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Pedagogical Tact as an Ethical Practice

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Drawing on Theodor W. Adorno's reflections on tact in Minima Moralia, this article revisits tact as a historically situated social capacity that emerges at moments when established conventions have lost their binding authority without fully disappearing. For Adorno, tact presupposes a fragile normative order and thus raises fundamental questions of belonging to, or deviating from, prevailing social norms. Building on this insight, the contribution adopts a phenomenological perspective to conceptualize pedagogical tact as a principle of difference – a capacity for "knowing deviations" in singular and unpredictable situations. Conceived as a cultural-aesthetic phenomenon, pedagogical tact integrates sociological and anthropological perspectives to orient professional judgment in educational practice. Such judgment is invariably shaped by ethical and moral demands grounded in an ethos of attentiveness and accountability. The article develops a normative understanding of pedagogical tact that is particularly suited to bridging theory and practice in special needs teacher education. It clarifies the relationship of this approach to related theoretical positions and highlights its specific value for professionalization and for coping with uncertainty in school-based teaching internships. The central elements are summarized in a concluding conceptual framework.

Introduction

> A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment.[1]

The figure of the child in the dark, as described by Deleuze and Guattari, points to a fundamental dimension of human existence: the experience of insecurity and vulnerability, as well as the search for orientation and belonging, which significantly shapes educational relationships. When the child finds stability in a world perceived as chaotic through a soft

[1]Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 311.

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song, it creates a temporary space of safety. The singing does not create a lasting order, but rather a fragile form of self-assurance—a small, fluid structure that can be thrown off balance at any moment. This oscillation between stability and vulnerability reveals a fundamental anthropological truth: humans depend on relationships, recognition, and a sense of social belonging, yet at the same time remain perpetually vulnerable to experiences of loss, exclusion, and alienation.

This phenomenological perspective provides an approach to educational issues centred on belonging, recognition, and difference. Educational practice always takes place within relationships, where people respond to one another, perceive differences, and decide which forms of expression, needs and ways of life are legitimate, normal or deviant. In school contexts in particular, it becomes apparent that recognition and difference affect not only individuals, but also institutions and society as a whole. Children and adolescents with mental health conditions or chronic illnesses are frequently confronted in their everyday school lives with increased stress, disruptions in their life contexts, and the feeling of having lost their rhythm. However, it cannot be understood exclusively as an individual physical or psychological disposition but must be viewed as a relational phenomenon that arises in interaction with social, institutional, and societal conditions. Experiences of a lack of recognition, stigmatization, or exclusion can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.[2]

From the perspective of resonance theory[3] educational practice can be understood as the creation of relationships and spaces in which resonance can occur. In this context, resonance does not signify a harmonious or conflict-free relationship; rather, it represents a dynamic engagement with the world, where individuals are recognized, can respond, and are consequently transformed. Thus, vulnerability and resonance are not opposites, but interconnected dimensions of relationship-oriented pedagogical practice, which is characterized by indeterminacy and renders pedagogical action an ethical practice of judgement. This requires sensitivity to situations in which existing guidelines are insufficient and decisions must nevertheless be made. In this sense, pedagogical tact gains significance as a special form of professional attention. It refers to the ability to perceive differences without fixing them in place, and to respond to vulnerability without reducing people to their vulnerability. Against this backdrop, pedagogical tact—as a distinct form of professional ethical practice—takes center stage. Pedagogical tact describes the ability to respond appropriately in complex situations that cannot be fully planned, without resolving the ambivalences inherent in pedagogical relationships. Precisely where recognition, difference, and normalization come into tension, tact becomes a central professional competency that enables a sensitive approach to human vulnerability.

This article proceeds in three steps. First, it considers the importance of ethical reflections as a decisive skill in the context of pedagogical professional acting. It focuses particularly on problematic situations arising from the antinomic structures of educational practice, to which educational tact provides a response as a pedagogical skill and practical judgement. Secondly, from a theoretical perspective, the article analyses the distinctions that educators make in their everyday practices, as well as the practices that emerge within

[2]Daniel Burghardt, Markus Dederich, Nadine Dziabel, Thomas Höhne, Diana Lohwasser, Robert Stöhr and Jörg Zirfas, Vulnerabilität: Pädagogische Herausforderungen (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2017).

[3] Hartmut Rosa, Resonance: A Sociology of World Relations (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2016);
Jens Beljan and Michael Winkler, Resonanzpädagogik auf dem Prüfstand: Über Hoffnungen und Zwei fel an einem neuen Ansatz (Weinheim: Beltz, 2019).

fields of tension characterized by recognition, exclusion and normalization. In this case, pedagogical tact operates as a concept of differentiation. Thirdly, the article discusses how tact, and pedagogical tact in particular, can be developed as a form of action within complex, pluralistic and vulnerable social contexts. The focus here is on teacher education as a profession-oriented field of research that could significantly advance practice in this area.

Ethics and Pedagogy

During the twenty-first century, disability has emerged as a central analytical category in educational and social debates, as well as in the field of disability studies. Rather than being understood solely as an individual impairment, disability is increasingly examined as a category produced through social, cultural, institutional, and normative processes.[4] This has prompted a shift in pedagogical practice, moving the focus from diagnostic classification towards ethical and relational forms of engagement concerned with recognition, participation, and the removal of barriers to learning. Rather than constituting a new societal framework, "Education for All" should be understood as part of a longer international trajectory in inclusive education policy and practice, which can be traced back to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. This perspective highlights continuity and gradual expansion rather than novelty, as inclusive education has since been further developed through subsequent international agreements and human rights frameworks. This evolving understanding of disability and inclusion provides the basis for the normative principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Beyond higher education, the convention has gained considerable prominence in public discourse and increasingly serves as a key point of reference and source of legitimacy for political decision-makers and governing bodies when developing policy decisions and shaping institutional practices. Consequently, pedagogical processes face the particular challenge of addressing complex learning conditions and support needs while deliberately incorporating inclusive educational practices that promote participation, inclusion and education for all learners.

