

o. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer, Universität Wien

Future Competence – A new challenge for educational communication research.

Studying the Future. A theoretical concept for a hermeneutical approach.

Future is a term by which we communicate hopes and fears, expectation, animation and resignation. Future in that sense is a communicative figure,, by which we negotiate on changes, challenges, risks, problems, decisions - and at the same time it is a semantic dispositiv of re-minding and discovering values for collective efforts in thoughts (public opinion) and practice (organization of action) in order to overcome/survive difficult and shocking phenomena of natural, cultural and social life. Natural (or even long term political) catastrophes (see terrorism) have cultural (and trans-culturally diversified) connotations of social acting (see Tsunami event 2005) as far as concerned people are in mutual communicative relation. Risks (even those of nature) are culturally defined. In search of cultural overcoming of all those scenarios - globalized because of global interconnection - the future challenge is education of cultural attention as a resource of future development. In that sense future communication is an (educational / theoretical) intervention of communication studies within a tradition of a communicating (not only communicated) social science and with the interest of focussing on future perspectives as communicative measures, also focussing on communication (social attention) as measures of making future.

Communication theory is scientifically justified as a system of self-reflecting observation, it considers the social practice (the societal connection of culture & communication, the cultural connection of communication and society, the communicative connection of society and culture) and – in the same time – it holds the status of reliability and viability by transparent methods of reflecting the observation of observation.

Future Studies in that context is a communication theory model of reflection of everyday communication on that what happens and what that means (or cultural programs make people meaning) on further actions to come, by models of hermeneutical interpretation. FS is a methodological program according the tradition of cultural studies to identify the culturally relational conditions of rationality and common

sense. It discovers relational and trans-mental connections between three discursive "Lebenswelten" (everyday discourses, milieu discourses, and media discourses) by which people mutually exchange meaning and sense for the "next step" to be done – thus becoming a community of culture of the "next view".

Future Studies in the framework of communication theory is a program of future communication (as a subject, as a perspective of observation and as a system of knowledge). Future Studies is not futurology (scientific approach), is not futurism (aesthetical or philosophical approach), is not futuristics (analytical approach), and is not trend studies (sociological approach), but relies on enlightenments of all those discursive systems on future and justifies itself methodologically and theoretically as the culturological or/and communicological exegetic system that explains, orders, and classifies how and why becomes what orientation (meaning) the future impact of societal communication, what has that to do with cultural specifications, and what are the lessons to be learned, in order to make happen cultural development and prosperity of conditions of life.

My interest of giving a presentation of that research field is to argue and to show that educational programs in communication /media should develop from simple professionalization programs (journalism, public relations etc.) to programs of competence development – which always respects the cultural sources and resources in the framework of professional communication work such as organizational, political, commercial, educational communication or communication management in economy, politics, education, environment, health, religion, etc.

Thomas A. Bauer, Dr. phil, University Professor at the Department of Media and Communication Studies at University of Vienna, Austria, Chair for Audiovisual Communication and Media Culture. Visiting Professor at PUC São Paulo/Brazil, City University of New York/USA and University of Dubrovnik/Croatia. Research focus on Cultural Theories, Health Communication, Urban Communication, Environmental Communication.

thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at

www.thomasbauer.at

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