

Theory and Methodology in International Comparative Classroom Studies

Anthology no 2: Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion

Theory and Methodology in International Comparative Classroom Studies

Edited by Berit H. Johnsen

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AKADEMISK

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Preface to Open Access edition

This is a revised edition of Anthology No. 2, *Theory and Methodology in International Comparative Classroom Studies*. The anthology is addressed to researchers, students and professionals within education, special needs education and related fields such as psychology, health sciences and other fields within social sciences and humanities.

A number of internationally renowned scholars contribute with articles in this cross-disciplinary anthology, such as the French Charles Gardou, British, Harry Daniels, Serbian Ivan Ivić, Swedish Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, Norwegian Ragnar Rommetveit and several others. Action research and qualitative methodologies are discussed, and examples are presented from seven European universities participating in the joint *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion*. Thus, this is the second of three anthologies in the research cooperation partly financed by the international research cooperation project WB 04/06: *Development towards the Inclusive School: Practices – Research – Capacity Building: Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo* together with the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo.

Oslo 15.03.2021

Berit H. Johnsen

PART ONE

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY IN
INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE CLASSROOM
STUDIES TOWARDS INCLUSION

Doing Research

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations and Choices

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

This book is the second of three anthologies related to the international research cooperation project WB 04/06: Development towards the Inclusive School: Practices – Research – Capacity Building: Universities of Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb & Oslo. While the first anthology dealt with how to prepare and formulate research projects (Johnsen, 2013), this book draws attention to the research process itself. Theoretical and methodological considerations are important aspects of doing research throughout the process of implementation. Theory and methodology are therefore the focal point of this book.

A number of internationally renowned scholars have contributed articles about theory on practice related to either of the two broad theoretical traditions; 1) the Vygotskyan cultural-historical school of teaching, learning and development, and 2) humanistic didactic-curricular theory aiming towards inclusion. Small-scale research projects are in focus, particularly classroom studies related to international comparative analysis. Different qualitative methodologies are investigated, including case study, action research and “mixed methods”, which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Thus, this anthology is addressed to researchers, students and professionals within education and special needs education as well as psychology, sociology, health sciences and other related fields. It makes a contribution to cross-disciplinary international research cooperation, aiming at revealing good practices and gaps between human rights principles and everyday practice. The book is a valuable asset to international students at the PhD and Master levels within

the social sciences and humanities in general, and the educational sciences in particular. Moreover, it directly applies to research colleagues in the joint project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion*, who have contributed to this anthology.

On theory, methodology and ethics of research on inclusive practices

The book is divided into four parts. In addition to this article, Part One has an historical survey article describing and discussing the history of ideas concerning the school for all and inclusion from the beginning of non-tuition elementary education “for all and everyone” in 1739 until current efforts being made to implement the principles of the inclusive school.

Part Two has seven articles mainly containing theoretical perspectives from cultural-historical and didactic-curricular theory, focusing on certain aspects of practice such as communication and care as well as teaching, learning and development. What is humanistic didactic-curricular theory? As the two closely related notions, the Continental-European ‘didactics’ and the Anglo-American ‘curriculum’ indicate, they focus on planning, implementing and revising education of individuals, groups and classes at school. The foundation for humanistic didactic-curricular theory is 1) communication – more precisely, the dialogue and 2) child- and individual centred education within the community of the class and school. Modern humanistic education draws its philosophy from Martin Buber’s (1947) encounter between “I and Thou” to Paolo Freire’s (1972) pedagogy of the oppressed and subsequent related texts. The broad traditions are in line with and capable of developing UNESCO’s (1994) statement on educational inclusion from a general international principle into practice within the diversity of countries and cultures.

Thus, Part Two begins with Ragnar Rommetveit’s criticism of mainstream individualistic communication theory and discussion of the essence of the dialogical paradigm and the individual as co-owner of the language. His article is followed by Harry Daniels’, Ivan Ivić’ and Berit H. Johnsen’s articles discussing aspects of cultural-historical theory in light of teaching, learning and development within education and special needs education, and during peace and war. Direct focus is placed on the interaction between the new-born and caregiver in Colwyn Trevarthen’s discussion of art and the joyful companionship of fiction. In his second article Harry Daniels discusses how development within the

cultural-historical tradition in social science has contributed to our understanding of pedagogy and thus to educational research. Cultural-historical theory coincides with humanistic didactic-curricular theory in the last article of Part Two, where issues are presented and discussed concerning how to bridge the gap between the principle and practice of educational inclusion.

Why does it take such a long time to realise the principle of inclusion? There are undoubtedly many answers to this question, among which there is an increasing awareness of ethical issues. Thus, Part Three addresses ethical issues in the development of social and educational inclusion, starting with Charles Gardou's brief, poetical text *From the Exceptional to the Universal*. The following two articles introduce French-Bulgarian philosopher and psycho-linguist Julia Kristeva's ethical-political program focusing on our shared human sense of vulnerability. Similarly, Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta reflects on inclusion and equality at the end of Part Three.

Research methodology is the focus of Part Four. Possibilities and limitations of qualitative research approaches in general and action research in particular were eagerly discussed and implemented in several of the participating universities within the joint comparative classroom study project (WB 06/04). Therefore, two different action research approaches are present and discussed, one of which focuses directly on qualitative classroom studies. The other is a good example of cross-disciplinary influence, where researchers in the field of health and medicine obtain knowledge from the field of education and try out approaches that stand out as good examples within several related research disciplines. The joint methodological basis and flexibility within the comparative classroom study project (WB 04/06) are discussed in an article summarizing the various methodological choices. It is followed by seven articles, one from each of the university teams presenting their methodological reflections and choices in more detail.

Participants

The various articles in this anthology provide the reader with an impression of the joint working process of the participants in the *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 06/04), as well as the joint upgrading process that took place throughout the project, particularly in the rotating workshops held every semester. Professor Harry Daniels, currently at Oxford University, England, Professor Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, University of Örebro,

Sweden, and Professor Ivan Ivić, University of Belgrade, Serbia, have all participated in workshops and contributed articles to this anthology.

Other authors have participated in related networks or conferences, such as Professor Emeritus Colwyn Trevarthen at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and Professor Emeritus Ragnar Rommetveit, University of Oslo. Several of the contributors belong to a circle related to Bulgarian-French Professor Julia Kristeva, University of Paris Diderot; they include French Professor Charles Gardou, University of Lyon 2, and Norwegian professors Per Koren Solvang, University College of Oslo and Akershus, and Eivind Engebretsen, University of Oslo, as well as the editor of this anthology. Engebretsen has also contributed the above-mentioned article on action research along with colleagues. The other article on action research has been written by Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, May Britt Postholm.

Researchers from all the participating WB 04/06 project universities have contributed methodological articles. Thus, this anthology presents a number of methodological reflections which may serve as examples for research fellows and students who are in the preparatory phase of their own studies. They may also be read together with the research plans of the same university teams presented in the first anthology of this series, *Research Project Preparation within Education and Special Needs Education* (Johnsen, 2013). The seven articles are linked to an article describing and discussing the common flexible methodological framework within the international comparative project. Taken together, these articles may serve as examples for other research networks that are planning joint research projects. However, thorough reflections on the possibilities and limitations of the kind of qualitative international comparative studies that have been carried out in this project will have to wait until the next of the three anthologies. All the authors of these methodological texts are presented in relation to their articles as well as in the survey of contributors at the end of the book. However, many other researchers, students and administrators are also behind the project process and subsequent articles in this anthology, having contributed project activities and acting as local peer reviewers or discussants and interpreters.

As already indicated, several other participants are needed in cooperation-projects of this size. This is also the case in the process from project activities to publishing a resulting anthology. Using English as their research language, the participating teams have done a great job of writing these articles. In addition, a French, Serbian and Norwegian article needed translating and editing to English

within the respective discipline genres. Mr. Goran Đapić, project interpreter, translated the Serbian and French articles to English, and the publisher's translator and proof-reader, Karin Lee-Hansen, translated from Norwegian to English. Both did an excellent job. The next step consisted of starting a detailed editing process in order to present the articles in accordance with different and complex scientific terminologies. This task included having "a hermeneutical dialogue" with the authors, and all three articles were eventually accepted by their authors. Special thanks go to Ragnar Rommetveit, who reviewed his article in English translation twice during this editing process, and to Ingrid Rommetveit, who has mediated the majority of messages sent back and forth between the two of us.

Certain articles have been published earlier and appear here in slightly revised forms or in translation. Thus, both articles by Harry Daniels have been adapted from former articles with the author's consent. Ragnar Rommetveit's article was published in the Norwegian language by Gyldendal Akademisk (2008) and is now being published in English with the consent of the author as well as the publishing company. Colwyn Trevarthen's article is also being published in a slightly revised version with the consent of the author and the publisher, Oxford University Press.

All articles have been peer reviewed, edited and proof read. A number of internal and external research colleagues have participated in the peer review process; amongst them my colleague at the Department of Special Needs Education, UiO, Associate Professor Ivar Morken, my colleague from the joint project, Professor Ljiljana Igrić at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, and Professor Gregor Hensen, University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück, Germany, deserve special mention. The cooperation with authors and peer reviewers throughout this project has been an excellent joint effort to increase the articles' overall quality. However, one difficult feature of editing has been to shorten the articles in order to make room for all the texts. The close cooperation with publishing house proof reader Karin Lee-Hansen has once again significantly increased the clarity and readability of our articles due to her conscientious and detailed work.

The publication of this second anthology has been made possible through funding from 1) the Department of Special Needs Education, and 2) the research group Humanity Studies in Pedagogy (HumStud), both located at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo, and 3) the international research cooperation project WB 06/04, which was partly financed by the Norwegian Cooperation Program on Research and Higher Education with the Countries in the Western Balkans (CPWB).

The editing process of this book took considerably longer time than expected. The cooperation with the generous and patient editor, Bjørn O. Hansen, at the publishing house Cappelen Damm Akademisk has once again been highly appreciated throughout the process of creating this book.

All participants deserve great thanks for their diligent work and close cooperation over several years with regard to their making contributions to this anthology, which we also hope will benefit other research colleagues, students and professionals.

Further dissemination

As mentioned in the introduction, this is the second anthology in the dissemination of the joint project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 06/04). While the first anthology dealt with how to prepare and formulate research projects, this book draws attention to the research process itself. Several articles have already been delivered concerning the research process as well as results in the project participants' languages, and future articles are expected to be published in national as well as international journals. The third anthology will contain the findings of the joint international research project *Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion*, and in this coming book the comparative analysis and discussion of findings from the studies of the seven universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo will comprise the main body of the book. In addition, there will be articles written by each of the research teams as well as discussions of other central aspects of inclusion, such as the process of making comparisons of inclusive practices within educational research completed on an international basis.

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From Historical Roots to Future Perspectives towards Inclusive Education

Debates, Policy and Practice

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

When the principle of inclusion was internationally introduced in UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration (1994), the idea of having one school for all children, with or without special educational needs and disabilities, had been debated for many years. Amongst the leading notions in this discourse were concepts such as the school for all, education for all and integration. A thorough understanding of the principle of inclusion would therefore gain from revisiting these basic concepts. However, neither inclusion nor the three abovementioned concepts are defined once and for all. As all other concepts, they are not static, but dynamic and changeable within various professional and scientific discourses as well as within different cultures and at different times in history. In this article inclusion is seen as the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and providing a meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Johnsen, 2013a).

This text focuses on debates, policies and practices involving educational inclusion in Norway. It is addressed to international research colleagues and professionals. The subsequent discussion is situated in Norwegian culture and

history of educational ideas albeit with a view to other cultures. The article's structure may be outlined with three sentences: It takes as the point of departure the first known statement about a school for all or the roots of the modern basic school free of charge, following this track until it disappears at the same time as this basic school is extended with several additional subjects and takes over the educational arena from private schools, becoming over time characterised by the notion of the unified school. Next, the article outlines the subsequent turn from segregation towards the new school for all and inclusion within legislation and national curricula in light of a general Norwegian context. This is followed by a discussion of a slow and hesitant transfer from "inclusion by law" towards "inclusion in practice", pointing to challenges and opportunities.

A school for all: Historical roots

European education is generally considered to have its known origins in ancient Greece. Since then, different kinds of education have seen the light of day, mostly in families who could afford to invest in their children's education at home or in institutions. When did the idea of a school for all children appear? It seems to have emerged with the Enlightenment or modern times.

In a European context regular school legislation in the twin realms Denmark¹ and Norway has an extraordinarily long history since the royal decrees made by King Christian VI in 1739. The decrees were identical except for the different names of the two countries. The stated intentions were to establish schools free of charge all over the country so that all and everybody, both boys and girls, also the poorest of children, would obtain sufficient education. What was sufficient education? According to the decree and related royal instructions, the content in this early elementary school was reading acquisition and texts with explanations of selected Christian doctrines so that the children were prepared for further training for confirmation. The decree marks the legislative establishment of an uninterrupted line of development up to the current Norwegian joint elementary-, lower and upper secondary school of ten + three years duration, even though this development has at times been slow (Johnsen, 2000a).

The foundation of "the school for all and everybody" was a huge innovation project at that time as it would have been today, too. Where did King Christian

1. Several Danish historians choose to mention a later and much more detailed decree issued in 1814 as forming the establishment of the Danish non-payment elementary school.

VI and his court get the ideas for the project? What were the incentives for it? In retrospect, a combination of two main trends was specifically influential.

- 1) Cameralistic financial policy claimed that education was important for economic growth. Thus, being able to read became an important skill at the beginning transmission from subsistence economy to an increasing division of labour (Markussen, 1991).
- 2) Christian Lutheran Pietism was the state religion, and the King and his selected court were dedicated Pietists. A main pillar of Pietism was that religion was a matter between the single person and God. The road to salvation went through enlightenment or the light of knowledge. Moreover, a basic means to reaching this direct connection was the ability to read religious main-texts. A reading acquisition programme was therefore necessary in order to facilitate each individual's responsibility before God (Johnsen, 2000a).

What did they mean by a school for all' and everybody when the decree was issued in 1739? Did they mean absolutely all children, or were some children not accounted for, even not thought about in this very early decree, which was in fact an "educational act"? These questions are discussed in the following.

What became of the school for all in the development of the unified school?

As argued in the introduction, each country follows its own paths on the inclusion and meeting children's different and special education needs. In the case of Norway, the establishment of the first school for all and everybody in the form of a school free of charge for both girls and boys marked the direction for the further development of official school policy. Thus, related to the key concept of the 'school for all', another notion turned into a basic principle for debate and development throughout the centuries up until today, namely the 'unified school'². This concept represents a principle pertinent for giving a further historical perspective on changes in the Norwegian educational system. The principle may be dated back to the early nineteenth century during which Frederik M. Bugge (1806–1853) became the first scholar to make a holistic plan

2. The term 'unified school' is a translation of the Norwegian word "enhetsskolen" applied in English by Rust (1989) in his book about the democratic tradition and evolution of schooling in Norway.

for a Norwegian educational system from the elementary to university level. He brought the ideas home from continental Europe and the Prussian educator and philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). Bugge’s plan for the unified school was a systematic organisation of all levels of education within a national framework. His plans had little to do with what is today called educational equality, as at that time the great majority of pupils only attended elementary schools financed by their municipalities, whereas children of a small number of wealthy families attended private elementary schools before they went on to pursue education (Grue-Sørensen, 1969; 1972; Høigård & Ruge, 1971; Høverstad, 1930; Johnsen, 2000a; 2001b; Lüth, 1997; Myhre, 1970).

However, one of Bugge’s successors, Ole Vig, a poor crofter family’s son holding a teaching certificate, introduced aims and content which would greatly expand the existing free or non-payment primary school. He introduced a new name; “Folkeskolen” for this school, meaning the people’s school, clarifying the term “folk”:

By “The people” we should be aware that we are in fact not thinking about a single “stand” or a class of people. The peasantry alone does not constitute the people, just as little as town citizens and officials do. No, when we speak about the Norwegian people, we mean every single “mother’s soul” between Lindesnæs and Nordkap, between Kjølen and the North Sea, whether they are found in towns or rural areas, as long as they do not explicitly reject our “fatherland and mother tongue”. The highest civil servant in the capital belongs to the people as well as the poorest fisherman on a lonely rock, and when we therefore speak about public enlightenment, we are primarily thinking about enlightenment that is useful and necessary for the whole people, and suits all³ (Ole Vig in *Folkevennen*, 1852a:5–6).

This poor but eager spokesman for full democracy – in times when only men of wealth or property had the right to vote – went on, clarifying which ones of the existing types of schools should be considered “folkeskoler”, namely all primary and secondary schools, both tuition-based and non-payment schools, and the newly established teacher training colleges, in short, all schools where education was conveyed through the people’s mother tongue and did not have scholarly “Bildung” (such as the so-called ‘Latin schools’) as its main goal (Vig, 1852b). He discussed the content of “folkeskolen” in a large number of articles. Vig’s vision was to extend the curriculum by including several secular subjects. The free, non-payment school should develop the same standard of quality as the private

3. Translated to English by the author of this article.

schools offered. Inspired by British liberalism and German romantic philosophy, the Danish theologian and educational philosopher Nikolai Grundtvig's (1783 – 1872) ideas about “the school of interest” and “the live storytelling”, and, most of all, his own experience of Norwegian culture, Vig argued that amongst all school subjects, three should be main subjects, namely mother tongue, history and religion (Johnsen, 2000a). In this way Vig's “folkeskole” vision represented a groundbreaking extension of the notion of a ‘unified school’.

Large parts of Vig's visions became political reality with the passage of several new “Folkeskole”-Acts towards the end of the nineteenth century. They secured a free secular and religious primary education of seven years' duration all over the country. This improvement became a reality as male peasants, who had enjoyed the right to vote since the introduction of the modern Norwegian Constitution in 1814, became increasingly conscious of their political strength and established their own political party, the Left Party.

An important question from current perspectives of educational inclusion is what had become of the principle of ‘the school for all’ during the almost one and half centuries since the 1739- Decree. Legislative revisions during this time span indicate that educational authorities gradually became aware of the fact that there were some children who appeared unable to learn to read. It may seem that children with various difficulties and disabilities had become more visible as the school grew in content and expectations. The new “folkeskole” acts explicitly demonstrated that some groups of children were now seen as problems for the school whose curriculum had been greatly expanded. At the same time as the large majority of Norwegian children were given much better schooling, some children were excluded. They were 1) children with serious contagious diseases (such as tuberculosis), 2) children with serious learning difficulties and 3) children exhibiting such bad behaviour that they spoiled their own learning and were bad role models for other children (Johnsen, 2000a; Lov, 1889a; 1889b). Thus, in accordance with the new legislation, the school was not for all anymore, but for those children only who could meet the school's requirements.

A few years before the “Folkeskole” acts were passed, the first Norwegian special school act was passed. In this way that the growing awareness for “curing and training” persons with disabilities had spread from the cradle of special education in Paris to most European countries and reached Norway, that was the last of the three Scandinavian countries to establish this type of school. At that time the first remedial class for “neglected and negligent children” had also been established in a regular town school; an organisational model that was adopted

by an increasing number of schools in the years to come. Three special school acts were adopted within a timespan of just under a century and an increasing number of children with different special needs received education, albeit in segregated schools or classes. (Indst. O. No. 12.,1881; Johnsen, 2000a; 2000b; 2001b; Lov, 1915; 1951; Thorsteinsen, 1974).

It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that the principle of the unified school came to mean that the school was free of fees for pupils from all societal levels from elementary school and throughout further education. This milestone was reached due to another political force, which was the establishment and growth of the Norwegian labour movement. The consequence was that nearly all schools with tuition-fees were closed down (Dokka 1974; 1983; Høigård & Ruge 1971; Johnsen, 2000b). From this time on it has been a main characteristic of the Norwegian school that the professor's son and the factory worker's daughter sit side by side in the classroom. The phenomenon that children of families from all societal levels and cultural groups are together in the same school may be one main reason for the relatively egalitarian society in Norway.

During the twentieth century the content of the principle of the unified school was further expanded and related to the idea about a school for all'. In the nineteen-seventies the term unified school covered all pupils regardless of their economic or social status, geographical location, cultural background, gender or **ability** (Østvold, 1975). With the rapid changes taking place in recent decades as Norwegian society becomes more international, the principle is again extended to also include multiethnicity and multilingualism (Johnsen, 2001b).

The 1960s and the turn towards a revitalised school for all

What became of the notion of the school for all'? It reappeared in conjunction with two other central concepts in the 1960s, namely the notions of normalisation and integration, concepts that focused on educational as well as social conditions in general. At that time the widespread practice of placing persons with disabilities in institutions began to be seriously questioned. Particularly in densely populated countries, institutions were large and often isolated from the rest of society. Thus, when the two pioneers, Niels Bank-Mikkelsen from Denmark and Bengt Nirje from Sweden, presented a new organisational principle using the notion of normalisation in their visit to North-America, it soon

became an international principle (Bank-Mikkelsen, 1980; Johnsen, 2001a; Nirje, 1980; Wolfensberger, 1980). Nirje (1980:32–33) described the principle in the following way:

Normalization means sharing a normal rhythm of the day, with privacy, activities, and mutual responsibilities; a normal rhythm of the week, with a home to live in, a school or work to go to, and leisure time with a modicum of social interaction; a normal rhythm of the year, with the changing modes and ways of life and of family and community customs as experienced in the different seasons of the year.

A huge wave of dissidence now rolled over international discourse, focusing on the vulnerability of institutions to neglect, abuse and cover up, and of isolated life conditions for children and adults with disabilities. The wave hit medical and special education institutions as well as orphanages on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In Norway, journalists revealed harsh and unethical conditions for children with developmental impairment. Parents started to organise in nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). NFU – Norwegian Association for People with Developmental Disabilities, which was founded in 1967, had and has on their main agenda equal rights, the local school for all and inclusion.

When it comes to education, Norway led the Nordic turn towards normalisation through the so-called Blom Report (KUF, 1970). In this White Paper the principle of integration was introduced explicitly and given a description. The criteria of integration were the following:

- a) Belongingness in a social community
- b) Participation in the benefits of the community
- c) Joint responsibility for tasks and obligations

Thus the notion of integration had found its way into Norwegian policy papers as well as been given an explicit conceptual description. Consequently, the third and last Norwegian “special school” act was abolished, and matters concerning special education needs were integrated into the Educational Act in 1975. The new main principle was that all children without exception should be covered by the same educational act. The principle was described in more detail in the Act of 1969/75 and in the current act (Education Act, 1969/75; 1999/05).

The integration of special needs education into regular educational legislation on the preschool, elementary and secondary level was a result of many years of public information and debate, advocated by special needs educators, politicians, parents and user organisations. The Norwegian NFU and the Nordic Cooperation Council (NSR) arranged a series of symposia where focus was

directed to political principles as well as practical consequences of decentralising education and other welfare services to local schools and municipalities⁴. They named their main principle **the school for all** in the local community for all. As mentioned, this time the principle of the school for all contained the same main aim as the principle of the unified school had come to represent, namely that the regular local school should include all pupils regardless of their ability or special needs. This revisited and revitalised concept of the school for all was adopted in Norwegian policy papers and legislation (Education Act 1969/75; 1999/05; M 1987; L 1997).

Aspects of the abovementioned educational principles have been, and still are, in focus of educational discourse in Norway as well as internationally under several headings or formulations such as comprehensive schools, mixed-ability teaching and mainstreaming as well as normalisation, integration and education for all. However, a large gap between claimed and actual integration and development of schools for all without exceptions led to a devaluation of the concepts' content. In Norway, the rhetorical question "If the school is for all, who are the others?" became a slogan for criticism of interpretation of the law as well as school practice. Internationally, the criticism resulted in the introduction of a new concept, namely the notion of inclusion, also called educational inclusion or the inclusive school⁵. Thus, this last shift in terminology may be seen as criticism of the half-heartedness characterising local regular schools when they were opened only to certain groups of pupils with special needs, or when special classes or special schools were organised as special units within regular schools.

What, then, are the main ideas behind the principle of the inclusive school? They may be described in the following statements:

- Every child belongs to their local community and a regular class or group
- The school day is organised with a great amount of educational differentiation, co-operative learning tasks and flexibility with regard to choice of content
- Teachers and special needs educators co-operate and have educational knowledge of general, special as well as individual learning strategies and tutoring needs, and of how to appreciate the plurality of individual differences in organising class activities.

4. <http://www.nfunorge.org/no>

5. See also the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994.

Educational practice in accordance with these statements requires a radical turn from traditional discipline-centred to child-centred education and from one-sided discipline or norm-related assessment of the pupil's learning results to assessment of individual progress. All in all, inclusive education is much more dynamic and complex than traditional discipline-centred practice (Johnsen, 2001c; 2014b). However, it is doubtful that a regular school with inclusive orientation will "... improve ... the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system", as proclaimed in UNESCO's Salamanca Statement, section 2 (1994). The profound educational turnaround from traditional, discipline-centred to inclusive practices requires major changes in mentality, knowledge and skills regarding class, school and municipality or state level as well as in higher education of regular teachers and special needs educators, even when inclusion-friendly legislation is in place. It involves making radical changes in the school system, more specifically in each school and classroom. This type of change is pervasive and takes time.

The current Norwegian national educational system

In what way does the Norwegian national educational system support the principle of the school for all and inclusion? How do laws and national curricula intend to fulfil the criteria of inclusion today and in the immediate future? Three pillars of current Norwegian education acts and national curricula outline the principle framework for the school for all or the inclusive school in the local society for all:

1. The School shall have room for everybody and teachers must therefore have an eye for each individual learner. The mode of teaching must not only be adapted to subject and content, but also to age and maturity, the individual learner and the mixed abilities of the entire class (L, 1997:35)

This passage secures the right of all children to attend their own local regular school. As mentioned earlier, this right was first pronounced in the Educational Act (1969/75. See also Educational Act, 1999/2005, section 13–1).

2. Teaching shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils, apprentices and trainees (Educational Act, 1999/2005, section 1–2)

The current act of 1999 covers for the first time elementary, lower and upper secondary educational levels – both vocational education and programmes for general studies. Thus, it applies to all children and youth; pupils, apprentices and trainees, as mentioned in the above quotation.

3. Pupils who either do not or are unable to benefit satisfactory from ordinary instruction have the right to special education (Educational Act, 1999/2005, section 5–1). The right to special education is described in more details in following sections of the act.

As already indicated, the current Educational Act (1999/2005) relates to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education and also including adult education at the level of knowledge compatible to primary- and lower secondary education. It also contains the same rights to special needs education on all levels, including preschool age. In addition to the core principles quoted above, the Act describes special regulations such as securing the right to use the Braille sign system. Several minority languages have their own national curricula, such as sign language and Sami languages.

These statements in current Educational Act and National Curriculum demonstrate that Norwegian educational legislation has taken many fundamental steps towards the realisation of equal rights to meaningful and individually adapted education within the collective of the local regular school. The crucial question is how each municipality and school practices these principles.

This being said, it is important to have an overview of the Norwegian educational system's structure in order to be able to compare it with other countries' systems. As an elongated, yet small country with approximately five million inhabitants, the same legislation and educational structure is applied on a national level. However, the responsibility for the school lies with the little more than four hundred municipalities (primary- and lower secondary school) and twenty counties ("fylker": upper secondary school). Governmental institutions monitor whether the schools are administered within the national legislative frameworks. The Norwegian school system of today is divided into the following levels:

- Kindergarten: ages one to six years
- Primary and lower secondary school: ages six to sixteen
- Upper secondary school: ages sixteen to nineteen (twenty-one)
- College and University education
- Adult education (at all educational levels)

Decentralisation is an old tradition in Norway with its sparsely populated demography combined with the political principle of equal rights for everyone. This relates to educational policy and administration as well. All children one year and over have the right to attend kindergarten (Kindergarten Act, 2005/2009). While municipalities and parents share the financial responsibility for the kindergartens, schools are, as mentioned, free of charge.

Compared with other countries, there are very few private schools in Norway; however, they may be approved and given state grants if they fulfil educational laws and national curricula. Private institutions are more common at the kindergarten level, in higher education and adult education.

With this backdrop of the inclusive school-legislation, the question is how special needs education is organised on the different educational levels. At the kindergarten level the great majority of children with special needs attend regular kindergarten groups, receiving special needs education support either in dyads or small groups, but most often in the ordinary kindergarten group. The preferred organisation in the elementary- and lower secondary school, in accordance with current Education Act, is that each pupil attends school in his or her age group and that pupils with documented special needs are awarded additional resources within the class, outside the group and/or combined with small group education. Schools, as a rule, have additional resources to provide “courses” in reading, writing and arithmetic for pupils who need extra time and support. When more specialised support is needed, the pupils’ special needs are assessed in within their school and at the municipality’s Educational-Psychological Service (EPC). This is only done with the consent of and in collaboration with parents. The EPC is responsible for documenting any special needs and supporting the school with individual recommendations concerning educational intentions, content and instruction approaches (Educational Act, 1999/2005). It is preferable that each school has its own special needs educator, and many schools employ teachers having one semester to two years of further higher education in special needs support or the equivalent. Thus, special needs education support is in principle available to the single school and pupil provided that the EPC has assessed and documented the needs for additional resources due to special educational needs. Who are employed at the municipalities’ EPCs? Three related professional disciplines allocate this kind of responsibility: 1) special needs education with expertise within different areas, such as speech therapy, psychosocial difficulties and intellectual challenges, to mention a few; 2) school psychology; and 3) education; all on Masters level.

What should be done if the EPC does not have the required expertise on hand? Then, they are obliged to search for support from the National Support System for Special Education (<http://www.statped.no>), where more intense updating and specialisation within various relevant fields are carried out. Cooperation with other institutions such as within medicine, psychiatry (<http://www.bupbarn.no>) and child welfare occurs frequently.

How the right to education for all is met at all educational levels? While primary- and lower secondary education is an obligatory right and duty for all children, all young adults are guaranteed admission to upper secondary school after finishing the lower secondary level (Education Act, 1999/2005). The upper secondary level is divided into thirteen foundation courses offering vocational and/or academic education. Classes with theoretical subjects may contain from 20 to 30 pupils, whereas vocational subjects are taught in classes of 10 to 15 pupils. The great majority of pupils with documented special educational needs on upper secondary level attend one of the regular foundation courses with individually adapted support. An amendment to the Education Act provides the right to so-called partial competence or competence at a lower level to pupils with special needs (Tangen, 2012; Education Act, 1999/2005: section 3–3). In addition there are smaller educational units for some of the pupils with severe and multiple disabilities. Pupils with recognised disabilities have the possibility of spending up to five years at this level instead of the usual three. According to information from the Ministry of Education, Research and the Church, 3,6 % of the pupils between 16 and 19 years of age receive education based on assessed needs for specially adapted courses (KUF, 1996b). Quite a number of pupils with and without special educational needs use four or five years to complete this educational level. The drop-out rate in the years 1999 – 2001 was estimated to be around 30 % (Støren, Helleland & Grøgaard, 2007). This means that approximately 70 % of the pupil population at this age level succeeded in completing upper secondary education. Innovation projects in order to increase the success rate represent a step in the right direction in current national action plan against poverty (Buland, Havn, Finbak & Dahl, 2007).

Nearly all institutions of higher education in Norway are run by the national government. These include six universities, six specialised colleges, and a larger number of state colleges. The ordinary entrance qualification is the final national upper secondary examination. Within higher education each institution is responsible for the provision of advice and assistance to students with special needs. The government has introduced a number of practical measures to pro-

mote equal opportunities regarding access to higher education (KUF, 1996a; 1996b).

