

THE POLITICS OF LEARNING

Nōku anō te Takapau Wharanui

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Interrupting the Politics of Learning – Reclaiming the Beautiful Risk of Education

The past two decades have witnessed a remarkable rise of a language of learning in education and in our lives more generally. Not only is it claimed that we live in an age of learning; we are also being spurred into being lifelong learners. At the same time the learning sciences and the big data of learning analytics are trying to measure and monitor learning in ever more detail in order to secure that learners become more and more effective at producing the learning outcomes that the global economy needs from them.

What started out as a liberating idea – placing learning at the centre of our educational endeavours – seems to have turned into its opposite, where learning itself has become a mode of control and increasingly also a mode of *self*-control. Looking at learning in this way begins to reveal the political work done through and in the name of learning.

In my presentation I will not only attempt to explore and expose different dimensions and manifestations of this ‘politics of learning,’ but will also argue why it might be important to interrupt this politics and resist the ongoing demand to learn and to be a learner. Against this background I will make a case for a return of education *beyond learning*, arguing that the liberation we need in our times may well be found in our willingness to engage with the beautiful risk of education, both as students and, even more importantly, as teachers.

Biographical Note:

Gert Biesta is currently Professor of Education and Director of Research in the Department of Education at Brunel University London, UK. In addition he is a visiting professor (art education) at ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, the Netherlands, and at NLA University College, Norway.

His work focuses on the theory and philosophy of education and the theory and philosophy of educational and social research. He is particularly interested in bringing different traditions and cultures of educational thought and scholarship in conversation with each other. His latest monograph, *The Beautiful Risk of Education*, won the 2014 Outstanding Book Award of the American Educational Research Association (Division B: Curriculum Studies). His latest book, *The Rediscovery of Teaching: Progressive Arguments for a Conservative Idea*, will appear with Routledge late in 2016 or early in 2017. He is currently finalising a short book entitled *Letting Art Teach: Art Education after Joseph Beuys*, to be published by ArtEZ Press, the Netherlands. (www.gertbiesta.com)



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