



# Educational Judgment: Linking the Actor and the Spectator

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The difficulty of connecting the knowledge generated by educational researchers and the practice of classroom teachers is familiar. Academics write about the importance of research for understanding and improving classroom practices; classroom teachers dismiss the academics' research knowledge as a poor substitute for actual experience. We argue for moving from debates between spectators and actors about knowledge and practice to discussions about how all educators can foster good judgment. We outline two major accounts of judgment in Western thought, Aristotle's and Kant's, which ultimately privilege the spectator over the actor. We then introduce the work of Hannah Arendt, who linked thinking and acting without privileging either in her conception of judgment. Focusing on how teachers and researchers might become better educational judges is a crucial, yet neglected, agenda that promises to link these communities.

The divide between classroom teachers working in schools and educational researchers working in universities is wide and deep. Zeichner (1995) puts it succinctly: "For the most part educational researchers ignore teachers and teachers ignore the researchers right back" (p. 154). The challenge for educational researchers who wish to affect the practice of classroom teachers is familiar to readers of research journals. A consistent theme in the *Educational Researcher* (*ER*), for example, is that research knowledge must be reconceived to impact educational practice (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999b; Richardson, 1994). In a recent issue, Willinsky (2001, p. 9) asks, "How can research knowledge contribute more to public and professional understanding and deliberation?" Indeed, one of us (Coulter, 1999), in contributing to the discussion in *ER* recommends—almost in anticipation of Willinsky's question—"a shift from an emphasis on the generation of research knowledge to a consideration of the justification of what counts as appropriate and useful knowledge" (p. 5). Research paradigms with accompanying epistemologies proliferate. New "knowledges" are created: strategic, propositional, relational, craft, local, case, situated, tacit, and personal are just a few of the forms of knowledge investigated by educational researchers (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 6). Articles by Korthagen and Kessels (1996, 1999) both typify this approach and perhaps hint at a "new" old way to understand the relationship between teaching practice and research knowledge.

In their 1999 article in *ER*, Korthagen and Kessels use their interpretation of Aristotle's *episteme-phronesis* distinction (roughly knowledge–judgment) to reconceive the role education faculties might play in preparing beginning teachers. They argue that the common model of teacher education involves experts working in universities transmitting knowledge (*episteme*) to student teachers who use this newly acquired knowledge to build teaching practices. This model has not worked for a number of reasons, they contend, especially because of the "nature of the relevant knowledge" (p. 5) and they contrast the knowledges of *episteme* and *phronesis*: "*episteme* aims primarily at helping us to *know* more about many situations, while the emphasis of *phronesis* is mostly on *perceiving* more in a particular situation and finding a helpful course of action on the basis of strengthened awareness" (p. 7). They go on to outline how beginning teachers might be taught to be better perceivers and therefore better actors. Although we follow Korthagen and Kessels' interpretation of Aristotle's *phronesis* as an understanding of particulars, we contend that in framing *phronesis* as a form of knowledge, important aspects of what Aristotle included in *phronesis* are missed. This exemplifies the effort of many educational researchers to understand teaching exclusively in terms of knowledge.

Following Reeve (1992) and Beiner (1983), we argue that *phronesis* is better understood as embodied judgment linking knowledge, virtue, and reason. Indeed, framing *phronesis* as a form of knowledge neglects the long tradition of debating conceptions of judgment in Western thought—a confrontation usually framed as Aristotle versus Kant—that continues in contemporary philosophy (e.g., Gadamer, 1960/1996 versus Habermas, 1992/1996). We briefly outline both conceptions of judgment and contend that each perpetuates the privileging of spectators over actors, theory over practice, and researchers over practitioners that contributes to the schism that Zeichner describes. We introduce another contender: the work of the political thinker Hannah Arendt whose efforts to understand and respond to the Holocaust generated original and powerful ideas about judgment that privilege neither spectators nor actors. We contend that Arendt's work provides a powerful resource to frame educational dialogue between teachers and researchers—an exchange focused not on knowledge, but judgment.

## Aristotle and Kant: Knowing and Judging

*Phronesis* does not easily translate into English. "Prudence" (Beiner, 1983), "practical wisdom" (Reeve, 1992) and "practical judgment" (Steinberger, 1993) are common renditions. Korthagen and Kessels (1996, 1999) use the practical wisdom translation and emphasize the knowledge–perception features of *phronesis*, an interpretation

that misses important aspects. Two are especially important for our purposes.

First, *phronesis* is not simply a form of knowledge, but an amalgam of knowledge, virtue, and reason that enables people to decide what they should do. Aristotle contrasts two conceptions of practice that are often conflated in English: practice as craft (*poiesis*) and practice as moral–political action (*praxis*). Practice as *poiesis* is means–ends activity in which knowledge and skill (*techne*) are used to accomplish ends decided by the exercise of theoretical wisdom (*sophia*). Practice as *praxis*, however, aims at a different kind of end, a good and worthwhile life (*eudaimonia*), where the means are integral to the end (how we go about leading such a life cannot be separated from that life). Deciding what counts as a good life, acquiring the requisite knowledge and virtue, and matching that knowledge and virtue to particular situations understood correctly requires a different form of wisdom: *phronesis*. Beginning teachers need to acquire not only the technique and the kinds of awareness that Korthagen and Kessels describe, but also need to learn how to link that understanding with their own talents as well as the talents they hope to foster in individual students in particular contexts and circumstances.