In the future larger numbers of pupils with special needs are expected to qualify for higher education due to higher educational quality and increased individual adaptation of education at the primary and secondary levels. As a follow up to this, up to 10 % of study places at state colleges are expected to be reserved for applicants with special needs. This means that once general academic admission requirements are satisfied, applicants with special needs may be exempted from ordinary competition (KUF, 1996b).

Responsibility for administering adult education programmes is divided between authorities at municipal, county and state level as well as private institutions. Adult education consist of schools such as the Folk High schools, adult education associations, language courses for non-Norwegians, labour market courses and education programmes at the primary and lower secondary level, distance education and special needs education. Adult education within the level of comprehension for primary and lower secondary education is free of charge (Education Act, 1999/2005; Johnsen, 2001b).

Undoubtedly, it is quite different to be a child or adolescent with disabilities and special needs in the Norwegian education system today than it was forty years ago, before the turn towards inclusion. However, there is still a gap between the principles of inclusion stated in educational acts and national curricula and the realities in school, as several studies reveal (see Johnsen, 2014c).

Future Perspectives towards Inclusive Education

Official policy is not static, but dynamic and constantly changing. In the Norwegian case the major turn in political reforms towards inclusion took place from the early 1970s on. During the more than forty years after the turn, revisions in educational acts, national curricula and related regulations have mostly, but not always, been directed towards inclusion. Trends and countertrends may be expected in an open and politically democratic society, since many different and even conflicting educational ideas are competing for dominance. Thus, through the years the eagerness for attaining inclusion as well as discussing special needs educational issues has faded from public debate. Other aspects of education and schooling have obtained positions in the foreground. Since the start of the abovementioned PISA assessment programme in 2000 and other similar assessments, Norway's position on these international rankings has been a win-

ner in the media coverage. Consequently, increased emphasis has been placed on teacher education with regard to reading, mathematics and natural science teaching, and less on didactical aspects concerning differentiation, individually adapted curricula and inclusive practices. Thus, media play a prominent role in the interactive triangle between themselves, politicians and voters.

What do the media publish about parents' views of the school for all and inclusion? Two examples from the same day illustrate possible conflicting views: 1) One national newspaper sheds light on needed services for children with disabilities and their families within and outside school (Aftenposten, 22.02.2014). 2) In a competing newspaper a mother argues that children with disabilities should not be in regular schools because they hit and hurt other children (Dagbladet, 22.02.2014). One might ask: Is it 'game over' for inclusion? Several school studies also indicate a clear gap between the ambitious political aims regarding educational inclusion and actual practice in schools (see Johnsen, 2014c). These studies are supported by official information. Thus, according to *The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training* (in Bringsvør, 2013), 92 % of the pupils who receive documented special education attend regular school and class. However, for a majority of them, the special education lessons are arranged outside of class, either in small groups or alone with a teacher or assistant. There are, however, also other participants in the discourse such as the trade journal of the Norwegian Union of Education, *Education*, that has joined hands with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK in Bringsvør, 2013); applying investigative journalism in order to document the status for pupils with special educational needs in school. Together these two media sources are starting what might be a new wave of debate about shortcomings in the process of fulfilling the official aims of inclusion.

A combination of critical disclosure of shortcomings and detailed revelations of good examples may act as driving forces in innovative processes. Participants in search of good examples come from different levels of society. Thus, since 2006 Queen Sonja's School Award has been given to a school "... practicing equality and inclusion in such a way that each individual pupil is experiencing to be appreciated in an environment of participation, safety and community" (<http://www.kongehuset.no/>). Another prize receiving public attention is the annual Jonas prize⁶, which has been awarded since 1986 by the Department

6. The Jonas prize is named after the main character in Jens Bjørneboe's novel, *Jonas* (1955), a young boy with reading difficulties.

of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo. The award is given to a person, organization or institution, and the ranking of candidates for the prize pays particular attention to their contributions to create a more open and tolerant society where human variation and personal characteristics are considered enriching (<http://www.uv.uio.no/isp/om/jonasprisen/>). Exploring good examples of inclusive practices is also in focus in the Norwegian research community. One example is the longitudinal single case *Classroom Study of Inclusive Practices* (Johnsen, 2013b). This Norwegian study is also a contribution to a European comparative classroom study project concerning the process towards inclusion (Johnsen, 2013a; SØE 06/02; WB 04/06).

Conclusion

Discourses, policies and practices in the history towards inclusion are the focus of this article on cultural and historical lines and turns of Norwegian education. We have seen how endeavours towards achieving a school for all and, more recently, towards inclusion, appear, disappear and reappear in ever new manifestations and contexts. Opportunities, challenges and obstacles in this process have been outlined, and the gap between solid legislation in favour of inclusion and hesitant practice is a prominent feature. The question has even been raised whether it is 'game over' for inclusion.

History indicates that it may take a long time to bridge the gap between legislation and practice, especially when changes are radical and complex, as the change from a segregated school system to inclusive schools has proven. Norwegian legislation and national curricula have set forth explicit premises for special needs education and inclusion. However, in spite of a growing number of good examples of inclusive practices, class- and subject-centred teaching still seems to have a hold on professional attitudes and practice in many schools. Generally speaking, the road from new principles laid down in legislation to good practice goes through innovation, evaluation, research and dissemination. At the same time radical turning operations such as these are vulnerable to other contextual interests and forces. In this connection it is timely to ask whether educational inclusion has gotten the needed attention and resources within educational as well as special needs educational research. It is not 'game over' for the search towards the inclusive school.

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PART TWO

REFLECTIONS ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

On Dialogism and Scientifically Disciplined Discourse- and Conversation Analysis

Ragnar Rommetveit⁸

Translated by Karin Lee-Hansen

Introduction

In monologically-based communication theory inspired by information technology, the relationship between what is subjectively and collectively meaningful has remained a ‘taboo topic’ in a no-man’s-land between narrow individualistic psychological theory and abstract systems theory. Pioneers in the development of a dialogical paradigm are broad-minded thinkers who dare to set out on a journey of discovery in this area, being free of established prejudices regarding boundaries between what is subjectively, intersubjectively and collectively meaningful. The essence of the dialogical paradigm is the individual as co-owner of the language as a collectively constituted resource; co-authorship of linguistically mediated meaning and sharing of epistemological responsibility. Dialogical-based communication science: Is it “a moral science”?

As a child I sometimes sneaked up to the balcony of the youth club at home, often when there were raucous parties taking place down below, but also, and especially during the wintertime, when ardent lay preachers came to our rural

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8. The article is published in a translated and slightly adapted version in this anthology with the permission of the author, Professor Ragnar Rommetveit (2008), and the publisher, Gyldendal Akademisk. It is a shortened version of “On Dialogism and Scientifically Disciplined Discourse and Conversation Analysis” in *Norwegian Linguistic Journal* (1991, 17:15–40).

area in order to convert sinners into pursuing new and better lives. Since I, after having led an academic life for fifty years with its ban on preaching, have to admit that I have envied them quite a bit, I will in this article allow myself the freedom to intertwine a touch of preaching in my reflections upon the mystery of the language and mind. In fact, I can imagine the following subtitle: “A Gospel on Dialogue as a Fundamental Form of Human Communication and Man as a Dialogically Constituted Being”.

But – unlike those ardent lay preachers – I feel obliged to *practice* dialogism. I invite my readers to discuss the questions I raise, fully conscious of the fact that my answers to the questions are not the final answers, but rather invitations to my readers to take part in a dialogue. And the central issues in this “dialogue about dialogue” are as follows:

- What is meant by the expression “dialogism” as it is currently used and interpreted by spokespersons for a so-called dialogically-based paradigm within psychological, social, interdisciplinary and humanistically-oriented communication research?
- How is the dialogical paradigm (or perspective) distinguished from traditional, monologically-based communication theory?
- What implications does a dialogically based and systematically grounded fundamental view on language, thinking and communication have for empirical discourse- and conversation analysis?

The questions above have been pondered by an international and interdisciplinary research group which has met twice annually in Bad Homburg, Germany, over a period of six years. Our aim was to search for a unified foundation for our communication studies. We came from different research fields; from linguistics, psychology and sociology. What united us was a wondering about fundamental problems across established boundaries between academic disciplines; a wondering about *the dialogical nature of the individual psyche, the relationship between the individual mind and the cultural collective and about the human being’s culturally appropriated “social nature”*⁹.

9. The written product of these collaborative discussions in Bad Homburg includes four anthologies dealing with various aspects of dialogically-based communication theory and empirical discourse analysis (Marková & Foppa, 1990; 1991; Marková, Graumann & Foppa, 1995; Bergmann & Linell, 1998). Furthermore, for readers who truly wish to expand their knowledge of dialogically-based communication theory and discourse and conversation analysis, I have a very good advice: Read Per Linell’s book *Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogical Perspectives* (Linell, 1998).

A sermon on dialogism must, as all other sermons, be based on authoritative texts. Today's text is not one, but several texts, namely a handful of cryptic and in part polemic statements that I intend to interpret as fragments of a draft for an interdisciplinary oriented and general theory on the dialogue as a fundamental form of communication. The authors I will quote are to a certain extent "Old Testament Prophets", in other words thinkers who thought of dialogism before the expression "dialogism" became popular and used as a label in the debate about human communication. Others are "New Testament Evangelists", modern-day researchers from various fields and academic traditions who are actively involved in a joint project aimed at the development of a dialogical alternative to the reigning cognitive, individualistic and monologically-based theories of language, thought and communication.

Today's "excerpts from the Old Testaments" have been written by the Russian Orthodox Prophets Mikhail Bakhtin, Valentin Vološinov and Lev Vygotsky, the Continental European philosophers Martin Buber and Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the famous American scholars William James and George Herbert Mead. With respect to the "New Testament excerpts", I have selected certain statements made by "the grand old man" of American cognitive psychology, Jerome Bruner, from Vygotsky- and Bakhtin interpreter James V. Wertsch, from the Swedish social psychologist Johan Asplund, and finally from the English social psychologist Michael Billig, who has expressed his dialogical perspective in thought-provoking analyses of the discussions and gossip surrounding the British royal house.

Today's text(s)

Bakhtin writes (1981:293):

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.

Moreover (1984:202):

The life of a word is contained in its transfer from one context to another, from one generation to another. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from these concrete contexts into which it has entered.

Next, Vološinov supplements Bakhtin's thinking in the following manner (1973:11 and 86):

Consciousness becomes consciousness [...] only in the process of social interaction. Individual consciousness is [...] a tenant lodging in the social edifice of ideological signs.

[...] *a word is a two-sided act*. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant.

And Vygotsky, the developmental psychologist among the Russian dialogism prophets, claims (Vygotsky, 1979:30 and 1981:163):

[...] the social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension is derivative and secondary.

Any function of the child's cultural development appears twice. First, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category [...] internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions.

What follows are a few quotations from William James and George Herbert Mead. James states the following about people's conversations with one another (James, 1962:197):

You accept my verification of one thing. I yours of another. We trade on each other's truth.

In accordance with this thinking, George Herbert Mead (1934:11 and 223) writes:

[...] it is a mistake that all we can call thought can be located in the organism or put in the head.

[...] The individual mind's field or locus is co-extensive with its social activity or apparatus of social relations.

In the Continental European "Old Testament" texts, dialogism is proclaimed with existential-philosophical pathos. For instance, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975:282 and 360) writes:

Arriving at the same meaning [...] is in truth an infinite process.

[...] language [...] is not a piece of property at the disposal of one or the other conversational partner.¹⁰

And Martin Buber condenses his view of dialogism and human identity in the following manner (Buber, 1958: 8 and 32):

There is no I in isolation, only the I in the basic word pair I-You and the I in the basic word pair I-It.

A human being becomes an I in relation to a You.¹¹

The most enthusiastic of the “New Testament” evangelists is probably the incredibly vital more than ninety years old Jerome Bruner. He writes about the cultural-psychological, dialogical counter-revolution against the dominant information-technology inspired cognitivism (Bruner, 1990: xi, 33 and 118):

[...] the great psychological questions are raised once again – questions about the nature of mind and its processes, questions about how we construct our meaning and our realities, questions about shaping of mind by history and culture.

[...] culture is constitutive of the mind.

While James Wertsch does not preach to the same extent as Bruner in his interpretation and development of the conceptions inherited from Vygotsky and Bakhtin, he is as stringent as Bruner in his critique of “the American psychology of the individual organism”. Regarding his own dialogical-based program for sociocultural studies, Wertsch writes the following (1991:14):

[...] mind is viewed [...] as something that “extends beyond the skin”

Similarly, the Swedish social psychologist Johan Asplund writes in his book *The Social Life's Elementary Forms* (1987:30):

[...] it is precisely in our social responsiveness that we develop our individuality.

And allow me to conclude this textual reading with a provocative contribution from the discourse researcher Michael Billig, who writes the following (1987:11):

[...] humans do not converse because they have inner thoughts to express, but they have thoughts because they are able to converse.

10. Die Ausschöpfung des wahren Sinnes [...] ist in Wahrheit ein unendlicher Prozeß. [...] die Sprache [...] ist kein verfügbarer Besitz des einen oder des anderen der Gesprächspartner.

11. Es gibt kein Ich an sich, sondern nur das Ich des Grundworts Ich-Du und das Ich des Grundworts Ich-Es. Der Mensch wird am Du zum Ich.

Exegesis

Is it at all possible to interpret these textual excerpts as fragments of a comprehensive program for the exploration of the mystery of language and mind, as subcomponents in a preliminary theory of dialogue as the core of historical and ontogenetic development, and even as a program with practical implications for empirical discourse and conversation analysis?

This is not easy. A critical philosopher would rightly claim that today's texts comprise a mixture of ontology, epistemology and *potentially* empirically verifiable claims with a strong element of rhetoric. However, let me try to gather the threads from these texts into a programmatic outline for interdisciplinary, humanistic research. In doing so, I will concentrate on three mutually related topics:

First, there is the dialogical (or dialectical) view of the relationship between language and thinking. Secondly, there is communication – written discourse and conversation – as a joint project between participants. Thirdly, there is the dialogue as a bridge from the individual mind into a linguistic-cultural collective.

Vološinov claims that our “consciousness” *comes into existence* in social interaction, and that an expression is a two-sided action with a meaning that is equally divided between the person expressing something and the person to whom something is expressed. William James says that conversation partners “trade on each other's truths”; while Michael Billig dares to make the statement that we do not converse because we have inner thoughts. We have thoughts because we are able to converse.

In my view, these texts converge in a *radical* dialogically-based view on the relationship between language and thought: Our thinking has the dialogue as a *prerequisite*, and language is therefore not merely a “midwife” for thought. When I search for a word for something I believe I know, but do not find the word for, this “wordless, inner” becomes *consummated* as a thought or a meaning I also can pass on to other people. Or, as Gadamer expresses: What is being “brought into the language” will somehow get its identity from the words we use in our description of it.

Hereby we are in the middle of the second topic, namely language communication as a collaborative project, the inherent addressivity in our speech and thought. The moment we become involved in a conversation with another person, the boundaries of our psyche do not go along our skin. Wertsch and Mead describe this phenomenon in the following manner: “[The psyche] reaches fur-

ther than that, our mental action radius reaches as far as our social engagement or apparatus for social relations”.

Let me at this point make a small digression and comment upon a recent presentation of *metaphor use of the language* as an argument for the dialogical paradigm in recent times. Vygotsky often characterized language as a mental tool. Bruner asks us to imagine language as a kind of prosthesis, “a prosthetic device”: In principle in the same way as a prosthetically applied cane expands a blind man’s tactile experience of a room, language expands our mental radius. But let me add to these remarks by Vygotsky and Bruner some reservations and supplementary comments.

While the cane makes the blind *more independent*, language makes us *more dependent on others*. As Gadamer expresses: The language belongs to everyone and is no single communication partner’s property. In financial, capitalistic jargon: *We all have shares in, but none of us is a majority shareholder in the language*. A major flaw with both the prosthesis- and stockholder metaphors is that none of them capture the fact that language, when we have acquired it, in a way functions as an almost completely automatic component of our mental activity. It is by no means “a prosthetic device” we can remove. The mind that expands through language is *a linguistically infiltrated, qualitatively changed mind*.

This is a major point in Vygotsky’s dialogical developmental psychology: Internationalization of language – our “inner speech” – leads to a transformation of our mental structures and functions. Furthermore, this transformation is an irreversible process. Once we have acquired our native language, we are somehow trapped within it. For this reason, our intuitively mastered language comprehension cannot be placed in any of the two cognitive scientific categories; “the cognitively penetrable functions” or “the functional architecture”, into which Zenon Pylyshyn (1980) divides our mental functions. The cognitively penetrable functions are influenced by such factors as “goals, beliefs, tacit knowledge” etc., and they are in principle available for reflective, voluntary control. The functional architecture, on the other hand, is characterized by a determinism and automation we only find in causal biological or physical processes, not in human rationality and intentionality.

Our spontaneous language comprehension must, according to this, be characterized as *cognitively penetrated*, that is, infiltrated by cognitive categorizations and comprehensive forms we have made our own, given the fact that we have acquired our native language, but simultaneously made it *cognitively impenetrable* in the sense that it is as unavailable for reflective, voluntary control as are

physical hormonal processes. None of us can, no matter how hard we try, hear a Norwegian expression or a single Norwegian word as a completely meaningless sound sequence. The language, the bridge from the subjective to the potentially intersubjective and collective has become a part of our “functional architecture” and, as Benveniste, Buber and Gadamer claim, part of our human identity and “nature”.

How can we claim that conversation is a collaborative project? Vološinov claims that the one *meant for* an utterance, is a co-producer of the meaning of the utterance. For those who are indoctrinated in monological mentality, this type of claim is absurd. Nonetheless, I dare claim that in many situations each and every one of us actually uses words in the unreflected belief that our conversation partner masters the meaning of those words *better* than we do ourselves. For my part, I am convinced that this is the case when I have brought my car to the repair shop and talk about what is under the hood, in order to tell the car mechanic what I think is wrong with the engine. This kind of asymmetry is a prevalent theme in dialogically-based analyses of conversations between the learned and unlearned (Marková & Foppa, 1991). William James would perhaps remark on this asymmetry by saying that “the lay person trades *unilaterally* on the professional’s or expert’s truth”.

When we – something we often *must* do in scientifically reflected and disciplined discussion of the mental and meaningful – use broad expressions such as “in”, “within”, etc., we are speaking in metaphors of a completely different sort than the concrete physical-geographical space in which we are wandering. Of course, it is important to remember what Charles Hockett points out in his essay *The Problems of Universals in Language* (1963), about the purely physically defined common “here-and-now” as being a universal “niche” in the evolution of “animal symbolism”. However, a point equally important and valid is Ernst Cassirer’s (1944) claim that the language in historic time is the most genuinely humane of man: that it liberates us from our prison in physically defined time and space, leading us into a life filled with meaningful memories about our common past, notions of far-off things and events as well as expectations regarding the future.

When we reflect upon *the distance between dialogue partners* in discourse- and conversation analysis, this distance measured in meters may at times also be interesting to calculate. But if the dimension we have in mind in attempts to map out the distance in linguistically mediated meaning, we know that no matter how difficult it would be to capture this dimension in a precise network

of concepts; it serves as parameter in a time-and-space-universe where we must use quite other aids than the clock and the meter-stick in our search for scientifically documented insight.

In this abstract, metaphorical space there are no clear boundaries between the *subjective*, the *intersubjective* and the *collectively* meaningful. It is in this space that the word on its wandering from generation to generation is not quite able to and liberate itself from old contexts, and *this is where we hold – and analyse – conversations*. For example, when we talk about conversation, love or animosity *between* two persons, we discuss phenomena that can neither be located inside nor outside two human bodies. And when we spontaneously use expressions such as “Platonic love” and ‘lusts of the flesh’, in individual and original expressions regarding sexual morality, it is indeed Plato and Paul who are co-authors of the meaning in our assertions; also when these expressions must be interpreted as contradictions to Plato and Paul. In family life and dialogue with adults the growing individual little by little enters into the dialogue with the fragments of the common cultural heritage that the parent generation carries with them from earlier generations. It is in this linguistically expanded, abstract, semantic space that Bruner places the mind when he claims that “culture is constitutive of the mind”.

On own account, I will add that previous twenty years of research on prelinguistic communication between infants and adult caregivers may be read as a fascinating and thorough scientifically documented story of the very first phase in the development and transformation of a new-born, socially responsive, biological organism into a speaking and thinking person with a dialogically and culturally constituted identity (Rommetveit, 1998). Researchers such as Stein Bråten (1992) and Colwyn Trevarthen (1992) claim that the dialogism within us is congenital. Moreover, about the very first prelinguistic dialogue flowing into adult mastery of language, they use expressions such as “communication within the mode of felt immediacy” and “primary intersubjectivity”. As a title for a report on their joint findings, Bråten and Trevarthen or any other prominent infant and toddler researchers, could use Buber’s poetically formulated philosophical statement: “The Human Being Becomes an I in Relation to a You”.

On cognitive versus dialogical language- and communication theory

After this tedious exegesis, I think it is possible to give a relatively brief and concise outline of the major distinctions between the dialogical paradigm and

cognitive, monologically based communication theory. True enough, I admit that my presentation of cognitive theory is incomplete and to some extent caricatured. My assertion – which I will document – is nonetheless that most theoretical models of language communication within current cognitive science, individually-based cognitive psychology and social psychology as well as American psycholinguistics are more or less sophisticated variations of an information-transport-model. Here the utterance (both spoken and written) is portrayed as a kind of conductor carrying mental content from a transmitter to a receiver. This is the essence of what the American linguist Michael Reddy calls “the conduit paradigm of communication”.

Some of the most sophisticated variations of this general conduit model are formulated in formal logical and information-technology inspired terminology. However, according to Reddy (1979) this thinking is completely in line with laypeople’s ideas regarding language communication of meaning. He claims that approximately seventy percent of all popular English metalinguistic words, that is seventy percent of laypeople’s words *about* words and expressions may be interpreted as manifestations of an idea about language as a kind of transport system. In cognitive- revolutionary psycholinguistics and text linguistics of the 1960s, it was often talk about “the propositional content” or “propositional information” in freestanding sentences or texts. Lyons (1977:724) writes about “the transport model” in relation to communication of propositional information:

[...] the process of communicating propositional information is readily describable [...] in terms of a journey: if X communicates *p* to Y, this implies that *p* travels, in some sense, from X to Y. [...] It may be suggested that “*p* is at X” (where X is a person) is the underlying location structure that is common to “X knows *p*”, “X believes *p*”, “X has *p* in mind”, etc.

In the psycholinguistics Noam Chomsky and George A. Miller laid the foundation for, “the atomic unit” was the core sentence (Miller, 1962), that is, the stipulated, complete communication of a freestanding core statement (a “proposition”) *p*. The point of departure for scientifically disciplined reflection on language mediation of meaning in dialogically-based conversation analysis, on the other hand, is not such an idealized “system sentence” (Lyons, 1977), but rather the unusually cryptic expression that – as Lev Vygotsky (1986) states – leads to “complete comprehension” in a given context. Thus, the “canonical expression” in such an analysis is not *the assertion* but *the answer* (Rommetveit, 1990). Expressions in the form of assertions have an (often implicit) built-in addressivity, are inserted in more comprehensive chains of communication, and are *meaningful*

only in the sense that they can be interpreted as (contributions to) answer to one or another question.

In John Searle's theory on speech acts (1974), the speaker is an autonomous player and the sole author of the expression, and, states Searle (1979:12):

Utterance meaning – whether indirect, metaphorical, or ironical – is in every case arrived at by going through literal sentence meaning.

On the other hand, Paul Grice (1975) points out in his “maxims of conversation” that conversation seems to be charted as a kind of collaborative project. However, referring to the word “say”, Grice (1975:44) writes that “[...] one would know something about what the speaker had said, *on the assumption that he was speaking [...] literally*” (my italics). So when we read Grice's discussion of his own theoretical premises on the topic, it becomes – in spite of several serious reservations – suspiciously similar to the presentation by John Lyons on the essence of the transport system paradigm in the study of language communicated meaning. While there is admittedly no mention of *transport of assertions* in Grice's presentation, but of transport (and modification) of *individual psychological states* (Grice, 1981:227):

[...] a certain psychological state *psi1* [...] is followed by a certain utterance U [...] which in turn [...] is followed by a particular instance of a further psychological state *psi2*, a state not now in the communicating creature but in the creature who is communicated to. And it might be a matter of desirability for *psi1* and *psi2* to be states of one and the same, rather than different sorts, so that when these sequences *psi1*, U, *psi2* occur, they involve utterances and psychological states between which these psycholinguistic correspondences obtain.

In my opinion, Searle and Grice represent cognitive-psychological sophisticated variations of monologically-based communication theory. In their discussions of “utterance meaning”, both postulate “literal sentence meaning” as a common foundation in the listener's and speaker's line of reasoning *from* what is said in a given context to what is meant (or communicated) with the utterance, and vice versa. I would therefore claim that they accept “the myth of literal meaning” (Rommetveit, 1988) as an axiom in discourse- and conversation analysis. The addressee is awarded status as “the creature who is communicated to”, and not the potential co-author of the meaning of the utterance. My provocative assertion is therefore that Searle and Grice are caught in a kind of solipsist mentalism of the same sort as Chomsky (before he became a neuroscientist!)

clearly made known in his redefinition of linguistics as (a branch of) cognitive individual psychology.

Searle understands the theory of speech acts as an extension of Frege's semantic analysis, and his implicit communication ethics are camouflaged in "the principle of expressibility". This is in principle a postulate, namely that for every single individually intended meaning there is an utterance that communicates this exactly. Therefore, claims Searle (1974: 21), are "[...] nonliteralness, ambiguity and incompleteness [...] not theoretically essential to linguistic communication". Searle is quite right in claiming this regarding discourse *about* and *in* an ideal world, a completely unambiguous and transparent "objective world". In such a world, where in principle everything that happens may be precisely categorized as *sub specie aeternitatis*, and everyone are "speaking literally" (Grice) about what is taking place; if this were the case, then the completely authentic utterance would thereby per definition also fulfil the requirement regarding true and correct use of language. Hereby, I would claim that we have entered into a seductive aspect of monologically-based discourse- and conversation theory: that postulates about "literal meaning" is smuggled in from prestigious normative-formal-logical philosophical traditions and – most often in far more effective camouflage than in Searle's theory on speech acts – accepted as a necessary guarantee for scientific insight into communication of meaning as *a rational activity*.

In Grice's conversation maxims this normative element is explicit in the sense that the requirement of individual, instrumental rationality is formulated as a directive: The conversation partner *should* (as speaker) formulate the contribution to the conversation so that the other (the listener) would be able to "compute implicatures", that is, from contextual knowledge and mutual goal-setting for "the exchange of information" be able to deduce logically what is implicitly or indirectly intended in what is "literally being said" (Grice, 1975; 1981). On the other hand, Herbert Clark writes in his version of the theory of speech acts that instrumental rationality is not formulated as an imperative to conversation partners, but rather *postulated as a necessary condition for scientifically disciplined insight into (or rational, scientific reconstruction of) their conversation*. Of course, the conversation is designed as collaboration ("joint actions" and "joint projects"), and each contribution to the conversation is divided into two phases. However, regarding what he calls "the presentation phase" and "the acceptance phase", Clark writes the following (Clark, 1996: 227):

Presentation phase: A presents a signal *s* for B to understand. He assumes that if B gives evidence *e* or more, he can believe that B understands what he means by it.

Acceptance phase: B accepts A's signal *s* by giving evidence *e* that she believes that she understands what A means by it. She assumes that once A registers *e*, he too will believe she understands.

In this two-phase sequence, *B* is – in what may be identified as an authorship of signals – *not co-author of the “s” signal*. Each utterance is interpreted as an *individually composed contribution* (or signal). But, as in all cognitivist variations of American psychology of the individual organism, both conversation partners are equipped with “beliefs” about the other’s “beliefs”, and with impressive logical capacity. The postulate on rationally calculated conversion of meaning to speech sound sequences and vice versa is supplemented with *a postulate on the calculation of the conversation partner’s calculation*. This meta-communicative element in the theory on conversation as a collaborative project is found in Clark, Schreuder and Buttrick’s “optimal design for demonstrative reference” formulated as follows (Clark, Schreuder & Buttrick, 1983:246):

The speaker designs his utterance in such a way that he has good reason to believe that the addressees can readily and uniquely compute what is meant on the basis of the utterance along with the rest of their common ground.

Instrumentally rational coordination of individual contributions (“joint activity”) therefore becomes in Clark’s theoretical model a product of “calculating” the implications of one’s own and the other’s “signal”.

“Signal” is one of the words that have survived the transition from behaviourism to cognitivism in American individual psychology. The fact that it has status as a scientific term in Pavlov’s reflexology and information-technology inspired communication theory appears to have strengthened the belief in accumulation of psychological knowledge comprising more than the suspicion of polysemy in psychological terminology. In contrast, the word “understand” is virtually characterized as a taboo in all varieties of scientific psychology of the individual organism. For example, in James Deese’s theory of associative meaning, the *understanding* (of a “stimulus word”) is formulated in the following manner (Deese, 1962: 164): “[...] the stimulus word elicits itself as a representational response”. Therefore, Clark’s formulation “A presents a signal for B to understand” appears to reflect an interesting ambivalence (in a purely terminological sense).

By calling an utterance a “signal”, Clark indirectly characterizes his own position (as researcher) as a *distanced observer*. Moreover, by frequently using the word “understand”, he indicates (in contrast to James Deese) a *participatory*

position. Thus, his terminology indicates an epistemological ambivalence and/or eclecticism; a position that neither can be unambiguously characterized as being (orthodox) cognitive nor hermeneutic-dialogical. However, the distinction between the two positions is greater – and far more significant – than the difference in terminology. The paradigmatic distinction concerns alternative perspectives on linguistically mediation of meaning. The choice is between discourse- and conversation analysis as a science on linguistically mediation of meaning via *bilateral, dialogically constituted utterances* or as a science on communication via *unilateral, individually composed “signals”*.

My conclusion is therefore that Herbert Clark’s theory of conversation is also an individual- psychological, monologically-based theory, although it is a great deal more effectively camouflaged than is Searle’s theory on speech acts and – in contrast to Grice’s conversational maxims – contains calculations of implications as inherent *theoretical premises* and not as *orders* of rationality.

On dialogism, epistemic responsibility and objective hermeneutics

The notion that language is a kind of transportation system (“the conduit paradigm”) can, scientifically speaking, be expanded upon in accordance with general information-technology inspired cognitive theory, and has simultaneously embedded an implicit, but unambiguous ethical implication: Since the listener has the status of “the creature who is communicated to”, the speaker alone must assume responsibility for what is meant by what is said. This principle is so deeply rooted in our western individualistic mentality that it in practice seems to be accepted as a norm in both conventional and scholarly discourse. The question is whether it in fact also functions as a tied mandate in western scientific reflection on linguistic mediation of meaning. And whether consistently thought-out dialogism has so little impact in academic discourse- and conversation analysis because it is an “ism” that seems to break radically with such a normatively motivated, limited mandate.

There is certainly no doubt that we in conventional as well as scholarly discourse hold the speaker (the author) responsible for what he or she says (writes). Accordingly, I would assert that the unspoken but generally accepted assumptions in our attitudes towards others’ “speech acts” are similar to what Vilhelm Aubert (1958) so clearly demonstrates in legal discourse on criminal actions: The criminal has “free will” and must be held accountable for what he or she has

done, and based on this same implied premise a speaker must be held accountable for what he or she has *said*.

The above assertion concerns the adult, legally capable person. It does not include the young child and certainly not the infant prelinguistic communication, “protoconversation”, with the adult caregiver. The “response-ability” that the new-born is equipped with is totally cognitively impenetrable, in other words “chemically free” of infiltration of linguistic-culturally mediated cognitive categorizations and completely inaccessible to reflective voluntary control. Rather, it becomes a “responsibility” as the individual is accepted as an equal partner in conversation with adult representatives of the linguistic-cultural collective that he or she has been socialized into (Rommetveit, 1998).