Against this background, the question of whether professionals in special and inclusive education should possess ethical competences appears largely self-evident. However, what remains open, is how such competences can be effectively developed, expanded, and deepened within higher education. While it would be presumptuous to expect universal answers from educational systems or educational science alone, education is nevertheless inevitably implicated in the very processes it seeks to address. Approaching it constructively can be understood as a defining feature of *pedagogical professionalism*[5], particularly for educators and teachers. In practical pedagogical terms, education involves finding ways to empower students to shape possible futures, thereby keeping the utopian question "how now?"[6] present in an age characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and

[4]Markus Dederich, Körper, Kultur und Behinderung: Eine Einführung in die Disability Studies (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007).
Franziska Felder, 'Unveiling Ableism in Education: A Critical Examination of its Normativity andImp lications for Learning in Schools', Educational Theory, 75 (2025), pp. 848-864.
[5]Werner Helsper, Professionalität und Professionalisierung pädagogischen Handelns: Eine Einführung (Berlin: Springer VS, 2021).
[6]Ernst Bloch, Geist der Utopie (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2018 [1918]).

ambiguity. Acting responsibly in such contexts requires educators to navigate unpredictability, make ethically grounded judgements, and remain attentive to the relational and moral dimensions of their practice.

This normative understanding of pedagogical tact is particularly well-suited to bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher education, especially in the context of special and inclusive education. Unlike broader conceptions of pedagogical ethos, pedagogical tact emphasizes situational judgements and responsiveness in concrete educational interactions. This clarifies its relationship with, and difference from, other theoretical positions. This highlights its specific value for students preparing to become special educational needs and disability teachers. On the one hand, it supports the acquisition and integration of theoretical knowledge within processes of professionalization, particularly in the German context. On the other hand, it provides orientation for navigating uncertainty in the everyday demands of school-based practicum experiences.

Recent scholarship on pedagogical tact[7] reconceptualizes the classical theory–practice problem by emphasizing its ethical and aesthetic dimensions[8] as well as its inherent fragility and fluidity.[9] From these perspectives, the role of the teacher or educator—the subject of tactful interaction—becomes a matter of inquiry itself. Tact is not simply a skill exercised by an expert; rather, practitioners themselves are shaped by contingency and the situational dynamics of the educational environment, rendering tact a "balancing act"[10]embedded within the repetitive rhythms of pedagogical interaction[11]. Central to this phenomenological understanding of practice is the handling of fragility within the *Dazwischen* — the in-between spaces of interaction in which crises, conflicting interests, and uncertainty emerge. While fragility might suggest something tangible that risks breaking, it resonates more strongly with Jakob Muth's conception of pedagogical tact as inaccessible and uncontrollable, as well as with Jörg Zirfas's ethnographic studies of difference as evasive and intangible. In Muth's text, reserve and sensitivity converge in the form of pedagogy's self-limitation as a means of influence. As Muth emphasizes, self-limitation operates as an individualized and situational responsiveness attuned to the singularity of each encounter with the Other. This responsiveness is tactful in nature, insofar as it acknowledges the Other as ultimately inaccessible to our will, knowledge, or perception, and therefore requires that we rely on a felt sensitivity- a "feeling for the 'you'" or Thou of the Other[12] – rather than on mastery or comprehension.

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[7]Morten T Korsgaard, Federico Rovea and Thomas Senkbeil, 'Introduction: Pedagogical Tact — Connections Old and New', Ethics and Education, 19:3 (2024), pp. 255–261.;
Norm Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil (eds), Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education (New York: Peter Lang, 2026)

[8]Daniel Burghardt, Dominik Krinninger and Sabine Seichter, Pädagogischer Takt: Theorie, Empirie, Kultur (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2015);
Daniel Burghardt and Jörg Zirfas, Der pädagogische Takt: Eine erziehungswissenschaftliche Problemformel (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2019).

[9]Thomas Senkbeil, 'Die Fragilität des Takts: Eine Rekonstruktion eines flüchtigen Moments', *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik*, 96 (2020), pp. 120–137.

[10] (ibid., p. 131)

[11] (ibid., p. 129)

[12] Norm Friesen, 'Pedagogical Tact: An Historical Overview', in *Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education*, edited by Norm Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil (New York: Peter Lang, 2026), pp. 2–23, at p. 15.

Within this relational *Dazwischen* between child and educator, the individual needs and the group concerns, but also theory and practice, tact operates as a practice of managing and transforming differences. Drawing on Norbert Ricken (et al. 2023) account of the language of recognition (*Sprachlichkeit der Anerkennung*), recognition is understood as emerging through linguistic and dialogical engagements. Pedagogical tact sustains the relational space in which self and other encounter one another, differentiation as a reflexive practice: the careful articulation of difference without reification.

Practical pedagogical studies provide a key setting in which aspiring and experienced educators at all levels of education (early childhood, primary and secondary education, and higher education) are confronted with the complexities of professional pedagogical practice. Drawing on Ulrich Oevermann's structural-theoretical reflections on professional action[13], we view educational practice as inherently crisis-ridden and characterized by uncertainty and the pressure to make decisions. This perspective is expanded by incorporating antinomic structures in which educational action is embedded (e.g. closeness versus distance; support versus selection; autonomy versus heteronomy)[14]. Professional pedagogical practice must also grapple with the possibility of failure due to an implicit technological deficit, not only because of a lack of measurable impact on learners, but also with regard to professionals' implementation of planned methods and techniques. Recognizing these dimensions of failure and engaging with them reflectively can be seen as the first step towards developing the necessary skills and attitudes for professional practice. This practice is inseparable from the ethical and normative demands of professionalization, particularly in contexts shaped by exclusionary formations such as racism, nationalism, and religious discrimination. Conceptualizing *pedagogical tact as a principle of difference*[15] and as rooted in anthropological dimensions of caring for oneself and the world emphasizes its non-reifiable, relational, and situational character of professional judgement, a central concern within research on educational professionalism. Classically, special and remedial education has been defined as a specialized pedagogy that starts from a threat of personal and social disintegration and that is particularly concerned with establishing or restoring the conditions for self-realization and belonging, for the acquisition of competence and a sense of purpose, in short, for becoming whole. In this sense, rather than being grounded in dualistic oppositions, pedagogical tact is enacted through relational interdependence, shaping social interactions characterized by hospitality, mutual recognition, and coexistence, and supporting the holistic development and flourishing of each learner.