Second, knowledge and virtue is not yet fully *phronesis*, which also includes the enactment of that judgment: “[T]he man of good judgment knows how to assess action correctly, but he does not thereby become a *phronimos*, who acts correctly with effectiveness” (Voegelin, 1978, pp. 69–70). Beiner (1983, p. 74) captures this well when he translates *phronesis* as embodied judgment. A teacher who displays *phronesis* must not only understand what to do, he or she must do it.

Aristotle’s *phronesis* has two important features that make its use for teaching difficult, however. First, its link to virtue, and thereby community, is extraordinarily problematic for large, complex, multicultural, democratic societies where virtue and community are hugely contested. Aristotle’s *polis* was limited to male citizens of an ancient Greek city-state and, even with severe limitation, he was not willing to trust in the judgment of this populace. Aristotle was no democrat and Aristotelian *phronesis* retains some sense of restriction and elitism. Second, despite the promise of linking knowledge and virtue, spectator and actor, Aristotle’s *phronesis* ultimately privileges the life of contemplation over the life of action (and, by extension, research over teaching). The aim of *praxis* is to lead a good and worthwhile life by matching ends and means via *phronesis*; determining a good and worthwhile life, however, is ultimately the result of contemplation or study and its particular form of wisdom (*sophia*). Reeve (1992) explains, “*phronesis* prescribes for the sake of [*sophia*] and aims to bring it into being. . . . Study expressing [*sophia*] is primary *eudaimonia*; practical activity expressing *phronesis* is secondary *eudaimonia*; and the latter is for the sake of the former” (pp. 96–97). Theory is prescribing for practice, research for teaching, and university professors for classroom teachers: we seem to have circled around to our beginning. Perhaps a way out is possible, however, and the most influential attempt is Kant’s.

Kant emphatically rejects the elitism of Aristotle’s *phronesis* and attempts to develop a more democratic conception of judgment. For Kant (1788/1909), understanding one’s moral duty “commands the most punctual obedience from everyone; it

must, therefore, not be so difficult to judge what it requires to be done, that the commonest unpracticed understanding, even without worldly prudence, should fail to apply it rightly” (p. 126). Kant posits two forms of judgment: determinant and reflective. In determinant judgment—involving political, moral, and therefore educational matters—the general (rule, principle, or law) is given and can be used to develop standards to judge the particular. For example, the duty to follow the categorical imperative (“Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” [Kant, 1785/1964, p. 88]) provides the universal formal principle by which all moral judgments can be tested. Judging involves using the knowledge of good ends to decide appropriate means; that is, the application of the general to the particular, a form of *techne* that replaces *phronesis* altogether. The “application of theory model” of teacher education described by Korthagen and Kessels (1999, pp. 5–6) is generally consistent with the assumptions of determinant judgment: general research knowledge (*episteme*) is passed along to student teachers who are then expected to apply this knowledge (using *techne*) to their teaching practice (conceived as *poiesis*). In brief, in determinant judgment, Kant responds to Aristotelian elitism by emphasizing the responsibility of each individual—albeit largely abstracted from community—to judge, arguably at the cost of further subordinating practice to theory by eliminating *phronesis* altogether.

Ironically, however, Kant’s second category of judgment—reflective judgment, primarily concerned with aesthetic taste—inspired Hannah Arendt to generate what we contend is a more powerful conception of judgment for education. Arendt finds in reflective judgment two important features that she uses to free actors from subordination to spectators: new roles for the imagination and for dialogue. First, unlike determinant judgment, meaning is found primarily in the particular not the universal. No universal concept of beauty can be applied to a work of art to judge its worth; no theory can be used to determine the good. Connecting the particular to the general cannot be accomplished by applying principles, rules, laws, virtues, or knowledge; instead, the link is made by using the imagination. Second, what emerges as general or universal is a kind of common sense that Kant contends links all people; Kant (1790/1952) explains, “by the name of *sensus communis* is to be understood the idea of a *public* sense, i.e., a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (*a priori*) of the mode of representation of every one else” (p. 151). Unlike sensory taste, aesthetic judgment is public and so people can compare judgments; unlike determinant judgment, no clear criteria can be used to discriminate among works of art; unlike *phronesis*, no community standards of beauty or art can be applied and the capacity for such judgment is within the capacity of all, not just an elite few. Dialogue about reflective judgments, however, is both possible and required: aesthetic criticism presumes the possibility of persuading others of the quality of the judgment without epistemologically or ethically secure foundations. (Otherwise why bother?)

Reversing the emphasis on the general over the specific, theory over practice, that is characteristic of both Aristotle’s *phronesis* and Kant’s determinant judgment, Arendt begins to argue from the particular; that is, she works from examples. Consistent with her approach, we too begin our appropriation of Arendt’s

work on judgment for education with a series of exemplars, beginning with Arendt herself.

### Hannah Arendt: Linking Acting and Thinking

Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) grew up in a middle-class Jewish family in East Prussia, attended the universities of Marburg and Heidelberg, studied with Heidegger, wrote a dissertation on the concept of love in Saint Augustine, and seemed on her way to a comfortable academic career as a spectator–philosopher. All that changed on February 27, 1933, the day the Nazis burned the Reichstag. She explains, “I was no longer of the opinion that one can simply be a bystander” (1994, pp. 4–5). Arendt fled Germany for France in 1933 and eventually arrived in the United States in 1940. Her subsequent work can be understood as an attempt to understand how and why the Holocaust could have happened. She investigates the constitution of identity and the crisis in understanding precipitated by the experiences of totalitarianism and the Holocaust. Democracy, freedom, totalitarianism, evil, authority, and responsibility are some of the subjects central to her writing.