I find it difficult to imagine that any preacher of dialogism would protest against this “right-hand rule” about responsibility for one’s own utterances as a practical guideline and ethically well-grounded “conversation maxim”. But if we apply this principle as a mandatory mandate in *semantic analysis* of utterances, where would that leave us?

In such monologically-bound mentality the speaker has in principle the status as *owner of – not “shareholder in”* – the words he or she utters, and the conversation analyst’s task is to assess the “literal meaning” in a (normatively) idealized and semantically closed “system language”. Most people would admit that this basis for analysing linguistic mediation of meaning becomes absurd when the utterance may be correctly characterized as a product of “a ventriloquist” (Wertsch, 1991), that is when the speaker is an authority-bound “parrot” who understands little or nothing of the assertion he or she puts forth without making apparent (and perhaps being completely unaware of the fact) that the utterance is merely a quotation of someone else. So, even if the car mechanic “takes me seriously” when I use words like “nozzle”, “carburettor” and the like while ranting about my car’s faulty engine, we both know that I cannot be held accountable for the meaning of these words. In this situation it is worthwhile to have Schleiermacher’s appeal to listeners (and conversation scientists) in mind: *It is crucial to understand our conversation partners better than they understand themselves.*

It is far more difficult to convince monologically indoctrinated discourse- and conversation theoreticians of the listener’s co-authorship and epistemic co-responsibility (Rommetveit, 1991) in everyday dialogue between equal conversation partners. In order to acquire an understanding of this topic, I have repeatedly invited intellectual opponents to reflect upon how it might be that

a certain Mrs. Smith can relate to someone hearing her say – and she does so with a clear conscience – that when Mr. Smith cuts the grass he *is working*, and then someone else hearing her say five minutes later that when he is still cutting grass he *isn't working*. During a telephone conversation with her friend Betty, who asks about Mrs. Smith's lazy husband (who is in fact still lying in bed), Mrs. Smith replies that he is out working. However, she tells Mr. Jones, who five minutes later calls to ask if Mr. Smith can go along on a fishing trip that Mr. Smith is not working. When she in both cases speaks truthfully and is understood, it is because she spontaneously accepts her conversation partner as being co-responsible for the interpretive premises in the different contexts – and meaning – regarding the utterance fragment “work”. When she speaks of her husband as working, she verbalizes the aspect of his activity on which her friend has focused through asking Mrs. Smith questions about the husband's laziness. However, when Mrs. Smith tells Mr. Jones that her husband is not working, the *leisure activity aspect* is in focus of their dialogically collaborative project.

Concerning these two truths about Mr. Smith's activity mediated by his wife, William James would most likely assert that they are the products of Mrs. Smith's “trade” on Betty's and Mr. Jones' truths. Let us now imagine an alternative sequence of events in which this does not prove to be the case – that when the telephone rings for the second time, Mrs. Smith, still believing that her husband is engaging in physical activity out in the yard, therefore tells Mr. Jones the following:

“Mr. Smith is working.”

By so doing, I would assert that she has provoked us to reflect upon a fundamental flaw in individual psychological, monologically-based communication and conversation theory. Based on the “right-hand rule” concerning the speaker's (own) responsibility for the meaning content in her utterances, she can certainly not be blamed for communication failure or lying in this particular case. On the contrary: In so far as both she and Mr. Jones regard mowing the grass as work, she may be said to have transported true “propositional information” to her conversation partner. This – intuitively absurd – conclusion may, in my opinion, not be avoided if we place a consistent monological, individual-psychological perspective at the heart of our theory on linguistically mediation of meaning.

The basic distinction between a consistently monological perspective and a radically dialogical alternative (Wold, 1992) concerns *epistemic responsibility for and authorship* of the meaning in utterances. Assigning the addressee epistemic (co-)responsibility means taking him or her “seriously”. In monologically-based

theory, it is in principle only the speaker, and not the addressee, who is assigned epistemic responsibility. In other words, the person for whom the utterance is “meant” has no other insight into the utterance’s meaning than what is “literally being said” *and* knowledge of the interpretive-relevant context. Deciphering “what is meant with what is said” must therefore in principle be charted as an increasingly longer and/or more complicated series of deductions should “utterance meaning” remove itself from “literal sentence meaning” (cf. Searle’s analysis of indirect linguistic acts in Searle, 1974; 1979). And I would claim that even the most rational and stringently designed models of language communication of meaning *qua* such deductive processes, are monological. Because the postulate regarding sophisticated series of deductions rests on far more fundamental postulates, namely that “a word is a *one-sided act*”, and that language is a piece of property that is at the disposition of the speaker alone (and not the listener), being in fact a negation of basic premises in dialogically-based mentality (cf. see the above excerpt from Vološinov and Gadamer).

To the extent the expression “literal meaning” is used within formal logical semantic tradition, it contains *an explicitly normative content*: In order to calculate the truth-value of complex “utterances”, one must use “propositional calculi” *without any kind of requirement of empirical verification*, taking for granted that every single tiny semantic component has one and the same truth-value across all imaginable variations in context. The formal logical semantics, represented by Gottlieb Frege, Bertrand Russel and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein, may, as do John Barwise and John Perry (1983), be called a semantics of “eternal sentences”. The goal of Barwise and Perry’s “situational semantics” is to perform a logical analysis of utterances inherent in communication situations, and their efforts may for this reason be said to represent a formal logical contribution to dialogically-based communication theory. Regarding the kinds of relationships between conversation partners that characterize Mrs. Smith’s telephone conversations, they use the expression “attunement to the attunement of the other”.

With this expression, critics may claim, Barwise and Perry are paying tribute to dialogism in a shroud of poetry and mystery. Let us therefore return to Mr. Smith’s – in a double sense – down-to-earth activity and to the telephone conversations about his mowing the lawn. Mrs. Smith’s exchange of words with her friend and thereafter Mr. Jones may in fact serve as an introduction to and actualization of a very significant implication of dialogically-based communication theory for empirical conversation analysis.

The *dialogically* indoctrinated analyst is duty-bound to investigate every single contribution (utterance, turn-taking or reply) from a double perspective: As potentially *context bound*, connected to something said before (or taken for granted) and as potentially *context creating*, directing towards the next contribution. *Prospectively* speaking, Betty's question about Mr. Smith's laziness (her thematic "initiative") makes her a co-author of the meaning in Mrs. Smith's reply. We may therefore in no way decipher this meaning content without analysing it *retrospectively* as a response to Betty's question. And the same strategy should be used to make us any hope of scientifically disciplined insight into what is taking place in the telephone conversation between Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones.

This dialogically-based double perspective lies inherently as a theoretical foundation in Per Linell and Lennart Gustavsson's program and guidelines for imitative-response-coding of utterances implicit in conversation (Linell & Gustavsson, 1987; Linell, Gustavsson & Juvonen, 1988; Linell, 1990). It is elaborated and extensively commented upon by two of my partners in the Bad Homburg group, Per Linell and Ivana Marková (1993), in the article "Acts of Discourse: From Monological Speech Acts to Dialogical Interactions". Here the authors invite to a discussion of significant theoretical and methodological implications of a dialogic-based view for interdisciplinary discourse- and conversation research. And as participants in this discussion we should in my opinion also turn the spotlight on the elements of dialogism in our own academic work; we should reflect upon our empirical communication studies from a meta-dialogical perspective or *upon ourselves as our informants' dialogue partners*. What kind of questions are we seeking to answer in our research projects? How and how much are transcription and interpretation of our empirical "raw material" coloured by the questions we seek to answer?

As discourse- and conversation researchers we are *participatory* observers in the sense that we acknowledge our own linguistic-cultural competence as a necessary and legitimate resource in the development of scientifically documented knowledge. In a variant of dialogically-based analysis developed by the German conversation researcher Ulrich Övermann and co-workers, labelling it "objective hermeneutics" (Övermann, Tilman, Konau & Krambeck, 1979), participatory observation is made part of an overall strategy for *prospective interpretation of conversations* "from within". In order to guard against irrelevant hindsight in interpreting complicated, potentially strategically important and comprehensive utterances, analysts focus on the transcribed individual contributions to the conversation, one by one, with full knowledge of everything that

has been said previous to the utterance they analyse, but from the (in practice: often simulated) assumption that *they know nothing about what is later said*. In this manner they may be said to simulate a *participatory position*. However, in the analysis of each individual utterance, they are most certainly not involved participants, but rather distanced and semantically schooled *observers*. The goal of the analysis is in fact to identify *potential initiatives to co-authorship in the other conversation partner's next utterance, an utterance they pretend they have not yet heard*. The interpretation therefore in principle flows into *theoretically-based hypotheses regarding possible and plausible "next replies"*.

Övermann and colleagues' presentation of their version of conversation analysis is far less systematic than is my attempt to make a relatively concise presentation of their "objective hermeneutics". I assume that most conversation researchers will likely have difficulties accepting their expression – "objective hermeneutics", even as a label of my more explicitly formulated version of Övermann's strategy for prospective conversation analysis. In my view, the most important aspect of this strategy is the following: By committing themselves to putting forth hypotheses regarding utterances they (in principle) *have not yet heard*, the analysts establish a kind of quasi-experimental framework for future-oriented interpretation of linguistically mediated meaning. Thus, upon completing an exhaustive analysis of the entire conversation, the previously written hypotheses regarding "possible next replies" can serve as a quasi-empirical foundation for systematic reflection upon *non-realized "possible next replies"*, over "lost opportunities".

The expression "lost opportunities" has been taken from Georg Henrik von Wright's (1974) discussion of *time*, (physical) *causality* and (human) *intentionality* in *Causality and Determinism*. His analysis of retrospective versus future-oriented time perspective in a given chain of events is based on the fact of our *past* being ontically closed, but epistemically open, and our *future* both ontically and epistemically open. In other words, what is done or said can never be erased and re-done or said in a different way, but *we can in principle always change our interpretation of it*. However, before we do or say something we are in principle at liberty to choose between alternative actions and utterances. In a retrospective scientific account of a chain of events, it is for this reason natural – also within psychology, social sciences and the humanities– to attempt to explain the last event as product of a cause-effect chain. *But conversations are carried out forwards, and our subjective, experienced future is absurd without postulated freedom of choice and intentionality*.

What do these reflections upon time, intentionality and causality have to do with empirical conversation analysis and (my version of) Övermann's "objective hermeneutics"? In nearly every variation of modern conversation analysis, the retrospective time perspective seems to dominate interpretation, theory and conclusions. However, it is usually implicit, not explicitly formulated in premises or program and without discussing alternative strategies. On the contrary, in Övermann's "objective hermeneutics" prospective interpretation is integrated as a theoretically motivated and significant methodical element of the analysis. He himself utilizes conversation analysis when supervising therapists, with an important goal to help the therapist better understand and consider the client's initiative. After each contribution from his client, he wishes to *reflect upon* and *write down* alternative "next replies" from the therapist, who can then bring the conversation forward. When he after a completed analysis sits down with the therapist to discuss the conversation, his written *plausible but non-realized "next replies"* provoke the therapist to systematic reflection upon *what he did not say, but perhaps should have said in order to meet the client.*

In this kind of conversation *about* a prospectively analysed dialogue, the researcher's primary task is to help their conversation partners to *reflect "forward" upon their own contribution to the concluded, ontically closed yet epistemically open dialogue*, not merely explaining "why it went the way it did". The overall goal of the conversation about the conversation is *increased self-insight*. And in what other way can increased self-awareness be "objectively" manifested than in *future actions based on increased thorough reflections*? Therefore, what Övermann's point was when calling his form of hermeneutics "objective" seems to be "emancipating utility value" (Habermas, 1963): that the new self-insight the therapist acquires through "future-oriented reflection", will make him or her better qualified in dialogue with clients on their terms, to take more account of their initiative to co-authorship of meaning in the conversation, *to give them increased epistemic co-responsibility.*

On dialogism and ethics

Jerome Bruner states in *Acts of Meaning* (1990: 51):

To tell a story is inescapably to take a moral stance even if it is a moral stance against stances.

My story – or preaching – about dialogism is no exception in this regard, and neither are the writings of Martin Buber and Hans-Georg Gadamer. The two Continental European “Old Testament prophets” are committed moral philosophers. In their reflections upon *the ideal dialogue*, they are both strongly concerned with the aspect of linguistically mediated meaning related to epistemic co-responsibility and co-authorship. Buber calls the attitude one has to one’s conversation partner in the ideal dialogue an “I-You” attitude, and the significant distinction between an “I-You” conversation and an “I-It” communication appears to be this: During an “I-You” conversation, you meet your conversation partner as a fellow human being, a subject, *a potential co-author of your own biography*. By contrast, during “I-It” communication you turn your conversation partner into an object, “a creature communicated to”, thereby *acquiring the status of the sole author of his or her biography*.

In parts of Buber’s *Ich und Du* and Gadamer’s *Warheit und Methode*, it may be difficult to distinguish between philosophical-scientifically disciplined reflection and moral preaching. And if it is the case of dialogically-based discourse and conversation theory, generally speaking, that it is “morally tainted”, should not the conclusion be that dialogism is an *ideological* rather than a *scientific* “ism”? In answer to this question, the philosopher Hilary Putnam would reply in the negative, claiming that as much as representatives of humanistic research *acknowledge and reflexively focus on* their own moral involvement, they are honest and reflective representatives of “a moral science” (Putnam, 1978). More precisely, we can never escape our fate as *participatory* observers of how our fellow human beings’ act and speak, not even when we as researchers observe and interpret them as “research objects” or “informants”.

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Vygotsky and the Education of Children with Severe Learning Difficulties

Harry Daniels

Introduction

Teachers of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) have usually received training in some aspects of behavioural or cognitive behavioural psychology if they have been able to access advanced professional development and often have been exposed to a version of Piagetian theory in their initial teacher training. Historically, these very influences have given rise to skills based instructional packages and a variety of developmental curricula. In this short article I wish to sketch some of the possibilities that may be derived from the influence of the Russian psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky, and to argue that these pedagogic possibilities should be implemented alongside the development of a curriculum which will prepare all young people to participate in the rapidly developing knowledge society.

The relevance of the zone of proximal development for the child with severe learning difficulties

Arguably, the advent of National Curricula with emphasis on uniformity and linearity in the curriculum has resulted in diminution of attempts to develop a 'developmental curriculum'. Whilst there is no doubt that the differences between Piaget and Vygotsky have been exaggerated, it is undoubtedly true that Piaget's stepladder-like metaphor of developmental possibility contrasts starkly

with the theories of Vygotsky. His general genetic law of cultural development asserts the primacy of the social, and thus diversity, in development.

every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological), and then inside the child (intrapyschological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals (Vygotsky, 1978: 57)

The conception of the teaching and learning process that lies at the heart of schooling is itself derived from beliefs about the relationship between instruction and development. Should the teacher wait for development to take place before teaching and thus be looking for signs of instructional readiness as indicated by developmental markers? Should the teacher take no account of development whatsoever and proceed to develop instructional packages on the basis of analyses of specific tasks?

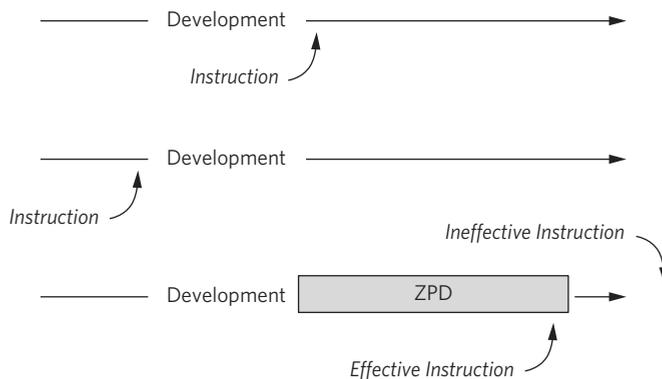


Figure 1 The relationship between learning and development in Skinner, Piaget and Vygotsky.

The diagram in figure 1 identifies three positions. 1) A crude behaviourist position is one in which instruction and development proceed together. In one sense this is a model in which development and instruction are synonymous. In this case task analysis in teaching may be viewed as a determinant of developmental sequence. 2) A version of the Piagetian position in which teaching comes to view the characteristics of the child's thinking as a lower threshold for instruction. Here instruction must wait for development to have done its work before it can be effective. 3) Vygotsky's (1978) position is that instruction actually creates possibilities for development rather than being seen as subordinate and incidental

to developmental processes. Organisation and content of teaching implied by this suggestion is directed towards formation of developmental possibilities rather than trailing behind developmental inevitabilities. This is the now well-known Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which was originally defined as the distance between the actual developmental level of a child as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). For Vygotsky ZPD embodies a concept of readiness to learn that emphasizes upper levels of competence. These upper boundaries are not immutable, however, but constantly changing with the learner's increasing independent competence. What a child can perform today with assistance, she will be able to perform tomorrow independently, thus preparing her for entry into a new and more demanding collaboration. These functions could be called the "buds," rather than the fruits of development. The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the ZPD characterizes mental development prospectively (Vygotsky, 1978: 86–87).

If we accept the Vygotskian position, we have to accept a notion of a complex relationship between teaching and development. The first two positions have been associated with practices assuming that instructional sequences are rather unproblematic and universal. In the first position the sequence of teaching arranges the sequence of development. In the second the sequence of development predicts the sequence of teaching. In the third position teaching must be responsive to the individual within a specific curriculum context. A discussion of the post-Vygotskian principles that may be employed in the selection of curriculum content is beyond the scope of this article. It is, perhaps, sufficient to note that these would be designed to guide the development of the structured systematic concepts which Vygotsky termed 'scientific' and would introduce general principles and seek to explore their implications in a variety of contexts¹².

In schooling the first model of the relationship between learning and development may result in a view of the child as a passive recipient of educational transmissions. The second leads to the view of the child as the active constructor of understanding along pre-established paths. In the third the learner

12. For example a circle would be introduced through the examination of the shapes that may be drawn by placing one end of a piece of string at a fixed point and drawing with a pencil fixed to the other end whilst the string was taut. This contrasts with the introduction of a variety of shapes and sizes of circles to a pupil who is expected to understand the essence of the circle on the basis of this empirical 'everyday' experience. In the Vygotskian model the 'scientific' concept informs the design of the instruction.

becomes an active participant in a socially negotiated project. Vygotsky developed a conception of a teaching and learning process based on dialogue. For example, teacher and child start out doing the task together. The teacher may initially take the major part of responsibility for executing the task, and the child may play a relatively small part. The teacher's intention will be to gradually transfer control of progress in task completion to the learner. The transfer is negotiated in dialogue. This dialogue may be mediated by a variety of tools and signs which Vygotsky referred to as 'psychological tools' or, more recently, cultural artefacts. These cultural products, such as speech or symbol and sign systems, are human products which are seen as the means which humans employ in their own development. However, the social influence does not become individual through a process of simple transmission. Individuals construct their own sense from socially available meanings. Vygotsky argues that it is through the use of whatever cultural artefacts and tools (e.g. speech, Braille, Makaton, form boards, Paget Gorman etc.) that are accessible to the child and made available socially, that they are able to 'master themselves from the "outside" through symbolic, cultural systems (Knox & Stevens, 1993: 15). Crucially, he states that it is the meaning encoded or that could be encoded in such cultural artefacts that is important. For him the *type* of symbolic system does not matter.

All systems (Braille for the blind and for the deaf, dactylogy or finger spelling, mimicry or a natural gesticulated sign language) are tools embedded in action and give rise to meaning as such. They allow a child to internalise language and develop those higher mental functions for which language serves as a basis. In actuality, qualitatively different mediational means may result in qualitatively different forms of higher mental functioning (Knox & Stevens, 1993: 15)

The emphasis is thus on meaningful communication irrespective of means. For the teacher this becomes a matter of making meaningful connection between the concepts that the child has formed on the basis of their everyday experiences and the concepts that are being introduced through schooling. This approach to teaching not only involves the acquisition of new teaching skills, such as interpreting when a child is operating within the ZPD, but it also involves a major attitude shift. The dimensions of this shift may be couched in terms of difference rather than deficiency, informed and supported acquisition rather than transmission, and transfer of control.

In practice this approach to teaching is much more difficult than rehearsing a preordained curriculum script, as David Wood (1991) reminds us when he

points out that monitoring children's activity, remembering what one had said or done to prompt that activity and responding quickly to their efforts at an appropriate level is a demanding intellectual feat. Thus, effective teaching is as difficult as the learning it seeks to promote. This statement suggests that we should not only be concerned about responding in face-to-face teaching but that we should also organise our institutions in such a way that they are learning systems which are themselves responsive to feedback. This is the force of the approach being developed by Nixon et. al. (1996). It also accords with the recent development in interpretations of the term ZPD. The early "scaffolding" definition of the distance between problem-solving abilities exhibited by a learner working alone and that learner's problem-solving abilities when assisted by or collaborating with more experienced people reflects Vygotsky's view of the role of instruction. This is refined in the "cultural" interpretation which draws on Vygotsky's distinction between scientific and everyday concepts. Here the emphasis is on the distance between the cultural knowledge, usually made accessible through instruction and the active knowledge, as owned by individuals in their everyday experience. More recently a "collectivist" or "societal" perspective has emerged. The focus tends to be on processes of social transformation and on what can be done together that cannot be done alone. It places the study of learning beyond the context of face to face pedagogical structuring, and includes the structure of the social world in the analysis. The concept of ZPD was created by Vygotsky as a metaphor to assist in explaining the way in which social and participatory learning takes place whilst he was in charge of the education of street children and children with disabilities in post-revolutionary Russia (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). However, Vygotsky discussed ZPD in terms of assessment and instruction. His interest was in assessing the ways in which learners make progress. The focus on process as well as product in assessment has become embedded in the range of techniques now called 'dynamic assessment'.

Vygotsky argues in the following way: Suppose I investigate two children upon entrance into school, both *being* twelve years old chronologically and eight years old in terms of mental development. Can I say that they are the same age mentally? Of course. What does this mean? It means that they can independently deal with tasks up to the degree of difficulty that has been standardized for the eight-year-old level. If I stop at this point, people would imagine that the subsequent course of development and of school learning of these children will be the same, because it depends on their intellect ... Now, imagine that I do not terminate my study at this point, but only begin it ... Suppose I show

that ... [these children] have various ways of dealing with a task ... and that the children solve problems with my assistance. Under these circumstances it turns out that the first child can deal with problems up to a twelve-year-old's level; the second up to a nine-year-old's. Now, are these children mentally the same?

When it was first shown that the capability of children with equal levels of mental development to learn under a teacher's guidance varied to a high degree, it became apparent that those children were not mentally the same and that the subsequent course of their learning would obviously be different. This difference between twelve and eight, or between nine and eight, is what we call the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978: 85–86).

Within both assessment and instructional frames of reference, Vygotsky discusses the relationship between an individual learner and a supportive other or others, even if that other is not physically present in the context in which learning is taking place. For example, a child may solve a problem with the help of a remembered series of prompts from the teacher. Whilst there are surprisingly few references to ZPD in his own writing, there is no doubt that in many ways the concept lies at the heart of Vygotsky's social account of learning. He emphasises this in one of his relatively rare published discussions of the education of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through collaborative activity, the social help of another human being, who from the first is his mind, his will, his activities. This proposition also corresponds entirely with the normal path of development for a child. *The developmental path for a severely retarded child lies through relationships and collaborative activity with other humans.* For precisely this reason, the social education of severely retarded children reveals to us possibilities which might seem outright Utopian from the viewpoint of purely biologically based physiological education ... (Coll. Works, Vol.2, 1993: 218)

This raises questions about the nature of the 'social' in the pedagogic relationship alongside questions concerning the nature of the relationship itself. I have sketched the implications for instruction, introduced the idea of dynamic assessment and hinted at the need for responsive cultures (ultimately cultures of learning) in schools. I now wish to speculate on the nature of the curriculum and its objects.

Collaborative knowledge building

In 2001 The World Health Organisation (WHO) published a new system of classification, *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICIDH-2). In this new scheme functioning and disablement are viewed as outcomes of an interaction between a person's physical and mental condition and a social and physical environment. The classification speaks of interventions concerned with impairment, activity limitations and participation restriction. I will now raise the question as to what kind of activity and what form of participation will be required as schools attempt to prepare young people for the knowledge society.

Schools encounter great difficulties when they attempt to become learning organisations. From the point of view of those concerned with schools as organisations, there is a need to shift schools from positions of passive compliance and/or resistance to change and ask how they can be transformed. The answer has been sought in the development and supervision of new management structures, formal standards and curriculum development. Alternatively and arguably more realistically (given the new economic and communications reality), schooling should be more responsive to the demands of whatever the 'knowledge society' becomes.

Scardamalia and Bereiter (1991; 1996) suggest that the kind of education that will best prepare mainstream students for life in a knowledge society should foster:

- flexibility
- creativity
- problem-solving ability
- technological literacy
- information-finding skills
- a lifelong readiness to learn

As Scardamalia and Bereiter argue, the idea of students as participants, along with teachers and perhaps others, in a collaborative enterprise has been around at least since Dewey, but has been taking a more definite shape over the past decade in various experimental programmes. The new approaches are all to some extent based on the model of the scientific research team. Brown and Campione (1990; 1994) have used the term 'fostering communities of learners' to characterise the very impressive approach they have developed. In it, teaching and learning are closely intertwined. In a typical activity, different groups

of students research different aspects of a topic and then prepare materials that they use to instruct the members of the other groups. A robust application of the scientific research team model is in what Bereiter and Scardamalia call 'collaborative knowledge building' (Scardamalia & Bereiter 1992; Scardamalia, Bereiter, & Lamon, 1994).

Therefore, if the future lies in schools as knowledge-building organisations, we need to rethink teaching by examining the relationships between cognition and context and between learning and knowledge production. International research is already highlighting the advantages of a combined focus on cognition, context and knowledge in research on pedagogy. This research has led to the following three premises:

- (i) *Learning occurs through engaged participation in the activities of knowledge communities.* Participation involves both the use and production of knowledge and a disposition to engage. The current policy agenda, aimed at social inclusion through economic participation in a knowledge-based economy, calls for a pedagogy which addresses students' self-beliefs and knowledge use and production in and out of school (Bentley, 1998; Brighouse & Woods, 1998; Osin & Lesgold, 1996).
- (ii) *Teaching involves informed interpretations of and responses to students' orientations to knowledge.* Teaching is therefore a complex activity which demands that teachers interpret students' constructions of opportunities for engagement and select responses which assist that engagement. Effective teaching is informed by knowledge of pupils, knowledge of disciplines and knowledge of pedagogy.
- (iii) *Schools seen as sites of teachers' knowledge use and production need to understand the range of orientations to knowledge held within them and how they originated.* We therefore need to know more about how schools interpret and respond to the situational affordances of their internal and their wider communities as they work to engage students as learners. It is clear that pedagogies which respond to the shifting demands of a fast moving knowledge economy will best be developed in schools which are capable of using and producing new knowledge.

In classrooms that adopt the collaborative knowledge building approach, the basic job to be done shifts from learning to the construction of collective knowledge. The nature of the work is essentially the same as that of a professional research group, with the students being the principal doers of the work. Thus,

in the ideal case, there is a complete shift from students as clients to students as participants in a learning organisation. The primary function of schooling shifts from learning to the construction of collective knowledge in “problem-based learning” and “project-based learning”. There is an emphasis on the distinction between knowledge content residing in people’s minds and knowledge as resource or knowledge as product. The job of a school class that takes a knowledge building approach is to construct an understanding of the world as they know it (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1996).

If schools of the future are to become sites for the construction of collective knowledge rather than sites where prescribed outcomes are ‘delivered’, then we must rise to the challenge of understanding the kinds of interventions that will facilitate successful participation by all. This is not to deny the need for tools for learning and participation (e.g. literacies and numeracies). If the school is to become the place where young learners are prepared for a knowledge building future, then appropriate supportive interventions must be available. The danger is that systems of support retain a focus on outdated knowledge and competence. I see no reason why the education of children with severe learning difficulties (SLD) should not be informed by these developments in the mainstream of educational theory.

Vygotsky presents a profoundly social understanding of development. The implications for teaching are significant, particularly if we are to develop a curriculum that looks forward. The emphasis on learning with the assistance of others calls for the development of schools as places where learning is socially supported rather than prescribed according to a curriculum script *that is* not meaningful or, perhaps, even useful in the society of the future. This calls on teachers to be interpreters of the meaning that is encoded in children’s attempts at communication, by whatever means, and for them to be responsive to that meaning. Their responses must be designed to be within the cognitive and affective ‘reach’ of the child (the ZPD). These responses may at times be formulated in terms of the design and management of classrooms and community-based environments in which they are brought into productive relationships in the social worlds of peers who are more capable of solving a particular task at a particular time. It also calls on teachers to select items for instruction which are commensurate with active participation in the social world. We should make plans designed to support social learning of individuals rather than constrain them through the kind of planning that may – through its focus on an individual in relation to a prescribed, linear script – serve to sever social and thus learning networks.

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Vygotsky's Theory and some Variants of Post-Vygotskyan Theories and their Implications for Didactic Interaction in the Inclusive School

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Introduction

The basic aims of this article are the following. 1) To show the components of Vygotsky's theory that is most relevant for understanding of the pedagogical and psychological phenomena in inclusive education. 2) Apart from the original theory of Vygotsky, some of the ideas originating from him and most probably belong to a broader category usually called post-Vygotskyan are briefly presented. 3) The matter of the "Piagotskyan" is presented, i.e. the idea of a possible synthesis of the co-constructivist theories of Vygotsky and Piaget. The second idea, the "reversed Vygotsky", emphasizes strongly Vygotsky's ideas that socio-cultural factors have a formative role in mental development, i.e. they influence not only the dynamics of development, but also contribute to construction of cognitive structures and knowledge systems. However, if the socio-cultural factors have negative parameters (as is the case in many social situations), then, according to the same Vygotskyan ideas, such socio-cultural factors could play a **destructive** role in mental development. That would be "reversed Vygotsky" because Vygotskyan mechanisms (for example, transformation of inter-psychological phenomena into intra-psychological) could explain this destructive role.

This author starts from the firm conviction that this interpretation of the Vygotsky's theory can be an exceptionally fruitful starting point for understanding phenomena that appear in the process of inclusive education, both in studies of these phenomena and in improvement of inclusive educational practices. Basically, in light of these ideas, education in the inclusive school can be seen as didactics as a specific form of social interaction, which has a significant place in Vygotsky's theory.

Vygotsky's original ideas

As mentioned, this section of the article provides a summary of a selection of Vygotsky's original ideas that could have significance for the understanding of the phenomenon of inclusive education. We start with a motto which is frequently referred to in Vygotsky's writings and which expresses some of his basic ideas in an appealing way. In Latin the motto reads: "*Nec manus, nisi intellectus, sibi permissus, multam valent: instrumentum et auxiliibus res perficitur*". A loose translation of this motto is that 'a bare hand and a bare intellect are of little value for it is the tools (instruments) and auxiliary gear that do the job'.

This aspect of Vygotsky's theory has been frequently referred to as "instrumentalism" (Vygotsky, 1982) and this is, to a certain extent, true: Vygotsky's theory on mental development and mental functions differs from almost all other theories in that in its interpretations of psychological phenomena and mental development, it is not confined to what exists within an individual. According to Vygotsky, in order to understand the specific psychology of man it is also necessary to consider everything in his environment (first of all, culture) as an **integral part** of the individual psyche. Moreover, ontogenetic mental development does not only consist of what develops within an individual but also includes the capabilities to use all "amplifiers" and socio-cultural support systems of the individual psychological functioning. Since these support systems develop over the course of history, Vygotsky's theory is justifiably entitled a cultural and historical theory.

