

# Theories of Affect and Concepts in Generic Skills Education



# Theories of Affect and Concepts in Generic Skills Education:

## *Adventurous Encounters*

Edited by

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Adventurous Encounters

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## INTRODUCTION

# THEORIES OF AFFECT AND CONCEPTS IN GENERIC SKILLS EDUCATION: ADVENTUROUS ENCOUNTERS

EDYTA JUST

*Please bring strange things.  
Please come bringing new things.  
(Le Guin 2001, 404)*

*“Adventurous”—the meaning of this word has been evolving through the centuries. At present, one of the most common definitions that one can come across, is “willing to take risks or to try out new methods, ideas or experiences; involving new ideas or methods; full of excitement” (Google). If we agree on this significance of “adventurous” then “adventurous encounters” would stand for encounters that are daring, rejuvenating and exciting, and engender something new, something thrilling and stimulating. Yet, what does make encounters adventurous? Perhaps difference? Perhaps novelty? Perhaps surprise? Diverse ingredients when brought together in unexpected and unusual ways may not only seem appealing but also result in positive and affirmative un-thought-of ways of thinking, feeling and doing. They may. Thus, always, “[p]lease bring strange things. Please come bringing new things” . . .*

During the last few years, the concept of generic skills/competences has spread across universities. The introduction of generic competences, which students should achieve during their university education, is important because it enables the redefinition of educational goals. Education no longer means only a top-down and unquestionable transfer of knowledge; it aims to inspire students to develop and use critical and creative forms of thinking, feeling and doing. Generic skills demand changes in the design and delivery of the content, teaching methods and

learning activities, and they may positively rearrange forms of interaction in classes and their dynamics. On the one hand, the need to stimulate the development of generic competences among graduates might be perceived as motivated and fuelled by neoliberal desire. On the other hand, generic skills can enable students to comprehend their own complex layers of subjectivity and embodiment; perceive, think, feel, and act differently; go beyond the beaten track; escape easy interpretations; and welcome and comprehend the plenitude of various forms of life and ways of living.

Being sensitive and responding to educational transformations, but also to the growing need to critically and creatively reflect upon generic competences and the ways in which they can be acquired, this collection aims to contribute to the ways of thinking about and discussing generic skills and the methods through which they might be achieved. Moreover, it brings attention to those concrete pedagogical practices that may facilitate the achievement of generic competences among graduates. Some of the authors in this volume address and problematize skills in a general and overall way, and some focus on particular competences. Universities tend to name or refer to generic skills/competences differently. In this volume, with regard to the particular competences, emphasis is put on the following skills: an ability for abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis; a capacity to generate new ideas (creativity); an ability to be critical and self-critical; an appreciation of and respect for difference (understood as an appreciation of and respect for not only cultural differences, but also multiple axes of differentiation such as: gender, sex, “race,” ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, class and religious beliefs); interpersonal and interaction skills; an ability to work in a team; an ability to work in an international context; an ability to adapt to and act in new situations; an ability to develop critically enabling and empowering social fantasy; and a commitment to safety.

*“Please bring strange things. Please come bringing new things” . . .  
Diverse ingredients, surprising configurations, invigorating experiences.*

This collection considers and reflects on theories of affect and concepts that complicate, problematize and contribute to the understanding of generic competences and to the comprehension of the processes in which they are or can be acquired. It explores, examines and discusses ways in which theories of affect and/or concepts might inspire and/or become applied in teaching practices for example, in the designing and delivery of content, teaching methods and learning activities that aim to result in generic skills among students. Furthermore, this volume brings to the fore

new theories of affect and concepts, which can act as inspiration for generic skills-oriented education. Finally, it describes concrete examples of educational practices motivated by theories of affect and concepts; practices, which have already been applied or might be implemented. In doing so, this collection revitalises and rejuvenates the concept of generic skills/competences and the ways in which they might be achieved. It also advocates daring, refreshing and original pedagogical practices that renew and invigorate the meaning of and approach to teaching and learning in the context of the present landscapes of higher education.

*“Please bring strange things. Please come bringing new things” . . .  
Different ingredients, astonishing configurations, energising experiences.*

*—Adventurous Encounters.*

In its considerations and reflections, this volume proceeds experimentally by engendering adventurous encounters and kaleidoscopic encounters between different theories that result in refreshing and appealing meanings of affect and concepts. These various theories—or “different ingredients”—originate from various fields of study, yet they predominantly come from the critically creative, anti-oppressive feminist conceptual framework that is committed to social and political change—a terrain of “adventurous encounters” itself. Furthermore, this volume also embodies appealing encounters between theories of affect and concepts—some born during theoretical encounters practised in this collection, some arriving directly from different academic fields, including Gender Studies—and generic skills/competences and teaching practices. These surprising and gleaming configurations bring to the fore the importance of constant productions of meaning, gestures and hiccups, multiple perspectives, relationality and affective capacity, failure and crisis, agency of the non-human, critical social fantasy, and affirmative and generative ways of thinking, feeling and acting in vast pedagogical environments and contemporary—Gender Studies, Educational Psychology, Social Justice, Literature, and any Other—classrooms.