In seeking to understand the Holocaust and prevent another one, Arendt is concerned with reconceiving judgment as the link between what she understands by action and thought without subordinating the former to the latter. The challenge that Arendt seeks to confront is, in some sense, a very personal one: explaining how Heidegger, one of the most careful, powerful thinkers of the 20th century—someone steeped in Western moral philosophy—could so lack judgment that he would be indirectly complicit in the Holocaust by joining the Nazi party and accepting the post of rector of Freiburg University. Arendt’s work on judgment is in some sense an attempt to explain how her mentor (and lover) Heidegger could be seduced by the Nazis. Generally silent in public about Heidegger’s relationship with the Nazis, Arendt was acerbic in private in questioning Heidegger’s character and judgment (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp. 442–443). Clearly Heidegger was a good thinker; why was he such a poor judge? To address this question, Arendt uses her interpretation of the life of another figure from Western philosophy: Socrates.

Socrates was a model of the kind of judge that Arendt wanted to foster, that is, someone able to connect the worlds of action and thought. Drawing on Vlastos (1971), Arendt portrays Socrates as a citizen among equals in the public life of Athens, not a professional philosopher withdrawn from the community. Socrates was both actor and spectator, that is, someone “equally at home in both spheres and able to move from one sphere to the other with the greatest apparent ease, very much as we ourselves constantly move back and forth between experiences in the world of appearances and the need for reflecting on them” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 167). Arendt’s Socrates tried to “help others give birth to what they themselves thought anyhow” (Arendt, 1990, pp. 73–74).

Arendt contends that Socrates’ pupil, Plato, drew a very different—and dangerous—lesson from Socrates’ life: the need to avoid the dangerous *polis* and the world of action by withdrawing into the superior sphere of contemplation. For Plato, the superiority of a life of contemplation, of research, is affirmed. Arendt (1958) explains that Plato introduces “the division between those who know and do not act and those who act and do

not know” (p. 223), and that by “sheer force of conceptualization and philosophical clarification, the Platonic identification of knowledge with command and rulership and of action [or practice] with obedience and execution overruled all earlier experiences and . . . became authoritative” (p. 225). Plato claims a superiority for the philosopher–spectator that echoes through centuries of Western thought from Plato’s pupil Aristotle through the extraordinary power of the German philosophy of Kant—and Heidegger. The challenge for Arendt is to understand the importance of this tradition to explain and prevent the Holocaust. Her response involves reconceiving judgment by rethinking first what it means to be an actor and then what it means to be a spectator.

### *The Judging Actor*

Arendt begins by distinguishing between forms of practice. She revives the *poiesis–praxis* distinction so important to Aristotle, and inimical to Kant, but subdivides *poiesis* into labor and work and reconceives *praxis* as action. Labor involves routine ephemeral behavior to meet basic human needs; work includes activity by artists or other fabricators to make lasting objects that comprise the artificial world; action requires collective public dialogue to determine identity and purpose. Only the form of practice that Arendt calls action—and its distinguishing qualities of plurality and natality—contributes to judgment.

“[P]lurality . . . is the law of the earth” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 187). By plurality Arendt signals the importance of others in both making our lives and understanding ourselves. Taylor (1991, pp. 47–48) makes much the same point when he writes: “My discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation but that I negotiate it through dialogue. . . . My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.” One also judges as a member of a community and better judges are able to take more perspectives into account. Good judgment for Arendt is not a matter of objective knowledge or of subjective opinion, but a result of intersubjectivity; becoming a good judge depends largely on one’s capacity to consider other viewpoints of the same experience, “to look upon the same world from another’s standpoint, to see the same in very different and frequently opposing aspects” (Arendt, 1968, p. 51).

Although Arendt argues that respect for plurality is a necessary attribute of a good actor and good judge, equally important is regard for the uniqueness and agency of others, that is, their natality. Humans have the capacity to begin something new, something totally unforeseen: “In the birth of each [child] this initial beginning is reaffirmed, because in each instance something new comes into an already existing world which will continue to exist after each individual’s death” (Arendt, 1968, p. 167). Natality signals a critical feature of Arendt’s conception of action—freedom. She contends that with the creation of humans, “the principle of beginning came into the world itself, which, of course, is only another way of saying that the principle of freedom was created” (1958, p. 177). Although Aristotle’s *praxis* aims at leading a good life in the *polis*, Arendt’s action is intended to be an expression of freedom, that is, the capacity of humans to make a difference in the world and the responsibility that accompanies this possibility. Humans have agency and therefore the responsibility to judge.

Certainly this understanding of action as freedom is controversial. Foucault (1977), for example, documents how knowledge–power complexes affect the scope of humans to act into the world, truncating human agency. Levinson (2001) explains that Arendt’s natality is tempered by belatedness:

The world does not simply precede us, but effectively constitutes us as particular kinds of people. This puts us in the difficult position of being simultaneously heirs to particular history and new to it, with the peculiar result that we experience ourselves as “belated” even though we are newcomers. (p. 13)

Indeed, Arendt (1973) explores how bureaucratic–totalitarian complexes prevent action largely by darkening the public sphere and destroying genuinely private and public spaces. Although her explanation for what happens to public and private spaces seems vague and unsatisfactory (Pitkin, 1998), she is clear that “[e]ven in the darkest of times, the question of one’s response and responsibility can and must be raised. There is the possibility to initiate, to begin, to act” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 38). One must judge and be responsible for those judgments. For this to happen, Arendt contends, new forms of dialogue and imagination must be fostered.