This theoretical assumption has great heuristic value in that it opens up new horizons for researchers. In providing explanation of the mental development and functioning instead of carrying out research only on changes within an individual, this theoretical perspective shows that what also needs to be subjected to research is the whole socio-cultural infrastructure on which individual mental functions rely.

Vygotsky worked out these aspects of mental development and functions through his theory on cultural and psychological tools. Vygotsky's idea (1983; 1984) is very simple: Just as a great number of tools supporting physical labour and multiplying natural physical capacities of the man are created over the course of history, what is also created over the course of history are cultural tool systems supporting and multiplying man's natural mental powers. These ideas will be absolutely clear if we remind ourselves of the extent to which, for instance, IT equipment has multiplied the power of human memory, or if we carry out a supposition as to what the modern educated man would be able or unable to achieve if we deprived him of all cultural auxiliary tools.

Vygotsky's key idea here is that relying on these cultural auxiliary tools substantially changes the structure of internal individual processes. For instance, a man using a cell phone, pocket computer or any other electronic accessories organises his memory in a much different way than a man who does not use either a written language or electronic devices. Such changes of the structure of individual functioning occur in all mental functions (perception, memory, thinking, and problem solving). Research within this area has been continued by others, including myself (Ivić, 1976; 1996), and thus the research field has been further developed.

This theoretical assumption of Vygotsky may play a very significant role in understanding the characteristics of mental development of persons with developmental difficulties (for example the secondary effects of different disabilities may be better understood), as well as in studies of the process of inclusive education and in improvement of inclusive educational practices. Cochlear implants used for enabling children with impaired hearing to participate in an inclusive class may be taken as a metaphor for the application of Vygotsky's instrumentalist ideas. In line with this theory, it would not be strange to discuss intellectual implants because once a multiplication table and the procedure of solving equations with one variable are learned, they become "intellectual implants", i.e. cultural tools incorporated into individual mental functions.

These ideas should be widely generalised and applied in research on the development of persons with intellectual disabilities as well, and in the improvement of inclusive practices. We could simply start by conducting an inventory of cultural and psychological tools, establishing which of them are present and which are missing (unavailable) to different categories of persons with developmental difficulties, and analyse how the missing element could be compensated, and how a social and cultural infrastructure can be enriched as the bases for mental functioning of

persons with developmental difficulties and for inclusive education. Thus, what can be **generated** from these ideas of Vygotsky are completely new cultural and psychological tools supporting these individuals.

Theory and practice of “instrumental enrichment” by R. Feuerstein (1980) finds inspiration in Vygotsky’s ideas and may serve as an example of an independent development of these ideas. However, one should also think of inventions of new technical tools, such as various adaptations of computers, etc.

The second component of Vygotsky’s theory with research potential for inclusive education is its very original **social interaction concept**. According to Vygotsky, social interaction is based on human beings’ primary sociality. We will use only quotation here (out of many different ones from Vygotsky’s works) that clearly expresses this. *“It is through the mediation of others, through the mediation of the adult, that the child undertakes activities. Absolutely everything in the behaviour of the child is merged and rooted in social relations.”* Immediately thereafter he continues: *“Thus, the child’s relations with reality are from the start social relations, so that the new-born baby could be said to be in the highest degree a social being”* (Vygotsky, 1983b). This foundation of social interaction has not only a dynamic, but also a constructive (formative) role in development. This means that not only some of the higher mental functions will develop more slowly without intensive social interaction, but they also cannot come into existence without social interaction. For instance, in the fascinating and generally well-known research on children’s language acquisition, Vygotsky shows that higher mental functions such as language and thinking and inner (private) language, which is located in the centre of the most intimate layers of the individual psyche, come into existence only in the process of social interaction without which they would not develop at all. This is the essence of Vygotsky’s theory of co-constructivism.

Social interaction has a developmental effect primarily because it is deeply connected with the nature of the human being whose evolution was significantly influenced not only by the struggle for survival but also by living in a social group (in the past years research on the “social brain” has been developing; a field of research that Vygotsky would appreciate, as it is along the lines of his ideas on human beings’ social nature). The child is therefore social in its nature (how far ahead we are here from Piaget’s understanding of the child’s egocentrism) which is demonstrated in its early sensitivity to social stimuli (early perception of a human face, early sensitivity to a human voice, early social smiling, and

above all, the ability to make affective attachment). Adults, on the other hand, are biologically prepared to react sensitively to the social needs of the child.

All this is the foundation on which **asymmetric social interaction** is built between child and adult (As opposed to this, in some of his works Piaget gave priority to symmetric interaction between children of the same age). Asymmetric interaction is every interaction where one of the partners is on a higher developmental level than the other (as in a child-adult relationship) or possesses a higher level of knowledge (child-teacher relationship, although here we also have asymmetry in the level of development). In such asymmetric interaction, which is of decisive importance for development, the adult partner brings cultural and psychological means, thinking and behaviour patterns which are shaped by culture. If such asymmetric interaction takes place in **the zone of proximal development** (another original concept in Vygotsky's theory as a form of operationalization of his general postulate on mutual adjustment of child and adult), a joint construction of novelties appears in the child's development. For example, you can specify the use of verbal means of communication by an adult while interacting with a child who cannot yet speak. Customizing language with a child's language (simplifications of speech, in particular, linking utterances with the child's current activities in a specific situation that the child can understand - for example feeding situations), - creates the possibility of "simultaneous translation" or the translation of "situational-practical language" - language of situations and practical actions that the child can understand, into verbal statements (Ivić, 1978), thus the child acquires new means of communication - verbal means. This is a clear example of co-construction. Transformation of communicative language into inner language via intermediate forms, such as egocentric (private) language, is another masterful example of co-construction demonstrated by Vygotsky. In this new developmental achievement, one cultural value, such as the language system, is being "privatized" and becomes an integral part of individual mental structures and is thus used for individual needs in the form of inner language. We have hereby shown the impact of Vygotsky's mechanism of **transformation of inter-psychic functions into intra-psychic functions** in the process of asymmetrical social interaction or, in other words, transformation of social relations into individual mental functions.

Didactic interaction in inclusive education - in light of Vygotsky's theory

Every teaching-learning situation is by nature a specific form of social interaction. These situations are forms of interaction even when extreme forms of lecturing take place, except that in such situations there is total domination by one partner – the teacher. Accordingly, this is the case of pedagogical and didactic interaction.

To understand the nature of the processes occurring in this didactic interaction, it is important to identify its specific qualities. The first specific quality follows from the function of the interaction form; it is directed at achieving some form of knowledge (factual and conceptual knowledge, practical skills, social skills, procedural knowledge, and adoption of the system of values or attitudes, and the like). Thus, the object around which the interaction is organized is some kind of knowledge.

Depending on the nature of knowledge which is the object of didactic interaction, it is possible to observe the appearance of its different forms in this case. This is because the learning process takes place in one way if it concerns the process of acquiring a body of factual knowledge and in another way if it concerns a process of acquiring the conceptual knowledge. It takes place in a third way if it concerns practical or procedural knowledge or adoption of values and attitudes. Depending on the nature of knowledge and forms of learning, in an inclusive classroom, children with intellectual disabilities have a different status (for example, in the artistic group of at school they can be equal to or better than children without disabilities, but weaker when acquiring conceptual knowledge). Therefore, in different variants of didactic interaction, processes and dynamics of that interaction in an inclusive classroom can be very different, as is also the case when it comes to the effects of learning in the course of these interactions for children with and without intellectual challenges.

The first component of didactic interaction is the interaction between teachers and pupils; the second one is between the pupils themselves in the classroom, and the third one is a very specific interaction between the knowledge to be acquired by pupils and the pupils who adopt this knowledge (based on existing cognitive structures and prior knowledge). This third component of interaction is immanent to Vygotsky's theory, although he does not anywhere explicitly mention it. We have called it "**cultural interaction**", that is, the interaction with the product of culture (cultural and psychological tools). Sometimes, the

cultural-psychological tools are mediated by adults (as in the teaching process), or is more direct when the individual is in direct contact with the cultural product, such as when a child learns from a textbook. But even in the latter case, it is also a social interaction, because the adult partner is implicitly present in the structure of cultural product.

The key form of didactic interaction, the teacher-pupil interaction, is an asymmetrical social interaction, because there are clear differences between the partners at the developmental and knowledge level. We have seen that according to Vygotsky, this form of interaction can have formative developmental effects, that is, it leads to the acquisition of knowledge and skills if it takes place in the zone of proximal development, if there is a co-construction; a joint construction of knowledge through joint activities. But if there is a clear dominance by the teacher, it can lead to rote learning, to passivity of the pupil and acquisition of knowledge that cannot be applied afterwards. A major problem of this form of didactic interaction is the distribution of the amount of interaction between the teacher and the pupils in the classroom. The teacher needs to be sufficiently professionally competent to assure participation of both children with and without intellectual disability in his or her interaction, or there will be imbalances – there will be either the prevalence of interaction with children with disabilities or with those without disabilities. In any case, it would lead to marginalization either of the children with disabilities or children without disabilities and hence lead to lower school achievements for either of the groups. This could be used as an argument against inclusive education.

Another form of didactic interaction as a form of social interaction is the interaction among the pupils in the classroom (if the organization of classes allows). In an inclusive school, this interaction can be in the form of symmetric interaction between peers in the part which is not related to learning but to **interpersonal and group relations** (children with and without intellectual disabilities in the group) This form of interaction can be of great significance for the overall development both of children without intellectual disabilities – acceptance of differences and establishment of solidarity – and for children with intellectual disabilities – reduction of effects of social isolation, building of important social skills, personal affirmation because of opportunities to gain social status in the group on the basis of those personal qualities that have been preserved and the like. The possible positive effects on socialization of all children in this form of social interaction are main reasons for introduction of inclusive education. However, it depends upon an organization of schools and classes that eliminates

the possibility of discrimination and exclusion of children with intellectual disabilities.

Another variant of social interaction is **didactic interaction among pupils**, that is, peer interaction oriented to learning. In the case of inclusive education involving children with special needs who are only somewhat different, such as children with physical impairments or from socio-culturally deprived milieu, a didactic interaction may take place that is very similar to interaction in non-inclusive classrooms. Such a learning situation can be fruitfully used to encourage exchanges among pupils having different and complementary experiences – different life experiences, various extracurricular experiences and learning experiences. This kind of didactic interaction can lead to co-construction of knowledge from which both groups of children benefit. In this respect, this form of didactic interaction greatly resembles the didactic interaction in a multicultural classroom.

However, didactic interaction in inclusive classroom may also appear as **asymmetric didactic interaction** among pupils, especially when one group consists of children with intellectual disabilities. In this case, there is a difference in both mental level and level of knowledge. This form of didactic interaction resembles interaction in multi-grade classes where the teacher works with pupils of different ages in the same class. These forms of didactic interaction can probably have positive effects in terms of school achievement of children with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties – or younger children – if the teacher organizes the work by engaging the pupils who are at higher levels of development and knowledge to help other pupils. But, in this case, a serious question has to be raised concerning how pupils at a higher level of development benefit from the interaction. This problem is often the reason why some parents oppose inclusive education because they fear that their children's learning and development is endangered. In this form of interaction, there is also a danger that children without intellectual disabilities will dominate, leading to marginalization and passivity of the children with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties.

Due to reasons stated here regarding didactic interaction in inclusive education, **asymmetric didactic interaction among pupils is of critical importance, in particular between pupils with and without intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties**. If serious problems, which necessarily appear in this kind of didactic interaction, are not solved (and in combination with imbalance in didactic interaction between teachers and pupils) the inclusive education itself

may be questioned if and when school achievements of pupils are perceived as problematic and thus provoke parents' resistance. *Vygotsky's concept of social interaction and handling of didactic interaction as a specific form of social interaction may have great importance for the analysis of the teaching-learning process in inclusive education.*

Primarily, it is highly productive to perceive teaching-learning processes in inclusive education not only as a narrow pedagogical process but also as a form of social interaction. This perspective reveals the nature of numerous processes during the course of education: education seen as a process revealing power relations between partners (between a teacher and a pupil or between some categories of pupils), existence of interaction or its absence, frequency and duration of each specific form of didactic interaction, relation between practice in certain forms of didactic interaction and school achievements of pupils and school achievement in different categories of pupils etc.

It is important that an overview of forms of didactic interaction is used as a powerful tool to analyse teaching/learning processes. Thus video footage of classes during this common project¹³ may be analysed so that it will be established for every class which forms of didactic interaction exist or not and what characteristics they have (didactic interaction between teacher-pupil, didactic interaction between pupils, etc.).

*For the future of scientifically based inclusive education **didactic interaction among pupils with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties (and other categories of students included in the education) is of critical importance:** whether it exists, how frequent it is and how long it lasts, what its characteristics are, what possible impact this interactions has on school achievements both of pupils without disabilities and pupils with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties. If this form of didactic interaction does not exist or is deformed, then inclusive education may be demoted to nothing more but a stay of pupils of the two categories in the same physical space.*

*Hence it appears that Vygotsky's theory of social interaction (and didactic interaction as a specific form) is of obvious importance in **research on the process of inclusive education.** However, the theory may be highly productively used to*

13. This article was presented as a lecture at a joint workshop at the University of Oslo on behalf of the participating universities in the international project *Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion; the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo* (Johnsen, 2013; WB 04/06). In this sentence the lecturer and author of this article refers to this context (editorial comment).

advance inclusive education practice by preventing failures and increasing positive potentials in all forms of didactic interaction.

Piagotsky

In this and the next section of the article some theoretical statements are summarised which are not contained in Vygotsky's original theory (thus belonging to post-Vygotskian ideas). Their significance for inclusive education will also be described. The neologism "Piagotsky" represents an attempt to outline a synthesis of Piaget's theory of constructivism and Vygotsky's theory of co-constructivism¹⁴. Exploring possibilities of a synthesis of these two theories is particularly important for analyses of the development of individuals with developmental problems and applied programmes for inclusive education, because, in discourse on this category of human beings we dominantly speak about **help**. It certainly seems that Vygotsky's theory is here the most advantageous since it highly emphasises the constructive role of adults. It is clear that this is very important for people with special needs. However, every social interaction contains power relations, and there is a hidden danger of domination by the adults: to overprotect, make children passive, manipulate and develop learned helplessness. Piaget's theory of (individual) constructivism may be used as counterweight to these trends. His theory strongly emphasises the role of individual activities of a person in active construction of cognitive structures and systems of knowledge. From Piaget's theory it is possible to generate all those useful teaching/learning procedures which provoke cognitive conflict and challenging situations where the learner independently strives to find solutions to these conflicts and to rebuild equilibrated structures. It is of extreme importance to create conditions to **encourage active construction for individuals with special needs also, and in inclusive education** (instead of serving them ready-made knowledge and solutions). The two theories – of constructivism and of co-constructivism – concurrently show that no true development is possible without these mechanisms.

It is hence necessary and seems possible to apply Piagotsky's theory on inclusive education in order to develop intensive asymmetric social (in the form of didactic

14. The author of this article used this term for the first time in his paper presented at Conference II for Socio-Cultural Research: Vygotsky-Piaget in Geneva in 1996. The paper analysed obstacles and possibilities to build synthesis of these two major developmental theories (Ivić, 1996).

interaction) interaction which also includes creating social-cognitive conflicts (as specified by Vygotsky's theory). Then, in a planned manner, enough room would be given to individual cognitive constructions under Piaget's model. Of course, such intellectually challenging learning situations would be attuned to children's developmental level and the level of knowledge regarding learning content. There are sufficiently good overviews in the literature related to the application of the notions of co-constructivism and constructivism in creating productive learning situations.

Reversed Vygotsky

The author of this article has been studying Vygotsky's theory and its application in education for a long time (for example, when developing the concept of active learning, in theoretical elaboration and in practical application of the concept of cultural-psychological tools in construction of school textbooks). But in the period of wars and great social crisis in our country in the 1990s, we came to understand that there was (and we succeeded to realise a small number of research projects on child development in this situation of crisis and war) also another form of impact of social and cultural factors on development. In this situation we acquired a clear insight concerning that Vygotsky only had in mind truly formative effects. However, when social and cultural factors are deeply disturbed, the effect may be contrary to formative or, to put it differently, it becomes negatively formative as it leads to disturbed development; to destruction. In such circumstances the theoretical statements that social and cultural factors are extremely important for development retains their validity. Their effect is not only dynamo-genic, but also leads to construction of structures. It concerns in effect the Vygotskian mechanism of transforming inter-psychological phenomena to intra-psychological (individual) ones, but the effect in such situations is destructive, **de-formative** (instead of formative). Consequently, in this case developmental effects are: setbacks in development, developmental disturbances, building of perverted structures and destructive behaviour. This is exactly what the author calls "the reversed Vygotsky".

In developing this new theoretical presumption, these ideas have been generalised. Thus, there are a number of social situations where social and cultural factors themselves (including cultural and psychological tools and resources) are deeply disturbed. These are war situations, deep social, economic and political crises, inter-ethnic conflicts, poverty, social and cultural deprivation, social isolation, exile with separation from entire social and cultural support, social

chaos (which is often transformed into inner disorganisation), natural disasters and being a refugee. Research done on refugees show that what mostly leads to human disturbance is when individuals are separated from their close relatives, personal belongings – trivial but personally highly regarded belongings such as books you loved, poems, photos, souvenirs – all these are true Vygotskian external components of a personality and they therefore belong to the cultural and psychological support of mental functioning. All these disturbances at the macro level strongly reflect on all institutions for children (such as schools) and on the families, thus leading to serious disturbances at the micro level. Vygotsky's theory is a powerful instrument to explain development under such circumstances. This also supports Vygotsky's theoretical presumptions concerning developmental mechanisms such as acquisition of cultural- psychological tools and transformation of inter-psychological (including Vygotsky's formulation that these are really social relations) into intra-psychological phenomena (that are inner individual mental functions). But in this case everything is "reversed" – the effect of social and cultural factors, which are also troubled, is destructive and de-formative.

The life situations of persons with disabilities, because of the very nature of the problems they have can lead to similar "reversed" (destructive) developmental effects, especially if they live in the mentioned perverted social situations.

Based on the arguments above we may conclude that the difficult circumstances in which persons with disabilities live and are educated should be carefully explored in order to establish the normality of social and cultural factors themselves in their environment. They may create circumstances such as: seriously reduced, poor and distorted social interaction or even isolation, absence of cultural-psychological tools and resources or their deprivation as well as deformation of their system of values. These disorders of social and cultural factors may lead to disorder in learning and development, unless preventive actions are taken.

Conclusion

Inclusive education originate, and with reason, from the framework of human and children rights. But unless the concept and practice of inclusive education are also supported by scientific and professional arguments, inclusive education may be questioned.

In this this article we wanted to demonstrate that Vygotsky's theory, and especially some components of it and their further elaborations, may be highly

productively applied **in scientific research on the process of inclusive education** (which also includes opening very serious issues from the perspective of scientific founding of inclusive education) and also elaborating on **the conception and practice of inclusive education**.

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Vygotsky's Legacy Regarding Teaching- Learning Interaction and Development

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

Pupil-centred education requires knowledge about learning and development. But what is learning, and what is development? And how are learning and development related to each other and to education? Wertsch and Sohmer (1995: 332) argue that even though the terms have been debated since the beginning of developmental psychology, "... we have not made a great deal of progress in addressing it. One of the major reasons is that the very terms 'learning' and 'development' take on quite different meanings in different theoretical frameworks." The main purpose of this article is to explore how these terms are applied in the Vygotskian and cultural-historical tradition of education. Secondly, the purpose is to examine the relationship between the concepts and the perhaps most cited notion in Vygotsky's texts, namely the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The third and additional purpose is to investigate whether and, if so, how the account of the relation between ZPD, learning and development in Vygotsky's texts contributes to explain individual differences in learning and development. The article is written from the point of departure of Norwegian educational practice and research and with an international target group.

Keeping in mind the widespread use of the notion of the zone of proximal development, the article starts with an examination of how Vygotsky explains the concept and how it is applied by his theoretical followers. Explorations into

Vygotsky's texts soon revealed interpretation difficulties related to translations of the original Russian texts into English. What do these problems indicate about different "mentalities" when it comes to making meaning of central concepts such as learning and development? The position of the zone of proximal development in Vygotsky's texts is also questioned. Does it represent the core of his theoretical construction? And what might the consequences be of reconsidering the meaning of ZPD in texts based on English translations and interpretations? Should different interpretations be considered as either "right" or "wrong"? Have "wrong" interpretations provided new aspects in analyzing learning, development and related concepts – and phenomena? And is it fair to say that the ZPD has been applied in different ways from being an inspiration to being a part of a groundbreaking theoretical construction? These questions guide the text studies of this article, ending with a short account of Vygotsky's construction of the development of higher mental functions. However, constructions of relations between ZPD and other main notions only represent one aspect of Vygotsky's complex theory building. A number of his other concepts are necessary in order to follow the lines of arguments towards an applicable theoretical understanding as well as for professional educational and special needs educational practice. Thus, insofar as this article provides answers to the questions posed above, it will also end with a series of new questions aiming at further studies.

The Zone of Proximal Development

As mentioned, the introduction of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been groundbreaking for the educational disciplines in several ways. 1) It situates education at the core of learning and development. 2) It places responsibility for children's learning and development with the educational professions and other "more competent persons". 3) With regard to defectology and special needs education, the construction of ZPD contributes to move the main attention from assessment (diagnosis) towards the acts of evaluative teaching and learning; thus, it also makes a strong argument for the principle of meaningful and individually adapted teaching and learning as stated in the Norwegian National Curriculum (L 1997) and wider. Vygotsky describes the zone of proximal development as follows:

... the distance between the child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978a: 86).

This quotation is from the article *Interaction between Learning and Development*, in one of the classical anthologies with several of Vygotsky's texts in English translation (Vygotsky in John-Steiner et. al., 1978a). The editorial preface states that the article is from a posthumously published collection of essays entitled *Mental Development of Children and the Process of Learning* (1935 in John-Steiner et. al.: 1978: ix). This particular article has not been found among the translated texts in *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky* edited by Rieber and colleagues (Vol.1, 1987; Vol.2, 1993; Vol. 3, 1997; Vol. 4, 1997; Vol. 5, 1998; Vol. 6, 1999). However, Vygotsky also discusses the zone of proximal development in other of his works.

In Volume 1, Chapter 6: *The Development of Scientific Concepts in Childhood*, Vygotsky introduces "... a unified conception of the problem of instruction and development" (1987a: 201). He presents the basic approach that instruction and development are neither two fully independent processes nor one single process, but rather two processes with a complex interrelationship. In summary his argument is that instead of basing instruction on a pupil's actual development, the zone of proximal development is a more fruitful point of departure for teaching in order to meet the pupil's optimal intellectual potentials. In Volume 5, Chapter 6: *The Problem of Age*, Vygotsky again discusses ZPD not only in relation to the dynamics of development, but also in relation to teaching, maturation processes and imitation. He points out that optimal teaching is not merely based on the child's already mature functions but on his or her maturing functions:

The period of maturation corresponding to the functions is the most favourable or optimum period for the corresponding type of teaching. It is also understandable, if we take this circumstance into account, that the child develops through the very process of learning..." (Vygotsky, 1998: 204).

In this way Vygotsky argues that teaching in accordance with the pupils' maturation processes is a prerequisite for optimal learning leading to development. This argument supports current curricular-didactical arguments concerning the importance of individually tailored education within the community of different levels of mastery in the class or group (Johnsen, 2001; 2014a). As may

have been discovered, teaching and instruction have been in focus and related to development in the two later texts referred to.

Interpretation difficulties. The problem of translation was mentioned in the introduction. It is well known that translation contains interpretation and that different interpretations may cause controversies. Such a disagreement has arisen concerning the Russian word *obuchenie*, which has been translated with ‘learning’ in Chapter 6 of *Interaction between Learning and Development* (Vygotsky, 1978a), ‘teaching’ (Vygotsky, 1998) and ‘instruction’ (Vygotsky, 1987a). What causes the eager debates about the interpretation of this specific word? Chapter 6 (1978a) is one of the most widely read texts in English. It is from this text that Vygotsky’s argumentation for the zone of proximal development has become widely known. In the chapter’s title *obuchenie* is translated with ‘learning’. This corresponds well with traditional Western developmental theory, where the pupil’s learning receives the prominent focus in relation to development, not least due to the influence of Piaget’s theoretical construction of cognitive development (Ginsburg & Opper, 1969; McShane, 1991). Thus, to use a “Piagetian” concept, Vygotsky’s developmental theory and introduction of ZPD seem to have been “assimilated” into a Western focus on the individual pupil’s learning and development. In his brief discussion of *The Perils of Translation*, Cole (2009) supports this analysis. Why is this a problem? Sutton (1980 in Cole, 2009: 292) points out that “... Soviet developmental psychology is a psychology of teaching and teaching difficulties as much as ours is one of learning and learning difficulties”. Accordingly, if the intention is to grasp an in-depth understanding of Vygotsky’s texts on development, translating *obuchenie* with ‘learning’ is not sufficient.

Wertsch (1984), Wertsch and Sohmer (1995) as well as Cole (2009) make specific accounts of the translations of *obuchenie* into English, documenting that the word has a double meaning. On one hand it may be translated with ‘instruction’ or ‘teaching’ and on the other it means ‘learning’. As shown above, all three English words are used in translations of Vygotsky’s texts. The debate surrounding the translation issue has mostly focused on criticising the use of the learning concept standing alone, while the words ‘instruction’ or ‘teaching’ have been preferred. However, Wertsch and Sohmer (1995) and especially Cole (2009) argue for applying the compound subject ‘instruction-learning’ or ‘teaching-learning’. The use of this compound subject or, similarly “teacher and learner interaction” seems to be a fair solution to this translation problem, also in view of the contextual aspects of Vygotsky’s use of the term *obuchenie*. Based on this

clarifying discussion, it seems that a number of texts using the 1978 translation of ZPD as their point of departure are biased when they focus only on learning related to ZPD and development. Instead, the notions of ‘teaching-learning interaction’ and ‘development’ are necessary in order to grasp the original meaning of Vygotsky’s arguments for the ZPD. This application coincides with the similar use of the concepts of ‘teaching-learning situations’ and ‘teaching-learning processes’ applied in curricular-didactical articles on individual educational needs and inclusive practices in school (Johnsen, 2001; 2014a).

“The good news” in this connection is that Vygotsky’s texts on ZPD focus even more explicitly on educational aspects of pupils’ development than previously interpreted; his texts place teaching in the foreground. “The less good, but inspiring news” is that re-readings of Vygotsky’s famous text on ZPD (1978a) in light these discussions show that it is time to revise former interpretations of the concept, since it now seems that both my own and several other researchers’ earlier applications of ZPD have been too strongly influenced by the emphasis on learning in Piagetian and related developmental theories.

The position of ZPD in Vygotsky’s texts. Does ZPD have a central position in Vygotsky’s texts on teaching, learning and development? According to the immense popularity in English texts in recent years, and the subsequent inspiration they generate, one should believe this to be true. However, Chaiklin (2003) finds that the concept is discussed in eight of Vygotsky’s texts. Compared to the large number of his writings this is a very small part. In Chaiklin’s view ZPD should not be seen as a main concept in Vygotsky’s theory of child development, and he continues: “Rather, its role is to point to an important place and moment in the process of child development” (2003: 45–46). In order to understand ZPD it is necessary to go beyond dictionary translations and study Vygotsky’s theory of development in full.

The zone of proximal development – inspiration or part of a groundbreaking theory?

Lacking Russian language skills is a serious disadvantage for in-depth text studies. As we have seen, the researcher is dependent on translations with accompanying interpretations. Consequently, the text studies do not have optimal thoroughness. Studying the movements of ideas and traditions in general shows how they change as they are grasped and used by authors with varying abilities and possibilities concerning language skills and cultural-historical belonging

(Bakhtin, 1986). Ideas may be changed to the point of being unrecognisable; sometimes their width and depth is transformed to superficial statements, or they may be diligently criticised to the extent that they lose original value (Johnsen, 2000).

Chaiklin (2003) analyses what he sees as problematic interpretations of Vygotsky's concept of ZPD in several English texts, some of which are widely known and used. One of the problematic assumptions concerns the belief that Vygotsky intends the ZPD to be applied to all kinds of learning. Chaiklin (2003:42) rhetorically asks: "If Vygotsky's intention was to use the concept for all kinds of learning, then why not name it the zone of proximal learning?" Chaiklin calls this kind of interpretation 'the generality assumption'. He points out that Vygotsky distinguishes between two kinds of instruction; one that covers instruction in the form of training specific skills, such as typing and riding a bicycle, to use Vygotsky's own examples. The other, development of higher mental functions, is connected to the kind of instruction or teaching-learning interaction, that "... impels or wakens a whole series of functions that are in a stage of maturation..." (Vygotsky, 1987a: 212). As mentioned, this kind of teaching is optimally productive when it occurs at a certain point in the ZPD, Vygotsky points out. Of the numerous post-Vygotskian scholars, not all follow his strictly formal delimitation of the ZPD to development of higher mental functions and preferably to school instruction. Thus, the ethnographic writings of the psychologist Barbara Rogoff seem to belong to Chaiklin's category of generality assumption. In spite of her strong devotion to Vygotsky's thinking, Rogoff writes the following about his construction of the ZPD:

Although Vygotsky's idea is very important, it seems to focus especially on the kind of interaction involved in schooling and preparation for use of academic discourse and tools. (This is no accident, because Vygotsky was particularly interested in promoting academic skills in his nation.) The focus on instructional interactions tends to overlook other forms of engagement that are also important to children's learning (Rogoff, 2003: 282 – 283).

Thus, it seems that Rogoff chooses not to follow Vygotsky's line of argument concerning fundamental aspects of the notion ZPD. However, the ZPD as well as other aspects of his cultural-historical theories of development have inspired her to adapt and apply his theory as a foundation in her very interesting ethnographic studies of high relevance in international education. Wertsch (1991) argues that Rogoff's and other current ethnographic studies in cultures where nonverbal communication is more applied than speech reveal an underlying

ethnographic bias in Vygotsky's texts, as may also be said of several other contemporary ethnographic studies implemented in unfamiliar cultures.

When it comes to ZPD, post-Vygotskian scholars have followed either of two different main tracks, the "inspirational" or the "text analytical". Rogoff is one amongst many researchers who have successfully been inspired by, interpreted and further developed important parts of his texts. Together with Wertsch and Sohmer (1995) and Cole (2009), Chaiklin (2003) has contributed to clear up and clarify the line of arguments in Vygotsky's texts on ZPD and its place as a part of the development of higher mental functions. As mentioned, Chaiklin also establishes that the ZPD does not represent the core of Vygotsky's construction of development. That provokes the question if Vygotsky has given an explicit description of child development.

Development of higher mental functions

Our concept of development implies a rejection of the frequently held view that cognitive development results from the gradual accumulation of separate changes. We believe that child development is a complex dialectical process characterized by periodicity, unevenness in the development of different functions, metamorphosis or qualitative transformation of one form into another, intertwining of external and internal factors, and adaptive processes which overcome impediments that the child encounters (Vygotsky, 1978b:73).

With these two sentences Vygotsky sums up his theoretical construction of development of higher mental functions. Cole (2009) points out that the only thing missing in this conceptual description is an account of the kind of and complex relationship between instruction, learning and development that takes place within formal education. He specifically calls for an account of the conditions in which instruction could be said to promote transformation to development. Vygotsky argues that teaching-learning interaction and development do not coincide (Vygotsky, 1987a:212). In the most favourable position he foresees that one step in learning may lead to two steps in development (Vygotsky, 1978a: 83–84). What exactly does he mean by this? Cole (2009: 294) provides the following example:

... if one assumes that it is possible to create a form of instruction (...) so that having learned a particular fact (e.g. $2 + 3 = 5$) one is led to acquire, simultaneously, greater insight into the basic arithmetic operations as whole.

