, cracks the eggs into a pan, shell and all, and one of them lands on her head.' I have to smile at your abrupt answer and ask, 'And do you know what she uses to stir the batter?' You think briefly and reply, 'Yes, with a brush.' After this conversation, there is no more flour flying around the room, no egg landing on the floor and the wild autumnal Christmas baking settles into tranquil activity (PV 3.1).

The atmosphere in this perceptual vignette is constantly disrupted or fractured. Even the references to the seasons are conspicuous and unexpected because it is a *sunny and mild* day in September, in late summer that is, but the plan is to bake for *Christmas*. *The child's wish* to make typical Christmas biscuits is not taken up; they are replaced by cookies. This change is *not received enthusiastically* by the child, although she *accepts* the decision. She nonetheless expresses a certain displeasure in the way she behaves: in the following scene some ingredients end up on the floor rather than in the bowl. The *baking preparations were not successful*, one might say. The child's *cheeky smile* inspires her caregiver to respond with *presence of mind* and *humour* and to ask how Pippi Longstocking stirs her batter. The child's answer is *equally witty* and original. The caregiver *smiles* and asks another question. The brush is the keyword that relaxes the situation and turns the 'wild autumnal Christmas baking […] into a *tranquil* activity'. Starting with the wish for a baking activity that is unusual in autumn, a challenging situation unfolds; it almost defeats the baking plans but is resolved when the carer shows interest in the child and her wishes; when, without rejecting anything, she meets the challenge with humour, probably preventing more mishap and disappointment.

This example illustrates the fluidity and variability of atmosphere; while it largely depends on the sentiments and behaviour of the persons involved, it can always be shaped. In human interactions it is an immediate bodily experience. The perceiving subjects sense themselves, their own mood and that of other people and their surroundings at the same time (Böhme 2001, p. 45) – a requirement for influencing or changing moods. As soon as we enter a room or join a community, we perceive the prevailing atmosphere or mood, and we notice it the more intensely, the more it differs from our own atmospheric situation, the more it appears to us a another or alien mood. In laying the basis of a 'new aesthetics', Gernot Böhme characterizes atmosphere as 'the relationship between the quality of the surround-

ings and a person's sensitivities' (Böhme 2017, p. 22); he distinguishes between experiences of ingression, 'where we perceive something by happening upon it', and, as mentioned earlier, discrepancy where we experience an atmosphere as completely different from the one we brought with us (Böhme 2001, p. 46f.). We find both dimensions in this perceptual vignette, the allowing for something to happen and the alienation caused by the unusual baking situation which – and this is a further experience – is, or can be, changed by the persons involved.

Atmospheres arise in the field of tension between resonance and alienation. While, since Hartmut Rosa's extensive study (2018), resonance is seen as the 'vibes' in people's interactions that contribute to a successful relationship, alienation is the opposite. Rahel Jaeggi calls it 'a relationship that is deficient, albeit in a crucial way' (Jaeggi 2019, p. 48), 'in other words a special kind of unrelatedness: a separation of something that belongs together, the loss of connection between entities that are nonetheless related to each other' (ibid.). If alienation as the dominant experience of mood is transformed or overcome, a disturbance is removed; if the atmosphere offers room for creativity and self-development, a different premise is provided for potential and actual actions and utterances. For they are in themselves potential ways of shaping the atmosphere that permeates and changes the in-between space, between alienation and 'connectedness with everything around us' (Hüter & Spannbauer 2021, p. 26).

If we assume that perceptual vignettes describe such phenomena whilst giving expression to atmospheres, they can be seen as calling attention to immediately given realities. Unlike Walter Benjamin, who describes the socially conditioned 'overcoming [of] the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction' and the subsequent 'changes in the medium of […] perception' which can be regarded 'as the decay of the aura' (Benjamin 1977, p. 15), atmosphere, particularly if it is experienced in bodily presence, directs the attention to the aura of *a* given phenomenon that will only reveal itself to unbiased perception and observation.

Journaling: describing atmosphere

I walk into another room, into the garden or onto the road. What is the atmosphere like at this moment? What do I sense? Do I find words to describe it?
I recall a particularly pleasant or unpleasant encounter and note down a few key words that characterize it. What moods are triggered by these memories? What atmospheres continue to resonate?

3.2 Perception as open, intentional attending with all senses

'The structure of true perception alone
can teach us what perception is.'
(Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 22)

The fostering of unbiased and empathetic perception as teachers requires attentive devotion to this task. For instance, when we assist a child, young person or adult with support needs, we are faced with many tasks that can be fulfilling, keep us busy or challenge us. We call the attention of our university students or people who take part in our perceptual vignette seminars to such special situations, encouraging them to focus on phases of perception and observation, to let themselves be stimulated and to linger in wonder. They are not only asked to act but to *perceive* a person, their behaviours, activities, interactions, utterances and wishes. Their task is to look at a person and their environment without bias rather than concentrate on aspects that meet their expectations or are already known to them. The intention is that students and professionals learn to see, hear and smell, that is to say perceive the phenomena, the child or group of children, the young people or adults, with all their senses ever more intensively and that they train their own perceptiveness. Perceiving starts as a search movement of sensory awareness; it is not yet observation in the narrower sense. Through perception we enter into a relationship with others and with our environment by internalizing impressions and experiencing them as sensations. What we strive for is an open, empathetic, unbiased turning to the phenomena with all our senses – from sensory perception to affective sensations (Brinkmann 2015a, 2017; Reh 2012).

The term *perception* can refer to the act of becoming aware of something or someone or to its content, the percept, which can be internal or external. In our context, 'perception' also includes aspects such as 'attending to', 'gaining awareness of' and 'direct experience' (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 720) and is seen as a phenomenological approach that is separate from observation (chapter 3.3). As a 'classic topic of philosophy', the term 'perception' is initially 'undefinable' (Wiesing 2002, p. 10). In common parlance, perception is – according to Lambert Wiesing – 'the capacity of living creatures to receive information about their material environment through the senses' (ibid., p. 12). However, we also perceive internal, emotional and mental processes as well as moods and atmospheres. Perception takes place at the threshold between inside and outside, through resonances of our own bodied being with its external and internal world. Every act of perception, whether it is directed at outer or inner events, is accompanied by intuition and sensation. In intuition or representation, we form a picture of the perceived object; in sensation we experience the perceived object as connected with ourselves or with our bodily being. Pure perception is merely turning towards something or

someone. But every perception inspires or becomes immediate inner experience. Without intuition and sensation, perception would remain unconscious; because external stimuli are not enough, they need to be processed and made conscious as sensed impressions, as they will otherwise not result in a perceptual experience. We can become aware of the act of perception, as Graumann suggests (1960, p. 68), in a more consciously experienced and reflected moment of being-in-the-world: perception happens at a particular point in time, from a particular standpoint and from a specific perspective. It is characterized by the subjective perspective, or 'the standpoint and viewpoint of perspectival awareness' (Graumann 1960, p. 68). Perspective arises from the movement of the observing person because their 'awareness presupposes movement' (Graumann 1966, p. 86). Perception is therefore relative, temporary, individual, subjective and above all

> 'perspectival: a subject, which can only ever be in one place at a time (standpoint) and sees from a viewpoint allocated to this standpoint only the side (aspect) of an object that corresponds to the viewpoint. The sides of things surrounding a perceiver that are visible from the viewpoint are themselves allocated to the scope of view (horizon) corresponding to the eye level in such a way that they point beyond themselves to this horizon as the boundary of visibility. […] Perceiving something from a very specific perspective or view can consequently never constitute an absolute but only ever a relative, mostly temporary, fixation of the gaze' (ibid.).

When the searching movement of the perceptual act is paused and the attention directed to one object or occurrence, the state of activity changes:

> 'The intentional attentive and selective mode of perceiving that notices very specific aspects at the cost of the specificity of the others we call observation. Compared to the usual perceiving, observation is more planned, more selective, determined by a searching attitude and directed from the outset to the potential evaluation of the observed in the sense of the overarching intention.
> In daily activity, perceiving and observing often merge unnoticed. As I observe unintentionally, […] something startles me: an unexpected movement, something that disappears again. The startling and the curiosity it provokes change my perceptual behaviour: I now 'seek' this movement; I look out more 'attentively' than before; the region where movement is not expected interests me less than before. Attentive searching inspired by interest characterizes both ordinary and scientific observation. The two differ on the one hand because of the systematic approach that distinguishes the scientific from the everyday approach. But even some non-scientific observational tasks require a kind of systematic training. […] The methodological consequence lies in the *call for fundamental repeatability* of the same observation so it can be recognized as scientific' (ibid., p. 86f.).

The approach explicated by Graumann is rooted in psychology, but it also includes phenomenological observation and reflection (Graumann 1960). He appears to unite two paths described by Lambert Wiesing in his synopsis of the source texts

of renowned philosophers and phenomenologists for the 'philosophical examination of perception' (Wiesing 2002, p. 16): we can either use verbalized reflections to look at our own experiences as perceivers or use constructed models to ponder the way perception works (ibid.). For our method, the first path – reflecting on self-experienced perception – is useful and we have developed and specified it for training and professional development (chapter 7). Below we explain why it is the task of phenomenology to consider the conditions, processes and objects of perception as elements of phenomenological exploration, which looks for wonder and curiosity (chapter 4) as the starting point and precondition of cognitive interest.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), in his early work of the 1930s and 1940s, studied first the 'nature' and then the 'primacy of perception' (2021), anticipating his lifelong research: the 'phenomenology of perception' (Merleau-Ponty 1966), a foundational work that was received in many sciences beyond phenomenology. In opposition to contemporary views, Merleau-Ponty finds it necessary to 'undertake a synthesis of the findings of experimental psychology and neurology, which both touch on the problem of perception, to determine their precise significance through reflection and, if possible, adjust certain psychological and philosophical concepts' (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 9). Building on Husserl's 'Idea of a Pure Phenomenology' (2021), Merleau-Ponty concludes that while the psychology previously accepted was not to be replaced by a philosophy, it was to be '*renewed in its own sphere*' in order to newly establish its methods and the meaning of basic concepts such as 'idea, memory etc.' (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 15). Psychology uses induction to infer from experimentally gained individual findings to a general knowledge as the basis of a theory. Phenomenology as represented by Husserl and others, on the other hand, explicitly distinguishes the 'eidetic from the inductive (i.e. experimental) method whilst never denying the justification of the latter' (ibid., p. 15). By 'eidetic' Husserl means the 'intuition of essences' in which the 'analogon' of a sensory act of perception is experienced as the essence of a matter (Vetter 2020, p. 122). The immediate apprehension of the percept, which includes all sensory aspects as well as the inner and outer horizon, is – as described earlier (chapter 2) – elementary to philosophical phenomenology, even if this process has been discussed variously since Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Alloa et al. 2023). Both psychology and philosophy 'draw from the same phenomena, even though problems are more formalized at the philosophical level,' but the two complement each other in a fruitful way (Wiesing 2021, p. 103). Unlike psychology, which is concerned with the emergence and theory of visual, auditory, tactile and other perceptions, phenomenology examines the actual process of perception, which becomes the object and content of perception, observation and reflection. For 'the structure of true perception alone can teach us what perception is' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 22). It is therefore true for Merleau-Ponty as well as for other phenome-

nologists that they 'describe what they describe exclusively as a phenomenon that shows itself and they bracket out any relation to reality' (Wiesing 2021, p. 104); in doing so they effect a 'reduction' (chapter 2.1). This approach essentially distinguishes their approach from psychological analyses (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 14).
While Husserl and Merleau-Ponty differ in their descriptions of perception, they agree on the unique function of perception in phenomenological philosophy (Wiesing 2021, p. 123). For Husserl, perception signifies 'the original mode of intuition (Anschauung) in which an object is given and appears 'within a horizon of typical familiarity' (Vetter 2020, p. 609; chapter 2.4). In this view the body is the 'organ of perception' that determines the perspective and the *how* of the perception (ibid.). Merleau-Ponty characterizes perception using multiple examples; however, he does not commit to one definition but distinguishes it from pure sensation which, as he says, resembles an 'undifferentiated, instantaneous, dot-like impact' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 21) that distorts 'any analysis of perception' (ibid., p. 32). Perception, he claims, always 'relates to relationships, not to anything specific' (ibid., p. 21), because our 'perceptual field is made up of "things" and "spaces between things"' (ibid., p. 35). Using the example of an area of red, he illustrates that 'red is not simply present [but] in its presence it represents more than itself; it represents something that is not a "real" but an "intentional aspect" of perception' (ibid., p. 32). Perception in this sense is a body-bound capacity of turning to things with intentional orientation; in the act of perception the body intentionally relates to the objects of perception. Intentionality in the general sense means 'that awareness is awareness of something' (Alloa et al. 2023, p. 9). Merleau-Ponty bases the 'overall idea of the perceptual world' (Vetter 2020, p. 209) on 'intentionality' as 'a manner of relating to the object that is clearly distinct from any knowledge' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 441) to which 'most phenomenologists are committed' (Alloa et al. 2023, p. 9).
He claims that perception occurs *prior to* all other forms of consciousness, 'that every form of consciousness occurs as awareness of something here and now, that it depends, therefore, on being conscious of one's presence' (Wiesing 2021, p. 122). This leads him to propose that 'consciousness is always perceptual' (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 27), contradicting Husserl's view that 'unseen sides of objects [are] simply possible perceptions' (ibid., p. 30). Invisible things, he holds, are not simply to be taken as given (ibid.); neither size nor colour can be seen as given because *what* is being perceived and *how* it is perceived always depends on perspective (ibid., p. 31); but the object itself, he adds, is 'real' in perception (ibid., p. 32).

> 'Perception is here understood as a reference to a wholeness that can be grasped, in principle, only through certain of its parts or aspects. The perceived object is not an ideal unity grasped by intellectual insight like a geometrical concept, for example; it is rather a totality open to a horizon of an indefinite number of perspectival views which overlap in a certain way that unambiguously defines the object in question' (ibid., p. 33)

Merleau-Ponty refers to the differences of perceptual experience and the importance of communicating about them: there is an 'undeniable plurality of consciousnesses' (ibid., p. 36) and 'I will never know how you see red' (ibid.); this means we need to communicate and share with each other, knowing that we each have the same possibilities (ibid.), but that we most probably perceive differently and perceive different things. Perception therefore does not pre-empt but, as lived experience, it precedes any knowledge (ibid., p. 70). 'Lived experience' is of immediate interest only to those who are interested in the human being' (ibid., p. 75) rather than rely on theories, as many branches of science do (ibid. p. 74). 'Perception is not a phenomenon of physical causality' (ibid., p. 77), rather, 'perception means to experience something as present through the body' (ibid., p. 83).

In phenomenology the body is as an 'organ of perception' central to the act of perceiving, which can only be experienced in bodily presence and through the body. Body-bound perception goes beyond *subjective* experience or *objective* appearance in that it takes in an object or content as a given phenomenon (for instance Agostini 2019a, chapter 2.2) in the same way as it experiences the body itself. Phenomena appear to perception as they are, without any cognitive separation between outer and inner, subjective and objective qualities. In recognizing this immediacy of perception, phenomenology differs from other perceptual models that 'work with the dualistic assumption of sensations on the one hand and unconscious operations on the other' (Wiesing 2021, p. 86f.); phenomena are not simply external 'apparitions' or 'the visible expression of something' that 'clandestinely underlies them and that is concealed behind the manifestation' (ibid., p. 93), but rather inner and outer appearances that 'reveal themselves to consciousness through complex sensations' (Vetter 2020, p. 410). Phenomenological research, in overcoming 'the dualistic subject-object division' (Fuchs 2018, p. 21) does not see 'either hidden inwardness nor pure outwardness in the body; it is the actual arena of relationship and encounter, the medium in which the world and the other reveal themselves to me and in which I can express and show myself' (ibid., p. 24). Perceptual philosophy, therefore, must include the body 'out of phenomenological necessity' (Wiesing 2021, p. 94). This is why for Merleau-Ponty the perception of our own body is fundamental to this elementary capacity: 'We need to describe the body's self-perception in order to demonstrate not its physiological but its transcendental significance for perception' (ibid., p. 94). In his view 'the presence of a bodily subject in perception [is] a necessary condition for the possibility of perspectival perception' (ibid.). This means that the perceiver is always the centre of the process and needs to be recognized as such.

According to Bernhard Waldenfels perception alone does not achieve anything 'if it is not joined by aspiration. In other words, looking at things has no effect […] unless something in them speaks to, attracts or deters us. Images whet our appetite in the widest sense' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 220). This means that attention precedes

conscious perception because our seeing something is triggered by our noticing it (ibid., p. 221; chapter 2.4). Meaning arises gradually through attention, seeing in movement, curiosity, aspiring to something new, being affected and moved by something that concerns and touches me. This 'impression' expresses itself in 'being bodily affected' (ibid.) inasmuch as an 'apperception connects with an equally unmediated affecting and concern' (ibid.). Perception is characterized by an object's first becoming *conspicuous* among a multitude of phenomena and its being *noticed* in its givenness, form and structure.

However, not every perception rises to consciousness or ends up being noticed and attended to. Depending on personal circumstances and concerns, the transition takes place at the crucial threshold from the 'entirely unconscious pre-attentive perception to more or less conscious processes that are subjected to the criteria pairs *known/unknown* or *important/unimportant*' (ibid., p. 146). Only what appears as new and affective, as personally significant or meaningful reaches the level of attention. Initially, *unconscious* perception meets a general plurality; in the next moment, anything unimportant is unconsciously disregarded while anything known or conspicuous, or anything that seems important is raised to consciousness. What was initially a vague apparition assumes shape, structure and meaning. In this process, perception becomes conscious, because 'attention is directed consciousness' (ibid., p. 145). 'As an initial form of response, noticing executes a movement that is preceded by an alien movement and that is itself a movement' (ibid., p. 106). According to Waldenfels, the conspicuousness comes too early and the noticing too late (ibid., p. 72). The perceptual process happens exactly in between, connecting the 'before' which appears first in consciousness with the taking notice 'after'. For Waldenfels this is 'philosophical piecework' (ibid., p. 69) because the conspicuous needs someone to be conspicuous to (ibid.), and then again, a third is required, whom he calls 'the observer, who ascertains causal effects and conditions' (ibid., p. 69f.). But we ourselves are observing these events and describe their imponderabilities and ambivalences. 'We must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon. We only meet qualities around this phenomenon. The meaning that is immanent in any quality is equivocal; it is more expressive value than logical signification' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 25). And yet, *the open turning towards* the uncertain, surprising and affective aspects of a phenomenon occurs in the sphere between the before and the after. Only through *intentional* perception does it become an object of attention and shows itself – in a moment to be determined – to conscious intuition as *the* phenomenon to be described and explored. 'The puzzle of image and thing, of reality and fiction belongs to perception because it is never pure perception or pure perceptual consciousness but a bodily process that involves us in a figurative prelude and postlude' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 213). We therefore refer to perception as an *open and intentional* process.

As soon as *attention* becomes focused activity, which means that the mind consciously devotes itself to a matter or object, the transition to *observation* takes place, the faculty that the empirical sciences rely on and to which we devote a separate section (chapter 3.3). Like collectors and researchers who focus their attention on an individual thing, or a mother who is aware of the smallest of sounds, there is, according to Waldenfels, an attentiveness that evokes a 'readiness to perceive', an 'alertness' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 14). The 'shift from conspicuousness to noticing starts precisely here' (ibid., p. 23).

Such fundamental thoughts on perception have been taken up and applied in many publications within and beyond phenomenology, in relation to practical disciplines such as education, for instance by Käte Meyer-Drawe, for whom 'perceiving is not inspecting. Reality is not interrogated but experienced through the senses in particular contexts. Something awakens our attention, it speaks to us, it becomes important to us. Writing about it is not the same as recording data but expressing perceptual experiences' (Meyer-Drawe 2020, p. 15). Describing 'what we see, hear, smell, touch and taste' is never easy (ibid., p. 17). 'Our thinking always interferes. Perceiving is changed to "perceiving our thinking". Perceiving in this view appears like an inspection carried out by a mind that monitors the world without letting itself be affected by it' (ibid., p. 17f.). Measured against reason and intellect, perception is seen as preceding definite knowledge whilst being inferior to it (ibid.).

In conclusion, we pause and consider again Merleau-Ponty's statements: perception is not the experience of the most diverse impressions that are then complemented by memories. Rather, perceiving means 'to experience the rising of an immanent meaning from a constellation of data without which no reference to memory would be possible. […] Perceiving is not remembering' (Merleau-Ponty 1966, p. 42). Hans Karl Peterlini, a researcher in the field of phenomenological vignettes, confirms the view that

> 'from a phenomenological perspective, the act of perceiving is neither merely autonomous nor merely passive; we neither have the absolute freedom to arbitrarily recognize something as something, nor are we in this process of perceiving something as something in particular, totally determined by external things and meanings. What we perceive has to do with us, with our previous experiences and our previous knowledge, with the perceptual possibilities of our senses and translations achieved by our cognitive efforts. As we perceive, we establish what we see, smell, taste, touch, feel, what impacts us, but we cannot do this arbitrarily, we cannot declare that red is green, cannot welcome a sharp sound as sweet or a hard blow as a caress. But within these opposites lies a range of possible sentiments, nuances, contradictions and ambivalences, denying us direct access to the reality behind the appearance of things and colours' (Peterlini 2020a, p. 7f.).

Perceiving is therefore in the first place 'noticing, wonderment, amazement' (Engel 2019, p. 46), followed by the conscious grasping of the perceptual content. Further work stages are required to focus on these perceptions through *observation* (chapter 3.3) before they can be described, documented (chapter 5) and united with experiential knowledge and scientific insights (chapters 6, 7, 8).
Bringing together the above views of perception as intentional turning towards with all senses reveals a process that is implied in this sphere of activity and that leads beyond the initial pure openness towards a creative future sphere. Based on Claus O. Scharmer's levels of listening (2022, p. 43), we identify the following five qualities:
1. Perceiving is purely turning towards something or someone
2. Perceiving is an objective, distinguishing activity
3. Perceiving in its deeper meaning is empathetic
4. Perceiving contains moments of discovery and creativity
5. Perceiving occurs in an emerging future field.

Perception precedes the knowing and recognizing of things and can be called the 'dawn of knowledge' (Engel 2019, p. 46).

> *Journaling: perceiving with all senses*
>
> I allow my eyes to roam, listen to the sounds and perceive the smells around me … What perceptions do I have? What sensations? Which impressions linger? Can I recall this process? Can I put it in words?
> I look out into nature, a green park or garden, and focus on a plant. What do I see, hear, smell? What do I feel? What inner image appears of this plant?

3.3 Observation as attentive turning to the world

Perception, when it first occurs, is unconscious but turns into conscious orientation to an object or content the moment we become attentive. As we notice and focus on the percept, observation sets in. Unlike open and intentional perception, observation can be defined as 'planned contemplation of an event or object' (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 99). Observation is the primary method of natural-scientific and empirical research which, based on specific criteria, scrutinizes objects and processes that 'present themselves directly without changes being made', and without being transferred for the purpose of research to arbitrarily changed or experimental situations (ibid.). In experimentation, on the other hand, the research object and its surroundings are demarcated and determined and, if necessary, changed and adapted. In that case, observers face no original but an artificially created or manipulated situation in which they observe processes

and gather results. 'Observation and experimentation are the essential methodical tools of empirical research' (ibid., p. 100). Unlike perception, observation is used in a targeted, structured and methodical way to access reality, as a research method in a selected or predetermined context.

Like perception, observation can involve all the senses. The difference is that in observation the senses are attentively focused on the object of observation in question. Both in everyday life and in the scientific context, observation serves as a tool for exact inspection, examination, comparison and assessment. I place food on the scales and observe a figure appearing on the display, showing me the weight; because the figure is lower than expected I add something to the scales and get the desired result. Observation is consequently not open and intentional but attentive and focused and it also depends on perspective. The orientation and perspective of observation on particular things or the experiment is not left to the curiously exploring subject but is, as a previously designed, repeatable process, part of the research profile. It is not the curious explorer who determines the orientation of observation or the perspective from which the object or experiment is viewed; rather, they are, as part of a previously described and repeatable process, part of the research profile. Observation, if it is not distracted or interrupted, leads ultimately to an expected, planned or even false result. It is attained according to different, previously determined rules, not simply because a phenomenon caused itself to be noticed by its conspicuousness (chapter 3.2). Observers usually know what they are looking for; as in the case of perception, they can suspend preconceptions, estimations, associations and categorizations of the observed content or establish hypotheses for their research proposal. However, this suspension of any additions and presumptions is precisely what *phenomenological* perception and observation aim for. The phenomenological work with perceptual vignettes aims to focus on the affective occurrence *itself,* without any previous instructions regulating the perceptual process and the moments of observation; the occurrence is taken as 'given', if possible, without any changes or interference (chapter 2.2), and it is only subjected to reflection, interpretation and application at a later stage (chapter 7). The phenomenological method of 'observing participation' is therefore fundamentally different from the modes of access mentioned earlier.

We call on philosophical and empirical approaches to conceptualize *observation* as an *attentive and focused* method and identify its characteristic features as well as its value and limitations for a phenomenological approach. The work of Carl Friedrich Graumann, which is more or less contemporary with Merleau-Ponty's seminal work on perception, inspires the juxtaposition, unusual in phenomenology, of *perception and observation* (introduction to chapter 3), as it addresses precisely this problem. 'Compared to the usual perceiving, observation is more planned, more selective, determined by a searching attitude and directed from the outset to the potential evaluation of the observed in keeping with the overarching intention.

In daily activity, perceiving and observing often merge unnoticed' (Graumann 1966, p. 86). Graumann explicates how observation in all sciences – if possible or necessitated by the research profile – constitutes the fundamental method (ibid.), from which other procedures and experimental methods are derived. The terms *observation* as activity, *observation* as an overall process, and *observation* as the content or object of observing, are often used synonymously or overlap. Observation designates the capacity to look carefully at something visual or listen attentively to noise, sound or speech. Because of the scope of conscious observation to precisely perceive something in every detail, its surroundings included, it has become the essential method of empirical research. Without observation, knowledge is impossible because knowledge always requires that a distinct something can be raised to consciousness and assigned to a law and concept. Observation turns perception into an *attentive-focused* and *cognitive method*.

Philosophical phenomenology as represented by Husserl (for instance 2016, 2021), Gurwitsch (1974) or Merleau-Ponty (1966) discusses perception in detail but not observation. However, intentionality and attention as conscious orientation in the process of perception (chapters 2.4 and 3.2) already constitute a transition to observation and to 'observing reason' (Hegel 1807/2023, p. 185ff.), because intentional attention directs our consciousness towards meaning and concept. Observation takes a certain direction, asking what the observed object is or means. This cognitive movement is carried out by 'observing reason' which Hegel examines in his Phenomenology of Mind (1807/2023), based on the 'observation of nature', 'organic life' and 'self-awareness' in particular (ibid., p. 187ff.) – in one of the 'least commented, interpreted and productively absorbed sections' of the work mentioned (Quante 2022, p. 325). Not the examples of his considerations but the 'characteristics of observing reason' (ibid., p. 391) are of interest in the attempt to distinguish observation from perception in the cognitive process. Hegel looks at both the enactment and the object of 'observing reason', pointing out that we 'need to consider the activity of reason in the moments of its movement, as it seeks nature, the mind and finally the relation between the two as sensory being and itself as existing reality' (Hegel 1807/2023, p. 187). As we perceive the sensory world, things become apparent, initially due to 'the superficial act of raising them from particularity and the equally superficial form of universality' (ibid., p. 188). Accordingly, we open ourselves to a situation, even before composing perceptual vignettes for example, but our attention is attracted by an object or occurrence that we at first don't identify or interpret further, although we trust in its meaningfulness. For in this 'realm where universal means indeterminate, where particularity approximates to singleness again and even fully descends into it, an inexhaustible supply of material for observation and description is offered' (ibid., p. 189). But to recognize something specific and distinguish 'the *essential* from the *inessential*' in observation, 'the concept arises from the sensory dispersion, and

knowledge thus explains that it is at least as essentially concerned *with itself* as it is with the things' (ibid.). Thinking, which interferes with observation, can reflect both on itself and on others, for the observing person is able to contemplate their own cognitive process and its object. This can 'produce a certain hesitation and raise the question as to whether what is essential and necessary for knowledge also applies to the things' (ibid.). This question concerning the essence and necessity that is given through the things or their inherent meaningfulness and anything that 'co-determines them' (Gurwitsch 1974, p. 193), also needs to be asked for the methods of phenomenology described here and is referred to as 'horizon' (chapter 2.4). As we perceive a phenomenon, 'references to the not given that accompany the core' (ibid.) already emerge as an excess of meaning; 'observing reason' guided by knowledge raises it above the universal to the sphere of laws and concepts, thus striving for identification or interpretation.

However, *open-intentional perception* (chapter 3.2) and *phenomenological description* (chapter 5) owe the percepts' 'givenness' and 'being given' (chapter 2.2) to the *eschewal* of 'observing reason' and therefore of 'the *truth* of self-certainty' (Quante 2022, p. 327). Phenomenological perception and description occur in relation to something concrete; as long as there is no reflection (chapter 7), they continue to have something unfathomable, mysterious, almost risky (Dufourmantelle 2019, 2021); they hold the potential for discovering human and social overtones. It is different with reason, which is rooted in self-consciousness; it 'can "tolerate" the independence of reality and turn towards it in recognition and with theoretical curiosity' (Quante 2022, p. 327f.). Reality reveals itself to it. 'Reason is this certainty of reality, and what is not independently present for our consciousness, i.e. what does not appear, does not exist for it' (Hegel 1807/2023, S. 192f.). For Hegel, reality encompasses what can be experienced through the senses and 'the truth of the law' (ibid., p. 193), which 'is *in itself concept*' (ibid., p. 194). In limiting 'observing reason' to a form of consciousness that focuses on cognition, Hegel provides a model for adapting observation as a scientific and empirical method; however, this method does not presuppose that the exterior to be observed is 'merely an expression of the interior' but interprets it according to rules and categories that need to be established.

Consequently, observation is, next to inquiry, content analysis and experimentation, one of the most important methods of empirical social research. In a narrower sense it includes the 'gathering of experiences in a non-communicative process, supported by all possible ways of perception. […] It is characterized by the use of instruments which guarantee that observation is self-reflected, systematic and controlled, and which help to expand the boundaries of our perceptivity' (Laatz 1993, p. 169). Unlike inquiry, to which subjective content is mostly 'not directly' accessible but by way of 'reactions', observation is directed at objective aspects such as behaviour or contextual conditions; observation 'can unlock behaviour

directly, the subjective cause however only indirectly' (ibid.). The subjective aspect grasped by observation enables the 'understanding of meaning and the extrapolating of goals' (ibid.). One example of this is empirical and reconstructive social research that is not to be confused with our methodology and that captures and analyses data in the field through 'participating observation'. In contrast to this, we focus, first through perceptive and then 'observing participation', on a concrete life context (chapter 2); for us, *attentive-focused* observation is the process that leads to phenomenological description (chapter 5).

Empirical research into education and social science negotiates observation under the methodological conditions of 'comprehensibility and replicability' (Gniewosz 2015, p. 110); it describes conditions, structural elements and methods for the process of observation that support the methodical goal-directedness required for verifying 'theoretical hypotheses through scientific observations' (ibid.). Methodical control is another requirement; its 'guidelines and tools for observation' must be determined from the outset (ibid.). Finally, 'verifiability' must be guaranteed since it increases the 'degree of intersubjective comprehensibility and replicability […] if possible, independently of the observer' (ibid.).

Aside from these aspects, scientific research designs always require the corresponding *forms of observation*. There is an essential difference, for instance, between an observer who *participates* and one who merely *observes*. The observational situation as such also depends on this: is it overt or covert? Does it have no established structure or is it semi- or fully structured? Who observes: is it self- or external observation. Where does the observation take place; in the lab or in the 'field'? Is the observation mechanically transmitted or is it direct? What degree of selection, reduction and/or interpretation is predominant (isomorphic, reductive observation, reductive estimation)? And finally, how many observers are there? The extent of 'subjective bias' differs depending on the number of observers' (ibid., p. 112ff.).

The *forms of observation* result in different ways of access to the field of research (Thierbach & Petschick 2014, 2022). Direct and indirect ways of access differ in that they are structured or systematic, strongly structured, quantitative or unsystematic, weakly structured, qualitative. *Transparency* means that observation takes place (or can take place) covertly and unknowingly or overtly and knowingly. Depending on the observer's degree of involvement, participation can be active or passive. Further differences may relate to the site of observation (field or lab) and to the object of observation (self- or external observation) (Thierbach & Petschick 2022, p. 1565f.). The fact that in the field much happens simultaneously constitutes a big challenge for observers (Thierbach & Petschick 2014, p. 860). Additionally, observation results are always relative and require justification of their provenance and of the procedure. The forms of observation themselves are variable and can arise from combinations of *standardization* (non-standardized-anecdotal/standardized-systematic), *transparency* (overt/covert), *observer role* (participant/

non-participant), *relation to reality* (indirect/ direct), *relation to the object of observation* (self-/external observation) and *timeframe* (simultaneous, subsequent) (Laatz 1993, p. 171).
In the social sciences, observation is directed primarily at human behaviours and material actualities (Thierbach & Petschik 2022, p. 1563). However, observation here 'does not serve to survey opinions, motivations, narratives or memories of persons […] but actual (social) actions, occurrences or procedures' (ibid.). Behaviours nonetheless encompass more than what is immediately visible; they can be expressed verbally or non-verbally (pronunciation, volume, body movement, facial expression etc.) or in relation to space or situation (constellations of persons, room setup) (Laatz 1993, p. 170). It is important to keep in mind that observation, or the observer, can never be completely overt or independent and that every act of observation and every evaluation or interpretation implies errors due to 'subjective bias' (Gniewosz 2015, p. 115f.). To a certain extent, they may be the logical consequence of the predetermined conditions or structured and planned methods an observer must adhere to in a given field of research. Ideally, in our work with perceptual vignettes, we avoid instructions that determine the field or mode of perception; we merely expect that what is 'given' is perceived from the first-person perspective and described accordingly.
The above deliberations cast light on some aspects of observation that raise the boundaries and transitions of perceptual vignettes as a phenomenological methodology to consciousness. However, due to its methods and principles, empirical, reconstructive science differs from our actual phenomenological concern, because scientific observation requires specific conditions as well as structuring elements and an observational form or approach. Essential criteria for distinguishing observation from perception are

- 'intention – scientific observation is deliberate and planned, has a purpose and presupposes a goal
- selection – not every percept is relevant. Certain aspects are selected, others disregarded
- evaluation – the process of observation itself is oriented to the evaluation of the observed' (Gniewosz 2015, p. 110)

Returning to perception and the reason for our choice of the term 'perceptual vignette', we can claim with Beau Lotto:

> 'What you perceive right now is a consequence of the history of your perceptions that led to this point. And as soon as you perceive it, that perception too becomes part of your future past, thereby contributing to what you will see in the future. This is why free will lives less in the present and more in the re-meaning of past perceptions in order to change your reflexive perceptions in the future (Lotto 2017, p. 303.)

This awareness informs our intention to develop the 'perceptual vignettes' into a multi-perspective, reflective work tool and implement it in our (special needs) education study programmes. The positions on observation outlined above challenge representatives of phenomenology to express criticism or at least present an evaluative statement regarding their own cause. Before we question what the statements of empirical social research contribute to the topic of observation, we would like to point out again that observation is not a main topic in phenomenology and that it is not found in the index of phenomenological publications (Vetter 2020; Alloa et al. 2023).

In conclusion, we quote Käte Meyer-Drawe again, who brings together the complex aspects of *observation as a way of approaching reality,* which have been extended to include empirical education and social research, with phenomenological perception: 'While observation constitutes a remote turning towards the world, perceptions remain situated in their world contact, enmeshed in an experiential fabric that renders any claim to a pure gaze suspicious' (Meyer-Drawe 2020, p. 12f.). On this count, perception is, 'in its world contact' (ibid.), a capacity that is open, dependent on inner and outer senses but nonetheless intentional. Observation, on the other hand, focuses on a single event and is oriented towards given structures or normative concepts, which means that it implies 'a [more] remote turning towards the world' (ibid.) than perception. When we perceive, the senses open up and allow us to discover and wonder at what is special. Our gaze and attention are directed to one scene, action or utterance as the object of observation. What we consciously perceive imprints itself in our memory to be processed as we explore and reflect on its meaning. Such moments are documented in perceptual vignettes; they arise from focused attention which directs the gaze and identifies an observational moment or scene (Brinkmann et al. 2015; Brinkmann 2017; Reh 2012).

As in the case of listening (Scharmer 2022, p. 43) and perception (chapter 3.2), the sounding out of observational processes casts light on qualities that augment the act of taking notice towards knowledge-guided apprehension:

1. Observing is attentive perception in an indeterminate context.
2. Observing directs the gaze to something determinate.
3. Observing kindles interest.
4. Observing serves the exploration of meaning.
5. Observing results in knowledge.

Considering these modes of observation is relevant to the method of the perceptual vignettes because, as has been described, *open-intentional perception* actually strives towards *attentive-focused observation*. Analogously to the metaphor of perception as the 'dawn of knowledge' (Engel 2019, p. 46), we liken observation which is oriented towards knowledge to the *sun rising towards the zenith*.

Journaling: pausing and observing
I let my eyes wander, I search and pause … When does perception take place? When does perceiving transition into observing? Can I become aware of this process in an entirely personal way? Can I describe it?
I proceed to concentrate on a mineral in nature. I look at the whole and its surroundings from a certain distance. I palpate the stone with my hands, sense its materiality, tap it and listen to its sound, perceive its smell and try to grasp all the details, forms, colours and structures. Can I describe the mineral in a few sentences

3.4 Exercises in perception, observation and thinking

Study courses in (special needs) education and other social sciences aim to combine theory and practice by including practical work experience in schools, kindergartens, after school care centres, residential homes and other care institutions. We use perceptual vignettes as part of our programme to help students (or participants in professional development courses) to develop perception and observation, notice conspicuous or bewildering moments and practise describing them. In the early phases of working with this phenomenological method, it often happens that feelings and thoughts are mixed in with the descriptions; they can't simply be ignored but need to be reflected on, considering phenomenological premises such as 'reduction' or 'bracketing' (chapter 2.1). Methodologies rely on theoretical rationales for their scientific verification and consolidation. We connect our work to pedagogical phenomenology for this purpose, but methods can only become effective when they have been tried and tested in practice.
Gaining awareness of perceptual and observational processes and anchoring them scientifically only reflect one side of the phenomenological process. The other side consists in applying these skills in practice and self-directed study. Merleau-Ponty (1966) provides numerous examples to support the points he makes about *perception*; Hegel (1807/2023, p. 185ff.) has a different approach in that he examines 'observing reason' as a form of consciousness that strives for knowledge. Both approaches are based on fundamental philosophical reflections. In order to move beyond reflective study, it is important to dwell on these faculties and – as Husserl proposes for dealing with phenomena – 'pave a way to the matter itself', that is to say to verify perception and observation by applying them. The elementary exercises in perception, observation and thinking developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) in three lectures he gave in 1909 on Practical Training in Thought (2009b) seem to be little known in the phenomenological context. Steiner, a philosopher who studied Kant, Hegel and Goethe in depth and was the originator of anthroposophy and Waldorf Education, started publishing a series of philosophical writings in 1894 (1892/2012a, 1892/2012b, 1918/2021), in which he examined

perception, observation and especially thinking as foundations of knowledge. Like Hegel, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in their main philosophical and phenomenological works, Steiner also chooses an approach that encourages readers to not only reflect on cognitive processes but to execute them consciously. Parts of his work therefore focus on practical application. But it is only in the lectures just mentioned that he invites readers to transcend comprehension and reflection and actively practise and explore (Steiner 2009b). As described in various publications (Wiehl 2015, p. 162ff; 2021b, p. 221ff.; Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 197ff.; Barth & Wiehl 2021, p. 7f.), the elementary exercises he proposed can form the basis for practising perception, observation and thinking without any previous knowledge, in seminars and study courses. This kind of practice needs self-motivation in the sense of an individual decision to embark on such exercises. We can therefore only offer the opportunity for this.

Malte Brinkmann (2009, 2012) illustrates with his fundamental studies on Christian religious exercises and the meditations of Descartes, Husserl and Fink that practical exercises rely 'not so much on available competences but rather on attitudes' (chapter 6) and dispositions such as concentration, attention and self-discipline, in other words on 'self-direction' (Brinkmann 2009, p. 423). Practising 'as a special form of learning' (Brinkmann 2012, p. 15) calls for activity and self-education in order to embark – as required by many learning processes – 'on an inner exploration' (Meyer 1987/2003 p. 171), to learn to understand human life 'as a meaningful and indispensable performance' (Bollnow 1978, p. 18) aimed at attaining 'competence' (ibid., p. 51) in a particular field of practice. Because practising begins 'when a habitual activity is disrupted due to an inability and when a specific individual achievement is isolated and brought to perfection. Only isolated individual achievements can be practised and transformed into competence through practice' (ibid., p. 51). Practising is 'conscious, meaning-making, goal-oriented, learning activity' (Wiehl 2015, p. 56) as 'I-activity' (Wiehl 2021a) that originates in motivation and will and that enables growth and transformation. Teacher educators and practitioners in Waldorf education and anthroposophic special needs education have access to an array of exercises developed by Rudolf Steiner in the early twentieth century, which have since been developed further for self-development and transformation and are applied in many spheres of life (cf. Dietz & Kracht 2016; Glasl 2022; Scharmer 2020, 2022).

The exercises suggested by Steiner in Practical Training in Thought (2009b) have been shown to be useful in our context as they are about entering 'into a cognitive process without bias' (Wiehl 2015, p. 164), about practising wonder, perception, observation, ideation, remembering and finally fully devoted and concentrated thinking. These exercises are ingenious in that they can be used individually and independently but they can also be transferred to or developed further for other spheres of life or activity. With the journaling process that we have integrated in

this publication we provide concrete proposals for working with these elementary exercises. Each exercise includes a practical aspect that relates to the preceding considerations on atmosphere, perception and observation. While Steiner's original indications (2009b) are used as a foundation, the exercises we propose have been rephrased and are therefore variations on his canon of exercises.

The *first exercise* sensitizes us to *pure perception* and the often-unnoticed transition *to attentive and focused observation* that tends to look more closely and frequently involves immediate judgement. In everyday life this distinction between perception and observation is only possible under specific conditions such as in moments of pausing and contemplation of one's own perceptual and cognitive processes, of the resonance between outer and inner experience, of the one chosen object of observation. We need to detach from the stream of activities so that we do not stop with the theory of perception and observation but experience the differences ourselves. As with the other journaling tasks it helps to record the experiences one has with these exercises in a diary as a way of enhancing *inner development*.

Journaling (1): from perception to attentive observation

For this exercise choose a place where you can look at something again and again from the same standpoint and angle for several days in a row and, if possible, at the same time. On your daily commute to work or your place of study or when you look out of the window in the morning or during your lunchbreak, notice – so Steiner's suggestion (2009b, p. 23ff.) – how the weather, the clouds, the colour moods and movements in the sky change from one day to the next.

We recommend that you observe a natural phenomenon that changes from day to day and that can initially not be explained. As you observe this phenomenon daily for a few minutes, preferably at the same time and in the same place, it will imprint itself in your mind as an image that can afterwards be consciously recalled. It is essential that you focus on what has been perceived and observed without any explanation or reference to previous experience because this exercise is about pure observation. Repeating this exercise for several days will result in a series of memory images of the meteorological conditions.

In inner concentration image after image is recalled as we allow them to transition from one to the next. This activity follows the series of images created inwardly over several days. It is easy to generate one observational picture. Experiencing the day-to-day changes however requires the decision to repeat the process consciously. Steiner points out (2009b, p. 26) that this helps us to not speculate but learn to rely on thoughts and thinking.