Tact as a Pedagogical Skill

This chapter argues that pedagogical tact is a form of embodied practical judgment that mediates between normative knowledge and situated educational action. The German word

[13] Ulrich Oevermann, 'Theoretische Skizze einer revidierten Theorie professionalisierten Handelns', in *Pädagogische Professionalität*, edited by Arno Combe and Werner Helsper (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), pp. 70–182.
[14] Werner Helsper, *Professionalität und Professionalisierung pädagogischen Handelns: Eine Einführung* (Berlin: Springer VS, 2021).
[15] Daniel Burghardt and Jörg Zirfas, *Der pädagogische Takt: Eine erziehungswissenschaftliche Problemformel* (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2019).

'takt' is derived from the Latin *tactus*, meaning 'contact.' Etymologically, it refers to the sense of touch that occurs when contact is made, as well as the emotions that arise internally as a result of that encounter (*Begegnung/Kontakt*). In the modern era, visual perception dominates, and the original sensory meaning of 'takt,' which encapsulated the sense of touch, has lost significance. Nevertheless, a child's development is heavily influenced by their sense of touch. Touch is a fundamental sensory ability that connects newborns to the world: They feel their caregiver's embrace, suckle at her breast and feel her heartbeat. As they become mobile, babies begin to explore the world by touching, grasping and holding objects to understand their texture and weight, and putting them in their mouths. The body plays a central role in education and child-raising: It serves as an instrument and medium for learning processes based on experience, in accordance with the *concept of mimesis*[16]. Using mimetic processes, as early as in infancy, children learn by imitating and mimicking the behavior, gestures, and actions of others. In educational contexts, these processes can be used to gain knowledge, develop social skills, and transfer cultural norms. According to Kant (2000), the body can be understood as a representation of "body" and "soul". It is moved and can be moved, it can hear and can be heard. As Bernhard Waldenfels (2006) states, it is both a "sensorium" and "responsorium," forming a kind of response register. In this sense, to borrow from Herbart and Kant, it is also an organ capable of rapid (aesthetic) judgment and decision-making power. The receptive body perceives harmony, dissonance, inconvenience, shock, and resistance through a multitude of senses. It also feels on a tactile and emotional level, passively absorbs and actively creates atmosphere by relating with others. The highly normative and ethical nature of tact allow it to play an important role in pedagogy, which is essentially "rooted in our phenomenological response to the child`s natural vulnerability".[17] For early childhood education and upbringing, pedagogical tact, in the sense of social tact, is a necessary supplement or corrective to a more nurturing and child-centered sensitive responsiveness, which is the core of a *pedagogy of resonance.*[18] Tact, in this context, focuses on sensitive and resonant close relationships in early childhood and on the use of pedagogical tact as a medium for pedagogical reference, for establishing the balance between closeness and distance or personhood and role. It concerns the protective function of tact, shielding against injuries and embarrassments.

Tact as a skill can also be understood through analogies with music. Tact is the measure of the regular sequence and weight distribution of the sequence of notes. Pedagogical tact, as a rhythm, serves an organizing and liberating function and can be understood as an intuitive activity, a form of knowledge that is by its nature normative, personal, immediate. The musician's task is to harmonize the notes with the rhythm. This is done in accordance with an aesthetic order. The interplay between order and the liberation of structures creates an acoustic resonance that makes the body vibrate. From a phenomenological point of view, the tact integrates the individual with the general to create a certain harmony. This perspective was transferred to the social sphere as early as the 18th

[16] Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf, Mimesis: Kultur – Kunst – Gesellschaft (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992).

[17] Max van Manen, Pedagogical Tact: Knowing What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do (Lo ndon and New York: Routledge, 2016).

[18] Jens Beljan, 'Creating Contact, Making Things Sound: Resonance and the Expression of Tact in the Classroom—Respect and Timing as Mediators of Self-
World Relations', in Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education, edited by Nor m Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil (New York: Peter Lang, 2026), pp. 169–194.

century. Blochmann (1887-1972) describes 'the social in time' as a basic principle that plays a central role in community building. It refers to the idea that a kind of common rhythm or tact is created in social groups that coordinates and structures interaction. The idea of the 'social in time' developed by Blochmann (1950) proves to be particularly significant in educational contexts, as it provides important impulses for the organization of group processes, the understanding of social dynamics and the promotion of a sense of community, emphasizing the importance of social harmony and coordination of interaction for individual development.

The term pedagogical tact was first introduced by the German philosopher and educator Johann Friedrich Herbart in his introductory lectures on education in 1802. Herbart (1896) described it as a teacher`s ability to apply educational theory in the moment of pedagogical action, emphasizing the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching. Following its introduction, the concept appeared sporadically in educational scholarship but rarely received sustained attention. In the English-speaking world, van Manen (1995) revived the term in the 1990s, while in Germany Jakob Muth revitalized it in 1962 with his study *Pädagogischer Takt: Monographie einer aktuellen Form erzieherischen und didaktischen Handelns*. Despite this, the term largely disappeared as educational theory shifted toward contemporary *Erziehungswissenschaft*, emphasizing social-scientific methods and moving away from the hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions of *Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*.

Pedagogical Tact, however, persists as a hermeneutical attitude. Scholars often refer to Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (2013) and Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Gadamer's notio of tact and *sensus communis*, closely linked to the ontology of *Bildung*, helps frame pedagogical tact as the capacity to interpret contingent situations educationally[19]. Gadamer portrays tact as a distinct capacity rooted in personal disposition and style, yet emphasizes that it must be intentionally cultivated—it is not innate but develops through study and training. While universal in dimension, it is shaped by each individual's unique qualities, aligning closely with pedagogical tact in teaching: effective teaching cannot be reduced to methods or techniques, but relies on a teacher's cultivated sensibilities, attitudes, and modes of engagement. Similarly, Aristotle's *phronesis* highlights discerning judgement: navigating complex situations not by fixed rules but through attentive, context-sensitive engagement. In the 21st-century classroom, this translates into responsive, nuanced teaching that aligns learners' individual prerequisites with instructional conditions. The *performative triangle of tact*[20] provides additional insights in this regard, emphasising the delicate interplay between teacher judgement, learner requirements, and situational demands.