Vygotsky (1978a: 83–84) also explains this expected relation between teaching-learning and development in a more general way with the following illustration: “Once a child has learned to perform an operation, he thus assimilates some structural principle whose sphere of application is other than just the operations of the type on whose basis the principle was assimilated”.

Individual differences in the zone of proximal development

The history of ideas about intellectual development shows that even scholars in Greek antiquity were well aware of individual differences, as demonstrated by Plato (1974) in *The Republic*. It is possible to follow various explanations for differences in learning and development throughout history and up to the present day (Johnsen, 2000). (It is surprising that this knowledge seems not to have been taken into account in the teaching going on in many classrooms around the world). Vygotsky also recognises that there are individual developmental differences. How does he explain this diversity?

As a matter of fact, Vygotsky (1978a; 1998) uses the generally accepted recognition of individual differences as a prerequisite in his argumentation for ZPD. He begins his argumentation by criticising mainstream educational psychology for using developmental tests in order to estimate the developmental level of individual pupils. This gives a necessary, but not sufficient, estimate, he argues, and to illustrate his point takes as an example two children. They are both supposed to be ten years old and with a mental age of eight years, which, he agrees, indicates that they are able to individually master intellectual tasks on the same level. The educational question is, however, how far the children are able to move towards a next developmental level when solving problems in cooperation with a teacher. Vygotsky proceeds by making the following statement:

Suppose that I show them various ways of dealing with the problem. Different experimenters might employ different modes of demonstration in different cases: some might run through an entire demonstration and ask the children to repeat it, others might initiate the solution and ask the child to finish it, or offer leading questions. In

short, in some way or another I propose that the children solve the problem with my assistance. Under these circumstances it turns out that the first child can deal with problems up to a twelve-year-old's level, the second up to nine-year-old's. Now, are these children mentally the same? (Vygotsky, 1978: 86).

Vygotsky applies this example of the two children in his argumentation leading up to his introduction of the concept of ZPD. Thus, this well-known passage in Vygotsky's texts shows clearly that he recognises individual mental differences between children of the same age.

Does Vygotsky follow up his recognition of individual differences with recommendations for teaching? In Volume 5 of *The Collected Works of Vygotsky; Child Psychology* (1998) he offers a brief and preliminary explanation of the practical significance of what he calls the diagnostic aspect of ZPD related to teaching; in other words, his focus is on how to assess the zone of proximal development in order to teach the pupil in accordance with her or his optimal maturity level. At first Vygotsky argues for the obvious difference in optimal maturation on different age levels, using examples of the optimal period for learning to speak and developing reading skills. According to this argument, it may seem that Vygotsky relates differences in mental level to chronological age. This would be a similar view to that of the Czech educational scholar, Johan Amos Comenius (1592–1670), who argued for organising school classes in accordance with chronological age (Johnsen, 2000). This principle has been followed in Norway and many other countries; and even though the main argument in the 1850s was to ensure teaching in accordance with pupils' different ability levels, when several smaller schools were merged into larger ones, a consequence of the age-based classes was a kind of teaching as if all pupils in the class had the same abilities – or, in Vygotsky's words, their ZPD was expected to be the same. This is one of the serious problems that Norwegian school struggles to change even today, more than forty years after educational acts have required teaching in accordance with pupils' individual abilities (Johnsen, 2000; 2014b).

Does Vygotsky's argumentation stop here? As already mentioned, it does not. In his critique of psychometrical developmental tests, he argues that they measure the symptoms of development from an external point of view. What is needed, Vygotsky argues, is not only an externally standardised measure of development but also "a critical and careful interpretation of the data obtained from various sources" (1998: 205). The data or information should be based on all manifestations and facts of maturation. Thus, a synthetic, dynamic picture of these manifestations, the aggregate of what he calls personality, enters

as a complete entity into the framework of the study – or the assessment of the ZPD of a pupil. Even though Vygotsky here makes an incremental move from practical recommendations to research, his line of arguments point in the direction of an understanding of individual differences between pupils. His other key issue in this connection is that a multifaceted assessment of the ZPD may determine as far as possible not only the externally standardised measures but also the pupil's internal state of development (Vygotsky, 1998: 203–205). Thus, even though Vygotsky does not argue explicitly for pupils' individual differences in this section, it is difficult to understand it otherwise than that he has individual personalities or pupils in mind in this line of arguments. However, in his introduction to *Fundamental Problems of Defectology* (1993:30) Vygotsky underlines that differences between children or personalities are not only quantitative, but also qualitative, when he puts forward the thesis "...that a child whose development is impeded by a defect is not simply a child less developed than his peers but a child who has developed differently".

According to the Russian scholar Vasily V. Davydov's interpretation of Vygotsky, the latter gave an explicit account for differences in individual mental development. In his overview of post-Perestroika Russian policy, Davydov (1995) describes several of Vygotsky's main ideas that are currently included in educational reforms. One of these ideas is that the most valuable methods for teaching-learning and upbringing should correspond to pupils' development and individual particularities, as he called it. Therefore, Davydov points out, these methods cannot be uniform. However, he points to the basic cultural-historical perspective in Vygotsky's theoretical construction; the society surrounding the child contains a historical and cultural frame around the collective activity that is conveyed to the child through teaching and upbringing and that leads to the development of the child's consciousness. Davydov adds: "But at the same time, Vygotsky proposed that to this collective activity, to this collaboration, every

child brings a personal contribution at the child's own level" (1995:17). Davydov¹⁵ relates this line of arguments to Vygotsky's introduction of ZDP.

Another scholar in the cultural-historical tradition, Marianne Hedegaard (2005: 247), describes this point in the following way:

Although each child is unique, children obviously share common traits with other children. Being of the same tradition, children in the same class have a lot of knowledge and skills in common. Instruction can build upon these common features if it takes into account that the children vary in their speed and form of learning.

From theoretical foundation to educational practice

This exploration into selected texts of Vygotsky and post-Vygotskian scholars has confirmed a focal shift in theory of development from a traditional, cognitive focus on the solitude individual development and then learning to focus on a cooperative teaching and learning process towards development. It has also been established how Vygotsky's theoretical construction acknowledges the variety of individual differences in development requiring different adaptation of the teaching in accordance with the optimal zone of development of the single pupils within their joint cultural-historical belonging. Sadly, as mentioned above, Vygotsky did not manage to realise his intended account of the consequences of his theory for educational practice. However, alongside the lines of arguments in his empirically related theoretical construction-building,

15. In collaboration with translator Robert Silverman, Davydov prepared a larger work of Vygotsky for publication in English entitled *Educational Psychology* (1997), which has not been included in Vygotsky's collected works. In his introductory article Davydov (1997) estimates that Vygotsky wrote this book during the years between 1921–1923, and thus it belongs to his early works. One of the main concerns in Davydov's introduction is that Vygotsky connects educational psychology to conditional reflexes, innate elementary functions and other physiological terms related to Ivan Pavlov and other physiologically schooled researchers. Vygotsky moves away from this connection in his later works where he constructs the theory on the cultural-historical foundation of human development, uniting social activities, teaching-learning processes and human development. His introduction of ZPD occurs "late in these later works" and due to his early death, he seems not to have managed to complete his intended clarifications of educational consequences of ZPD in his cultural-historical theory (Vygotsky, 1998: 203). According to the Danish researcher Madsen (1986), Russian experimental psychology has its roots from the opening of a psychological institute at the University of Moscow in 1912. After the revolution in 1917, an attempt was made to develop a psychology based on a Marxist dialectical-materialist approach and on Lenin's so-called reflection theory on the psycho-physical problem. The world-famous researcher Ivan Pavlov's (1849 – 1936) studies seemed compatible with this paradigm and were eagerly studied by many researchers, including by the young Vygotsky, as his early text *Educational Psychology* (1997) indicates.

he introduced and discussed a number of concepts that have been applied in further, post-Vygotskian theory building.

What are the central concepts for a more detailed discussion of implications for educational practices of Vygotsky's theory? How are these notions helpful in demonstrating the relationship between concrete knowledge about individual pupils' level of mastery and selection of relevant educational goals, content and methods as well as communication and mediation approaches focusing on their optimal learning opportunities within the zones of proximal development (Johnsen, 2014a)? Moreover, in order to grasp a slightly different aspect of educational practice, a third question is posed: How can Vygotsky's theoretical construction and related concepts help make the school capable of facilitating the teaching-learning process in order to optimise the development of all pupils in a group or class, all of whom have different zones of proximal development?

Amongst all the relevant concepts to be highlighted, it is tempting to start with the two words, 'cooperation' and 'imitation', since Vygotsky often applies them when describing the process from the momentary milestone of ZPD towards the next step in development. However, in order to grasp an overview of notions that contribute to a further account of implications of Vygotsky's theoretical construction for educational practices, it may be helpful to situate this core theory within the larger scope of his theoretical construction. Personally speaking, as I am a former enthusiastic follower of Piagetian and post-Piagetian cognitive construction, it was Vygotsky's focus on the collective's impact on the single person's development or, as Arieievitch (2003) indicates, a beginning resolution of the dichotomies of the individual and the social, that first captured my attention. Why? Because this was consistent with my common, conventional¹⁶ perception that my own, my children's and other pupils' development depend on the historical period and culture into which we are born. Vygotsky differentiates between four interdependent genetic domains of development; the phylogenetic and the cultural-historical domain and the ontogenetic and microgenetic domain (Vygotsky, 1978b; 1987b; 1987c; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch & Sohmer, 1995; Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). The phylogenetic and cultural-historical domains represent the long and broad development that at any time frames contemporary teaching and learning processes. The ontogenetic and microgenetic domains are constructions on a micro level, where ontogen-

16. My use of the term 'conventional perception' here is inspired by the classical work of John I. Goodlad (1979) *Curriculum Inquiry*, where he applies the pair of concepts "funded knowledge" and "conventional wisdom" in order to differentiate between research based and layman influence on curriculum making.

esis represents the interactional individual development in a lifespan perspective, and microgenesis accounts for the single interactional unit of activity that, as Rosenthal (2004: 222) clarifies, "... concerns the psychogenetic dynamics of a process that can take from a few seconds (as in the case of perception and speech) up to several hours or even weeks (as in the case of reading, problem solving or skill acquisition)". A large number of texts discussing the relationship between the genetic domains belong to the rich Vygotskian heritage. In the search for answers to the questions above, a relevant selection of these texts is necessary together with Vygotsky's works; more specifically, those that may contribute to clarify connections between long-term cultural-historical development and teaching-learning processes on a micro level.

When it comes to micro level, the cultural-historical school makes use of a considerable number of concepts. One of the main contributions of Vygotsky's construction is the emphasis on the totality of the theory and the relationship between and within the genetic domains (1987b; 1987c). Keeping in mind that any attempt to sort out concepts in different categories is artificial, several notions may be seen as relating to the developing individual, such as imitation, tools and signs, egocentric and inner speech, internalisation and intrapersonal processes, and periods of development. Vygotsky also applies a number of concepts in his argumentation and explanation of the interrelationship between society and child/teacher and pupil, such as communication, mediating activity, cooperation and intrapersonal processes. Together these two groups of concepts contribute to elucidate the complex and dynamic interplay between teaching and learning leading to development where, according to Chaiklin (2003: 45 – 46), Vygotsky gives ZPD the role to "...point to an important place and moment in the process". How does Vygotsky account for the complex and dynamic interplay designated by these concepts? How are his texts interpreted? How are new concepts developed by his descendants that may contribute to shed further light on the puzzle regarding the connections between teaching, learning and development for children with a plurality of ZPDs in a common cultural-historical setting? Vygotsky was aware of the close connection between developmental and educational or didactic theory and practices, as are also Davidov (1995) and Hedegaard (2005). Establishing a fusion of developmental and educational/didactic theory is crucial for planning, implementing, assessing and revising the teaching-learning process towards development of higher mental functions in all children based on their diverse zones of proximal development and within their common cultures, schools and classes.

Conclusion

The introduction of Vygotsky's works in the English language contributed to a turn in the understanding of child development. At that time development in Anglo-American mainstream literature was considered to be an individual achievement closely linked to learning. The idea of ZPD implied an explicit relationship between development and teaching or mediation. Further exploration of development of higher mental functions in his and his successors' works, as presented in this article, reveals an even more explicit relationship between teaching-learning interaction and development. Thus, development is constructed as an educational interactional process. The texts applied in this article contribute to revise the role of ZPD as it has been interpreted in English-based articles and position it, not as a main concept in the construction of development of higher mental functions, but as an important location and optimal moment in this development.

Does this construct of teaching-learning interaction and development account for individual differences in development? Vygotsky's texts reveal that he acknowledges qualitative as well as quantitative individual differences in development within the phylogenetic and cultural-historical frameworks at any given time and place. Referring to ZPD, Davydov (1995) points out that Vygotsky proposed that every child brings a personal contribution at her or his own level to this collective activity. Hedegaard (2005) also argues that every child is unique and individual, but when children belong to the same culture, their individualities have common features that need to be developed. Thus, these theoretical constructions support the didactics of individually adapted education in the community of the class and society and, accordingly, pupil-centred education (Johnsen, 2014a). This is a good reason for continuing to explore Vygotsky's and his followers' texts.

However, Vygotsky also emphasizes the complexity of his theory, which makes it necessary to consider the totality of his construction, including the content and interrelationship of its various concepts. This article only touches on a small part of the construction. Several aspects and a large number of concepts need to be explored and connected to this "beginning" study – as already pointed out – from theoretical foundation to educational practice.

Vygotsky is also one of the very first European pioneers in special education research, or defectology, as it was named in his time. Special needs educational knowledge is currently in dire need of theoretical and empirical research. The discipline is shifting its focus from troubleshooting towards resource-based

mediation. This may explain the great interest in the ZPD as a concept where assessment of individual mastery and interactive teaching-learning processes are integrated. Special needs education is a necessary educational area for the development of individually adapted and inclusive educational practices. Therefore, the continued journey of discovery into Vygotsky's works and the cultural-historical school must be extended to this crucial aspect of their contributions.

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Situating Pedagogy: Moving beyond an Interactional Account

Harry Daniels¹⁷

Introduction

In this article, I discuss a development within the cultural historical tradition in social science that makes a contribution to our understanding of pedagogy and thus to educational research. This departure involves the incorporation of sociology of pedagogy into the post-Vygotskian formulation of the social formation of mind. In so doing, it seeks to extend the understanding of pedagogic practice beyond the analysis of dyadic or small group interactions so often found in studies which acknowledge the formative influence of Lev Vygotsky's writing and develops further the analytic and descriptive capacity of the various versions of activity theory developed in the wake of A. N. Leontiev's early work.

A non-dualist conception of mind claims that 'intermental' (social) experience shapes 'intramental' (psychological) development. This is understood as a mediated process in which societally produced cultural artifacts (such as forms of talk, representations in the form of ideas and beliefs, signs and symbols) shape and are shaped by human engagement with the world (Vygotsky, 1987). In recent years, sociology of this social experience which is compatible with, but absent from, Vygotskian psychology has been developed (Bernstein, 2000). Part of Bernstein's argument is that everyday discourse, which is often not the object of conscious reflection and analysis, puts in place our understanding of the world.

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Such discourse is ordinary in that its sayings and their meanings are seen as entirely natural, and arguably, that is why it is so effective. It is also instrumental in creating ‘habits of the mind’ that are crucial to a subject’s ways of engaging in decision-making in the social world (Hasan, 2005). The challenge for educators is to theorize how this everyday aspect of pedagogic discourse is produced in different settings and how it mediates engagement with the social relations of its production site and other settings. Such theorization brings with it possibilities for analyzing and describing specific forms of pedagogic practice. The position that I advance here is that a conception of pedagogy compatible with the cultural historical turn in Vygotsky’s later writing must take a full account of the setting in which learning and development take place. This notion of the ‘setting of development’ is clearly represented in his later writing and yet it is often not fully operationalized. What is therefore required is a way of articulating the way in which the setting mediates engagement in the social world.

Vygotsky and pedagogy

In this section, I identify the tensions between the aspirations and the reality of Vygotskian perspectives on pedagogy. In so doing, I make the case for the expansion of the term’s remit beyond a narrow focus on the overt features of pedagogic interaction. My argument is that the broader situation of pedagogic exchange implicitly mediates that interaction. Pedagogy is shaped by the history of the setting in which it is enacted. Pedagogic practice involves explicit and implicit mediational effects as the interactional and the wider setting shape the formation of mind. Vygotsky considered the capacity to teach and benefit from instruction as a fundamental attribute of human beings:

Vygotsky’s primary contribution was in developing a general approach that brought education, as a fundamental human activity, fully into a theory of psychological development. Human pedagogy, in all its forms, is the defining characteristic of his approach, the central concept in his system (Moll, 1990:15).

Whilst Vygotsky declared an interest in more broadly defined sociocultural development, he spent a major part of his time focusing on a somewhat constrained operational definition of the ‘social’ in his investigations of individual development in instructional settings. However, in his early writing, Vygotsky provides an emergent sociological position on pedagogy that attests to his own evolving aspirations. He argues that:

... pedagogics is never and was never politically indifferent, since, willingly or unwillingly, through its own work on the psyche, it has always adopted a particular social pattern, political line, in accordance with the dominant social class that has guided its interests (Vygotsky, 1997: 348).

Vygotsky was thus suggesting a process of social formation in the development of educational ideas: pedagogies arise and are shaped in particular social circumstances. He is also seen by some as being concerned with much more than face-to-face interaction between teacher and the one taught: It is quite possible to regard the school itself as a 'message' that is, a fundamental factor of education, because, as an institution and quite apart from the content of its teaching, it implies a certain structuring of time and space and is based on a system of social relations (between pupils and teacher, between the pupils themselves, between the school and its surroundings, and so on) (Ivic, 1989: 434).

This statement calls for a radical extension in the scope of the understanding of pedagogy than has been adopted in much of the present classroom research, and it would seem that others have also noted a similar challenge.

We argue that in order to understand social mediation it is necessary to take into account ways in which the practices of a community, such as school and the family, are structured by their institutional context. Cultural tools and the practices they are associated with, have their existence in communities, which in turn occupy positions in the broader social structure. These wider social structures impact on the interactions between the participants and the cultural tools (Abreu & Elbers, 2005: 4).

Taken together with Vygotsky's development of units of analysis that conceptually integrate person and context, this understanding of pedagogy may be seen to reveal a concern to create a broadly based account of a person formed in as well as forming culture and society. What is interesting is that his conceptual orientation is also implicit in the general definition of pedagogy offered by Bernstein (1999), who suggests that:

... pedagogy is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria, from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator. Appropriate either from the point of view of the acquirer or by some other body(s) or both (Bernstein, 1999: 259).

Now, this definition emphasizes that conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria may all be developed from 'somebody(s) or something' and sets it apart from definitions of teaching or learning that attend only to matters of skills and

knowledge. Moreover, it suggests that a complete analysis of processes of development and learning within pedagogic practice must consider cognitive and affective matters. It also suggests that pedagogic provision may be thought of in terms of the arrangement of material things as well as persons. This would appear to accord with the opinion that Vygotsky aspired to a view of the breadth of formative influences in pedagogic relations.

The introduction of new tools into human activity does more than improve a specific form of functioning – it transforms it. The focus of research in this tradition is on how the inclusion of tools and signs leads to qualitative transformation in human functioning. In the second phase of Vygotsky's (1987) work appearing in parts of *Thinking and Speech*, he discusses the process of development in terms of changes in the functional relationship between speaking and thinking. He asserts that "... change in the functional structure of consciousness is the main and central content of the entire process of mental development" (Vygotsky, 1987: 188). The incorporation of the setting of development into an account of social formation of mind requires an enhanced understanding of mediation. The philosophy of 'ideality', according to which humans inscribe significance and value into the very physical objects of their environment, is of relevance to this demand. Ideality results from sensuously objective activity, transforms and creates the activity of social beings. Thus, the "... transcendental account of the origin of subject and object in activity portrays nature as a kind of shapeless raw material given form by human agency. Nature is the clay on which humanity inscribes its mark" (Bakhurst, 1995: 173).

Russian thinking has developed in a culture that embodied a powerful anti-Cartesian element. This contrasts with the kind of intellectual environment, found in many settings in the West, where so much effort has been expended in conceptualizing the mind as a 'self-contained private realm, set over against the objective, 'external' world of material things, and populated by subjective states revealed only to the 'self' presiding over them (Bakhurst, 1995: 155–156).

The argument in this article is that culture and community are not merely independent factors that discriminate between settings. They are, as it were, the mediational medium with and through which ideas (and learning) are developed. It is through tool use that individual- psychological and cultural-historical processes become interwoven and co-create each other, and it is this understanding which lies at the very heart of Vygotsky's thesis. The cultural historical nature of the development of ideality is emphasized at the macro and micro level of analysis. He also seeks to unify the analysis of the ideal and the material. Arti-

facts are both ideal (conceptual) and material. “Their creators and users exhibit a corresponding duality of thought, at once grounded in the material here and now, yet simultaneously capable of entertaining the far away, the long ago, and the never has-been” (Cole, 1994: 94). Similarly, Wartofsky’s (1973) definition of artifacts as objectifications of human needs and intentions is already invested with cognitive and affective content. He distinguishes between three hierarchical levels of the notion of artifacts. Primary artifacts include needles, clubs and bowls, which are used directly in the making of things. Secondary artifacts are representations of primary artifacts and of modes of action using primary artifacts. They are therefore traditions or beliefs. Tertiary artifacts are imagined worlds. Works of art are examples of these tertiary artifacts or imagined worlds. These three artifact levels function in processes of cultural mediation. These processes may be viewed as pedagogic in the widest sense of the term and are compatible with the following definition of implicit mediation:

... part of an already ongoing communicative stream that is brought into contact with other forms of action. Indeed, one of the properties that characterizes implicit mediation is that it involves signs, especially natural language, whose primary function is communication ... they are part of a pre-existing, independent stream of communicative action that becomes integrated with other forms of goal-directed behavior (Wertsch, 2007: 185).

This account of implicit mediation echoes some of Bernstein’s (2000) work on invisible mediation. Bernstein paid very close attention to what he termed invisible semiotic mediation – how the unself-conscious everyday discourse mediates mental dispositions, tendencies to respond to situations in certain ways and how it puts in place beliefs about the world one lives in, including phenomena that are supposedly in nature and those which are said to be in our culture. Here discourse is not treated as simply the regulator of cognitive functions; it is, as Bernstein states, also central to the shaping of dispositions, identities and practices.

To understand these forms of mediation, we must take into account ways in which practices of school and the family are structured. These have arisen and have been shaped by the societal, cultural and historical circumstances in which interpersonal exchanges arise, and they, in turn, shape thoughts and feelings, identities and aspirations for action of those engaged in interpersonal exchange in those contexts. This should provide a means of relating the social cultural historical context, the setting of development, to the form of the artifact. If processes of social formation are posited, research requires a theoretical description

of the possibilities for social products in terms of principles regulating the social relations in which they are produced. We need to understand the principles of communication in terms derived from a study of principles of social regulation at the institutional or organizational level.

Production of discursive artifacts

In this section, I argue that we need to understand the ways in which artifacts are produced if we are to be in a position to investigate pedagogic effects on the basis of a wider understanding of the pedagogic setting. As we talk, we enter the flow of communication in a stream of both history and future; researchers need to have some definition of the situation or activity at hand. This definition must in some way relate to the structuring of the setting and the way in which categories are constructed in institutions. Thus:

By sorting things out we are able to cope with complexity and maintain a measure of social order in our private and professional lives... This is a historical process initiated by individuals in specific activities (e.g., personal concerns), but when generalized, the resulting categories may serve as governing parts of institutional activities (e.g., laws) (Morch, Nygard & Ludvigsen, 2010: 186).

At a very general level, a challenge has been set within modern interpretations of Marxist theory: "... social life . . . must be understood in terms that do justice both to objective material, social and cultural structures and to the constituting practices and experiences of individuals and groups" (Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993: 3). There is a long running debate as to whether Vygotsky was a Marxist who wished to create a Marxist psychology. There is no doubt that he drew on theoretical Marxism, and it has been argued, for example, by Bernstein (2000) that this in itself presented him with a particular theoretical challenge.

A crucial problem of theoretical Marxism is the inability of the theory to provide descriptions of micro-level processes, except by projecting macro-level concepts on to the micro-level unmediated by intervening concepts through which the micro-level can be both uniquely described and related to the macro-level. Marxist theory can provide the orientation and the conditions the micro language must satisfy if it is to be 'legitimate'. Thus, such a language must be materialist, not idealist, dialectic in method, and its principles of development and change must resonate with Marxist principles. In addition, there are limita-

tions in the Marxian interpretation of Hegel's conception of self-creation through labour:

Human nature is not found within the human individual but in the movement between the inside and the outside, in the worlds of artifact use and artifact creation . . . the creative and dynamic potential of concrete work process and technologies remains underdeveloped in his (Marx's) work (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999: 5).

If activities are to be thought of as 'socially rooted and historically developed', how do we describe them in relation to their social, cultural and historical contexts of production?

If Vygotsky (1987) was arguing that formation of mind is a socially mediated process, then what theoretical and operational understandings of the social, cultural, historical production of 'tools' or artifacts do we need to develop in order to empirically investigate the processes of development? The metaphor of the 'tool' itself serves to detract attention away from the relation between its structure and the context of its production.

The metaphor of 'tool' draws attention to a device, an empowering device, but there are some reasons to consider that the tool, its internal specialized structure is abstracted from its social construction. Symbolic 'tools' are never neutral; intrinsic to their construction are social classifications, stratifications, distributions and modes of recontextualizing (Bernstein, 1993: xvii).

These questions concerning the production of artifacts or tools would appear to be a matter of some priority for the development of the field, as so much of the empirical work that has been undertaken struggles to connect the analysis of the formative effect of mediated activity or tool use with the analysis of tool or artifact production. I now invoke an account of the production of psychological tools or artifacts, such as discourse, that allows for exploration of formative effects of the social context of production at the psychological level. This also involves a consideration of the possibilities afforded to different social actors as they take up positions and are positioned in social products such as discourse. This discussion of production thus opens up the possibility of analysing the possible positions that an individual may take up in a field of social practice. I use the following statement as a device to start a debate about the relationship between principles of social production, regulation and individual functioning:

The substantive issue of the theory is to explicate the processes whereby a given distribution of power and principles of control are translated into specialised principles

of communication differentially, and often unequally, distributed to social groups/classes. And how such an unequal distribution of forms of communication, initially (but not necessarily terminally) shapes the formation of consciousness of members of these groups/classes in such a way as to relay both opposition and change. The critical issue is the translation of power and control into principles of communication which become (successful or otherwise) their carriers or relays (Bernstein, 2000: 91).

Particularly when the cultural artifact takes the form of a pedagogic discourse, we should also analyse its structure in the context of its production. The term 'pedagogic' does not mean just those discourses that are enacted in educational institutions. The general practitioner, the policymaker, the therapist, the broadcaster and the journalist are all involved in a form of pedagogic practice. From this point of view (and given that human beings have the capacity to influence their own development through their use of the artifacts, including discourses, which they and others create or have created), we then need a language of description that allows us to identify and investigate.

A language for describing pedagogic practice

The development of Vygotskian theory calls for the development of languages of description that will facilitate a multi-level understanding of pedagogic discourse, the varieties of its practice and contexts of its realization and production. Different social structures give rise to different modalities of language that have specialized mediational properties. They have arisen and have been shaped by the societal, cultural and historical circumstances in which interpersonal exchanges arise, and they in turn shape the thoughts and feelings, the identities and aspirations for action of those engaged in interpersonal exchange in those contexts. Hence the relations of power and control, which regulate social interchange, give rise to specialized principles of communication, as they mediate social relations. Within activity theory, the production of the outcome is often discussed – but not the production and structure of the tool itself. The rules, community and division of labour are analysed in terms of the contradictions and dilemmas that arise within the activity system specifically with respect to the production of the object.

The language that Bernstein has developed, uniquely, allows researchers to take measures of institutional modality. That is to describe and position the discursive, organizational and interactional practice of the institution. Through the concepts of classification and framing, Bernstein provides the language of

description for moving from those issues that activity theory handles as rules, community and division of labour to the discursive tools or artifacts that are produced and deployed within an activity. Research may then seek to investigate the connections between the rules children use to make sense of their pedagogic world and the modality of that world. For example, in a school, the curriculum may then be analysed in terms of a social division of labour and pedagogic practice as its constituent social relations through which the specialization of that social division (subjects, units of the curriculum) are transmitted and expected to be acquired. Power is spoken of in terms of classification which is manifested in category relations, which themselves generate recognition rules (possession of which allows the acquirer to recognize as difference that is marked by a category). Control is spoken of in terms of framing which is manifested in pedagogic communication governed by realization rules (possession of which allows the acquirer to perform, in this case speaking, in a way that is seen as competent and realize difference that is marked by a category). The distribution of power and principles of control specialize structural features and their pedagogic communicative relays differently.

A key feature of the structure of pedagogic discourse involves making the distinction between instructional and regulative discourse. The former refers to the transmission of skills and their relation to each other, while the latter refers to the principles of social order, relation and identity. Regulative discourse communicates the school's public moral practice, values, beliefs and attitudes, principles of conduct, character and manner. It also transmits features of the school's local history, local tradition and community relations.

Different institutional modalities may be described in terms of the relationship between the relations of power and control which gives rise to distinctive discursive artifacts. For example, with respect to schooling, where the theory of instruction gives rise to a strong classification and strong framing of the pedagogic practice, it is expected that there will be a separation of discourses (school subjects), an emphasis upon acquisition of specialized skills, the teacher will be dominant in the formulation of intended learning and the pupils are constrained by the teacher's practice. The relatively strong control on the pupils' learning itself acts as a means of maintaining order in the context where the learning takes place. This form of instructional discourse contains regulative functions. With strong classification and framing, the social relations between teachers and pupils will be more asymmetrical, that is, more clearly hierarchical. In this instance, the regulative discourse and its practice is more explicit and

distinguishable from the instructional discourse. Where the theory of instruction gives rise to a weak classification and weak framing of practice, children will be encouraged to be active in the classroom, to undertake enquiry and perhaps work in groups at their own pace. Here the relations between teacher and pupils will have the appearance of being more symmetrical. In these circumstances, it is difficult to separate instructional discourse from regulative discourse, as these are mutually embedded. The formulation of pedagogic discourse, as an embedded discourse comprised of instructional and regulative components, allows for the analysis of the production of such embedded discourses in activities structured through specifiable relations of power and control within institutions.

The pedagogic subject

Subject–subject and within subject relations are under-theorized in activity theory. In activity the possibilities for use of artifacts depend on the social position occupied by an individual. Sociologists and sociolinguists have produced empirical verification of this suggestion. The notion of ‘subject’ within activity theory requires expansion and clarification. In many studies, the term ‘subject perspective’ is used. The term infers subject position but does little to illuminate the formative processes that gave rise to this perspective. It requires a theoretical account of social relations and positioning. The theoretical move that Bernstein makes in relating positioning to the distribution of power and principles of control opens up the possibility of grounding the analysis of social positioning and mental dispositions in relation to the distribution of labour in an activity.