A few years ago, Tania Stoltz and Angelika Wiehl (Wiehl 2021b, p. 228ff.) introduced this exercise in a seminar with graduates, asking the students to carry out the first phase – observing a section of sky – individually. Afterwards the students drew the section of sky with chalk and then put their pictures up in a sequence that seemed to harmoniously reflect the transitions and transformations that had occurred. The exercise was carried out in silence, and we only started sharing our experiences once the entire series of pictures was spread out before us. It was impressive how intensively the group experienced the transition from the individual picture to the series of pictures as an example of metamorphosis. This group exercise can be integrated in any seminar on perception and observation and is very useful when introducing perceptual and observational tasks for the writing of perceptual vignettes.

The *second exercise* directs our consciousness to carefully observe and examine assumptions and expectations we have with things 'we do not yet understand' (Steiner 2009b, p. 26). Often we are not aware that our thoughts about an event or person are intermingled with feelings and judgements that don't originate in the current observation but in previous experiences that are associated with pleasant or unpleasant sentiments or a tendency to premature judgement. The unconscious merging of previous experiences with current observations can produce prejudice. The following exercise helps to focus on observing the 'matter itself' so you can enter into it and at the same time become aware of your own thoughts (ibid., p. 28).

Journaling (2): Attentive observation and examining one's expectations

This exercise is about precise observation, thinking and recalling so that we learn to pay attention to details and idiosyncrasies when we meet a person repeatedly; it is, in other words, a training in attentiveness. Choose a person you meet frequently or occasionally but who you don't know well personally; observe them, their behaviour and expressions.

a) I like to shop on the market and usually go to the same vegetable stall. The stall holder knows me and uses my name when he greets me or, when it's the two of us, he says, 'Hi, good to see you both.' He registers whether it's one or both of us. – I take in as many details as possible: how he is standing behind his vegetables, how he picks up the vegetables with his whole hand or even with both hands, how he makes sure to serve his customers well when he chooses and weighs the produce, adding a bit extra, then noting the price down on a slip of paper, sometimes calling the customer's attention to some special produce or adding a free item, then stating the price, usually rounding it down, how he receives the money, hands back the change, then says goodbye with a cheerful, 'See you next week. Have a good week both of you.' – All these processes resonate in my memory.

b) Before my next visit to the market stall, I imagine what it will be like. When I'm shopping there again, I pay attention to what actually happens. If something differs from my expectations, I try to find out where I went wrong and correct my mistake.

Examining and correcting one's own assumptions and expectations in this kind of revisiting of an encounter helps us to realize to what extent 'our thinking is inwardly connected with reality' (Steiner 2009b, p. 28). When I devote my interest *intentionally* to a matter or person, it can happen that I grasp the given phenomenon as it is. Perceptual vignettes do not record the possible, expected, imagined or assumed but what is actually given, which means that this exercise can be a preparation for open perception and attentive observation. It may sound easy, but it turns out to be quite a challenging task.

The *third exercise* is about examining the causes or reasons for certain behaviours. We find examples for this exercise in daily teaching situations and some of them are reflected in the perceptual vignettes printed in this book: Why is the boy rocking on his chair and seems deflated when he is prevented from rocking (PV 8.4)? Why is one of the children fascinated by a fly instead of focusing on the arithmetic lesson; will he not miss out on learning? (PV 4.6)? Why does the girl ignore what her carer tells her and goes more and more deeply into the water, putting her life at risk (PV 3.2)? Why does another child throw the baking ingredients around the kitchen instead of placing them in a bowl (PV 3.1)? When we are stressed by 'challenging behaviours' and situations, we tend to look for quick answers (Elvén 2017; Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2020). The following exercise can help us learn to focus on an observed event and describe it without additional comments or thoughts.

Journaling (3): examining *causes and avoiding bias*

a) Read the following perceptual vignette, write down notes about its content and consider possible reasons for the child's behaviour; write down your thoughts.

Bathing in October

It is cold and has started to rain, the river we walk along is a silver-green ribbon. Pebbles and small shells crunch beneath my feet. 'Right', I say, 'time to go home'.
'No,' calls Mira, who is standing a few steps from the shore, wildly stirring the water with a stick. The water doesn't reach halfway up her riding boots.
'Yes,' I reply, 'it's getting dark and it's cold. Come along!'
'I'm not cold!' she calls back and wildly hits the water with the stick, making it splash in all directions. Her trousers are getting wet. I give her a stern look. She holds my gaze and says provocatively, 'or I'll drown myself in the river!'

'No way,' I say firmly, 'you certainly won't do that. Let's go!' I walk a few steps away from the shore.
'Catch me!' She is dancing around, jumping, splashing; the cold water is now running into her boots, her trousers and jacket are soaked.
'That I won't do, you are much faster than me anyway,' I say firmly as she comes closer to me and then slips away again.
The rain continues and the world looks ever more grey. A child, splashing through the water with big steps, her clothes drenched and a young adult who is following her on the shore (PV 3.2; Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 204).

b) Observe a similarly challenging everyday situation. Note down again your assumed reasons for the observed behaviour.
Take the next opportunity to ask for the reasons, compare them with your assumptions and correct your judgment.

After experiencing such a difficult situation it is important to try to think through why someone behaved as they did, then inform oneself of the actual reasons. These will either confirm or correct one's own assumptions. Difficult pedagogical situations often require a change of attitude in us, they require us to let go of pre-conceptions, of sympathies or antipathies or of automatic responses such as 'she/he is always like that' or 'she/he is always doing that.' Because we tend to *react* rather than *act* in difficult situations and because this often aggravates people's disturbing or challenging behaviours, conscious intervention and turning around a tricky or dangerous situation requires us to pause and reflect. While perceptual vignettes also illustrate difficult moments, it is only at the reflection stage that they may point to potential solutions (chapter 7). According to Steiner, this exercise can help to enhance intuitive thinking as if it was moving 'within the things', even becoming one with them (Steiner 2009b, p. 29) – without us constructing causes for behaviours or reaching for premature conclusions.
The *fourth exercise* asks us to concentrate on a matter or content and stop the usual stream of associative thoughts. When we rest during the day, for example, all kinds of thoughts rise up in our mind. Instead of resting, we are driven by these thoughts or worries. If I consciously choose what I want to think about, I can escape this vortex of thoughts: I detach myself from 'what life draws me into' (ibid., p. 32).

Journaling (4): Conscious thinking and resourcefulness

Resolve to think about something specific whenever you have time for reflection. Do this for five to ten minutes.

a) You may recall a hike in the mountains: you are surrounded by meadow flowers, high summits rising to the left and right as you walk through a valley towards the remnants of a glacier. Suddenly the meadow falls down steeply on one side. You see many flowers below including dome shining blue columbines that don't usually grow in such meadows. How do they come to be there? As you look around you see signs of sheep, even some horns. Maybe the sheep could not get to the bottom of the slope to eat the columbine flowers.
b) Or open a book and read a few lines, then think about what you've read. Or decide on an object and describe it, observing every detail. Or choose a short poem or statement to meditate on.

When I deliberately focus on a thought, I not only take charge of my thinking, but my thinking also becomes more mobile and resourceful. Steiner recommends this exercise to develop the ability to have the right ideas at the right time (ibid.). In working with perceptual vignettes, we need to concentrate on an experience and recall a special moment as soon as we carry out a phenomenological description (chapter 5). Such moments cannot be grasped within a flow of associative thoughts; we need to concentrate and reflect on them.

The fifth exercise, which serves to improve memory, follows on from this.

Journaling (5): precise recall through attentive observation

a) Think of a person you met a short time ago and whom you are likely to see again soon. Recall details of their appearance, form, clothes, idiosyncrasies. Consider what you don't remember: the colour of their eyes, their hands or a particular piece of clothing.
b) Write down what you cannot remember, try out ways of mentally adding what is missing to complete the memory picture. If you practise this exercise repeatedly, you realize what and how much we don't register in the first moment and how often we don't look carefully.
c) In seminars with students or colleagues this exercise can also be done in a group; you decide together to observe a particular person in your shared context in the course of the following week. When you meet again, you all share what you remember, looking out for anything that may be missing.

> In a group of thirty students it was possible to describe a person precisely from head to foot; but no one had seen this person's socks. We each then tried to imagine them wearing pink socks. One week later we discussed this person again and realized that their trousers are too long for the socks to be visible (Wiehl 2021b, p. 229f.).

This exercise supports the development of open-intentional perception and the detailed observation of a child or adult in a pedagogical situation in order to gradually build up a full picture of them. It also strengthens memory forces. 'A reliable memory is attained by faithful observation (Steiner 2009b, p. 33f.).
With the *sixth exercise* we consider various ways of solving a task or question rather than hastily deciding on a solution. Because we are 'keen to see results' and usually not good at coping with uncertainty about the outcome of a situation, we tend to make more or less unfortunate or more or less competent decisions. This exercise teaches us to dwell attentively on a matter and consider possibilities, to wait and 'let the inner necessity of things unfold their effect' (ibid., p. 36).

> *Journaling (6): considering possibilities, waiting and finding a solution*
>
> A colleague asks you for advice on how to resolve a playground situation.
> A few children broke school rules by climbing a tree; they had fixed all kinds of utensils up there so they could sit on the branches and protect themselves from other children. Tree climbing is not permitted in the playground. The children don't respond to calls and admonitions and refuse to come down. Because you and your colleagues are not willing or able to climb after the children but want them to come down, you consider possible solutions before you inform the parents and initiate school policies.
>
> a) Envision how you could get the children to come down from the trees, give up their treehouse and find alternative ways of using the playground. Write all these ideas down and consider the implications of the proposed solutions. Wait at least one night before making a decision. Recall the situation before going to work on the second or third morning after the event and weigh up your solutions. Observe the thoughts rising up in you that may point to the right steps to take.
> b) Think of a similar situation in daily life and proceed in the same way. Don't make hasty decisions, give yourself a day before deciding…

This exercise aims to make your thinking more mobile since no immediate decisions are taken but possibilities are pondered and initially left open. As with phenomenological perception, the first phase is in principle about holding back opinions; this is followed by weighing up the situation as you do with 'cognition-guided observation' and finally, after some time has passed and the event has been recalled,

the solution is found. This exercise lets us *experience* how the perception of special pedagogical situations (on which perceptual vignettes focus) implies a latent request for explanation and leads us to observe a situation more attentively to really engage with it. Our aim is not to avoid such cognition-based approaches but to observe them and imbue them with our consciousness.

All these different and widely variable exercises exemplify how perceptual and cognitive capacities can be honed for use in pedagogical and other contexts, in work and research, and particularly with a view to developing a pedagogical attitude (chapter 6). According to Steiner, habitual thinking holds two dangers: thought associations on the one hand, when we think whatever comes to mind, and on the other, the kind of encapsulated thinking that is based on narrowmindedness, prejudice and thinking errors (Steiner 2009b, p. 19). Like phenomenology, the suggested exercises help us steer clear of these dangers and, by intentionally turning towards the things in our professional practice, to elucidate human ways of being and behaving impartially. These exercises are of value to us because they inspire the development of capacities such as perception, observation, ideation, remembering and thinking which are all relevant to working phenomenologically (Wiehl 2015, p. 164).

3.5 Perceptual vignettes show traces of attention

We present texts that discuss perception and observation to analyze the phenomenological approach of some perceptual vignettes. With this in mind and in order to present the method in an accessible, practice-related way, we will identify individual forms of expression and try to read them hermeneutically in relation to the perceptual and observational processes contained in them. Our primary goal is therefore not the interpretation of the content of the perceptual vignettes, but rather to read and seek to understand the statements as if the phenomena and occurrences were playing out before our eyes in order to reflect on our processes of consciousness. At the same time, we use these examples to connect the theoretical considerations presented earlier with experiences that can be made in working with perceptual vignettes.

1) Perceptual vignettes demonstrate open perception of the given

Ideally, perceptual vignettes are written because someone is openly aware of an as yet open-ended pedagogical or general-life situation. Something specific stands out from a general context because it affects the perceiving person in one way or another. Their initially open awareness becomes focused on one moment as the perceiver turns towards it, seeing, hearing or touching. In the first moment of awareness, the perceived phenomenon shows itself as 'given' (chapter 2.2). This process can be observed as it unfolds and is reflected in the following perceptual vignette.

Attentive perceptual encounter

Maurice lies in his wheelchair, which has been set to a reclining position, with his back to the windows. His carer walks slowly towards him and stops next to him, turning her whole body towards him. Her gaze rests on Maurice as she greets him, 'Hi, Maurice.' Maurice slowly turns his head and strains his eyes to look in her direction. Gently she touches his left lower arm. After a moment's pause, she strokes Maurice's arms and hands in a downward movement. Despite many distracting background noises, her gaze rests on him. Calmly, using only minimal slow movements, the carer is focusing her attention on Maurice. His face is wrinkled, his eyes look at her. They hold this intense eye contact for a while. When he deeply exhales, the carer continues her stroking movement. 'Would you like me to leave you in peace?' she gently asks Maurice. Still fully focused on him, she observes him and gives him time to respond. Her hand is still resting on his lower arm. 'Ok, then I leave you now, see you later,' she says firmly, lightly pressing his left lower arm. As she walks away, she briefly touches his right hand (PV 3.3).

This perceptual vignette impressively describes an everyday but nonetheless special situation between a carer and a severely disabled person. At the beginning we learn something about Maurice' living conditions. They are not explained or justified, but we are taken along with the carer as she slowly approaches, turns to and greets the cared-for person and we experience and read the mutual gazes, pauses, the touching of arms and legs, the calming and soothing mood, the deep out-breath and the carer's letting go and departure. In the perceptual vignette, the perceived events appear as visualizations that readers can use to re-live the original situation with Maurice. Pausing and condensing a perceived event are the essence of working with perceptual vignettes.

2) Perceptual vignettes show the transition *from perceiving to observing*

The following perceptual vignette exemplifies the transition from perception to attentive and focused observation. It describes a pupil who behaves inconspicuously during a moment of silence the teacher asked for. It was written by a student teacher during her work placement in a school.

Bathing in silence

The former class teacher is visiting and asks the pupils for a shared moment of silence. She wants the pupils to spend three minutes silently and be aware of the stillness. Lola is right at the back of the classroom. Her desk stands sideways so that she faces the windows on the left side of the classroom. She is sitting on her chair, one foot pulled up very close to her body. Her arms are in front of her, her legs crossed. She looks straight ahead, her gaze rigid. Her facial expression is like frozen. The windows are open, other children can be heard outside. She is still, pulls her eyebrows together and briefly blinks.

Then her gaze turns rigid again and expressionless. After three minutes the teacher strikes a gong to signal that the moment of stillness is over. Lola coughs loudly; her face and body relax and a breath runs noticeably through her body. She gets out her writing pad, exchanges a few words with her neighbour and then begins to draw, all centred in herself (PV 3.4).

The first two sentences in this perceptual vignette tell us about a special situation in the classroom. The class is visited by its former teacher who does a stillness exercise with them. At the beginning of the exercise the student teacher's attention is drawn to a girl right at the back of the classroom because of her behaviour. As her attention is caught by this one pupil's behaviour, the student no longer looks around the classroom; her gaze is held. She observes Lola's behaviour: where her gaze is directed, how she sits on her chair, how her face changes as the laughing and voices of other pupils and outside noises can be heard. As an observer, she seems to share these experiences with Lola. When the teacher concludes the exercise by striking a gong, Lola relaxes, exchanges a few words with her desk neighbour and seems to withdraw into herself again. When students experience these details and express them in their own words, their attention follows and registers them in the reality of the classroom. The observer perceives Lola's behaviour, her movements and expressions, focuses on them and on the surrounding noises. An observing attitude can arise in any daily perception when one's attention is directed to something specific that is then explored. This is a preliminary stage to observation, which is guided by cognitive interest.

3) Perceptual vignettes show a moment of particular attention

Incidental moments can express more than extraordinary events and they can bring something subtle, latent and unnoticed to light as soon as attention is directed towards it. This everyday process is used as an exercise in the work with perceptual vignettes as it facilitates the discovery of aspects that point beyond the external appearance and spoken words. The following text was written by a student teacher working with a two-year old girl, Stella.

Fairness

We are standing at the fence that surrounds a field and we are looking at three big horses. One of the horses is a new arrival. Stella calls out, 'Come on, Junior, come along, come here, little chap!'

Stella's mother admonishes her, 'Stella, leave him alone if he doesn't want to come here. He will come when he's ready.' We all look at the pasture, expectantly. Then Stella's mother calls out, 'Come along, Junior, little chap, come on!' Stella looks at her, her eyes narrowed, her mouth slightly twisted. With hands on hips she says, full of indignation, 'That's not fair. How come you can call him and I can't …?' (PV 3.5)

We notice two kinds of attention: when visiting the horses in the field, the student remarks on how the child approaches this situation not only observantly but that she calls out to the horse; she mentions how the mother admonishes the child to leave the horse alone; the child is then immediately struck by the contradiction between her mother's admonishment and her calling out to the horse herself. It is thanks to the attention of the observing student that the child's pointed remark, which momentarily reverses the mother-child-relationship, is perceived and described. The child only responds to the mother's cautioning when the latter does not adhere to her own instructions. This contradictory behaviour ignites attention as a waking up to what is essential. Noticing such moments that are surprising or raised from the stream of everyday life can yield true treasures. Or as the student wrote, 'Perceptual vignettes are a true gift for perceiving, describing and portraying situations. They have helped me so much in learning to describe the essential without having to name it as such.'

4) Perceptual vignettes show the transition to reflection

We conclude this chapter with a perceptual vignette that was written by a student in the form of a fictive letter to a child she had looked after in the afternoons for a longer period of time. She does not restrict her impressions to perceptions and observations but raises them to a level of feeling and thinking that appears to the reader as representation, review and reflection.

Like a bouncy ball

When I meet you, you are like a rubber ball, bouncing up and down. You fetch your school bag from after-school care and race up the stairs with legs that seem even longer than usual, towards the desks where we always do your homework together. You are keen to know everything, to ask and discover. Your interest in things you want to discover and learn is amazing. When we're out in nature, the 'rubber ball' is always visible. You tear up and down paths, woods and fields. You pause briefly to make sure that everything is ok. Then you jump and skip off again, hardly ever resting or stopping. You create a world as you like it – content and happy, you find joy both in other people and in your own calmness and 'bounciness' (PV 3.6).

This perceptual vignette depicts the child's behaviour, but the comparison with a bouncy ball also includes a degree of judgement. By using verbs such as bouncing, fetching, racing, doing something together, being keen to discover and learn, tearing up and down, pausing briefly, making sure, jumping and skipping, the student likens the child's activities explicitly to the movements of a bouncy ball. From this she concludes, 'You create a world as you like it – content and happy, you find joy both in other people and in your own calmness and bounciness'. The mixture of perception, feelings and thoughts expresses the fluidity and openness

of perceptions that are captured in the visualization and written description and lead to self-perception and reflection on the occurrences. The perceiver/observer is clearly touched by the 'bouncy' child and expresses this in her description, which goes beyond the external occurrence, including its 'inner and outer horizon', that is, the 'shared experience' and the 'surplus of meaning' (chapters 2.4, 3.2, 3.3); for whenever we perceive and observe, something resonates and we decide which external and internal impressions to focus on. In evaluating their courses and seminars with Waldorf (special needs) teacher students, the authors have learned to not narrow down the format and method of perceptual vignettes and to view them – unless it is in relation to reflection, attitudinal development and diagnosis (chapters 6, 7.8) – as atmospheric states described by a participating and open mind as a means of practising phenomenological 'interest in the world (Meyer-Drawe 2020, p. 12), using physical, mental and spiritual senses (Barth & Gloystein 2021, p. 436f.), through perception and observation, in other words, with inner engagement.

4 Wonder as a phenomenological-pedagogical capacity of 'being-with'

A sense of wonder and 'being-with' are central qualities of human experience. Without them we would not be able to relate to other people and to the world. While 'being-with' and 'co-existence' as understood by Heidegger (2006, p. 118) mean any kind of encounter or experience of someone or something else, the capacity of wonder guarantees that we can open to something big, even bigger than we are as human beings, or to meet things or events that disturb or stir us. In this field of tension between disturbance and admiration, we stand in wonder as self-being, being-with and world-being are disclosed to us. The qualities of wonder are tangible in the following *memory picture* of an alpine hike with which the Master thesis of Waldorf teacher student opens.

Crossing the Alps

In class 9 we undertook a challenging ten-day hike across the Alps from Bernau on Lake Chiemsee to the Three Peaks (Dolomites). We had been walking for a good week, exposed to the blazing sun, traversing vast snowfields, climbing steep, difficult paths, enduring a heavy storm that forced us to turn back, drenched to the bones. We stuck together, left no one behind and came closer to our destination, or rather the end of our hike, with every day. On day eight we were meant to reach the highest point of our walk at an altitude of more than 3000 metres. The mountain hut was just below that and it was left to each of us to decide whether to attempt the final metres to the summit. An icy cold wind was blowing up there and the clouds grew thicker. Thick whitish-grey swathes of mist rose from the valley and soon engulfed us. Visibility suddenly deteriorated and a sense of constriction took hold of me. Each of us was focused entirely on themselves and on this moment. It felt like being alone in an isolated room, knowing full well that there were others in the same room who were in the same situation. When we reached the summit, we tried to picture the view as it would be in ideal weather conditions and were annoyed about the poor visibility. Then something unexpected happened: suddenly the clouds tore open, a strip of blue appeared and the yellow-white rays of the sun made the valley light up in all its colours. No one said a word. Struck by the sudden change, I held my breath, my eyes opened wide, and my heart started pounding. Sounds like Oh! Ah! Wow! burst out from us. We stood rooted to the ground, open to the spectacle out there, soaking it all in. It must have been wonder that filled us in that moment. The gap in the clouds closed as suddenly as it had appeared.

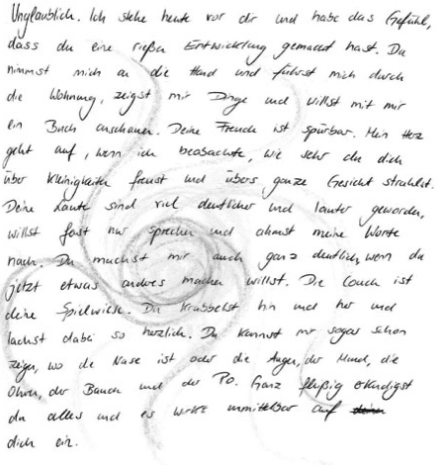
> But now the entire spectacle played out again on the opposite side of the summit. For a moment I entered a totally different world. A world of wonder. Hardly ever had I experienced wonder so powerfully. It transformed me. I felt reverence, humility, inwardness, total happiness and contentment. I felt at one with the world, letting everything around me happen. I felt both like a spectator and as part of the whole spectacle. My ordinary consciousness was lifted to another level. There was no room for thoughts like 'How much longer?' or 'I'm boiling, freezing, hungry …'. I was fully immersed in this moment, feeling deeply and impartially connected with it (BT 4.1).

For the author of this memory picture, wonder brings a quality of purity and freshness to perceiving and experiencing extraordinary moments that alone enable the 'I' to relate to them. She first describes how they overcome the challenges of the hike, down to a sense of 'constriction' and the sense of being totally thrown back on herself. Then she describes the surprising opening of the clouds and the rays of the sun that paint the whole valley in colour. She experiences this overwhelming moment as a profound inner experience for it 'must have been wonder that filled us in that moment' (BT 4.1). Wonder evokes an immediate inner response, whether it is repulsion, attraction, stimulation or reverence. Through wonder we experience 'being-with' and 'sensing with'. This is why wonder is the key to being affected by the special occurrences and situations portrayed in condensed form in the perceptual vignettes and made to resonate in language. Wonder is like a door, in front of which the observer does not wait, however, like the 'man from the country' in Franz Kafka's enigmatic parable *Before the Law* (Kafka 1915, p. 162f.), but through which one enters directly to let oneself be touched, impressed and inspired by something new or previously unknown. The door of wonder is always open. Asking to be admitted, hesitating and sitting on a stool in front of it – as the 'man from the country' does in Kafka's story – means merely that the person in question is missing an opportunity offered to them. Wonder is a quality that can be individually experienced and that holds the potential for discovering and meeting new things, but it also requires compassion and interest, particularly in the context of education.

The following sections describe the qualities of wonder in working with perceptual vignettes but also consider their philosophical foundation as a way of accessing a phenomenological-pedagogical method. Special consideration is given to diverse research findings on wonder and related processes that have been produced in recent years in the humanities and cultural sciences in particular (cf. Schlesier 1996; Martens 2003; Gess & Schnyder 2017; Bianchi 2019a; Gess 2019; Kehren et al. 2019).

4.1 Everyday wonder in the work with perceptual vignettes

Many everyday situations inspire wonder, but they often pass unnoticed, although we seem to be more aware of unpleasant or confusing impressions or those we find hard to believe. Unlike creativity, flexibility and sociality, marvelling at the world in wonder as children do is not part of the repertoire of desired fundamental competences. This is the more surprising because it is the capacity for wonder that gives us access to ourselves, to the world and to other people. Even Plato (1980) and Aristotle (1976) regarded wonder as the starting point for all cognitive processes (Matuschek 2017) as it raises to consciousness what remains otherwise unseen and hidden. We may have lost our sense of wonder, but we can regain it and practise it in situations where we consider something impossible or improbable. The following perceptual vignette, which describes a distinctive moment in the development of a one- or two-year old child, points us in that direction:



Incredible

Incredible. I stand before you today and it seems to me that you have taken a giant step forward in your development. You take my hand, leading me through the flat, pointing things out to me, and you want to look at a book with me. Your joy is tangible, it warms my heart to see how the smallest things delight you and how your face lights up. The sounds you produce are much clearer and louder now; you want to speak all the time and you copy my words. You also show me clearly when you want to do something differently. The sofa is your playground. You crawl around, laughing so happily. You can even show me now where your nose is, your eyes, your mouth, ears, tummy and bottom. Diligently you explore everything and everything affects you directly (PV 4.1; autograph and transcript in Wiehl 2021b, p. 237)

This perceptual vignette describes phenomena as surprising insights; it does not represent anything but captures the immediate observations of a child as they rise to consciousness so they can be written down. The autograph is taken from the portfolio of a Bachelor student who looks after a child who is just starting to speak and who discovers the world around her with increasing confidence. With wonder the child explores her surroundings, and with wonder the student observes the child's activities and utterances.

Wonder is a primordial capacity that we have from childhood and that we keep developing. We may even be born to wonder because, from when we first open our eyes, they playfully follow mother and father in the bonding process, with a devotion and openness that we never have again in later life. The infant's searching eye movements could be the archetype of the original and primary playing that children embrace out of their own initiative (Salis Gross 2020, p. 82ff.); on the other hand, it is also a metaphor for the perceptive and wondrous exploration of the world and the self. Like children's basic dispositions for moving, touching, grasping, imitating, speaking and thinking, their capacity for wonder requires a human and resonant environment where they can experience the world devotedly and with all their senses.

Our capacity for wonder enables us to perceive others with curiosity and interest, without premature associations or judgements. Rediscovering this capacity that we were born with and practising it is a condition for developing a bias-conscious attitude in education (chapter 6) and the starting point for working phenomenologically with perceptual vignettes, because these short descriptive texts ideally express unique affective moments of an encounter or an experience, similar to the newborn's searching eye movements.

The author of the above perceptual vignette describes such an experience with a child who is learning to speak. With wonder, she observes the child's development and expressions, as the child points things out to her. She notices the child's delight in imitating her words, pointing at parts of the body and exploring the surroundings with curiosity. Her immediate sense of wonder, which she expresses with the word 'incredible' (PV 4.1), gradually changes into attentive observation of the child and the way the child is exploring the world.

The capacity for wonder – as 'silenced perception' and 'condensed reflection' (Gess & Schnyder 2017, p. 10) – implies a particular kind of opening to other people, events or things, of pausing and lingering with a person or event. In the pedagogical context, and especially in the writing of perceptual vignettes, it is not so much the kind of wonder elicited by extraordinary situations, imposing nature experiences or impressions of wondrous objects – such as the exotic or wondrous objects exhibited for pedagogical purposes in 17th century curiosity cabinets (Müller-Bahlke 2012) – that we try to capture but more the everyday occurrences that range from the familiar to the new or alien. Perceptual vignettes express such

moments of wonder by tracing another person's affective events, behaviours or expressions. While they capture the evidence of a 'given' phenomenon (Marion 2015, p. 61f.), they are not about the phenomenon's objective or cognitive appearance but about the emerging consciousness of the otherness of a person's situation or experience. Our task is therefore to try to discover traces of the other. According to Heidegger the others are 'those who one is mostly not that different from, those among whom one also is' (Heidegger 2006, p. 118), that is, those with whom we share the world. 'Due to this with-like being-in-the-world, the world has always been the one I share with others. Being-in is being-with others. Their being-as-such within the world is co-existence (Mitdasein)' (ibid., p. 155).

If we continue to follow Emmanuel Lévinas' 'Trace of the Other' (2013), we can admit that we owe our subjective perspective or experience to the self that can identify with any object, character trait and anything that is (ibid., p. 209) by recognizing itself as a '*pure phenomenon that exhibits its immanent essence (taken individually) as absolute givenness*' (Husserl 2016, p. 45). Jean-Luc Marion, who critically discusses Husserl's and Heidegger's view of the given as externally real and who pleads for a distinct being-given, states that 'reduction alone allows us to reduce [the phenomena] to the entity that receives givenness' (Marion 2015, p. 41). What we need to ask is to what extent phenomenological reduction is only a theoretical background for the work with perceptual vignettes or whether, as a basic philosophical problem of a phenomenological methodology, it can constitute a criterion or benchmark (chapters 2 and 3).

Another question to be considered is whether the subject 'relates to the givenness of a phenomenon like a passive witness' (Kühn 2012, p. 177) or whether it is present in embodied inner activity. Without bodily presence – which is presupposed and examined in the discourses of pedagogical phenomenology – and without feelings (Böhme 2010) and resonances (Rosa 2018) in the 'co-existence' (Mitdasein) (Heidegger 2006, p. 118) of a phenomenological givenness, a subjective approach to phenomena of wonder does not seem possible in the field of education with which this inquiry is concerned. 'Co-existence proves to be a separate mode of being of entities encountered within the world. Insofar as existence [Dasein] is at all, its mode of being is being-with-one-another' (ibid., p. 125). Co-existing or being-with, terms that are increasingly common in the terminology of pedagogical and phenomenological studies, includes personal and conscious presence, which is a precondition for something else entering the subjective field of attention in the first place.

In education and in the work with perceptual vignettes 'being-with' seems to us to be a basic condition for the perceiving in wonder that belongs to the methodology of the perceptual vignettes – particularly because it is an application-oriented research field. This ideal state of pure being-with is of short duration in the pedagogical practice, because in human encounters open devotion is soon overtaken by

inner states of excitation and affectedness. 'Your joy is tangible, it warms my heart to see how the smallest things delight you and how your face lights up,' the author adds to her descriptive text (PV 4.1). Her turning to the child in wonder resonates with the child's joy. The example illustrates how 'givenness' and 'being-with' as basic philosophical modes characterize and determine the lingering in wonder but how they are immediately overtaken by the accompanying feelings, sensations and thoughts. The pure turning towards a human givenness in wonder as an act that precedes learning and the search for knowledge can be aspired to, but it cannot really be learned (Meyer-Drawe 2011, p. 199). What we can do is seek out opportunities for wonder in 'being-with' – whether that is in the context of special needs education, therapy, social work or in our personal lives.

Wonder as the first act of identifying with a human situation remains preliminary to knowledge, even though, in turning towards the situation, that which is or that which shows itself is at the same time mirrored 'in infinite pictures', that is, in mental images, and thus penetrates our inner being. 'It shows itself and radiates out as if the very abundance of its otherness, in order to generate itself, flooded the mystery in which it is concealed' (Lévinas 2013, p. 210). A phenomenon that appears, particularly one already captured in the descriptive language of perceptual vignettes (chapter 5), demands understanding and interpretation. This is precisely why the pedagogical-phenomenological approach asks to consciously suspend associations, thoughts and above all preconceptions and interpretations. Consciously holding back judgement requires the development, by means of reflection, of a bias-conscious attitude and impartial understanding of development (chapter 6, 7 and 8). It is rooted in the simple and radical insight that wondering presence of the perceiver is all that is required. 'Even if the being has caused the I to wonder, it does not in truth change the identity of the I' (ibid., p. 210). The I determines its attitude and assumes responsibility towards the other (ibid., p. 224). Its very uniqueness consists in the fact that no one else can provide an answer (ibid.) or withhold this answer. Experiencing something that reveals itself as a question and the need for an answer are an expression of a resonant relationship between the wondering person and the other as something foreign that gives rise to wonder. The question arises because of the 'skandalon of the alien' (Waldenfels 2002, p. 186) 'that can neither be reduced to something that is our own or something general nor be equated with their opposite' (ibid., p. 187f.) and that consequently does not reveal or explain itself but keeps a secret, the secret of alienness. Like secrets, alienness carries a risk; neither can be grasped or explained for then they would not be what they are.

> 'And yet, this is precisely what we long to take possession of in another person: their secret. We would like to seize what remains elusive, for two reasons: firstly, precisely because it is essentially unattainable, and secondly, because it is the essence that is insep-

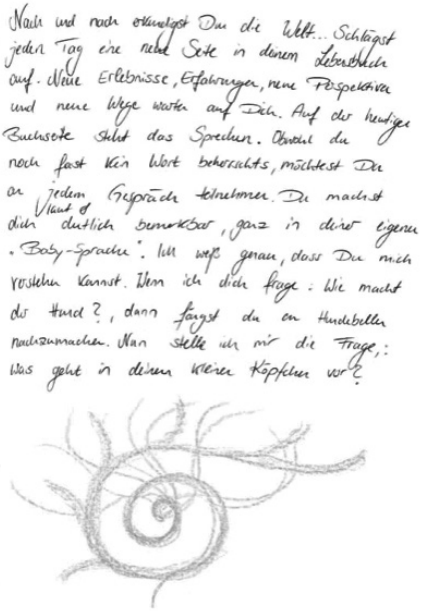
> arable from a person's development, their inner motive. Every secret is evolving. What conceals itself is secret' (Dufourmantelle 2021, p. 27)

The French philosopher Anne Dufourmantelle champions the guarding of secrets and accepts the related potential risk as 'the crucial moment that determines not only the future but also the past, where it reveals an unsuspected store of freedom' (Dufourmantelle 2019, p. 29). In other words, we leave what is other and alien in the givenness in which it appears to us.

Here is another reason for suspending assumptions, categorizations and interpretations in favour of initially – until we get to reflection and professionalization in chapters 7 and 8 – acknowledging the content of wonder, the given phenomenon. We regard wonder in this sense as intentionally turning towards and becoming aware of the 'Trace of the Other' in which 'all meaning emerges' and a face is revealed (Lévinas 2013, p. 220f.). The 'wonder of the face arises from the elsewhere from where it comes and where it is already withdrawing' (ibid., p. 227). The perceiving subject decides whether to turn to it in wonder and linger with the mystery of the given.

As we see from the perceptual vignette (PV 4.1), nothing special or extraordinary needs to happen; something very ordinary can evoke wonder and admiration, even if in other cases it is more the great and novel things that are perceived with amazement, while things that seem strange and terrifying cause surprise or disturbance. The capacity of wonder encompasses everything from reverence to irritation (Gess 2019, p. 18ff.). Nicola Gess refers to wonder as an 'aesthetic emotion […], triggered by phenomena that transcend the boundaries of the ordinary towards the unexpected, extraordinary or impossible' (ibid., p. 15). According to Gess wonder is inspired by the dissonance between sensory perception and rational thought' (ibid.) and directed both at the 'astonishing phenomenon' and at the 'divine state' (ibid.) that it elicits. Depending on a person's constitution or sensitivity to admirable or astonishing influences, it elicits various responses: feelings known from similar occurrences and memories of comparable situations come up; associations, ideas and thoughts rise to consciousness. Feelings often dominate in situations of wonder; the 'breadth of their variants' (Böhme 2010, p. 525) and the subjectivity of experience are not conducive to clear distinction; thus we see feelings ranging from joy when there is admiration to fear when someone is frightened. With devotion and openness on the one hand and emotional diversity and mental associations on the other, wonder can be interpreted as a 'borderline phenomenon' (Gess & Schnyder 2017, p. 7ff.) that can be misleading and deceptive. Wonder opens a door towards uncertainty and mystery and requires, as explained earlier, openness from the perceiving I. Wonder is the beginning of the kind of exploration and comprehension of people and of the world that is characteristic of young children. The following perceptual vignette is about this and

about 'how a child's wonder can be interpreted as their natural enthusiasm about anything new' (Heßdörfer 2021, p. 21):


Nach und nach erkundest Du die Welt... Schlägst jeden Tag eine neue Seite in deinem Lebensbuch auf. Neue Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen, neue Perspektiven und neue Wege warten auf Dich. Auf der heutigen Buchseite steht das Sprechen. Obwohl du noch fast kein Wort beherrschst, möchtest Du an jedem Gesprächen teilnehmen. Du machst dich deutlich bemerkbar, ganz in deiner eigenen „Baby-Sprache". Ich weiß genau, dass Du mich verstehen kannst. Wenn ich dich frage: Wie macht der Hund?, dann fängst du an Hundebellen nachzumachen. Man stelle sich mir die Frage,: Was geht in deinem kleinen Köpfchen vor?

Bit by bit you explore the world

Bit by bit you explore the world … every day you turn a new page in the book of your life. New experiences, perspectives and journeys await you. Today's page is about speaking. Although you hardly master even a single word, you want to take part in every conversation. Loudly and clearly you make yourself heard, in your own 'baby language'. I know that you understand me. When I ask: what does the dog say?, you imitate a dog barking. I wonder what is going on in your little head? (4.2; autograph and transcript in Wiehl 2021b, p. 236).

In writing, the author of this perceptual vignette thinks herself into the child's sphere of life, pondering her perceptions. Such spontaneous texts are often not pure descriptions of outer facts but tend to contain personal feelings, comments, assumptions or explanations as well as observations. The aim of the exercise is to stay with the phenomena, or as Husserl calls it, 'with the things themselves' (Husserl 2016, p. 6 p. 1) and to use the descriptive text only to express in words what appears to the wondering eye or ear and any inner stirrings immediately related to that.

When we isolate a phenomenon from the given diversity, its essence stands out. Husserl calls this separation of the one from the many 'reduction': 'Only through reduction, which we will call phenomenological reduction, do I gain absolute givenness that no longer has any transcendence' (ibid., p. 44). This is not about the platonic wonder that expects revelation from the world of ideas, but the Aristotelian wonder which initiates philosophizing (Matuschek 2017, p. 19ff.) and requires initial cognitive work. We will come back to this in the next section.
Before cognition occurs, the astonished observer can turn to a given phenomenon whose meaning remains initially open or undisclosed and to 'the things given to us in intuition and thought' (ibid., p. 17). Perceptual vignettes would ideally result in such phenomenological reduction by only allowing the pure phenomenon to appear; for 'to every mental experience corresponds […] by means of phenomenological reduction a pure phenomenon that exhibits its immanent essence […] as absolute givenness' (ibid., p. 45). This quality of the phenomenologically given has priority in Marion's *Phenomenology of Givenness* (2015).

4.2 Philosophical excursus: wonder is beginning

Since Antiquity, wonder has been studied in philosophy and aesthetics as a capacity (Gess 2019) that expresses itself as admiration or amazement, inspired by the 'common' or 'unusual', and even 'tolerating the unconcealed' (Heidegger 1992, p. 169). In describing wonder as the 'basic disposition of original Western thinking' (Heidegger 1992, p. 162), Heidegger anticipates many aspects surrounding this topic that light up in current interdisciplinary publications. The changing understanding, but above all the quality of this open attitude, inspire the phenomenological methodology of the perceptual vignettes. Wonder is essential for becoming aware of the surprising, affective or awakening moments that make us sit up and listen. Their specialness is expressed in the short descriptive texts. To enter more deeply into this theme, we use the interdisciplinary publications by Nicola Gess (2019) and other researchers around her, who focus on literature and philosophy in particular. We start by transferring her perspective on wonder to the pedagogical context. A rather singular publication on wonder as 'the beginning of anthropology' (Schlesier 1996) provides an interesting viewpoint; while its content may distract from our topic, its method seems relevant to education.
Wonder is always at the beginning. It is 'an act that I don't initiate but that I am present in, as I am in waking up' (Meyer-Drawe 2011, p. 199). Depending on context, one wants to find out what follows this first moment of noticing something or someone, because wonder occurs at the boundary between not yet being able to observe and attentive discovery. Inner sensations and feelings accompany this process, suggesting an empathetic and resonant attitude. What follows is the

consideration of the object of perception that elicits wonder and calls up mental images and thoughts. As soon as the admired phenomenon has been emotionally and conceptually registered, the state of pure wonder has passed. Since the first moment of becoming aware of a phenomenon coincides with an emotional turning towards it, it resembles a bodily-emotional state (Böhme 2010, p. 525ff.). Wonder therefore unites embodied cognitive, mental and volitional states. Without bodily presence, wonder can only be imagined by way of ideas. Spatial 'being-with' (Heidegger 2006, p. 118) as well as a turning to the phenomenon in question with empathy and feeling are required for wonder to occur; the experience of wonder relies on the prior and simultaneous attitude of turning towards the world.

Two paths have evolved since ancient Greek philosophy regarding wonder as the beginning of cognitive thinking. They can be understood as a 'double source' (Matuschek 2017, p. 20) and go back to Plato and Aristotle respectively. They cast light on how a philosophy of wonder can be applied, particularly in the context of the perceptual vignettes. Understanding their meaning and content is methodically relevant for the development of a pedagogical attitude. It is a question of perspective whether one follows Plato who starts with the phenomenon as the thing being 'wondered at', or Aristotle who views wonder as an 'incentive' for gaining knowledge (ibid., p. 20).

In *Theaetetus*, Plato's dialogue on knowledge and perception, Socrates and Theaetetus decide to 'look at the matter itself' and weigh up whether their claims are consistent (Platon 1980, 154e, p. 119). Socrates suggests to 'calmly and patiently investigate the matter again from the beginning, examining ourselves honestly to see what these phenomena inside us really are' (ibid., 155a, p. 120). When Socrates makes three claims – firstly, that nothing can evolve as long as 'it is equal to itself'; secondly, a matter cannot increase or decrease if nothing is added to or taken away from it; and thirdly, what was not there before cannot be there after 'if it has not come or is not coming into being' (ibid.). – Theaetetus is taken aback, 'I am greatly surprised […] and feel faint when I look at them rightly' (ibid.,155c, p. 120). Socrates confirms the statement as 'quite right, for wonder is the state of the lover of wisdom; there is no other beginning to philosophy' (ibid., 155d, p. 120). The attempt to 'look at the matter itself' proves to be the moment that elicits wonder and wonder is the beginning of philosophy, comparable to the phenomenological approach of perceptual vignettes and to Husserl's method of beginning with 'the things themselves' (Husserl 2016, p. 6). However, according to Matuschek (2017), Plato's wonder, if seen in the context of his philosophy, reveals itself as an 'affective beginning' on the path to ideation where 'the soul recognizes the ideas' (ibid., p. 19).

In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle, unlike Plato, interprets the initial 'wonderment' or wonder from the point of view of the subject, of the person who is astonished, as an

'incentive for knowledge that is an end to itself' (Matuschek 2017, p. 20). 'Everyone wonders at first that the things are as they are' (Aristoteles 1976, 983a, p. 23). 'Since knowledge of the primordial causes is evidently required […] (for we can only speak of knowledge in each case when we believe that we know its first cause)' (ibid.). For him, wonderment or wonder at something yet unknown or incomprehensible is merely an incentive for gaining knowledge for its own sake (Matuschek 2017, p. 20). Unlike Plato, who seeks to draw the meaning of what fills him with wonder from the world of ideas, Aristotle is interested in a search for knowledge that overcomes the initial affect. Modern natural science is rooted in this autonomous striving for knowledge; it mostly does not linger with the phenomena themselves but relies on discursive and empirical-experimental methods.