*The Need for Public Dialogue: Visiting.* The *sensus communis*, or common sense, so important to Kant’s reflective judgment is transformed in Arendt’s interpretation. Instead of attempting to consider the perspective of a collective, abstract other, Arendt advocates “visiting,” which involves carefully listening to the perspectives of others because “[t]he more people’s standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can [judge]” (1968, p. 241). Actors must go into a plural public world and engage with other actors. To be a judging actor involves considerations of publicity, but Arendt’s public is not an abstract public sphere, but a world of diverse and unique individuals, all capable of agency. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973), Arendt documents how new forms of totalitarian government in the 20th century destroyed what was left of public and private spheres, leading to what she calls “the social” and the subsequent destruction of the necessary conditions for judgment. The public world is the arena required for action, where plurality and natality are possible. Equal, but distinct, individuals meet in the public to determine who they are and who they want to be individually and collectively. Arendt (1958) explains,

The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents us from falling over each other, so to speak. What makes [contemporary] mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved . . . but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them. (pp. 52–53)

The social cannot sustain action; a public common world is required.

Arendt’s public is not a reified fusion, however, but is instead “closely connected with particulars, with the particular conditions of the standpoints one has to go through in order to arrive at one’s own ‘general standpoint’” (1982, p. 44). Respecting diverse standpoints requires dialogue with other people, listening to their stories, and relating to their uniqueness without collaps-

ing these divergent views into a generalized amalgam. A new kind of actor with the requisite communicative virtues is needed.

Heidegger was not such an actor: He did not attempt to visit others. Heidegger had withdrawn so far in his thinking that he could not understand what was happening from the standpoints of other people (Arendt, 1978b). Indeed, in some sense, he lacked a world to visit. The Nazis seemed to understand the importance of destroying the public better than Heidegger did. The Holocaust was possible, explains Arendt (1973), partly because Jews had first been stripped of their capacity to appear and be part of the community:

Not the loss of specific rights, then, but the loss of a community willing and able to guarantee any rights whatsoever, has been the calamity which has befallen ever-increasing numbers of people. . . . Only the loss of a polity itself expels [people] from humanity. (p. 297)

The Nazis made it difficult to take the perspectives of Jews into account—to judge from their perspective—because the Nazis had systematically excluded Jews from the public world. Heidegger neglected his responsibility as a citizen and as a person to maintain that world, to enter it and to consider the viewpoints of others.

Teachers, however, can become good judging actors by learning to recognize the diversity of educational perspectives and by developing a capacity to listen attentively to other people (especially their students), partly by giving them an opportunity to appear. Indeed, good teachers are able to visit the points of view of their students before, during, and after classes; such teachers plan, adapt, and evaluate their lessons accordingly. They draw on their experience talking with others who are affected by what happens in the classroom: other students, teachers, officials, parents, neighbors, citizens. To be a good judging actor, according to Arendt, is not simply a matter of acquiring knowledge or experience or knowledge–perception, but involves recognizing plurality and natality, listening to particular others, and learning from them—dispositions that good teachers share with good researchers. In our experience, many of the people we consider to be good teachers and good researchers are careful when talking about reified students, parents, teachers, and administrators; instead they try to name the others and detail perspectives.

*The Need for a Visiting Imagination.* Visiting, however, requires the development and use of the imagination, which is needed to determine who must be visited, to ensure the success of that visiting, to move from the particular to the general, and sometimes to substitute for actual dialogue. Not everyone affected by a judgment can participate in dialogue or nothing that affected more than few people could ever be decided. Judging actors can attempt to imagine the various relevant perspectives on a matter based on their own past experiences and their access to other experiences through, for example, reading literature and watching films. Such judging involves accepting the responsibility for traveling to all relevant viewpoints, especially those that are unlikely to be in the public world, and attending to those perspectives. To make this possible at all presumes judges who have acted and continue to act in the world, who have talked with and continue to engage with concrete others. Disch (1994) explains, “To visit, in other words, you must travel to a new location, leave

behind what is familiar, and resist the temptation to make yourself at home where you are not” (p. 159). According to Arendt, Heidegger could not develop a visiting imagination because he lacked the requisite willingness and capacity to visit new locations.

We both have worked with teachers who regularly display a visiting imagination. Some primary teachers, for example, can see the classroom through the eyes of the dozens of 6- and 7-year-old children they work with. They imaginatively visit their students and understand the classroom world through their eyes. Such teachers do not teach classes or grades, but individuals within complex communities; these teachers are able to judge what is appropriate—what is educational—for each child and the collective simultaneously. They negotiate the inherent tensions that adults have in working with children: they provide both guidance and scope for children to achieve agency. Transferred to teach another age level, however, sometimes these teachers are not able to understand the classroom from the perspectives of older students and struggle as teachers. Good primary teachers are not necessarily good intermediate teachers. Further, some wonderful teachers fail as teacher leaders partly because they are not able to perceive the school from the perspectives of other adults.

Similarly, we have worked with good researchers who are also good judging actors, who are capable of imagining those affected by their research and respectfully engage those others to understand varying perspectives. Empirical researchers are able to attend to those people being interviewed or watched or surveyed; conceptual researchers are able to connect ideas with the world of experience. Indeed all researchers who share their work must attempt to imagine the disparate perspectives of the varying audiences.

Following Arendt, we contend that becoming a good judging actor involves respecting plurality and natality by talking with particular other people in a diverse public world and by developing and using the imagination. Arendt explains Heidegger’s failure in judgment using these criteria: Heidegger failed to judge what was happening in Nazi Germany because of his inability to connect with others, to fight to secure a public world where all could appear, and to imagine the world from different perspectives.