The concept of social positioning can be brought to the fore in a discussion of social identity. Bernstein used this concept to refer to the establishing of a specific relation to other subjects and to the creating of specific relationships within subjects. Social positioning through meanings is inseparable from power relations. Bernstein (1990) provided an elaboration of his early general argument:

More specifically, class-regulated codes position subjects with respect to dominant and dominated forms of communication and to the relationships between them. Ideology is constituted through and in such positioning. From this perspective, ideology inheres in and regulates modes of relation. Ideology is not so much a content as a mode of relation for the realizing of content. Social, cultural, political and economic relations are intrinsic to pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 1990: 13–14).

Here the linkage is forged between social positioning and psychological attributes. This is the process through which Bernstein talks of the shaping of the possibilities for consciousness. The dialectical relation between discourse and subject makes it possible to think of pedagogic discourse as a semiotic means that regulates or traces the generation of subjects' positions in discourse. We can understand the potency of pedagogic discourse in selectively producing subjects and their identities in a temporal and spatial dimension. Within the Bernsteinian thesis, there exists an ineluctable relation between one's social positioning, one's mental disposition and one's relation to the distribution of labour in society. Here the emphasis on discourse is theorized in its influence on dispositions, identities and practices rather than only in terms of the shaping of cognitive functions.

Through the notions of 'voice' and 'message', he brings the division of labour and principles of control (rules) into relation with social position in practice. The implication is that subject in an activity theory driven depiction should be represented by a space of possibility (voice) in which a particular position (message) is taken up. It is also argued that multiple identities are developed within figured worlds and that these are 'historical developments, grown through continued participation in the positions defined by the social organization of those world's activity' (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998: 41).

This body of work represents a significant development in our understanding of the concept of the 'subject' in activity theory. Goals and actions are free-floating, generally intelligible, cultural-historically contingent possibilities. Because concrete embodied actions articulate between society and the self, a person's identity does not constitute a singularity but is itself inherently intelligible within the cultural unit. It is because of what they see each other doing that two (or more) persons come to "... recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another" (Hegel, 1806/1977: 112). Publicly visible actions serve as the ground of recognizing in the other another self that recognizes in me its corresponding other. It is this linkage between self and other through patterned embodied actions that have led some to theorize identity in terms of agency and culture in which a person participates (Roth, 2007a).

From my point of view, there remains a need to develop the notion of 'figured world' in such a way that we can theorize, analyse and describe the processes by which that world is 'figured'. The concept of social positioning seems to me to concur with the analysis outlined by Holland et al. (1998). Bernstein (2000) relates social positioning to the formation of mental dispositions in terms of

the identity's relation to the distribution of labour in society. It is through the deployment of his concepts of voice and message that Bernstein forges the link between division of labour, social position and discourse, opening up the possibilities for a language of description that will serve empirical as well analytical purposes. The distinction between what can be recognized as belonging to a voice and a particular message is formulated in terms of distinction between relations of power and relations of control. In his last book, Bernstein (2000) argues:

Voice refers to the limits on what could be realized if the identity was to be recognized as legitimate. The classificatory (boundary) relation established the voice. In this way power relations, through the classificatory relation, regulated voice. However voice, although a necessary condition for establishing what could and could not be said and its context, could not determine what was said and the form of its contextual realization; the message. The message was a function of framing (control). The stronger the framing the smaller the space accorded for potential variation in the message (Bernstein, 2000: 204).

Thus, social categories constitute voices and control over practices constitutes messages.

Identity becomes the outcome of the voice–message relation. Production and reproduction

have their social basis in categories and practices; that categories are constituted by the social division of labour and that practices are constituted by social relations within production/ reproduction; that categories constitute 'voices' and that practices constitute their 'messages'; message is dependent upon 'voice', and the subject is a dialectical relation between 'voice' and message. Thus a socially structured zone of possibility rather than a singular point would represent subject. This representation would signify a move to attempt to theorize the subject as emerging in a world that was 'figured' by relations of power and control.

Conclusion

It is necessary to take into account ways in which the practices of a community, such as school and the family are structured by their institutional context and that social structures impact on the interactions between the participants and the cultural tools. In a footnote to the introduction of a recent volume of the

journal *Mind, Culture and Activity*, Roth (2007b) sees what might be the root of a problem in translation:

English translations of Marx and Leont'ev use the adjective social (sozial, [sozial'no]) where the German/Russian versions use societal (gesellschaftlich, [obshchestvenno]). The two English adjectives have very different implications in that the latter concept immediately introduces society as a major mediating moment into the kinds of relations that people entertain and realize (Roth, 2007b: 143).

Thus, it is not just a matter of the structuring of interactions between participants and other cultural tools; rather that the institutional structures themselves are cultural products serving as mediators in their own right. In this sense, they are 'messages', that is, fundamental factors of education. When we speak, we enter the flow of communication in a stream of both history and future. When we speak in institutions, history enters the flow of communication through the invisible or implicit mediation of institutional structures. There is therefore a need to analyse and codify the mediational structures as they deflect and direct attention of participants and as they are shaped through interactions which they also shape. In this sense, I advocate the development of cultural-historical analysis of the invisible or implicit mediational properties of institutional structures which themselves are transformed through the actions of those whose interactions are influenced by them. This move would serve to both expand the gaze on activity theory and at the same time bring sociologies of cultural transmission into a framework in which institutional structures are analysed as historical products, being themselves subject to dynamic transformation and change as people act within and on them.

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A Curricular Approach to Inclusive Education

Some Thoughts concerning Practice, Innovation and Research

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

This article focuses on the development towards achieving educational inclusion in the local school for all. Educational inclusion is seen as the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and offering a meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Johnsen, 2000; 2007; UNESCO, 1994). This description of main characteristics of inclusion forms the basis for the common project plan for international comparative classroom studies towards the inclusive school; a joint research project between the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo (WB 04/06). This understanding of educational inclusion is in line with Stainback and Stainback's (1990 in Igrić & Cvitković in press 2014) description of an inclusive school as a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his/her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met. The two statements are complementary. They are both in accordance with and provide more details than UNESCO's introductory outlines of inclusion in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994).

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The mentioned UNESCO statement on inclusion and the later UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) confirming the principle of inclusion, are accepted by a large majority of governments. However, questions about how to implement the principle of educational inclusion in individual countries and local schools have not yet found satisfactory answers in spite of a large number of innovative research projects worldwide¹⁸. To change from the deep-rooted tradition of competitive whole class teaching to inclusive practices based on cooperation, represents a major turn in professional knowledge, skills and attitudes held by regular teachers, special needs educators and other stakeholders. It is fair to say that no country has reached fully inclusive practices in their schools. Development towards inclusion is in the beginning phase in a continuous struggle for dominance amongst a variety of different and even contradictory educational trends. The research- and innovation focus on inclusion has come from many sources; from national policies and financial priorities and from reorganisation of educational structures and educational strategies.

In this article focus is on the school's inner activity and development of inclusive practices. The main question concerns how to construct a bridge between the principle of inclusion and practices related to individual pupils as partners in the joint class or group. The question challenges practitioners as well as researchers to consider what "professional tools" are available in order to plan, practice, evaluate and move on in the process towards achieving full inclusion. In the following a curricular approach is presented which has been applied by professionals as an innovative tool for implementing inclusion, and by researchers as a set of main topics or aspects determining the research perspective on practice. The approach is based on a curriculum relation model consisting of eight (or seven plus one) main areas of the teaching-learning situation and process. The curricular areas are interrelated as well as related with the intended users of the tool, practitioners and researchers. The main areas are:

- the pupil/s
- educational intentions
- educational content
- methods and organisation
- assessment

18. UNESCO's homepage contains some information, discussions and practical guidelines for inclusive education (<http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.>)

- communication
- care
- +
- context / frame factors

As mentioned, the seven aspects are concerned with the school's inner activities; the teaching-learning situation and process on a micro level. Their point of departure is what may be called a 'bottom-up perspective' where the individual pupils and their curricula are the centre of attention. The seven aspects are embraced by contextual aspects within which the inner activity of the school is situated; a context consisting of several frame factors, which tend to be perceived from a top-down perspective, interrelating with one another and with the seven main aspects.

My involvement in development towards educational inclusion started in the two Nordic countries, Iceland and Norway, which developed similar educational legislation, later cooperating with a number of other countries both in Europe and on other continents. As a special needs educational advisor, I worked with pupils, parents, teachers, special needs educators and school leaders. I have been responsible for developing, leading and lecturing on special needs educational topics in higher education in several countries on two continents. The Russian scholar Lev Vygotsky and followers' cultural-historical school has become an important contributor to understanding this inner activity of teaching-learning processes; specifically their focus on the pupil-teacher relationship through communication and mediation as well as on learning and development in a cultural context. Relationships between the cultural-historical approach and the deeply entrenched curricular-didactic traditions are therefore in the centre of my scientific curiosity (Vygotsky, 1978; Cole, 1996; Johnsen, 2014b). One of my major works in this field is a historical study of ideas concerning the school for all (Johnsen, 2000). Another is a longitudinal classroom study of inclusive practices (Johnsen, 2013b), which is the Norwegian contribution to the project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06) along with contributions of my research colleagues in the project. The joint study uses the eight curricular main aspects as a common denominator (Johnsen, 2013a). A continuous revision and – hopefully – improvement of this curricular approach has been developed through educational practice, innovation, research and dialogue with a number of student groups, teachers, special needs educators and researchers in the mentioned countries. Our dialogues have been especially fruitful for the clarification of curricular foci in different contexts.

In the following, the curricular relation approach is presented and discussed in more details and related to an illustrating model, before each curricular main area is subjected to description and discussion. However, before this takes place, some important concepts are briefly described.

Key concepts

As mentioned, educational inclusion is described and understood in various ways. The same applies to the wide selection of relevant notions in the discussion of inclusive practices. A brief clarification of a few of these terms follows here. They are a) the diverse class, the school for all and inclusion, b) individually adapted education and differentiation and 3) curriculum and didactics.

The diverse class and school in relation to the school for all and inclusion. Diverse classes are all too often called inclusive classes. Awareness of the diversity in a class – meaning that a class consists of pupils with different levels of mastery and needs for educational support – is indeed a necessary, but not sufficient aspect of inclusion. What characterises a school for all and an inclusive class is that all pupils with their diverse educational needs are taught in accordance with their individual needs within the class community.

The principle of educational inclusion was accounted for in the introduction of this article. It was related to another term, ‘inclusive practices’, that points to educational and special needs educational practices supporting the affiliation to the class for all its pupils. These practices may be actions directed towards an individual pupil, a certain group or the whole class. An example of inclusive practice is to plan one joint study topic consisting of a number of differentiated learning tasks in accordance with the proximal learning capacity of each and every pupil in the class (Vygotsky, 1978). The concepts representing the eight curricular main areas are all connected to the art and craftsmanship of inclusive practice. However, as mentioned, it applies to these as to all concepts that they are not given a conclusive definition; rather, they need to be discussed, clarified and revised as new aspects of practice are revealed. Thus, they are seen as dynamic and flexible, and their meaning varies in different contexts (Johnsen, 2000; 2001a).

Individually adapted education and differentiation. Norwegian educational legislation establishes that school is to provide equitable and suitably adapted education for everyone in a co-ordinated system of education based on the same national curriculum (Johnsen 1998; L 1997). This is possible because

the national curriculum is a so-called framework plan, i.e. open to flexibility and adaptation related to local contexts and individual differences. All pupils are entitled to receive education that gives due consideration to individual aptitudes and abilities. This is the principle of individually or suitably adapted education. The principle relates to all pupils and calls for a more or less detailed individual educational plan or curriculum for each single pupil along with flexibility in teaching within the regular recourses assigned to the class. In accordance with this principle, pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are, in addition to regular resources, entitled to additional resources. Thus, the foundation for inclusive practices is based on making, implementing and continuously revising individual educational curricula, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, in as closely as possible connection with the class curriculum. Focus on individual curricula resembles a bottom-up perspective to educational flexibility because it has individual pupils' needs as its starting point.

Conversely, there is what may be called a top-down perspective of educational differentiation. Differentiation means giving different learning tasks to pupils with different proximal learning possibilities. Providing variation in learning content, assignments and length of time to solve learning tasks are traditional ways of differentiating. Darlene Perner and her project group (UNESCO, 2004: 14) describe differentiation in the following way:

Curriculum education, then, is the process of modifying or adapting the curriculum according to the different ability levels of the students in one class. Teachers can adapt or differentiate the curriculum by changing: the content, methods for teaching and learning content (sometimes referred to as the process), and, the methods of assessment (sometimes referred to as the products)

This understanding is in line with the proclamation of the right of all pupils to receive meaningful and individually adapted education found in the Norwegian national curriculum. Thus Perner's broad definition of differentiation is compatible with the use of individual curricula when these are planned and implemented within the joint framework of all pupils in a class. The art is to make educational plans that are meaningful to each pupil yet also function for the whole class. The metaphor "concerted actions" is a beautiful illustration of the combination of individual adaptation and differentiation in order to create meaningful learning processes for all in a diverse class or group (Booth et al., 2000). The metaphor views the class as an orchestra where the pupils have different roles but together create a holistic learning performance, similar to what musicians do in a symphony orchestra.

Curriculum¹⁹. In this article the individual curriculum is seen as a basic tool for the implementation of individually adapted education and differentiation. The two concepts, curriculum and **didactic**, are used similarly, even though applied with somewhat different starting points and used unevenly in different educational discourses and countries (didactics is seldom used in English discourse and, when used, often with a negative connotation), (Johnsen, 2000). Curriculum is also a key concept for Perner and colleagues, as shown above. Let us take a look at how they describe the concept and how they point to a serious dilemma many teachers all over the world experience with respect to their national curriculum.

Curriculum is what is learned and what is taught (context); how it is delivered (teaching –learning methods); how it is assessed (exams, for example); and the resources used (e. g. books used to deliver and support teaching and learning). [...]

Often we, as teachers base our curriculum content, the “formal curriculum”, on a prescribed set of educational outcomes or goals. Because this formal curriculum may be prescribed by authority, teachers feel constrained and often implement it rigidly. Teachers feel that they cannot make changes to or decisions about this type of prescribed curriculum including the predetermined textbook selection. As a result teachers are bound to teaching from textbook and to the “average” group of students. In many countries teachers do this because the system has content-loaded examinations that students must pass and teacher success is measured by students’ performance on these examinations (UNESCO, 2004: 13).

This broad interpretation of the concept of ‘curriculum’ allows both detail and perspective. It contains similar details on the micro- or classroom level as the curriculum relation model presented below²⁰. This interpretation of curriculum also allows a micro-macro dimension similar to the classic ecological curricular model of Goodlad (1979). In accordance with this understanding, curricula are developed on different levels. A national curriculum is developed within the frames of educational acts and other high-level policy papers (this is what Perner and colleagues call “formal curriculum”). A local or school curriculum is developed within the frames of national curriculum and the particular social-

19. The concept of ‘individual curriculum’ is used synonymously with individual plan and program, which is more often applied in West Balkan discourse, and which may also be seen in other international texts.

20. The Curriculum Relation Model was first presented outside the University of Oslo at Pedagoška Akademija, the current Faculty of Education, University of Sarajevo, in a different version (Johnsen, 1998; 2001a; 2007).

economic and cultural characteristics of the local community. A class curriculum is developed within the frameworks of the national and local curriculum and – from the perspective of inclusion – in accordance with the level of mastery and proximal learning possibilities of all the pupils in the class. An individual curriculum is developed within the framework of the class curriculum and in accordance with the level of mastery, proximal learning possibilities and mediation needs of the individual pupil. However, when a national curriculum is too rigid to allow necessary adaptation to individual learning needs, as Perner and colleagues point out, adapting the individual curriculum within the framework of national curriculum is not sufficient; and individual and joint class curricula need to extend the national curriculum.

A Curriculum Relation Model

The eight main curricular aspects or arenas; the pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – class organisation and teaching methods – communication – care – context or frame factors; are rooted in educational and special needs educational traditions. The following aspects; the pupil/s, assessment, educational intentions, educational content, and methods & classroom organisation, are classical categories rooted back to Plato and ancient Greek traditions. They are commonplace categories and parts of a joint European educational heritage (Johnsen, 2000).

The aspects of communication and care represent an extension of the curriculum field, arising out of current humanistic special needs educational discourse with links to regular education, psychology and other related research disciplines (Befring, 1997; Johnsen, 2001a; 2007; Noddings, 1992; 2003). The emphasis on communication in relation to the other seven curricular aspects stems from the cultural-historical approach to learning in context. Vygotsky (1978; Johnsen, 2014b) argues that knowing the pupil's level of mastery is necessary, but not sufficient. The educator also needs to know the level of potential development, which is found through assessing the pupil's problem solving skills under the teacher's guidance or in cooperation with more competent peers. Vygotsky states that learning is a social activity based on interaction between learner and environment, that the main mediating tool for learning is communication, and that the optimal quality of learning is determined by the learner's cultural-historical environment. His concept 'the zone of proximal development' represents a core argument underlying the development of this current Cur-

riculum Relation Model as a professional tool. Related concepts developed by Vygotsky and post-Vygotskian scholars, such as dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986; Rommetveit, 1992), mediation (Rye, 2001; Wertsch, 1991), apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990; 2003) and scaffolding (Berk & Winsler, 1997; Rogoff, 1990; Sehic, Karlsdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir, 2005) are embedded in the cultural-historical discourse and contribute knowledge within the same arena of education as curricular-didactic discourse, namely the teaching-learning relationship.

The cultural-historical approach, when joined with the related discourse on educational ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Goodlad, 1979), highlights the important connection between the inner activity of the school and its frame factors or context, which is the eighth main aspect of the Curriculum Relation Model. This aspect deals with the relation between individual and class curricula on the micro-level (local level) as well as national and international contextual factors on the macro-level, such as national policy and curriculum, economic and physical factors and a number of different cultural and historical aspects, all of which create opportunities and barriers for inclusive practices.

The important interrelationship between the eight aspects may be illustrated through a model. The model is inspired by North American curricular discourse in the mid-twentieth century (Herrick, 1950; Tyler, 1949; Johnsen, 2000). It is a modification and further extension of Bjørndal and Lieberg's (1978) *Didactic Relation Model*; a well-known model in different modifications to Norwegian educational practitioners, politicians and researchers. Here, the model has been further extended and revised, and its main focus is moved to the individual pupil in the class in conjunction with special needs educational aspects. In its current form the model is also known to participants in the former Bosnia- and West Balkan projects (SØE 06/02; WB 04/06; Johnsen, 2001a; 2007).

Some modifications are necessary whenever a model is applied. First and foremost it is important to keep in mind that no model is able to illustrate reality with all its complexity. Models are always simplifications, and every model is a result of prioritising certain aspects of reality and opting out of others. What models do (in particular this model) is help create an overview of the complex area of curriculum development. This model also indicates relationships between the different curricular main aspects as discussed below. But before each aspect is described any further, different areas of application are highlighted.

Areas of application. The Curriculum Relation Model and its eight main areas is an example of a professional tool used to help create relevant learning

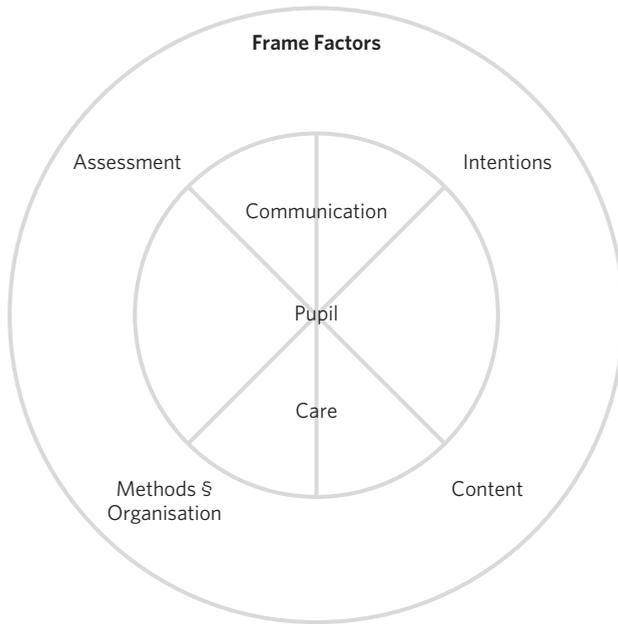


Figure 1 The Curriculum Relation Model revised in Johnsen (2007)

and teaching situations promoting the plurality of individual and special needs of all pupils in a classroom setting²¹. It can be applied in connection with different educational questions, problems and tasks:

- As a guide to an overview of vital aspects and processes related to teaching and learning
- To support awareness of the continuous interrelationship between the above-mentioned aspects and processes
- As a guide explaining how to ask necessary questions, discover important sub-aspects and processes, gather relevant knowledge and train educational skills within and between each of the main aspects, aiming towards fulfilment of the plurality of pupils' different educational needs and capacities in the inclusive classroom and school for all
- As a guide to long-term as well as short-term curricular or didactic planning

21. Some people have asked where the teacher is in the model. The answer is that the teacher is not in the model. The teacher applies the model as a tool in planning, implementing and revising individual and class curricula.

- As a framework for systematic work in planning, implementing and evaluating the relationship between teaching and learning for individual pupils as well as for groups and whole classes
- As arenas of focus, clarification and delimitation in research on practice and theory

The following presentation mainly focuses on how each main aspect of the Curriculum Relation Model may contribute to inclusive practices. The discussions are based on my articles presented in 1998 and 2001. New experience and knowledge have been added from the previously mentioned long-term innovation project in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Johnsen, 2007), and further knowledge has been generated from idea-historical research as well as longitudinal classroom studies (Johnsen, 2000; 2013b) and from the international comparative classroom studies implemented in collaboration with my colleagues from the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo (Johnsen, 2013a; WB 04/06). In the following each of the curricular main aspects are discussed.

The pupil and pupils

Why do the teacher and special needs educator need to know their pupils in order to make a meaningful and individually adapted curriculum? And what do they need to know about their pupils? The main focus in this discussion is on the individual pupil. However, it is important to keep in mind all single pupils in the group or class as well as the diverse class as a joint holistic entity.

The pupil or the learner is, of course, the ultimate user of education and therefore the main agent in focus in the Curriculum Relation Model. Indeed, not only do the learner's experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes, mastery level, capacity and possibilities, interests and mentoring needs²², but also the worries and fears have to be seen in relation to the education she or he is a part of. This view is in accordance with classical child-centred educational traditions, and I accepted my Master students' arguments for placing the pupil in the centre of the Model as a reminder of this fundamental educational principle (Dewey, 1916/2002; UNESCO, 1994). The opposite position is found in discipline-centred

22. Mentor is originally a Greek word, meaning an experienced and trusted adviser. While Knowles (1975) uses the concept in his description of the teacher as a facilitator for adult learners, it may also be used in relation to learners of all ages. Of the three terms applied here – teacher, mentor and mediator – the term mediator is taken from the socio-cultural approach and applied by Feuerstein and associates (1991), Rye (2001; 2005) and others.

education with its overall focus on teaching in accordance with the logic and content of the discipline. Discipline-centred education seems to have a deeply entrenched and strong position within teaching, and is often combined with one-sided discipline or norm-related assessment of the pupils' learning results. This kind of teaching and assessing is in opposition to individually adapted education in a diverse pupil group. Development towards inclusion therefore calls for the following changes:

- From narrow discipline-centred towards learner-centred education
- From narrow assessment of the pupils' learning products towards an extended assessment of all aspects of the teaching-learning situation, process and results.

When we focus on the pupil, there are many factors influencing our understanding as teachers and special needs educators. These factors are derived from a number of different and even antagonistic ideas and traditions, including theoretical and practical knowledge and actual experience with pupils. Our views of the nature of mankind, childhood and learning are fundamental to what we are looking for in the pupil, and how we interpret our findings. Such basic views are historically and culturally determined as well as subjectively constituted; they are therefore different from culture to culture and from educator to educator. They are also more or less conscious (Johnsen, 2000). An important component in reflecting on our understanding of the pupil (and of all other issues, for that matter) is therefore to focus our attention on, be conscious of and articulate our own view of mankind, childhood and the nature of teaching and learning. Professional special needs educational understanding of the learner is based on knowledge on the following levels:

- General knowledge about learning and development
- Knowledge about disability-specific learning strategies
- Knowledge about individual learning strategies, interests and communication types and styles

Our position in general theory of learning and development reflects our self-concept as educators. Thus, within socio-cultural theory the teacher is presented as a mediator (Feuerstein, 1991; Rye, 2001). Rogoff (1990) describes the teacher-pupil relationship as that between a master and a novice or apprentice, where the apprentice strives to reach the teacher's level of mastery through using the mediating or cultural tools demonstrated by the teacher. How do we learn, and

how do we develop? Different traditions have different answers to these questions. In this article Vygotsky's (1978:84) discussion of learning and development is in focus. He stated that "... in making one step in learning, a child makes two steps in development, that is, learning and development do not coincide", explaining his point in the following manner:

Once a child has learned to perform an operation, he thus assimilates some structural principle whose sphere of application is other than just the operations of the type on whose basis the principle was assimilated (Vygotsky, 1978:83–84).

So, according to Vygotsky, development is a consequence of learning, which again "... presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978:88). Learning takes place within what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnsen, 2014b). Accordingly, the educator, classmates and adaptation of the teaching and learning situation and process as a whole are crucial to learning and development. Consequently, assessing only the pupil's independent learning achievement provides only a part of all the information that is necessary in order to plan for further learning and development. A whole range of influencing factors concerning the teaching and learning environment needs to be considered. The Curriculum Relation Model is an example of a "professional tool" offering an overview of some of the main aspects of this complex phenomenon.

How can we learn to know the pupil? The question may to some extent be answered related to assessment. In the following the question is limited to three key informants and partners; the learner, parents and educators. The most important informant is of course the pupil. Teaching and learning needs are assessed through regular communication and through formal and informal assessment of the learner's work and working strategies. It is important to encourage pupils to participate in a dialogue about their education, and listen carefully to the pupils' voices, paying attention to what their interests, priorities and worries are and understanding which learning strategies they manage and prefer.

Parents are essential partners in assessing pupils' needs and interests; in reflecting over long-term aims as well as other aspects of making and re-evaluating individual curricula. As a rule they have a great deal of information about their children. Moreover, parents need information from educators about their children's rights and opportunities. Regular exchange of information and

co-operation with parents proved to be important and fruitful in individual curricular co-operation with parents in a higher education programme in special needs education for practicing teachers in eastern Iceland (Johnsen, 1988). There are several ways to arrange co-operation and exchange information with parents. If circumstances allow, it is a great advantage to prepare thoroughly for the first meeting. In my experience, no matter how small the difficulty may seem to us educators, parents feel despondent and are concerned about their child's future. In addition, many parents are insecure with regard to school and uncomfortable before their first meeting with educators and other possible advisers. If there is a prepared written proposal for an individual curriculum, this might help focus attention on the matter, which is the pupil's teaching and learning situation and process.

The third key informant is the educator who has an overall overview of a pupil's individual learning potentials and possible special needs. The concept 'educator' is used here about class teachers, subject teachers, special needs educators and assistants; all those who have or are currently working with the pupil. Ideally, they should be part of a working team, conducting regular meetings and co-ordinating responsibility (Dalen, 1982; Dyson, 1998; Fox & Williams, 1991; Johnsen, 2007; Strickland & Turnbull, 1993). Assessment and reassessment of individual learning needs is one of their responsibilities. While the class teacher has formal responsibility for all pupils in the class in Norwegian primary schools, special needs educators often carry out large parts of special needs curriculum planning. In my classroom study (Johnsen, 2013b) the principal played a key role in cooperating with all the teachers, parents and external advisory institutions (she was said to know the name of every pupil in her school). During the study this school established a resource team consisting of the principal, special needs educator and a teacher in order to provide services for an increasing number of vulnerable pupils²³. Such resource teams have become common in Norwegian schools. My colleagues at the University of Zagreb carried out an innovation project where regular class teachers were given additional support in the diverse classroom in cooperation with NGOs. Assistants were hired to participate in the classroom work, and special needs educators offered advice regarding individual educational plans and practices (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013). In several countries external institutions support schools in gathering relevant

23. References to the seven classroom studies in the WB 04/06 project relate to research plans since the results have not yet been published in English. Results of the Norwegian study are currently only available as draft.

knowledge about pupils. These institutions differ from country to country. They may be local or centralised; educational-medical, educational-psychological or special needs educational, and they may be potential or obligatory partners with schools. Members of other professions, including medical practitioners, child welfare and social workers and, in some cases, even representatives of police forces, religious leaders or athletic coaches, may be potential partners. Co-operation may vary from one brief meeting to partnership in regional, national or international networks over several years. Special needs educational work often calls for cross-disciplinary team work. It is important that teachers are self-evident participants in this type of networking for the school development to develop towards the principle of inclusion.

What do educators need to know about their pupils? The question is related to ethical principles of privacy for pupils and families. One important aspect of this principle is that educator and school should not contact external advisers without having received informed consent from parents to do so, a process which places attention on “the important conversation or conversations” with parents, building trust and inviting co-operation. Another important point is that not all information about the pupil is relevant to the school. Many aspects belong to the pupil’s and family’s privacy. Ethical sensitivity is crucial in order to distinguish between relevant information and private information that should neither be used nor recorded or even remembered. It is only in cases when there is reason to suspect child negligence or abuse that a school should inform child welfare services, which according to Norwegian law is the only institution which may override parental decision-making rights over their children.

Assessment

To assess and evaluate is to gather, interpret and reflect on a variety of information in order to adjust the direction towards reaching a future goal. Educational assessment and evaluation consists of considerations and judgements about teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and about their contextual relations. In special needs education assessment and evaluation draw attention to specific possibilities, barriers and adaptations concerning teaching and learning environments, processes and results, and their contextual relations.

According to this account, a great deal of information about the learner as well as the teaching is derived from assessment. Traditionally, pupils have been the focus of assessment. Their learning achievements have been measured and given

marks in comparison with the other pupils in the class as well as in nationwide relational product assessments. At the bottom of – or even below – such norm-referenced marking scales, we find pupils with a variety of special learning needs. In this way some pupils are stigmatised and even denied being with “the good company” of the class or school, often with serious consequences for their educational path and personal self-esteem. Assessment has also played a decisive role in decisions concerning placement of children outside ordinary classes in special classes and units, special schools or even outside the educational system in social or health institutions. This kind of assessment for segregation purposes is still more or less practised in all countries despite national and international official intentions about promotion of diversity in the inclusive school.