*“Please bring strange things. Please come bringing new things” . . .*

Since creative theories concerning pedagogical undertakings in present-day classrooms are necessary, and since the Deleuzian/Guattarian philosophy might actualize its potential within the context of pedagogy, **Edyta Just** in the opening chapter tries to map to what extent in a snapshot of a class duration one can create a vortex composed of “planes of

composition” and “immanence” concomitantly negotiating between “chaos” and “opinion.” She poses questions regarding the possibility of engendering affective indetermination (“sensory becoming”/“affect”) and conceptual novelty (“conceptual becoming”/“concept”), and she questions the duration of affect’s indiscernibility, the sustainability of creation and further transformation and change, and the durability of being. She also calls for a teacher to become at once an artist and a philosopher, or an *artphil* (*a∞p*). In doing so, she complicates the meaning and understanding of generic competences along the lines of sensory and conceptual becomings and “strata,” and also highlights the possibilities of engendering pedagogical practices in contemporary classrooms that are inspired and motivated by theories of affect and concepts of “concept,” *per se*.

**Line Henriksen, Erika Kvistad and Sara Orning** approach generic skills as not easily testable and propose to look at teaching and learning practices in academic education through the lens of what they call *monster pedagogy*. They contend that both teaching and learning are a collaborative, unruly, subjective, and relational process. Furthermore, they appealingly argue that learning is always a monster; pedagogy is the practice of daily failure and pedagogical practices are inherently unpredictable. Drawing on the emerging scholarly and artistic field of Monster Studies and strategies from feminist and norm-critical pedagogy, their chapter tells three stories about teaching and academic practices that all feature the monster in some form. They explore aspects of the experience of teaching and learning that are often seen as unproductive, excessive, unnecessary or wasteful: failures, emotional responses and even embodiment itself. In this way, Henriksen, Kvistad and Orning consider how monster pedagogy allows us to reimagine failure in university classrooms and to affirmatively challenge and positively transform the spaces of academic education.

The chapter by **Sal Renshaw and Renée Valiquette** brings to the fore the insights from ethical pedagogy that aim at social and environmental transformations and rest on the recognition that knowledge and those who produce it are subjects in relation. Concomitantly, however, it argues that neoliberal logic—dominant in contemporary universities—promotes and fosters what is called a phenomenology of individualism and separation. Against this logic, the authors of the chapter have developed *Trojan horse pedagogy*, and the delivery of the Trojan horse model of course saturates classrooms with an epistemology of immanent and affective relationality. Trojan horse pedagogy has found its expression and actualization in innovative Interdisciplinary Concept classes taught at the Department of Gender Equality and Social Justice at Nipissing University, Canada. The

course has centred on different themes such as DIRT, SLOTH, WATER, GENIUS, and SECRETS. Those titles, as the authors make clear, are intended to evoke the curiosity of a neoliberal consumer, whereas the structure of the course has promoted an immanent, affective and relational knowledge production that allows for social justice to thrive and social transformations to occur.

In her chapter, **Malou Juelskjær** uses a posthuman framework that recognises the agency of the nonhuman and the import of space/time and affect to reconceptualise and rejuvenate the understanding of generic competences, and to recommend daring forms of teaching and learning. According to Juelskjær, sensuous, affective, material, and spatial qualities of pedagogical practices matter and should be taken under consideration in educational institutions. She suggests that we approach generic competences as emergent with and through content, and she defines them as more-than-human in order to be/come. She argues that both content and competences actualize as intra-active forces of materialization, and that competences are not something to acquire but rather they stand for an entangled becoming with no beginning or end. The posthuman framework inspires ways of thinking about both competences and pedagogical undertakings. In her chapter, Juelskjær proposes not only a highly creative take on competences but also on ways of teaching and learning. She advocates for *atmospheric encounters* to occur in present-day classrooms. Such encounters have already come into being during a course on Affect Theory and Contemporary Management: Psy-leadership in/of Organizations in Educational Psychology, which Juelskjær co-taught with Dorthe Staunæs at Aarhus University in Denmark.

How do we talk about and understand complex “realities” and contemporary phenomena? How do we support students in developing generic competences that will allow them to articulate their own position and points of view? The probable answer would be to provide them with theoretical backgrounds and methodological tools for analyses—to provide guidance for students to gain knowledge and develop their own critical-reflexive standpoints. If the analyses concern structures of power, various forms of oppression and exclusion, then the feminist conceptual framework is indispensable. Those are the main conclusions of the chapter by **Sigrid Schmitz**. To support these claims, Schmitz brings an example from a seminar she conducted at Graz University, Austria, where she analysed together with her students the debates that followed the sexual harassment and the sexualized attacks of New Year’s Eve 2016 in Cologne, Germany. One of the main aims of the seminar was to support students in developing their own critical and creative reflections and

arguments. By grounding the analysis in Foucauldian concepts and conceptual insights from Feminist Studies, Feminist Science Studies, intersectionality, and Postcolonial Studies, and by using didactic concepts of feminist materialist pedagogies, the students were able to reflect on the entangled sexism and racism in the arguments and regulations following the “Cologne” event, simultaneously learning how to formulate and negotiate their individual standpoints.