### *The Judging Spectator*

For 20 years after the Second World War, Arendt continued her efforts to understand the Holocaust largely by developing a conception of judgment in which the actor—engaged with autonomous others in a plural world—is no longer subordinated to the spectator. Beginning in the 1960s and certainly after 1970, however, she shifted her focus and concentrated on the spectator’s role in judging. The stimulus for this change was the 1960 arrest and 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, a key figure in the Holocaust. Arendt covered the trial for *The New Yorker* (1963) and subsequently wrote *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1964).

Initially, Arendt attempts to explain Eichmann’s actions with the resources she had developed. Although he was certainly no Heidegger, Eichmann was clearly able to think independently, albeit “within the narrow limits of whatever laws and decrees were valid at a given moment” (Arendt, 1964, p. 157) and even to claim that he had tried to live by Kant’s categorical imperative. What he seemed to lack was the capacity to be an actor in

Arendt’s terms, that is, to act in a public world using his imagination to respect plurality and natality. For example, he was unable “to look at anything from the other fellow’s point of view” (Arendt, 1964, p. 48) and had a startling “lack of imagination” (p. 287). But Arendt saw something else, as well, however—Eichmann’s consistent refusal to think.

What shocked Arendt was that Eichmann “*never realized what he was doing*” (1964, p. 287). His inability to judge, to recognize the human significance of his actions, resulted largely because he did not bother to think. Arendt (1978a) later explains, “Absence of thought is not stupidity; it can be found in highly intelligent people, and a wicked heart is not its cause; it is probably the other way round, that wickedness may be caused by absence of thought” (p. 13). What startled Arendt was that Eichmann was so ordinary, so “banal”; he was “not Iago and not MacBeth,” indeed he “had no motives at all” (1964, p. 287). He had ceased to be a thinking human being and become a cog in the administrative machinery of Nazi Germany. Eichmann was culpable because he had abdicated his own responsibility to think as an independent person. Arendt (1978a) explains, “A life without thinking is quite possible; it then fails to develop its own essence—it is not merely meaningless; it is not fully alive. Unthinking men are like sleepwalkers” (p. 191).

Responding to the challenge presented by Eichmann preoccupied Arendt for the last decade of her life and led her to rethink the relationship between thinking and acting. She needed a conception of thinking that she could connect with judging. Obviously the kind of thinking practiced by Heidegger was not an adequate resource for judging and so she again returned to Socrates for an answer. She poses the challenge as follows:

Thinking in its non-cognitive, non-specialized sense as a natural need of human life . . . is not a prerogative of the few but an ever-present faculty in everybody; by the same token, inability to think is not a failing of the many who lack brain power but an ever-present possibility for everybody—scientists, scholars, and other specialists in mental enterprises not excluded. Everybody may come to shun that intercourse with oneself whose feasibility and importance Socrates first discovered. (1978a, p. 191)

Creating the possibility for this kind of thinking, however, involves fostering different roles for dialogue and the imagination than those required for acting.

*The Need for Two-In-One Dialogue.* For Arendt, thinking and judging are distinct yet interrelated. By thinking, Arendt does not mean an activity that is the prerogative of philosophers; it can and should be practiced by everyone. Thinking is a kind of internal “two-in-one” dialogue with self that she claims Socrates discovered. Arendt (1978a) explains, “Thinking . . . is a solitary but not a lonely business; solitude is that human situation in which I keep myself company” (p. 185). Indeed, the conditions and dispositions required for thinking are in tension with those necessary for visiting: the need for privacy and the willingness to withdraw from the world. The consciousness of self brought about by thinking can promote a dialogue of “myself with myself . . . in which I am both the one who asks and the one who answers” (p. 185). Two-in-one dialogue requires privacy, which like publicity, is increasingly rare under conditions of modernity. People’s lives—including teachers’—are increasingly subject to

the quasi-public intrusions of bureaucracies (Arendt’s “social”) that are unable to distinguish between support and surveillance (Coulter, 2002).

The challenge of thinking is to listen carefully to oneself, to be consistent: “The partner who comes to life when you are alert and alone is the only one from whom you can never get away—except by ceasing to think” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 188). The by-product of such thinking is not only knowledge, however, but conscience—precisely what Eichmann lacked. Arendt contends that Eichmann’s failure to understand what he was doing and develop conscience was a result of his failure to think, to withdraw from the world created by the Nazis and use any language but the formulas they supplied. Arendt (1964) explains, “Officialese became his only language because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché” (p. 48).

Arendt is concerned to ensure that the withdrawal necessary for thinking does not lead to the isolation so clearly demonstrated by Heidegger. Thinking should not be an escape from experience, so Arendt posits two requirements for the withdrawal of the judging spectator to maintain a link with the world. First, the withdrawal must be only temporary: “the withdrawal of judgment is obviously very different from the withdrawal of the philosopher. It does not leave the world of appearances but retires from active involvement to a privileged position in order to contemplate the whole” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 94). Secondly, unlike Kant’s solitary individual deciding monologically what to do, the judging spectator must remain connected to others by taking account of the world in deliberations and by returning to the world to defend an assessment. Arendt signals this when she emphasizes the plural, spectators, and not the singular; the judgment of the event reflects the plurality of judging spectators (Birmingham, 1999, p. 33).