In contrast to this hermeneutic account, the turn of the 21(st) century has witnessed a renewed interest in understanding pedagogy as a practice-oriented discipline, particularly through proposals for a 'performative' pedagogy. As Zirfas[21] notes, "The goal of education

[19] Morten T. Korsgaard, Federico Rovea and Thomas Senkbeil, 'Introduction: Pedagogical Tact—Connections Old and New', Ethics and Education, 19:3 (2024), pp. 255–261.
Norm Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil, Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education (New York: Peter Lang, 2026).
[20]Thomas Senkbeil, 'The Performative Triangle of Tact as a Professional "Action Competence"', Ethi cs and Education, 19:3 (2024), pp. 408–429.
[21]Jörg Zirfas, 'Pedagogical Tact: Ten Theses', in Tact and the Pedagogical Relation, edited by Norm Friesen (New York: Peter Lang, 2022), pp. 175-196. p. 223.

in the modern age is the independence of the individual in all practices of human life... In short: education is the audacious demand for maturity." This framing emphasizes that pedagogical practice is not merely about imparting knowledge but aboput navigating the ethical and performative tensions inherent in teaching: balancing freedom and law, autonomy and heteronomy, resistance and conformity. Zirfas (2012) emphasises that ethical responsibility in teaching involves 'restraint' — limiting oneself for the sake of the other — and the occasional need to 'push' learners to take the next developmental step. Such performative ethical judgement cannot be cultivated through superficial training in procedural skills alone. Confidence in navigating the complex antinomies of pedagogy requires a course of study that develops scientific reflective competence. As Müller (2026) notes,

> [a]ny 'external demand for self-activity' (Fremdaufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit) (Benner, 2001, pp. 80-84) involves both an aspect of external imposition and an aspect of active contribution by the subject. Acting tactfully thus requires a careful balance between structuring a pedagogical situation and leaving it open.[22]

From a phenomenological perspective, the performative and the ethical are thus inseparable: effective pedagogy is simultaneously skilled enactment and responsibility for the learner's development. Tactful action rests on a form of "feeling [*Fernfühlung*] and touch [*Ferntastung*] for the distance of unremarkable, but information-rich things in the permanent oscillations of the situation of the social milieu".[23] This describes an intuitive mode of attumenent in which educators maintain a reflective distance while at the same time remaining affectively and perceptually open to the situation. Such oscillation between distance and engagement enables pedagogical action that is both responsive and situationally appropriate. This becomes a special skill when learning is influenced by difficulties within the system or at an individual level.

The negotiation of boundaries, whether bodily, emotional, or pedagogical, becomes particularly salient in pedagogical contexts, especially in elementary education, early childhood education or in special needs settings, which depend on a heightened sensitivity. At its most basic, education can be understood as the exercise of influence on others, especially children and young people. Boundary reflection, a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to boundaries and limitations, is concerned with the customary definition of boundaries to this influence. These boundaries are limitations determined by cultural and organizational rules and norms and by ever-changing situational parameters. Another way of putting this is to say that pedagogical tact is a matter of distinguishing differences and accepting divergences, both in thought and action. This understanding can be critically extended through Theodor W. Adorno`s reflections in Minima Moralia. Adorno shows that tact presupposes social conventions that are no longer fully stable yet continue to structure interaction. The historical moment of tact coincides with a reshuffling of what once appeared to be an objective, even universal, social order. "The precondition of tact is a

[22] Hans-Rüdiger Müller, 'Pedagogical Tact and the Limits of Community', in Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education, edited by Norm Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil (New York: Peter Lang, 2026), pp. 97–112.
[23] (ibid., p. 100)

convention that is no longer intact, yet still present"[24]. Ultimately, he argues that tact depends on social conventions that have lost their full authority but have not yet disappeared. This always involves the theoretical question of belonging or differing from existing social norms. Adorno's understanding of the concept of "difference" serves primarily as a dialectical tool for envisioning the future, particularly in pedagogy, which is permeated with unpredictable situations and the potential for new beginnings. If theory is simply applied to practice, it will therefore ultimately fail. In its role as an arbiter between theory and practice, pedagogical tact can be described as a "systematic place of mediation".[25] Tactful pedagogical professionalism could therefore be recognized in the educator's ability to successfully mediate between theory and an uncertain practice in a unique situation, since "tact is not only to be understood as a theoretical conception of educational studies, but it also contains, above all, a pedagogical theory of action for the educator".[26] In this "in-between" (Dazwischen), tact continuously produces and redraws boundaries between self and other. In doing so, it does not merely regulate relations but also transforms itself through practice. Its function lies in continuously redrawing these boundaries, through which it transforms itself.

> *Takt*, which generates similar repetitions by itself by forming a boundary, transforms its function through its action. *Takt* is a motion that continues to form itself and it also forms a boundary by itself. *Takt* is always forming itself by means of forming a boundary. Indeed, *Takt* is comparable to skill, because it is polished as it is used.[27]

This process is a tension between repetition, which fosters identification, and differentiation, and within this dynamic, tact continually reshapes itself. Despite its lack of controllable or technical structure, tact is not "unruly" or "arbitrary." It is instead engendered by moral development, through which people are sensitized, stimulated, and strengthened in relation to their professional pedagogical goals. Through professionally meaningful activities and individual reflection, insight is gained that is assessed as significant and valuable. This subsequently becomes internalized in the form of principles that guide action both in and across individual situations. These theoretical principles must be critically questioned, contextualized, and evaluated so that they can be demonstrated in practice. Tact regulates the drawing of boundaries as an act of mediation between an inside and an outside. It facilitates the mediation between a deep sensitivity to the child's psychological state (closeness) and a detached judgment that comprehends the external situation. In other words, tact involves the ability to navigate the fine line between being empathetic and emotionally attuned to a child's inner world and, at the same time, being able to make judgments and decisions that are in line with the child's external situation. Since tact is characterized by mental activity, it, like Kant's logical tact, allows one to come "out with a correct result, without being conscious of the acts that are going on inside the mind during this process".[28] In this sense, pedagogical tact supplements sensitive