**Anna Lundberg and Ann Werner** in their text problematize and further advance the understanding of the generic skill/competence known as the ability to think critically. Even though, as they argue, critical thinking as a concept has been discussed and employed for many years, still what is actually meant by criticism remains problematic and ambivalent. To ease this ambivalence, Lundberg and Werner discuss the concept of critical thinking and try to reflect on how it is possible to engage in this activity in both theory and practice. They bring to the fore an interesting overview of the concept (critique and critical thinking as negative, aesthetic, philosophical, political, and finally communicative), but also focus on its various meanings (e.g., reactive and generative aspects of the concept of critique) and applications in the field of Gender Studies, where critical thinking is regarded as imperative. Their discussion adds to the comprehension of the concept and simultaneously the skill of critique and critical thinking, and it highlights the importance of conceptualizing and practising critical thinking as both reactive and generative.

**Beatriz Revelles-Benavente** discusses critical thinking not as a skill/competence but as an *affective capacity* and ponders how this conceptual change alters the pedagogical approach to teaching and learning contemporary literature. She also connects literature and sociology in a tangible way. In her chapter, Revelles-Benavente transforms critical thinking from a generic skill to an affective capacity via Clough’s (2009) definition of affects as radical units of analysis. Furthermore, she suggests approaching critical thinking as *affective critical thinking*. According to the author, affective critical thinking (as an affective capacity) de-centralizes the hegemonic power of the literary critic in favour of an affective relational communicative process, allowing students to express their feelings and points of view in a less hierarchical and a more horizontal way, and creates spaces of resistance and social change. In her essay, Revelles-Benavente presents a Facebook page where Toni Morrison’s novels are collectively discussed to show how affective critical thinking can be practised and to argue that digital platforms can

enable the teaching and learning of critical thinking as an affective capacity.

. . . [T]he torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away—that’s how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak—even just open her mouth—in public . . . (Cixous 1976, 880)

With this powerful quotation and by referring to different concepts and theories which predominantly come from a feminist conceptual framework, **Olga Cielemecka** explores the idea of *corporeal thinking* as a collective, embodied, affective, material, and dynamic process situated in the context of a classroom setting. She argues that thinking and speaking are never innocent or isolated processes and that they stimulate bodily responses. Furthermore, she discusses, problematizes and complicates the importance of embodied performance and movement in the classroom. In doing so, Cielemecka examines and explores how to comprehend and teach critical, creative and experimental thinking together with the body, and calls for “letting the thinking breathe” by opening spaces for wandering, creativity and experimentation in contemporary classrooms.

The chapter by **Olga Plakhotnik** explores the concept of “safety” in the feminist classroom in relation to competences and affects. It starts with an examination of how a competence-based model of education works in Gender Studies teaching and the place of a “commitment to safety” in Gender Studies generic competences. Analysing debates in feminist, queer and other radical pedagogies, Plakhotnik explores the main arguments in the critique of the commitment to safety in the classroom and calls for replacing safety with semantically opposing notions such as “crisis.” Acknowledging and building on these discussions, she considers safety to be an affective contraposition to crisis, which is constituted through Gender Studies knowledge. She complicates her conclusion with the claim that in a feminist context, safety remains an explicitly political category often at risk of being misused in the neoliberal university. Therefore, Plakhotnik underlines that a commitment to safety remains an important mission in a feminist classroom and that both safety and crisis need to be carefully and critically tackled within responsible and effective feminist pedagogical praxis.

**Nina Lykke** focuses on a generic skill defined as the ability to develop critically enabling and empowering social fantasy suitable for fostering more socially and environmentally just futures. She discusses how skills in critical social fantasy can help students to imagine alternative futures and how they can be applied to professional work. Given her immense

experience with teaching Gender and Intersectionality Studies, Lykke also reflects on teaching practices that can assist students in acquiring such skills. She demonstrates how feminist conceptual tools such as the concepts of “figurations” and “worlding” and feminist transgressive methods such as creative writing and theatrical acting can be used to prompt learning processes, building on embodied thinking-feeling, and fostering the development of the generic skill in question. To present how such teaching practices can be actualized, Lykke uses as an example the course Career Paths and Professional Communication taught in the international master’s programme Gender Studies—Intersectionality and Change at Linköping University, Sweden.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## AFFECT AND CONCEPT OR *ZERO∞GRAVITY* CONSCIOUSNESS

EDYTA JUST

### I.1

At present academic courses, inspired by critical pedagogies, by creatively combining content, teaching methods and learning activities, but also by incorporating careful and critical reflections on the role and behaviour of a teacher, aim to create among its graduates, apart from other competences, certain generic skills such as an ability for abstract thinking, analysis and synthesis; the capacity to generate new ideas (creativity); an ability to be critical and self-critical; an appreciation of and respect for difference (understood as an appreciation of and respect for not only cultural differences, but also multiple axes of differentiation such as: gender, sex, “race,” ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, class and religious beliefs); interpersonal and interaction skills; an ability to work in a team; an ability to work in an international context; and an ability to adapt to and act in new situations. As those competences appear to be of vital import regarding graduates’ abilities to negotiate and navigate in the present neoliberal order and current, highly complex cultural, social, economic, and political climates and territories, there is a constant need to monitor, discuss and revisit forms of design and manners of delivery of academic courses that assist students in acquiring generic competences. As the most daring and creative epistemologies and practices seem to grow from the application of interdisciplinary approaches; it appears both advisable and necessary to search for inspiration outside the walls of one’s academic field. With regard to the theoretical and practical realms of pedagogy, the field of philosophy seems to be fecund in concepts and ideas that can be integrated into the conceptual framework of pedagogy and pedagogical practices.