According to the principle of inclusion and the basic ideas underlying the Curriculum Relation Model, the purpose of assessment and evaluation is neither to give marks nor to place pupils in segregated environments. On the contrary it is characterised by being extensive, flexible and dynamic:

- Extensive because it concerns more than assessing the pupils’ learning products
- Flexible because the assessment’s form and content are supposed to be adapted to individual pupils as well as classes and schools
- Dynamic because the assessment is intended to take place through dialogue between teachers, special needs educators, pupils and parents

In spite of critique of assessment traditions, co-operation aiming towards inclusion indicates that schools discover new ways of using assessment tools they already possess as well as developing new ones. In my experience as a special needs educational supervisor, lecturer and leader of innovation and research projects, schools have developed a number of different assessment procedures of a more or less informal character in addition to formal tests. Many and different assessment practices have been described focusing on individual learning processes, such as observation of activities in school, homework and dialogue with pupil and parents. Concerning product assessment, schools also demonstrate a series of practices concerning step-by-step evaluation. Several schools are genuinely interested in developing individual curricula and adapting assessment practices to this development. These observations apply to co-operating schools in Iceland and to the Norwegian school participating in my longitudinal study as well as other schools (Johnsen, 1988; 2013b). Moreover, seventy-two Bosnian teachers, special needs educators and researchers who participated in

an innovation project from 2003 to 2005 reported applying a number of methods and approaches in their assessment of individual curricula, as the following categorisation sums up (Johnsen, 2007)²⁴:

- How do you assess the pupil's level of mastery and next possible step in learning and development?: 13 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise relevant long-term goals and short-term objectives of teaching-learning?: 4 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise learning strategies – teaching methods and classroom organisation?: 3 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise communication between pupil – teacher/s and pupil-pupil/s?: 7 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the care given to the pupil in the class?: 4 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the long-term individual curriculum for a pupil with special needs in the class?: 9 assessment methods or approaches
- How do you assess and revise the long-term class curriculum in relation to revised curricula for individual pupils with special needs in the class?: 3 assessment methods or approaches
- Assessing professional needs for upgrading: Whom (professions, institutions, etc.) would you seek cooperation and support from when discussing and answering your professional questions?: 5 different suggestions

The first category presented with the question “How do you assess the pupil's level of mastery and next possible step in learning and development?” points directly to the two levels of mastery needed to be assessed according to Vygotsky's (1978) arguments for the zone of proximal development. It is necessary to know the level of independent mastery in order to plan for the next educational steps, but it is not sufficient. We also need to know what the pupil is able to master “with a little help from a friend”; be it a fellow pupil or the teacher, in other words the pupil's learning process in cooperation with others (Johnsen, 2014b). In addition to clarifying the importance of assessing both product and process of pupils' learning, the statement of the zone of proximal development also places responsibility for adaptation of the learning process on the educators in the making of all aspects of individual and class curricula. Consequently, the purpose of assessment and evaluation might also be described as curriculum

24. For a detailed presentation of each category, see Johnsen, 2007, chapter 5.

review of all aspects and on all levels (Johnsen, 2001a). According to the Curriculum Relation Model, all eight main aspects – with relevant sub-aspects – and the interrelationship between these aspects are to be assessed.

As indicated in the examples above, while a number of traditional assessment methods may be applied, this is not done with the narrow goal of assigning marks but rather with extended intentions of reviewing the curriculum as a whole and shedding light on relevant aspects of the teaching and learning process, of the nearest zone of development (Vygotsky, 1978) and of specific needs for support. When needed, more specialised assessment tools may be added and administered by special needs educators. The pupil, parents, teachers and special needs educator of the school working together on a daily basis are in the best position to assess the actual teaching and learning process. However, cooperation with external supporters having specific knowledge and experience in relevant fields may shed new light on and add depth to the understanding, thereby resulting in alternative teaching and learning approaches.

The following are general examples of methods and approaches in individual assessment:

- Interviews and conversations
- Questionnaires
- Pupil's self-evaluation
- Assessment as part of mediating
- Achievement tests
- Specific mastery or ability tests

Several of these are also applicable in assessment in group or class settings:

- Checklists
- Dialogue with pupils
- Observations
- Logbook or diary
- Pupils' work
- Screening tests
- Portfolios

As pointed out, the pupil is not the only part of the educational process that needs assessment. In addition to assessing the pupil related to other aspects of the curriculum, all curricular aspects need to be simultaneously assessed in order to adapt the teaching and learning environment to meet the pupils'

different needs. This parallel thinking is in line with the principles and future aims towards which this text is heading, which is inclusion and promotion of the diversity of individual educational possibilities and needs. Assessment of an individual curriculum is both a continuous process and a series of “milestones” or long-term assessments. The continuous assessment process takes place through everyday teaching and assessing in dialogue with individual pupils and the whole class, with the use of checklists, observations, collection in portfolios and the use of logbooks or diaries. Regular systematic long-term assessment and revision of the individual curriculum may be implemented every semester and related to class curricula revision. The “milestone” revisions should expand on the foregoing short-term assessments and logbooks in teamwork undertaken between class-teacher and/or subject teachers and special needs educators. Some educational teams prefer to do long-term assessment more often than once each semester.

The Curriculum Relation Model allows a contextual and ecological assessment of the quality of individually adapted education. Each of the eight main curricular areas is open to examination, and relevant and important sub-aspects may be identified and assessed in relation to the pupil’s educational needs. In this way the individual curriculum may be tailored to each pupil in relation to the collective curricular levels represented by the class curriculum as well as local and national principles and contexts. Some pupils have specific needs regarding a whole range of educational aspects, and consequently, their individual curriculum needs to be extensive, while other individual curricula are more modest and less time-consuming to assess and revise.

When assessing school-related information, all involved teachers and special needs educators are important key informants in addition to the pupil and his or her family and related environment, as discussed in the previous section. Gathering background information provides access to contextual and ecological connections. The following questions might function as “door openers” for acquiring a more accurate and detailed curriculum assessment:

- Is there a need for changing priorities within some of the frame factors?
- Should the actual educational intentions be changed or repeated?
- How does the content suit the pupil’s zone of proximal development, interests and need for support?
- How does the adaptation of content and learning environment correspond to the pupil’s communication and learning strategies and pace?

- Does the individual curriculum lack any important aspects for the individual learning process?
- Are there any aspects of the individual curriculum that are not essential to the learning process and, consequently, should be taken away?
- Are the individual curricula and the class curriculum sufficiently related so that they make inclusion possible?

As already mentioned, in order to secure individually adapted education, the class curriculum needs to be assessed and revised in relation to the individual curriculum of all the pupils in class. This does not mean that educational principles laid down in statutes and policy documents are neglected, since they are given space within the curriculum model in the two main areas of 'frame factors' and 'intentions'. However, the starting point or baseline for assessment and revision of the class curriculum is in a so-called 'bottom-up perspective' that starts out by considering the pupils' educational needs. This is contrary to traditional, ordinary class curriculum planning, which has been based on a top-down perspective (Johnsen, 1998).

Educational intentions

Institutionalised education as represented by schools is, as a rule, built on intentions described in education acts and other policy documents. An important part of educators' professional work is to transfer general intentions into concrete and manageable goals through adapting them to pupils' learning needs and capacity. Society has a need to hand over traditions to new generations, helping them to become responsible adult citizens and develop new knowledge and skills for future society. National education acts reflect this need in their aims²⁵. On the other hand pupils have their own more or less clear-cut personal aims and preferences, distant future dreams and concrete, immediate objectives. Choosing learning goals and objectives in an individual curriculum is therefore reasonably based on the three components:

- Aims and goals stated in education acts and other official documents
- Individual aims, goals and objectives
- Assessment of the learner's knowledge, skills and learning potentials (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development discussed earlier)

25. Please, note that legislation and policy documents are discussed as both frame factors and intentions.

Thus goals and objectives are expected to be “operationalised” or adapted to concrete educational action within the framework of existing policy. If existing acts and regulations are too limited to meet the educational needs of a pupil or class, making an exception from the legal requirements could be a short-term solution. In this process of adaptation, maintaining dialogue and co-operation with the pupil is of essential importance. So, too, is maintaining cooperation with parents, co-teachers and other partners. Dialogue and cooperation are especially important when the pupil has special needs. In addition to cooperating on concrete educational goals, the partners need to engage in an ongoing dialogue about the pupil’s various alternative future aims and goals, both personally and professionally speaking, such as vocational possibilities.

As mentioned, many parents of children with special needs are anxious about their children’s future. Therefore, maintaining a regular dialogue between parents and school is important for the development of realistic long-term plans. In cases of severe disabilities, collaboration also needs to be extended to other related services. Interdepartmental local cooperation is also important with a view to future employment, housing, social and health care services, leisure-time activities and social network, to mention a few important aspects of general human activities and needs. There are great differences between and within countries in how they organise local service networks. Therefore, international comparative studies of “good cases” of cooperation may be useful sources of new ideas²⁶ However, as with all international comparative studies, seemingly good ideas are not fit to be transferred directly and without adaptation from one community to another. On the contrary, it is important that ideas are discussed thoroughly and adapted in accordance with local contexts (Johnsen, 2013a).

Returning to the school situation for pupils with special needs, it is important that individual goals and objectives are stated in all educational subjects and themes, and not only where barriers are found. Having a limited focus on the area where a child has special educational needs magnifies any barriers in the pupil’s mind at the expense of successful learning in other areas. Howard Gardner’s (1993a; 1993b) idea of multiple intelligences strongly supports this view. He criticises the narrow focus on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence in modern education, arguing that there are in addition musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, personal intelligence and

26. The innovation process in the municipality of Meland on the west coast of Norway, which started three decades ago, is a “classical good example” of local interdepartmental co-operation (Meland/NFPU 1987).

social intelligence. Furthermore, all these “intelligences” need to be addressed. Education is not only a matter of producing subject-bound knowledge and skills. It aims at developing active and responsible independent individuals. There are general aims for developing positive self-esteem, a personal sense of responsibility, communication and cooperative skills, tolerance, solidarity and care. In literature on individual curricula there is a growing tendency to emphasise developmental aims of such general human character, as is also the case in the more traditional literature on individual educational programmes (Fox & Williams, 1991; Gunnestad, 1992; Nordahl & Overland, 1996; Putnam, 1993; Strickland & Turnbull, 1993).

Educational intentions consist of several aspects or sub-categories of importance in curriculum planning. In the following, four different categories are presented by examples concerning 1) training of certain skills, 2) bringing about a certain type of knowledge, 3) possibilities to develop attitudes and 4) ensuring access to learning experiences. 1) Using goals and objectives concerning reading acquisition as an example of specific **skills**, this may again be divided into many small steps of developing skills, each with a specific learning intention. Another example is Activities of Daily Living (ADL), such as independently getting dressed or setting the table is also often taught through small step objectives. 2) Goals and objectives in different subjects such as biology, literature and history may be stated in terms of **knowledge** brought to the pupils by a variety of means. 3) While some skills and types of knowledge might be rather easily transferred to concrete and measurable items for assessment, educational goals concerning **attitudes** are often more difficult to describe. Moreover, there are serious ethical problems associated with stating attitudinal objectives in terms of expected pupil behaviour, simply because they are not measurable – either in terms of marks or written statements about the learner’s supposed attitude. Nevertheless, developing acceptable attitudes is an immensely important educational goal, and they must not be neglected because of a lack of measurability. In a curriculum plan they can be described as opportunities offered to develop attitudes through literature, films, poems, role-play, and visits to museums, and they may also be offered through discussion and dialogue. 4) To mention an increasingly popular example of equal **access to experiences**, several city schools list making visits to local farms among their goals so that the children may see and touch animals “for real”, and not merely look at them in picture books and on television. Creating opportunities for pupils to listen to different kinds of music, to look at paintings and visit theatres are also examples of

goals that provide pupils with access to experiences. Some pupils need special arrangements in order to gain access to these kinds of experiences. For instance, touchable art is developed for people with visual impairment, music is played so that people with hearing impairment may feel its vibrations, and mobility is assured to art centres, theatres and athletic stadiums for people with physical impairments. These are examples of educational as well as general societal goals for equal universal access to experiences.

This is only a very limited description of a few of the many aspects and levels of educational intentions that need to be considered when creating individual and class curricula.

Content

There is a close relationship between educational intentions and content because these two main aspects are expected to jointly answer questions concerning **what** a certain type of education is about. Educational content may be understood as phenomena and values that are supposed to form the pupil into an educated²⁷ person. This educational theoretical statement raises questions about what is meant by “an educated person” and, consequently, questions what kind of content phenomena or substance and values ought to be chosen for educational purposes, as the German scholar, Wolfgang Klafki, points out:

... that a double relativity constitutes the very essence of contents of education, in other words their substance and values. What constitutes content of education, or wherein its substance and values lie, can, first, be ascertained only with reference to the particular children and adolescents who are to be educated and, second, with a particular human, historical situation in mind, with its attendant past and the anticipated future (Klafki 1999:148).

Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) also stress the relativity of educational content when they highlight socio-cultural and pupil-centred dimensions alongside qualitative and quantitative dimensions as the four main criteria for choosing educational content. However, Klafki and his Norwegian colleagues, all outstanding scholars in the field of regular education, limit the interrelation to a

27. Neither of the two English concepts ‘form’ and ‘educate’ exactly encompasses the meaning of the German concept of ‘Bildung’ (Norwegian: *danning*), which is a basic concept in educational discourse. Therefore, the German word is often used when discussing this educational foundation, even in English texts.

matter between content and different groups of pupils such as classes and levels. By turning the focus towards the individual pupil in the classroom, the special needs education and inclusive tradition represents an extended view of great importance, as illustrated in the Curriculum Relation Model.

Debate and decisions concerning educational content have deep historical roots and take place on macro and micro levels. Political decisions are made on a macro level and stated in statutes and other policy documents and, in many countries, in national curricula. However, the way in which the educational content is prescribed varies greatly. Some national curricula describe content in general terms, allowing the opportunity for flexibility for local schools and educators with respect to how they may apply the term, while others give detailed directions as to its application. On a micro level the teacher and special needs educator have the professional responsibility of bridging the gap between official curricula statements and the actual learning situation in the individual classroom.

A variety of concepts are used to describe content in educational literature and national curricula. One widely used categorisation is to divide the content into school subjects and themes, which may in turn be divided into main parts and subparts. An important part of the bridging process from the macro to micro level may be to make plans for different alternative learning activities and, consequently, for teaching activities. Based on their cooperation with practising teachers, Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978: 116–118) present a set of general quality criteria for a learning activity:

- Consistency with the entire teaching programme
- Compatibility with goals
- Variety and multiplicity
- Adaptive to individual pupils and group
- Balanced and cumulative
- Relevance and meaning
- Open to optimal integration with other learning activities
- Open to pupils' choices.

Similarly, Tony Booth et al. (2000:77) presents a number of questions to be asked in order to monitor choice of educational content:

- Do lessons extend the learning of all pupils?
- Do lessons build on the diversity of the pupils' experiences?
- Do lessons reflect differences in the pupils' knowledge?
- Is the way opened up for different subjects to be learnt in different ways?

These two sets of criteria for choosing educational content are examples of considerations to take into account in curriculum planning. However, the daily plan of educational content consists of even more concrete considerations, such as choice of phenomena, situations, experiments, examples, resource persons and illustrations. Learning materials, equipment and learning environment are concrete manifestations of educational content. The educator, textbooks and blackboard or currently the electronic board constitute “the classical triangle of teaching content”. In addition, a large variety and number of materials may be at hand – either readymade purchased or handmade. In all the schools I have visited, I have found a great deal of additional teaching and learning materials; a large part of them handmade by teachers and special needs educators. This applies to schools in both Europe and other regions. A good example of a school with its own production of teaching and learning material is the case school in our research cooperation project with Addis Ababa University (NUFU 32/2002). Another good example is the Norwegian case school in my longitudinal classroom study (Johnsen, 2013b), where the teachers are steadily producing and exchanging materials.

Selecting curriculum content for an individual as well as a group is based on societal aims and needs as well as the educational needs of individual pupils and of the group or class. A main question arises regarding how to **adapt** subjects and themes from national and local curriculum to the variety of individual learning needs. This leads to another question: How can we **create** learning environments, plan learning sequences and obtain materials and equipment to suit the needs of every pupil? And how can we **coordinate** these differentiated individual learning tasks so that the whole class cooperates on learning tasks within a common theme or subject area? The “we” mainly refers to teachers and special needs educators; those who use the Curriculum Relation Model or other approaches to planning and implementing teaching in the diverse and inclusive classroom. In Vygotskian terms they are mediators in the pupils’ learning process, together with mediating tools such as the Model, all kinds of manifestations of learning content as well as methods, organisation and other factors that serve as adaptation to learning (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teaching methods and classroom organisation

Not only content, but also teaching methods and organisation must be considered when planning group and classroom activities involving the plurality of

individual learners. As mentioned, methods and classroom organisation are also considered to be mediating tools in the teaching-learning process, adapting as they do the pupil's apprenticeship within the zone of proximal development. However, these considerations need to be based on knowledge about the pupils' preferred learning strategies. Therefore, the following discussion starts with illustrative examples of learning strategies or methods before proceeding with consequences for teaching methods and classroom organisation.

Pupils learn through different strategies, activities, media and methods. Some master making generalisations through literature, while others learn the same thing more effectively from observing and experimenting. Some pupils need to write things down to remember; others learn faster by concentrating on listening. Some need to use paper and pencil in order to "think in interrelations"; some remember well what they see, while touching is of great help to others. Some prefer to study by themselves while others prefer studying in a group. The curricular scholar Hilda Taba (1962:307) pointed out that different individuals use different learning techniques for their self-development. Today, terms such as learning strategies and learning styles are the focus of educational discourse, referring to individual strategies of communication, attention focus, memorising, problem-solving, learning and development.

Barriers to learning may be caused by biological, psychological or contextual factors or, and in most cases, from a combination of these. For example, sensory impairment is a barrier to input of external information. Attention deficit and depression may have a severe impact on a pupil's ability to concentrate. Research on reading and writing difficulties focuses on problems with use of learning strategies such as short-term memory and meta-linguistic operations. Learning strategies are also related to arithmetic difficulties, general learning difficulties and developmental impairment. Most types of learning difficulties are related to communication problems between the environment and learner. Research and development of modes of communication and equipment is therefore crucial to many learners, such as those who have multiple impairments, cerebral palsy and functional deaf-blindness (Lyster, 2001; Nafstad, 1993; Ostad, 1989; 2001; Rye, 2001). The concept of learning difficulties used in connection with teaching methods and classroom organisation is not unproblematic. In light of the principle of inclusion, it raises questions like the following:

- When does an individual way of learning become a learning difficulty?
- To what extent is the organisation of the environment – the classroom teaching – or other curricular factors the main reason for labelling a specific way

of learning a difficulty, instead of looking at it as an example of the plurality of different ways of learning?

A serious problem concerns labelling a small group of pupils “owners of difficulties”, “deviations from the normal”, or in other words, not fully belonging to the pupil group. The principle of a school for all offers an alternative attitude, which is the inclusion of all pupils in the recognition of the plurality of individual differences and the positive use of these differences as a source of joint learning and understanding in the classroom.

In order to successfully address the diversity of individual learning, the learning environment must be adapted so that each learner is able to develop and use a collection of learning strategies and methods that are suitable for her or him. Handling this variation is not an easy task, not least in view of the many available educational programmes advocating that “they represent the best solution to most educational challenges”. My argument is that no method or programme is so complete that it suits all pupils or all educators. On the contrary, it is the professional duty and freedom (!) of every educator to create and develop her or his own arsenal of different methods, programmes, knowledge and skills to select from when making and revising curricula for individual pupils and classes.

As indicated, the field of **educational methodology** is so immense and varied that it is difficult – if not impossible – to grasp a complete overview. Most certainly, updating our professional knowledge in the field is a lifelong challenge. In this article there is only room to mention a few aspects and examples, starting with some old “evergreens”, since methodological discussion is not a new phenomenon. In the 1830s Danish educational scholar, Gerhard Brammer (1838) discussed the following four main teaching methods in his detailed work on didactic and pedagogic methods:

- The prescribing method: lecturing, dictation and demonstration
- The achromatic method: uninterrupted lecturing
- The dialogic method: conversation with questions and answers
- The heuristic method: The teacher asks questions and the pupils answer through undertaking independent activities

It is no surprise to learn that Brammer’s classification was by no means the first methodological discussion to ever take place; such discussions may be traced back to antiquity (Brammer, 1838; Johnsen, 2000). The methodological categories discussed by Brammer are illustrations of different kinds of interaction between educator and pupil. The emphasis on dialogue is classical, and

has currently been revitalised within cultural-historical and related theories. There is good reason to believe that Brammer's use of the concept of 'dialogue' within his historical context was not the same as is used today. Bakhtin (1986) and Rommetveit (1992, 2014) situate the dialogue in the subject's meeting with another subject or subjects and with other cultural phenomena, for instance between mediator and learner, between peers or pupil and text or other culturally mediating learning tools. The educational intention behind dialogue may be to construct a joint inter-subjective understanding, which, put simply, means that the apprentice is in the process of becoming a master. Similarly, Henning Rye's (2001) eight themes for caregiver-child and teacher-pupil interaction represent a modern elaboration of the dialogue principle based on new research on attachment, communication and mediation. They follow here in a slightly modified version:

1. To demonstrate positive feelings
2. To adapt to the pupil(s)
3. To talk with the pupil(s)
4. To give relevant praise and acknowledgement
5. To help the pupil(s) focus
6. To assist in giving meaning to the pupil's (pupils') experience
7. To elaborate and explain
8. To help the pupil(s) achieve self-discipline

Another methodological concept, scaffolding, is a metaphor from the construction industry frequently used within cultural-historical education when elaborating on Vygotsky's theory. Scaffolding is a structured and systematic assistance in the zone of proximal development through social interaction between an expert and a novice. Several scholars have contributed detailed descriptions of scaffolding through applying concepts from didactic literature, most often regarding teaching methods and sometimes adapted to cultural-historical terminology (Berk & Winsler, 1997; Cole, 1996; Johnsen, 2014b; Rogoff, 1990; Sehic, Karlsdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Storytelling is another teaching method with ancient roots that has recently been revitalised. What characterises a well-told story is that it touches the listeners' emotions, creates interest and involvement, and is therefore well suited to change attitudes and increase knowledge. But is it possible that the same story can grasp the attention and hold the interest of a group of pupils with different educational needs? In the 1850s Norwegian teacher Ole Vig described

storytelling or “the living word” as he preferred to call it, with the following characteristics:

It was very important that the teacher did not tell directly from the book, but used his or her own free style of oral presentation. The content of the story had to be at the children’s comprehension level. It should also be illustrative, with the use of examples, explanations and repetitions. The storytelling should be fluid, lively, amusing, preferably like a tale. This would awaken the children’s interest and involvement, and then their learning would take place freely and not be forced upon them (Johnsen, 2000:174).

Like quality literature, quality storytelling reaches an audience with different levels of acquisition and various background experiences simply because a good story is told on different levels. However, this does not mean that we do not have to take special precautions when we have members of the audience with individual needs. For example, if any of the pupils are dependent on sign language, the story might be told simultaneously by a signing storyteller. Alternatively, one person tells the story orally while signing. The use of sign language enriches the presentation for the whole audience, not least because of its lively use of gestures and mimicry. Storytelling might also be supplemented with pictures, requested movements and questions to be answered by the pupils, to give some further examples.

Special needs education has a number of classical methodological aspects, such as breaking down learning tasks into small steps, systematic repetition and variation in use of examples. In general, adapting methods and approaches to the plurality of different educational needs consists of the following aspects:

- Continuous acquisition of new methods and approaches
- Overview of different methods and approaches
- Flexible application of methods and approaches
- Multiple uses of methods and approaches in joint classroom settings

As mentioned, methodological considerations strongly affect choice of materials and equipment, such as literature, paper and pencil, computers and programmes, videos, materials for painting, drawing, sewing and cooking and equipment for physical exercises. Some pupils need special learning materials and equipment. Thus, pupils who are functionally blind need machines for printing in Braille and, when possible, access to computerised Braille transcription technology. Some pupils with cerebral palsy need access to BLISS symbol language and, if possible, to computers with special communication programmes. Pupils with

reading difficulties need special books, books on CD and other training materials. Pupils with developmental impairment need concrete learning materials and circumstances. However, as Vygotsky (1978) points out, they first and foremost need guidance in the direction of more abstract and general cognitive functioning.

Choosing educational content and methods is closely connected to **classroom organisation**. The traditional learning environment is the classroom. In literature on inclusion, creating classrooms that welcome pupils with special learning needs is emphasised. However, there are other possibilities of creating learning environments, like gardening, excursions, study visits and field work (Johnsen, 2001a; Klafki, 1999; Smith, 1998; Putnam, 1993). A fundamental criterion of inclusion is that all pupils belong to either a class or group. In a Nordic context this means that all pupils of the same age are organised together in classes. Age is thus the only criterion for placement in a class. Although this is a fundamental principle underlying the idea of inclusion, it does not mean that the classroom as an organisational entity is an absolute. It is wise to keep in mind that the classroom has not always been part of school. In the not too distant past, schools were established on street corners and in marketplaces, churches and other buildings. People of all ages gathered in groups; some even numbering up in the hundreds. Private tutors gave lessons to single pupils or small groups. Thus, although the class is important as a main organisational entity, as pupils' "educational home", so to speak, the following additional arrangements should also be taken into consideration:

- Organising into large classes (two or more classes together)
- Organising into groups
- Individual teaching
- Inside and outside the classroom

Along with the whole-class structure, these organisational entities are arenas where a variety of possible approaches to teaching and learning may be applied. A well-used example is that individual learning may be arranged either as independent learning or as a dyad consisting of one teacher or special needs educator and one pupil. Dyadic teaching might create excellent possibilities for various quality-teaching approaches, from effective training to creative dialogue. However, individual teaching also has its serious pitfalls. For example, extended use of teacher-pupil dyads might be a way to avoid making radical changes in traditional classroom management. The consequence may be that the pupil with

special needs is separated from the rest of the class activities for a considerable part of the school day and thereby loses important opportunities to learn and take part in peer socialisation. This problem is, however, limited to financially wealthy school environments.

Inclusive organisation of pupils in class depends upon a number of physical frame factors related to the classroom and how we are able to utilise them to create flexible solutions and – most importantly – a friendly and welcoming learning environment for everyone. Thus, the class is expected to reflect the class members' diversity with respect to different mastery levels and learning possibilities.

Group work and collaborative learning take into account Vygotsky's (1978) focus on peer support in the learning process. Pupils divide tasks among themselves, discussing, assisting and drawing conclusions (Dzemidzic, 2007). This kind of organisation may be applied to a variety of tasks. In addition to encouraging factual learning and cognitive development, it also supports creative thinking, critical thought, the art of discussion as well as listening, and recognition of a variety of barriers that may arise during the cooperative process. Last but not least, it may encourage pupils to have a sense of solidarity and care connected to the joy of joint problem solving. Ultimately, collaborative learning is an extremely important approach to developing democratic skills and attitudes. However, cooperation is not learned over night. There are many pitfalls to achieving successful cooperation, which must be learned step by step under the teacher's close supervision.

Collaborative learning calls for collaborative teaching, where more than one educator works in the classroom, possibly aided by assistant (Johnsen, 2001a; Igrić & Cvitković, 2013). This, however, presupposes that educators are willing to change their professional attitude and teaching style. Traditionally, educators are self-sufficient, assuming independent responsibility for either an entire class or smaller group of pupils. To team teach with one or more colleagues means that lessons are prepared, practiced and assessed together so that the capacity of all educators is effectively utilised, and nobody is passive while one of the teachers takes the traditional responsibility for the entire class. This also means that preparatory work and teaching tasks are divided among colleagues beforehand. (Bigge & Stump, 1998; Dalen, 1982; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Dyson, 1998; Hjelm-brekke, 2014; Johnsen, 1998; 2001a; Mittler 2000; Booth et. al., 2000; Skrtic, 1995).

An important aspect of flexible class organisation is to use the classroom as a base combined with different activities outside of it. Pupils are assigned

tasks where they go elsewhere to find solutions; for instance, they might go to the school library in order to search for handbooks or find another room in which to interview a pupil or assist a group. They might be asked to go out into the schoolyard to measure the circumference of trees or go shopping to the local grocery store. Currently, most pupils leave the classroom for special needs education and many of them feel themselves negatively labelled. The inclusive school needs to be open to a greater extent of “inside and outside classroom activities”. Ideally, having either single pupils or groups leave the classroom to take part in separate learning activities should be a natural occurrence. Thus, flexibility and openness in organisation will enrich the learning environment for all. Further, it will allow the possibility of providing specific studies and support services adapted to a variety of pupil interests and levels of comprehension. Another highly important reason for “inside and outside classroom activities” is that children and young people need space in order to thrive, learn and develop. Even the most pleasant classroom is too small in a physical sense to be an ideal permanent learning environment.

Communication

Communication and care, two of the main aspects of the Curriculum Relation Model, represent an extension of traditional education. In the model the two aspects are located inside the circle of classical didactical areas and serve as bridges between the instruction planning and the pupil. There can be no education without communication, no matter how qualified and relevant the adaptation of intentions, content, methods and organisation seems to be.

The notion of communication covers a wide range of aspects. It is a core concept in education for democratic citizenship called for by Englund (1997), who also points to creation of inter-subjective meaning and training in argumentation or discursive practices. He further develops educational practices with roots in the Socratic dialogue of ancient Greece. Similarly, in Freire’s education for empowerment (1972) communication and dialogue are basic concepts along with joint experience and reflection. Communication is certainly at the core of interaction and mediation, as argued by Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1996) Feuerstein (1991), Rommetveit (1992; 2014) and Rye (2001, 2005). They focus on the following factors:

- Pupils learn through interaction with their fellow human beings and their environments
- Language and communication are essential tools in learning and cognitive development
- Parents, teachers and peers may function as mediators and discourse partners in joint teaching and learning processes

Communication and mediation theories like these offer direction to individual and class curriculum activities. They are therefore of great importance when we are preparing concrete educational intentions, content, methods and organisation based on assessment of individual learning possibilities and need for support.

Communication may be divided into two aspects; technological and human-relation. The following examples illustrate the first aspect:

- Do we hear and see each other (levels of light and noise in the classroom)?
- Does anyone need hearing aids?
- Do we need special communication media such as sign language, signed speech, BLISS-signs, icons, computer communication programmes or other augmentative devices?
- Do we need systematic step-by- step support in learning to understand and apply a language?

The human-relation aspect of communication relates to our ability to see and hear the single pupil, every pupil and the entire class. According to Rye (2001, 2005) research and theory building during recent decades indicates the following traits in human nature in general and children's development in particular:

- The child has an innate social nature and potential to develop communication and social interaction
- The child has a fundamental need to establish reciprocal social relationships in order to survive, develop physically and socially, and learn to understand and relate to the physical and social world
- The child – particularly throughout the early years – learns through social interaction with caregivers, who become the child's important mediators and supporters in the process of socialisation and mastery of their relationship to the surrounding world

Human relationships are based on being seen, listened to and taken seriously. Let us take ourselves as examples; we tune in to each other's attention. This is

the case in families, between man and wife, between friends – and in school. However, we all have experienced either not being seen or we do not see all of our family members, friends or every single pupil in class. And when we feel that someone does not really see us over a long period of time, our relationship with that person may gradually fade away. Thus, a pupil that is not seen loses sight of the meaning of school. Seeing and being seen are fundamental elements of human relationships and communication. The communication act may be illustrated by Martin Buber's (1947) early discussion of the notion of 'inclusion', where he relates it to similar concepts, namely 'dialogue' and 'dialogical relation', and argues that 'inclusion' is the opposite of 'empathy', before he proceeds with his clarification:

It (inclusion) is the extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfilment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates. Its elements are, first, a relation, of no matter what kind, between two persons, second, an event experienced by them in common, in which at least one of them actively participates, and, third, the fact that this one person, without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same time lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other.

A relation between persons that is characterized in more or less degree by the element of inclusion may be termed a dialogical relation (Buber, 1947: 124–125).

In this way Buber places 'dialogical relation', described as open, positive and profound communication, in what today may be called an inclusive practice. Throughout the history of schooling, there have been many dialogical relations between teachers and pupils, and such teachers are cherished in our memories as "The Good Teacher". Last but not least, the kind of dialogical relation or recourse-based communication act discussed here goes beyond the spoken or signed words and incorporates non-verbal communication (Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2000).

Care

Care is another main aspect of fundamental importance for the entire educational process. Similar to communication, it represents an extended professional understanding compared to traditional limited discipline or knowledge-related education. It emphasises that positive learning depends on the satisfaction of basic human needs (Rye, 2005) as belongingness, love, acceptance and recogni-

tion. Therefore we need to be aware of not only the learner but the whole child or adolescent within their social and cultural context. We also need to be conscious of the joint cultural heritage and conditions that we share with our pupils, with its potential and joy as well as its barriers and traumas. Knowledge and care for pupils' personal living conditions and the whole range of their developmental potentials and needs is an important part of our challenge as educators. It was therefore impressive to witness the extensive knowledge the class teacher in my longitudinal classroom study had of every child in her class, and how carefully she handled this sensitive information (Johnsen, 2013b). Our pupils need to be aware of our care. It shows in our attitudes, small informal talks, eye contact or a light touch on the shoulder; in some nice words about what was good in the homework as well as our concerns. Care shows itself in how we plan, implement and evaluate all aspects in the Curricular Relation Model.

