Hermeneutics of Education: Learning as A Way of Being

The main objective of this lecture course is to situate hermeneutic praxis of education within the context of general philosophical hermeneutics of education. We will go beyond hermeneutics as a theory or an academic discipline to the practice of hermeneutics, interpreting learning as a way of being. Instead of being overwhelmed by the instability of our educational system, we will reflect upon learning as an ongoing lifelong process, constantly occurring in the midst of living.

Our hermeneutic approach to the philosophy of education draws on insights from Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur. With special attention to the centrality of conversational reciprocity in educative process (and not so much in educative structures), we will show that the task of education is the conscientious endeavor of leading a student to a certain wisdom and a complex development of the whole person. The key issue is the formation of the individual while fostering the intersubjective understanding, which stands in an opposition to the predominant contemporary tendency of overstressing the transfer of information and the growth of scientific knowledge. Following the ancient tradition, we will critically address the issue of the limits of education in their *Wirkungsgeschichte*: How the universal call for thinking compels us to transgress ourselves and transform our convictions? If the logic of question and answer is the guiding phronetic model for education, what are the conditions of possibility of dialogical education? Is education as self-education with all aspects of the possible uselessness just yet another extravagant and an obvious burden on the social system or a rather true expression of the hermeneutic gesture of hospitality and welcoming the other as the possible disclosure of that which is yet undisclosed to us. By its
very nature, education happens always in the realm of ambiguity. Is there an a priori need to dismiss the hermeneutic approach to education as an infertile endorsement of equivocity, vagueness, fuzziness, and deceptiveness? Hermeneutics reminds us rather that the plurivocity of understanding situates the human search of meaning in the horizon of incompleteness, allowing for both, spontaneity and rigor, and always remembering that the most important in education is to understand what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing when we understand.

Prof. Dr. Dr. Andrzej Wiercinski

University of Warsaw, Poland
http://www.pedagog.uw.edu.pl/cgi/pracownicy.php?id=324#wizytowka
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Germany
http://www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/institute/ist/cr/wiercinski
President of the International Institute for Hermeneutics
http://www.iihermeneutics.org
e-mail: andrew.wiercinski@gmail.com