Despite the fact that theories intrinsic to one field cannot always find an easy way into the theories of yet another field, certain theories may indeed become an inspiration for or grow into other theories, affirmative actions and more than real undertakings and activities. It is enough to mention the philosophical concepts of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari that have become applied not only in various academic disciplines in order to problematize and creatively discuss certain phenomena, but also to initiate new forms of academic, cultural or political being and acting. Given the wide range of contexts hospitable to the Deleuzian/Guattarian philosophy, it is of no surprise that the field of pedagogy constitutes one of those aforementioned contexts. The adaptation and assimilation of the Deleuzian/Guattarian philosophy to the conceptual framework of pedagogy and its practice have significantly grown over the last years. It is enough to mention the remarkable scholarship created by scholars such as: Jason J. Wallin, Elspeth Probyn, Inna Semetsky, Mark Connell or David R. Colle with which the drilling of the well-established contours and “strata” of the pedagogical systems appears possible.

Being aware of and facing the existing research and literature that search for and discover a productive inspiration in the Deleuzian/Guattarian theories with regard to pedagogy, I do find myself wondering why I am still prone to experiment with and venture into the Deleuzian/Guattarian “milieus” concomitantly hoping to add to the affirmative and creative manners of knowledge production? Yet, Deleuze/Guattari appear to inspire me every time we collide. It seems that after I lay their pages to rest, words, sentences and paragraphs rearrange themselves in such a way that when, after a pause, I plunge again into the “plateaus,” I cannot straightforwardly discover the old, the known, the comprehended, and the familiar. To the contrary, I seem to repeatedly wander through over and again differentiated, unknown and only recently formed “nonhuman landscapes;” undergo “nonhuman becomings;” form exciting, and sometimes creatively frustrating, “assemblages;” and search for the sense-territories marked by a simultaneous presence and absence of gravity. The Deleuzian/Guattarian “noumenos” and “phenomenons” appear to remain forever charged with nonhuman *potentia* and continue to launch ceaseless becomings within the “molar”/“striated” and “molecular”/“smooth” spaces of my corporeality and stubbornly embodied subjectivity not to mention my “unconscious.”

As creative theories and practices concerning pedagogical ventures in academic classrooms are of vital importance; as the Deleuzian/Guattarian philosophy might apparently actualize its potential within the context of pedagogy; and as my becomings tend to be of a different kind each time I

enter the plateaus, I dare to conclude that the Deleuzian/Guattarian theories and concepts, especially when intersecting with my own multiplicities, still carry a promise for affirmative and stimulating insights with regard to theories and practices concerning teaching and learning and as such the formation of generic competences among academic graduates.

## II.2

Scholars motivated by critical pedagogies recognize the design and delivery of content, teaching methods and learning activities as important and influential with regard to generic competences that are expected to be acquired by students (Waldijk and Just 2010). Next to that, undoubtedly a figure of a teacher and her/his/their roleplay a significant part in a given class assemblage. Thus, the frequently asked questions mainly and precisely concern content, teaching methods, learning activities, and the role of a teacher. Referring to the embodied experience, I tend to contend that only when all those elements become neatly woven and only when there is an awareness that students do form intrinsic elements of a class assemblage then one may hopefully anticipate that generic skills can possibly be obtained by students. As generic competences practically refer to the subject able to become an immanent expression of difference; perceive and think differently; reject representational manners of comprehension; go beyond the beaten track; resist timeworn customs, habits, beliefs, and opinions; escape easy interpretations and well-too-familiar *doxa*, and affirmatively welcome the novelty of being and acting, it seems that the Deleuzian/Guattarian insights, which assert novel and daring forms of both existence and existing, might be of assistance with regard to the manners of creating spaces and dimensions in academic classrooms.

## III.3 (1–2)

For Deleuze and Guattari embodied subjectivity, consciousness and the unconscious are always a crowd, a multiplicity. They state,

There are no individual statements, there never are. Every statement is the product of a machinic assemblage, in other words, of collective agents of enunciation (take “collective agents” to mean not people or societies but multiplicities). (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 37)

Furthermore, subjectivity, consciousness and the unconscious are recurrently in the making thus they are prone to change and transformation at all

times. Significantly, though consisting of multiplicities both subjectivity and consciousness also contain molar/striated formations next to the molecular/smooth. The same applies to the unconscious. Deleuze and Guattari argue that,

it does not suffice to attribute molar multiplicities and mass machines to the pre-conscious, reserving another kind of machine or multiplicity for the unconscious. For it is the assemblage of both of these that is the province of the unconscious. (1987, 35)

This indicates, among others, that one can easily cross the well-known boundaries (become a molecule), but also stay within the frames and walls of the all-too-familiar borders (become a molar). According to this creative team of philosophers encounters bring about an actualization of a “virtual” concomitantly promising that whatever is produced stands for pure, immanent creation; becomes an expression of difference and is always new. Semetsky argues that

Deleuze’s philosophy of the virtual frees thinking from common sense: for him, it is life, or experience, that activates thought, and it is thought that affirms life. (2009, 449)