Neoplatonic thought and the Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages with the 'motif of the beatific vision of god […] in which wonder as threshold and borderline phenomenon marks both the beginning and highest intensity' (Matuschek 2017, p. 20) follow the Platonic tradition. As with Plato, the phenomenon wondered at is the starting point (ibid.); it paves the way towards a mystical experience of god and culminates, poetically transformed, in Dante's Divine Comedy (ibid., p. 20ff.). The phenomenologist Goethe, one of 'the most highly respected outsiders' (ibid., p. 23) and important inspirer of (Waldorf) education (Schad 2016; Rumpf & Kranich 2000), follows this stream with his research into the metamorphosis of plants and animals and his theory of colour. Matuschek concludes convincingly that Goethe's phenomenological method is not based on experiments with measuring instruments, but that he explores nature's phenomena through 'participating observation' until they reveal their laws to him (ibid.). 'The greatest achievement would be to understand that every fact is already theory. The blue of the sky reveals the basic laws of chromatics to us. There is no need for seeking behind the phenomena; the phenomena themselves teach us' (Goethe 1989b, p. 304). According to Goethe, the laws of nature reveal themselves immediately in the 'original phenomenon' (Matuschek 2017, p. 23). Matuschek interprets Goethe's wonder in the tradition of Plato's vision of ideas, 'inasmuch as it is about a revelatory experience as the culmination of the human search for truth' (ibid., p. 24). Eckermann recorded what Goethe said about wonder in a conversation 'about the theory of colour, speaking of drinking glasses, for instance, whose turbid figures appeared yellow when seen against the light and blue when viewed against darkness, and which thus allow for the observation of an archetypal phenomenon' (Eckermann 1981, p. 298, 18 February 1829). 'Wonder is the highest state we can attain […]; and if the archetypal phenomenon makes us wonder, we should be content; nothing higher can be granted to us, and we should not seek more behind it; this is the limit' (ibid.). Goethe means by this that the phenomena themselves reveal their meaning.

While for Plato wonder marks the beginning of the path to knowledge and the threshold to the world of ideas (Matuschek 2017, p. 20), it is for Aristotle the incentive for seeking knowledge and for Goethe the highest point in gaining awareness of a phenomenon. Goethe's understanding of the capacity for wonder is central to the methodology of the perceptual vignettes because it corresponds to the sought for bias-sensitive and open-minded 'being with' the phenomena (chapter 2.7). This openness does not always come naturally to us, but we often learn about our own preconceptions through the responses of other people. By practising 'impartiality' we can learn to hold these preconceptions back (chapter 6.6).

A further perspective is presented in an essay about wonder as the 'beginning of anthropology' (Schlesier 1996), whose approach, which is based on examples from cultural anthropology, is of interest in the context of education. Wonder also enables us to become aware of each other as others or strangers. Not only the researchers wonder at their objects, but those they marvel at look back at them in wonder too. This mutual relationship, first pondered by Montaigne (ibid., p. 54) and examined in depth by Claude Lévi-Strauss as part of his ethnological observations (ibid., p. 55), while it cannot be applied to every pedagogical situation, indicates that wonder can elicit a counter-reaction or a sense of alienation in that the person wondered at is also overcome by wonder. 'Our wonder at strangers', Renate Schlesier concludes from her perspective of cultural anthropology, 'should not blind us to the wonder others feel towards us, and if we don't overlook the others' wonder at us, we will learn to wonder at our own culture. Seen from this angle, wonder has become obsolete as the beginning of philosophy' (ibid.) and proves itself equally as the beginning of anthropology and of empirical pedagogical work, as it does as the original awareness of and revealing of the phenomena. In wonder – as we intervene in the events of the world through speech and action (Arendt 2018, p. 176ff.) – a 'second birth' takes place. 'With word and deed, we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance' (ibid., p. 176f.)

While wonder is the beginning, as such it holds the potential for meeting phenomena anew, again and again, with an open attitude. This capacity seems fundamental to our work with perceptual vignettes: it moves, and will continue to move, at the boundary of phenomenological discovery, whose methodological operators are central to phenomenology (chapter 2) although they present limitations and fractures in practical application. In principle, wonder as a source of working with perceptual vignettes corresponds to the beginning of any knowledge – as in 'observing participation' or 'participating experience' (Brinkmann 2015b, p. 531), which differs from 'participating observation' of ethnographic social research because the latter already projects a research task (chapter 3). We, by contrast, define and develop the method of perceptual vignettes on the basis

of phenomenal wonder with all the risks that implies of 'an unsuspected store of freedom' (Dufourmantelle 2019, p. 29).
Wonder at the phenomenon, above all in the Goethean sense, is the key to pedagogical phenomenology. It interweaves the subjective and the other (ibid.) and embraces the two philosophical paths: the Platonic perspective concerning the immediacy of the apparent meaning of a phenomenon or an experience with a person, but also, in the phases of reflection and knowledge acquisition, the Aristotelian perspective of including extended horizons of meaning and interpretation (chapter 7 and 8). And finally, it is also open to anthropological research inasmuch as it considers the interaction and resonance of 'being-with' in wonder.

4.3 Wonder and alienation in children

We find examples of wonder in the lifeworld of children and in literature and film. We will use such examples to illustrate how wonder can make us focus on something new, wondrous, special or even alien. Becoming aware in wonder is attention in the first moment; it 'ranges from the phenomenon that we notice and that inspires us to the mindfulness we give or withhold from each other' (Waldenfels 2019, p. 9). Some examples from literature or film exemplify how narrated or filmed images of wonder carry the readers or viewers off into the world of wonder that not only holds greatness, beauty and amazement in store but also surprise, terror and fear. Children's books and films make use of children's unique ability to explore people and the world unconditionally in order to generate resonance through amazing occurrences and open a door to a world of fantasy where children experience themselves as involved and participating in the events. The same kind of empathetic attitude of wonder is evoked that the reading of perceptual vignettes will ideally also elicit. Perceptual vignettes are both an expression of perceived wonder and can themselves be viewed as phenomena with that quality. However, there is always a difference between a perceiver sharing or empathizing with another person's wonder and a perceiver in whom a sense of wonder is elicited. The two perspectives differ in real life, film and literature, and presumably also in reading perceptual vignettes that recount situations of wonder. Readers or observers can therefore experience wonder at the wonder of the person described or at the wonder-inducing object itself. Scenes from Erwin Wagenhofer's film *Alphabet*, from Lewis Carroll's well-known tales of *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and from Michael Ende's Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver (2015, first published 1960) are examples that mirror these ambivalent experiences. They are suitable motifs for perceptual vignettes or for presentation as textual extracts.

Cailloux (pebbles)

A child, about a year old, is sitting in the garden with her mother and grandmother. He throws a stone and calls, 'cailloux' (French for stone or pebble). His grandmother takes his hand and walks with him past a flowerbed. A bumblebee hovers above the blue borage blossoms. Murmuring softly, the child stretches his hand out towards the bumblebee but cannot reach it. The grandmother watches calmly and smiles. A moment later the child stops in front of three bright red peonies. He looks from flower to flower. He takes one of the flowers in both his hands and brings it towards his face as if to caress and kiss it. As he touches the flower, the expression in his face changes. The child is amazed and produces speechlike sounds. Then he lets go of the flower, looks around at the other peonies and takes another one in his hands, pulling it close to his face, on which a gentle smile appears (PV 4.3, description of a scene from the film Alphabet)..

When *Alphabet* opened in German cinemas in 2013 it was a surprise and even a shock for some audience members. Realizing under what conditions children are learning today and that these conditions might not support their development can raise awareness of the whole problem of traditional schooling. Empathetically but also critically, the director shows how children are growing up, the disciplined behaviour they learn in school and the exact opposite: how the protagonist André Stern grows up in France, home educated and allowed to explore the world according to his needs. Short but impressive film sequences focus on little André, devotedly admiring the peonies in his parents' garden. He meets the world with all his senses, without thinking about it, but full of natural curiosity. An ideal! The beautiful and admirable surroundings inspire soul and mind, especially when there is time for wonder and lingering. Wonder is not something one can learn; it is an occurrence for which one can be receptive (Meyer-Drawe 2011, p. 197ff.). It inspires joy in learning and yearning for knowledge as the new and alien connects with the treasures of one's experience.

Lewis Carroll's children's book Alice in Wonderland has been translated in many languages and keeps being republished. It follows a tradition of presenting whimsical and phantastic figures that were popular in nineteenth century children's books and as caricatures (Kullmann 2008; Voss 2009).

Oh dear!

Alice is sitting by a stream next to her sister who is reading. Now and again, she glances at her sister's book. 'And what is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?' she thinks, bored. The hot weather makes her feel sleepy. She gets up and walks through the grass to where some daisies are growing. Suddenly a white rabbit runs close by her. 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late,' she hears the rabbit say to itself. It pulls a watch from its waistcoat, looks at it and hurries on. Amazed, Alice jumps to her feet and runs after

> the rabbit across the field, just in time to see it disappear into a large rabbit-hole (PV 4.4; description of a scene from Carroll 1984, p. 11f.)[1].

This text is not a literal rendering of the original but an attempt to convey the opening scene of the book in the style of a perceptual vignette. While the original story recounts what happens to Alice and the rabbit retrospectively, the perceptual vignette brings it into the present, as if the writer is witnessing the scene and Alice's wonder at the rabbit's appearance and disappearance. Lewis Carroll inserts a paragraph in parentheses, commenting on the beginning of Alice's phantastic journey: '(When she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural)' (Carroll 1984, p. 12). It is typical that no thinking takes place when the rabbit first appears, but that Alice is carried off into another world by the unusual apparition. She has no time to wonder at the strange animal because everything happens so fast and in such a matter-of-fact way. The state of amazement and wonder, if experienced unexpectedly (Meyer-Drawe 2011, p. 197), is often over before we realize it. The story of Alice in Wonderland invites wonder because it presents a sequence of wondrous boundary experiences (Lötscher 2021, p. 43ff.). Alice has hardly followed the rabbit down into the hole in the earth, when she goes on a wondrous 'journey of discovery' beyond space and time; she meets a number of strange characters and learns to 'look at the world with new eyes […] always risking that the things thus looked at might look back'; 'magical and wondrous things make an appearance' (Bianchi 2019b, p. 49). The transition into Wonderland signifies the loss of the familiar in favour of new experiential dimensions. We cross a threshold to a new, alien world; what was familiar or what just happened is transformed and is wondered at in its transformed appearance. In wonder, we perceive the transformations or transformative processes that occur as we close the gap between the reference to something given and its reception and processing (Böhme 2011). The attempt to retell the extract from Alice in Wonderland as a perceptual vignette copies this transformation; it dissolves the boundary between the real experienced world and imagination and fiction. Literature holds many such examples in store that can be used for practising the writing of perceptual vignettes.

Wonder is experience of the present and the moments of wonder are ideally rendered in the present tense and best described with adjectives to express in words the emotional nuances experienced in body and soul, the sentiments (Böhme 2010) and the 'atmosphere' (Böhme 2017, p. 66) as a 'strange interim state' between the wondering perceiver and the object of wonder (chapter 5). Variations offer different opportunities for engaging with the narrative. They depend on the

1 Translator's note: English original on www.gutenberg.org/files/11/11-h/11-h.htm accessed on 14.03.2024

person having the experience and on their sensitivity, on whether a story is told as poetically as Alice's, whether a surprise strikes like lightning, whether an event causes wonder, shock, alienation or horror, or whether something appears surprisingly and mysteriously. Usually, one actions follows another as if in a sudden hurry, and often assumptions are made.

When in Michael Ende's book *Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver* (2015), which has been translated into many languages, the protagonist arrives in a parcel, everyone is surprised, puzzled and bewildered. No one knows who the parcel is for or where it came from. In the end, Mrs Whaat opens it and reveals a black baby. All look at the new arrival with 'big shiny eyes', calling out, 'a black baby!' The king puts on his glasses and says, 'this is astonishing, truly astonishing' (ibid., p. 13).

Like the king, who has probably never seen a person of colour, readers are invited to wonder at the foreign and unexpected arrival. This is only one of many examples in Ende's book of how a person's otherness is – initially unreflectively and in the tradition of European colonial thinking – described as alien, in a way that is deliberate and causes justified offence. Michael Ende did not comment on the provenance of the black boy. Reading Julia Voss' (2007) research into Darwin's images, which probably inspired Michael Ende's story of Jim Button, one wonders even more at the unexpected discovery; for concealed behind it, and brought to light by it, is a complex processing of Darwin's theory of evolution and the racial ideology of the Third Reich. The story of Jim Button can and must be seen as Ende's attempt at a counter-theory to discriminatory ideologies (Voss 2009); he cites 'the vocabulary and places of crime of the National Socialists' as an example of such ideologies and sends out 'two adventurers [Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver] to overcome the German past' (ibid., p. 17).

The scene described above of the appearance of a black boy illustrates how, in unusual encounters with others, we are guided by deep-seated societal habits; we tend to categorize others according to their outer appearance and allow our judgement to guide our actions. As we will show in the chapters on attitude, reflection and diagnosis (chapters 6, 7 and 8), perceptual vignettes heighten our sensibility for such moments by first describing them and then inviting us to reflect on their multidimensional levels of meaning. The scene from *Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver* illustrates how easily racist, or other ideologically informed ways of thinking, creep in and how differentiated judgement requires criteria-guided and informed reflection.

The great merit of Julia Voss' research lies in having lifted the veil from an often re-edited and much read book that was first published in 1960. She explains that Michael Ende's Jim Button is based on Jemmy Button, an indigenous boy who was taken from Tierra del Fuego to England and later travelled back with Darwin on the latter's first expedition (ibid., p. 59ff.; Hazlewood 2003). Voss also

uncovers common patterns of wonder and prejudice against anything foreign – a danger with any experience of wonder. It is doubly astonishing that Michael Ende produced such a lastingly popular story to wonder at, in which one wondrous and strange episode follows the other. The whole book appeals to our capacity for wonder, presenting a fantasy world that calls on our own imaginative activity. While wonder can inspire fantasy and imagination (Gess 2019, p. 86), it can also evoke errors and misjudgement of all kinds. Julia Voss' careful analysis of the background of this fantastic story makes us aware of the dangers of phenomenological wonder, but it also inspires us, especially in our work with perceptual vignettes, to practise bias-consciousness regarding phenomena and their meaning.

The kind of wonder that elicits shock, fascination and disturbance is often used deliberately in digital productions, in which wondrous episodes do not appear as real events in a sense-perceptible world, as impressive natural phenomena or figments of the imagination but spring from a passion for technology. In films, computer games and animation, real and fictional scenes and characters overlap and mesmerize viewers with their excessive focus on the sensational, making use of the capacity for wonder but wearing it down at the same time. Regaining wonder for the pedagogical context and using it as a field of practice seems to be a worthwhile undertaking.

There are certainly also endless examples that capture childlike admiration and curiosity and the ability to be surprised that are not trying to be sensational; the examples we chose here illustrate that both children and adults can mentally immerse themselves in a world that is foreign, strange and marvellous. Some works of fiction are attractive precisely because moments of wonder carry the readers into unknown dimensions inspiring them to imagine new things. As the scene with the snails illustrates (PV 4.5), special and everyday occurrences, or sequences from a film or literary work, can recall similar situations, ideas and notions. The stronger this resonant relationship with the event is, the more likely it is that not only past experiences are recalled but that wishes and future-oriented images are evoked. The kind of unexpected behaviours we often meet in education ask for precisely this attitude: the ability to allow the unknown to be there, to pause in perception, to imagine the future and to think and act in solution-oriented ways. The development of a pedagogical attitude that is oriented towards potential and the future is prepared by the ability to wonder at a phenomenon and questioned in the phases of reflection (chapter 7).

4.4 Widening the pedagogical horizon with wonder

Snails on the wall

It has been raining. On the way to Joe's carer we walk along a hedge. Because of the rain, countless snails have appeared and can be seen near the hedge on a low wall. I point them out to Ariana who responds with immediate enthusiasm. We see big snails but also many little baby snails. For Ariana all the little snails are children and the big ones are parents. So, she picks up all the little snails she can find and puts them with the big snail, saying 'There you are, back with your mummy's (PV 4.5; Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 202).

The use of language transforms this inconspicuous everyday situation into a special moment, into a gesture that directs the reader's imagination precisely to the point of attention that evokes enthusiasm: 'I point them out to Ariana who responds with immediate enthusiasm' (PV 4.5). The statement implies the preceding but unexpressed experience of wonder in the carer who calls the child's attention to the snails. Wonder, as in this little scene with the snails, occurs as an initially unreflected response to something surprising or unusual. This perceptual vignette would probably not have been written if the child had not devoted herself so enthusiastically to the snails. The scene reveals a primordial ability children have, which is to be enthusiastic about new things and able to imagine what lies in the future (Heßdörfer 2021, p. 217), ready to take what is given and extend it creatively. Childlike wonder has the quality of immediate engagement. This is very different from the wonder we experience when confronted with unexpected or terrible events. When we experience child-like wonder as in the scene with the snails, we are as adults ourselves 'astounded by the child's capacity for wonder' (ibid., p. 209) and by the fact that childlike wonder is indeed a key to the world worth (re)acquiring.

Anticipating the chapter on reflection (chapter 7), we insert here the example of another person's *reflection* on the above perceptual vignette (PV 4.5) with added comments. Active reading and reflecting on the perceptual vignette reveal the child's motives, previous knowledge, actions and sensitivity, but also the student's caring attitude, her openness and compassion, which encourage the child's imaginative actions:

> 'Observation turns into a kind of role play because Ariana sees the little snails as "babies" and the big ones as "parents". This attribution of relationships is presumably based on her perception of her own family or other people. She acts this out and mirrors it in her activity of moving the snails around. The size ratio of the snails plays an important part in this. The "idea for playing" comes from the student because she points out to Ariana that there are a lot of snails on the wall. In the process of observing and playing, it be-

comes apparent that she develops a sense of a mutual connection and relationship. The learning process is noticeable in Ariana's concern that the "baby snails" be reunited with the "mummy snail". As she explains her action, she carefully places the little snails with the big snails. Her actions also show that she has developed a sense of familial relations and of belonging. Through her actions she develops a kind of responsibility for the snails. Based on her reactions and statements I estimate her developmental age at around four to six years.'

When we discuss this *reflection* in the seminar, it is seen as successful because it interprets the playing situation and the child's actions empathetically.
This example helps us to understand and realize how crucial wonder as an emotional way of accessing the world is if we are to develop sensitivity in working with children, young people and adults in education or generally. In all the examples provided, the inner orientation of the wondering person can be distinguished from the effect of the object to be marvelled at; but it is only in the interaction or encounter of subject and object that the resonant in-between space appears where the searching wondering gaze pauses and where lingering and contemplation are possible (Han 2009, p. 45). A sequence of impressions and events distracts because they all impose themselves simultaneously on the mind. Awareness in wonder of a particular on the other hand retains attention and interest. The fly in the following perceptual vignette is a metaphor of this.

The fly

You are sitting next to me as the class teacher explains fractions. A fly is buzzing around in front of you while we are all busy doing maths together. Very carefully and skilfully you pull out your glasses case. You slowly open it as your eyes keep following the fly and you try to catch it with the case. There – you caught it! Calmly you bend your head over the case and slowly open it. The fly is sitting on the cloth that you carefully hold between your fingers as you pull it out and place it on the table. The little creature is still sitting on it. In deep concentration you look at the fly, observing it until it flies away (PV 4.6).

In this perceptual vignette, our attention as readers follows that of the boy. Due to the way the situation is described our mental gaze follows the fly in the same way as the boy's eyes. His focused attention mesmerizes us. Wonder occurs in two ways: firstly, at the skill of the fly catcher, his achievement and success, his mindful observation of the trapped animal, and secondly at ourselves as we entirely ignore what is going on in the lesson because something special is happening. In retrospect, it seems as if the observer put herself entirely in the place of the fly-catching boy and as if the boy's wonder at the fly did not in any way go against the expectations and intentions of the teacher. The precise description allows the reader

to also develop a sense of wonder for this phenomenon. This is why the special moments recreated in perceptual vignettes can be a key to and material for phenomenological inquiry. There are two levels of givenness for the susceptibility to wonder: the real, wonder-eliciting phenomenon and the described phenomenon. This interconnection, which only occurs in the experience of the wondering person, gives rise to the joint evocation in lingering with the phenomenon. Wonder is 'lingering' in an 'interval' of engaging, without much happening or premature orientation towards a goal (Han 2009, p. 41ff.).

From this perspective, lingering with a phenomenon in wonder is a pedagogical skill which needs to be practised and which is not necessarily only positive but can also be associated with fear and mistrust towards a potentially insurmountable pedagogical task (ibid., p. 219). The wish to discover and admire the positive and the potential in every person is a pedagogical challenge, a question of attitude and, above all, of wanting to do what is good (Wiehl 2022a, p. 225). It is up to each of us individually to appreciate our own sense of wonder.

4.5 Wonder precedes knowledge. An outlook

Wonder is always at the beginning; wonder is the chance to learn and open up to something new and to make room for the surprising or unexpected (Meyer-Drawe 2011, p. 199). While phenomenological wonder cannot be learned (ibid.), it can be developed through practices that heighten our sensibility for ourselves and the world. In the act of wonder we immediately connect with another person or something given. 'It is because we can feel wonder about something that we can enter into a connection with it that lies below the threshold of consciousness' (Steiner 2021, p. 22). We abide with this immediate, resonant relationship as long as the resonance persists and we are inwardly touched by wonder or stirred up. In this state of mind, we initially only connect unconsciously with the object of wonder, in a way that would be impossible if we engaged with it intellectually or on a knowledge basis. Only by becoming conscious of the state of wonder and through reflection will we be able to actively establish a relationship with an event or person and gain knowledge.

This quality of acquiring knowledge of the world through subjective experiences in connection with the objects of cognition stands in contrast to common formats of teaching, learning and education that tend to rely on experimental research or verbal instruction without personal engagement and practical life experience (Rumpf 2000, p. 20).

> 'The quick and clever transfer of knowledge, forever chasing something even newer, may generate brilliant minds but it comes with an enormous deception: feeling, reality, the curiosity that keeps the tentative and preliminary nature of cognition fresh, the void that

> needs to be endured rather than be filled with stuff – they all disappear. What remains is the kind of correct scientific knowledge presented in reference books as "basic knowledge"' (ibid., p. 22).

In his essays, which are inspired by many years of research, Horst Rumpf not only criticizes the approach to knowledge in universities and the way teachers acquire knowledge in order to impart it to pupils, but he embraces 'the power of wonder' as a 'kind of productive forgetting' (Rumpf 2004, p. 148) and the approach to prior knowledge acquisition that Ernst-Michael Kranich (2000) elaborated for teachers to hone their natural science teaching skills (Wiehl 2015, p. 159ff.). According to Kranich, teachers don't need the kind of approved knowledge that paralyzes perception but different approaches and methods for devoting themselves to a phenomenon in wonder and contemplation and for achieving an 'experience of the mysterious' (Kranich 2000, p. 59) from which thinking and comprehension can arise. This radical change from an education oriented on knowledge acquisition to a phenomenological method, which is to be applied in universities and schools, anticipates what we have newly developed in our work with perceptual vignettes. It is not only a phenomenological method but also a path of practice that starts with wonder and devotion.

In studying the importance of wonder in education one notices unexpected links to hidden but important foundations of Waldorf Education. Remarkably, Rudolf Steiner called attention to 'sacred wonder' as early as 1911, eight years before the founding of the first Waldorf School. Steiner sees it as a fundamental ability of teachers that allows them to remain open to the 'infinite depths of an individual' which 'surfaces, as it were, from darkness' but cannot be grasped with intelligence; 'encountering this individual we intentionally engender a sense of wonder in ourselves', because 'there is always rich opportunity for wonder and amazement toward each person' (Steiner 2021, p. 22). Steiner goes on to explain that in wonder we marvel 'at the whole matter' (ibid.) rather than only grasping it intellectually. This holistic opening to a matter in wonder should be followed by the sense of reverence and awe (Steiner 1990, p. 22), from which thinking arises once 'it has moved beyond the state of wonder' (ibid.). Wonder and reverence ultimately transition into a contextual understanding which is characterized as feeling in wise harmony with the laws of the world (ibid., p. 23).

These three attitudes underlie the cognitive process proposed by Kranich (2000) for teacher education. It is applied, in principle at least, in the Waldorf context in the form of 'child conferences' or 'child studies' (Barth 2020; Ruhrmann & Henke 2017; Selg 2007; Seydel 2015; Wiechert 2017; Wiehl 2019). 'Child conferences' rely on perception and observation skills and on collegial conversations and they result in educational support recommendations. The work with perceptual vignettes is more elementary because it starts with open wonder 'in response to

the whole phenomenon' (Steiner 2021, p. 22) and aims primarily at practising phenomenological perception, observation and description and, at a later stage, reflection. The additional cultivation of this method as a path of inner development that leads from wonder to reverence and through the phases of reflection to knowledge further widens the scope of the perceptual vignettes as a phenomenological method.

Wonder, from amazement to disturbance, involves a range of soul experiences that are ignited by how something is given but that can only be experienced subjectively. If an event or a situation with a person can be described in a perceptual vignette in such a way that this igniting moment is repeated when someone reads it, an ideal degree of congruence has been achieved between the original event and the written text. Wonder stands at the beginning of both the origin and study of perceptual vignettes, and it is central to any phenomenological method; it encompasses the empathetic turning to and being attentive to the given, the being and the potential of a child, young person or adult; it needs to be practised in connection with the phenomenological principles of 'being-with' and 'the trace of the other' that have been discussed earlier. Perceptual vignettes reveal that wonder is available to everyone as a primordial faculty for empathetic and resonant perception in 'being-with' the given phenomena in a consciously chosen pedagogical environment. As we experience and reflect on moments of wonder, they become modes of research and of a search for knowledge in education and in life in general.

Journaling: practising wonder

1) Recall moments of wonder; look for photos or pictures of nature moods or events that filled you with wonder. Or use the expression of wonder in the child on the book cover and compose a fictional memory image from that child's point of view: 'Once I was really amazed …'.
2) At the next opportunity, write a perceptual vignette about a real or fictional moment of wonder (in a film or in literature). Simply record what you see and hear and what attracts your attention. Or watch a scene from the films *Alphabet* or *System Crasher* and write a perceptual vignette about it.
3) Observe and describe a child who is exploring something new – in your family or circle of friends, or on the train or tram. There is cause for wonder everywhere.

5 Writing perceptual vignettes – a creative phenomenological method

Writing, especially if it's done by hand with pen or pencil, is often seen as a hurdle. A piece of writing is a reflection of its author and can be attributed to them not only on the basis of style and expression but also of content. Even when typed on the computer, textual compositions, as long as they are not mere templates or modules but express personal thoughts and experiences, can with some practice be identified and distinguished by the style of writing. Personal writing, however, is gradually disappearing with the rapid progress of digital speech programmes such as ChatGPT that can generate texts of various content and styles whose origin cannot even be traced by plagiarism check software (Bach & Weßels 2022). Writing perceptual vignettes therefore goes against the current trend for digital text production. Their value lies in the fact that they are personal phenomenological descriptions of a person's own observations. The phenomenon, observed from a subjective perspective, is recorded in a way that allows it to be read as if it was perceived a second time. Perceptual vignettes don't document or explain, they try not to mix events that happened at different times or in different places; they are 'phenomenological descriptions' (Vetter 2020, p. 71ff. and p. 108ff.) of something that is present and has recently been experienced and they focus on events and occurrences as meaningful experiences (Tengelyi 2007, p. 15).

To substantiate our writing method, we bring Graham Wallas' principles of creative work (Wallas 1926/2014) together with the principles of phenomenological description (Vetter 2020, p. 72f.) which aims to present a phenomenon the way it is in its givenness. Phenomenological writing, while it can be operationalized for our purposes as a creative process, remains marginal in science and research. Like the 'individual apprehending of a new speech situation' and like every realization, writing is 'creative activity' (Kühlewind 1991, p. 101) through which something new is generated. Based on thoughts about handwriting (chapter 5.1) and the problems of phenomenological description (chapters 5.2, 5.3), we identify (body-)phenomenological and creative writing as an essential phase of the pedagogical-phenomenological method of perceptual vignettes (chapter 5.4, 5.5) for application in the pedagogical practice of trainees, students and researchers (chapters 5.6, 5.7). Perceptual vignettes don't claim to be a complete or instructive form of writing but rather follow Husserl's request 'to go back to the things

themselves' and scrutinize them primarily 'in their self-givenness' (Husserl quoted in Vetter 2020, p. 468). Only the writing process can unfold in conscious phases.

5.1 'I examined the writing'

'I examined the writing' is the first line of a poem by Rose Ausländer (1990, p. 199) that can be read as reflecting a state of mind, a sensory experience, a personal view or a meaning yet to be unlocked, but also as the expression of a personal writing experience. Perceptual vignettes can be similarly read and interpreted. They are written as spontaneous texts about affective moments, based on sketches and notes, as handwritten or typed first drafts or directly as final versions. They are intended as short descriptive narrative texts; they don't replicate a particular literary text form but are kinds of phenomenological writing. Whether they address another person directly, or whether they are written from a first (PV 5.2) or third person (PV 5.1) perspective, purely from an observer's point of view, they contribute to the phenomenological scrutiny of pedagogical observations, events and actions, as long as the description makes sense and carries meaning – as the perceived phenomena themselves do (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 69f.). There is no interpretation or reflection at this point because that only happens at a later stage (chapter 7); rather, when a phenomenon is captured in writing, something more emerges than what seemed meaningful at first glance (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 70). Phenomenological writing aims to convey meaningful phenomena to written or descriptive text without assigning to them any meaning beyond the immediately given.

Writing is seen as a cultural skill that helps to preserve memories for the future, give poetic expression to experiences and document content for communication. Without written language, there would be no poetry and no philosophical or historical texts to support a culture of remembering or as a basis for reflection and interpretation. The oral traditions that still exist today articulate experiences and events time and again while retaining their content and morale. Jan Assmann points out that – against expectation – the content of oral traditions hardly varies to facilitate memorization; written down content on the other hand allows for varying interpretation (Assmann 2007, p. 97f.). In principle, every reception or reading of a text involves interpretation as situational adaptation based on previous experience, even if, like perceptual vignettes, the text describes a given phenomenon for which judgement is initially suspended. The purpose of perceptual vignettes is therefore not to serve as "means of eternalizing' or as 'memory aids' (Assmann 2018, p. 181) but primarily to activate pedagogical reflection in the new or re-encounter with the initially experienced phenomenon. In reading and comprehending a perceptual vignette, recipients notice and examine the meaning

expressed in the references to situations or objects, fictional or metaphorical, or 'between the lines' (Ausländer 1990, p. 199).

Written language always presupposes internalization unless it is mere copying out by hand as known from the medieval scriptoria (Hauschild 2016); it involves the observation of a meaningful content that is written down out of an authentic experience and from a personal viewpoint. The handwritten text that has been individually composed reflects the character and writing style of the writer and is more personal than machine- or computer-typed scripts. 'Because the hand is us. A computer is not. The keyboard translates our thoughts; the hand is I myself. The direct connection from head to hand is the handwriting. It changes as soon as we write about something that really grabs us; gets larger, freer' (Dörrie 2019, p. 18). Autographs are regarded as non-reproducible 'physiognomies' of their originators' ideas and trains of thought (Ginzburg 2005, p. 7). In handwritten text, 'the dream wafts' like something personal between the lines (Ausländer 1990, p. 199); a person's handwriting can influence or expand how it is read or interpreted. Reproducible script in print or on a screen, on the other hand, primarily conveys content, whether it is imaginative, descriptive, commenting, abstract, reflective or metaphorical. All forms of writing are possible as long as the writing process itself is considered.

We call attention to the difference between autographs and reproducible scripts which is (marginally) important for our further methodological inquiry because it plays a part in the process of creating perceptual vignettes and the subsequent written reflections in practical teaching, workshops and seminars. Whether the writer chooses a notepad or copybook and pen or decides in favour of digital processing for all kinds of practical reasons, is left to their individual discretion. Autographs or handwritten texts may not necessarily reflect a person's writing skills and reveal even less about the writers themselves (Grésillon 2012, p. 153), but it is possible that the handwriting, corrections and marginal notes reveal something about how an observation was captured in written language (PV 5.4).

There are different modes and formats for writing perceptual vignettes, such as sketches, notes, drawings, down to poetic or descriptive texts, which can all be tried out as long as they depict an observation. The chosen method needs to be justifiable and to be replicable in keeping with the ideal of *phenomenological description*. It needs pointing out that several years of practical experience have shown that, particularly with the first writing exercises for the perceptual vignettes, no structured methodical instructions proved helpful either in the pedagogical work with students or in the authors' research for this study guide (chapter 1) and that only in the subsequent review creative practising emerged as a replicable method that could then be introduced in individual steps.

Spontaneous and narrative writing are open to anyone who is literate, even without deliberate practice; it is best learned through creative writing (Dörrie 2019). In working with perceptual vignettes, this approach would, however, produce texts that might only by coincidence correspond to the phenomenological method. Therefore, we propose (body-oriented) phenomenological description and – because this method provides a developmental path in several stages that requires repetition – the way of writing developed by us as conscious 'I'-activity (Wiehl 2021a) in a creative and formative process (Wiehl 2021b; chapters 5.4, 5.5). Practising can't be done on demand but requires us to devote ourselves attentively to a content or process; in other words, we need to learn or at least want it in order to 'lift ourselves above the flow of time and relate to ourselves' (Brinkmann 2009, p. 425). This quality characterizes the intended writing process of perceptual vignettes.

5.2 Problems and system of phenomenological description

'You're so mean to me'

The class 3 children have gone to their places and have put almost all their school things and personal belongings into their school bags. One girl continues to play with a little cat she has made from paper. The teacher is standing in the front, looking from one child to the next and waiting for everyone to be ready to start the lesson together. She notices that one girl is still playing with something she is holding in her hand. She gives the girl a stern look. 'Cara, put that away please,' she says in a clear and friendly voice. 'No, the animal needs to be outside,' Cara replies firmly. 'Cara!' the teacher calls, her voice slightly raised. 'You're so mean to me,' Cara says, puts the paper cat into her bag, mutters something under her breath and sits upright on her chair (PV 5.1).

Phenomenological descriptions are key elements of phenomenology and differ from other similar text forms. They require a 'methodical control of the conditions in which givenness can be immediately generated' (Vetter 2020, p. 73). The 'reduction' (chapter 2.1) of the perceptible object to itself and its essence excludes any other assumptions regarding its way of being and focuses on the way a phenomenon appears, in perception for instance (ibid.). As this phenomenon becomes conscious in 'intuition' (Anschauung), it appears as the thing itself (Husserl 2016, p. 6; chapter 2.2) and as an object of immediate givenness (Vetter 2020, p. 30). The connection of reduction and intuition facilitates the active reception of the phenomenologically given that proves to be constitutive of the writing of perceptual vignettes. Their content consists ideally in phenomena that can be conveyed or made to appear through language.

The author of the perceptual vignette 'You're so mean to me' (PV 5.1) calls to consciousness a brief moment in a class 3, when the teacher waits for Cara to do as she is told before starting the lesson. It is not an *ordinary* but a *special* situation that is brought to the reader's attention. The descriptive form asks for verbs in the present tense, for direct rather than indirect speech and the avoidance of judgement and assumptions. In the choice of the special moment the motives, which are not discussed, are included, for they cause us to perceive the aspects that stand out against the everyday lesson as phenomenologically 'given' (Marion 2015, p. 61). Phenomena rise to awareness in moments of wonder (chapter 4), perception and attentive observation (chapter 3). Perceptual vignettes show them as moments that affect us personally in an everyday or pedagogical situation. Being affected directs our attention, which unites with feelings, thoughts and previous experiences and serves our conscious experience, towards a particular object.

The children who are sitting down, the tidied utensils and the teacher who is standing in front of the class form the 'background' or 'horizon' of everything that 'is also experienced' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 68; chapter 2.4): the event focused on. It is from this 'background' that Cara's playing and her interaction with the teacher stand out. There is more to the event as a whole than what is explicitly presented and said, such as for instance the teacher's intention to start the lesson in a certain way – without any activities and behaviours other than those she expects and asks for.

In examining the problems with the phenomenological description of perceptual vignettes, we reflect on these particularities of the background and the horizon in order to distinguish phenomenological from non-phenomenological descriptions (Vetter 2020, p. 72). Phenomenological descriptions aim to 'assess the thing itself or the phenomenon's essence. Anything that can be experienced is the potential object of a description' (ibid., p. 71). Underlying this is a concept of intuition that is not limited to sensory perception; any phenomena that are given to inner and outer intuition and that appear more or less simultaneously are therefore describable. Perceptual vignettes consequently not only express what can be experienced outwardly and through the senses but take into consideration modes of being and activities that are bound to body, space, time and feeling; but they nonetheless exclude or consciously suspend assumptions and preconceptions.

For a precise qualification of phenomenological descriptions, Helmuth Vetter suggests nine questions (ibid.), to which we have added a tenth. We answer these questions with specific reference to the phenomenological work with perceptual vignettes and to the corresponding chapters. While bundling the ten questions and their answers results in a degree of redundancy, it is nonetheless valuable for our investigation of phenomenological description.

1. 'What is the object of the description?' (Vetter 2020, p. 71.)
   Because the phenomenological method of perceptual vignettes has been developed for training and research in practical teaching, the descriptions arise primarily from observations of persons, events, activities and utterances in the pedagogical context – such as Cara playing around or the teacher waiting (PV 5.1). Depending on the field of research, descriptions can be of any activities, whether they occur in everyday life, on train journeys, during shopping or in the family.
2. 'What methods are used to turn what is to be described into the object of the description?' (ibid.)
   As explained earlier (chapters 3 and 4), the object of the description is brought to life due to an attitude of openness and wonder which facilitates the increasingly attentive but unbiased observation of the affective moment (chapter 6) and a creative writing process that is either spontaneous or deliberately arranged in several stages.
3. 'What are the methodological standards or conceptual and/or ontological requirements for phenomenological descriptions?' (Vetter 2020, p. 71)
   We expect the qualities of phenomenological perception or observation of affective moments in the pedagogical context and their written presentation in short descriptive text, or their practice and reflection in pedagogical seminars (chapter 1). Such preparation is essential for working successfully with perceptual vignettes, which rely on the perception of the given.
4. What concept of reality is the programme of describing the given based on?' (Vetter 2020, p. 71).
   Husserl uses 'reality' synonymously with existence or being, or with the perception of actual facts that can be empirical or ideal (ibid., p. 626). This notion of 'reality' comes close to that of Goethean phenomenology (chapter 2.7). Because the description is not a mere repetition of 'something that already exists in conceptual form' (Steiner 1892/2012a, p. 11) but the productive linking of concepts to something given and sense-perceptible, the emerging reality is one of holistic intuition (Stoltz & Wiehl 2019, p. 106). The productive, creative activity of writing perceptual vignettes replicates the emergence of the *real* phenomenon which initially appeared to naïve contemplation as given. It recreates itself as reality whenever it enters consciousness holistically as a physical and spiritual dimension. Methods intended for (Waldorf) teacher education cannot rely on a constructivist understanding of reality but only on one based on the enactment of cognitive processes (ibid.). Lastly, it depends on the school of thought that an applied phenomenological method chooses to follow (chapters 2 and 3).

5. ‘In what way are subjectivity and perspectivity, which are implied in the concept of givenness, taken into account, or the claim that description can lead to objective knowledge? (Vetter 2020, p. 71f.)
   Perceptual vignettes are in principle written from the point of view and attentive capacity of the observer and writer. The standpoint and the nuances of a perceptual vignette change depending on whether the writer appears as a writing and acting ‘I’ or as an unnamed person that nonetheless exists – namely as the writer – in the field of observation, pedagogical or otherwise. In perceptual vignettes, variations of subjectivity and perspectivity contribute structural aspects to the description of the phenomenon which always ever includes a selected detail of the observed event.
6. ‘Are phenomenological descriptions as suited to the assessment of (meaningful) processes as they are to the assessment of (meaningful) structures?’ (ibid. p. 72)
   Every perceptual vignette contains meaning-giving and/or meaning-structuring content. However, it does not contain object-related or purely material descriptions but presents a perspective on the essence of an object or organism, on ways of being, events, actions and utterances. Without intentional meaning there would be no point to the perceptual vignettes because it is the very goal of this methodology to reflect on structures and statements of meaning in further working stages to gain insights that enhance the pedagogical practice, the development of a professional attitude and diagnostic competence (chapters 6, 7 and 8).
7. ‘What are the criteria for distinguishing between correct and incorrect descriptions?’ (Vetter 2020, p. 72)
   Perceptual vignettes are ideally short descriptive texts composed in the present tense from one person’s point of view in the first or third person. They neither narrate or journal past events, even if they are in fact mostly written in retrospect, nor do they portray events in photographic detail. The quality of the linguistic style depends on the writer, on their particular emphasis and faithfulness to detail.
8. ‘What is the purpose of descriptions?’ (ibid.)
   On the one hand, perceptual vignettes serve the development of pedagogical sensitivity, professional attitude and diagnostic understanding, on the other they support the scientific research into this method for the benefit of the training of teachers and educators. Further research is underway.
9. ‘What kind of knowledge is intended?’ (ibid.)
   As a method, perceptual vignettes aim to develop phenomenological perception and observation and, based on this, a differentiated ability for reflection on pedagogical processes and the professionalization of pedagogical actions.

They constitute a practical approach for processing the pedagogical practice not only phenomenologically but also reflectively.

10. Where are perceptual vignettes most useful?
    The methodology of perceptual vignettes has been conceived to call human encounters to mind and help the writer to learn to link specialized theoretical knowledge to pedagogical experiences using a medium that is suitable for reflection. They can be applied in the pedagogical practice, in teacher education and phenomenological research.

From the answers to the ten questions, we derive the following definition:

> **Perceptual vignettes are the result of a phenomenological method that includes observations in practice, descriptions, stages of reflection and professional application in a pedagogical context.**

5.3 Perceptual vignettes as body-oriented phenomenological descriptions

On the swings

It is early autumn. You are sitting on a swing in the playground, wearing your pink raincoat and matching hat, lost in thought while I give you a push. You have gone all quiet as you observe your siblings playing with their bikes. At least that's what it looks like from the outside. I wonder if you see them or if you just happen to look in their direction, daydreaming. If you are lost in your thoughts, what universe are you exploring right now? (PV 5.2)

The student who, as we know from other documents, is looking after a child of preschool age, focuses her attention on the season, clothing, swing, siblings and bikes. She does not refer to the child directly nor does she mention the child's name but addresses her directly as 'you'. When she realizes her own outside view – as well as the activity of 'giving a push', she mentions 'gone all quiet' and 'observe' – she turns to her own thoughts: sympathetically, she observes the child's dreamy expression. This may only have occurred to her in the process of writing. The perceptual vignette pictures an event on the playground that the student witnessed and that others present at the time would probably have described differently. She presents the events from her perspective.

What are the boundaries of phenomenological descriptions? What does the 'reduction' to the essence of a thing or the thing itself achieve?

Perceptual vignettes are, on the one hand, about visual, auditory and haptic impressions; the bodily presence and the environment on the other hand do not only express something material but also mirror the atmosphere that is also part of the overall experience. Atmospheres, related in an aesthetic sense to people, things and surroundings, are not perceived as things but as connected with one's body and feelings, as 'something subjective' or as 'definitions of a mental state' (Böhme 2017, p. 33; chapter 3.1). A stimulating moment that has been captured in a perceptual vignette is like an expression of atmospheric resonances. In correspondence to the human encounter as a resonant event with a bodily, emotional, social and mental dimension, the words and sentences of the descriptive texts should express multiple perspectives. Perceptual vignettes do not only describe external events but a 'given' occurrence that is reduced to itself (Marion 2015, p. 44) and contains a surplus of meaning. This requires openness and interest in a phenomenon and the ability to put an outer actuality into language as it is, in its essence: 'You are sitting on a swing in the playground, wearing your pink raincoat and matching hat, lost in thought while I give you a push.' A written description requires our judgement to decide which sentiments and ideas that invariably arise due to the personal focus and previous experiences should be included and which ones are better left out. The writer describes this balancing act when she moves beyond her perception of the bodily expression to the child's inner life, as she follows the child's gaze and interprets her observation: 'You have gone all quiet as you observe your siblings playing with their bikes.' She resonates bodily with the child's actions and expressions and senses more or less consciously what can be read from the outer appearance: 'at least that's what it looks like from the outside.' Then she turns her attention to herself and becomes a self-questioning observer: 'I wonder if you see them or if you just happen to look in their direction, daydreaming.' Finally, she ventures a guess as to the child's world of thoughts: 'If you are lost in your thoughts, what universe are you exploring right now?'