Creating the requisite conditions and fostering the necessary communicative virtues for teachers and researchers to participate in the forms of dialogue that Arendt recommends is extraordinarily difficult for different reasons. Teachers spend their days surrounded by others in crowded venues with infrequent opportunities to withdraw for two-in-one dialogue; researchers often work in competitive, isolating faculties that discourage “field” involvement and public visiting dialogue. Teachers are rarely asked to publicly justify their decisions to their students, colleagues, or even administrators; researchers are encouraged to write for limited circles of other researchers in language often inaccessible to other

publics. Further, on the occasions when teachers are able to withdraw from their practice or when researchers are able to connect with wider publics, the use of the kind of imagination required to be judging spectators in Arendt’s terms is often penalized.

*The Need for a Critical Imagination.* Judging actors and judging spectators require different forms of imagination. Acting requires presence in the world (plurality) and the recognition that all can create or imagine something new (natality). Thinking requires a degree of withdrawal from the world and the challenging of assumptions. Again, Arendt turns to Socrates, whose thinking allowed him to challenge unexamined values, doctrines, theories, and convictions, clearing the space for judgment while he remained connected to the *polis*. Socrates imagined that things could be other than they were and woke others to this possibility with his questions. Such an activity can be dangerous (as it proved to be for Socrates). The danger, however, is not just the thoughts themselves, but “thinking itself is dangerous” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 176) because thinking destroys the accepted, agreed-upon world. Eichmann lacked the courage to challenge the assumptions of all those around him, or indeed, his own assumptions. Not thinking is, of course, also dangerous because it allows people “to hold fast to whatever the prescribed rules of conduct may be at a given time in a given society” (Arendt, 1978a, p. 177). For Arendt, the challenge is to connect thinking to judging, to use thinking to clear the

space for judging and not to allow thinking to be an escape from the world:

If thinking—the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue—actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, then judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, makes it manifest in the world. (p. 193)

Thinking judges, judging spectators, risk alienation from their own communities. Socrates, perhaps the most famous judging spectator, paid the ultimate price for such alienation by being required to kill himself. Teachers are often discouraged from criticizing the assumptions of schools by the norms of bureaucracies and their profession; researchers, often rewarded for criticizing other people’s practices, can be penalized for criticizing the existing policies of their departments and faculties via tenure, promotion, and grant decisions. Both judging actors and judging

**Teachers spend their days surrounded by others in crowded venues with infrequent opportunities to withdraw for two-in-one dialogue; researchers often work in competitive, isolating faculties . . .**

spectators can be at risk in schools and universities when they challenge the existing norms, a danger familiar to those involved in the most direct effort to link actors and spectators in education—teacher research.

### Attempts to Link Actors and Spectators: Teacher Research

Born partly to combat the hegemony of researchers over practitioners (Noffke, 1997), teacher research aims at joining the two solitudes that Zeichner describes. If our analysis so far is correct, however, the challenge the teacher research movement tries to confront is perhaps even greater than usually characterized: we contend that the attempts to link knowledge, practice, and judgment in various approaches to teacher research generally reflect the assumptions of either Kantian determinant judgment or Aristotelian *phronesis* and the inevitable privileging of spectators over actors. To support this contention, we briefly sketch two influential approaches to connect actors and spectators, teachers and researchers.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999a) are very clear what they are against: “The idea of teachers actively initiating and carrying out research in their own schools and classrooms is connected . . . to challenges to the hegemony of a university-generated knowledge base for teaching” (p. 282). They are for teachers accepting “a deep and passionately enacted responsibility to students’ learning and life chances” (p. 279) by investigating “what is taken for granted, challenging school and classroom structures, deliberating about what it means to know and what is regarded as expert knowledge . . . and attempting to uncover the values and interests served and not served by the arrangements of schooling” (p. 279). To accomplish their goals they conceive teacher research as linking “richer conceptions of knowledge” to “an expanded conception of practice as both practical and theoretical” (1999b, p. 19). Knowledge shapes “the conceptual and interpretive frameworks teachers develop to make judgments, theorize practice” (1999a, p. 273). The result is “fundamental change in classrooms, schools, districts, programs, and professional organizations” (p. 279) consistent with “school reorganization, democratic schooling, and social justice” (p. 281).

Running throughout the Cochran-Smith and Lytle approach is the importance of an expanded conception of knowledge that links research knowledge, broadly construed, to teaching practice, a tactic reminiscent of the Korthagen and Kessels project. Their conception of practice is very different from the Aristotelian or Arendtian versions we have outlined, instead focusing on “critical reflection on practice” (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992, p. 448), which leads to “a different theory of knowledge for teaching, a distinctive epistemology” (p. 447). We are unclear, however, how Cochran-Smith and Lytle distinguish between knowledge, practice, and judgment or how each is related to the others. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999a) affirm, “[T]eachers who *know* more teach better. . . . We do not question this basic idea” (p. 249). We do. Following Arendt, we contend that knowing more may not lead to teaching better: Heidegger knew a great deal, but did not act accordingly. Eichmann knew better. Human action is not simply an epistemological matter, however broad the conception of what counts as knowledge.

For Cochran-Smith and Lytle good practice seems to involve consistency with particular normative frameworks that challenge existing schooling arrangements, that is, research or practice that goes “against the grain” (Cochran-Smith, 1991); determining valid, defensible knowledge seems to involve the application of “standards . . . generated in and for [the teacher research] community” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, p. 8). Indeed, explicitly linking teacher research to a social change agenda and the application of standards seems consistent with Kantian determinant judgment. Clearly Cochran-Smith and Lytle remedy a Kantian focus on the individual by emphasizing the importance of community. Consistent with determinant judgment, however, the general seems to be used to develop criteria to judge the particular.