[24]Theodor W Adorno, Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben (Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 1984 [1951]).
[25] Sabine Seichter, `Pedagogical Tact-Viewed from a Humanities Perspective`. in Pedagogical tact: Theory, empiricism, culture (pp. 43–52). Schöningh., at p. 45.
[26] (ibid.)
[27] Shoko Suzuki, Takt in Modern Education (Münster: Waxmann, 2010), at p.167.
[28]Immanuel Kant, Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht, in Werke in zehn Bänden, vol. 10, edited by Volker W. Weischedel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2007 [1798]), at p. 250.

responsiveness in early childhood, guiding the balance between closeness and distance, personhood and role. It protects against harm or embarrassment and structures boundaries in bodily, emotional, and pedagogical dimensions. Education, in its most basic form, is the exercise of influence on others; tact allows teachers to do so ethically and skillfully. In this respect, Adorno's concept of difference underscores that pedagogy unfolds in unpredictable, uncertain situations and open-ended constellations, requiring tact to mediate between theoretical orientation and situated practice.[29]

Pedagogical tact as a concept of differentiation

To better understand pedagogical tact as a concept of differentiation (Burghardt & Zirfas 2019), it is first necessary to define the term 'difference'. This term operates on several semantic levels: as a formal distinction; as qualitative otherness; and as symbolic strangeness. In their seminal article, Ricken and Balzer (2007) distinguish between three dimensions: difference, understood as a categorical distinction; otherness, understood as a subjective perspective on difference; and strangeness, understood as a physical and emotional experience of the other.

Difference is therefore always double-coded, both as an epistemological criterion of distinction and as a normative structural element of social hierarchies. As critical theory reminds us, "No difference exists without a norm": those who appear 'different' are always positioned against what is considered 'normal'. In the school context, descriptions of difference – whether through performance assessments, diagnoses or support measures, thus become objects of critical reflection. Here, difference functions as an epistemic-normative prerequisite, shaping which distinctions are made and how they are pedagogically addressed. When considered alongside the category of inequality, difference refers to the production, evaluation and institutionalization of social and ethnic distinctions. To the extent that such processes result in sustained disadvantages for particular groups, they constitute forms of institutional discrimination.[30] From phenomenological and practice-theoretical perspectives, this raises further questions that allow for different areas of focus. The phenomenological perspective emphasizes how difference is physically perceived, experienced, and responded to in terms of its foreignness.[31] From a practice-theoretical perspective, the inquiry centers on which distinctions educational actors routinely make, and how practices emerge at the intersection of recognition, exclusion, and normalization.

The constructed nature of the category of disability became a relevant topic in the 21st century in the context of the inclusion debate and disability studies. Traditional diagnostic approaches, once viewed as guiding action, are increasingly criticized for reinforcing inequality and producing exclusion. In response, contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasize identifying structural and interactive barriers to participation and transforming them wherever possible. From this perspective, inclusive pedagogical tact can

[29]Seichter, Pedagogical Tact-Viewed from a Humanities Perspective, p. 45.
[30]Mechtild Gomolla and Frank-
Olaf Radtke, Institutionelle Diskriminierung: Die Herstellung ethnischer Differenz in der Schule (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009).
[31]Bernhard Waldenfels, Grundmotive einer Phänomenologie des Fremden (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006).

be understood as a practice that becomes visible precisely at the boundaries of social participation and recognition.

Just as the child uses his song to navigate the boundaries of chaos and safety, educators exercise pedagogical tact to guide students across the social boundaries that shape participation. This delicate navigation of emerging order and chaos mirrors the social processes that performativity research seeks to understand.

The aim of performativity research[32] is to empirically understand concepts and processes of personal self-limitation, as they apply to the successful socialization of the individual. Performativity research offers a framework for analyzing how such boundaries are enacted and negotiated in everyday pedagogical interactions. In *Boundaries of the Social*, Lindemann (2006) analyses how social relationships and communities are defined by certain boundaries. These boundaries can be physical, cultural, economic or social and influence how people interact and feel part of a community. The relationship between sociology and anthropology is reformulated following the historical-reflexive anthropology of Helmuth Plessner. Plessner's anthropologically grounded sociology places social tact at the center of his critique of community, most prominently developed in *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft* (1924). Rather than treating community as an unqualified social ideal, Plessner approaches it as a form of social organization that is inherently limited and potentially dangerous when absolutized. His intervention was shaped by the rise of what he called "social radicalism," a broad cultural tendency in the early twentieth century that sought to overcome modern society by replacing mediated, impersonal relations with immediate forms of communal belonging.

How is the boundary between social persons and other entities actually drawn within social processes? Because of the human capacity for "eccentric positionality",[33] individuals can create consistency. "In order to realize this, a self would not only have to be the current consummation of the mediation between perceiving and self-activity, but it would have to be simultaneously within and outside of this mediation".[34] Furthermore, Plessner (1924) defines tact as "a bindingness which does not bind," as a "sphere" in which "there should be neither good nor evil, neither truth nor error, but only the value of beneficence—the hygiene of the greatest possible nurturance [Schonung, or protection]".[35] It can be considered a specific feature of modern societies that only people living in this world can be social persons in a generally recognized sense. Other societies draw the boundaries of the social in a different way and include, for example, gods or animals in the circle of legitimate persons. Plessner had already referred to in the importance of tact for diplomacy in the public sphere on the basis of determinate interstices, by granting the "balancing of inner tension through the stamp of a spiritual function, [so] this relationship in turn acts back on the effective whole and thus gives the public sphere inner structure and

[32]Bernd Huppauf and Christoph Wulf, Dynamics and Performativity of Imagination: The Image betw een the Visible and the Invisible (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).
[33] Helmuth Plessner, The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism, translated by Alan Wallace (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1999 [1924]).
[34] Gesa Lindemann, 'Sociology—Anthropology and the Analysis of Societal Border Regimes', in Philosophical Anthropology in the 21st Century, edited by Hans-Peter Krüger and Gesa Lindemann (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2006), pp. 42–62., at p. 51.
[35] Plessner, The Limits of Community, pp. 163–164.