Following the Deleuzian/Guattarian ways of arguing, I would contend that consciousness continually becomes a creative “possible” (where the possible is understood as a “sensory becoming,” “sensation”/“affect,” becoming other, an expression of otherness, suspension, and deterritorialization) and a novel “actual” (where the actual is comprehended as a “conceptual becoming,” “concept,” “absolute form of hetero-geneity,” brave meanings, and new sense). The point, however, at least as I approach it, is that quite often those refreshing becomings are, so to say, simply not long and audible enough. Furthermore, I dare to argue; the results of the encounters with daring and untried elements and particles frequently get stratified and nicely covered with molar blankets not to mention encounters with the longstanding customs, habits and knowledges as those almost immediately become nothing more than the striated spaces. Ultimately then the best would be to capture a molecule in the molar and to undergo a molecularization once faced with both the surrounding “reality” and the uncanny and weird. Nevertheless, at times in order to become an embodiment of difference, a molecule, a deterritorialization, a novelty, one must undergo an experimental encounter, precisely as Semetsky argues,

[E]xperiential and experimental encounter that would force us to think and learn, that is, to create a singular meaning for a particular experience (still un-thought-of and lacking sense). (2009, 444)

Striving to engender and promote new molecular and not molar manners of thinking, Deleuze together with Guattari in their book *What is Philosophy?* (2009) advocate daring and forever rejuvenating forms of thinking initiated by art and philosophy. Art's "planes of composition," "aesthetic figures" and sensations/affects and philosophy's "planes of immanence," "conceptual personae" and concepts are all meant to initiate embodied-brain processes, which, so to speak, situate themselves between "chaos" and "opinion." Interestingly, those new embodied-brain processes, which are possible/sensations/sensory becomings and actual/concepts/conceptual becomings, are approached as novel manners of thinking—

Thinking is thought through concepts . . . or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically 'thought' . . . The [two] thoughts intersect and intertwine . . . (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 198)

For those forms of thought to materialize an artist and a philosopher give a consistency to an infinite speed of appearing and disappearing of vital particles and elements, and they do it in such a way as to bring to the fore a pure embodiment of difference, vital deterritorializations and the novel and unexpected.

— [A]rt, . . . and philosophy—is always confronting chaos, laying out a plane, throwing a plane over chaos. . . . philosophy wants to save the infinite by giving it consistency: it lays out the plane of immanence that, through the action of conceptual personae, takes events or consistent concepts to infinity. . . . Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turn, through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 197)

Art and artists are supposed to launch sensory becomings that are "the action[s] by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other. . . sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression" (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 177). Sensory becoming or becoming-other signalizes a particular form of deterritorialization and an experimental state of imperceptibility. Becoming a sensation/affect indicates a certain form of suspension, hesitation, confusion, wonder, the collapse of a signifying system, disarticulation, intensity, possibility, irritation of organism,

subjectification and signification, and an ultimate slide from the territory into a breathing yet formless universe. To be affected is to become affirmatively nothing thus everything. It means to reach the zone of indiscernibility and state of indetermination.

[B]ecoming is an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection. . . . this is not the transformation of one into other . . . but something passing from one to the other. This something can be specified only as sensation. It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons . . . endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an *affect*. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 173)

To become an affect, a sensation, a-other is to have no contour, no trace, no recognition; it is to lose gravity at the crossroads; it is to plunge into the chaos, the universe, the infinite.

Sensation is excitation itself, not insofar as it is gradually prolonged and passes into the reaction but insofar as it is preserved or preserves its vibrations. Sensation contracts the vibrations of the stimulant on a nervous surface or in a cerebral volume: what comes before has not yet disappeared when what follows appears. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 211)

Becoming affected and expressing vital otherness and affirmative deterritorialization indicate a possible and as such efface the strata; blur the belief in the unified and forever-the-same identity; undermine the ego; allow the ultimate empathy with all the possible others; question habits and opinions, and create or better prepare a spacious room for a new sense and new meaning.

Sensation is pure contemplation, for it is through contemplation that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one originates. Contemplating is creating, the mystery of passive creation, sensation. Sensation fills out the plane of composition and is filled with itself by filling itself with what it contemplates: it is 'enjoyment' and 'selfenjoyment.' It is a subject, or rather an *inject*. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 212)

Philosophy and philosophers, on the other hand, are meant to initiate conceptual becomings comprehended as "the action[s] by which the common event eludes what is. Conceptual becoming is heterogeneity grasped in an absolute form" (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 177). For

conceptual becoming to occur, various molecules, particles and elements must come together in a sort of trembling manner. Vibrating, as they should, those intrinsic conceptual ingredients have to get a sort of a contour, an irregular fence preventing them from an all too quick disappearance and flight into chaos. Once brought together under the transparent and permeable umbrella, they allow new and unexpected meanings and novel senses to appear.