Fenstermacher (1994) and Richardson (1994), in contrast, are very clear about the limitations of epistemology for guiding practice and about what they mean by knowledge in the process developing *techne* into what they call practical knowledge and *episteme* into formal knowledge, both of which contribute to teaching practice. Practice, however, is an amalgam of the epistemological and the moral, or what they label method and manner. Method depends on both formal and practical knowledge; manner involves “action consistent with one or more relatively stable dispositions or traits of character. . . . Manner . . . is grounded in virtue” (Fenstermacher, 2001, p. 631). Their Manner Project (Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2001) is anchored in an explicitly Aristotelian conception of knowledge, practice, and judgment: They try to develop criteria to judge practice, understood as an amalgam of knowledge and virtue, by appealing to Aristotelian *phronesis*, which they interpret as practical reason. Fenstermacher (1994) explains,

*Phronesis* . . . is well suited to addressing some of the demands for epistemic merit. . . . The provision of reasons, when done well, makes action sensible to the actor and the observer. . . . Practical reasoning may also address the moral aspects of action, indicating that it was fair, right, or the best of a number of poor alternatives. . . . [*Phronesis*] permits consideration of both epistemological and moral dimensions of teaching. (p. 45)

The Manner Project aims to distinguish between method and manner, epistemological and moral aspects of teaching, without either collapsing one into the other or drawing a sharp dichotomy. Richardson and Fallona (2001) explain, “We conclude that there is a place for the separation of method and manner. However it is not always called for. Above all, this separation should never become reified, as it has with most conceptions of classroom management” (p. 724).

To date, however, Richardson and Fenstermacher link their efforts to justify good practice to *phronesis* without attempting to remedy the problems in the original Aristotelian conception. We contend that this point is where Arendt is especially useful. Elite Aristotelian *praxis* can become democratic Arendtian action with its concerns for plurality and natality; *phronesis* can become embodied judgment supported by dialogue and imagination. Moreover, the privilege of the spectator to decide the ends of *praxis*—the good life in the *polis*—is contrasted with the responsibility of both actors and spectators to attempt to exercise freedom in a common world. Both actors and spectators are charged with becoming good judges.

## Judging Actors and Judging Spectators

In her conception of judgment, Arendt links actors and spectators in two activities, acting and thinking, that are difficult to combine—and never simultaneous. Yet both are required for good judgment: to be a good judge entails being both actor and spectator, although the balance may be toward one or the other activity. Villa (1999) explains,

If we desire, then, to do justice to Arendt's insights concerning the interrelations of thinking, judging and acting, we must avoid the twin temptations of existentialist *engagement* and philosophical withdrawal. For, in the end, what Arendt teaches is the irreducible need to be both in and out of the game—as the times and situation demand, and as personal talents dictate. (p. 106)

Indeed, Arendt's entire effort to develop judgment as a hedge against the Holocaust would have been hindered if she could not find examples of how acting and thinking could be linked, of someone who was both a judging actor and judging spectator. She could not fall back on Socrates. Her response was Anton Schmidt.

At Eichmann's trial one of the witnesses told the story of a sergeant in the German Army who was in charge of a patrol in Poland that collected stray soldiers that were cut off from their units. In the course of doing this, the sergeant connected with the Jewish underground and quickly decided to aid them by providing forged papers and military trucks. Five months later he was arrested and executed. Schmidt's story was the sole testimony at Eichmann's trial of a German soldier who resisted the Holocaust: someone who, unlike Eichmann, both thought about what he was doing and acted accordingly. Arendt (1964) describes the effect of the testimony:

And in those two minutes, which were like a sudden burst of light in the midst of impenetrable, unfathomable darkness, a single thought stood out clearly, irrefutably, beyond question—how utterly different everything would be today in this courtroom, in Israel, in Germany, in all of Europe, and perhaps in all countries of the world, if only more such stories could have been told. (p. 231)

Schmidt's story is an example of judgment in which action and thinking are linked. Unlike Heidegger, Schmidt understood that he was connected to the Jewish underground. These people had not disappeared; they were part of a public world and Schmidt could visit them. He could also use his imagination and see what was happening by visiting the perspectives of those not present. At the same time, however, he was able to withdraw from the world he inhabited—the chaotic public world of World War Two Poland—separate himself from his colleagues, use his crit-

ical imagination to examine the prevalent rules and laws, and decide how to be consistent with himself. He acted accordingly. Arendt concludes,

The lesson of such stories is simple and within everyone's grasp. . . . [U]nder conditions of terror most people will comply but some people will not. . . . Humanly speaking, no more is required, and no more can reasonably be asked, for this planet to remain a place fit for human habitation. (p. 233)

One challenge that Arendt leaves us is how to foster more judging actors who can also be judging spectators, a critical moral-political, and educational, problem.

But she also presents the equally important educational problem of how to foster judging spectators who are also judging actors. Our exemplar of such a judging spectator is Arendt herself. She wrote, "There are other people who are primarily interested

in doing something. I am not. I can very well live without doing anything. But I cannot live without trying at least to understand whatever happens" (Arendt, 1979, p. 303). Clearly Arendt was a good judging spectator: she was able to withdraw from the world (but not too far) and to use her imagination critically. Her self-description is incomplete, however. It is equally obvious that Arendt could not live without also inserting and testing her understanding in the public world by visiting others both in person and in her imagination. Arendt could have remained a spectator, keeping silent about her conclusions at the Eichmann

**One challenge that Arendt leaves us is how to foster more judging actors who can also be judging spectators, a critical moral-political, and educational, problem.**

trial or publishing them in a more obscure journal with a more limited public than *The New Yorker*. She would have avoided the opprobrium, the charges of betrayal that ensued: "Arendt was attacked, threatened, vilified, and excoriated. Some of her closest friends broke with her" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 158). These options would have been a failure to act, to show courage and exercise judgment, and be a judging actor in the ways she describes. This she could not do. Unlike the heroes of ancient Greece, Arendt was a democratic hero: someone who insisted on inserting herself into the public world, engaging with her fellow citizens, and exercising her freedom understood as responsibility.

