Is there a need for the rediscovery of teaching?

Prof Gert Biesta
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Wednesday 28th June 4:00 – 5:30
Room SW105, Stenhouse Wing

In the current ‘age of learning,’ teaching seems to have gained a bad name. This is partly because a focus on teaching runs the risk of only being concerned with the ‘input-side’ of education but not with what this might mean for learners and their learning. And it is because teaching is often seen as an attempt to control students and limit their freedom, rather than as something that can contribute to their empowerment and emancipation. It looks as if the only people who are still excited about teaching are therefore those who actually believe that education should be about controlling students, managing their behaviour and instilling knowledge and skills in them. In my recent book, The Rediscovery of Teaching (Routledge, 2017), I raise the question whether teaching can indeed only be seen as a limitation of the student’s freedom, and ask whether learning is automatically an expression of the student’s freedom. I raise questions about both assumptions and argue that there is indeed a need for rediscovering and reclaiming teaching for the sake of education that is interested in the grown-up freedom of children and young people.

Gert Biesta (www.gertbiesta.com) is Professor of Education in the Department of Education of Brunel University London and, for one day a week, NIVOZ Professor for Education at the University of Humanistic Studies, the Netherlands. He writes about the theory and philosophy of education and the theory and philosophy of educational and social research, and has a broad interest in teaching, curriculum, and the relationships between education and democracy. He is currently also a member of the Education Council of the Netherlands, the advisory board for the Dutch government and parliament.

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