outer form".[36] As the "beat of the heart" and the "cement of society",[37] tact manifests itself as a perceptible phenomenon in the "in-between" and characterizes the fragility of human bodily existence in terms of its performance, which must be cultivated and civilized as the variable shaping and "mastery of one's own body [...], which had to be learned and demands constant control. This distance in me and to me only gives me the possibility to overcome it".[38] Tact describes a state of liminality and mediates as a creative act between a negating past. This moment calls for new modes of attunement and care, new ways of living alongside the non-human world, and new practices for sustaining fragile relationships across differences. The fragility of these interactions reflects the fragility of life itself in the Anthropocene: both require attention to the elusive and ephemeral yet essential elements that sustain our worlds. To think of tact in this way is to understand it as a practice of care — not only for students and situations, but also for the worlds and relations that uphold life amid ecological and cultural uncertainty.

The role of reflection for pedagogical tact

According to Suzuki (2014), tact is situationally an appropriate agency for humans "to comprehend their material and psychological distance in relation to other people and their environment and to adjust accordingly".[39] Tact represents a reflexive moment, which presupposes self-activity and self-authorization. "Moreover, in the sense that it functions as an instinct or intuition on the borderline between consciousness and the unconscious, it is neither purely rational nor is it purely affective".[40] Confidence in the reflection of self-representation creates security in the environment and the interactions within it, and, from an anthropological perspective, provides complexity reduction. Tact ultimately creates a "style," a bundle of heterogeneous, fuzzy elements combined with professional components, such as self-reflection, awareness, motivation, and self-regulation, e.g. resulting in consistency in the form of a territory or professional attitude (*Haltung*).[41]

Again, the adjective "reflexive" means a self-referential movement. "Tact enables the active person to grasp a situation in seconds. Tact is the ability and the art of grasping a fixed point at which the best balance can be found within a movement".[42] This leads to questions of what structures thought and which forces are involved. Tact, with its aesthetic-mimetic structure follows taste as one of the sensory cognitive faculties or aesthetic judgments that needs to be cultivated. According to Kant, the education of the soul is always linked to the education of the body: "The education of the soul can therefore just as

[36] Plessner, The Limits of Community, p. 95.
[37] (ibid.)
[38]Helmuth Plessner, Mit anderen Augen: Aspekte einer philosophischen Anthropologie (Stuttgart: Rec lam, 1982).
[39] Shoko Suzuki, 'Takt', in Handbook of Pedagogical Anthropology, edited by Christoph Wulf and Jörg Zirfas (Cham: Springer, 2014), pp. 295–301., at p. 298.
[40] Shoko Suzuki, Takt in Modern Education (Münster: Waxmann, 2010). at p. 169.
[41]Thomas Senkbeil and Norm Friesen, 'Pedagogical Tact and Teacher Professionalization: A Conceptualization', in Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education, edited by Norm Friesen and Thomas Senkbeil (New York: Peter Lang, 2026), pp. 195–212.
[42] Suzuki, 'Takt', p. 298f.

well be called physical as that of the body"[43]– but this still leaves it far removed from the highest level of moral education, as mere cultivation. Kant's conception of power is closely tied to concepts of freedom and moral autonomy. He believed that individuals possess inherent moral worth and should be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to an end. Consequently, the concept of freedom plays a central role in his notion of Enlightenment, which he famously defined as "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity." Leaving this self-inflicted condition can be interpreted as a professional action, a step toward emancipation. Self-reflexivity addresses the interstices in the transitions between different milieus. Each milieu has different codes, which in turn encode other milieus and are themselves constantly transcoded. The impulses constantly pass from one milieu to another, and milieus also pass from one to the other, by their very nature, communicating. The space in-between forms the union of rhythm and chaos that gives humans their signature, their style – their tact, understood as a place to stay, a home, at least for the moment. Pedagogical tact as a reflexive, responsive, and ethical practice navigates boundaries, fosters belongings, and creates solidarity across human and non-human worlds. It is a practice of inclusion rather than exclusion, attentive to fragility, and oriented toward sustaining life, relationships, and communities in all their complexities.

In this context, the philosophy of Kitaro Nishida, founder of the Kyoto School, offers profound insights into the dynamic interplay between intuition, repetition, and action, which resonates with Deleuze's concept of the *ritornello*. Deleuze and Guattari's musical notion of the refrain, or *ritornello*, in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, highlights the creative potential of repetition and return. Similarly, tactful teaching can manifest as dynamic irregularity within static regularity, as Muth (1967/2022, p. 91) has put it. Nishida's "logic of place" (basho no ronri) situates human consciousness and action within a continuously shifting field of interactions, drawing on both Eastern and Western philosophical traditions.[44] Influenced by Leibniz's differential logic and Buddhist thought, Nishida proposed that human consciousness is not a fixed entity but a reflective process in which the self mirrors itself in action. His concept of "active intuition" (kōiteki chokkan) suggests that intuition is not passive observation but an active process unfolding within the dynamics of being and place.[45]

In Nishida's framework, this "place of acting intuition" is precisely where tact operates. Tact, for Nishida, emerges as an intuitive awareness that arises not through reflective reasoning alone but through habitual and creative acts of self-awareness. Similar to Deleuze`s understanding of thought emerging from unconscious repetitions of memory and habit, Nishida conceptualizes repetition not as mechanical recurrence but as mimesis, through which something genuinely new is created. This creative dimension of repetition is captured in Nishida`s notion of *effort*, understood as a conscious striving that shapes intuitive action.[46]

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[43]Immanuel Kant, 'Über Pädagogik', in Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie und Päda gogik, vol. 2, Werkausgabe, vol. XII (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000 [1803]), pp. 695–768. At p. 728)

[44] Kitaro Nishida, Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness, translated by H. Valdo, T. Viglielmo, T. Takeuchi and J. S. O'Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987 [1912]). at p.28).