Every concept has an irregular contour defined by the sum of its components, . . . the idea of the concept being a matter of articulation, of cutting and cross-cutting. The concept is a whole because it totalizes its components, but it is a fragmentary whole. . . . A concept is heterogenesis . . . an ordering of its components by zones of neighbourhood. It is ordinal, an intension present in all the features that make it up. The concept is in a state of *survey* . . . in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them according to an order without distance. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 16, 20)

However, to become a concept means to always expect new and unpredicted connections; it is to await new elements to enter or to abandon the scene; it is to be prepared to altogether leave the brief and provisional territory at any moment and form yet another dynamic structure that is never fixed, certain and finite but always prone to further movement *ad infinitum*. To undergo conceptual becoming indicates the ability to gather and temporarily hold heterogeneity in a porous embrace. It also means to ceaselessly connect or to form in a nomadic way another formless territory. To become a concept is to forever be able to think differently, anew and not to be afraid of the continual transformations of the consciousness. It equally means to constantly maintain the state of wonder and to pose critical and vital questions regarding the self and the other knowing that the ultimate answers will never be given. Conceptual becoming prevents an appearance of the final truth and as such opposes the definitive and fixed opinions and stubborn beliefs. It allows the shedding of a new creative light on the self, the other, but also on the given cultural, social or political landscapes. This fascinating heterogenesis does not support short-cuts of easy recognition, fast interpretation and feasible ultimate conclusions. On the contrary, it makes one persistently aware of and searching for a new sense and new meaning.

Thought demands ‘only’ movement that can be carried to infinity. What thought claims by right, what it selects, is infinite movement or the movement of the infinite. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 37)

#### IV.4 (1–2)

I would argue that for students to achieve generic competences means in fact for them to be able to undergo sensory and conceptual becomings on their own that is, to repeat briefly, to be able to capture a molecule in the molar and to experience a molecularization when in an encounter with “reality” or eeriness. To affirmatively become other and to creatively fold heterogeneity on a daily basis without any preceding training are not at all that impossible. Nevertheless, as I have previously argued, sometimes certain efforts need to be undertaken in order to launch such vital becomings. As new manners of thinking, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, might be engendered by art and philosophy—is it then doable and likely for a teacher to become not only an artist or a philosopher but, as I tend to name it, an *artphil* (*a∞p*)? As art and philosophy operate consecutively by planes of composition, aesthetic figures and sensations, and planes of immanence, conceptual personae and concepts—to what extent in a snapshot of a class duration can an educator create, using as intrinsic elements her/his/their own embodied presence, content, teaching methods, and learning activities, an indiscernible vortex composed of the entwined planes that will result in the sensory and conceptual becomings of students?

However, it does not suffice to construct separate planes but in fact to cause them to intersect. Deleuze and Guattari respect the separateness of art and philosophy, and they explicitly emphasize that sensory becoming, initiated by art, differs from the conceptual one, engendered by philosophy (2009, 177). This reverence, however, does not prevent them from advocating the necessary “intrinsic interference” between them (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 217). This interference is necessary because proximity, an entanglement between sensory and conceptual becoming, enables the first to charge the latter. It assists consciousness in becoming a plateau wherein unsteady territory, prone to connections and indeterminate nomadism, is frequently replaced by its productive absence which in return assists and helps to generate another vibrating landscape. Importantly, a zero gravity consciousness—experiencing an “unbearable lightness of being”—should always find its grounding moments. Yet, the landscapes of the magnetic attraction must be about the short-lived affinities with a robust capacity for ongoing and ceaseless gravity supply disruptions (*zero∞gravity*). It is a matter of carefully tiptoeing in-between chaos and opinion. Neither infinite deterritorialization nor immeasurable *doxa* is what consciousness should become. Deleuze and Guattari both warn against the short-cuts of the habitual manners of thinking, but also against



the all too wild and definite deterritorializations as they may simply result in a one-way journey to the void of the “black hole.” A possible, becoming-other, affective consciousness needs in the speed of light to equally become an actual, heterogenous, conceptual one, but a conceptual consciousness must always and already be on its way to infinity.

It is, however, not only a question of creating and simultaneously inviting the planes for an experimental interference, but also of ensuring that they will result in competences and knowledges charged with the *potentia* of initiating necessary and vital changes and transformations on the personal, but also cultural, social and political levels. Therefore, it is crucial, apart from initiating sensory and conceptual becomings, to point to and address the existence of “strata”/molars. It is as Semetsky stresses, reading Deleuze and Guattari in the context of education, that powerful becomings are indeed about pure deterritorializations and an ultimate actualization of difference. Yet, for progress to happen attentiveness to and awareness of the strata are of the highest import (Semetsky 2009, 452).

Furthermore, when becoming an artphil ( $a\infty p$ ) one needs to be aware that embodied subjectivities have their highly diversified say with regard to the initiated degrees of the possible and the evoked contour lines of an actual.

Ultimately, one has to bear in mind that a vortex created out of the entangled planes might be as alluring and productive as it is repulsing and deadly. Therefore, whenever one dares to navigate between chaos and opinion, one must pose questions regarding the possibility of engendering affective indetermination and conceptual novelty; the evoked duration of affect’s indiscernibility; a conjured conceptual freshness; the endurance of being (that is endurance of an embodied subjectivity/subject); and the sustainability of creation and further transformation and change.

## V.5 (1–2; 3–4)

The content of the class is usually conditioned by the overall thematic framework of the course. The teaching methods such as lectures, seminars, workshops, and tutorials, and the learning activities including discussions, active participation by students, work in groups, practical assignments, experimental approaches to text and data, creative writing, and artistic performances vary depending on the assessment of their utility or the possibility of their being applied in a given educational context. Suddenly, content, teaching methods, learning activities, and teacher form vast planes that challengingly balance between chaotic speed and head over heels *doxa* or do they? They should.