Boundary experiences which are tied to bodily phenomena and made conscious by them and verbalized, are constitutive to the writing of perceptual vignettes. Phenomena not only appear multidimensional in perception, but phenomenological description has the potential to point to meaningful atmospheric, emotional, social and mental dimensions of lived bodily being and to present them in a way that allows for subsequent reflection. As phenomenological texts, perceptual vignettes evoke in the readers – analogously to the original perception and observation of events – not only awareness of features or persons as *physical things* in sensory external surroundings but their bodied existence as such. Although both the inside and outside of a person are seen ('at least that is what it looks like from the outside'), this statement does not refer to the 'contrast of body and soul, of nature and spirit' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 16), but to the consonance of all elements required for life and constitutive of life (chapter 2). The person perceiving a ped-

agogical situation and describing a phenomenon is as bodily present as the object of observation to be described, inasmuch as it is about a person and their living way of appearing, acting and speaking. The bodily existence of both constitutes phenomenal being, for the phenomenon revealing itself to the bodied perceptual act 'is not simply there' nor is it experienced as a 'mere reproduction' of something present in the mind or in the outside world, but it can, as Waldenfels and Merleau-Ponty agree, be called a 'creation' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 63).

When writing perceptual vignettes, the balancing act consists in contemplating less the *what* and more the *how* (Peterlini 2020, p. 122) of the initial moment of attention as the originally observed event is remembered and written down. Since acts of writing always occur subsequently to the appearance of the phenomenon, phenomenal description requires a language that enables 'an original appearance in the course of which the things become what they are' (ibid.). Writing perceptual vignettes is therefore regarded as a creative reiteration of the perceptual act. 'And since we cannot assume that the things are in themselves explicitly and finally what they are, the process of defining implies elements of creation' (Waldenfels 2018a, p. 63). In this sense perceptual vignettes are intended as *recreations* of specific phenomena in the pedagogical practice or other spheres of life and made available for reflection (chapter 7).

5.4 Do phenomenology and creativity contradict or complement each other?

The givenness of phenomena and creativity seem to be mutually exclusive. We therefore need to reflect on the criteria of our method in this respect. Phenomenology presupposes the givenness of the phenomena, creativity is concerned with the conditions and expressions of their emergence. Both have in common that they are not bound to a merely material or physical mode of being. Heidegger claims that a phenomenon is not restricted to its material substantiality but needs to be thought of as expanded by everything that it causes to be present in consciousness (Heidegger 2006, p. 118; chapter 4.2); this multidimensionality applies similarly to all creative processes. Although the contradiction, which is clearly apparent at first glance, and the – upon closer inspection – more balanced relationship constitute dangerous terrain, we hold that creativity is *one* working phase of the phenomenological method of perceptual vignettes and look in more detail at the writing process, using Graham Wallas' four-stage model (1926/2014) as a structuring principle of creative writing.

Creativity is a productive force or faculty that, generally speaking, arises from personal motivation and a particular situation and aims at an open result. As an original human faculty, creativity can express itself at a mental or material level.

It generates new ideas or gives creative expression to language, painting, music or ways of life. Even young children are creators of their environment as they emulate and playfully imitate the actions of people or moving objects (Wiehl 2020). Every imitative process, if it is not merely reaction or simulation, is creative because everything that was previously perceived, as it is being internalized and recalled, goes through a transformation or 'incubation' (Wallas 1926/2014, p. 42) and re-emerges in a new form. This basic principle also applies to writing processes because they are creative acts. Writing is a creative process in which an idea is recalled and condensed and given verbal expression. In writing, human and world existence are expressed from a reality-based, historical, mythological or fictional perspective on the writer's own or other lives. Something presenting itself to the eyes (Dörrie 2019) is absorbed visually or auditorily and described – 'romanticized' in language (Novalis 1999, p. 334), as it were, so that the 'original meaning' can be found.

Perceptual vignettes are works of art because their aim is not to document but to let an object of description appear in a new medium: language. This requires mental internalization with memories, feelings, thoughts relating to the perceived object. Descriptive texts seem deprived of poetry if the writer is not inwardly engaged or emotionally involved; they lack multiperspectivity of meaning. This is why the creative writing process, rather than the mere stating of facts, is the preferred integrative component of a phenomenological method.

Some aspects need adding to expand the concept of creativity beyond its meaning in everyday usage. For this we turn to the findings of current creativity research. Creativity is variously defined depending on the research context (Heinze et al., 2012; Kaufmann & Sternberg 2019) as either a 'situational process' (Brodbeck 1999, p. 1), mental activity (Csikszentmihalyi 2019, p. 41), the capacity for 'divergent thinking' (Krampen 2019, p. 20) or, which is adequate for our purpose here, as a method to be learned (Weidemann 2010; Wiehl 2021b; Stoltz & Wiehl 2021, p. 20). In his seminal book *The Art of Thought,* (1926/2014) presents the four-stage model he developed for finding creative solutions or to explain how something new is created. The four stages are *preparation, incubation, illumination and verification* (ibid., p. 37ff.). While many publications quote Wallas' method to explain creative processes (Kaufmann & Glăveanu 2019, p. 27ff.; Krampen 2019, p. 183ff.; Nett 2019, p. 4f.), this is not the only reason why it is relevant to perceptual vignettes. The main reason is that it describes an art of thinking and therefore a creative cognitive method which is part of every conscious productive process that results in something new.

Rudolf Steiner described such a method as the reversal of the Aristotelian logic that starts with concepts and definitions and applies them to judgements and conclusions (Steiner 1992, p. 133ff.; 1986, p. 27ff.; Wiehl 2015, p. 188ff.). Reversing this process means that the cognitive act does not start with a conceptual

result but with perception, observation and consideration and therefore amounts to an open cognitive process that explores the phenomena. The forming of judgements and concepts only follows subsequently, in the reenacting or recalling of the previous perception (ibid.). A comparison of this cognitive process that encompasses *exploration, forgetting and recalling down to judgement and conceptualization* (Wiehl 2015, p. 188ff.) with Graham Wallas' creative stages reveals that the two approaches are based on the same methodological structure, although they use different terminologies for what happens in the cognitive and creative processes. Steiner describes the forming of independent intuitive concepts for a previously discovered phenomenon, while Wallas focuses on the creative generating of something new or the finding of a solution. Every idea experienced in thinking requires individual activity, as does any artistic creation; they are never coincidence but always intuition (Henrich 2010).

What Wallas refers to as 'incubation stage' can be seen as corresponding to Steiner's idea of overnight forgetting, which allows for new access, new perspectives, new contexts to arise in relation to previous perceptions or thoughts. Wallas (1926/2014, p. 37) references an impressive description by the German physicist Hermann von Helmholtz who, speaking at a banquet in 1891, recounted how 'favourable thoughts' come to him for his scientific work:

> 'I first had to have turned a problem over in my mind and looked at it from all sides so that I could see all its angles and complexities before me, without writing them down. This is not usually possible without extended previous efforts. Then, as the fatigue caused by this faded, there had to be an hour of complete physical freshness and quiet wellbeing before the good ideas came to me. Often, they were there in the morning upon waking up, like the verses by *Goethe* I quoted. But they liked to make an appearance particularly when I was walking in sunny weather over wooded hills' (Helmholtz 1891, no page reference).

Wallas refers to the restorative phase before waking up or during a walk as 'incubation' (Wallas 1926/2014, p. 38ff.); it describes a period of inner openness and of 'un-folding' when a new view on the content of the thoughts that had occupied someone and new ideas can be gained (as described for the preview exercise in chapter 6.6). By deliberately withholding the conscious thinking that a content or phenomenon naturally inspire, this phase could be used for another mental activity or for relaxation (ibid., p. 41). Wallas points out, however, that with demanding creative thinking (for instance with scientific or poetic endeavours) a free interval was not enough but that *nothing* must disturb the free or half-conscious work (ibid., p. 42): incubation requires intensive relaxation (ibid.). Using examples from science and literature, he demonstrates how during physical exercise, on walks, when reading the classics or various other activities unrelated to one's own profession or questions, an idea can present itself like an 'instantaneous

flash' (ibid., p. 43ff.). A spontaneous and unexpected 'illumination' occurs that, though not accessible to volition, can be accompanied by a will that is focused on the process and appears as the climax of associations that previously intimated themselves (ibid., p. 46f.). This 'intimation' is the moment when the mental flash announces itself during another intensive activity (ibid., p. 48). Wallas compares it to an association that rises to the surface and expands into an impression of joy (ibid., p. 48); the term 'association' seems to summarize the emotions, thoughts and ideas associated with the emerging idea.

'Incubation' describes a state of forgetting and letting go, a prelinguistic phase that is particularly relevant to the perceptual vignettes and that can be used for practising. Since perceptual vignettes are not usually written in the actual (pedagogical) situation – or if they are, then only in draft form – they emerge like any speech utterance with a delay in time. Incubation phases are therefore always of varying duration. However, the emerging perceptual vignettes are not intended as memory pictures; they are accounts of a moment recorded as soon as possible after its occurrence, expressive and concise due to the attentive re-calling to memory of the affective event. An event reappears as a meaningful phenomenon in the recalling mind; it appears like a mental flash or an intuition in the act of cognition: we can see inwardly what we perceive in bodied presence simultaneously or what we perceived at an earlier time.

Big sister

The way you play has changed. You used to prefer watching the big children or play with Sami when we went to the playground. Now you like playing with the younger children. It's great to see how you enjoy being the older one. You are protective and caring when you go down the slide with your little friend. And you share your food with her. Your loving attention has big sister potential. Is that what you would like to be? (PV 5.3)

This perceptual vignette traces the writer's levels of bodied experience as they might light up in reflection: observing the child, comparing her current with her previous play behaviour, the child's enjoyment, her protective and caring attitude, the sliding and sharing of food with her friend, the comparison of her loving attitude with that of a big sister and finally the forward-looking, fictive question addressed at the child.

For perceptual vignettes to be not only spontaneous but also reflective of the individual working steps, Graham Wallas' (1926/2014) four-stage model can be a suitable methodological model for practising:

1) Observation ('preparation') in the pedagogical situation corresponds to exploration or preparation, in other words to the moment of phenomenological perception, wonder and attentive observation (chapters 3 and 4).
2) Incubation and forgetting – because time passes after the event or there is a night in between – could endanger the phenomenological work but always happens naturally when we let go of something and take it up in a new way after a certain time.
3) Insight ('illumination') appears as a mental flash or intuition that previously intimated itself in associations or ideally as a condensed thought image of the perceived phenomenon and its essential expression.
4) Processing ('verification') of the 'illumination' gives rise to condensed meaning and new understanding as a result of appropriate judgements and concepts and in the descriptive expression of a perceptual vignette. Wallas adds this fourth stage to the first three after reading Henri Poincaré (1854-1912; French mathematician, physicist, astronomer and philosopher) who submitted his mathematical ideas and discoveries to scientific verification to bring them into the right 'form' (ibid., p. 38). We use perceptual vignettes as a textual form that corresponds to the phenomenon.

Connecting the cognitive processes with the creative act of writing guarantees a phenomenological approach, firstly because any phenomenological exploration of the given world content must bring this content to consciousness, to mental representation and, if required, to verbal expression, and secondly because it is the only way perceptual vignettes as ways of expressing phenomenological perception and observation can be intentionally realized in an adequate linguistic form.
Working with perceptual vignettes therefore has the following stages, each of which can be practised separately:

1. preparation for writing a perceptual vignette: empathetic and perceptive engagement with a child/person/group,
2. incubation or intuition: letting go of and forgetting the impressions,
3. illumination/insight: recalling the perceived and observed moments,
4. verification: writing the perceptual vignette and discussing and reflecting on it in a seminar or group (Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 200).

5.5 Using the four-stage model for the phenomenological, creative writing of perceptual vignettes

The opportunity to repeatedly practise the development of perceptual vignettes with students at the Institute for Waldorf Education, Inclusion and Intercultural Studies in Mannheim (DE) arose from three circumstances: Ulrike Barth

was looking for new, non-categorizing and sympathetic approaches to diagnosis (Barth 2020, p. 133ff.; Kap. 8); Angelika Wiehl brought, in addition to intellectual discussion, creative methods such as perceptual exercises, artistic sketches, memory pictures, perceptual vignettes (Wiehl 2021b) to scientific contexts. Finally, the project realized the wish to provide students at our Institute with a tool to use during their pedagogical placements that can enhance their awareness of the growing individualization of children, the heterogeneous learning groups and of many other premises, particularly in education, and inspire them to reflect on their own attitude and actions and learn to apply a non-categorizing approach to diagnosis (chapters 6, 7 and 8). Students should not only acquire theoretical knowledge in anthropology, developmental psychology and pedagogy but also learn from experience (Meyer-Drawe 2012, p. 16ff.); they should become aware of pedagogical phenomena and connect them with the knowledge gained in theoretical, scientific seminars. In phenomenological descriptions, expert knowledge only serves to guide the way we look at things, not as a template for interpretation, because we introduced reflection as a separate working process (chapter 7). These goals encourage us to develop the writing of perceptual vignettes as an exercise that prepares pedagogical reflection and to systematize it by using the examples below.

All exercises in phenomenological description are relevant to pedagogical study, particularly those focusing their attention on events that appear as 'fracture lines' of experience (Waldenfels 2002; chapter 2), that inspire the need for explanation and enhance individual professionalization. We will use examples to discuss the relevance of the four practical or creative stages for the writing of perceptual vignettes:

1) Preparing for writing perceptual vignettes ('preparation stage')

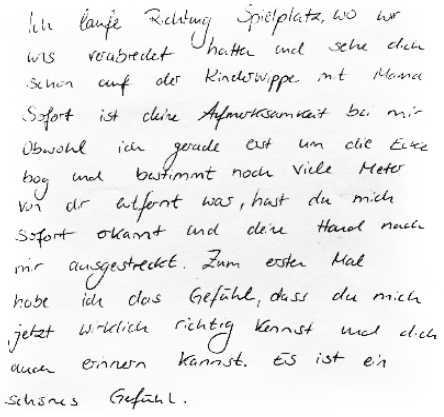
Preparation for writing includes the perceptions and observations of a lived pedagogical situation or of a person, note-taking and the ability to recall a suitable affective moment. Similarly to Helmholtz, who turned 'a problem over in his mind and looked at it from all sides,' students can intensively engage with the pedagogical practice. Their notes, sketches or descriptive texts need to be turned into perceptual vignettes as soon as possible. Notes of any kind support memory, the choice of words and the reflection of the process. Exact phenomenological descriptions of situations, events, behaviours, utterances, etc. are helpful exercises as is the training of perception, inner representation and thinking and the conscious distinction of perception and observation (chapter 3.4), that is, of open devotion and focused attention. The questions as to whether only the period of pedagogical practice counts as preparation or whether the preparatory activity continues or is repeated when reporting in the seminar remain open.

2) Incubation or intuition stage

In the second stage, which follows quite naturally from the first, the students let go of the perceived event, circumstances and particularities or, as often proves necessary with disconcerting or dissatisfying situations, consciously record them, for instance by committing them to a journal or considering them in their (evening) review (Steiner 2019; chapter 6.6). This phase of forgetting helps to *unconsciously* process the experience; in the ideal case, it leads to the lighting up of an intuition, an 'aha' experience. Studies on creativity prove that intuitions do not appear from nowhere nor are they incidental, but they are preceded by intensive occupation with an experience or content and that ideas and insights emerge precisely because of the preceding process of letting go (Krampen 2019, p. 188ff.).

This stage of inner processing can be enhanced by meditative exercises that can raise to consciousness what may have been overlooked in everyday life or in the pedagogical situation. By looking at the events of the day from an outside perspective and in reverse order, one learns with repeated practice to distinguish the essential from the inessential (Steiner 2019; chapter 6.6) so that it can then be processed further. It is not the constant turning of thoughts in one's mind that paves the way for the intuition but the exact opposite: letting the experience rest. This opens up a mental space for intuitions. Whether the period of rest is one night, several days or the time between the pedagogical work placement and the next university seminar – the impressions should be forgotten and remain *unconscious*. The phase leading up to the 'aha' experience is called 'intimation' (Kaufmann & Gläveanu 2019, p. 32).

The following perceptual vignette describes a seemingly unimportant moment in the playground followed by the discovery that the child in question not only recognizes her carer but 'really' sees her.


Ich laufe Richtung Spielplatz, wo wir
uns verabredet hatten und sehe dich
schon auf der Kinderwippe mit Mama
Sofort ist deine Aufmerksamkeit bei mir
Obwohl ich gerade erst um die Ecke
bog und bestimmt noch viele Meter
von dir entfernt war, hast du mich
sofort erkannt und deine Hand nach
mir ausgestreckt. Zum ersten Mal
habe ich das Gefühl, dass du mich
jetzt wirklich richtig kennst und dich
daran erinnern kannst. Es ist ein
schönes Gefühl.

I'm walking towards the playground

I'm walking towards the playground where we agreed to meet, and I can already see you on the seesaw with your mummy. You're immediately aware of me. Although I've only just turned the corner and am many yards away from you, you recognize me immediately and stretch out your hand towards me. For the first time I have the feeling that you really know me now and that you can remember. It feels good (PV 5.4; autograph and transcript in Wiehl 2021b, p. 233f.)

This perceptual vignette describes a scene that seems insignificant at first. The situation in the playground is described in suitable words and phrases, feelings are included and finally the discovery 'that you really know me now and that you can also remember' (PV 4.5). Discovering this is in itself an *intuition*; the idea or essence of the moment is being experienced.
Incubation – an intuition relating to a previously observed event – happens when, both in writing and in the affective event, our attention is suddenly drawn to something other than the obvious and a feeling or thought occurs in relation to an attention-arousing moment. The feelings, sensations and thoughts exceed the visual and auditory impressions; they mirror the atmosphere between people (Böhme 2017, p. 33) and give meaning to the event: 'for the first time I have the feeling that you really know me and that you can remember. It feels good' (PV 5.4). The observation of the given phenomenon clearly includes both outer *and* inner experiences, even if the eye tends to be initially drawn to the obvious.

In our first seminars we allowed too little time for reflection so that for some students no memories or ideas came up. The method requires the building of a bridge to ensure that not just any event from the pedagogical practice is recalled but that the awareness is guided towards the memorable moment with a child or another person, supported for instance by sketches, notes and conversations. The selecting of an event as such may be seen as implying valuation, but if we had no sense for special, different or affective moments, no event would ever stand out from others.

(3) Insight ('illumination stage')
Like the focusing of attention on one affective event in the moment of perception itself, whether that happens in the pedagogical or any other context, the incubation stage prepares us for an *insight*. While *intuition* is an act of cognition, *insight* unites the meaning and expression of an event. It prepares the ground for phenomenological and narrative description.
In this post-incubation stage, we focus our attention on a scene that stands out from the general 'horizon' of all recalled impressions. It can trigger memories of further related or resulting events. After intensive attention, we are asked to mentally dwell

on one single moment or a series of incidents and find suitable words. In thinking back, we re-engage with the former experience as if we had returned to the place where it originally took place. Representations, thoughts and feelings are enhanced and give rise to colour sketches, word pictures, notes or even the final descriptive text that should not be edited or revised much in the subsequent work phase. Occasionally some preparatory work is needed to reenact the original affective event. With repeated practice it becomes easier to remember a particular scene or utterance. It can happen that experiences, which took place at different times, merge into one in memory or in the narration, as the following perceptual vignette illustrates.

The silver sword

Since I started picking you up from school with my new bike, you have been insisting on jogging alongside me the whole way home. Of course, I carry your school bag, which I fix on top of my rucksack so I have a real turtle shell on my back. We race each other, sing together and you sometimes include a little dance in between. You've been running half the way when you suddenly stop in your tracks. You bend down, pick up a little silver object and hold it up to me. I look at the little 'sword' with big eyes, admiring your find. Neither of us says a word but we understand each other perfectly. You squat down again, pull some moss from the ground and use everything you can find in that moment to create a small mandala around the silver object that looks like a sword. When your work of art is complete, we go on happily, without a word.
A week later we pass the same place. Again, you stop, linger for a moment, scanning the ground and then, with a proud smile, you hold up the sword you first found a week ago (PV 5.5).

(4) Processing or 'verification stage'

Processing in our method corresponds to describing affective moments in a pedagogical context. Perceptual vignettes are written as narrative texts in the present tense, without any detailed instructions regarding style or volume. Unusual expressions are better than polished formulations at mirroring the experienced affectedness and mood that belong to the atmosphere of an experience. Occasionally, texts take on poetic and narrative forms that emphasize the mental and emotional processes more than the outer event, as the following examples illustrates.

Calm

You rest within yourself,
fully centred.
Your arms often folded across your chest,
not in defence,
not distant,
or are they?

I know you are open to me,
you don't push me away,
but you wholly rest in yourself,
you are centred in yourself (PV 5.6).

Particularly at the beginning of our study course we also accept as perceptual vignettes texts in the form of unrhymed and unmetered poetry (PV 5.6), letters (PV 5.7) or aphorisms; they only need revising when assumptions or explanations outweigh phenomenal givenness.

The wrong way round

What do you see? What do you think? What's going on inside you?
You're sitting at the table, suddenly you notice that one of the cookbooks on the shelf is the other way round from all the others.
'Lena, why's that book the wrong way round?' you ask as you get up to turn it around.
On another day we are sewing your 'monster'; you are supposed to make it for school.
You have already cut out the fabric, the pattern on it is the wrong way round.
Did you notice that? Didn't you mind? Or did it make you think? (PV 5.7)

Both perceptual vignettes (PV 5.6 und 5.7) contain characteristic moments which are noted by a student when she was looking after a nine-year old child. She even includes two incidents that happened at different times. The longer students or researchers practise writing perceptual vignettes, the more they develop their own style and the closer they come to a phenomenological description. Not all texts can be clearly distinguished from the vignettes of Network VignA, but concise observation without much detailed information about the person, locality and other circumstances remains a main characteristic of perceptual vignettes.

Dive

Hannah talks about today's PE lesson: 'We practised diving headfirst! And I was so excited, my legs were really shaking when I was standing by the pool. Then we had a swimming contest and I came second! The boys were really cheering me on. I was gliding for so long!' (WN 5.8)

Although our method differs from the vignettes of Network VignA (chapter 5.6), there are similarities regarding the phenomenological way of working and researching. Like Husserl, we see the method of writing as an 'exploring' that does not aim at *'what* the things *are*, but *how* they *appear* to the human senses and – in cognition, perception, comprehension, understanding – to the conscious mind'

(Peterlini 2020, p. 122). The descriptions do not depict anything, but they are personal ways of denoting appearance, constitution, behaviours, abilities, development and other characteristics that attract immediate attention.
Often, the work on perceptual vignettes starts with an affective moment, includes observations of inner processes, feelings, sensations and thoughts as well as of the attitude of the person observed; perceptual vignettes do not claim to be an objective account or 'case' report. They capture the exemplary or fragmentary. Each perceptual vignette is complete in itself and yet only a small detail of a wider shared experience. We can therefore say of this text form – as in the aesthetics of the fragment (Ostermann 1991) – that while fragments are imperfect or incomplete, 'the idea of the whole and of the fragment coincide in that the whole is defined as the result of a fragmentation' (ibid., p. 16) and each piece 'is assigned the status of prevented wholeness' (ibid.). Perceptual vignettes are consequently 'fragments of a future whole' (Wiehl 2019b, p. 42), whose meaning is explored in the subsequent phases of reflection (chapter 7). The writing emerges in the careful propaedeutic approximation to the phenomenological research methodology. It does not result in complete texts but in *moments of bodied phenomenological experience* which are expressed in writing. Perceptual vignettes make affective moments newly available, committing them to words as a basis for pedagogical conversations.

5.6 Variations of phenomenological texts: phenomenological descriptions, vignettes, anecdotes, memory pictures and perceptual vignettes

Texts that describe phenomena differ depending on their format and style and on the perspective, time and place reflected in them. The vignettes and anecdotes of the VignA research group (cf. Schratz et al. 2012; Agostini et al. 2018; Rathgeb 2019; Krenn 2020a) use a different approach from the descriptive texts of the research team around Malte Brinkmann (2020a, 2020b) or the memory pictures used by Birgit Engel and others in art teaching and research (Engel 2020; Engel & Hallmann 2022a; 2022b). The following examples present three aspects that are relevant to the phenomenological work with perceptual vignettes: the writer's *perspective*, *possible linguistic styles or textual forms* and *fields of application*.

Phenomenological description
One-year old girl practises climbing stairs

A mother, Anna, who is around one year old and a lecturer are in front of the seminar room on the first floor of a building. The adults are deeply engaged in conversation while Anna, whose lower legs don't even reach the next level of the stairs, climbs up the stairs with big steps. On every level she stands for a moment on both legs, takes a breath and climbs the next step. When she reaches the landing she turns, looks at the two adults and climbs down the stairs, continually balancing the slight swaying of her body. This goes on until another woman appears, stops amazed and joins Anna. Anna holds out her little hand to her, then, holding on to the woman's hand for support, climbs down the stairs with quick and firm steps. She is holding her balance perfectly now and concentrates on the steps (PD 5.1).

Phenomenological descriptions constitute a separate text form and can be seen as a preliminary step towards perceptual vignettes. Rather than focusing on something conspicuous or affective, they pick out everyday (pedagogical) moments for the purpose of practising precise perception and description.

Any verbal description of a phenomenon constitutes its representation. 'The verbal expression articulates something that eludes it at the same time' (Brinkmann 2015b, p. 530) because it always refers to something 'preverbal and pre-reflective' (ibid.). It can therefore be said of any description of a phenomenon or event: 'Any verbal, interpretative and reflective articulation follows the event. It does not cover the whole or replace anything but remains tentative, touching on the event from a temporal distance' (ibid., p. 531). Phenomenological descriptions therefore *only* show the subject's perception as subsequent reenactments; the question to ask is whether they are based on detailed perception or whether some expressions may be the result of wishful thinking.

Perceptual vignettes are rarely written in the moment of pedagogical activity but usually in retrospect and all at once. In this they differ from Network VignA's *(lesson) vignettes* (cf. Schratz et al. 2012; Schwarz 2017; Agostini & Peterlini 2022) which are composed in the lesson or at other occasions from collected data, initially as *notes or rough drafts*. They are then read and edited repeatedly until the team of researchers decides that they correspond to the actual experience of the original phenomenon. The editing requires precision and detailed observation; in this kind of description, nuances of moods, gestures, facial expressions, gazes, direct speech, sensations and feelings – everything revealing itself to the senses – serves to verbalize 'the bodied experiences' (Thielmann 2020, p. 74) comprehensively and compellingly. When a (basic) vignette is edited – a process that can be done in several phases and by a team – the text is repeatedly examined to identify missing elements that are then added. Such omissions may have to do with context,

space, time, appearance, a person's tasks and position or their way of acting and expressing themselves.

Vignettes are used in many studies, above all in the VignA Network, as a quantitative and 'qualitative survey tool in empirical learning research' (Thielmann 2020, p. 65), in order to demonstrate the 'learning experiences at school from a learner's perspective' (Thielmann 2020, p. 69) based on a '*jointly experienced* research attitude' (Schwarz 2018, p. 90f.), or to make the 'learner's side' (Schratz 2009) of pupils visible. The research into vignettes, which initially focused on teacher education and professionalization, is increasingly extended to include other fields of phenomenological research (Agostini & Peterlini 2022). Like the work with perceptual vignettes, this methodology, which we can only introduce here very briefly, sees itself as a phenomenological approach to study and research; in principle, it represents the model for the development of perceptual vignettes as a phenomenological and reflective medium in (Waldorf) teacher education. But while perceptual vignettes describe primarily the appearance, modes of action and utterances of a person or group and the corresponding inner processes of the observers directly after the phenomenological perception, vignettes aim to '"translate" bodily perceptions and intersubjective experiences' (Thielmann 2020, p. 70), using 'the tone, tempo and rhythm' of a 'pathic language' and of the observer's perspective to allow the reader to share in the original experience (ibid., p. 70f.).

The following two vignettes were written in a workshop with students and researchers; they illustrate the journey of the participants from first draft to revised version.

Original vignette or first draft
Pulse taking

'Can someone describe how we take the pulse?' The teacher is standing at the blackboard while the students are sitting on chairs in a half circle, facing the teacher. Someone puts up a hand, more hands follow. During this time, the teacher turns his head to the right and looks briefly out of the window. He then points to one child and says, 'yes, please'. The teacher looks at this child while she is talking, he folds his hands, stretching out both first fingers and raising them to his mouth. He responds by frowning, narrowing his eyes and then looking out of the window. Finally he says, looking around the classroom, 'Very good. We take the pulse on the radial side. Where exactly?' (PV 5.9)

Revised vignette
Radial pulse taking

In their biology lesson the class 7 students are sitting at individual desks that are arranged in a half circle; they are facing their biology teacher who is standing with folded arms before the closed blackboard. 'Can someone describe how we take the pulse', he asks the pupils. They look at him expectantly as the room falls silent. One pupil puts up a hand. More hands follow. But immediately after asking the question, the teacher looks pensively out of the window for a moment, raising his eyebrows. Then he turns his head back to the class and lets his gaze wander from the left to the right side of the half circle. Now he points with his flat hand towards a pupil and says, 'Yes, please!' As the student says softly and somewhat indistinctly, 'We take the pulse radially', the teacher looks at him attentively, folds his hands, stretches both first fingers away from the hands and lifts them to this mouth. His head slightly inclined, he continues to look at the pupil, his eyes fixed on him. He frowns as if he had not quite understood what had been said. He then frowns, astonished. The pupil only briefly looks into the teacher's eyes before looking around among his classmates searchingly and finally turns his eyes on the teacher again. The teacher looks out of the window again, fixing his eyes on a tree. The pupils in his eyes move closer together. He turns to the student again, looks at him closely and says, 'Very good, we take the pulse at the radius. Where exactly?' (PV 5.10)

The edited version describes the student-teacher relationship, their eye contact and the biology teacher's attitude in much more detail. Subtle nuances in their interaction are made visible, such as the teacher's expectant and challenging attitude and the student's uncertain, hesitant response. The teacher's gesture, head movement, his wandering gaze do not suggest that he gives the student a chance but rather that he tries to force an answer from him, driving the student more and more into a corner in a way that, in the worst case, could cause him to fail. For even the eventual praise – 'very good' – is immediately invalidated by the insistent next question. These are a few aspects to illustrate the reflection that went into this vignette, the multiple layers in such a text and the responsibility required in its interpretation. The more detailed and precise a vignette or perceptual vignette is, the more multidimensional is the statement it makes which can lead to unexpected insights.

Anecdotes are another concise phenomenological text form. What characterizes them is the succinct humour in their narration of a memorable event. They also serve as a qualitative research tool (Krenn 2020a, 2020b), for instance when written-down conversations with pupils about their experiences at school are condensed into a vibrant anecdotal story about a 'particularly effective' event (Krenn 2020b, p. 81). When used as research tools, anecdotes need to meet four criteria: they need 'to describe *one* experience relating to *one* specific theme, have *one* focus and *one* punchline (ibid.). The researcher's ability to '*share an experience*' (ibid., p.

83) is important to the writing of an anecdote, because only this subjective co-experiencing of the conversation *with* a person based on notes or audio recordings can bring out the affective moments after the event (ibid., p. 81ff.).
The following anecdote is the condensed version of a surprising event that was recounted repeatedly by class 5 pupils and that most of them documented in anecdotal form in their journals.

Class five anecdote
Seagull poo

As a group of happily chatting schoolgirls leave the ferry which just arrived in the island harbour, they approach a group of ladies who are lugging their suitcases ashore. Suddenly, one of the ladies turns around and screams at the young people in an angry, high-pitched voice: 'Who did this? Who of you did this? This is …'. At first, the girls have no idea what she is talking about, but then they detect a huge blot right on the screaming lady's bosom. 'That wasn't us, it was a seagull,' the girls call to her, almost bursting with laughter. The lady seems desperate and keeps blaming them. Anni runs back onto the ferry to summon her teacher who quickly runs to the group. 'Excuse me,' she says politely to the ladies, 'this has certainly not been caused by the girls, it is seagull poo – it must be very unpleasant for you, but the girls have nothing to do with it' (PD 5.2).

This story is not an anecdote composed for research purposes (for examples of such anecdotes cf. Krenn 2020a and b) but an anecdotal story which we include here as an example, because this kind of story can be concealed in, resemble or arise from perceptual vignettes. Anecdotes and perceptual vignettes are often similar due to their pithy narrative style.
Perceptual vignettes also need to be distinguished from *memory pictures* because the latter locate their content in an arbitrary past and can include feelings and thoughts that start resonating again after the event. Memory pictures are 'condensed accounts' that 'recall particularly trenchant or stimulating moments of perception, an unusual experience' (Engel & Hallmann 2022a, p. 3f.). Like perceptual vignettes or vignettes and depending on the chosen theme or experience, they can be reflected on in relation to their pedagogical or didactic content and for the purpose of professionalization. The two text forms have in common that they reproduce 'a lived perception, the feel of a situation, a past action and experience' (Engel 2020, p. 114). Unlike perceptual vignettes, memory pictures are about relating an event rather than describing a phenomenon. Memory pictures take the reader back to the past.

Memory picture
Monsieur Schmidt

It must have been in class 2 when Monsieur Schmidt became our French teacher. One morning he came into the classroom and immediately attracted the children's attention. He seemed to us like a noble Frenchman who spoke with a strong French accent. His tall figure, blue suit and waistcoat, white shirt and cravat, his gloves and above all his golden pen deeply impressed us. He used the pen to write something down in the class register. He was very cautious when he shook our hands. We were told that he suffered from the consequences of a gunshot wound and that he was therefore very sensitive and concerned with cleanliness. His lessons were as noble and elegant as his appearance. He always spoke French and indicated with gentle hand movements what we needed to look out for, where we should go and what we should do. I loved the way he spoke French and his noble demeanour. One of the highlights was when we rehearsed the story of the wolf and the seven little kids as a French play to be performed at the local theatre for the school's anniversary. All the children recited the story together in French, with each of us also having a solo part. I was the big clock behind which one of the little goats went to hide. The stage and we were brightly lit, and it was very quiet in the auditorium so that I could not see or hear who was sitting in front of us. Not until the audience clapped did I notice the many people who were looking at us, enjoying the play. We were very proud, and I think Monsieur Schmidt was too (PD 5.3).

As well as a narrative style with a beginning and end, similar to literary prose, memory pictures feature the narrator's often idealizing or exalting views of past events, feelings that can range from positive to negative concerning past events and described persons, and explanations of circumstances or peculiarities. Perceptual vignettes can also have a memory component, because like every act of writing, they arise in the process of retrospection. All acts of writing, including revising or composing a final version, involve this looking back to the past. What distinguishes them is the initial phase of perception and observation in a pedagogical or other context in the not distant past and the fact that the writing phase is practised as a productive and creative method of phenomenological description, reflected on and structured and therefore not spontaneous.

The following notes for a perceptual vignette were taken in a biology lesson, along with sketches for the blackboard which are not included.

Biology lesson

Class 12 biology lesson; 'Morning', 'Everyone in today?', one student appears, L. looks to the door, 'The new subject is neurophysiology', L. looks at one student: 'Do you remember what we talked about last time?', technical terms, 'what can influence the nerve cells?' short answers, some not audible, overhead, nerves, synapses, 'We will read sentence by sentence, starting at the back, and add the missing words', reading out loud,

adding technical terms to slide, L: 'nerve cells don't regenerate well'; interjection from colleague: 'that can be dangerous for when you get plastered for instance, lots of nerve cells get damaged' (PV 5.11, notes and draft for PV 5.12).

It is evident from the keywords that it differs from person to person what is written down and how and what is transferred to the final perceptual vignette. The descriptive text is composed by combining the notes and the memories. Direct speech was dominant in the final version of the perceptual vignette.

Perceptual vignettes
From a class 12 biology lesson

'Morning,' the young biology teacher says in a friendly voice, looking at the seven class 12 students present. 'Is that all we have today?' Just then the door opens, another student comes in and sits down between two other boys. The teacher starts the lesson with an announcement: 'The new topic is neurophysiology.' He looks at one of the boys and asks, 'Do you remember what we talked about last time?' The students put their hands up, calling out a few technical terms. 'What can affect the nerve cells?' the biology teacher asks. Again, a few answers are called out, short phrases or just words; they are spoken in the direction of the teacher. Because I'm sitting at the wall where the door is, I hardly understand what the students are saying. The teacher turns on the overhead projector, shows a schematic representation of a nerve cord, explains the synapses and other details.
The young people look at the drawing with interest,naming relevant technical terms at the teacher's request. After that they are given copies of a text on the 'structure of a nerve cell' that contains a number of gaps. The same text is visible to all students as an overhead projection. 'We will read sentence by sentence, starting at the back, and add the missing words', the teacher says. The sentences are read out loud, first by a few boys, then by the three girls and then by some boys again. The students fill in the missing words and the teacher writes them on his own copy, the one that is projected. As the last sentence dies away, he says: 'Nerve cells are not good at regenerating.' Suddenly, from the back, the voice of the older biology colleague is heard who is here to support the young teacher who is new. 'That can be dangerous, because when you get completely plastered, for instance, a lot of nerve cells are damaged.' Some students smile (PV 5.12).

If one regularly writes perceptual vignettes as a teacher or observer, one notices more and more occasions that can be spontaneously described in suitable words. But challenging behaviours and striking events in working with children also need a phase of reflection that allows the essential to be separated from the inessential for the description (Wiehl & Barth 2021; chapter 6.6). Spontaneous writing requires sensitivity for outstanding moments, a certain linguistic competence, rich vocabulary and a quick grasp of direct speech. In addition, a sense of humour is

needed to detect unusual interactions and events. Something unexpected often says more about a person than the everyday routine and familiar impressions do. This is why we focus on a person's individual and unique characteristics when we write perceptual vignettes.

5.7 Writing perceptual vignettes

Although the previous sections contain many examples and considerations that can inspire observation and writing, we conclude this chapter with journaling exercises. We recommend that you write your own attempts by hand into a copybook, in other words you compose autographs as stepping stones towards phenomenological writing.

Journaling: reading and comparing perceptual vignettes

Read the two perceptual vignettes below (PV 5.13 and PV 5.14) out loud and note down or sketch the thoughts that come up. Distinguish between inner pictures, feelings, thoughts and (preconceived) judgements; be mindful of different text forms.

Like daily encounters with other people, perceptual vignettes can also contain affective moments.

Example 1: I loooove you!

We're sitting on the sofa watching a film.
You on the right, I on the left
It's already dark outside
Rain is pelting against the window
Something sad is happening on the telly,
Slowly, you move closer
A tear is running down your cheek
You bury your head in my lap
I stroke your back until you calm down
Something funny is happening on television now
You're laughing, singing, dancing
The film is coming to an end, you're getting tired
You lie down across my legs, your head at my feet
For a while you lie quietly
I think you may have fallen asleep
Suddenly you whirl around and say 'I looooove you'
You turn back and fall silent
The moment went so suddenly (PV 5.13)

Example 2: You're so mean to me

The class 3 children have gone to their places and have put all their things and personal belongings into their school bags. One girl continues to play with a little cat she has made herself from paper. The teacher is standing in the front, looking from one child to the next and waiting for everyone to be ready to start the lesson together. She notices that one girl is still playing with something she is holding in her hand. She gives the girl a stern look. 'Cara, put that away please,' she says in a clear and friendly voice. 'No, the animal needs to be outside,' Cara replies firmly. 'Cara!' the teacher calls, her voice slightly raised. 'You're so mean to me,' Cara says, puts the paper cat into her bag, muttering something under her breath, and sits upright on her chair (PV 5.1).

Journaling: describing a situation

Be mindful of moments that repeat themselves in everyday life, like the train guard who digitally checks the tickets or stamps the paper ones, or the post person ringing the doorbell and handing over the letters that are too big for the letter box. Describe the situations in few sentences in the present tense.

Journaling: visualizing

Rephrase the following perceptual vignettes in writing so that you can inwardly visualize all parts of it as they were originally perceived.

Joyfully you explore the world …

Colourful lights, Christmas music and an aroma of cinnamon in the air: this is how we experience the Christmas market. Joyfully, you explore the world, looking at everything very closely. Excited, you run from one stall to the next; you would love to pick up everything and try it out. You did very well with archery and even won a small prize. To have a better view of the spectacle we go up to the library; from there we can observe how all the colours play into each other. Cheerfully you go home and tell your mum about the day (PV 5.15).

Journaling: envisaging events

Rewrite the text Maths?, which is written in the narrative past tense, as a perceptual vignette; describe what is being seen and heard; use the present tense, avoid looking back and making assumptions; consider only the actual *events*.

Maths?

You could do maths all day long, if it wasn't for those worksheets that need filling in. Today we took a different approach. We sat down on the floor. When I concentrated on the homework, you got very interested and excited. I asked you to find the exercise and to explain it to me. You made your choice; I did the writing. 'How do I do this?' 'What next'? 'What's the result?' 'Is it correct?' We were a good team, the two of us. For the first time you were not distracted, you didn't get up or change the subject. Just before half the tasks were done, you had to take a break. You didn't want to wait until halfway. But when you came back, you had a snack and you asked without discussion if we could continue. We ended with a high five and praise for you. Copying down what we had worked on was no longer a problem for you (PV 5.16).

Part II
Using perceptual vignettes in (special needs) education

6 Developing a professional pedagogical attitude

'You must change your life', the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke demands in the last line of one of his poems. These words were chosen as the title of a widely read publication on practising (Sloterdijk 2009). They could equally serve as a title on attitude because attitude is not a quality that is given or to be expected but needs to be acquired through reflection and practise. Forms of spiritual practice derived, or to be derived, from philosophical and religious tradition constitute the foundation of attitudinal development and consequently – unlike in Bourdieu's habitus theory – the opportunity to break the power of habits (ibid., p. 287). As an inner orientation that other people notice or that influences others, these faculties evolve and are formed entirely individually in our interactions with ourselves and with others. These are faculties we bring with us as dispositions but which, if they are not developed through practice, are at risk of being dominated by subjective sensitivities, ideas and character traits. With a more or less conscious knowledge of attitude, I can become aware of them in self-reflection or in moments when resonances are elicited in others through me. The effect of attitude is comparable to atmosphere as the first object of perception (chapter 3.1) because it is directly expressed in actions, utterances, gestures and facial expressions. In focusing on attitude and its development, we expand our view as we move from the phenomenological aspects of working with perceptual vignettes (chapters 2 and 3) to a sphere of activity that is central to and ubiquitous in education. Attitude is active inner potential that becomes noticeable in external phenomena and therefore holds a key position in the reflection phases of perceptual vignettes (chapters 7 and 8).

Attitude and attitudinal development are currently widely discussed topics in education and the subject of many research studies and publications. There is as yet 'little reliable knowledge as to what is concretely meant by it' (Schratz 2021, p. 299). When we speak of 'attitude' as opposed to 'professional attitude' we realize how frequently the word is used in everyday language and how differently it is connoted. It is therefore important – as with all much used and quoted but rarely defined 'container terms' – to find the right way of using them. What exactly does 'attitude' mean in what context? How is it defined? How is it used? Starting from these questions, we will explore the question of attitude to identify aspects of the current scientific discourse as a basis for self-reflection and the reflective spiral we use in working with perceptual vignettes (chapters 6.1, 6.2). We regard attitudinal

development as part of pedagogical professionalization (chapters 6.3, 6.4, 6.5), which is made possible by the experience of responsivity and self-efficacy as much as by reflecting on practical pedagogical experiences and basic competences (chapter 6.6), in other words by self-reflection and self-development.