[45] Nishida, Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness, p.31.

[46] Kitarō Nishida, 'Essays on Philosophy', vols. 6–7 (1945–1946), in Nishida Kitaro Zenshu, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), p. 288-290.

Tact in this sense, sharpens the self-reflective process through effort. It bridges the gap between the internal reflective process of judgment and the external action, enabling the individual to navigate the complexities of social and educational interactions.[47] Deleuze's ritornello similarly functions as a metaphor for returning to and reorganizing structure within ongoing processes of interaction. Thus, tact emerges as a medium for creative action, wherein judgment, intuition, and effort converge.

In its pedagogical dimension, tact manifests as intuitive professional behavior and thinking. Van Manen (1995) observes, that "a thoughtful teacher discovers in concrete situations that he or she has pedagogical tact,"[48] emphasizing that tact cannot be separated from the curriculum, subject matter, or didactic-methodological considerations. Pedagogical tact is "thoughtless" in the sense that it cannot be fully articulated through rational deliberation or calculation; it is a reflective thoughtfulness embedded in action. Tact is therefore both intuitive and ethically informed, functioning as a critical distance or clarity that arises from habituated professional experience. Tact can be understood primarily to be an intuitive action, and in its embodiment as habitual territory, a kind of critical distance or clarity. Because of the self-reflective character of an ethical-moral embodied attitude or judgement, particular attention is therefore paid to research into tact in therapeutic settings, especially in psychoanalysis. "Tact, then, is neither an outdated construct of thought nor a new invention; rather, it is an expression of an educational self-understanding on the one hand and a characterization of a professional cognitive ability on the other".[49] Tact that suddenly appears in a particular unconscious state "arises when consciousness has been ground down by the formation of routines".[50] So, too, is the role of the ritornello in Deleuze's work, which can be considered a metaphor for such a form of thinking. The connection between these elements is a form of resistance and empowerment, less a territorial locality absorbed in its structured provincial or regional determinations, more a spiritual companion in territorialization, which unconsciously returns to a structure of its own, as a form of *professional intuition*, or as Deleuze refers to the construction of his thought, as a kind of "trajectory of the intuition".[51]

How Can Pedagogical Tact Be Learned and Cultivated?

The relationship between enactment of pedagogical tact and "learned" professional competence requires particular attention when considering the learnability of tact. The problematic aspect of pedagogical tact in terms of the mystery posed by the indeterminacies in pedagogical practice cannot be easily remedied through scientific logic, rational planning, or technical controllability. Also, tact plays a role when professionalism is prescribed without anyone being able to justify it, when determinations prove futile or when the rationality of practical decisions or of appropriate practical action in pedagogy is

[47] Nishida, 'Essays on Philosophy', p. 288.
[48] Max van Manen, 'Herbarth und der Takt im Unterricht', in Didaktik und/oder Curriculum: Basic Problems of an International Comparative Didactics, edited by Stefan Hopmann and Klaus Riquarts (Weinheim and Basel: Beltz, 1995), pp. 61–80, at p. 61.
[49] Seichter, Pedagogical Tact-Viewed from a Humanities Perspective, p. 46.
[50] Suzuki, 'Takt', p. 299.
[51] Alain Badiou, Deleuze: The Clamor of Being, translated by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000 [1997]). at p. 35.

not only casually but principally in question. New and more profound discussions about the heuristic of pedagogical tact are clearly worthwhile when supporting a learning subject's own efforts to educate themselves or developing one's own moral and pedagogical responsibility.[52] As a conceptualization of pedagogical tact in teacher education, examined by Senkbeil and Friesen[53], pedagogical tact represents a professional orientation that enables educators to exercise responsible judgement under conditions of uncertainty. Its relevance emerges precisely in situations where pedagogical professionalism is required but cannot be fully predetermined, where established solutions prove insufficient, and where appropriate pedagogical action depends on reflective and context-sensitive judgement.

From this perspective, pedagogical tact can nonetheless be approached as something that is cultivable—although not in a strictly technical or linear sense. Its development should therefore not be understood as the transmission of a fixed skill set, but rather as an iterative process of professional formation. This process may be supported through three interrelated dimensions: (1) academic preparation grounded in scientific methods, subject-specific and didactic knowledge, illustrative examples, and practical demonstrations; (2) experiential learning through practical training placements; and (3) structured reflection in seminars and mentoring contexts. These dimensions do not operate independently but should be understood as mutually reinforcing elements of professional learning that reconnect theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

Against the background of praxeological research conducted within reflection seminars with student teachers, I have developed a course design in the field of practical teacher education that examines the significance of pedagogical tact for processes of professionalization. The aim of this approach is not to suggest that pedagogical tact can be directly taught or technically acquired, but rather to create learning environments in which students can critically engage with complex pedagogical situations, reflect on their experiences, and gradually develop professional judgement. Through the systematic interplay of practical experience, theoretical knowledge, and collaborative reflection, students are supported in developing a reflective orientation towards uncertainty and the relational, ethical, and situational demands of pedagogical practice. In this sense, the cultivation of pedagogical tact emerges not as the application of a predefined method, but as an ongoing process in which theoretical understanding and practical experience continuously inform each other. Pedagogical tact as a reflexive-normative concept may be considered a valuable approach, providing orientation both for theoretical training and professionalization and for handling situations involving uncertainty. This is achieved 1) through academic preparation using scientific methods, subject-specific and didactic instructions, illustrative examples and practical demonstrations, 2) through experience and practice in the context of practical placements and 3) through reflection as a framework for thought in the reflection seminars. The central aspects of professional action competence(s) and the pedagogical tact can be introduced in order to then discuss application horizons and practical realization in reflection seminars and internships. Against this background, a possible justification with application potential and reflection potential for the 1) internship

[52] Senkbeil, 'The Performative Triangle of Tact as a Professional "Action Competence"'; Friesen & Senkbeil, Pedagogical Tact: Reconnecting Theory and Practice in Education.
[53] Senkbeil & Friesen, 'Pedagogical Tact and Teacher Professionalization: A Conceptualization'

and 2) reflection seminar & mentorship follows, with the aim of practicing and embodying pedagogical tact which is marked by a distanced-reflective attitude and critical thinking, whereby this professionalization process is an iterative and lifelong endeavour. Ultimately, this involves aesthetic-sensory judgments that can be put into practice. In the context of professionalization and teacher education, the performance of pedagogical tact involves the fusion of subject knowledge and professional competency and occurs based on reflective action. To make the process of learning pedagogical tact more concrete, it is essential to consider practical training models that foster reflective practice. For example, role-playing, case-based learning, and peer feedback could be incorporated into teacher education programs to enable future educators to practice real-time decision-making while reflecting on their actions. This hands-on approach allows learners to integrate theoretical knowledge with experiential learning, creating a dynamic feedback loop where reflection and action continuously inform each other.