A plane of composition stands for an in-the-middle snapshot of a universe—intense, diversified, formless, and possible. This vibrating snapshot contains aesthetic figures that are nothing more than pure sensations/affects. The quivering shot of the infinite means pure deterritorialization, an ambiguous zone of indetermination and an unknown space of indiscernibility.

The frames and their joins hold the compounds of sensations, hold up figures, and intermingle with their upholding, with their own appearance. . . . Frames or sections . . . belong to compounds of sensations whose faces, whose interfaces, they constitute. But however extendable this system may be, it still needs a vast plane of composition that carries out a kind of *deframing* following lines of flight that pass through the territory only in order to open it onto the universe, that go from house-territory to town-cosmos, . . . (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 187)

There is a canvas of a classroom space, a sculpture of a teacher, a genuine book of content, a painting of teaching methods and yet another one of learning activities. Separately and consecutively, canvas, sculpture, book, and paintings become intense and imperceptible. They share no organism, no subjectification and no signification. They stand for an absence of strata and suspension; they mean disarticulation; they are differentiation and destratification; they have the temperature of absolute zero. Furthermore, in their necessary, constant and ongoing gallery-like entanglements they experience nothing more than persistent otherness/othering and embody nothing else but an uncontaminated difference. The daring and unexpected settings of a classroom space with a reverse linearity of time of the typical class-like proceedings—is this a classroom? An embodied sculpture of an aesthetic figure of a teacher who with an original posture/gestures/face/sounds passes into affects of imperceptibility and indetermination: is that person a teacher? Is this a classroom? A book of content in a close affinity with an embodied sculpture populated by an incommensurable crowd of letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, and theories disappearing with a “line of flight” into a charismatic infinite universe:

[the book of content’s] writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing: this is the style, the ‘tone,’ the language of sensations, or the foreign language within language that summons forth a people to come, . . . (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 176)

—a moment of suspension and—a-gain—beloved indetermination: what is this “reality”? What is this self? What is this other? What is this phenomenon? Is that person a teacher? Paintings of teaching methods and learning activities spread on a classroom’s canvas do not allow a signifying system to enter the scene; they refuse interpretation and in a rhizomatic way turn into a destratifying creation: “[t]he [rhizome] line no longer forms a contour, and instead passes between things, *between* points. It belongs to a smooth space” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 505)—a moment of wonder and of stopping short and—a-gain—the ultimate questions: what is this “reality”? What is this self? Is there a self? What is this other? Is there an other? What is this phenomenon? Phenomenon? Is this a classroom? Classroom?

Inscribed on the plane . . . are *haecceities*, . . . *continuums of intensities* or continuous variations, . . . *becomings*, which have neither culmination nor subject, but draw one another into zones of proximity or undecidability; *smooth spaces*, composed from within striated space. . . . intensities beginning at a degree zero, in the matter of variation, in the medium of becoming or transformation, and in the smoothing of space. A powerful nonorganic life that escapes the strata, cuts across assemblages, and draws an abstract line without contour, a line of nomad art and itinerant metallurgy. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 507)

The plane of immanence is a vast landscape with a continually fleeing horizon line populated by feverish assemblages; it is a continuum; it goes on endlessly and so does an unexpected sense, and so does a rejuvenating meaning.

The plane is like a desert that concepts populate without dividing it up. The only regions of the plane are concepts themselves, but the plane is all that holds them together. The plane has no other regions than the tribes populating and moving around on it. It is the plane that secures conceptual linkages with ever increasing connections, and it is concepts that secure the populating of the plane on an always renewed and variable curve. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 37)

A conceptual persona, that is a teacher in disguise or a simulacrum of the evoked “human” presence, carries concepts in her/his/their embrace and sets them loose like balloons on a run, crashes their china-like frames on the wooden floor or gladly transforms their internal chemistry. Sentences, words and letters—the whole beauty of linguistics—from a book’s pages challengingly mingle with a brief smile or taunting smirk of a teacher’s face; theories made audible with the volume of a smooth or

scratchy teacher's voice turn and twist surprised by their multiplicity and their trembling epistemological status. Uncanny interconnections formed in-between theories and empirical data appear and then alter their intensity, contours and genome when sieved through a performance, a piece of creative writing or the multiplicities intrinsic to group work. Using corporeal expressions of an unconventional origin; forming sentences that seem to grow on ground borrowed from outside the classroom's walls; bringing a plenitude of empirical and theoretical connections-dis-connections and content-oxymoron(s); problematizing the unity of the self; "[t]he plane is like a row of doors" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 508); problematizing the unity of the other; becoming silent with an out-of-nowhere question; delaying the truth; not recognizing; postponing the answer; fuming the senses; not representing; breaking the genealogy of clashing vocal cords with a melody of a YouTube clip or a visual/sonic feast cooked by the selected movie or episode and as such giving a short-lived consistency that gives a new/daring sense and meaning to various chaotic phenomena, self and other, and concomitantly securing a ceaseless anti-opinion movement of this very sense and meaning of these various chaotic phenomena, self and other.

