

The Micro-Phenomenological Interview

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Sensory perception generates sensations and feelings. Phenomenology (founded by Edmund Husserl) is based on the fact that mental concepts such as ideas, expectations, memories and existing knowledge are also involved in the process of perception. But Ludwig Klages already spoke of the wholeness of experience (*Erlebensganzheit*) and thus referred to all the circumstances surrounding the object of perception.¹

The types of task that largely determines eurhythmics teaching are improvisation, exploration and composition. Verbal reflection can take place especially after experiential tasks concerning listening, non-verbal interaction through movement and handling a material or object. This can have different objectives:

- Making people aware of what they have experienced as a bridge to recognising and understanding contexts;
- as a comparison to what the teacher has observed;
- enabling the finding of linguistic equivalences to what the individual participants experienced and felt;
- as a means to raise awareness of differences in individual experience, discovery and sensation.

Depending on how the question is formulated, the focus of reflection is set. It can be of an open nature and refer to the individual feelings of the group members ("How did you feel about it?"). It can refer explicitly to the task and thus often appeal more to the ability to abstract ("How did you deal with the task?").

In 2006, the philosopher Claire Petitmengin developed the micro-phenomenological interview technique as an empirical procedure with the aim of being able to understand the emergence of experiences more precisely and to make preverbal levels of perception accessible to a linguistic formulation.² The questioning technique is an instrument to bring to mind past experiences and to become aware of the numerous parts of the experience that have been perceived but have receded into the background. The person asking the questions provides instructions for self-observation in small steps. In doing so, he/she is careful to let the interviewee find more and more precise words for what she/he has brought back to mind,

¹ Klages, L. (1934) p. 23

² Mark, Elke (2019), p. 133 f

verbalising sensory impressions, images, what is heard and thought without judgement. It is a special questioning technique that has to be learned.

This approach can be helpful for debriefing improvisations and in accompanying forming and compositional processes to understand internalised structures that influence our decision-making processes and to change them if necessary.

Selection of literature

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