The goal of professionalization in pedagogy, especially in Teacher Education in Special Needs, is the critical-reflexive examination of the human image and self-determination of the human being in pedagogical child-raising and educational relationships. This is understood first and foremost as a self-reflexive regulating process, which acts structurally in psychodynamic relational processes to itself and its intertwined environment. In special education, this boundary becomes apparent when attributions of deficiency, deviation, or non-normativity call into question the status of humanity and at the same time generate a claim to recognition and responsibility. This article argues that remedial education necessarily operates within this tension: between criticism of normative images of humanity and the indispensability of a reference to humanity. The boundaries of the inhuman do not mark a place beyond humanity, but rather a reflective space in which humanism is redefined in conditions of vulnerability and unavailability. In the sense of an implicit normativity of manifold forms of knowledge, it is necessary to represent these fields of knowledge while maintaining the manifold, unfathomable essential cores of humanity in a complementary manner that is radically open and objective.[54] Likewise, as a superficial maieutic achievement of pedagogy, it is necessary for the unconscious or internal, in the form of imagination and imagery, to be fostered and brought forth. Only focused and repetitive engagement between the unconscious and external stimuli, experiences, and forces allows consciousness and attitude to emerge. Pedagogical anthropology, therefore, does not constitute a "firmly defined, systematic canon of knowledge, but rather a scientific attitude or stance that poses the question of what is human, precisely because it is enigmatic and not fully recognizable".[55] Moreover, it is important to recognize that pedagogical tact does not exist in a vacuum; it is shaped by the cultural and societal contexts in which it is practiced. In diverse educational environments, tact must adapt to varying social norms, values, and expectations. For example, what is considered tactful behavior in one culture may be perceived differently in another. Therefore, developing pedagogical tact requires not only personal reflection but also an awareness of cultural differences and the flexibility to adjust one's actions accordingly.

[54] Christoph Wulf and Jörg Zirfas (eds), Handbuch der pädagogischen Anthropologie (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2014).
[55] ibid., p.11.

This can be considered as the foundation[56] for tactful action based on the practices of theory and praxis, as opposed to intuitive action. Tact is characterized by its structuring of itself in practical pedagogical activity on the basis of corresponding theoretical orientation and knowledge. It is intended to mediate a structuring function within the framework of reciprocity. In the performativity of pedagogical tact, practical experience and theoretical knowledge are consistently united, shaped, and exemplified. Neither comprehensive theoretical knowledge nor retrospectively gained practical experience can fully capture the singularity of pedagogical practice. Professionalization, therefore, should not be understood as the application of fixed knowledge or ready-made solutions. Rather, it functions as a rehearsal process for a reflexive scientific habitus and, as Burghardt and Zirfas (2019) argue, as a "problem formula" (*Problematisierungsformel*). In this sense, professionalization does not primarily offer instructions for action but provides a framework through which pedagogical situations can be critically framed and examined. Its central function lies in problematizing fundamental pedagogical facts—rendering visible those aspects of practice that are structurally problematic and enabling them to be addressed both theoretically and practically.[57] As an action of thought and practice, pedagogical tact combines scientific knowledge and professional practice. It can be understood as an immediate, intuitive reflection in action that is appropriate to the individual case.

In this context, Kitaro Nishida's concept of "effort" in his work *An Inquiry into the Good* offers a valuable perspective on cultivating tact.[58] Nishida describes how "pure experience," - a state in which the distinction between subject and object dissolves[59] - can be cultivated through effort, which he defines as a reflective and dynamic process rather than mere mental or physical labor. Thus, effort becomes a technique for guiding oneself into a state of pure experience, where the self and the world are mirrored in a unified process of reflection.[60] This active reflection on one's being within the dynamics of action enables individuals to refine their sense of self, much as pedagogical tact is continually honed through reflection and practice. Nishida's emphasis on the self's ability to structure and cultivate itself through effort is similar to the process of developing tact, where reflective engagement with theoretical knowledge and practical experience shapes professional competency, as Suzuki (2022) points out. As a result, pedagogical tact can be understood as an ethically grounded skill mediating between theory and practice. This concept echoes Herbart's "Mittelglied" and resonates with Kantian concerns for moral responsibility in education. Pedagogical tact is not a purely intuitive skill; it presupposes reflective ethical judgement and a disciplined form of empathy that is attuned to the vulnerability of others without overstepping professional boundaries. This empathetic restraint allows educators to respond sensitively to specific situations, safeguarding the

[56] As a foundation, pedagogical anthropology highlights that theory and practice are part of a constantly evolving process, and that tact emerges and develops from that dynamic relationship. Tact is not a static precondition, but as something that evolves and is shaped by the ongoing relationship between theory and practice.

[57] Burghardt & Zirfas, Der pädagogische Takt: Eine erziehungswissenschaftliche Problemformel., p. 10.

[58] Kitarō Nishida, 'Essays on Philosophy', vols. 6–7 (1945–1946), in Nishida Kitaro Zenshu, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004). p. 288.

[59] Nishida, Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness, p.28.

[60] cf. Nishida, Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness

dignity and integrity of children while minimizing the risk of harm. As Zirfas (2022) emphasizes, the practice of 'limiting oneself for the sake of the other' highlights the ethical core of pedagogical action. This positions empathy and responsibility as foundational conditions for professional educational practice, rather than optional dispositions.

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