The plane consists abstractly, but really, in relations of speed and slowness between unformed elements, . . . consistency concretely ties together heterogeneous, disparate elements as such: it assures the consolidation of fuzzy aggregates, in other words, multiplicities of the rhizome type. In effect, consistency, proceeding by consolidation, acts necessarily in the middle, by the middle, and stands opposed to all planes of principle or finality. . . . Never unifications, never totalizations, but rather consistencies or consolidations. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 507)

## VI.6 (1–2; 3–4–5)

[An I]ntrinsic type of interference [occurs] when concepts and conceptual personae seem to leave a plane of immanence that would correspond to them, as to slip in among . . . the sensations and aesthetic figures, on another plane; and similarly in the other cases. These slidings are so subtle, . . . that we find ourselves on complex planes that are difficult to qualify. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 217)

A plane of composition should form a unique assemblage with the plane of immanence. Aesthetic figures turn into conceptual personae and *vice versa*. They are fast and those transformations cannot be easily discerned. Concepts and affects intermingle in an intense embrace.

The plane of composition of art and the plane of immanence of philosophy can slip into each other to the degree that parts of one may be occupied by entities of the other. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 66)

The canvas of a classroom space in a transparent manner encompasses a sculpture of a teacher through whom a book of content and a painting of teaching methods shine like a blue moon phenomenon. A painting of learning activities links with a sculpture; attaches itself to a canvas and sneaks into a book of content. Assemblages of moving contours and spaces of pure indiscernibility and deterritorialization—respecting each other due to a reciprocal etiquette—ensure a simultaneous disappearance and re-dis-appearance of the self, other and “reality.” Once the self, other and “reality” re-dis-appear they never become the same; they are never finished; never-stratified, and never fixed. However, to re-dis-appear they need to disappear, and they disappear so they may re-dis-appear again. Affects squeezed out of intersecting elements of a class assemblage make a spacious room for a new sense, and concepts formed due to corporeal entanglements with theories and empirical input fill the room with a re-dis-appearing, constantly becoming new meaning. Suspension and indetermination—what are these? What does this mean? Is there this? What is “a” this?—intersect with and support a voiceover of gravitational forces of conceptual contours that bring an answer by simultaneously extending its duration *ad infinitum*. Affective, zero gravity consciousness encompasses all the possible affinities and its vital processes of othering and deterritorializations promise a post-human salvation from the deadly representation-based customs, Symbolic and Real identifications, practised habits, stubborn and harmful egos, attachment to the identity of the self and the other, sympathy for norms and ultimate truth. Yet, a possible consciousness also needs to find its trembling territory to rest though only for a brief moment. Nevertheless, the territory must tremble and at times in order to cease to exist it requires an electric shock of affect supporting the constant movement far away from the possible petrification, laziness and security provided customarily by *doxa*. Therefore, the classroom questions concerning the “a” this? the “a” it?—and its meaning?—require a reply which by not being “the replay” supports and prevents the plane of immanence from a dangerous solidification. A new meaning, which the reply brings, must be equipped with open doors or “bridges”—“the concept also has an exconsistency with other concepts, when their respective creation implies the construction of a bridge on the same plane” (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 20)—which promise ceaseless and unending connections, but sometimes a new sense must be also equipped with a

senseless indetermination; with an affect that secures and ensures an existence and fluctuated breathing of infinity.

[C]oncepts, sensations, . . . become undecidable, at the same time as philosophy, art, . . . become indiscernible, as if they shared the same shadow that extends itself across their different nature and constantly accompanies them. (Deleuze and Guattari 2009, 218)

The interference of the planes, that is the entanglements and forces of connections between teacher, content, teaching methods, and learning activities; between canvases, sculptures, paintings, and books; between various forms of corporealities, matters, particles, and intensive multiplicities not only secures an ongoing vital creation of an undetermined novelty, but also protects the consciousness. It safeguards its landscapes from a non-returnable disappearing into chaos, simultaneously not allowing laziness and dangerous, a certain and convinced satisfaction to enter the scene. The enactment of sensory (a possible) and conceptual (an actual) becomings should happen simultaneously in a smooth indiscernible motion. That created on the classroom canvas that is self-less, other-less, “reality”-less consecutively turns into a-self, a-other, a-“reality” to a-gain become self-less, other-less, “reality”-less a-gain *ad infinitum*. In this sense, affective deterritorialization and conceptual novelty both constitute vital forces of creation. Apparently, the interference of the planes renegotiates the places of the consciousness’ in-between-ness by indicating that to be in-between does not only mean to touch upon chaos but to constantly challenge *doxa* by becoming a-opinion that is always already a-anti-opinion.

However, the extent to which consciousness may become a possible and an actual can vary significantly. Even if the planes are created and even if the experiments that Semetsky talks about, do occur still it might happen that they will not “force us to think and learn, . . . to create a singular meaning (still un-thought-of and lacking sense)” (2009, 444). An unconscious is a vast territory inhabited by molecules and molars and it cannot be easily predicted what the encounters might result in and bring about. Furthermore, both consciousness and unconscious do not exist in a void but belong to embodied subjects. Life histories, former experiences, sensations, and thoughts are written into bodies, the embodied unconscious, and the embodied brain. Geo-political locations, cultures and multiple aspects of embodied identities such as gender, sexual orientation, “race,” ethnicity, age, dis/ability or religious views do matter. Similarly, manners and forms of interactions can differ considerably. Deleuze and Guattari, while referring to the work of art, stress that artists by casting vast planes of composition populated by affects not only “give them to