6.1 Attitude – habitus – beliefs – ethos

What do we mean by attitude?
Posture, mindset, questions of habit, of specific cultural influences or personal lifestyle, or of life choices and social conditions – the term 'attitude' is associated with diverse notions and phenomena. Categorizing the term theoretically therefore requires an approach that explores, captures and reflects contexts and levels from different angles (Kurbacher & Wüschner 2016, p. 11). Attitude encompasses 'an individual's elementary values, standards and views that significantly influence subjective thinking and actions. They are acquired and developed as part of socialization. A previously attained mature attitude can be newly negotiated and modified through intensive reflection and self- and world examination' (Dupuis et al. 2017, p. 7) It ranges from existential basic experiences to 'moral imperatives' and is 'inherent in any kind of ethics' (Kurbacher & Wüschner 2016, p. 11). The development of an individual attitude starts at birth, goes hand in hand with identity development and is influenced by the social context and society (Dupuis et al. 2017, p. 7).
The following definitions are relevant to working with perceptual vignettes and in particular to young people in university education:

- attitude is the [basic] inner mindset guiding a person's thinking and actions'
- attitude is the 'behaviour or conduct evoked by a particular inner mindset, constitution' (Duden, no date)
- as well as bodily posture, attitude is a 'faculty and ability that only humans have' (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 279).

If attitude is defined in relation to physical bodily aspects, it points us in the direction of the concept of habitus which describes a person's behaviour and appearance *in relation to something* or *as characteristic expression* (ibid.). Ethos, which is defined as 'a person's attitude or, at a social level, as morals and customs' (ibid., p. 205) means inner disposition arising from values (ibid.).
Existential philosophy sees attitude as a basic category: 'the way one views the world is behaviour as self-comportment that gives rise to actions' (Vetter 2020, p. 250), while philosophy in general discusses attitude in the context of ethical actions (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 279). The social sciences regard 'attitude […] as the personal disposition (values, convictions) that is acquired in socialization and reflection processes and that, along with knowledge and skills, impacts

on the orientation of our actions and can also express itself bodily (Domes & Wagner 2020, no page reference).

There is clearly some overlap of the concepts and content of mindset, habitus and ethos. 'Habitus' as a notion refers 'to the study of questions of attitude that goes back as far as Antiquity' (Schwer et al. 2014, p. 48). It includes multiple facets of philosophical and sociological theory that justify its use in the context of education (ibid., p. 49ff.). Habitus depends on living conditions. It implies the ability to change which is, however, described as inert potential (ibid., p. 50). In phenomenology, habituality is seen as representing the past and the common (such as traditions) (Wehrle 2023, p. 208) or an 'acquired, fixed disposition' (Vetter 2020, p. 250). According to Edmund Husserl, its antonym is actuality which can always exceed permanence and therefore dissolve the habitual (ibid.).

In his comprehensive treatise Peter Nickle (2005) pursues the concept of habitus back to the 'highest form' of human expression in classic Greek statues, to Thomas Aquinas' vertical integration of rationality and emotionality and the horizontal integration of intellect and affect in Franciscan thinking which, he concludes, needs further inquiry. He also recognizes a 'relationship between the idea of habitus with the philosophy of dialogue (Jacobi, Buber, Lévinas) on the one hand and the philosophy of value (Scheler) on the other: both have in common that they take feeling seriously because a relationship with the 'You', or with value, cannot be intellectually constructed but only attained affectively (in the passivity of devotion)' (Nickl 2005, p. VI). While Nickl paraphrases habitus as 'affective states' (ibid., p. 9), he also pursues philosophical and lifeworld aspects of the habitus theory throughout the history of philosophy up to Arnold Gehlen and Pierre Bourdieu, not to determine the normativity of the concept but to create opportunities for dialogue (ibid., p. 207). In the modern context and, specifically, in that of virtue ethics, the concept of habitus gives access to 'domains of human life and coexistence' that 'rationalistic descriptions have lost sight of' (Roick 2016, p. 26). The scope of our publication does not allow for a differentiated historical exploration of the habitus concept, but it seems important to consider above all the new approach to habitus as a mutable quantity introduced by Bourdieu (Nickl 2005; Fröhlich & Rehbein 2014, p. 110ff.; Sloterdijk 2009, p. 287f.). The problem that the terms 'habitus' and 'attitude' often merge and cannot be separated remains (Roick 2016, p. 29).

No profession or sphere of life has as lasting an impact on habitus as school. For a teacher habitus to ultimately emerge, it needs to be transformed and continuously developed throughout life (Kahlau 2023, p. 11). Joana Kahlau explores, from the point of view of habit theory, how a pupil habitus can evolve through a transitional student habitus into a teacher habitus (ibid., p. 11f.). She views practical teaching experience without reflection in academic teacher education as a topic in need of 'critical questioning in the context of professionalization' (ibid., p. 12).

This problem illustrates the importance of reflective engagement with practical teaching experience in teacher education (ibid.) as a foundation for students to be able to engage with their own attitude, with the background of this attitude and the need for change (chapters 7 and 8). Such reflection facilitates moments of waking up to one's own attitude of which one was previously unconscious:

> 'I had no idea that there could be a reason for rocking on the chair' (student in the third reflection phase; chapters 7.7 and 7.8)

'Attitude research belongs to the field of morality or pedagogical ethics' (Brinkmann & Rödel 2021, p. 46). Scrutiny of current publications on attitude(s) and ethos suggests a 'research gap' (ibid., p. 48) regarding this topic, because pedagogical ethics is a very complex but 'soft' culturally and individually informed subject that cannot simply be learned nor can it be tested (ibid.). The approach to attitudes is controversial because they 'touch on a person's affectivity' and are hardly conceivable 'without emotional involvement' (Kurbacher & Wüschner 2016, p. 12). Attitudes determine how we feel about something, how we deal with feelings, how we meet one another (ibid.). Mental, sensory, political, emotional and bodily aspects are influenced by attitudes and resonate with each other (ibid., p. 12). While teachers are expected to have values that determine their professional actions, there is no indication as to what kind of values are relevant or how to find the way from abstract values to concrete pedagogical actions (Brinkmann & Rödel 2021, p. 48). The Index for Inclusion provides orientation for teachers with a list of inclusive and excluding values (Booth & Ainscow 2019, p. 33ff.):

Inclusive values	Excluding values
equality	hierarchy
rights	utility
compassion	self-interest
beauty	performance
participation	image
wisdom	exploitation
sustainability	power
honesty	consumption
courage	conformity
trust	supervision
love	authority
community	clique mentality
non-violence	discrimination
hope/optimism	fatalism
joy	monoculture
respect for diversity	reward vs punishment
(ibid., p. 34)	(ibid., p. 44)

These values ask us to consciously gauge our own inner orientation and they enable us to assess how attitudes from each category affect the social sphere. These values can be a theoretical basis for examining attitudes in everyday pedagogical practice and for developing them in ways that can then find practical application. This step from theory to practice is however often 'tacitly expected without further explanation'(Brinkmann & Rödel 2021, p. 46). The transfer of theoretical knowledge to an often rather challenging practice via ethical-moral actions and corresponding strategies is often very difficult (ibid., p. 49). Also, the question remains as to 'how a professional sensorium for antinomies is formed and how "lived sensitivity" is interrelated with the "attitude and view of the experienced practitioner' (ibid.). The relationship level, which provides the context for moral-ethical actions, is also difficult to shape because teachers do not only relate to students (of whatever age) but have to act in ethical-moral ways in various roles. Ultimately, any 'catalogue of desirable behaviours in education' (ibid.) results in a 'controversial discourse on the plurality of ethical standards' (ibid.).

Professional attitude consequently needs to be developed in a theory-based process of reflection with analytical components (chapter 7) because it can neither be expected as given nor does it arise through theoretical study. Examples from practice – vignettes or perceptual vignettes in particular – describe micro-scenes from daily pedagogical practice based on which attitudes can be scrutinized at the most diverse levels (chapter 7). Sharing and discussing them opens ways of transferring the required knowledge to ethical-inclusive application in practice and vice

versa. Being able to recognize or know one's own values is the starting point for attitudinal development.

Journaling
Which values am I guided by in daily life? Which values inform my professional attitude in particular?

All our actions are based on an attitude that reflects 'our relationship both to the world – in general and to the concrete *object* of our action – and to ourselves' (Mührel 2019, p. 31). We cannot separate ourselves from our attitude, whatever its orientation; we can only make sure we are aware of it and then change it in accordance with our goals and views and develop it through practice (chapter 6.6). This means that the individual underlying quality of every attitude needs to be taken into consideration.

6.2 Beliefs versus attitude

The words 'beliefs' and 'attitude' are sometimes used synonymously. A joint research project of Berlin's Humboldt University and the Technical University in Dortmund (both in Germany) finds that 'beliefs' – in contrast to 'convictions' which are seen to have a strong cognitive element (Kuhl et al. 2013, p. 5) – are based on a philosophical concept.

> 'Beliefs are an object-related, value-based, individual system of clustered convictions that guide our actions in a partly conscious and partly unconscious way. Beliefs can contain both affective and cognitive components that have been acquired through experiences, insights, instructions and/or information and remain consistent over a longer period of time but can be altered in the course of life' (ibid., p. 6)

Beliefs arise during and are informed by study, but they also influence the choice of study. Experts tend to assume that the beliefs of students of different pedagogical study courses already differ when they begin their studies (ibid., p. 7).

> 'Generally speaking, it has become apparent that beliefs develop specifically in relation to professions and that these profession-related convictions arise during the study course or that they are even present before study begins. It is however true to say that the beliefs of special needs teachers and elementary school teachers in some areas differ less than expected' (ibid., p. 22).

Phenomenology clearly distinguishes between 'attitude' and 'beliefs' because according to Husserl's theory, convictions are intentionally directed at objects (Vetter, p. 70). Beliefs encompass central concepts, reaching from assertions or propositions viewed as objective to subjective convictions. Intentional theory

distinguishes between 'beliefs' as 'belief of something' and 'belief in something' (ibid.). Beliefs are neither final nor conditional and therefore always transformable (ibid., p. 71).

Journaling

- When I reflect on the term 'attitude', I think of …
- What values would I use to express my personal attitude?
- How has my habitus evolved?
- What are my beliefs?
- What attitude am I bringing to my profession?
- Why did I choose to become a teacher, educator, special needs teacher …?
- What professional attitude do I expect in my work?
- What can I do for my professional attitude?
- What could I work on?
- What do I need for that?
- Where have I experienced my attitude to be effective?
- What do I expect from leaders in terms of attitude?
- What do I expect from my colleague in terms of professional attitude?
- What do I mean by 'learner's attitude' (Schratz 2021, p. 306)?
- What could I develop to achieve this?

6.3 Professional attitude in (special needs) education

The topic of professional attitude can be introduced through philosophy since ethics as 'a branch of practical philosophy asks about our attitude to the world and consequently to other human beings and ourselves. It looks generally for well-founded values and standards as well as goals and purposes of human actions' (Mührel 2019, p. 36).

Since this book is about developing a methodology for training young people in inclusive (special needs) education, we examine the question of *professional attitude* in search of a more precise definition. Michael Domes and Leonie Wagner explain that in the context of social work professional attitude 'usually designates a specific, democratic and/or participatory disposition in which personal convictions are examined based on expert knowledge and applied whilst giving consideration to the perspective of the recipients and of the institutional, social or political context and ethical principles' (Domes & Wagner 2020, no page reference). There are three dimensions of pedagogical attitude: attitudes first of all express value judgments; this concerns the *normative* dimension. Attitudes can also be *relational*

in that they relate to oneself or to someone or something else. Finally, attitudes become concrete reality in *spatial, temporal, relational and bodily practices* (Christof et al. 2020, p. 55).

Professional attitude can only be tolerated in the tension between understanding and respect (Mührel 2019, p. 121) as it unfolds 'in its different facets and at different levels' (ibid., p.129). This includes, on the one hand, an underlying level of competence that needs to be seen as part of a partnership or from the point of view of the other person (ibid., p. 130); on the other hand, it relies on the mediating role between individual and society that, in social work, forms a bridge which needs to be professionally created. Ultimately, all work-related actions need to rest on a professional attitude (ibid., p. 131f.). In the social and inclusive context there is always the possibility that understanding another person implies an appropriation of power over them (ibid., p. 122) and descends into disregard or contempt (ibid., p. 124).

Pedagogical attitude arises in each individual case from a person's views, values and convictions, from individual self-reference and self-competence. As a professional attitude it resembles an inner compass that enables 'stability, sustainability and context sensitivity in judgement and action' (Kuhl et al. 2014, p.107). A person's actions are consequently on the one hand 'highly coherent and comprehensible beyond a given situation,' while, on the other hand, 'a high situational sensitivity [develops] for the potential, needs and skills of the persons involved' (ibid.). Attitude is based on values and convictions, while a *professional attitude* requires the integration of life experience and orientation to the object, which in this case is education. In principle we can say that 'attitude is co-determined by external conditions, but it also determines them (feedback processes)' (ibid.).

Although attitude is described 'as hardly transparent and therefore susceptible to differing ideological interpretations and content' (Solzbacher & Schwer 2015, p. 142), we make decisive statements regarding pedagogical professionalism in the context of inclusive schools, organizations and society. In addition to a 'subjective surface' (i.e. convictions, views, etc.), characteristic features of a professional attitude are explained by characteristics of a well-developed self. The three most important characteristics of an individually developed (healthy) attitude are:

- solid and coherent decisions that consider decisions, personal values, needs and skills (one's own and those of others)
- integrating feelings, needs and body perceptions (one's own and those of others)
- broad attention displayed by a person (Kuhl et al. 2014, p. 108).

These competences which are rooted in a professional pedagogical attitude determine how pedagogical situations are perceived and assessed by the persons involved in each case. 'Attitude in this sense is a central aspect of pedagogical actions' (ibid., p. 109). The corresponding actions in a professional field are de-

rived from methods, pedagogical targets and concepts, and scientific-theoretical foundations (ibid.). Professional attitude includes initial reaction which cannot be easily overcome by training. Often it even has genetic determinants and is part of a person's identity' (ibid., p. 111). A well-trained person combines it with a well-developed secondary response (ibid., p. 109). The formation and development of a professional pedagogical attitude are supported by emotional stability and values, open-mindedness and inner freedom (ibid., p. 114f.) as well as by external structures such as the climate in an organization (ibid., p. 117). The arguments presented show that the acquisition of self-competences by teachers 'requires immense development in order to work out methods that are suited to the specific conditions of a school or study course' (ibid., p. 119). A balance is needed between objectively developed self-competences and subjective self-experiences, convictions and views (ibid., p. 118). This differentiation can be learned and taught, and time and space should be made for that in the development of a professional pedagogical attitude. A crucial factor in this is what knowledge is being imparted and how it is conveyed to students based on values and children's rights.

In the context of inclusion in particular, the question of a corresponding attitude is growing ever more important. In a research project in 2013/2014, Claudia Solzbacher and Christina Schwer (2015) demonstrate ways of approaching the significance of a 'professional pedagogical attitude' successfully (ibid., p. 144): inclusive actions require us to be open to something new; previous experiences can help as they can be called upon to mobilize (positive) emotions; our inner compass receives its direction from such experiences and can determine new behaviours (ibid., p. 150). With every initial or renewed attitudinal orientation, reactions and actions can change because they are driven by our mental disposition: 'mental flexibility' is created (ibid.) and, within the limits of self-congruence, attitude becomes changeable due to 'context sensitivity' (ibid.). As part of a process of reflection with analytical components, all this enables a flexible and possibly inclusion-sensitive attitude.

The demand for inclusion makes evident that a corresponding professional attitude can neither be prescribed nor appealed to (Solzbacher 2019, p. 42f.). Inclusion therefore needs openness for new things, mental flexibility and reflection that directs one's own inner compass towards inclusion based on knowledge and experience. 'A stable and reliable pedagogical attitude consequently needs above all a "strongly integrative self"' (Solzbacher & Schwer 2015, p. 151). This self needs strengthening, however, and for that an 'inner compass' is required, as are self-competences which can be learned throughout life (ibid.).

> 'Self-competences also determine a person's potential and limitations in defining their own values and goals self-congruently and in implementing what they consider valua-

> ble (such as pedagogical goals, actions or behaviours). In summary, this means that it depends on a person's self-competences whether they can "live out" their attitude in an authentic and self-congruent way' (ibid., p. 152).

These individually developed self-competences give direction to a person's inner compass and are an essential prerequisite to a professional pedagogical attitude (ibid., p. 153). It is clearly important what topics play a part in (special needs) teacher education and how they are activated in developing a professional attitude.

> 'According to our research, attitude relies importantly on various mental functions (we call them self-competences) which include holistic feeling, recognizing contexts, keeping an overview, being awake to contradictory expectations and impulses both from within and from outside, being able to integrate difficult experiences and regulate emotions oneself. Attitude thus presents itself as our 'backbone', giving us stability' (Solzbacher 2019, p. 45).

Teacher education that aims at inclusion must meet the requirements of an 'evolving pedagogical attitude' (Lindmeier & Junge 2017, no page reference). A professional pedagogical attitude encompasses much more than 'views, beliefs, subjective theories or (normative) ideas regarding notions of human nature, pedagogical concepts, theories, practices' (Schwer & Solzbacher 2014, p. 215). How and what teachers think does not yet constitute an attitude; a high degree 'of reflexivity, autonomous routines, context sensitivity and above all integrative competence' (ibid., p. 216) are needed for developing a *professional* pedagogical attitude. Despite a certain risk of being torn between authenticity, or personal attitude, and professional actions (ibid., p. 219), attitude can be taught and learned.

6.4 Professional pedagogical attitude and inclusion

> 'Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it, and by the same token save it from the ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world' (Arendt 1968, p. 193).

In these thoughts which were written long before the discourse on inclusion started, Hannah Arendt refers to a central task of education: doing right by children between leaving them to themselves and actively preparing them 'for the task of renewing a common world' (ibid.). From this field of tension rise the requirements of a professional pedagogical attitude in the discourse on inclusion. The necessary attitude 'evolves, is almost wrought from manifold life experiences and

becomes a deeply rooted view of oneself, of the things, of life itself. An attitude and the action arising from it, the behaviour, takes hold of the whole person in their unity of body, mind and soul' (Dreber 2021, p. 24); and it takes into account the development of individuals in connection with their surroundings and their future.

We assume, maintain, or let go of an attitude. We face the world and show ourselves through our attitude (Rödel et al. 2022, p. 8). But how can the development of a professional attitude in the inclusive context be supported? What conditions are needed? How can a college or university course achieve this? These are not new questions, but they have been pursued more decidedly since the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially in inclusive teacher education (Kuhl et al. 2013; EPIK; Schenz 2012; summarized in Kahlau 2023; chapter 7).

Attitudinal development can take place when phenomenological approaches are implemented and practised in teacher education; it 'can (and should) lead to enhanced mindfulness towards oneself and the recipients of pedagogical actions' (Brinkmann 2017, p. 9). Seminars and exercises that universities can provide to support the development of a professional attitude, should be implemented from the very beginning. Although the availability of data on this topic is limited both nationally and internationally, university seminars on inclusive education and/or special needs education can bring about a change of attitude. According to Bettina Lindmeier and Marian Laubner there are indications 'that the combination of knowledge transfer and practice-based seminars is superior when it comes to a differentiated pedagogical attitude to knowledge transfer alone' (Lindmeier & Laubner 2015, p. 310). Initiating pedagogical practical experience in seminars, evaluating and reflecting on them in relation to attitudes (chapter 7) are essential aspects of our work with perceptual vignettes. The following concise statement of a student reflects this:

> 'Don't be biased; my assumptions don't reflect the child's truth' (from a student's third reflection phase, chapter 7.9)

Developing such an attitude is the responsibility of each individual, because in the age of value pluralism there are no longer clearly defined moral concepts or a universally valid moral code that would determine the cultural centre of society. We need to acquire our own ethical basis for attitude. This includes that we orient ourselves towards inclusive values and develop our own attitude in response to the urgent questions of life and of our time. The current renaissance of ethics as a way of life is hardly surprising (Mührel 2019, p. 42) and expresses a longing for orientation. It is not enough, however, for a professional attitude; professional attitude needs practice (chapter 6.6) and knowledge (ibid., p. 47f.). Attitude is not plannable or doable; not even in the professional context can it be objectively determined

or empirically measured, nor is it subject to any subjective autonomy (ibid., p. 49). Attitude can evolve when we reflect on actions, which means that reflection follows after action. Reflecting on actions leads to an attitude that is sensitive to inclusion and conscious of barriers: 'Ethos or pedagogical attitude are therefore apparent in practical, personal decisions and the resulting (active) positioning that calls on experience in a particular situation and follows pre-predicative judgement' (Rödel et al. 2022, p. 10). What is needed therefore are opportunities for students to become conscious of their pedagogical actions. College and university are important places to pave the way for professional attitudes (chapters 6, 7 and 8) and to practise judgement, distancing and reflection which can then crystallize into an attitude (Rödel et al. 2022, p. 11). Ultimately, it is about 'receiving and admitting the other' (Mührel 2019, p. 138) as the foundation of a professional attitude in the social and pedagogical context.

The challenge lies in the 'problem of theorization': 'ethos manifests in practice and can only be experienced as practice' (Brinkmann & Rödel 2021, p. 50). This means we need occasions of practice to create theoretical categorizations. The situational decisions that occur in practice and that are carried by a corresponding attitude could be supported by regular reflective exchange on diverse topics that shape attitude. Team discussions based on the reflection spiral of the perceptual vignettes could for instance be integrated in the daily pedagogical practice (chapter 7), because 'ethos cannot be implemented by insight or volition' (ibid., p. 51), but it consists of habitual experiences that manifest in practice (ibid.). Ethos therefore needs to be developed and directed in the practical context for the practical context 'through exercise, repetition and experience' (ibid.).

Authentic (pedagogical) interaction with people that is carried by self-reflection and a holistic understanding cannot be promoted with appeals but through the development of a strongly integrative self and the corresponding self-competences (Kuhl et al. 2014, p. 99). The professional development of a pedagogical attitude requires the transfer of knowledge as well as methods for accessing the corresponding mental subsystem and activating it for the professional practice based on the given situation (ibid., p. 103). In training and professional development, specific modules are offered for this as well as options focusing on experience, knowledge, reflection and transfer (ibid.). These focal points resemble the stages of the reflection spiral in the context of the perceptual vignettes (chapter 7).

Journaling

'The responsibility for the development of the child turns in a certain sense against the world' (Arendt 1968, p. 193). What does this statement by Hannah Arendt tell us about professional action in the context of inclusion?

6.5 Professionalizing pedagogical attitude

New professionalization concepts respond to the need for reform and to demands to develop and enhance an experimental, inquiring attitude and an analytical, reflexive approach to the complexity of pedagogical actions in order to be flexible in unknown territory such as inclusion and able to adequately judge the dynamics of change in the education system (Solzbacher 2019, p. 45).

> *Journaling*
> What helps me move on professionally? How do I reflect on my actions? Do I have specific exercises for this? What carries me?
> What forms of communication and qualification would I wish for?
> (Please feel welcome to email these to us. We are considering an online course).

The concept of professionalization as such needs to be examined more closely. Joana Kahlau is working on an up-to-date categorization (Kahlau 2023, p. 16ff.) and has identified an individual and a collective professionalization process (ibid., p. 16). The two overlap and are part of a process in a person's professional biography in which professionalism emerges. Ideally this professionalism is reflected on throughout that person's career. 'Education' constitutes *the* basis for pedagogical professionalism. The pedagogical practice needs to be reflected on and interpreted with regard to its inner coherence. However, in reconsidering key pedagogical questions, the connection between theory and practice, reflection and action, intention and the effect of pedagogical activities is not always apparent (Schenz 2012, p. 92).

Viewing professionalization as a lifelong process is particularly relevant in education and begins long before teacher education at college or university. The process includes early experiences as well as skills and views and will ideally be ongoing throughout a person's professional life (Schwer et al. 2014, p. 51). For decades, professionalization methods have been explicitly published in the context of reflection models (cf. Kahlau 2023) that are diverse because they are aimed at heterogeneous groups of trainees, students and student teachers and must therefore offer different forms of training and professional development (Kahlau 2023, p. 278f.). The relevant literature provides approaches based on structure, competence, cultural theory, professional biography and personality (ibid., p. 17ff.). In summary, these theoretical approaches propose that the professionalization of student teachers at university should include 'the perception and elaboration of developmental tasks and the development of a scientific and reflexive habitus, framed by foundations of structural theory and habitus theory' (ibid., p. 41). Reflection and reflexivity are important elements of this.

Looking at the research results that exist so far, it is disconcerting, however, that the time spent at university is seen as hardly effective in terms of attitudinal development, although it is the time when formative discomfort through experiences is possible (Kahlau 2023, p. 52). The what, where and how of university studies therefore need to be considered (ibid., p. 272ff.). Professionalization at university level is about the *subject-matter*, the *in-between* – as a transitional process for professionalization at diverse levels (subject-specific, personal, as transition from pupil habitus to student habitus to teacher habitus) and about *reflection,* which students experience explicitly as productive in this transitional phase (ibid., p. 275). Since practitioners and scientists ultimately agree 'that one aims at ethically based dimensions of pedagogical action' (Schratz 2021, p. 299), a group of researchers and scientists decided to develop a manual. In 2022, a research cooperation of Berlin's Humboldt University (Germany) and Innsbruck University, the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and Vienna University (all in Austria) published a manual for developing a professional attitude during university education. The manual describes the development of professional actions and professional attitude as one of the 'most complex and difficult tasks' (Rödel et al. 2022, p. 5) in university training. The manual is based on the EPIK[2] domain concept which introduces a professionalization model of teacher education focusing on five central domains of professional action in the context of schools and teaching: professional awareness, reflection and discourse, ability to differentiate, cooperation and collegiality, personal mastery and the sixth integrative discipline that combines all the others in a holistic whole of theory and practice. Each of these domains is subdivided into interweaving and not clearly distinguishable abilities, skills and attitudes. The last domain permeates the other five and focuses them in their respective areas: 'The domain Ability to Differentiate differs depending on where it is used, in mathematics at school, in early years settings or in a consultation situation' (EPIK, no date).

Journaling

Consider the five central features of pedagogical actions:

- professional awareness
- the capacity for reflection and discourse
- the ability to differentiate
- cooperation and collegiality
- personal mastery

Where are they relevant for you personally? Find examples from everyday life.

2 EPIK stands for Entwicklung von Professionalität im internationalen Kontext (professionalization in the international context)

Every attitude is based on the image one has of the human being and this image is used as a compass for a living pedagogical behaviour, even if personal attitudes have biographical roots and cannot easily be changed because they often remain unconscious. Strategies involving reflection and analysis can help to 'address questions of attitude and be used for personal and professional development' (Schratz 2021, p. 315). Self-efficacy drives the development of personal, and ultimately also professional pedagogical attitudes. An organization's vision statement can also help with this if it mirrors attitudes. However, vision statements are only effective if as many individuals as possible actively represent them (ibid.).
An important insight to be gained from the above considerations is that new attitudes can arise from crises and disruptions such as the Covid pandemic and promote developments such as the enhanced practice of mindfulness, or digitality (ibid.). One student draws the following conclusion from her pedagogical work placement:

> 'Conclusion: discovering a slower pace
> The three weeks are already over, and they just flew by. I nevertheless entitle this placement report 'The Discovery of Slowness', because the days with Clara and the work with the perceptual vignettes have sharpened my perception and decelerated my actions. I have been made aware once again of my previous routine way of working and acting.' (Reflection in student's work placement report).

Attitude arises from reflection as an act of relating or connecting back to something. Aspects of relating to something or someone other are intrinsic to attitudes.

> 'I relate – this means I direct myself to something, orient myself to something; however, orientation and direction, tendency, action and execution are only possible in this movement if I am aware of myself as involved in what is happening. This means that the very act of relating reflects me and the process of my relating itself' (Kurbacher 2006, no page reference).

Attitude evolves. It does not exist of itself; it takes a direction; we are our attitude. It emerges through processes of relating to ourselves and to others. 'It is a reference to the concrete and in principle changeable way we are that is nonetheless the way we are (and no other)' (Kurbacher 2006, no page reference). Attitude can be made fruitful through a 'multi-perspective basic concept of human (self-)reflection and understanding' (Kurbacher & Wüschner 2016, p. 14). The concept of attitude is not easily accessible and can harbour the possibility of discomfort and risks; engaging with it is often 'a balancing act' (ibid., p. 14f.). A critical attitude grows from critical (self-)reflection and only then deserves the name *attitude* in the true sense of the word. 'It is then also a sign of responsibility and a response to others, to otherness, to what is alien, to the world, in short: a sign of responsivity' (ibid., p.15).

Ultimately, the development of attitude and of pedagogical professionalism require 'repeated practice' (Roick 2016, p. 25). In our experience, the 'exercises in perception, observation and thinking' (chapter 3.4) are elementary and effective. They are complemented in the following section by 'exercises for the development of a pedagogical ethos' (chapter 6.6) and can contribute to a targeted and specific application of reflection.

6.6 Exercises for developing pedagogical ethos

Developing pedagogical ethos is the responsibility of the individual. Engaging with the topic can help us become aware of our own attitude and ways of acting in specific, especially surprising, unusual or challenging pedagogical situations (as recommended in the ELBE Manual by Rödel et al. 2022). Self-reflection can awaken us to the need for coping with ordinary and extraordinary situations and for self-empowerment. Being able to draw conclusions from this for the development of a professional pedagogical attitude requires, aside from external reflection or coaching, the decision to achieve professionalization through self-development. This relies on faculties that we have brought with us but that need honing through exercise to become self- and socially effective. They include behaviours that influence, support and change our own attitude and that are rooted in schooled thinking, feeling and will.

The way I think about a person, what feelings and actions they trigger in me depends on a more or less conscious self-direction and is expressed in the social behaviour we cultivate. Mindfulness and appreciation are ideals that give orientation to what we say or how we act and that we strive to develop in pedagogical and general life contexts by means of professional training or coaching. The methods and techniques used for this purpose are based on self-education exercises and aim at social effectiveness. Examples of this are the mindfulness exercises used in schools to support the learning and developmental processes of children and young people and improve the social climate (Kaltwasser 2008). Some teachers also choose this mindfulness training, but according to Ha Vinh Tho, the former happiness minister in Bhutan and state education adviser in Vietnam, this is not enough because it is important to also consider the 'ethical dimensions' of attitude (Wiehl 2018, p. 163ff.).

In 2017, Annedore Prengel and her team published ten guidelines in their appeal for an ethical orientation in education ('Reckahner Reflexionen', German Institute for Human Rights, 2017). Ethical professional actions, they state, include appreciation, listening, giving feedback, learning and behavioural support, fostering a sense of belonging, being mindful to interests and needs, self-respect and recognition of others; as non-admissible they list discrimination, disrespect

and discouragement as well as disregarding any harm children and young people inflict on each other (ibid., p. 4). These behaviours and characteristics conceal tendencies, ranging from respect and sympathy to dislike and antipathy, that can be consciously applied or avoided in reactions. Developing pedagogical ethos therefore includes developing respect for human dignity in every situation. Generally, these faculties enable and foster 'quality of life' (Nussbaum 2019, p. 26f.); in relation to thinking, feeling and will, they enable self-development and the development of attitude in social work, particularly in education.

Professionalizing the pedagogical attitude requires actors and leaders to be able to adequately assess a situation, reflect on their own attitude and adjust their own thinking, emotional responses and actions accordingly (Scharmer 2022, p. 100ff.). When confronted with repeated or unexpected events that concern us personally, whether in our private or professional life, we respond somehow – emotionally, intellectually, verbally and actively – or we withdraw. The emotions and thoughts arising in us in such moments can be situational, spontaneous, empathetic or detached, even negative. Any further reactions depend on those initial ones that usually guide our thinking and actions. This dependency can be broken up by self-reflection and exercises that support the development of thinking, feeling and will.

Consideration of methods of phenomenological reflection and of the capacities required for a pedagogical ethos leads us to a series of exercises by Rudolf Steiner (2010) that, similarly to the exercises for 'perception, observation and thinking' (chapter 3.4), start with the schooling of thinking but are aimed primarily at the effect of our own thinking and behaviours on the way we experience ourselves, others and the world and seem suitable for the development of an ethical attitude. These exercises, originally developed by Steiner as 'supplementary exercises' for preparing oneself for meditative spiritual development, correspond to the mindfulness training (Kaltwasser 2016) that is often recommended today to adults, children and young people for personal strengthening (Schmelzer 2016, p. 657ff.). Steiner's 'supplementary exercises' work on the soul forces of thinking, feeling and will and enable the development of the qualities of 'control of thoughts, initiative of will, equanimity, positivity, open-mindedness and equilibrium of soul' (Steiner 2010, p. 1). They aim to remove the outer and inner 'hindrances' in the soul's relationship with itself, the outer world, people and events (ibid., p. 4f.). For the purpose of *journaling,* we recommend exercises for the development of attitude which we based on Steiner's six mindfulness exercises and to which we have added a review and a preview exercise. For personal development, regular inner practice has shown to be helpful, as have the experiences gained by journaling.

(1) Control of thoughts – for the development of thinking
The first exercise trains concentrated thinking; it is the precondition for all further exercises because it keeps thoughts from 'flitting about' or drifting away, keeping them strictly focused on one particular object in order to learn to think 'appropriately and invoking inner strength' (ibid., p. 6f.). For this first exercise, Steiner recommends choosing a concept or thinking of a rather insignificant object like an office clip or a glasses case. You can follow your own inclination in choosing an object or concept, then concentrate on it for a few minutes every day, and 'through nothing but your own inner initiative sequentially add all that can objectively be connected with it' (ibid., p. 13).

Journaling (1): Practising concentration in thinking and ideation

a) Concentrate on a concept such as 'partaking' for instance; note how it is composed of 'part' and 'take'. The first syllable refers to an aspect or part of something; it is associated with sharing and can be found in words like participate, impart or partial. The second syllable, 'take', originally derives from grasping, laying hold. When we partake, we share in something, are part of it, belong to it. – We are aiming here at expanding the concept so that its original meaning is not lost. When the thoughts begin to drift during this exercise, we guide them back to the initial thought.
b) Concentrate on an object: choose something that is not too complicated, a *glasses case*, for instance, or a *key fob*. Place the object before you on the table and try to perceive and memorize as many details as possible. Then close your eyes and go through your observations again in your mind by recalling detail after detail and finally the entire object. When you are distracted, for instance by the surroundings of the object which you also register, or the origin of the object, or any association, allow them to light up and consciously direct your thoughts back to the object.

Effect on attitude development: being able to consciously observe and engage with something.

Controlling our thoughts in this way in a daily exercise of three to five minutes is doable. People who have experience with this practice state that it has a positive effect on their ability to concentrate in their daily life and work. They also notice that their concentration noticeably drops again as soon as they stop practising (Heertsch 2007, p. 28). Allowing thoughts and ideas to take over, drift off into imagined and fictive associations or simply reiterate earlier thoughts can lead to unreflected and biased reactions. The ability to remain 'with the things' and consistently focus on a matter, occurrence or a person's situation, engage with them and try to share the experience, can support the development of professional attitude.

(2) Initiative of action – for strengthening the will
Will is not to be confused with wish or desire because it only comes to expression in actions and activities that have been carried out. Emotions and cognition can be influenced by will, but will finds its pure expression when intentions are put into practice. In our everyday familial or professional lives, necessities overlap with external influences and self-determination; many activities are not initiated by our own will. If we, for instance, no longer have to get up early to go to school or to work, we may no longer have any motivation to continue certain activities regularly and we begin to 'let go'. This may seem pleasant in terms of wellbeing, but it does not strengthen our will. When we no longer have a daily structure imposed on us, we may find it difficult to provide it ourselves.
The following examples show something that is typical of will: will takes place in the future. Any activities that we carry out of our own accord, without any external prompting, are suitable for schooling the will. The concentration exercise for gaining control of our thoughts is a will exercise, too. Since will manifests most evidently in repeated and self-determined actions, we should resolve to carry out an insignificant action every day.

Journaling (2): practising initiative and will activity

a) Smiling: note how other people meet you in the morning, their facial expression, body language, what they are saying and what effect this has on you. – Resolve to greet everyone with a friendly smile when you meet them for the first time on the following days. Repeat this daily and observe how others respond and whether anything changes as you meet them again. Wait to see if someone notices or says anything. – This is not about gaining benefit from anything. Even if you only try to make a difference to the general mood by smiling (chapter 6.1), others will notice this.
b) Insignificant action: think of an object that is always accessible to you and that does not require any action from you. It can be your wedding ring, a mirror or a curtain. Resolve to do something with this object every day at the same time – turn the ring, look in the mirror or close and open the curtain. If the chosen object is not in reach on a particular day, use something else. The main thing is that you continue the meaningless action regularly without there being any need to do it.

Effect on attitude development: presence of mind and adequate action

This will-strengthening exercise can be carried out alongside the exercise for gaining control of our thoughts (Steiner 2010, p. 17f.), so that the 'appropriate thinking' gained through concentration is not lost again. Building up 'initiative of action' (ibid., p. 20) as an inner strength is not or hardly possible with activities that are imposed from outside, that is, caused by external necessity or tasks and

instructions given by others. Daily or professional duties in particular can fully absorb us and once they have been done the power of initiative wanes (ibid.). This is why we should choose for our will exercise 'insignificant actions which arise from our own initiative' (ibid.) and accomplish 'an action daily that arises from one's own most intrinsic initiative' (ibid., p. 20f.).

(3) Equanimity – for the development of feeling

The third exercise is about consciously controlling mood swings and unreflected feelings (ibid., p. 27f.). Events that move, affect or shock us can evoke strong emotional responses that might overwhelm us. While being carried away between 'sky-high elation' and 'deep gloom' (ibid., p. 29) are 'natural' responses, they also mean that we are dependent on how we feel in any given moment. Developing our feeling by practising equanimity 'means mastering the greatest joy and the profoundest pain. In fact, we only become fully receptive to the joys and sufferings in the world when we no longer lose ourselves in pain and pleasure, no longer immerse ourselves in them egotistically' (ibid., p. 31). The following examples illustrate ways of responding to unexpected situations and surprising or frightening events; these we try to seek out in everyday life.

Journaling (3): practising equanimity

a) Equanimity at school: Imagine you enter an upper school classroom ready to start your lesson. You hear lively chatting, some students are sitting on their chairs, others are leaning on the radiators or gathered in small groups at the back of the classroom. The need to talk seems so great that only a few students return your greeting and follow your friendly invitation to go to their places. 'What do I do now?' you ask yourself. You think for a moment, then set up what you need for the lesson and try again. – This time you focus on your intention to deepen a particular topic with the students. You decide to be fully present and open to whatever comes towards you. You say a few words to the class and all the students get ready for class. – Equanimity in this case means giving *others* space and time.

b) Equanimity on a train: we expect trains to leave and arrive on time, but delays are a daily experience. Imagine you get to the station and read the display: 'Train cancelled due to train repairs.' You are in a hurry and find an alternative connection that does not take you directly to your destination but involves two extra connections. The first connecting train is delayed so that you miss your second connection. What to do? – Whatever you do or think, the situation is what it is. The only thing to do is to adapt to it and use the extra time *as a gift* in a meaningful way. – Equanimity also means giving *yourself* space and time.

Effect on attitude development: equanimity and empathetic turning towards

Examples of missed or successful equanimity are by necessity in the past. Looking back is not about judging whether you did the right thing or not but about realizing that a situation in which you stayed equanimous can make you more susceptible to feelings of joy or pain, without losing yourself or dwelling on them egotistically. 'The greatest artists,' Steiner points out, 'have achieved the most through this composure, because it enabled them to open their souls to important subtle or inner qualities' (Steiner 2010, p. 31)

(4) Impartiality – developing positivity in thinking and feeling
Impartiality is the objective of the fourth exercise (ibid., p. 38ff.) and appears to be a positive quality some people have. They are open and inquisitive, meet others without prejudice, are open for new things and interested, while others respond to disruptions, strangers and unexpected situations with suspicion, criticism and reservation. Meeting otherness impartially, however different and alien it may initially appear, requires the conscious decision 'to seek and find the positive aspect in all things and occurrences' (ibid., p. 41), to see goodness and beauty in them. Daily life, as we can see in the examples below, offers plenty of opportunity for this exercise.

Journaling (4): practising impartiality and positivity

a) Water colour puddle: imagine a class 5 painting with water colours. Every desk has painting boards, white paper, brushes, water jars, sponges and several little jars with different water colours. While most children are immersed in their work, one child gets up, walks to the sink to rinse something; on their way back, they walk past other desks, their sleeve gets caught on someone else's colour jar, which drops on the floor causing a big blue puddle. – How should you respond? By showing how annoyed you are, scolding the child and admonishing them to clean up? By helping them to mop up the paint? Or with humour, making light of the misfortune – without even a hint of irritation? 'Well, you've created a great blue painting. Let's mop it up again.'
b) Pollen: you come home and the stairs and entrance to the house are covered in pollen from the flowering trees. It has rained and the pollen sticks to the ground, forming little round mounds that cannot be blown away by the wind. The thought of having to step in the pollen before entering the house can elicit different reactions, from indifference to irritation. The pollen will probably cause a mess inside. – What do we see and think? How annoying to have all this pollen in front of the house! It needs clearing up. Or: how beautiful the stairs look covered in pollen! It reminds me of Wolfgang Laib's pollen installations.

Effect on attitude development: empathetic openness to positivity, goodness and beauty

We cannot plan to be more open and impartial in future, but new opportunities arise again and again for practising impartiality in the face of unfortunate or happy and encouraging events. The above examples serve as preliminary exercises that can awaken us to the many moments and encounters we have in everyday life. When we tend to perceive unpleasant aspects first, we can consciously resolve to try and find something positive at the same time.

(5) Open-mindedness in thinking and will

With our daily consciousness we have experiences of reality which we distinguish from beliefs, fiction, fantasies and virtuality. Practising open-mindedness requires us to always keep 'a tiny backdoor of belief open' (ibid. p. 52) rather than responding spontaneously with a statement such as 'I've never seen or heard that before! I don't believe it' (ibid., p. 53); it might, after all, be true what others say. We decide to use every opportunity to 'allow all things, beings or people to tell us something new' (ibid., p. 49) however strange these phenomena, events or statements may seem. We take them in and remain open to thinking differently from how we are used to think so as to not 'close off [our] capacity to have new experiences' and 'leave ourselves open for new experiences' (ibid., p. 52). Our first example is one suggested by Steiner (2022, p. 92)

Journaling (5): practising open-mindedness

a) Leaning steeple: we meet an acquaintance who tells us that the steeple of the local church has started to tilt and is now leaning at a 45-degree angle. We are probably taken aback and will not believe them. Alternatively, we can think of the tower of Pisa which has been famously leaning for centuries. – Our task here is not to focus on doubt and negation but keep an open mind and consider the possibility that the steeple may now be leaning at 45 degrees. We imagine ourselves going to the church and seeing the leaning steeple. However, we don't lose ourselves in fantasies or fiction but allow ourselves to think new thoughts so that we can see the world with new eyes again.
b) An argument with a child: imagine a class 4. During break, the children like acting out the stories they have heard in the lesson. Today they are in their castle, which can be reached by a bridge across a marshy ditch. Some children are defending the castle, while others try to storm it. Everyone laughs when some of the pupils fall into the ditch, climb out again and fall back in. This goes on until the bell rings for the next lesson. Most of the children are wet and have muddy shoes. – How do we respond to this challenging situation as teachers? With anger or humour? Can we meet the children on the following day free from old impressions, trusting that they will develop in a positive way? This would be an expression of open-mindedness.

Effect on attitude development: unprejudiced and impartial openness; trust in development and positive outcomes.

The two examples illustrate that it is easier to test our impartiality on a surprising and initially incredible story but that it is more difficult than with the other exercises to imagine a pedagogical situation that would ask us to be unprejudiced and impartial in dealing with other people. Developing open-mindedness in thinking and will requires an inner shift by freeing ourselves from ingrained and normative conceptions. We open ourselves to the risks of real life, hold back judgement and adjust our inner attitude.