Many teachers and researchers seem to follow Arendt in accepting this responsibility, that is, they try to be both good judging actors and good judging spectators, "to be both in and out of the game" (Villa, 1999, p. 106). For example, Buck (Arhar & Buck, 2000), a middle school science teacher, writes about researching her own practice by questioning her students about their understanding of the environment, only to discover that they had learned school so well that they tried "really hard to give

me the answers they thought I would want” (pp. 330–331). Buck’s response was to visit them more attentively, “to listen carefully to my students and interpret what they were saying” (p. 331), to try to see “the environment through eighth-grade eyes” (p. 334). She taped group discussions, listened to each group’s tape several times, and then “put the data away for a few days and let my mind wonder about what I had heard” (p. 332). Her eventual response was to critique her own assumptions about teaching environmental science, leading to the reorganization of her science teaching so that her students were better prepared to become “*people who are fit to be inhabitants of the planet*” (p. 335).

Another example of an effort to be both an actor and a spectator, albeit from the perspective of someone working in higher education, is Shulman’s (2000) impassioned argument for the unity of teaching and researching. He explains that “each of us in higher education is a member of at least two professions: that of our discipline . . . as well as our profession as educator” (p. 49). As the president of the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Shulman calls for a wider and deeper discussion of teaching in higher education, a dialogue in which “our work becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of our professional communities so that they, in turn, can build on our work” (p. 49). Although Shulman’s focus seems to be on knowledge as the focus for joining teaching and researching, we contend that his call for a scholarship of teaching is in some important ways consistent with Arendt’s efforts to link the actor and the spectator roles via judgment, an appeal with both heroic and tragic dimensions.

### The Tragedy of Judging

“Judgment tends to be tragic judgment. It continually confronts a reality that it can never fully master, but to which it must none the less reconcile itself” (Beiner, 1983, p. 119). Arendt’s ideas about judgment complicate this tragedy by revealing the tensions between the required virtues and necessary conditions for thinking and acting, both of which are essential for judging. Knowledge and theory were no hedge against the Holocaust; neither was action without contemplation. The challenge that Arendt presents involves fostering more people who can be both actors and spectators in the ways she describes and combine acting and thinking about acting to be good judges. Much work remains to be done, however, before we can begin to explain how we might better foster more people like Anton Schmidt and Hannah Arendt. Huge areas need to be investigated. Benhabib (1996) begins to outline just a few of the problems:

To explore the relationships between thinking, judging and acting would have required a treatise in moral philosophy. Hannah Arendt . . . leaves unexplored the motivational question of how perspicacious thinking and good judgment could be translated into action. Cognition and action, though, are distinct; not only must one know what to do, under which circumstances, in what fashion, and the like, but one must also have the proper motivation to translate them into action. (p. 192)

Bernstein adds,

The question that eludes Arendt—and may always elude us—is how we are to explain (in a noncircular way) the differences between those who remain capable of judging what is evil and acting according to conscience and those who have lost or never had this ability. (p. 178)

There is no more important educational question, however, than how we foster educational judgment in students, teachers, and researchers. How do we learn to exercise our freedom understood as responsibility?

Although the challenge is daunting—indeed, tragic—the failure to judge is even more frightening; it is just this failure that seems so common in schools and universities, where conditions often promote the escape from judgment. Teachers are often encouraged to be compliant laborers, delivering curriculum using best practice strategies and having their work checked by quality control testing tied to objective standards. Trapped in Arendt’s social, teachers generally have few public or private spaces for dialogues with others or with themselves and few opportunities to use either visiting or critical imagination. Indeed, the environment seems designed to promote Eichmannism. At the same time, university researchers are often rewarded by tenure, promotion, and grant committees for withdrawing from the world of action and generating knowledge—measured by the number of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals—that might (or might not) be used to prescribe for other people’s practices. The Platonic withdrawal from the world of action to create the division between “those who know and do not act and those who act and do not know” (Arendt, 1958, p. 223) seems almost complete.

Repairing the schism that Ziechner describes is not simply a matter of developing research knowledge with considerations of “justification of what counts as appropriate and useful knowledge” (Coulter, 1999, p. 5) or encouraging teachers to become researchers so that they can generate and share their own knowledge of practice. Knowledge, no matter how broadly construed, cannot by itself link teachers and researchers. The challenge that Arendt reveals is much more complex and involves serious consideration of what it means to be a teacher and a researcher, actor, and spectator. If our aim is to foster people who are educational judges, then separate discussions of acting and thinking, teaching and researching, are incomplete. The challenge involves helping teachers and researchers become both actors and spectators, that is, good judges. Much is at stake in creating the possibility for educational judgment. As Arendt (1978a) explains,

[W]e are doomed to be free by virtue of being born, no matter whether we like freedom or abhor its arbitrariness, are “pleased” with it or prefer to escape its awesome responsibility. . . . This impasse, if such it is, cannot be opened or solved except by an appeal to . . . the faculty of Judgment. (p. 217)

### NOTE

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