(6) Inner equilibrium for the development of harmoniousness
The exercise for gaining inner equilibrium (ibid., p. 58f.) requires us to bring the 'soul qualities' acquired in the five preceding exercises 'into harmonious accord with one another' (ibid., p. 58). Steiner recommends to 'repeat all five exercises in rhythmic alternation' (ibid., p. 61), because inner balance develops 'subsequently through the five other qualities, entirely by itself. We need to attend to these six qualities. We must take our life in hand and gradually progress: slowly and surely like a drop of water wearing away a stone' (ibid., p. 60). Perseverance is essential to finding this harmony of mind and soul, also referred to as 'life balance', and to experiencing real relaxation in our relationship with the world.

Journaling (6): practising inner equilibrium

a) Coping with daily demands: many people feel stressed in their daily lives and overwhelmed by demands and duties. We will be able to escape this vortex of activities if we can regularly do the first (gaining control of our thoughts) and second exercises (initiative of will) for at least a week at the same self-chosen time and place. After a week we add the next exercise and so on. We can continually integrate exercises three, four and five into the daily routine by looking out for opportunities when equanimity (3), positivity (4) and open-mindedness (5) could enhance our inner attitude in dealing with a person or situation. Inner balance proves itself in our attitude towards everyday life.
b) Finding inner peace and calm: there will always be experiences that resonate and stir up emotions in us, that make us question our attitude or hold us back from self-development. Imagine that a student kicked you unexpectedly and without provocation. Even after a clarifying conversation you keep asking yourself how this could happen. Instead of dwelling on the matter you want to have closure. Focus on the occurrence and remember exactly how it unfolded, weighing up reasons, considering effects and consequences. Look at it positively by asking questions such as: what did I learn from this? What positive impulses can I derive from it for the future? Your goal is to make peace with your own memories and calmly draw positive conclusions from the situation.

Effect on attitude development: inner balance and self-regulation

Inner balance and self-regulation develop indirectly as inner attitudes when we use the exercise of controlling our thoughts alongside or in alternation with one of the other exercises. Learning to control our thoughts means that we can focus our thinking and concentrate on a task. The way to self-education goes through thinking; with the exercises for 'initiative of will, equanimity, positivity, open-mindedness and inner equilibrium' (ibid., p. 1) we develop our feeling and will. The exercise for inner equilibrium can help us to look at the world in wonder (chapter 4) and let go of our own sensitivities, preconceptions and intentions. A sense of wonder can inspire interest in new and other things; it guides comprehension as thinking from the other's point of view. 'To *live* in love of action and to *let live* in understanding of the other's will is the fundamental maxim of *free human beings*' (Steiner 1995, p. 155).

(7) Evening review and morning preview exercises
Reviewing the day in the evening (Steiner 2009) is an exercise that can strengthen memory and will, allowing us to process the events of the day and gain insights for a new future orientation. New perspectives and possibilities appear in the morning preview exercise (Scharmer, p .122), which is added here to Steiner's suggestions. We propose using the review (*Rückschau*) exercise, which was originally intended for spiritual self-development, for developing the right inner attitude in relation to social and pedagogical tasks. When ethos becomes a habitual disposition (Agostini 2020, p. 51f.) and the basis for our actions, there is a risk of one-sided influences and heteronomy. The ability to put oneself into another person's shoes and act accordingly relies on a conscious inner attitude that is not fed by habits but draws from intuition. To achieve this, we need to become aware of and process experiences that are guided by personal views, characteristics and skills. We therefore focus on one aspect of the review exercise and supplement it with a morning preview exercise inspired by Scharmer (2022, p. 122).

Journaling (7): do an evening preview and a morning preview exercise

a) Evening review: choose a time not too late in the evening and let the day pass before your inner eye in reverse order, from evening to getting up in the morning. Pause briefly when you notice something that stands out. Ask yourself what was important on this day, what worked out well and what you would like to do better. Choose one thing that you would like to do differently, start anew or continue to work on the next day; you can also choose a question or task that remains unresolved; keep an open mind as to how you will deal with it on the next day.
b) Morning preview: find a quiet place soon after waking up and recall the task or question from the previous evening. Focus on the here and now; note what

has changed since the previous day, what feelings and thoughts come up. Note the ideas and intuitions for solutions and new perspectives; let these impulses flow into your planning even if you won't be able to achieve everything in one day. Examine what you have achieved in your next evening review.

Effect on attitude development: mental hygiene through reflection; feeling encouraged by inspirations for solutions

The exercises support attitude and its development; they prepare for an inner orientation that is tested in the concrete situation and adjusted in dialogue with others (chapter 7).

The exercises for perception and observation in chapter 3.4 are particularly relevant to sensory phenomena in the outside world and intended for expanding cognition in the natural-scientific sense towards spiritual-scientific insights. We regard the mental-spiritual exercises presented in this section, which serve the schooling of faculties and the development of qualities, as exercises for attitudinal development because of their effectiveness not only in self-development but also in the social and pedagogical context. We therefore recommend these exercises and supplement them with examples that are relevant to our subject area. Peter Sloterdijk looks beyond the daily social context at global disasters in the world and concludes that a 'life in exercises' can make change possible (Sloterdijk 2009, p. 704ff.). We agree because this is precisely what attitudinal development in the situations addressed here aims at. In relation to attitude, we would like to adapt a motto borrowed from Hans Jonas – 'Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life on earth' (ibid., p. 708): Continually renew your attitudes and actions using exercises for pedagogical development – a path of self-development and professionalization.

Tab. 1: Motifs of practising, pedagogical attitude and the perceptual vignette method

Exercises and journaling	Relevance to attitude development	Perceptual vignette method
1. practising concentration in thinking	ability to consciously observe and engage with something	open perception and focused observation
5. practising initiative and will	presence of mind and adequate action	wonder and attention to special moments
6. practising equanimity	equanimity and empathetic turning towards	accepting the given and givenness as being-as-they-are (Sosein)
7. practising positivity	empathetic openness to positivity, goodness and beauty	recognizing attention and special phenomena
8. practising open-mindedness	unprejudiced and impartial openness; trust in developmental potential and success	suspending views, opinions, previous knowledge, judgement, prejudice; pedagogical diagnosis (chapter 8)
9. practising inner equilibrium	inner balance and self-regulation	a. describing phenomena as such (chapter 5) b. considering potential attitudes (chapter 6)
10. evening review, morning preview	mental hygiene through reflection and being encouraged by ideas for solutions	a. reflecting on the phenomenological working process b. initiating reflection as a work phase (chapter 7) c. formulating aspects for diagnosis (chapter 8)

Table by Barth & Wiehl

7 Perceptual vignettes as media of reflection

Reflection permeates our everyday consciousness. We become aware of it as soon as we dwell on a matter, situation or thought, weighing up, questioning, critiquing or judging it. We can observe how we consciously take in external events, feelings or thoughts in order to process them cognitively. As a thought process in cognition, reflection does what the reflector at the back of a bicycle does when it reflects the light of an approaching car. The difference is that the *physical* process ends with light reflection, while philosophical and applied *reflection* leads to knowledge. In physics, *reflection* refers to the throwing back of light rays and waves (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 558) and involves spatial distance. *Reflection* in the psychological sense means 'directing the attention from the objects of the outside world back to the soul experience, to the conscious mental activity, to the cognizing and thinking subject' (ibid.). *Philosophical reflection* examines perceptual, mental and intellectual processes from a temporal distance. Reflection in applied sciences such as education *can* happen in spatial presence but always involves a temporal delay as it is carried out after the actual event.

According to Merleau-Ponty 'pure reflection' occurs outside of perception because in the moment of reflection the perceiving subject becomes a 'thinking subject that is radically free in relation to these things and this body' (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 43). 'What is given is a route, an experience that gradually illuminates and corrects itself and seeks the dialogue with itself and with others' (ibid., p. 42). It is about 'our openness to *something*. What saves us is the potential for new development and our ability to make something true even if it is false by reconsidering our errors and placing them back into the sphere of truth' (ibid., p. 43). These philosophical-phenomenological foundations form the guiding principles for working with perceptual vignettes.

We leave these aspects for now and proceed to use reflection as a practical tool in attitudinal development (Christof et al. 2020, p. 55) and as a key for professionalization (Kahlau 2023, p. 51). Teachers and student teachers should be supported in their training with suitable practice-theory models to help them to develop a reflective attitude. In addition, the practice of reflection is also essential to developing the basic readiness to engage with stirring and challenging topics (ibid., p. 279). As a method, reflection is limited, however, and can meet with resistance and rejection (Reintjes & Kunze 2022, in particular Häcker 2022, p. 95).

Reflection models that contribute to and enhance reflexivity are essential. They can differ widely: professional or personal approaches to reflection can help us achieve and maintain mental flexibility. The context of inclusion shows clearly that we need to keep an open mind and learn new things throughout our career. It is important to reflect on 'the knowledge and experiences that guide our inner compass with regard to inclusion and ability and on what inner responses this may trigger in the individual teacher (in me)' (Solzbacher 2019, p. 44f.)

> *Journaling*
> What do I mean by reflection? What do I mean by analysis?
> In which aspects of my life do I include these formats and how?
> Am I familiar with the concept of 'reflexivity'?

The following sections give insight in the current discourse on reflection in the context of education; they present selected concepts and illustrate how we use the *reflection spiral* for deepening our work with the perceptual vignettes in teacher education.

7.1 Reflection in the discourse on education

In the context of education, the discourse on reflection takes up the mental processes described in philosophy and uses them to explore social and educational fields of action. As applied method, reflection leads 'from pure cogitation through self-reference and reflectiveness, problem-solving, the development of alternative action patterns by means of "reframing", change of perspective and (theoretical) contextual integration' (Kahlau 2023, p. 54) to knowledge acquisition and can therefore be viewed 'as an active process' (ibid.).
In her dissertation, Catherine Beauchamp provides an overview of around 200 publications on reflection from more than twenty years. Based on different perspectives and three forms of analysis, she tries to comprehensively present the research that has gone into reflection in the past. Her main points of reference are John Dewey and Donald Schöne, who with their different approaches have both been leading in all subsequent publications on reflection[3] (Beauchamp 2006, p.

3 John Dewey has a rather pragmatic approach to reflection. For Dewey reflection constitutes a process of pondering the solution to a problem (Beauchamp 2006, p. 35) or 'a pure thinking concept' (Aeppli & Löscher 2016, p. 80). Donald Schön distinguishes between action and thinking. It was Schön who first spoke of the difference between 'reflection-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action' (Beauchamp 2006, p. 36) and who differentiated a 'concept of knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action in relation to professional values' (Aeppli & Löscher 2016, p. 80). Incidentally, Paulo Freire's critical 'questioning of the social, cultural and political context of learning' is also mentioned in the historical derivation of reflection (ibid.)

34). Beauchamp only finds 55 texts that define reflection, and this is precisely the root of the problem (ibid., p. 62). When people speak or write about reflection (and reflexivity), it is never clear what approach or process they mean; in most cases there seems to be an assumption that the meaning of reflection is known. The main aspect of reflection is that it is a process which serves to generate rationales and to categorize (ibid., p. 64). As a whole, Catherine Beauchamp's literary analysis generates a picture of mutually conditional themes: reflection is based on different assumptions and epistemologies; within the different processes and contexts there are both cognitive and affective components and activities; reflection is not based on rationality alone; the value of reflection lies in the process and the situational context and in its relation to the self during, after or before the action which, in turn, impacts on the reflection itself (ibid., p. 146).

There are dynamic interrelationships between processes, rationales, contexts and actions that are effective due to reflection and have an effect on reflection' (ibid., p. 152). Reflection is consequently an active cognitive process aimed at gaining an understanding of events and experiences and making it fertile for actions. Aside from intellectual knowledge, reflective processes also have affective aspects. These emotional components need to be included in any training of reflection for professional contexts (ibid., p. 124f.).

At the beginning of the millennium Fred A. J. Korthagen and his colleagues examined publications on reflection in teacher education and concluded that it was difficult to define reflection in a consensual and accessible way. A definition derived from cognitive psychology proved more helpful in that it defines reflection as a mental process that subjects experiences, problems, existing knowledge or insights to a process of structuring and restructuring (Korthagen et al. 2002, p. 63). The few existing evaluative studies on reflection in teacher education conclude that the reflective process, if it is meticulous and methodical, can in fact minimize the gap between theory and practice (ibid., p. 98). This insight can play a central role in professionalization; we regard the reflection spiral we use in our work with perceptual vignettes as a method that can contribute to closing this gap (chapter 7.8).

With regard to teacher education in college or university courses we conclude in summary that reflection is a process that occurs in thinking about theoretical knowledge and practical application or situational actions. As an internal process it contributes crucially to teacher development and professionalization. Externally, it is crucial to the development of organizational and practice-related skills (for instance in lessons) (von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 145f.).

7.2 Reflective capacity vs reflective competence/reflexivity

As a competence, reflexivity is constituted of a *reflective disposition* and *latent traits, reflective thinking models* (such as the reflection spiral in chapter 7.8) as well as *visible behaviour* and *reflective performance* (von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 152, based on the model of Sigrid Blömeke, Jan-Eric Gustafsson and Richard J. Shavelson 2015, p. 7). Publications on reflection refer to three theoretical approaches: reflection mediates between the *professional approach of competence theory* which is based on experience and formal theoretical knowledge, and the *professional approach of structural theory* which encompasses bodies of scientific knowledge, reconstructive case understanding and antinomies of teacher actions (Kuckuck 2022, p. 24; von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 145). The two approaches are supplemented by the EPIK Domain approach that includes theoretical and practical aspects such as organizational and professional logic (Kuckuck 2022, p. 24), and by the *biographical approach* (von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 145). In the scientific discourse, reflection is defined as the highest asset on the way to professionalism (Kuckuck 2022, p. 24). Reflective thinking processes support mediation so that different options of acting in a situation can be considered and premature responses avoided; they 'support the building up of experiential knowledge' (ibid., p. 31).

> 'In order to be successful, reflection requires inner readiness as well as the curiosity to engage with a task and, connected with that, the investigation of one's own strengths, weaknesses and beliefs. One should feel the need to consider more than just one side of a matter and to study alternative views' (Wyss & Mahler 2021, p. 21f.).

In the context of pedagogical application and research, reflection is distinguished from 'concepts such as reflective capacity, reflective potential, reflective awareness and reflexivity' (Kahlau 2023, p. 54). The capacity and the potential for reflection include the willingness to reflect. Reflective awareness is seen as 'a general and explicable assigning of importance to reflection' (ibid.). In basic theory or the theory of objects, reflexivity is associated with attitude or habitus, while reflection is seen as an activity (ibid.). Subjectivity and reflexivity as the ability and the readiness to reflect are inseparable, but there must be scope for a critical approach (Albers & Blanck 2022, p. 295). In the (first) phase of training at college or university, students are in danger of adapting their readiness to reflect to the expectations of their lecturers (ibid.) rather than developing their critical reflexivity. This is an important aspect of exercises in reflection in seminars.

Journaling
What knowledge of reflection is being conveyed and how?
Consider in what situations you use or are asked to use reflection?
In these situations, do you feel free to address critical issues?
Are there potential power structures (at university)?

In relation to thought and action, reflexivity can be differentiated according to three, more or less conscious, approaches: (1) Reflexivity (if it is unconscious or hardly conscious) is a *supporting regulator*; it is often applied indiscriminately since it always relates to preset, partly restrictive statements in teacher education and can therefore sometimes reinforce stereotypes and preconceptions. (2) Reflexivity can support the *development of subjectivity*; in this case the 'what' and 'how' of one's thinking and actions are critically reflected; here the students need to deal with unconscious and unintended reproductions. (3) Reflexivity is also a *sign of maturity, autonomy and self-determination* (Albers & Blanck 2022, p. 297). Each approach is in principle questionable and requires justification (ibid.); students can also reflect at different levels and use analytical thinking: 'Someone who builds up critical reflexivity will be aware of the limits of their knowledge, including their reflective knowledge' (ibid., p. 298). It is ultimately not possible to develop critical reflexivity without the inclusion of personal or subjective aspects. This always needs to be considered in critical and reflective adult education. It is important *how* knowledge and content are dealt with in reflective processes.

7.3 Excursus: from analysis to synthesis

Reflection has played an important part in teacher education since the 1980s and has positive connotations. While there is scientific evidence that reflection in training and professional development enhances competence building, the concept does not fulfil its intentions (Wyss & Mahler 2021, p. 17). We therefore need to ask what conditions support reflexivity in training and professional development. The publications mentioned reveal that some university lecturers do not distinguish between analysis and reflection but define them both more or less synonymously (ibid., p. 19). We have therefore decided on the following working definition: 'reflection is a process of structured analysis' (von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 148) for subsequent further reflection that consolidates the previously gained insights into knowledge. To this end, skills and know-how need to be linked to situation-specific thinking and behaviour so that both sides can (continue to) develop (ibid.). In our model this approach corresponds to the second and third stages of reflection (chapter 7.8).
Solution-oriented analytical thinking requires the differentiation of approaches to conceptualizing the reflective process that cover the whole breadth of goals

and characteristics set out above. Nonetheless, reflection is difficult to separate from problem solving (external, 'reacting' to a problematic situation) or analysis. Both can be intrinsic to or consciously integrated in the reflective process (ibid., p. 147).

In the context of philosophy, analysis refers to the 'division, dissection of unity into multiplicity, of a whole into its parts, of a composite into its elements, of a concept into its attributes, of an incidence or occurrence into individual acts' (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 34f.). Logical analysis considers the 'logical relationships that exist between the parts and the whole', causal analysis the 'causative interconnection of the parts with one another and with the whole' (ibid., p. 35). Psychological analysis dissects the content of consciousness into its elements, while phenomenological analysis does the very opposite in that it elaborates the meaning of that content (ibid.).

The opposite of analysis is synthesis, which reunites the previously dissected and the individual details. While analytical thinking, or the intellect, investigates the details, synthetic thinking, or reason, helps to gain new perspectives, different insights and knowledge. We refer to this here to clarify that while we assign the first reflective stage of our reflection spiral to the phenomenological tradition, that is to say to the perception and reenactment of the given, we view the second reflective stage as analytical; in the third reflective stage we make the outcome of the analytical work fruitful for attitudinal development and potential actions. In this reflective process analysis refers primarily to the theoretical knowledge of anthropology, developmental psychology, pedagogy and sociology. The descriptions in perceptual vignettes are examined from different angles and new observational levels are generated by consulting specialized literature.

This step clearly requires more time to accumulate knowledge than a purely theoretical reception. Reflection asks us on the one hand to perceive, appreciate and update our own inner processes (Witzer 2018, no page reference), and on the other hand it requires us to analyze our percepts and create a coherent context from which knowledge can be derived. For our purpose of training and professional development, reflection consequently has both an analytical (von Aufschnaiter et al. 2019, p. 148) and a synthetic function, because it makes 'knowledge explicitly conscious' (Aeppli & Lötscher 2016, p. 85) and enables individual conclusions and insights. Analysis is systematic; it aims at an adjustment of knowledge with specific goals in mind and requires research. It needs synthetic thinking, however, to create the perspectives for developing a professional attitude that then in turn allows for a reorientation and adjustment of the pedagogical practice. Reflection therefore deals with a person's experiences and attitudes in the context of education and knowledge formation; it perceives these and focuses the gaze on actions (Heinzel 2022, p. 30). Analytical and synthetic reflection generate the foundation for a deeper understanding of inclusive pedagogical actions.

7.4 Preliminary conclusion and starting point for our actions

The difficulty with defining reflection (Aeppli & Lötscher 2016, p. 81) is due to different normative framework conditions. Precisely because the concept of reflection does not seem to be clearly definable, because it partly coincides with analysis and because we need to define it for our reflective work with the perceptual vignettes, we choose a broader definition that focuses on the details of the reflective process. We understand reflection as a mental process that can lead to changes and developments in the pedagogical practice. In our university setting we use reflection as a method for students to engage individually, emotionally and intellectually with their own experiences and previous knowledge and to learn to use specialized knowledge in this process as a bridge between practice and theory. The competence arising from this process we call *reflexivity*. Aside from personal experiences, views, emotions, needs and desires, individual and subject-specific knowledge is crucial, because it supports the development of an ethical basis as a central element of professional agency.
In our work with perceptual vignettes, we include three reflective phases (chapter 7.8) to initiate the process of self-development and professionalization. It is important

- to gain awareness of one's own feeling and thinking and to grasp the specific aspect of a given situation
- to learn to assume different perspectives, to derive new conclusions from theoretical knowledge in order to be open to and further develop potential alternatives; to apply criteria-guided reflection
- to observe oneself reflectively, to learn to distance oneself from one's actions if necessary and gain knowledge from new experiences and thoughts.

7.5 Implications for training or teacher education

In teacher education and education studies it is important for students to develop an inner attitude that can be derived from the use of phenomenological approaches and practical experience; this 'can (and should) lead to heightened attention to oneself and the addressees of pedagogical actions' (Brinkmann 2017, p. 9). Modern adult education in the context of inclusion needs to employ new objectives, principles and methods that enable future teachers to reconstruct ways of thinking in relation to inclusive education and heterogeneous learning groups in the protected space that the training situation offers, and challenge them to critically question, in self-reflection, their own views, knowledge, skills and the way they deal with stereotypes (Gloystein 2020, p. 55), and to benefit from the expertise of a group. Accordingly, the training options need to be expanded to prepare and

support future teachers in developing a professional attitude and in autonomously converting concepts into action knowledge. From the point of view of practical teaching this requirement is essential and meaningful because changes towards inclusion have so far remained insufficient.

Inclusive teacher education requires concepts, content and methods that allow teachers 'to be open to diversity and to ideas that go beyond standard notions of normality.' 'With a view to learning in particular, a paradigmatic reversal is required: it is not the diverse learning behaviours that have to adapt to notions of normality, but the notions of normality have to be extended to offer spaces for the given reality to express and creatively manifest itself' (Peterlini 2018b, no page reference).

Reflection is seen as highly significant in building up pedagogical professionalism and a professional pedagogical practice (Häcker 2019, p. 84). Because it rarely, or only insufficiently, arises from life and professional experience, it needs to be learned before it can be professionally applied. The importance of reflection or reflexivity is explained by the need to make pedagogical actions conscious. Reflection could contribute to resolving the still prevailing theory/practice or knowledge/skill problem. And lastly, the demands on teachers in their everyday practice has clearly increased. The 'risks and side effects of pedagogical actions have become increasingly apparent' (ibid., p. 85) and require high reflexivity in teachers and education professionals so they can meet the high expectations at least to some degree. Reflexivity helps to build, maintain and further develop professional know-how (ibid., p. 84). And yet, the 'request to comprehensively promote reflective competence in teacher students must be regarded as ambitious' (ibid.). High quality and high expectations in relation to the students' capacity for reflection are based, as the practice clearly shows, on the mistaken notion that reflexivity as such is to be enhanced or deepened (ibid., p. 83). Especially in the university context, we need to take into account that students, as they say themselves, include in their reflective process statements that are *expected* by their lecturers.

Much diverse research has gone into reflection as a key element of pedagogical professionalization (Kuckuck 2022, p. 197). The following modules are essential for reflective teacher education in an academic setting: systematic mentoring of students, discursive exchange, freedom from time pressure or the pressure to act, reconstructive study of unknown cases, data capture and evaluation methods, reference to theory, self-chosen practice situations and meta-reflection (ibid., p. 214). Training courses should enable teachers to 'analyze, discuss, evaluate and change their own practice by bringing an analytical approach to their teaching' (Korthagen et al. 2002, p. 57). In addition, teachers need to be able to consider the social and political context in which they are acting and to include moral and ethical aspects into their practice (ibid.).

Knowledge alone cannot result in action, however high the expectations of 'reflexive practitioners' with regard to their social accountability may be. This accountability is fed by developments in society at large and by the ambition to generate actions on the basis of scientific insights (Häcker 2019, p. 87). Häcker describes the relevant modalities of reflection:

- reflecting is based on establishing connections and applying thought patterns and is therefore a normative concept
- reflecting is, strictly speaking, not something one can learn; it is an aspect of the human condition
- reflecting is practice-relevant and horizon-widening and has critical and transformative potential
- reflecting is an activity and can therefore, like any other activity, be assessed as to its expediency
- reflecting is not in itself a positive value; it has potential risks and side-effects, which means that any taboos associated with reflection-free zones need removing
- reflective professionalization needs to be anchored in organizational structures (Häcker 2019, p. 88ff.)

In summary, reflection seems to offer the 'only valid solution' (Kahlau 2023, p. 61) for mediating between theory and practice, without 'evading their individual logic of thought and action' (ibid.). 'Reflection as action and reflexivity as attitude' (ibid.) are mutually dependent. Precisely because of the theory-practice gap, university or college courses (unless they have practice elements or are part-time) require the examination of and reflection on practical and multiple other experiences on the basis of scientific theory. Students need space and time to practise their capacity for reflection individually and in a team so that they can draw on them later in their daily work; they may subsequently experience the acquired reflective skills as additional knowledge that can make their working life easier. Modern teacher education must start with breaking up habits and focus on reflective competence as a 'tendency of practice to promote professionalization' (Kahlau 2023, p. 279). As well as on the appreciation of attitudes, the professionalization phase relies on analysis and reflection of pedagogical experiences. Power structures in the training context also need consideration because they may play an essential part in the development of reflection-based training concepts of colleges and universities.

7.6 Excursus: a working model based on biographical theory

We never experience gained knowledge objectively 'but always subjectively and intersubjectively' when it occurs 'in communication with others […] who also change in the course of their career' (Schenz 2012, p. 62). From this point of view – similarly to the development of a professional pedagogical attitude described in chapter 6 – routine actions and the capacity for reflection are key professional features. Christina Hansen (formerly Schenz) uses the '*profigraphy* model', which she developed to promote reflection throughout the professional biography, in order to show that reflexivity needs developing as part of pedagogical professionalization (ibid., p. 65). If teachers and educators are expected to develop pedagogical professionalism in the context of their pedagogical practice, much depends on 'how they view and interpret this practice and how they act within it' (ibid., p. 66); because professional pedagogical actions 'are reconstructed and newly interpreted based on the mood and interpretation of the pedagogical situation' (ibid.). Hansen's '*profigraphy* model' focuses on the 'possibility to reflect on one's own professional actions' (ibid.).

Expertise and judgement (which form the foundation of the second reflection phase in our model; chapter 7.8) as well as the interpretation and recognition of experiences (which belong to the third reflection phase in our model) are also indorsed for professionalization by Christina Hansen. Her claim that 'as well as knowledge and competence on the part of the teacher, pedagogical actions require above all pedagogically informed individuals who are able to reflect on their actions, and to qualify, critically question and adjust their knowledge' (ibid., p. 91) makes clear that the professional capacity for reflection asks much of teachers wishing or expected to reflect on the effect of their actions in school and teaching situations. Teachers need to be able to distance themselves and they need strategies for self-observation in lessons (ibid., p. 215) or a group in which to practise dialogue and analysis in order to penetrate to deeper levels of reflection process.

7.7 Levels of reflection with perceptual vignettes

The reflection phase in working with perceptual vignettes essentially encompasses three cognitive qualities that we find similarly presented in the work of other researchers (Wyss & Mahler 2021; overview in Aeppli & Lötscher 2016):

1. conscious access and unlocking of the content or statement of the perceptual vignette; reflection on the view or role of the persons mentioned by focusing on the situation;

2. establishing connections with other knowledge, for instance in anthropology or developmental psychology; analysis of the concepts used in the perceptual vignettes to understand persons and what they say and do;
3. reflecting in a way that is sensitive to attitudes and actions while appreciating an observed moment with a person; understanding what is special about this person, gaining awareness or new knowledge that can support the development of diagnostic competence, learning through experience as new ideas arise for the forming of a professional pedagogical attitude; in bringing the aspects developed in the second reflective phase together, the third phase supports pedagogical professionalization.

Motivation for self-reflection and self-development consequently occurs in the third and last phase: previous attitudes and habitual way(s) of acting are raised to awareness, examined as to their implications and consequences and reflected, as in a mental mirror, with intentions, concerns and motives included (Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 200). In this phase, reflection is like a self-mirroring; however, it does not only provide a picture of what has been experienced but – as we described for the review exercise (chapter 6.6) – it is meant to bring the essence and the change to conscious awareness. To this end we ask questions like: why did the person act as they did? Why was their action interpreted in one way and later maybe in another way? With such self-reflective interpretations we explore our own interpretive patterns and locate them in our own biography or habitus. Ideally, we recognize what patterns and habits inform our actions. We may even encounter a 'surplus', when something essential becomes visible that we were unaware of before or when something remains that we cannot yet categorize. Our starting position in phenomenological research are first-person experiences, which means that subjectivity is part of the working process; this is true both for the researcher and the person researched. Therefore 'the researcher's subjective experiences [should be] reflected on separately' (Brinkmann 2015a, p. 38) as in philosophical phenomenology, where the perceptual and cognitive processes are examined separately.
Perceptual vignettes describe experiences that are significant or touching for the writer. They are the result of experiences of wonder, affectedness or perturbation (chapter 4) in the context of (special needs) education or social work with children, young people and adults. These experiences are processed in the reflective processes by referring to the development of a professional, inclusion-sensitive attitude (chapter 6). As we analyze these processes systematically and combine them with learned knowledge and aspects of developmental potential and disorders (chapter 8), we find inspirations for inclusive approaches in teaching and projects. In our seminars, the students experience different cognitive qualities during the three phases of reflection:

- understanding or gaining awareness of the content or statement of the perceptual vignette
- establishing connections to anthropology and developmental psychology
- conceptualization for pedagogical professionalism
- recognition of the appropriateness of spatial structures and teaching activities
- where applicable, reference to the Index for Inclusion and pedagogical expertise (Wiehl & Barth 2021).

Many concepts include reflective cycles and often integrate the following elements in specific phases (between three and seven): description of experience, (spontaneous) interpretation, analysis, conclusions and application (Aeppli & Lötscher 2016, p. 83). They are not purely reflective phases as some speak explicitly of 'thinking activities' (ibid., p. 85). We therefore point out again that reflection is a 'key competence in professionalization that needs promoting in teacher education' (Wyss & Mahler 2021, p. 23). This is why students need opportunities for practising reflection. Tasks must be 'well dosed, varied and relevant for the students and they must focus in each case on a few central (theoretical) aspects' (ibid., p. 24). One would wish that once such a task has been worked on, it will result in useful knowledge for practical application (ibid.). This knowledge can then be tested in practice and reflected on again. Reflection thus creates circular processes that serve the continued development of professional competence (ibid.).

Working with text vignettes that describe everyday school experiences has become an important way of bringing the practice into the discourse concerning reflection at university. Franziska Wehner and Nadine Weber examine the reflective competence of student teachers on the basis of 'case vignettes'; in their preliminary study of 2018 they conclude that text vignettes are indeed suitable for the development of reflective competence. They also point out that the levels of reflection need to be considered (Wehner & Weber 2018, p. 273). Katharina Kuckuck (2022, p. 77ff.) looks at the current state of research on reflection in teacher education and examines different research methods based on text vignettes; she concludes 'that text vignettes can be suitable for assessing written reflections' (ibid., p. 81) but adds that this approach is restricted to research-based learning. We don't know of any statements yet that would give information on how sustainable these approaches are in general for students (ibid., p. 216).

Our methodology is based on the phenomenological reflective work with perceptual vignettes as they reveal diverse pedagogical phenomena and can be integrated almost unreservedly into ongoing study courses. They are also suited for developing this work further together with the students. Our future interest will focus on exploring the long-term effects of this way of working.

7.8 The reflection spiral of the perceptual vignette method

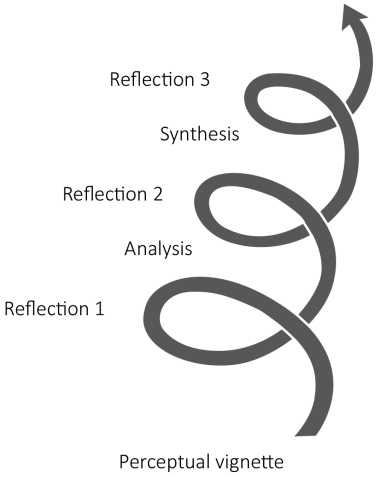


Fig. 1: Reflection spiral (drawing by Barth)

The reflection spiral was developed with students and encompasses three phases:

(I) The process starts with spontaneous reflection which enables the reader to understand and categorize (pedagogical) moments as a personal cognitive quality. The results, like the results of all the phases, are noted down in writing and discussed in dialogue.

(II) This is followed by focused and criteria-guided analytical reflection based on scientific insights and theories. Selected specialized texts widen the horizon and allow for a deeper understanding of the situation described in a perceptual vignette or focus the attention on a previously unknown aspect that helps to understand the child better. Reference to the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow 2019) raises awareness of current basic requirements and their possible contradictions. During this phase, the students first read selected specialized texts and then compose new reflective texts, which are then again read out and discussed in a group or team. Reading the technical literature leads to the gaining of knowledge which then manifests in the analytical and criteria-guided exploration of behaviours and actions. After that, the students reflect on what they have learned in the preceding working and writing processes. Interest in understanding the wider context leads to the ability to look at attitudes and actions from multiple perspectives.

(III) The third phase of reflection, during which the views and insights from phase II are brought together and compared again with the perceptual vignette, introduces changes and new ways of looking at a situation. It essentially serves the forming of a professional pedagogical attitude and provides above all inspiration for an inclusive practice. Based on our experiences so far with the methods described, we assume that the regular practice and application of phenomenological perception and observation can support the students – as future teachers in various professional fields – in developing reflective competences that will help them to build up a professional attitude and (pedagogical) agency.

The following statement taken from a student's reflective work describes this concisely:

> 'My perception has changed during the process … I realized that each child learns differently and needs to be addressed and encouraged differently.'

The three reflective stages described are mainly used in Master courses (chapter 8), following the practice of perception, observation, and the recalling and describing of affective events in the Bachelor course. When writing, the students already follow their natural inclination to include personal and reflective components which arise partly from empathy and partly from acquired specialist content and which, as is apparent from the following examples, gain new significance in the phases of reflection.

7.9 Examples of reflective processes

(1) Simple reflection

Perceptual vignette

Snails on the wall

It has been raining. On the way to Joe's carer we walk along a hedge. Because of the rain, countless snails have appeared and can be seen near the hedge on a low wall. I point them out to Ariana who responds with immediate enthusiasm. We see big snails but also many little baby snails. For Ariana all the little snails are children and the big ones are parents. So, she picks up all the little snails she can find and puts them with the big snail, saying 'There you are, back with your mummy' (PV 7.1).

One student writes in her reflection on this perceptual vignette:

> 'Observation turns into a kind of role play because Ariana sees the little snails as "babies" and the big ones as "parents". This attribution of relationships is presumably based on her perception of her own family or other people. She acts this out and mirrors it in her activity of moving the snails around. The size ratio of the snails plays an important part in this. The "idea for playing" comes from the student because she points out to Ariana that there are a lot of snails on the wall. In the process of observing and playing, it becomes apparent that she develops a sense of a mutual connection and relationship. The learning process is noticeable in Ariana's concern that the "baby snails" be reunited with the "mummy snail". As she explains her action, she carefully places the little snails with the big snails. Her actions also show that she has developed a sense of familial relations and of belonging. Through her actions she develops a kind of responsibility for the snails. Based on her reactions and statements I estimate her developmental age at around four to six years.'

In the seminar, as we discuss this reflection, it is seen as successful because the student interprets the child's playing and actions empathetically.

(2) Group work with subsequent tasks with five examples of perceptual vignettes

Journaling in the group

1 Highlight the statements that refer to the game or to playing.
2 Name and characterize the kind of game and the play behaviour (for instance role play, symbolic play, game with rules, primary play, free play).
3 Use the content or type of game to infer the underlying idea or inspiration.
4 Describe the learning processes associated with the game.
5 Estimate the child's developmental age.

1st perceptual vignette
Rocket

'Shall we build something today?' I ask the prince. 'Yes! A rocket!' We search the recycling bin for bits we could use for building. I find an empty Pringles tube. 'This is splendid! We can paint it and add a tip and then jets and fire coming out at the back. What do you think?' The prince looks at me confused. 'No', he says, 'we are going to build a proper rocket that we can actually fly in'. I am taken aback. 'I don't know enough about all the electronic stuff though. Do you?' 'No,' he says, 'let's not build a rocket then' (PV 7.2).

2nd perceptual vignette
Kindergarten

Camilla is standing on the carpet; she is playing 'kindergarten'. 'Mummy, you sit here, Tanya, you sit over there.' She starts with the circle game they are doing in kindergarten at lunch time. She knows most of the verses by heart, if she forgets the words, she simply skips a line. The lunchtime circle always ends with the 'drop of gold', the oil that one child is always allowed to give out. So she stands up and gives each of the two of us a 'drop of gold' and then finishes the lunchtime circle (PV 7.3).

3rd perceptual vignette
Doll mummy

As a doll mummy Anna, has an important task. Finding the mouth for feeding and combining different pieces of clothing need some more practice. But going to bed works really well already. Anna puts her head in the doll's pram. The pram's safety belt which is wrapped around the doll's body is released by shaking and pulling it. Anna uses both hands to lift up the doll's body. With a quick movement she jams it between her left cheek and shoulder. With careful, slow stroking movements, accompanied by a 'there, there', the doll is gently rocked to sleep and then taken to the sofa where she is wrapped in a blanket (PV 7.4).

4th perceptual vignette
Kindergarten group 'Meadow'

It is 8 o'clock in kindergarten. I am with the Meadow group and find three children sitting together at a round table. I hear a loud 'hello'. Amina spotted me immediately. Promptly she gets a jigsaw puzzle from the games cupboard and pulls a chair next to her own. Patting the seat with her flat hand, she nods towards me. Now I know what I need to do (PV 7.5).

5th perceptual vignette
Snails on the wall

It has been raining. On the way to Joe's carer we walk along a hedge. Because of the rain, countless snails have appeared and can be seen near the hedge on a low wall. I point them out to Ariana who responds with immediate enthusiasm. We see big snails but also many little baby snails. For Ariana all the little snails are children and the big ones are parents. So, she picks up all the little snails she can find and puts them with the big snail, saying 'There you are, back with your mummy' (PV 7.6).

(3) Reflections on a work placement report

Below are extracts from a report on a work placement of several weeks carried out by two students who accompanied a young woman with support needs. Aside from the introduction and evaluation, the report contains numerous perceptual

vignettes with the corresponding reflections which are marked accordingly. The title of the report is 'The discovery of Slowness. A Three-Week Work Placement as Part of the Waldorf Education Bachelor Course.'

> 'Beginning of a spontaneous adventure. Introduction
>
> In the first week with Clara and her assistant Conni, we get to know each other better and slowly develop a routine that suits us and our needs. With a few exceptions, we meet in the morning at 9 and after arriving, we first dance or do some morning exercises. Clara chooses two or three songs for this, occasionally we can also express our wishes for songs. Once we have shaken ourselves awake and have danced, we prepare our work.
> In the first week we are felting spheres and magic balls which we are then threaded to make a mobile. The second week we spend with the sewing machine, making curtains for the college and we are allowed to help hanging them up in the hall. In the third and final week, we felt again, making hot water bottle covers and bags.
> At 1 pm Julia's and my work with Clara is finished but we sit together for half an hour or an hour, write our perceptual vignettes, share our experiences and insights and plan for the next day. Conni usually continues to work with Clara for another half hour until Clara is picked up at 1.30 pm.'

The following perceptual vignettes are among the first written by students. No theoretical introduction was given; they were asked to use them as a medium for their work placement report. It is important to note that these perceptual vignettes contain the students' own feelings and thoughts. As the work progressed, we were careful that only their reflections entered the perceptual vignettes. For the reflective process presented here the expressions of feelings are important, however, and we decided to print them as they were originally written.

Work placement report

Monday, 11 January 2021
'Now listen up, Sarah!' you demand after you arrive slightly excited but happy with Conni in the handwork room and after we've said hello and cheerfully chatted all at once. I respond brightly, 'You listen up!' as you reach with your hand into your bag to show me something hidden and we both have to laugh.
We sit together, the four of us, at two tables we pushed together. A lot of wool is piled up on the table, there is hot soapy water and towels. We are felting magic balls. You choose blue for your first one, your favourite colour, as you point out. Gently but with a bit too much pressure you begin to roll the ball in your hand. I show you that you need to use less pressure. I need to keep reminding you of this but soon a beautiful round ball appears. I am surprised how much perseverance you show with the repetitive felting movement […] (PV 7.7).

Thursday 14 January 2021
We walk over to Campus I to pick up papers for your voluntary social year (FSJ). Because Conni tells you that they are for your volunteering application, you insist on picking them up and carrying them. 'Mine', you say firmly. When Conni wants to explain to you that they are not yours but need to be handed in to someone else, you turn sullen. 'Mine', you repeat sulkily, turning away with the papers in your hand, 'it says Clara on them'. You look around, restless and excited, stamp your foot and tell us that we should go now. I'm taken aback and don't really know how what do make of your behaviour. Conni stops walking. 'Right, I need to sort this out.' 'Stop', you tell us abruptly and firmly as you raise your hand. Conni explains to you again what these papers are about and you seem to understand it a bit better. Moodily, you walk back with us to Campus II (PV 7.8).

Friday, 15 January 2021
Today we have to go for a spontaneous short walk while Mr Miller fixes the electricity so we can boil the kettle. It was very cold in the night and the puddles are frozen over. I slide on one of them and invite you to join me. We laugh as we slide around, enjoying how much fun one can have with such a small puddle! Suddenly you tap me on the shoulder. 'Tag. You're it!' and you are off. I respond to your impulse and run after you. We keep tagging each other and running away. It needs little or no communication to understand the other person and to embark on a game of tag for a few minutes. My heart lights up and is bursting with joy about the ease of the situation […] (PV 7.9).

Friday, 15 January 2021
After breakfast we both write. I write down the felting instructions for you and you copy them letter for letter. First you watch and think, you say the letter and write it down. Then you repeat the process. It takes you a long time to write one sentence and keep up your concentration; you seem strained. When I ask you at the end how writing is for you, you reply, 'Yes, easy.' That makes me smile (PV 7.10).

Wednesday, 20 January 2021
When we were writing today, I tried to help you remember two letters so you wouldn't have to look at each letter of what I had written down for you. It worked a few times but then you were suddenly uncertain and you went wrong a few times. I let you copy letter for letter again. 'I'm doing this well,' you say, 'are you proud of me?' I had to struggle inwardly with my impatience and was frustrated that it hadn't worked. Practice makes perfect – tomorrow we try again (PV 7.11).

Thursday, 21 January 2021
'Clara, what day is it today,' I ask before we start writing. 'January', you call out enthusiastically, your eyes wide. 'No, January is the month'. You think hard and then decide on 'Monday'. 'No, don't just guess, Clara.' Somewhat dejected you look at your empty sheet and then out of the window. A few moments pass and I wait. 'Wednesday,' you say, hopefully. 'Yesterday was Wednesday and after Wednesday comes…'. You look at me, your face blank. 'Monday, Tuesday, …' You join in with me, 'Wednesday?' After pausing for a moment you say firmly 'Thursday' and you are beaming at me […] (PV 7.12)

Friday, 22.01.2021
As I finish your mobile a strand of hair comes loose from behind my ear. 'Oh, hair in face,' you observe, stretching out your hand, your eyes asking if you can put my hair back again. I nod and you gently move my hair back behind my ear. 'Friend?' you ask, hope in your voice. 'Yes, friend,' I assure you, you beam at me and briefly put your arm around my shoulder. We use a thin branch to make a circle and I help you hang up our felted balls. Carefully you pick up needle and thread and you concentrate on threading the needle; with a bit of help you push the needle through your felted balls.Then you cut the thread, I tie a knot for you and together we tie them to the branch. I need to call back your attention and concentration repeatedly. 'Excited, so excited!' you call again and again. Very proudly you hold up your mobile for the photo. 'Mine, I made it,' you explain repeatedly (PV 7.13).Monday 25 January 2021
Today, as we felt the cover for the hot water bottle, you keep repeating your words and short phrases. 'Mine,' you say firmly, 'turned out nice, didn't it,' you ask us and you keep complaining that it's got 'fluff on'. I find this very trying and suggest we keep felting in silence for ten minutes. We manage five of at least speaking softly (PV 7.14).

Tuesday, 26 January 2021
I explain to you that I would like to read you a perceptual vignette. A story about you and me. I have the impression that you don't really understand but I get my laptop and consider which one to read to you. I choose yesterday's hoping that you it is easier for you to remember. Suddenly you are very excited and you're laughing nervously; it seems as if you know that something different and unusual is about to happen. Your mobile phone rings and distracts you immediately. Julia asks you to turn the volume down. We focus again, I slowly read the perceptual vignette and you concentrate, turning quiet, laughing briefly and softly from time to time. I finish and wait for your response. You're smiling at me. 'How is it for you, hearing this?' I ask carefully. 'Good,' you say softly. 'Hm', I'm thinking, 'do you understand that I read about you? A story about you?' You seem uncertain. 'Yes,' and you laugh. 'Do you want me to read another one or was it enough?' I look at you. 'Was it enough,' you reply. We prepare for the second felting session of the day and you seem to have forgotten everything. […] (PV 7.15)

Friday, 29 January 2021
The music is really loud, the way you like it. For a change, we are not listening to your choice of music but to ABBA. I know most of the lyrics of these songs by heart and I always enjoy them, I feel free and they give me energy. I have always felt most connected with you when we are dancing. Without either of us saying anything we find a shared rhythm and do the different moves together. We're both singing along with the music at the top of our voices, I sing the words, you sing whatever comes to your mind, it doesn't matter! Four steps towards me, then four steps back, in the rhythm of the music. I show you something new, you copy it and then we swap. We laugh, it's fun and needs no effort. I draw energy from this. 'Clara, can you please sweep the floor?' Juliagives you a task and hands you the broom. Joylessly and without motivation you move the broom around a few times. 'Done?' 'No, Clara, the whole rooms needs sweeping.'

> 'Ok now?' you ask after a few brush strokes. 'Come on, Clara, try a bit harder. We were given this room to work in and we've had a good time here and now we can give it a bit of care, that is only fair,' I reply. You move the broom across the floor a few more times, but I don't think you understand that you are meant to sweep all the corners. 'Here, Clara, take the dustpan and brush and sweep up the heaps I sweep together.' If I point out the heaps to you, you manage to sweep them up. Everything is packed up and we make our way downstairs. Your mum is already there to pick you up. Although it often seemed as if you don't understand notions of time, you seem to realize now that our time together is coming to an end. Impulsively you first hug Julia and then me. 'Thank you,' you say without being prompted. 'It's been a pleasure, thank you for joining in so cheerfully, dear Clara' (PV 7.16).

The student's corresponding reflections document her immediate view of the events:

> 'First I decided to use the present tense and address Clara directly (11 January 2021) and that felt right. I feel an inner affection and joy when I write in this form. I write lovingly as if I was addressing Clara personally in the moment or with the feeling that she may read it herself some time.
> On another day (12 January 2021), I again choose the present tense but use the third person because I notice that I need some inner distance on this day to note down my perceptions honestly because they are not all positive. I feel that if I addressed you directly, I couldn't write honestly because I'd worry that I may hurt you somehow. But I realize on the next day that I'm working with a distance, and I am amazed at the powerful effect of the perceptual vignette. Did my attitude change through writing down the perceptual vignettes, did my feelings harden and will I continue to find working with Clara exhausting? Does the writing of perceptual vignettes intensify my negative thoughts? I found it difficult at first and was reluctant to also describe situations that were not satisfying. But by and by, with some practice and growing familiarity with writing perceptual vignettes, I learn how I can best present even negative situations without blame in a perceptual vignette. I observe and write my experience in the form of I-messages. I feel a sense of relief (including in my attitude towards Clara) because I can put the challenging moments on paper and no longer have to carry them around with me. It does me good to have this medium for writing down my disappointments, impatience and lack of understanding and let go of them. It means that I can observe these feelings in detail, process them by writing them down and consider if they are adequate.
> I now write all my perceptual vignettes using the second person. I like it and I notice how much I enjoy writing down little situations so freely and in such detail. Using the direct 'you' makes me more careful and above all more considerate in choosing my words. I love thinking about the right words to describe a situation as aptly as possible. I feel more like an author who can write creatively but honestly rather than like a student who is obliged to write a formal placement report. Because I don't have to write an ordinary placement report I can concentrate much more freely on presenting the (pedagogical) situations precisely the way I perceived them, and I feel less under pressure to describe the (pedagogically) *correct* actions and to make sure I present myself in the best light. My

writing is much more honest and less forced. Nor do I always have the thought of the grade in the back of my mind as I usually would, although I know that this assignment will also be graded. I find this insight refreshing and liberating.
When I write a perceptual vignette, I focus much more on the *how* than on the *what*; how do I do things, how do I feel when I do them; how is it for us, instead of: what happened, what do I do and what do we do? This means that several levels are presented and observed, and writing down the perceptual vignette facilitates deepened and decelerated observation. I notice that I can remember the situation in much more detail and the writing flows much better.'

From the author's *sharing* and *reflection* with her fellow student Julia we learn this:

'Julia and I sat down every day to reflect on the day and on the work experience in general and to prepare for the following day. We read our perceptual vignettes to each other and quickly entered into an exchange. I found our interaction very pleasant; we were considerate of each other in our communication and I felt heard at the same time. This sharing opened up further perspectives for me on the situations we had experienced together, as well as new ideas and impulses for situations that I found difficult. Through her eyes I was able to find a new understanding and different ways of dealing with them. And it was also reassuring and soothing to be able to share certain experiences, thoughts, worries and observations and to find out that we perceived similar things.
We agreed that we would have wished for a somewhat better preparation with regard to the structure and framework of the work placement. I do understand of course that planning is very difficult in times like these but finding out four days before the placement that it can go ahead, I found a bit short notice.
I would have liked to know before how much guidance there would be from Conni and what was expected of me in terms of reprimanding and disciplining. But in looking back we can say that the three weeks were successful for us and that there were also good points to answering these questions only during the work placement. As it was, Julia and I found out gradually what routine suits Clara and us, even if we were initially unclear as to how much we could determine this or what Clara needed. In our exchange with Conni we had the feedback that she approves of how we are doing things and that she would have told us if our actions hadn't been appropriate. Knowing this in advance would have given me more certainty but one is always wiser with hindsight, I suppose…!'

The author finally finds in her conclusion the title and motto for her work: The Discovery of Slowness:

'The three weeks are already over and they just flew by. I nevertheless entitle this placement report 'The Discovery of Slowness', because the individual days with Clara and the work with the perceptual vignettes have sharpened my perception and decelerated by actions. I was made aware once again of my previous routine way of working and acting. It feels good to perceive the softness of the wool, the hot water and the slippery soap in my hands. How do you do this again – forming a nicely rounded ball? I realize that not much pressure is needed at first because one will end up with a flat disk otherwise. Too

much water and the wool loses its shape, but I can save it by using enough soap. And after a while I can press on my ball quite firmly and even roll it on a knobbly rubber mat. I only became aware of all these qualities through working with Clara. I used to be impatient and could hardly wait for the first ball to be finished, always having in the back of my mind that I needed a few more. The warm water was running down my hands and arms and I didn't like the tickly sensation. The water got cold again, now I have to stop my work and put the kettle on.
Now I appreciate what a nice break that gives me from felting! Breaks are also part of the working day.'

The final passages of the placement report highlight different levels and qualities of reflection:

- reflection on the effect of language (I/you)
- sensitivity to resonance (nervousness, do you understand me?)
- changes of perspective in listening (there are two students)
- deepening penetration ('long conversations')
- food for thought and impulses: 'difficulties dissolve', 'relaxation', 'discovery of slowness'

The text passages reflected on illustrate the student's way of working, her ambivalent relationship with the person with support-needs and her level of knowledge regarding that person's ability to participate and carry out tasks. The individual situations and the writer's own feelings are scrutinized as through a magnifying glass. The statement that 'the how is important not the what' is significant in this report. The perceptual vignettes are informed by the relationship between the writer and the other person. The author verbalizes feelings such as 'exhausted', 'annoyed' etc. and describes proximity and a sense of connectedness. Preparation and references are missing in this report. This becomes apparent as soon as the perceptual vignettes are read in a specific context and with specialized professional criteria in mind (see the section on ableism below). The student had no previous knowledge of disability, the deconstruction of disability or even ableism. It was the first time she had spent time with a young woman with a so-called 'disability'. In retrospect, she wished she had had more guidance and advice and she would have been open to receiving critical comments on the way she dealt with the young woman. This is why the critique relating to ableism in the following reflective texts remains restricted to a criticism of introduction and mentoring during the placement. It does not concern the student's actions or her way of reporting. This needs to be said because we discussed the placement report in a space of trust that we provided to work with the perceptual vignettes of a fellow student. All the students who took part in this seminar unit felt this and verbalized it in the follow-up conversation.

During a scientific conference we received the following *external reflection* by a researcher:

> 'I assume that Clara is a young woman with cognitive developmental delay. From the student's texts I derive that she is very caring and happy to be able to work with Clara (she uses the term 'allowed to work' at the beginning). One question I have is what kind of access/concept the student has of 'disability' as a phenomenon. If I read the context correctly, Clara is an adolescent; but the student's text sometimes sounds as if she were working with a younger child. What strikes me is the precise description of the child's (?) responses as perceived by the student (looks hopeful, blank face, somewhat dejected…), and the joy one senses as a reader when something has worked well from the student's point of view (mostly in connection with the relationship). A question I would find interesting to ask is whether this joy is so great because Clara is a person with a 'disability'. What if the student were working with a young person of the same age with age-appropriate cognitive development?'

The reflections of our university students sound different:
Bachelor student 1:

> 'A student describes her work placement, using perceptual vignettes. The perceptual vignettes mirror the student's feelings in different situations. The perceptual vignettes give the reader insight in the student's and in Clara's (girl cared for) feeling world. It becomes apparent how Clara experiences the various situations, what she finds difficult and what she enjoys. One also has access to the student's feeling world. She highlights what is problematic for her, when she is annoyed but also her happy moments. The perceptual vignettes do not only dwell on positive experiences but mention also the negative aspects. They reflect authenticity. For the reader, the perceptual vignettes provide a sense of being connected with and close to the student.'

Bachelor student 2:

> 'The perceptual vignettes seem to magnify small moments. When I read the individual situations, I had to think of similar situations I experienced myself. What I found striking is that each perceptual vignette elicits feelings as if I had been there witnessing that situation. Some of the moments described are very personal and make me feel as if I'd been caught (seeing) reading too much. I'm amazed that the small, seemingly unplanned situations are most revealing. Themes that seem to be important for Clara have to do with self-belonging and boundaries and with 'how do I do something?' She often wants to have feedback on how she did something. The concluding situation describes how Clara seems to notice without prompting that it is time to say goodbye.'

Bachelor student 3:

> 'When I was given a student's work placement report to read, I was pleased because I could easily empathize with her situations and feelings. Because of the very precise descriptions and the simultaneous characterization of the two main persons and the

situations that occurred during the placement, I almost felt as if I had taken part in it. I still have some minor questions that were not answered when read the report. Who was Conni? What was her position, what exactly was her role in this work placement? She was referred to as "assistant", but one does not understand what kind of assistance she was providing for Clara. What I found interesting was the use of direct speech which lends much character to the report. Because of the descriptions one can easily imagine Clara in her being. The outer appearance seems secondary. On the whole a wonderful report that is interesting to read.'

Bachelor student 4:

'In the perceptual vignettes the author expresses her own feelings and describes how Clara expresses hers. Expressing her own feelings enables her to distance herself, from unpleasant feelings in particular, and to become aware of her own needs. The documentation of her feelings towards Clara makes it possible to sympathize with her and be empathetic towards her. Moments of encounter when the writer and Clara can be open to one another emerge again and again. The dance scene in particular shows clearly how the roles of carer and cared-for person dissolve. The women inspire each other and they both enjoy spending time together.'

7.10 Excursus: phenomenology in relation to inclusion and exclusion – ableism

Phenomenology as the science of the essence of things, the science of the visible (*phainomenon* in ancient Greek means 'thing appearing to view') focuses on the immediate situation. Entering into and being open to the things that show themselves are crucial to working phenomenologically.

'Some of the spiritual openness of that time we would wish for today, of this "curiosity towards the wonder of an unfinished world that is waiting for our imaginative answers," as the phenomenologist Bernhard Waldenfels said about the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, some of the enthusiasm to meet the world and the things without knowing in advance what they will give us to see and think' (Nettling 2009, no page reference).

Our method integrates the perceptual vignettes in the canon of descriptive phenomenological texts such as vignettes, which are committed to openness in sharing an experience in order to be able to show and reflect on otherness as given, as the examples from the work placement with Clara illustrate.

'As records of shared experience, vignettes offer a possibility to perceive phenomena of inclusion and exclusion and to reflect on their ambiguity and their pedagogical and normative implications. Precisely because a person is *different*, observing and listening to how this otherness lights up through the tool of the vignette generates the opportunity

to reflect not in a targeted but in an open-ended way on pedagogical actions in relation to inclusive schools' (Peterlini 2018b, no page reference).

The perceptual vignettes from the work placement report were subsequently reflected on by students on the basis of various specialized texts and conceptual explanations. The students read texts about ableism. *Ableism* is a technical term that refers to the judgement of a person's body and mind on the basis of their skills or abilities. Its benchmarks are rooted in biologism and essentialism since it appraises, appreciates or devalues persons on the basis of desired bodily and mental norms (Maskos 2015, p. 4). *Ableist* judgements deny persons with disability full subject status. As the following examples show, the use of specialized texts on this topic helps students reflecting on the perceptual vignettes to bring unconscious stereotypes and exclusions of this kind to light and to examine their own views.

After reading specialized texts on ableism, the students changed their views and judgements of the work placement student's approach to Clara in their reflections:

Bachelor student 5:

'My impression of the perceptual vignettes is that they are very much like pictures. The author describes her observations warmly and personally. The narrative perspective of addressing or describing the person as 'you' generates a special tension: 'you do, you say, you seem to feel' etc. The descriptions make 'Clara', the girl addressed as 'you', seem young and lively. It is also apparent that the author has great ambitions for her work with Clara. She works hard and comes across as empathetic and appreciative. But she is also honest and describes moments when she finds the work less easy. I personally find the strong interpretations sometimes difficult. For instance, in the perceptual vignette of 26 January where she writes, 'You seem to have forgotten everything.' What is this impression based on? Could it not say instead: it seems to me as if you had forgotten because.. .? Personally, I would find this more generous and clearer. It doesn't strike me as ableism here, however. For me, it simply seems to illustrate the author's very decisive style of writing. It was different for me with the first perceptual vignette, where the author is surprised about Clara's perseverance. Why is she surprised? Because Clara is a person with special needs? Or because Clara seems to her to be a generally impatient person? That is a question I ask myself here. On the whole, reading these perceptual vignettes is very impressive and touching. With the exception of the one statement mentioned, I don't have the feeling that the thoughts are ableist. The author describes her feelings factually, when she is happy or frustrated about something, and it seems to me that she would feel the same with any other person in this moment, simply because of the situation.'

Bachelor student 6 – from the phases of reflection:

'1st reflection: memories come up of my own work experience with Clara: joy, music, dance, macramé, being confident! I automatically compare it with our behaviour at the time, from authentic, honest, affective, interested, assertive, achieving, no glossing over

('No Clara, the whole room needs sweeping'). How do I wish to be spoken to? She is doing a voluntary social year?
2nd reflection: When I read the perceptual vignettes with ableism glasses on, I find that there are situations when the author does not treat Clara as an equal who has dignity. Clara is being reduced to what she 'can' or 'cannot' do ('I am surprised how much perseverance you show', 'joylessly and without motivation'). It has been clearly established who learns from whom, who has to obey and who needs to be taught a lesson. There are also moments, however, when the author and Clara meet as equals, for instance when they play tag or when they dance. They go towards each other; the ascription of roles is flexible. Sometimes it is Clara who shows the author the steps and sometimes it is the other way round.'

7.11 Reflection in training: outlook

After studying the text on ableism one student writes a more nuanced comment:

'While I was reading, I focused strongly on situations where one can detect ableism. Interestingly, my attitude towards the perceptual vignettes changed in that I find several potential deficits. Certain expressions such as 'sullen' suggest an absence of equality, in the language at least. Certain devaluations that could be seen as ableist are noticeable when the author points out how long Clara needs for certain tasks and that Clara appears exhausted. When Clara denies this, the student smiles, which seems patronizing in an 'I know better' way. But there is also appreciation, when the author describes her surprise at Clara being more patient than expected. This wouldn't have been emphasized in the same way with another person. That Clara does not understand certain things is also described rather judgementally in the text.'

The use of phenomenological methods in qualitative social research has been described in chapter 3. We try to illustrate that we use the reflecting on perceptual vignettes in teacher education to open different levels of access. There is a difference if students read their own or someone else's perceptual vignettes and spontaneously reflect on what is revealed in them. Aside from this, the writer of the above work placement report often mentions her own feelings. It is specific to this early work with perceptual vignettes that the student speaks honestly about her feelings and reflects on how this affects her.
A new dimension opens as soon as we ask the students to reflect on a certain topic after reading scientific texts as it sharpens their perception in a particular direction. It is enriching and instructive to see which facets the students notice, for it is never about being *right* or *wrong*. Events and experiences belong to the past. Working reflectively with perceptual vignettes is always oriented to the future.
A touching conversation evolved about the perceptual vignettes from the work placement report and about the renewed reflections following the study of the text on ableism. Students reported how their awareness was enhanced by reading

the text. They were critical of the student's attitude because they discovered ableist thinking in the perceptual vignettes which they had not noticed before. They pointed out that the student described things in the placement report 'that are not actually ok'. One student found that she was annoyed because 'Clara was seen as a child'. Another said, 'She is doing a voluntary social year! I also did a work placement with her and my role was that of a teacher. I then realized and considered that she was a volunteer after all and that she needed positive validation.'

Another student described how, in her first reflection, she found the perceptual vignettes 'really lovely', they were written in a 'very loving way'. In the second reflection, after reading the text on ableism, her view changed: 'I notice things: why is the student 'annoyed'? Where is this 'now there is quiet for a change' coming from? What could she do to make it sound less patronizing? Explaining things better, offering alternatives. I notice the role ascriptions: who has a say? Clara comes across as a care receiver not as a person in need of assistance.'

'I struggled to apply the concept of ableism because I don't really know what kind of support Clara needs,' writes another student, who is however also struck by statements such as 'make an effort', 'don't you understand', 'you don't really understand'. But she wonders if that is presuming given that she doesn't really know what Clara's needs are. She thinks she detects a judgement in some expressions in the perceptual vignettes. 'Ableism must really be avoided, but what do we do with the demands that we and others are confronted with?' because 'in our interactions with others it is always important to know what their needs are, and it needs time and patience to get to know these needs.' – Students also express these kinds of thought.

'One rarely reads that they are equals: what are the presumptions here? Do negative presumptions prevent exchange? There are no explanations?'

Another student writes that she sensed 'warmth and kindness' in her first reflection and that the whole problem had only become apparent to her in the second reflection after reading the text on ableism: 'We mean well, but we don't treat adults as adults.'

What an outcome! What did these young people learn in a 90-minute seminar about their professional attitude in this guided reflective approach that allowed a new attitude to evolve! What was noticeable and what shone through in the conversation was their deep gratitude for their fellow student's text and their realization that validation and trust are important to them. They recognized themselves and protected the fellow student as a learner and as someone who revealed much of herself in her personal written reflections. They wished for a follow-up conversation with her in a space of trust, where her own revelations and those of others regarding the status of self-development can be examined and appreciatively discussed. This contributes to the development of a professional attitude. For reflexivity – the ability in other words to relate something to something – requires

the simultaneous training of perception, feeling, thinking and will. Only with these faculties and by relating back to something can we make our knowledge effective. 'This kind of potentially reflexive relating can now be seen as attitude' (Kurbacher 2006, no page reference). Attitude points to a phenomenon and is closely interwoven with evaluation (ibid.). We view attitude as a movement that relates to something, and reflection as a thought process that prepares what lies in the future, what is in the process of becoming (ibid.). Ultimately, professional attitude also includes expressing oneself as a 'critical friend' and the wish to give feedback.

8 Perceptual vignettes in preparatory exercises for diagnostic competence

Journaling
What do I mean by diagnosis?
What does it mean in my professional context? How do I feel about it?
Where do I diagnose?
What competences or support do I wish for?

Personal thoughts on these questions can attune us to the topic of diagnosis and its fields of application. The understanding of diagnosis is undergoing a paradigm shift from deficient and status-oriented evaluation procedures to *sympathetic diagnosing* which considers a person's individual starting position and needs. Tried and tested diagnostic procedures exist in many areas but while they provide rationales for early intervention and support programmes, they fail to do justice to the individual and special development and learning of children, young people and adults. We discuss this situation critically (chapters 8.1 and 8.2) and present phenomenological-reflective approaches that we have developed for *learning to observe and assess children, young people and adults without bias* before decisions are made regarding diagnosis, support and learning plans or following collegial consultation (chapters 8.3 and 8.4). Using examples of perceptual vignettes written by our students, we would like to encourage readers to try out the reflection spiral introduced in chapter 7 and to reflect on their experience (chapters 7.8 and 8.6). Application of this reflective method (chapter 7) completes the circle that began with phenomenological perception (chapters 2, 3 and 4) and continued to the writing of perceptual vignettes (chapter 5) and ultimately to diagnostic competence arising from an attitude-sensitive and reflective professionalization process (chapter 8).

8.1 Diagnostic competences in transition

In the context of inclusion-oriented teacher education, we champion the participation of all children and young people in kindergartens and schools, irrespective of their different starting conditions. Achieving this goal requires that students learn to deal professionally with diversity. Dimensions of diversity point to the variability and openness of key concepts such as age, gender and disability (Salz-

brunn 2014, p. 119). However, these different dimensions do not appear in isolation. It is therefore essential for teachers and educators to develop competence in dealing with dimensions of diversity (Gloystein & Barth 2020).

Inclusion-sensitive teacher education aims to develop the ability to perceive, recognize and understand children, young people and adults in their being, actions, interactions and relationships, and above all to identify barriers in order to develop participatory pedagogical options for individuals and groups (Barth & Gloystein 2018a, 2018b, 2020; Largo 2017). Diversity competence aims to enable optimal participation for all children, young people and adults regardless of their individual starting conditions. For teachers and educators this means above all the willingness and ability to deal with human diversity, to recognize the potential of individual differences and to use the possibilities arising from this for the benefit of individuals and the community (Gloystein & Barth 2020, p. 116f.).

Sensitivity to and knowledge of all the facets and levels of diversity can result in the competence to use social diversity constructively, prevent discrimination and increase equal opportunities. In recent years, we (Barth & Gloystein 2018a, 2018b, 2019, 2020, 2021; Gloystein & Barth 2020; Barth 2020) have prepared this foundation in the context of expanding adaptive teaching competence as an 'interdisciplinary requirement for a subject-oriented observation and teaching practice' (Beck et al. 2008, p. 39; Brühwiler 2014, p. 75).

Adaptive teaching competence tries to consider students' individual requirements (Beck et al. 2008, p. 10) on the basis of four interweaving competences: diagnostic competence, teaching competence, competence to identify and plan content and classroom management competence (or agency) (Beck et al. 2008; Brühwiler 2014). Teaching and learning research focus on the individualization of learning processes, aim for children's and young people's holistic personal development, demand an open-minded, bias-conscious attitude as well as recognition and appreciation, and acknowledge heterogeneity and participation (Barth & Gloystein 2019, p. 97). Modelling this approach constitutes an 'adaptation to variable conditions' (Brühwiler 2014, p. 76) and enables teachers to adapt their teaching to the needs of the individual learners (ibid., p. 60).

Developing diagnostic competence as part of adaptive competence is crucial to (pedagogical) professionalization today. In teacher education in particular, the view of diagnosis is changing. In the years following the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities a very differing interpretation evolved in the sixteen German federal states of what inclusive education means and above all how it is to be implemented. While the distinction between education for additional needs and education in general changed to a certain extent in favour of an inclusive approach, it also continued to be prevalent in many places. This has a strong impact on the topic of diagnosis in that teachers in schools are increasingly faced with diagnostic questions. The now established right

to inclusion and participation casts a new light on establishing diagnoses as an elementary (educational) principle and demands a fundamentally different approach to difference and diversity (Gloystein & Moser 2019, p. 65). The differentiation between diagnosis in general education and special needs education is perpetuated, however, which means that the latter continues to hold on, both in the professional practice and in training, to old power structures that espouse assessment and achievement and therefore promote labelling and deficit-orientation (Feyerer 2013, p. 195). Special needs diagnosis focuses on *status and attributes* (disability as an individual, permanent characteristic), on *deficits* (disability as a negative deviation from the norm), on *intervention and care* (persons with disability in a passive, those tasked with assisting them in an active role) (ibid., p. 190) and on the use of rigid and time-saving methods *for assessing performance and behaviour related problems*. These procedures tend to apply normative standards that are themselves measured against statistic mean values. Such homogenizing strategies also take the burden off teachers and mainstream school and vocational training systems (Severing & Weiß 2014, p. 5). Diagnosis continues in the old tradition where categorization is a precondition for receiving the necessary resources (labelling-resource dilemma). However, the importance of special needs diagnosis and intervention in inclusive schools (Lütje-Klose & Neumann 2022, p. 56) is clearly a question of pedagogical practice.

In the context of diagnosis, the change towards an inclusive orientation has not happened yet because it is stuck in old thinking and action models. The distinction of special needs (psychological) diagnosis and pedagogical diagnosis goes hand in hand with a distinction between developmental and pedagogical perspectives. However, education is inconceivable without knowledge about the children and young people and their environment. Inclusive pedagogical diagnosis in particular requires insights that are relevant to development and learning in the sense of a comprehensive child-environment-analysis (Prengel 2016, p. 58). In order to be meaningful, diagnosis needs to concern each individual actor in the multiprofessional pedagogical team. Students therefore need to familiarize themselves with diagnostic procedures and develop a professional attitude. But their personal perspective is just one of many diverse possibilities. Adequate intervention and suitable pedagogical actions depend on multiple perspectives on the child and on the corresponding professional attitude (chapters 6 and 7). Professionalization includes the acquisition of suitable competences so that the field of tension of diagnostic procedures can be mastered for the benefit of the children and young people.

Pedagogical diagnosis is not about the attribution of disorders but:

> ‘Due to the underlying attitude and objective, pedagogical diagnosing needs to be separated from (medical) classification systems, even though it does not simply exclude them.

> Since categorization facilitates communication and testing adds empirically valid data to the diagnosis, both can be relevant, if their findings are considered in the context of a sympathetic reconstruction of a person's development rather than used to define that development' (Baumann et al. 2021, p. 23).

In pedagogical thinking and actions, pedagogical diagnosis serves as a catalyst since successful pedagogical processes depend on each member of the multiprofessional team (Schenz 2012, p. 218f.). Pedagogical diagnosing requires the development of a broad and dynamic understanding of dispositions and gifts that is gained by observing the individual person's needs in life, learning and development. Inclusive intervention looks at the gifts of each child and young person (Solzbacher 2019, p. 40f.).

Diagnosis is consequently among the key tasks of teachers and educators (Lütje-Klose & Neumann 2022, p. 52). For the generally required pedagogical diagnosis, the pedagogical actors need knowledge on learning dispositions and learning conditions, developmental and learning stages, learning potential, motivation, learning hindrances and learning progress, learning types, the learning environment, group processes, behaviours, subject-specific or general learning outcomes and potential achievements as well as types of intelligence based on the principle of multiple intelligences (Paradies et al. 2007, pp. 25-37; von Saldern 2009, p. 52f.). The aim is to establish each child's or young person's individual learning disposition and needs in order to offer appropriate pedagogical learning opportunities. Aside from learning dispositions and insights into development-, learning- or theory-based categorization, relationships and learning environments play an important role. Sympathetic diagnosing accompanies the learning process, supports development and focuses on competencies. The choice of diagnostic procedures and strategies as well as the matching of interventions to diagnostic results need to be considered in all areas of teacher education. It is essential that this kind of understanding is included in university courses because 'support planning' needs much more than diagnostic techniques (Schenz 2012, p. 218f.).

It falls to teachers and educators in schools, kindergartens, residential and other care institutions to prepare children and young people for an uncertain future (future-oriented schools) so they can find their place in society. Regardless of intelligence or social background, talents and strengths, every person has a right to participate in society (inclusive schools). Pedagogical actions aim to enable children and young people to lead meaningful lives in society (meaning-giving schools), to learn to actively engage on the basis of shared values and, if necessary, assume shared responsibility for changing agreements (democratic school). 'Each child and each young person needs to be seen and recognized with their strengths and talents (successful school); dealing with this kind of diversity needs to be learned' (Schenz 2012, p. 115). Diagnostic competence means that children and

young people – the way they are, their actions (in lessons) and their complex relationships – are perceived, recognized and understood so that barriers can be identified and participatory pedagogical options developed (Barth & Gloystein 2018a, 2018b, 2020).

Studies have shown that 'formal diagnoses based on systematic information gathering and processing and the targeted implementation of diagnostic methods' (Südkamp & Praetorius 2017, p. 254) lead to 'consequential and lastingly effective decisions' (ibid.) being taken by people in positions of responsibility. This makes it essential that pedagogical staff acquire diagnostic competences with a view to potential and possibly far-reaching implications and their importance for the professional practice in institutions (for instance in lessons). Diagnostic competence is based on a dynamic, continually developing field of research of which only some areas have been examined and only some initial outlines of future developments have become visible. This means that new developmental directions and perspectives of diagnostic actions need to be identified and proposals for their further elaboration formulated.

Professional attitude becomes particularly effective when inclusion-oriented diagnosis is combined with a 'learner's view' (VignA) and easily accessible, self-educational mindfulness exercises (chapter 3.4.). For a clear orientation of active interventions in particular, it needs to be understood that, while people may meet or correspond to a particular diagnosis due to certain criteria, they *are* not that diagnosis. Test results arise from controlled data collection on characteristics, behaviours and conspicuous traits. No child is ever a *case* but an individual human being. Cases arise from specific observations and the attempt to provide support (Baumann et al. 2021, p. 32). The danger with every diagnosis is that it may be a construct that fails to do justice to the complexity, life situation and biography of the child, young person or adult in question (ibid., p. 22). Our society needs to rethink the way diagnosis is used. We need to get used to the thought that there are, or should be, new perspectives regarding the application and establishing of diagnoses. Some diagnoses have even been deleted because they do not respect the dignity of the individual (ibid., p. 19). More and more self-representatives describe how their life was made difficult by a particular diagnosis, disclose the whole range of exclusive interventions and demand dignified ways of dealing with their unique situation (Barth 2022).

8.2 Sympathetic diagnosis vs categorization

Every person wants to learn at their own pace and in their own way, as Remo Largo found in his Zurich longitudinal study into healthily developing children (Largo 2010) and in his lifelong research (Largo 2017). It is the task of professions theory

to establish precisely, and beyond any existing ICD 10 or 11 diagnosis, what can be perceived or possibly also (co-)experienced. We use the term diagnosis in the sense of the Greek word *diá-gignôskein* which means 'knowing something through and through' (Zimpel 2017, p. 41). Diagnosis needs to be oriented to human development and developmental possibilities. Its ultimate goal cannot be to reliably distinguish existing '*disorders*' from so-called *normal behaviours* and to define them as precisely as possible. Rather, it aims to observe individuals in relation to their biography, experience of reality and the 'rules' of their surroundings and tries to consider every characteristic and behaviour within this context (Baumann et al. 2021, p. 40). There lies meaning behind every behaviour and every conspicuous feature, but we need to ask 'in what context realizing or retaining this behaviour or feature makes sense and to what extent the individual person actively adheres to or manipulates this context to make it fit the developed schemas' (ibid., p. 45). Thinking in 'imprecise and devaluing' (Felkendorf & Luder 2014, p. 53f.) categories such as disability, poverty and migration is increasingly negatively connoted. Due to judgements and negative assignations such as restrictions, weaknesses or inabilities, these categories lead to stigmatization and discrimination (Gloystein & Frohn 2020, p. 63). With regard to diagnosis, one needs to say generally that 'disability' is a powerful construct and that it is time for requesting, preparing and executing a radical change of routines, structures and habits in social institutions (Hazibar & Mecheril 2013, no page reference). This change can succeed if students learn during training to practise perceptual exercises and to reflect on them, for example by combining their observations with (newly) acquired knowledge and by formulating questions on child development and 'developmental disorders' . (Special needs) teachers have a powerful position when it comes to categorization. Gaining awareness of this position sensitizes students and inspires them to examine their own judgments and prejudices and to question themselves and their routine attitudes (chapter 7.9). They may realize that 'the developmental potential of people who live and grow up with diagnoses is often underestimated', that their competences are frequently not or not sufficiently recognized and acknowledged. This not only causes them confusion but also stress and impacts negatively on their development' (Ziemen 2013, p. 23).

> *Journaling: the purpose of diagnosis*
> In what context or framework does diagnosis take place?
> What do we need this diagnosis for?
> What exactly are we looking for?

Diagnoses are made in various contexts and for different reasons. We need to differentiate *who* diagnoses *whom* and *to what end*, because some professions are tasked with the provision of healthcare. The task of special needs education, on

the other hand, is to provide education and formation (Link 2022, p. 176). Is the question about a person or about the way they solve tasks? Does it relate to a particular subject? Or does the diagnosis concern general competences or key qualifications? Is it about the individual child or young person or the class? Is it about a person's current situation or their potential? What exactly does the diagnostic finding relate to (Hesse & Latzko 2017, p. 29f.)? And above all: is the diagnosis based on personal everyday experience or on precise scientific measurements and statements? What is the underlying system (ibid., p. 62f.)? There is a big difference between children or young people not being able to cope with a particular task because they are not paying attention or because they have a negative self-image. In-depth knowledge of this is essential for pedagogical support planning. 'This is why support-oriented diagnosis, rather than clinical diagnosis, is so relevant to data-based decision-making and intervention (Link 2022, p. 176).
Diagnosis consequently needs to be seen as a set of tools aimed at establishing individual learning dispositions and needs in order to offer adequate pedagogical (learning) opportunities. Teachers and educators need to understand behaviours so that they can support children and young people accordingly, but they also need to be aware that the routine 'diagnostic categories carry the risk of stigmatization' (Boger & Textor 2016, p. 96). This is why a preliminary unbiased problem description is required: what diagnostic needs exist for the individual child or young person? What is the support planning meant to achieve (ibid.)? In the context of participation and inclusion, a dialogical systemic approach to diagnosis appears to be promising (Boban & Hinz 2016, p. 64).

The following rules apply for the inclusive application of diagnostic categories:
1. Diagnoses are to be used as preliminary and revisable working hypotheses.
2. Diagnoses are always limited and concern selected aspects of a person.
3. General regular knowledge and individual understanding must always come together.
4. Beware of the 'threat of stereotyping': this threat is reduced by open and non-labelling diagnostic models.
5. Diagnostic perspectives need to be oriented and extended to the person in question in their ecosystemic environment; possible interventions must focus as much as possible on the environment (Prengel 2017, p. 23).

Our perceptions and observations are informed by norms and by visual and auditory habits (chapter 3.2); they are based on benchmarks that don't arise from critical research and personal insights but from that fact that a societal majority considers them universally valid.

> 'Diagnostic "clarity" and the use of diagnostic technical terms are prerequisite to further insights, expert exchange, support planning and support. Attitude is particularly important here: we rely on our self, which generates our capacity for empathy, to recognize when unambiguousness and precise conceptualization are required – in collegial work for instance – and when we should use our concepts and descriptions with more caution and empathy, for instance in contact with children or their parents, in order to avoid distress and discouragement' (Solzbacher & Schwer 2015, p. 153).

A dynamic understanding of diagnosis requires a circular phenomenological and multidimensional diagnostic process (Römer 2018, p. 235) and the following basic pedagogical competences: observation, documentation, hypothesizing, knowledge and use of (purely technical) test material, a more profound understanding and appreciation of a person, the qualitative assessment of holistic contexts, the ability to reflect and the acceptance and comprehension of other life worlds (ibid., p. 223).

Diagnosis oriented to inclusive values requires a politically initiated rejection of traditional assessment-based diagnosis and the corresponding diagnostic methods that are not relevant at all for the required support (Barth & Gloystein 2019, p. 99). Institutions must not depend on the labelling of individuals for gaining access to resources. A procedure that is independent of such methods enhances the sense of responsibility in all members of the multiprofessional team and requires a different kind of professionalization. Inclusion-oriented diagnosis needs to be seen as a *service* to all children and therefore as a tool for finding adequate pedagogical options and situations. Adaption of the entire environment to each individual child is required (Gebauer & Simon 2012, no page reference), as is critical scrutiny of institutions and conceptions as to their 'capacity for inclusion' (Simon & Simon 2014, no page reference). In the true sense of the word there can be no such thing as 'inclusive diagnosis, nor can diagnosis be inclusive; it is rather that diagnosis, if theoretically reflected on and responsibly transformed into practice, can enable or obstruct inclusion' (Prosetzky 2018, p. 88). Diagnosis can only serve to help us understand by asking questions. The task is to transform the understanding of diagnosis following the paradigm shift towards inclusion.

8.3 Perceptual vignettes complementing the 'child conference'

Waldorf (special needs) schools use the phenomenological description of a child (young person or adult), known as 'child conference' or 'child study', as a step towards a pedagogical diagnosis (Selg 2007; Gäch 2008, 2013; Göschel 2008, 2013; Seydel 2015; Schöffmann & Schulz 2016; Ruhrmann & Henke 2017; Wiechert 2017; chapter 5.5). Additional aspects are required in the context of inclusive education (Barth 2019; Prengel 2003).

Journaling
Do you have experience with 'child studies' or 'child conferences'? If yes, what are they?
If you are familiar with them, describe an example of a 'child study' or 'child conference'* (Wiehl 2019; Barth 2020).
How do you arrive at insights? What decisions are or were made?

* NB: This format is used in Waldorf (special needs) education, similarly to collegial consultation.

The phenomenological observation and unbiased assessment of human developmental conditions and needs are fundamental to anthroposophic (special needs) teacher education. Guidance towards participation and professional diversity competence requires the (new) ability to co-experience, unlock and contextualize reality on the basis of brief descriptions that can serve as examples. These impulses in the discourse on inclusion are relevant to both the present and the future.
Working with perceptual vignettes can be a starting point and foundation for 'child studies'. In academic teacher education, perceptual vignettes can serve as preliminary exercises that pave the way towards that format. Inclusion-oriented diagnosis that give expression to the given and verbalizes 'co-experience' with the help of perceptual vignettes in order to illustrate different views and perspectives and combine different knowledge-based interpretations, can enhance the students' sensitivity for developmental and learning phenomena, relationships and the learning and living environment. Perceptual vignettes are open, complex and processual; they cast light on one moment that helps to stimulate comprehension. 'Which classroom constellations and professional attitudes and competences influence the diagnostic process of assessing educational support needs in what way?' – a question that has hardly been empirically examined (Lütje-Klose & Neumann 2022, p. 56) but that is made transparent and visible through the method of the reflection spiral.
Working with perceptual vignettes is individual, generally accessible method and an important building block in academic education that enhances both personal and professional development in students at the level of self-reflection, diagnosis, professional attitude and pedagogical actions. Developing and building a professional inclusion-sensitive attitude with the corresponding practical options relies on an approach that supports the development of competences. These competences are associated with quality of life, not only in relation to society as a whole but also to individual biographies (Nussbaum 2019). Trying out perceptual exercises and reflecting on the corresponding processes both individually and in groups supports personal development which in turn can favourably affect professionalization in the pedagogical and social context. The phenomenological and reflective approaches of the perceptual vignettes can be integrated as 'creative exercises into

[both] the scientific' (Wiehl 2021b, p. 231ff.) and theoretical studies of special needs and inclusive education.
Impartial perception and a non-categorizing attitude towards others are prerequisite to dealing professionally with people with additional (educational) needs. The pedagogical-phenomenological method described can be of great value when we begin to embark on such a non-categorizing approach. In doing so, we do not only draw on the learners' experiences (Agostini et al. 2017, p. 324f.) but we practise sharing and transformatively adopting them (Rosa & Endres 2016, p. 15). This method leads to deceleration and evokes subtle resonances between the observers and the observed. Hartmut Rosa defines 'resonance' as a way of relating to the world that arises 'through af←fection and e→motion, intrinsic interest and the expectation of self-efficacy in which subject and world touch and simultaneously transform each other (Rosa 2018, p. 298). Resonance is described as a mode of relating that remains neutral to the emotional content; either side can speak 'with their own voice' and is not disposable in its way of being (So-sein) (ibid.). Again, we hear that we need time and spaces in order to uncover, again and again, different relations and perspectives. No test or questionnaire will ever enable us to understand a person; no regulated or set timetable of available (required) actions does justice to all or specific situations. Perceptual vignettes leave us free because they direct our interest to the 'things themselves' (chapter 2). Every person wants and needs to be understood anew and personally, again and again (chapter 3.1).

8.4 Phenomenology in diagnosis

Humanist psychotherapy also knows phenomenologically oriented experiences of processes and also the critical suspension of attributions that seemingly objectify a situation (such as diagnoses or interpretations). The focus is on the immediate event 'at this very moment, here, between us' (Eberwein 2015, no page reference). Applying phenomenology as a method in this context means precluding preconceptions, conceptualizations and associations as far as possible so that the perceived person can be perceived as alien or other (ibid.).
Phenomenological hermeneutics holds that a person as a subject can only be understood in dialogue with another subject, based on a sympathetic 'wanting to understand' which leads through several phases and levels to a better understanding of others (ibid.). Understanding implies shared experience. In diagnosis it is important to know that a person is 'someone as a person and something as a quality or state' (Stinkes 2019, p. 534). Through the process of recognizing otherness a new perspective emerges which means, 'Anna is not fully described by what I see and recognize in her: as sick, disabled, a girl, a migrant etc. Anna has meaning in

and of herself, she is someone with a name, a face that not only speaks to me but demands: I am the one who is meant' (ibid., p. 535).
If we were able to speak up against assessments of persons with educational support needs (if resources did not depend on such assessments!) and if we could combine phenomenological perceptions with knowledge, we would have achieved much on the way towards inclusion. We think that the phenomenological approach is crucial for gaining the required knowledge and for practising ways of acting and we therefore use perceptual vignettes to enhance the students' sensitivity. This approach requires exercises that need to be practised before, during and after the practical experience (chapter 3.4): taking notice, being attentive, letting oneself be surprised by what is happening, and being curious to what emerges, the dialogue, the reflection (chapter 7). Such future-oriented approaches lead to human dignity and diversity competence.
In questioning the superiority of diagnosis, we recognize the potential for disconcertment in the 'discourse on decategorization' in special needs education (Stinkes 2021, p. 23). The encounter with the individual person and the acknowledgement of their dignity will then have priority over diagnostic categorization or classification. 'The primacy of the encounter over attribution honours the fact that the other person is not per se "a case" or a "diagnostic or pedagogical therapeutic topic"' (ibid.). Diagnosis has its place; the question is whether the subjective experiences of the individual in question (ibid.) before and after diagnosis are also taken into account. Much depends on whether or not the dignity of the individual is recognized. *Dignity* has three dimensions: how I am treated by others, how I treat others and how I see myself (Bieri 2020, p. 12f.). *Recognition* includes acknowledging and appreciatively encouraging someone (Regenbogen & Meyer 2020, p. 41). *Recognizing* means being respectful (ibid.). We need a professional attitude that commits to recognizing human dignity (chapter 6).

8.5 Perceptual vignettes as a medium of sympathetic diagnosis

Practising 'reflection as activity and reflexivity as attitude' seems essential for diagnosis (Kahlau 2023, p. 61). Professional attitudes of openness must be discussed in the context of pedagogical diagnosis and assessment, particularly from the perspective of an inclusion-oriented professions theory, with a view to child development without habit- or belief-specific preconceptions (chapter 6).

> 'The theory of professional practice teaches us that we need to alternate between different perspectives if we want to understand children. We should build up and call on knowledge from scientifically constructed knowledge systems as much as we can when we don't understand a child or young person' (Prengel 2003, p. 36).

When we practise perception as a pedagogical exercise, we distance ourselves from rash interpretation. Practising asks for precise perception, empathy, co-experiencing and attentive observation (chapter 3.4). An ADHD diagnosis makes it difficult for us to perceive the child in question outside this behavioural model, because everything is dominated by that diagnosis. The diagnosis can be helpful to a certain extent for finding good ways of helping the child, but it makes us blind to everything else the child is, can be and wishes to be. A child may be misunderstood and things may not be done to help them escape this diagnosis (Peterlini 2020, p. 9). 'Attributions are always limiting, restricting or excluding. They classify, categorize and assign' (Baur 2018, p. 9). The question is whether we can really be objective towards someone if we believe we can explain them causally and whether tests are at all suited to assessing competences or dispositions. Is it not more respectful to a person's dignity to see and describe special and idiosyncratic behaviours in the sense of a 'science of human life (*science de la vie humaine*)' (Merleau-Ponty 2021, p. 48)?

Inclusion-oriented diagnosis requires bias-conscious perception and interpretation. I write a perceptual vignette about a moment that affects me, speaks to me, catches and directs my attention, draws me in, a moment that causes wonder or confusion. The resulting text vignette is like a snapshot condensed into language, similar to a picture or a scene that has been captured (chapter 5). I use words to share the experience of this moment, to describe it as pictorially and vividly as possible. Perceptual vignettes ask us to perceive attentively and recall in detail; it conveys atmosphere, moods, proximity and empathy. The sensitivity to nuances and resonances can be practised with artistic exercises or with the help of Rudolf Steiner's six elementary exercises for the 'practical training of thought' (Wiehl & Barth 2021, p. 208; chapter 3.4).

Perceptual vignettes constitute a new method that precedes the 'child conferences'; they are descriptions that are as impartial as possible, which is something that young people may find difficult at first. Perceptual vignettes give students the opportunity to lovingly approach such descriptions. They mirror experiences that are important to the writer and describe touching events, captured in suitable words; unusual phrases reflect wonder or even alarm. It is these qualities that have led to the name *perceptual vignettes*. We focus on moments as if we were looking at them through a magnifying glass and describe them concisely. Being there with the other person requires sharing their experience, and writing about this requires finding suitable ways of verbalizing the perceived moment. What is being perceived – individually, without validation or categorization, with conscious awareness of diversity – finds expression in the descriptive text. Reflections that include knowledge lead to a noticeable change in attitude and to as deepened person-centred approach. This work needs time and 'deceleration' (Rosa 2018; chapter 7.9).

In our study courses perceptual vignettes serve primarily the qualification of students, but they can also be used for reflection and intervision in other institutions. We consider *focusing on* and *co-experiencing* of the experiences of others to be special competences that can support basic professional development in (special needs) education. It is essential with this method that resonant relationships emerge and that teachers practise looking at learning and development from the others' point of view (Rosa & Endres 2018, p. 8; chapter 3.1) and allowing this process can inspire their own actions.
Sympathetic diagnosis looks behind the behaviour to find its meaning for the person in question in this moment; it affirms the insight that the behaviour displayed is a coping strategy. With this change of perspective spaces open up for new experiences and for dialogue. This is an interdisciplinary approach to diagnosis that tries to understand and unite all the relevant existing theories. It constitutes a path (Baumann et al. 2021, p. 165) that is worth exploring. We therefore request that, along with subject-specific knowledge, (special needs) teacher education should convey competences for self-reflection, knowledge about shaping relationships and flexibility in the face of entrenched life plans (Römer 2018, p. 7). It is from this perspective that we look at the possibilities of diagnostic procedures.

> 'Diagnosis is first regarded as a cyclical phenomenological process that focuses on a person's experience and potential. This kind of diagnosis needs time and differentiated approaches. It is resource- and future-oriented. It supports and enables active participation and self-efficacy from the client's point of view. It does not generate overarching and prescribed assistance or intervention but works with the client to identify developmental steps in the sense of individual understanding and actions' (ibid., p. 8).

Diagnosis must not take place as a process that is isolated from the life context but 'within the building of a relationship in the joint working towards a formulated goal' (ibid.).

8.6 Exercises in pedagogical diagnosis

It is important to be aware that when we perceive or observe we only ever see segments of a whole (Graumann 2002, p. 27). In education we therefore need exercises that help us develop tolerance so we can assume different perspectives and communicate about them, to develop empathy in particular. Developing tolerance on the basis of communication and the integration of different perspectives has proven to have the most sustainable effect (ibid., p. 28).

Journaling
Open yourself to special moments at work for a period of time (two to three weeks). Look at them more closely and write them down as perceptual vignettes.
Perceptions of bodied statements, actions and behaviours, condensed into textual vignettes, resonate in this creative process.
Reflect on your perceptual vignettes in relation to a previously established diagnosis or assumption. What fits the picture? What does not fit the picture at all? What can you conclude from this?

8.6.1 'Rhythm' – perceptual vignettes and reflection

The students have just started the second year of their Master's programme which focuses on inclusion, and they have received an in-depth introduction to the perceptual vignettes and how to work with them. In a seminar we discuss reflections in the context of diagnosis as a critical preparation for the 'child conferences'. The students are asked to spontaneously write a first, very personal reflection on a perceptual vignette presented to them: what is apparent in this perceptual vignette? What feelings, thoughts, memories does it evoke? What negative or positive moments come to expression? The students have time to put their thoughts on paper.

Rhythm

The educational assistent in the classroom, Chris, stands in front and claps a rhythm for the children to join in with. He first claps rhythmically, then stamps his feet in the pause between the claps, and then he adds a third element by rubbing his hands. Charlie is standing close to Chris and pulls a face, as if in pain, when Chris adds the rubbing of hands to the rhythm. The rhythm continues. The next time Chris rubs his hands, Charlie turns away, he tries to find the rhythm, claps, stamps with a slight delay, turns away and pulls a face. In the next round, after the stamping, he puts his hands on his ears and keeps them there while the others are rubbing their hands. He finds the rhythm: clapping, stamping, hands on ears, clapping, stamping; his face relaxes, he smiles, his whole body slightly swaying (PV 8.1).

Here are a few spontaneous reflections on this perceptual vignette by the students:

'I immediately feel for Charlie who seems to find the sound of rubbing hands unpleasant if not unbearable. I wonder why he finds this noise in particular so unpleasant? I think of many other noises that are potentially unpleasant and realize that I have a very different reaction to the sound of rubbing hands; I find it somewhere between inconspicuous and pleasantly soft. I can nonetheless understand that level of discomfort, I partly recognize myself in that and I know that one often can't explain extreme aversions. This is simply a reality for the person in question and needs to be taken seriously. While it may be

inexplicable, I do not need explanations or words 'in my own world' either. I wonder if Chris, the educator, noticed Charlie's discomfort. If he did, was he confused by it, or baffled, or distracted? Could he have stopped and tried to talk to Charlie? Or is it good that Charlie found his own way of dealing with the situation?'

'Charlie obviously had a problem with the hand rubbing. Instead of putting this discomfort into words, he found his own way of dealing with the situation. While the others in the group rub their hands together, Charlie deliberately turns the other way and covers his ears. After a while Charlie relaxes and even smiles. The feeling of discomfort has evidently disappeared and he found a way of dealing with that without separating from the group or missing out in any way.'

'I felt that someone was carried along (motivated). I noticed that this child does not give up but tries to join in, to be part of the group. He shows commitment. I could sense his feeling of success. A child who is looking for proximity to the teacher! He seeks contact and does not withdraw from the situation. Active commitment; will. The child wants to be an active part of the group. There is a relationship of trust between the teacher and the child.'

'I am really impressed with Charlie. Most people would have withdrawn from this kind of situation and only covered their ears without continuing to clap along with the rhythm. But he finds a solution that enables him to participate.'

'A child behaves differently from what is expected of him in the class context. One could interpret his behaviour based on his facial expression. He pulls a face – maybe he doesn't like the exercise? Later, after having repeatedly turned his back on the situation without success, he puts his hands on his ears and in doing so, finds a way of being able to take part in the exercise again. Only now does the listener, viewer, reader realize that the child seems to find the noise of rubbing hands unpleasant. Doesn't Charlie feel well? Is the noise too loud? An experience of success: the child struggles at first but then finds his own rhythm.'

'Great that a child can make use of this ability to withdraw into himself.'

The students find their own access to this perceptual vignette and respond according to their individual perspective and knowledge. They notice that the child finds his own way of resolving the situation. They are open to what happens and able to place themselves into the boy's position, sharing his experience. They only know this one moment in the child's life. They may find out later what prompted the perceptual vignette; that can elicit new wonder or confusion.

For the second phase of reflection the students are given different specialized texts to read:

- Gloystein, Dietlind (2014): Über den Zusammenhang von Hör- und Sprachverarbeitung, Kommunikation, Lernen und Verhalten [The connection between auditory and linguistic processing, communication, learning and behav-

iour], in: Barth, Ulrike & Maschke, Thomas (eds.): Inklusion. Vielfalt gestalten. Ein Praxisbuch [Inclusion. Working creatively with diversity. A practice guide], Stuttgart: Freies Geistesleben, pp. 244-259.

This book discusses what children hear, what might impede their hearing, how they communicate with the world around them and why their behaviour at school may be seen as conspicuous.

- Roszak, Stefan (2014): Räume hören – oder: Vom Lärmklima zum Lernklima. Ein künstlerisches Projekt zum Thema „Raumklang" in einer Berliner Grundschule [listening to spaces - or: from a climate of noise to a climate of learning. An artistic project on "spatial sound" in a Berlin elementary school]. In: Zeitschrift für ästhetische Bildung [journal of aesthetic education], vol. 6 (1). Online: zaeb.net/wordpress/wpcontent/uploads/2020/12/76-307-1-PB.pdf (accessed on 30 May 2023).

This text describes the unhealthy acoustics in schools as a chronically overlooked, often ignored problem.

- Gruber, Martina (no date): Das Johansen-Hörtraining in der Praxis [the Johansen hearing training in practice]. This is a scientific report by an Austrian speech therapist on working with a particular hearing training. Online: www.jias.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Johansen_Praxiserfahrungen-MartinaGruber.pdf (accessed on 30 May 2023).

The book reports examples of experiences with the Johansen auditory training in a practice for speech therapy and neurophysiological developmental support.

After reading one of the texts the students wrote the following criteria-guided reflections:

> 'Reading the text brought back to me the impact of hearing problems on the entire child development. Charlie may have such a problem that should be looked at. I had initially thought of a processing problem (like ASD). Looking at it again I realize that that may not be the case and that my judgement was premature. (The connection of auditory and linguistic processing, communication, learning and behaviour).'

> 'From the point of view of the author of "From a climate of noise to a climate of learning" Chris could do sound exercises with his group. These exercises can be helpful for children who find noises and sounds unbearable. – After reading the text I wonder whether it was too loud and busy in the room for Charlie and whether he was unable to concentrate. According to the text even the slightest impairment of acoustic perception can lead to high degrees of school failure. It is too loud for him and he may anyway have problems with rhythm so that the volume distracted him even more. His solution was covering his ears. Maybe the clapping was too quiet so that he couldn't hear the rhythm properly.'

'Having read the text on the connection between auditory and linguistic processing, communication, learning and behaviour I must honestly say that nothing much changed for me. Because I was aware before of how many different causes there could be for the pupil's response, I did not presume to make a premature diagnosis. … I didn't think of something acoustic or hearing related; rather that the noises reminded the child of something (traumatic).'

'When I read the text about Johansen auditory stimulation, I was quite annoyed with myself for drawing premature conclusions after such a short episode. I suppose I did this to be able to categorize Charlie's behaviour for myself. I was aware before that there is more to noise perception. It was nonetheless interesting for me that the text confirmed my diagnosis somewhat in that it points out that persons with autistic spectrum disorder often have very sensitive hearing.'

'Listening to spaces – or: from a climate of noise to a climate of learning. The text illustrates how noise can be used as a learning process through joint sound projects. Old brick buildings in particular have high ceilings and long corridors where sound reverberates and everything sounds or is louder. Through various projects, children were shown that every room sounds different and props were introduced to dampen the sound. The basic lesson I learned from this text is that one can pay attention to the specific and protected acoustics in the classroom and that this can be influenced with simple design changes.'

Different approaches direct the renewed reflection to a particular issue. The room or the lesson structure can have an influence on the situation, for instance, or the child's sensitivity can be the cause *for his non-adapted behaviour*. We don't know; but looking at the different causes for the situation opens up perspectives that may not be known yet or that may not be considered in the contexts described. What is important in this moment is the insight: I don't know everything; I'm only seeing one moment and I need the different perspectives of (in this case) my fellow students.

It is interesting what the students write after the third and final phase of reflection. They note down the insights they gained from the two preceding reflective phases and describe their insights in relation to their own judgement, actions and the emeging perspectives and chances for transformation:

'Maybe Charlie has in fact 'only' a hearing impediment that has been misinterpreted as a behavioural problem. In order to exclude such a wrong diagnosis one should first carry out a hearing test. Hearing and sight tests are a good foundation for further diagnostic considerations.'

'Things are not always what they seem. Perceptions can be misleading. Perceptions are based on previous experience. Sharing experiences with colleagues is therefore always helpful.'

'It helps if there is less labelling at the beginning. I think it's very important to widen one's perspective. One should not let personal experiences influence the diagnosis, that can be misleading.'

> 'For my professionalizing behaviour I would pay attention to the learning climate so I can develop suitable exercises. This would give my learners the space and resources they need to overcome the unpleasant atmosphere whilst continuing their learning process in comfort.'
>
> 'I feel caught out: I always have this immediate need to help but Charlie has his own coping strategies. Does the educator realize what is going on with Charlie? So that next time he can really address it? That is precisely what I didn't think of and that annoys me!'

Children and young people in organizations often have react in *unexpected* ways. Is it the acoustics in the room, is there an auditory problem, is it the lesson structure? From Charlie's behaviour the students were able to learn how differently they can look at a pupil who is finding good strategies for participation in this moment but who is at other times conspicuous due to his non-adapted behaviour. It is easy to categorize a child's behaviour as 'challenging' (Elvén 2017; Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al. 2020). Capturing many small perceptual moments, comparing them and reflecting on them in the group can help to better understand children, young people and adults and to ameliorate certain situations or find solutions. There are always good reasons for any behaviour. In education it is up to the professional team to examine the structures and the environment closely in order to find ways of working together well.

8.6.2 Perceptual vignettes for personal reflection

Below are two perceptual vignettes that you can work with and use for practising. Think about which texts you would propose to a group as additional material for reflection. Often it is something a student says that inspire more ideas and specialist topics. It is interesting to discover new facets and bring them to the dialogue.
The two perceptual vignettes below were written during a work placement by a student who knew that she would be the class teacher of this class after the summer holidays. She was therefore keen to perceive and observe the children to get to know them better.

The fly

You are sitting next to me as the class teacher explains fractions. A fly is buzzing around in front of you while we are all busy doing maths together. Very carefully and skilfully you pull out your glasses case. You slowly open it as your eyes keep following the fly and you try to catch it with the case. There – you caught it! Calmly you bend your head over the case and slowly open it. The fly is sitting on the cloth that you carefully hold between your fingers as you pull it out and place it on the table. The little creature is still sitting on it. In deep concentration you look at the fly, observing it until it flies away (PV 8.2).

Dictation

Every child is given an empty sheet. The class teacher dictates words with 'ie', writing them down simultaneously on the back of the blackboard. When Paul realizes that he is expected to write something, he looks straight ahead, worried. Whenever we want to write something he suddenly looks stressed. The teacher says a word. Paul looks, waits but doesn't write. He leans back unnoticeably and peeps over to his neighbour, making sure that no one notices him. He can't see anything because Billy unwittingly holds his arm over his sheet. Paul leans forward again and is pale. The teacher now speaks the second word and writes it down. Again, Paul slowly leans back, trying to read the word on his neighbour's sheet. There is the third word already. Paul looks left and right, desperate but cautiously. Suddenly Billy moves his arm because he is moving his paper to be able to keep writing. Paul notices this at once. Slowly he turns his head towards Billie, his shoulders sink and he starts writing (PV 8.3).

Journaling
Go through the phased of reflection. Look for specialist texts if necessary to find ideas for the second, analytical and criteria-guided reflection. What is your perspective as you look at the situation? What would you like to discuss in the team?

8.6.3 'Equilibrium' – perceptual vignettes and reflection

The following text is another example from the master's course with focus on inclusion; it was used for the multiphase reflective process that is part of working with perceptual vignettes. The perceptual vignette and the subsequent phases of reflection show very clearly what previous assumptions and experiences the students had, what changed when they read specialist texts in the second reflective phase and how they themselves viewed the whole process at the end.

Equilibrium

Aaron – too (?) tall for the chair he's sitting on. The hood of his jumper is pulled over his head, his hands almost covered by the sleeves. He is balancing on the back legs of his chair, finds equilibrium, the chair is rocking very gently forward and backward, while Aaron's fingers move super quickly on the desk to hold the balance: his whole body is upright, extremely tense, diagonal to the teacher; he looks at her and at the table which he needs for his subtle balancing. The chair is poised on the tips of the back legs, Aaron's feet rest on the wood between the chair legs. Subtle balancing movements keep Aaron upright, he looks at the teacher, gently holding his balance with his fingers. Calmly the second teacher approaches from behind, gently touches Aaron's back and pushes him forward with this chair so that the chair comes to rest on its four legs. Aaron's upper body slowly slumps forward onto the table, he places his right arm bent on the desk, lays his head on it, his whole body goes limp and he remains still in this position. Aaron closes his eyes (PV 8.4).

The feedback from the students encompasses a whole range of individual spontaneous reflections; their interpretations go in different directions. In the seminar we read the interpretations to each other and talk about them. It needs courage and trust to open up, share one's own statements that can sometimes be revealing. What becomes tangible for everyone is: how I read and interpret the situation has to do with me.
From the first reflective phase:

'At first negative feelings rise up in me … Aaron doesn't seem to care about the lesson. He is absent-minded and hides behind his clothes. He disturbs the lesson with his 'acrobatics'. He might distract other pupils too. … My first impulse is to stop him. The teacher's intervention brings up a different picture. I'm amazed. Maybe his behaviour was a desperate attempt to stay awake?! Because he wanted to follow the lesson? He was tense and being touched brought him back to the present. I feel sympathetic towards Aaron now and wonder what may have kept him from sleeping. … I should try to talk to him. Something entirely different from disinterest may be at the root of this. … He certainly didn't intend to 'disturb' the lesson. I almost have a bad conscience …'

'A certain indifference on the part of the pupil, he is probably bored, and entertains himself by rocking on the chair, when he is reprimanded, he lies down to rest. Aaron is probably not aware that his actions could be dangerous in case he loses his balance. When I was at school there was a teacher who had a student who had to go to hospital after such an accident and now, she always pointed out to pupils that they should never rock on their chair.'

'I know this situation well from my own time at school and from work placements. I was both the one rocking on the chair and the one gently calming someone. When I read this perceptual vignette, however, the first feelings coming up in me are disquiet and concern. When I get to the end, I realize how sad the situation is. The second teacher meant well – for him and for the other pupils, but his attention which is clearly supported by the physical tension, is gone as soon the tension stops and it seems as if the second teacher had wittingly or unwittingly pushed his standby button.'

'This perceptual vignette describes a scenario with a restless boy in a situation where he could get hurt.'

'Aaron is balancing on his chair. He is possibly bored and has found something to do. But maybe he urgently needs to move after the teaching phase. He is certainly not concentrating. When the second teacher touches his back, he calms down. Maybe the child is not feeling well and that's why he lies down quietly afterwards and closes his eyes.'

'Aaron's tension and activity while he is rocking on his chair, which is in stark contrast to the resignation and passivity at the end, are well described in the perceptual vignette. Aaron's response to the 'gentle behavioural correction' by being gently touched and pushed reveals that this may happen more often. Freely interpreted, Aaron's physical exercises and activities, whose positive correlation to mental activity has been shown in trials, could be a desperate attempt to actively participate in and shape his life. His behaviour does not find room here.'

'I'm immediately reminded of my own time at school and it elicits mixed feelings in me. I remember the fun we had rocking on chairs but also the many times when someone hurt themselves or there was trouble with a teacher. Often I would have wished that my teacher, instead of shouting and scolding, would have mastered the situation like this and created calm and safety.'

For the second reflection phase the students were given different specialized texts to study. Each student reads an extract from the text and writes a new reflection. The criteria-guided reflections mirror different interpretations. Materials for the second reflection of the perceptual vignette Equilibrium (PV 8.4) could include:

- Auer, Wolfgang-M. (2021): Das Bewegte Klassenzimmer [The moving classroom]. In: Barth, Ulrike & Maschke, Thomas (eds.): Dimensionen pädagogischer Räume: Erleben – Begegnen – Lernen [dimensions of pedagogical spaces: experience – encounter – learning]. Salzburg: Residenz, pp. 164-174.
- Largo, Remo H. (2020): Motorische Kompetenz [motor competence]. In: id.: Kinderjahre. Die Individualität des Kindes als erzieherische Herausforderung [Childhood. The child's individuality as a pedagogical challenge] 2nd edition. Munich: Piper, pp. 280-291.
- Rittelmeyer, Christian (2021): Architektur und Bildung – mit einem besonderen Blick auf Schulbauten [architecture and education – with a particular focus on school buildings] In: Barth Ulrike & Maschke, Thomas (eds): Dimensionen pädagogischer Räume: Erleben – Begegnen – Lernen. Salzburg: Residenz, pp. 12-24.
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After reading the technical texts the students wrote the following reflections:

'I respond calmly and relaxed to Aaron's rocking. His active balancing helps him focus on the lesson. The fact that he wraps himself up so cosily also shows me that his multimodal sensory experience helps him focus on the lesson. I realize that his behaviour does not disrupt the lesson and decide not to intervene. There is a connection between sensory activity and cognitive achievements. I should offer more teaching approaches that stimulate Aaron's sensory activity … (heterogeneous learning groups). The interference of the teacher I find (almost) intrusive.'

'The text (motor skills) really changed my view of the perceptual vignettes and the scenario. It is important to understand how great children's need for movement is, how important it is and that it is totally normal and healthy. From this point of view it is obvious and right to find some way to regulate this urge for movement and concentrate at the same time. As a teacher one could therefore have responded better to the situation, realizing that movement is needed here, and giving the children the opportunity to satisfy this urge. Sure, rocking on chairs can lead to serious accidents and preventing it is also

understandable. I still like that it was done calmly and not with shouting and calling everyone's attention to it. In situations like this we should all remember that these are children who simply have to live out their energy and simply have much to discover and learn, and that the 'learning target' may be achieved faster when everyone has the chance to move enough.'

'Questions after having read the text on moving classrooms: how can one provide a suitable learning environment for the boy? What does he actually need so he can concentrate and be safe at the same time?

- Balancing may be necessary for him to concentrate
- Create opportunities for the child to live out his urge for movement
- Chairs that are built so they always swing forward again so one can't fall over backwards. → for safe balancing'

'The importance to learn to appreciate the heterogeneity in the whole school – the goal here is to support every need individually and offer learning opportunities; the school community gives the impulses for change, for instance by observing different learning behaviours:

- the need for different movement occasions
- the pupil needs occasions for movement so he can concentrate, and, for example, individual and group work (no frontal teaching) & room to withdraw
- different seating opportunity that he likes
- if chair: suitable size.'

'Rittelmeyer writes in his text that 'research shows increasingly that our thinking and mental image forming are determined to a considerable degree by the way we move in space […], our gestures, our posture when thinking […]' (2021, p. 16 f.). Maybe rocking on a chair is Aaron's best position for thinking?'

'With the creation of learning spaces for students (article by Sütterlin and Knodt), a rather new aspect has come into focus. In my first reflection I didn't really look from the 'architectural' point of view, and reasons why pupils do something weren't so prevalent for me. My focus has been totally widened again here. In my first reflection I hardly examined what reasons there could be for the behaviour. The proposals of architectural changes might help the pupil not only to stop rocking on his chair and no longer restrict or try to restrict his urge for movement. Together with the teacher I could ask for a solution to be worked on. I would also ask the pupil himself concretely why he does it, or I would try to explore the problem with his trust. Whether that will lead to initiate architectural changes remains to be seen, but it would certainly be worth trying.'

For many students the way they look at this moment has changed. While some first felt reminded of their own childhood, of rocking on chairs themselves as pupils and experiencing the teacher shouting, there are others who put themselves in the situation of the teacher and feel disturbed, experiencing the calming intervention of the second teacher as pleasant. And there are others who found the behaviour of the second teacher 'intrusive'. Discussing these perspectives, casting a

momentary light on the different views, awakens understanding for the students, teachers and the daily situations. In addition, the students recognize the children's developmental needs and gain experiences of the actions teachers can take. In the final, third phase of reflection the students write down their insights from the previous reflections and how their views have changed.

> 'My perception has changed in the process … I realized that every child learns differently and needs to be addressed and encouraged differently. The world is rarely as it seems at first glance. I was reminded again that I must not judge prematurely and that I should include all dimensions if possible.'
> 'By consulting the specialized literature, more ways of interpreting the situation emerged, when I become more aware of certain developmental conditions, particularly regarding the connection of movement and attention, I can observe in more detail what is actually happening and act more wisely as a result.'
>
> 'I started off thinking that the teacher had found a good way of calming a restless student and saved him from a "dangerous" situation. In the course of the morning I considered that there might be reasons why the boy is rocking on his chair, that it is an inner urge, totally normal and healthy and not based on bad intentions. This helped me understand and made me consider how one can respond positively as a teacher in such situations and help meeting the urge for movement in a way that everyone benefits from it.'

Journaling
Remember a situation similar to the one described in the perceptual vignette Equilibrium (WB 8.4) and observe:
How can I remain centred and focused?
• Practise calmness of thought, not let myself be distracted
How can I perceive the needs of all the children and respond to them accordingly (think of different learning types, room situations, etc.)?
• Practise equanimity and positivity
Can I describe my boundaries well? Do I remain centred and do I refrain from assuming bad intentions in children?
Observe the change in your behaviour as you read about the importance of movement and/or the different needs of children. How do you discover the individual needs? How do you create room for students to withdraw?

One student writes in her *journal*:

> 'When one reflects on these perceived and observed moments it is important to consider alternative attitudes. Just because something appears to me 'like this' doesn't mean that it is 'like this'. Through self-reflection one places oneself at the centre and observes one's own behaviour as if it was another person's; in this way one can see better and discover who one is, how one thinks.'

This brief example illustrates the different ways everyday situations can be accessed and viewed. It shows how a pupil is identified with his disruptive behaviour. Often we forget that our estimation is not thought through, that it is rooted in habits and possibly corresponds to habitus (chapter 6.1). It is therefore important to remember the external requirements in child development and the awareness of how rooms are set up and equipped before people are being categorized. This can lead to aha experiences, as in the case of one student:

'I had no idea that there could be a reason for rocking on the chair!'

8.7 The potential of perceptual vignettes in pedagogical diagnosis. Outlook

The reflective phases (chapters 7; 8.6) in working with perceptual vignettes demonstrate how to meet and work with others in a bias-sensitive way. The students relate in new ways and apply different ways of categorizing. They discuss their views in a protected environment, some only listen and don't say anything. And yet, these exercises elicit amazement at how differently situations can be interpreted, how our interpretations are informed by our experiences and previous knowledge and, as the example of Aaron shows, by our own pupil habitus. In training and professionalization, time needs to be given for gaining awareness and for developing a professional attitude and practice (chapters 6 and 7). Our attitude arises from what we see, hear, read, perceive, observe and reflect on.

The potential of perceptual vignettes in pedagogical diagnosis lies in accentuating affective moments and looking at them from different angles. We, too, are astonished again and again at how our students choose to approach a situation. As we share these experiences and cast light on situations by consulting scientific texts, the potential for interpretation increases; the students look more critically at themselves and others and they recognize the potential of working in a multiprofessional team. Situations become clearer that are often not considered in organizations for children or adults, such as opportunities for movement, the acoustics in a room and so on. How many children are being *diagnosed into* special educational categories although the requirements are not examined first has been shown by Dietlind Gloystein (2014) for instance in her *book on the connection between auditory and linguistic processing, communication, learning and behaviour*. It falls to us as teachers and educators to question again and again our interpretations of child behaviour and our actions.

The reflection spiral that is part of working with perceptual vignettes seems to us to be an important step on the way to professionalization and the development of a pedagogical attitude. It will be interesting for us to ask former students in a

few years' time whether and how this reflective work changed their attitude in the long term, whether they maintained their sensitivity for different perspectives on pedagogical situations and whether they continue to apply it in their daily work.

9 Perceptual vignettes for innovative professionalism in education. Outlook

Ever more people and international publications focus on the implications of the Anthropocene (Crutzen 2011), the causes and conditions of war, the refugee and climate crises, and warn us that we are globally about to reach the 'point of no return'. Clearly education, as a basic discipline with a lifelong formative effect must not ignore this state of affairs, which is also a chance. The children and young people of the coming generations, and ultimately everyone, need to make a contribution to the future global tasks and acquire basic, effective skills for 'peace, cultural diversity and sustainability as tasks of global education' (Wulf 2020, p. 204).

An educational journey can only start with the abilities available to the individuals involved and their personal and social circumstances. Perception and observation of individual potential and of the needs of others are therefore crucial for initiating personal and social formative processes, whether in the context of education or elsewhere. Joint practice and individual self-development accompany this professional development.

Abilities such as standing up, walking, speaking, acting and thinking are considered archetypally human and culturally required for active participation in the individual and social organization of life. Preceding these are perceptions in prenatal development that connect children with the processes in the womb and the maternal lifestyle and later with their internal and external world. We do not all have equally developed talents and abilities. We may live in multicultural societies now, but the canon of ideal-typical abilities continues to serve as a benchmark for assessments and evaluations. While this canon can be a useful guideline, it does not have to be the exclusive basis for pedagogical actions. The perceptual vignettes ask us to defer ideal-typical patterns, categorizations of all kinds, judgements and prognoses and look more closely at each person's situation. Perception draws from immediate experience rather than previously acquired concepts or knowledge. Perception not only differs from observation as focused, directed attention (chapter 3), but also from any kind of reflection, judgement and thinking. Perception comes first, giving us access to the world and to ourselves. It opens the gates to uncertainty, secrets, hazards and risks, challenging us to enter into a process of reflection on what reveals itself:

> 'Expecting thinking to be merely affirmative and reassuring means demanding its self-annihilation' (Heidegger 2002, S. 266)

Claus Otto Scharmer (2020, 2022) developed the core principles of his Theory U from a wider global perspective as descending and ascending movements. Descending corresponds to letting go of old thinking habits and previous experiences and looking with fresh eyes at the 'constellations' of things and persons, redirecting the attention from the objects to ourselves as observers and therefore to the 'source' in order to 'map the deeper territory' (Scharmer 2022, p. 38). In letting go of the old we enter the sphere of the future, we allow visions to appear, something new is conceived and realized (ibid., p. 38ff.).

The Martinican poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant (1928-2011) refers to the new capacity required for this as 'archipelagic thinking' (2013, p. 34). This is different from systems thinking or 'continental thinking' – that is from a thinking in ideological and predetermined patterns. It is a 'new kind of thinking, more intuitive, more conspicuous, more threatened, but attuned to the chaotic world and its unpredictability […]. However, it also points to a vision of the poetic and imaginary in the world' (ibid). Glissant here identifies the core elements required for transforming what exists into a *sphere of the future* – a thought that motivates us to continue developing what we have achieved so far.

In engaging with the basic elements and processes of phenomenology we tried to cast as much light as possible on the development of perceptual vignettes. We found that the conscious practice of opening ourselves to moods, wonder, open perception and attentive observation achieved precisely what Claus Otto Scharmer referred to as letting go: we freed ourselves from established thinking, judging and other presumptions, making it possible for surprises to happen and for unexpected sides of a person, new possibilities and perspectives to show themselves. We found out that working with perceptual vignettes calls first on perception as an archetypal faculty, which was also the reason why we chose the name. Developing one's perceptiveness not only supports a thinking that is critical, sympathetic and a sound basis for judgement but a thinking that can embrace living contexts, that is visionary and future-oriented, maybe even 'archipelagic'. It is precisely this kind of thinking that is required for 'actively participating in the necessary socio-ecological changes' (Wiehl 2022b, p. 31), both in the microsocial (education, everyday life) and macrosocial sense.

This second process, which in Theory U emerges from 'presencing', from 'connecting with the source' (Scharmer 2022, p. 55ff.), is reflected in the writing of perceptual vignettes as a productive process. We took the courageous step of letting the students first write down spontaneous impressions in various textual forms, then observe the writing process and overcome writing obstacles. By offering opportunities for practice in seminars, we enabled the students to gain aware-

ness of their own view on the matter to be observed and to keep refocusing on the particular given aspect of an event, action or utterance. The task was to produce a description in the present-tense that stayed as close as possible to the phenomenon. A feeling for language is essential, both in terms of expression and choice of words. What a perceptual vignette actually is was not immediately apparent but had to be discovered by trial and error. In the end, by examining the textual examples collected, we were able to formulate the difference between phenomenological descriptions and perceptual vignettes. Here is our definition (chapter 5.5):

Perceptual vignettes arise from a phenomenological method that includes observations in practice, descriptions, stages of reflection and professional application in a pedagogical context.

This does not fully describe the processes through which perceptual vignettes arise. These also include diverse individual perspectives and humorous and magical descriptions which often read like poetry. In these qualities we discover creative processes that mirror Graham Wallas' four stages of creativity (1926/2014). Our focus is not *only* on perception and observation, or phenomenologically speaking, on showing and letting appear, but also on the creative writing process that gives new expression to what has been seen, heard or touched. Letting something appear and seeing persons or objects as they are requires openness and risk-taking.

> 'What we see depends both on what we are looking at and what our visual-conceptual experience has taught us to see. Lack of practice can only result in utter and wild confusion' (Kuhn 2020, p. 125).

In the context of education, perceptual vignettes teach students and researchers to observe children, young people and adults sensitively and appreciatively and to reflect and change their attitudes and actions. By looking back on the developments and studies investigated for this publication on perceptual vignettes so far and looking ahead to the potential of this medium for the professionalization of teachers and educators, we identified specific methodological approaches that have been presented in the individual chapters of this book. In teacher education, study courses and qualification phases such as professional induction as well as in the daily pedagogical practice and in scientific enquiry, the perceptual vignettes have emerged as a phenomenological, reflective method involving *three levels*: *engaging* with a pedagogical situation*, processing* impressions and special moments in the perceptual vignettes (chapter 5) and *reflecting* on them by spontaneously recalling initial impressions, assessing them on the basis of particular specialized criteria and finally by reflecting on the entire process in ways that are sensitive to attitudes and actions (chapter 7). We have discovered a methodology that does not

follow the rules of diagnostic technique but regards diagnosis as a process guided by differentiating and attending to individual and special qualities (chapter 8).
Students and researchers who use perceptual vignettes productively and reflectively for the purposes of diagnosis and professionalization often participate in a situation as observers or teaching practitioners. In their mutual relationship and in the resonant in-between space, participation and observation appear as capacities 'of the same origin' (Seel 2006, p. 131). Participation means involving oneself in a situation or a pedagogical action and engaging with another, while observation is 'orientation to an object of cognition or action' (ibid.); it requires a certain distance from other persons and events. As participants, teachers and researchers involve themselves actively or perceptively in pedagogical activities with individuals or with a group; their actions are either guided by the needs and directions of others who are also present in the sphere of action, or they implement their own intentions. As observers, on the other hand, they – at least temporarily - take up a position opposite others, as outsiders, letting themselves be affected by events with and around others. Since those who work with perceptual vignettes do not have to give up their *multidimensional engaged attitude* – we refer particularly to participation as a new field of research (Wansing et al. 2022) – they can never fully assume the position of empirical ethnographers. Rather, they alternate this method with *observation* and *participation* (in the sense of participatory experience) or as *observing participation* (chapter 2) and therefore as *(co-)experience*.
They take up a sympathetic and empathetic perspective, trying to capture what is special rather than universal or ideal-typical in a child, young person or adult. Their subjective observations and descriptions – some perceptual vignettes also address the observed person directly – do not correspond to any common categories applied in diagnosis or in the assessment of learning development (chapter 8). Observation and participation as meaning-giving (co-) experience rather reflect the phenomenological practice.

> 'We can define the experience […] as an *implicit process of meaning construction that cannot be reduced to conscious meaning-making*' (Tengelyi 2007, p. 15).

While we did not explicitly focus on the concept of 'experience as getting to know people, things and phenomena' (Morasch 2014, p. 549), which is central to education, in the previous chapters, we referred to it repeatedly since experiences emerge as a result of both the phenomenological and the reflective processes. According to Käte Meyer-Drawe, *experience* is based on 'learning from the other' as an 'intersubjective act' (Meyer-Drawe 1996, p. 375) and 'learning as experience is an ambivalent process' (Meyer-Drawe 2003, p. 424). In his famous essay *Of Experience,* Michel de Montaigne remarked as early as 1580 that experience – unlike knowledge which derives from reason and rationality – leads to 'diversity and variety':

> 'There is no desire more natural than that of knowledge. We try out all ways that can lead us to it; where reason is wanting, we therein employ experience […] which is a means much more weak and cheap; but truth is so great a thing that we ought not to disdain any mediation that will guide us to it. Reason has so many forms that we know not to which to take; experience has no fewer; the consequence we would draw from the comparison of events is unsure, by reason they are always unlike. There is no quality so universal in this image of things as diversity and variety (Montaigne 2017, p. 571).

Working phenomenologically and reflectively relies on such experiences of 'diversity and variety'. However, another research method is appearing on the horizon and we are using it for participative research in addition to interviews, specifically in the field of inclusion. It has been applied in a project called 'In Good Company' (in-guter-gesellschaft.org) and for the research into musical communication with non-speaking persons. Participatory research is a generic term for research methods that, in direct collaboration with those affected, investigate and understand, influence and change the social reality (von Unger 2014, p. 1). Perceptual vignettes as a phenomenological-reflective approach integrated in participatory research mirror the potential and limitations of inclusion in a broad understanding (Booth & Ainscow 2019). The reflection and dialogue loops used to reflect on perceptual vignettes (one's own and those of others) at different levels (in relation to inclusion, participation, power theory and critique of ableism) help students and researchers find their own standpoint. As part of the research projects mentioned, the researching students compose perceptual vignettes which are critically reflected on and discussed with the original question in mind, in mixed research groups with people with and without additional support needs as well as among the students. Based on these premisses, we discuss questions of inclusion, participation and deconstruction and work on developing a (professional) attitude oriented to inclusion and participation.

> 'As we conduct research and write down our findings, we always make decisions as to whose story we tell and which story we omit. This means we construct and reconstruct reality. Our generating of knowledge serves to legitimize some perspectives and experiences and to challenge others' (Traustadóttir 2001, p. 26)

The reflective work with perceptual vignettes leads to wider insights that can be the starting point for professionalization in the field of inclusive education. Even in their fledgling stage it is apparent that they constitute a new method for a participatory approach to research that we currently view as a learning field and that we are discussing with colleagues both nationally and internationally.
Looking at what is given can reveal new options for micro- and macro processes, give a voice to people who do not, or not yet, have one – as is apparent from the application of perceptual vignettes with non-speaking persons in musical communication (Drechsler 2023), in the work with dementia patients and in residen-

tial projects with people with so-called learning disabilities: What challenges and learning fields are brought to light by perceptual vignettes? What conditions for success (with regard to the research method and research practice) can be identified for participatory research processes? And above all: How can insights derived from participatory research projects be successfully transferred to the social reality so that they can influence and sustainably change this reality?

Our society is much more diverse than we can ever comprehend; focusing on the moment and the connectedness (Hüter & Spannbauer 2021) and taking up the challenge of responding and doing justice to the individual and alien (Waldenfels 2016; chapter 2.5) can be key to mastering many challenging tasks. We were fortunate in that our students were enthusiastic about the perceptual vignettes from the start, that they seized the process together with us as lecturers and researchers and made the method more concrete with their many examples. The task to simply perceive a child and write down what was observed without judgement is what resulted in this format. In the process of working with the perceptual vignettes it became apparent time and again that the relevant skills – perception and observation, productive writing and processing, reflecting on the object of observation and reflection in relation to self-development – needed honing so that they could be used as approaches of a *visionary pedagogy* that does not merely build on tradition but is ready to accept challenges and risks.

In conclusion, we will share examples of affective moments taken from the feedback we had in response to our work with perceptual vignettes in study seminars and professional development: students experience this work as instructive, well structured, inspiring and enriching and feel that it meets their need to capture personal and special moments in writing. Working with perceptual vignettes opens new vistas, gives insight into personal perceptual structures and leads to less biased approaches.

> 'Thank you. I was touched by experiencing this process and how gradually a connection emerges from content that is basically known to the scientific form. For me it is like the 'cracking' of a shell, something breaks open. Something comes to light.'

This is what one seminar participant wrote in her evaluation. We find the obstacles at the beginning of the process relevant. The process of writing in particular (chapter 5) needs time; it also needs courage. Once these obstacles are cleared, impressive moments ensue. Some students are shy to read and share their own perceptual vignettes. These are personal pieces of writing and talking about them requires a space of trust (chapter 7). If this shyness can be overcome, a space opens 'to consciously perceive brief moments of everyday life, to cast a new light on the child, myself, the situation.' The students look with new eyes, enchanted by the practical experience, and they experience accessibility. New perspectives let challenging situations light up in different colours, enable a view of each individual's

needs and widen the horizon. The method is felt to be interesting and highly productive:

> 'A great method that can be integrated in the daily work without much of an effort as a way of focusing one's perception in everyday life. It lets you see the child.'

The students experience especially the '*freer access to the child*' created by this method and they appreciate how it gradually enhances their sensitivity. Perceptual vignettes need little time, they are *accessible, uncomplicated* and *suitable for everyday use*. They engender wakefulness and attention to the needs of everyone involved. Students also repeatedly mention the method fosters an appreciative attitude.

> 'I was able to fully immerse myself in the matter and gain strength.'

Perceptual vignettes help to deal more easily with more complex formats and to make use of the perspectives of the multiprofessional team.

> 'For me perceptual vignettes are like practising mindfulness; the approach is good, easy, subjective, they are a piece in the wider jigsaw puzzle.'

> 'This way of documenting and engaging is so subtle, easy and I will enjoy it. Focusing on the small, unique moments is very important!'

> 'The reflection spiral amazes, enriches, irritates and inspires.'

> 'I like the user-friendliness. Short and concise – but very expressive. It is easy to integrate and implement.'

Perceptual vignettes let 'the given' resonate; they capture individual, affective moments in a person's development, learning biography or constitution; they focus on moments that appeal, stand out and direct our gaze, and they magnify these moments. They are snapshots condensed into language, similar to a picture or a short scene in a play. As a phenomenological approach, perceptual vignettes rely on unbiased perception and empathetic observation of a person, their actions, utterances and environment. They require attentive perception, detailed recall and creative verbalization in an act of selfless devotion, concentration, attention and mindfulness. They express experiences that elicit wonder and concern, that are personally important und reflect touching events; we regard them as propaedeutic, as introduction and preparatory exercise. Perceptual vignettes are building blocks towards an ethics of connectedness, towards transforming habits and traditions in favour of diverse ways of 'relating to the world' (Glissant 2021). Maybe the perceptual vignettes can point the way to a visionary future education.

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Perceptual vignettes are the result of a phenomenological method applied in pedagogical practice and research. This method includes perception, description and phases of reflection and supports the development of a professional inclusive attitude and diagnostic competence. The process-based way of working with perceptual vignettes asks us to defer ideal-typical patterns, categorizations of all kinds, judgements and prognoses and to look more closely at each person's situation. The book is intended as a study and practice guide and includes theoretical foundations and the practical application of the method as well as theme-based exercises in perception, writing and reflection.

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