Recently, the ethics of care have gained renewed interest in educational discourse. Nel Noddings (1992; 2003) discusses the challenge to care in school. She argues that there is a need for a radical change in both curriculum and teaching to reach all children, not just the few who fit our conception of the academically able. She argues that care is a form of relationship founded on the receptivity, relatedness and responsiveness of both the care-giver and the cared-for. It has to do with recognizing actual needs from the point of view of the cared-for. Referring to Carol Gilligan (1993), Noddings points out that care has a long tradition as a feminine endeavour. Care also seems to have been a driving force in many of the male and female pioneers who opened special schools for children who were deaf, blind or had developmental impairments in the latter part of the eighteenth century and onwards (Johnsen, 2001b). It had also great attention in early inclusion debates in Norway in the 1960s and 1970's, as seen in the national curriculum of that time (M 1987: 16–17). However, in the late 1970s and 1980s, the conception of care was criticised as being a type of naive pity, and there was a terminology shift in educational discourse that is found in the following Norwegian national curriculum (L 1997), where the term 'care' is hardly used. Recently, the ethics of care have gained renewed interest. In Norway Edvard Befring (1996; 1997; 2001) discusses care in a special needs educational and inclusion perspective, arguing that care and learning are complementary functions.

Care is manifested in concrete actions in the way we as educators interact with individual pupils and the class, in our choice of content, methods, classroom organisation and not least how we choose to assess and give feedback to

our pupils on their work and progress. Gross (1996) and Webster-Stratton (1999) describe a number of specific caring actions that are in line with Befring's and Nodding's recommendations. Here are some of their examples:

- Encouragement of and participation in play activities with pupils
- Listening to pupil(s)
- Sharing personal experiences with pupil(s)
- Creating opportunities for feelings to be expressed and discussed through play and through a variety of creative activities, like drawing, painting, drama and role-play, literature reading and discussions, writing logbooks, dialogue books and essays
- Giving support to pupils who have experienced disappointments, traumatic events and loss
- Supporting pupils to develop positive coping and mastering strategies
- Promoting self-confidence through self-talk and other empowerment strategies
- Showing pupil(s) trust

These examples of caring activities are all in line with Rye's (2001, 2005) previously described principles for teacher- pupil interaction. The general message in the literature referred to above supports the basic philosophy of this article, pointing out that care means seeing and supporting each pupil as a unique individual who has their own learning opportunities and needs (Johnsen, 2001a).

From their slightly different theoretical positions, Maslow (1954) and Vygotsky point out that we are not only individuals but also members of a group or collective. Care must therefore be extended to support individual pupils as members of a collective entity such as the class, as well as to develop the class as a caring environment for all pupils. Gross (1996) focuses on the importance of organising the caring classroom through measures where pupils' personal autonomy and development of self-esteem go hand-in-hand with showing respect, involvement and caring for others. She points out that the teacher is an important role model for pupils' development of involvement and care. Tetler (2000) presents a number of recommendations for the development of an inclusive and caring classroom culture under the metaphorical "Didactics of Generosity"²⁸. Her main point is that in order to develop an inclusive classroom,

28. Didactics of Generosity has been translated from the Danish "rummelighedens didaktik" by the author of this article, who regrets the fact that the English translation does not fully grasp the Danish concept.

it is necessary to turn from categorisation and grouping of pupils towards focusing on how to plan and practise classroom activities that meet the plurality of different needs of all the pupils in the class.

Advocacy is another important topic in the internal work of the inclusive class, and perhaps even more so outside the classroom and school. Educators have a professional ethical duty to defend and argue for pupils' rights to receive suitably adapted education in an inclusive school. This is still of great importance for pupils with needs that have traditionally not been met in the ordinary school. The French-Bulgarian philosopher and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva, revitalises and extends the slogan of early French Enlightenment in her ethical-political project on liberty, equality, community²⁹ – and vulnerability. Her expansion is based on recognising the community of vulnerability as well as that of liberty (Johnsen, 2010; 2014c; Kristeva, 2010). Kristeva's point of departure stems from her observations of people's as well as society's all too common avoidance of persons with disabilities, especially people with severe intellectual challenges. She situates the reason for this avoidance the individual's sub-consciousness, where the encounter with the disability evokes uneasiness; an uneasiness that we need to confront in ourselves in order to meet the disabled as an equal citizen in our collective society of vulnerable individuals. In this way she applies psychoanalysis, arguing in favour of making individual ethical choices which in turn relate to the ethical mentality of the entire community.

Similar to the art of communication, care is an ability that can be made conscious, learned and developed, even though we will never be fully qualified.

Context

Michael Cole presents a thorough discussion and continuation of Vygotsky's (1978) pioneer argumentation for the culture-historical context of learning in his work *Cultural Psychology – A **Once** and Future Discipline* (1996), where he relates Vygotsky's theories to contemporary and current scholars such as Rogoff (1990; 2003) and Bronfenbrenner, whose theory of ecology (1979) is mentioned

29. The phrase 'liberty, equality and fraternity' became a motto for the French Revolution on August 26, 1789. Kristeva refers directly to this phrase. The emphasis on the community of brothers was, however, quickly criticized by contemporary women's rights activists. The French Olympe de Gouges pronounced the Women's Rights Declaration in 1793, and the English philosopher and educational scholar Mary Wollstonecraft argued for gender equality (Rustad, 2007). With this backdrop the initial slogan becomes less faulty as 'liberty, equality and community'. The change from 'fraternity' to 'community' is made by the author of this chapter.

above in conjunction with Goodlad's (1979) curricular ecology. According to Rogoff (1990:140), Vygotsky emphasises that development is a process of learning to use the intellectual tools provided through social history. Thus so-called 'scaffolding,' a term frequently used by cultural-historical and socio-cultural scholars, consists of finding or developing and adapting the intellectual tools available at any time, be they the pen and inkwell of yesterday or apps (application software) of tomorrow. These are what in the deeply rooted science of didactics or curriculum may be categorised as educational intentions, assessment, content, methods and organisation, and the most classical and important intellectual tool at all time; the educator. Bronfenbrenner and Goodlad pay particular attention to the cultural and curricular context of the local school with its opportunities and barriers, called 'frame factors' in sociology of education. Thus, school as an institution depends upon and operates within a framework that may be constructed by several factors, such as legislation, financial and human resources and a number of physical, social and cultural aspects. Frame factors set limits and give direction, and they also allow new opportunities. Therefore context and frame factors are a main area in the Curriculum Relation Model, embracing the inner activity of schooling as indicated by placing context as a second circle around the other main areas in the model.

As mentioned, educational **legislation** and **policy** "have two faces", one as macro-level educational intentions and the other as frame factors. In most countries the documents describe official educational rights, responsibilities and general aims. These are in many cases related to internationally agreed principles such as the principle of education for all and the inclusive school. However, national educational acts and curricula tend to have a variety of aims and goals that do not necessarily correspond to one another. On the contrary, they might modify or even contradict each other. This is rather usual in countries that have a self-image as actively performing political democracies. One reason for this may be that their legislation is the result of a number of compromises between different interests and ideas (Englund, 1986; Johnsen, 2000). In the making of individual and class curricula, national legislation and policies therefore need interpretation in the process of adapting them to actual educational situations. They also need to be related to other frame factors and curricular main aspects.

Annual national budgets are nicknamed "the law above the law" in some countries because budget items influence the possibility for implementing political intentions. **Economy** is the most discussed – and complained about – of all the frame factors. What is too often forgotten is that the division of available

financial resources depends on what priorities are made by central and local politicians and officials and, ultimately, the local school and even the class.

Professional quality is perhaps the most important element in the development towards an inclusive school. The prevalence of qualified teachers and special needs educators as well as the quality and perspective of their education are important frame factors. The process from principle to reality of an inclusive school needs strong professional advocacy and solid craftsmanship, flexibility and creativity in the art of educating. Consequently, educators of regular teachers and special needs educators have a great responsibility when it comes to preparing future professionals for adapting schools and classes for all children, with and without special needs. The same is the case for research and research policy.

The school building, its surroundings and neighbourhood may be categorised as **physical frame factors** or **context**. The physical framework of schools varies enormously both within and between countries. Classrooms may be dark and cold, with doors too narrow for a wheelchair. The schoolyard may be small and dirty, surrounded by streets with heavy traffic. Buildings may be small and located in secure surroundings, with trees, grass and beautiful flowers, and with ample opportunity for children to play and learn. Or the building may be clean and nice, with rooms of different sizes, tables and chairs adapted to pupils' changing sizes, with modern teaching equipment and secure surroundings. In some localities the school building functions as the heart of the community; a place for education and the area's cultural centre. In some places caring for the school and for suitably adapted education for all pupils is given high priority by local politicians as well as educators and parents. Quite often, minor changes made to the physical surroundings may decrease or even eliminate barriers to learning. For example, a dark classroom may be given more light so that it becomes easier for pupils to read their textbooks and see the blackboard. Another example may be when a pupil who is hard of hearing is placed in the room so that she or he is able to see the teacher's mouth and facial expressions. The classroom equipment and working conditions for educators are certainly important frame factors as well. New technology developed during recent decades has radically increased teachers' possibilities to create flexible and suitably adapted individual curricula in the class setting. However, new technology is dependent on economic frames as well as infrastructural factors, such as having dependable electricity in the area. There is a danger that the gap between western schools and educational opportunities in the south will further increase as a

consequence of the new possibilities accompanying computer technology due to the major differences in schools' financial ability to utilise these "new helpers".

There is a whole range of **social and cultural frame factors** or **contextual aspects** influencing the internal activity in school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) takes into consideration the local community's social and economic structures, its employment situation and natural environment as important influential factors for learning. In a local innovation project Høgmo (1981) demonstrated contradictions and dilemmas when a centralised national curriculum heavily biased by social and cultural factors from the capital was implemented in a small fishing village in northern Norway. His criticism led to major changes in the next national curriculum (M 1987), introducing local curriculum development as an obligatory part of educational planning. The intentions were to suitably adapt general national guidelines in accordance with the local environment of each school. Accompanying this turn from centralised to locally adapted curriculum development was the principle of meaningful and suitably adapted education for the individual pupil.

A number of more or less concrete and easily discovered social and cultural factors also influence schools and pupils' learning opportunities. Bilingualism and the fact that children are expected to learn to read in a language other than their first language is a well-known barrier to reading acquisition. Parents' illiteracy is another factor that needs to be taken into account when planning school curricula. Changing priorities in educational matters are – or should be – consequences of social and cultural contextual factors on the local and national level. Attitudes are important aspects of this context that influence how information is interpreted and choices made, consciously as well as unconsciously. Prejudices also exert influence; in the case of attitude, perhaps the main view in a local community is that its school should give "bright pupils" high priority? Perhaps special needs are seen as dangerous or shameful? Or maybe they are viewed as natural states of human diversity?

This brief descriptions and examples indicate that socio-cultural contexts consist of many vague as well as clear and concrete aspects. Some are even quantifiable, such as economic factors or the number of qualified educators. Others are more diffuse and hard to detect, while several aspects remain undiscovered as hidden frame factors. Some factors are subjected to official debate on a macro level and lead to revisions in laws and priorities. These revisions are in turn prone to having actual consequences for the single school and educational team in the planning, practicing and revision of local and individual curricula.

Some practical considerations

After this review of the eight curricular main aspects of the Curriculum Relation Model, some unifying considerations regarding purposeful use of it are required. As mentioned, the model has been used in research, innovation and professional-practical work. The following discussion is delimited to practical considerations, starting with two fundamental questions:

- How can we organise our work as teachers and special needs educators so that the relevant main aspects of importance for individual pupils and the whole class are considered?
- How can we assure enough flexibility so that the variety of individual needs is met?

As a starting point to answering the questions, the context in which the Curriculum Relation Model was developed in the 1990s is briefly outlined. At that time – as today – there were several books and articles about individual curricula focusing on pre-produced checklists and forms as ‘prescriptions’ for working with learners with special needs. Professional educators are invited to follow the checklists and fill in the forms. However, a serious problem with these forms is that they are static and encourage one absolute, detailed understanding of curriculum making, thus adapting the work to the form instead of to the pupil. Among all the forms and checklists in circulation, I have never seen a form that suits every pupil, every educational team and all varieties of educational needs within different contexts. Inflexible use of pre-produced forms may therefore limit educational planning and overlook important possibilities, barriers and needs. In this way they may function as obstacles instead of positive professional tools for suitable facilitation of teaching-learning processes.

The Curriculum Relation Model was developed as a dynamic and flexible alternative to pre-prepared forms. This is why the model only consists of eight main aspects in interrelation with each other and no pre-prepared checklist. Three main components are recommended in curricular planning; 1) development of a professional-personal list of important curriculum keywords, 2) use of a diary or logbook and 3) development of individual long-term curricula in relation to class curricula and for further detailed planning of short-term curricula that are continuously revised throughout the teaching-learning process.

- 1) Every teacher and special needs educator applies a number of professional concepts regarding teaching-learning processes. Each educator is advised

to use these to develop their own **personal-professional list of important curriculum keywords** related to each of the main aspects, and in this way create an overview of the many possible aspects of individual education in a class context. The keywords function as reminders of practice phenomena such as a specific academic content or communication approach. Flexibility is a main feature of the list, which should be continuously revised so that new keywords are added and outdated ones discarded. Thus, the list serves as a foundation for tailor-making individual curricula in planning and re-evaluation. Creating and revising a personal-professional list of curricular keywords does not require any sophisticated and expensive material or forms. On the contrary, because of the expected continuous changes, it is well suited to be written down and placed in a portfolio or in a folder on the computer. A version of such a list is presented in the report from the Bosnian curricular innovation project where the participants developed individual lists of keywords related to curricular main aspects. These were discussed and summarised in teams and presented in plenum (Johnsen, 2007).

- 2) The use of a **diary or logbook** is a classic and strongly recommended practical aid in curriculum development. The logbook is suitable for gathering informal information about the pupils' daily educational process in one place, recording thoughts that may be important regarding progress, barriers, needs and surprises. Commenting on the efficiency of teaching methods, aspects of the individual curriculum and communication with other pupils, co-teachers, parents and other collaboration partners may also be noted in this highly personal medium. Taking five to ten minutes every day to write down observations may prove of great importance next time we make long-term curricular revisions. However, diaries and notebooks must be stored in a safe place to ensure that unauthorised persons do not access our highly important and sensitive information about individual and class curricula³⁰.
- 3) The last crucial component in curriculum creation is, of course, the individual and class curricula, created as long-term curricula, which are further developed as short-term curricula at a level of detail relevant to each case. It should be noted that special needs educational practice is often characterised as "the small steps endeavour". This is a quality that must be

30. It is also a matter of ethical consideration to decide which kind of information should be written down in this and other curricular working documents and which information is better stored in our memory or not at all.

catered for in the curriculum of the inclusive class. According to this curricular relation approach, all curricula are continuously revised through the teaching-learning process.

Concluding thoughts

Finally, there are three matters that need to be given some consideration. The first is the choice of curricular main aspects. Secondly, some problems and dilemmas of special needs education are commented upon through using examples discussed by Dyson (1998). Lastly, the need to develop perspectives that are in favour of suitably adapted education in inclusive schools must be mentioned.

As stated earlier, the eight curricular aspects described here are intended to focus on some, but not all, important aspects and relations of learning and teaching processes. My assumption is that no model or list of keywords is able to cover all aspects of reality. The keywords chosen are important factors in deciding which parts of reality are being focused on, and which parts are not discussed, and therefore remain taken for granted and less visible. As mentioned, several of the main aspects commented upon in this article are classical curricular aspects or ‘commonplaces’, by which is meant there is a common understanding and agreement on the importance of these aspects in educational and special needs educational discourse. Intentions, content, methods, organisation, assessment and learning have been classical focus points as far back as the history of educational ideas has been recorded (Johnsen, 2000). However, context, communication and care are aspects that are in the process of gaining attention at least within some educational and special needs educational traditions. There is also a rising criticism of “the taken for grantedness” of these educational commonplaces. Both their content and focusing effect are seen as problematic (Englund, 1997; Popkewitz, 1997). Some critics go so far as to argue for replacing them with other concepts. As mentioned above, Englund states his view in the following way:

... in didactics and curriculum theory we are often too entrenched in concepts like schooling, planning, teaching and learning. Instead, I think we need a language which uses concepts like experiences, communication, meaning-creating, discursive practices and so on (Englund, 1997:22).

This important criticism is met by adding main aspects, such as communication, which contains much of what Englund (1997) advocates, to the classical and

commonplace ones. Another view is that explicit reflections on commonplace construction and aspects of education are necessary elements of a purposeful changing process of schooling. In school settings educational intentions, content, organisation and other methods need to be problematised in relation to pupil diversity. This is a key principle in special needs education and a fundamental inclusive practice. Thus, communication and care have been introduced and given central positions in the Curriculum Relation Model because the ability to communicate and provide care is viewed as so fundamental that all other important educational aspects depend on them in order to be activated.

As repeatedly mentioned, the field of education and special needs education is complex and in some respects contradictory. Consequently, there are a number of dilemmas that are important to face in practical curriculum work. Dyson (1998:11) states that "... the notion of dilemmas offers a powerful lens through which education generally and special education in particular can be viewed". Thus, from his point of view, dilemmas are not merely accidental and temporary difficulties arising in particular situations. Rather, education and special needs education are characterised by a series of dilemmas tied to specific aspects of the field. Dilemmas are supposed to be found in each of the eight main aspects pinpointed here. For example, there is a dilemma between the teacher's need to assess special learning needs and the danger of labelling certain pupils in the class. Being labelled and categorised into a disability group may have a negative effect on both the pupil's self-concept and other pupils' attitudes.

Dyson (1998) is in line with the cultural-historical school when he points out that special needs education and the principle of inclusion do not emerge out of a social vacuum, but are found within a particular social context filled with the interplay of history, knowledge, interests and power. Several different educational principles, some of which are in direct contradiction, are rubbed against each other in ongoing discourses³¹. One such example is the principles of solidarity, co-operation and inclusion confronted by the societal urge for competition (Johnsen, 1998:11). The principle of suitably adapted education in an inclusive school is challenged from several different positions, one of which being the deeply ingrained tradition concerning the worship of the genius.

31. In my study of the history of educational ideas in early modern times (Johnsen, 2000), a flow of different ideas was found to be apparent already in the early phases of educational discourse – strengthening, moderating and even exterminating each other in "the fight for a privileged position" as the centuries went by.

This leads us to a third topic for reflection. A continuous creation of new perspectives in favour of inclusion is necessary. Befring (2001; 2014) launched a new perspective when arguing for the enrichment perspective as a special educational approach to the inclusive school. According to this perspective, a “good” school for children with disabilities also offers an ideal environment for the learning, nurturing and well-being of all other pupils, not only in the class, but also the entire school. How? Applying the curricular relation approach with its flexibility embedded in the connection between individual and class curricula, accommodating the variety of comprehension levels, interests and educational needs of all pupils is a practice-focused approach in accordance with the enrichment perspective.

The Curriculum Relation Model discussed in this article represents one possible and fruitful approach to bridging the gap between the international normative principle of inclusion and the school and educational practice. It also offers a research and theory-based perspective advocating the application of innovation and research on inclusive practices in the process towards achieving full educational inclusion.

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PART THREE

ETHICS OF INCLUSION

From the Exceptional to the Universal

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Translated by Goran Đapić

Introduction

Do particular phenomena such as different disabilities really have anything in common? Is it possible to get access to the core of what is essentially human through such a side track? Is it possible to discover the universal in something “so unique” and exceptional? How can it address grand anthropological problems related to man in society; in the culture, in the world; faced with “the others”...? To what extent could exceptional phenomena such as disabilities serve as a magnifying mirror, as magnification?

Singular - plural - universal

Among the many significant characteristics of our culture, there is an inclination to put the issue of disability aside. The responsibility to understand the phenomenon is left to different specialists or experts together with sympathisers fighting for their cause. “It is their job, not ours. It is not our field of interest. It is too difficult, and humiliating, too, to focus our activities, work or research on those who are weak!” For the same reasons, they are being placed “somewhere else”; those who are affected by some impairments. Since they are thought to be strange, they must be isolated. “The strangers”, they are perceived as unfamiliar, unclear silhouettes, often distant and weird, being identified only by their syndrome: Down’s, Guillain-Barre’s, Kanner’s or Asperger’s, Prader-Willi, Rett, or Locked-in. They are children, adolescents and adults reduced to one designation, identified with a specific institution and similar centre. They are

reduced to their wheelchairs, to their crutches or prostheses. It is even possible to disembody and regard them as senseless beings instead of thinking of them as children and adults, as living human beings who feel and think; who have urges and desires, plans, passions and will.

However, are the deaf the opposite of hearing people? No! Their eyes are their ears. Their visual sharpness, imagination and intuition are fascinating. They speak with “signs”. Their first language is their sign language, and it functions similarly to other people’s oral language. They are not acquainted with the world of noises. Their culture is one of silence, and their bodies live in the rhythm of vibration. Emmanuelle Laborit remembers how as a teenager, she loved to go out with her deaf friends to a disco-club:

It was the only place where we could switch on the music on full strength regardless of others. I danced all night, with my body glued to the speakers. The hearing looked at me, surprised. They must have thought that I was crazy (Laborit, 1994: 32).

Are blind people half-human compared to those who see well? No! Their eyes are at the tips of their fingers, and they view the world beyond appearances. Beauty is for them something warm, mild, smooth; the softness of a face, the melody in a piece of music, the resonance and colour of a voice and the shape of a sculpture. Evgen Bavčar, a blind photographer, tells how he colours the things and persons that he meets³².

I know one woman whose voice is so blue that it can transform an autumn day from grey to azure. I met a painter who had a dark-red voice, and by chance it was the colour that he loved (Bavčar, 1992:10).

He experiences the sun through its warming effect. And as for light, it comes to him through words and music: “I remember”, he says, “a guitar player who sang a *bossa nova* in Portuguese and I barely understood the words, but the sounds were multiplying like glow-worms spreading over her and her guitar; it was so light that I wished to paint them”. He concludes: “We will live in a barbarous world until you understand that without eyes there are other ways of seeing. That is why I am a photographer; in order to join you in your universe and to suggest to you another kind of view” (Bavčar, 2004: 85). He tells how he, during the opening of a sculpture exhibition, was observing “the nudes up close” with his hands. He was asked to leave the gallery because other visitors were

32. Born in Slovenia, Evgen Bavčar completely lost his sight at the age of eleven following two consecutive accidents. The first exhibition of his photographic achievements took place in Paris in 1987.

shocked by his touching the bodies. His experience as photographer continuously imposes this question to us: How does a blind man manage to substitute seeing with using his tactile sense and by so doing grasp the reality of that vision in all its details? Photographic art is considered a prerogative for those who can see. But is it first and foremost a mental picture of the world, and only that? Is it an effect of sensuality, whose imprint is only a secondary phenomenon?

Even though persons who are blind or deaf may be perceived as being exceptional or completely unique individuals, by nature there is no fundamental difference between them and others who are not deprived of hearing or seeing. This remains true, even in the case of the most advanced impairments. I think of a boy with cerebral palsy, who cannot control the movements of his legs, hands or speech organs. His words, insane of fury at being trapped within the confines, collide with the walls of his body. While these are difficult moments that reflect the seriousness of his impairment, they still indicate his level of understanding. He recently enrolled in a higher education programme in social sciences. On the table in his room lies the book *The Body Silent (Vivre à corps perdu)* by Robert F. Murphy (1987), an American anthropologist who tested his physical reactions as his body became gradually paralysed day by day. On his computer, which he commanded by means of his chin, is a love message from his darling, asking him to choose the same type of summer vacation as she has done from a brochure promoting adapted tourism.

I also still think about the girl with multiple disabilities due to major and diffuse lesions which had obstructed her entire developmental process. Her cerebral impairment generates a progressive disease, multiplying her difficulties in a downwards spiral. The domino effect of her overall motor impairments creates a host of secondary effects whereof the most serious are hypotonic or pathological lethargy of the spine³³, paralysis in all four limbs and difficulty swallowing. Against all odds and even though they lack the possibility of reversing the increasingly serious impairments, her parents are tirelessly continuing to encourage their girl's appetite for life and her desire to explore the world; her ability to enjoy others' caresses, experience new emotions and understand certain messages, such as receiving an invitation to a dinner or listening to music. Their relationship with her is like sharing a precious jewel.

33. Hypotonia, also called floppy infant syndrome or infantile hypotonia, is a condition of decreased muscle tone.

Regardless of their impairments³⁴, each of the memorable persons I have told about contribute to highlight the meaning of anthropological universality, namely the endless diversity of human beings, their polyphony and changeability of appearance, their inconstancy and essential vulnerability. “Just when I am nothing”, wrote Sophocles (1989) in *Edipe at Colone*, “then I am a man”. Therefore, even if disability particularises these individuals’ place in the world, their suffering and strength, silence and dreams as well as tragedies and their surmounting these tragedies are as much intersected in them as in all of us. However, because they are the mirror of our own incompleteness, they evoke poorly controlled reactions in us where the most intimate layers of our consciousness try to exorcise our own fears and deviations. “*Ecce homo*; behold the man!”

As individuals or single persons we are neither extraordinary nor ordinary. The boundaries are vague. We are all – with or without a disability – “singularly plural”. All of us are “singularly plural and plural singular” (Nancy, 1996:12)³⁵. No more, no less. We are all intermediary human beings between plus and minus, the best and the worst, above and below. Unfavourable circumstances may without warning smash to pieces the self-confidence we are used to enjoy as unchanging members of destiny’s favourable side. Nonetheless, at any moment it can throw us into extraordinary circumstances. No one is protected from being a stranger in relation to collective norms; to becoming a stranger in relation to life’s normal path; to becoming a stranger in the universe of others, in the eyes of the collective.

To break isolation and build inclusion and reciprocity

What characterizes the issue of disability is that we talk about this particular phenomenon as if it is universal. A disability seems to carry the entire human destiny of an individual; nothing seems to be left out. In this way the issue comes to represent a closed system. Research on disability should not take place in this kind of closed system of thinking, self-contemplating and dogmatic in nature. Rather, through tapping into the sources of common cultural references,

34. In *La naissance de la clinique* (1963) Michel Foucault showed how diseases tend to be conceptually isolated and physically manipulated, regardless of the patient. The disease exists as an object and its prevalence hides the sight of the physician from the subject who is carrying it.

35. “From a singular one”, Jean-Luc Nancy (1996) writes, “there is contiguity (...) each singularity is a different access to the world”.

singularity becomes open to universality, however radical this notion might be. When original thinking or thinking containing originality is desirable, it is all the more legitimate that it maintains as a principle to refuse to reduce the issues connected with disability to “special issues”.

The phenomenon of exclusion is, according to Michel Foucault (1972: 113)³⁶ recognised through “the manner in which societies get rid of, not their dead, but their living human beings”. His statement is an echo of Montesquieu’s (1739/1998) argument regarding “closing several lunatics in homes in order to persuade us that those who are outside are not lunatics”. These kinds of statements seem to be on the increase. Unfortunately, more than for people with disabilities, whom such statements threaten in particular, they tell us about our world’s difficulty to build a world; “the world sick of the world and of the sense of that world” (Nancy, 1996:12).

For those who are excluded, this mind-set is worthless and inappropriate: Being invited by discreetly insinuating messages, “to be gone somewhere else” when there is nothing else; and to sense that according to some prevailing logic, they live in this world without any reasonable cause. When Joë Bousquet, a friend of Paul Valéry, André Gide, Paul Eluard and Louis Aragon, was unable to move after suffering a serious injury, he formulated this view in the following way: “I live in a fairy-tale that my peers take for life”. He also said: “I owe to my injury to learn that all men are wounded as I am”. The most vulnerable among us are paying a high price due to the contradiction that destroys solidarity in exchange for mutual benefit. The conception according to which a society must exist as an assembly of (non-) equals is at risk. Should we, indeed, still believe in Nietzsche’s (1993: 342) words: “Man and Land are not yet discovered”? How can we rebuild community? How can we learn “to be with” in order to “exist together”? How can we promote permeability and fluidity between them and us?

Nowadays there is increasing debate about the inclusive society, inclusive education and the inclusive school. It would be interesting to clarify the profound meaning of these words and assess their relevance, considering the way they are created on the basis of their opposites. On the one hand, the verb *to exclude* (*exclure*) appeared at the end of the 16th century and originally meant not to allow entrance, not to accept, lock or keep someone at a distance from something he would be entitled to, and, subsequently, to reject phenomena that

36. Foucault (1972) continues, “There are arrangements of massacre or ritual murders, for exiling, for repairing or for imprisonment.”

are believed to be incompatible with each other. On the other hand, the adjective *exclusive*, which was developed two centuries later, refers to something that belongs to someone on the basis of special privileges, and which as such does not allow its being shared with others. This terminological evolution shows how words have both meaning and stability. Their authenticity has as a consequence or, better yet, as a condition, a certain amount of integrity. Therefore, merely by offering it to others, it is possible to constitute a relational universe. This is even more true within the field of disability³⁷.

Current use of terms such as ‘inclusion’ and ‘included’ clearly reflects a double refusal. Firstly, it is a denial of the mentality considering non-disabled as eligible for arenas such as a company, school, professional group, cultural arenas, sports and leisure; that these spheres are seen as their “exclusive privileges” according to the expression of Montesquieu, or their “exclusive pleasures” in the words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Secondly, the terms imply refusal of insularisation or isolation of those who are judged as being unpleasant, strange and incompatible, and their subsequent exile to other cultures.

The terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘included’ are gradually replacing the words ‘integration’ and ‘integrate’ (etymologically: to remedy, resort, remake, redo); integration meaning to introduce into something or to incorporate into a whole. To integrate means taking an element, let us say a person, from the outside and placing them inside, and this transfer requires their adaptation to a system already in existence. Above all, such adaptation may cause difficulties for the single person, who is being integrated. As a contrast, there is inclusion when a social organisation, such as a school or a local society, becomes flexible and changes its function. This changing action is of primary importance in relation to the social context, so that it concretely implies for everyone: “What makes you unique (your cultural affiliation, your sexual identity, your abilities, your difficulties) cannot deprive you of your right to access the joint heritage, to all social welfare benefits: education, work, entertainment... these areas are not exclusive for anybody”.

Thus, inclusion is not related to disability; it is derived from an overall investment, and it expresses the existence of a process of deep cultural change. Our culture is being rebuilt to nothing less than a unification of multitude, *l'unita multiplex*, as Edgar Morin says. The school lays the foundation of this process

37. See Eliane Amado Levy-Valensi (1995). *La dignité des mots* (The dignity of words). “The words mean” she said “not the end of the world or close to it, but (they point at) routes to be branched to infinity, with others to rely on”.

within which it must be understood that it is no longer appropriate to think and act in specific terms for specific groups. A more positive approach, one that is humanizing for all and in accordance with the universal principle of access and the concept of quality of life, must be applied. This is the importance of awareness: “We are made to live together; what is easy for some is good for others!” Plans of inclusion are universally beneficial whether they apply to architecture, social services or education.

Conclusion

To conclude, what is the challenge for the singular as well as universal underlying this discussion? It is simple but immense. The challenge is about granting the rights of the unique and exceptional individual, even in its sometimes extreme expression; to allow everyone to tell his or her own story for the common good. It is about giving each other through our social ties, a sense of belonging to the universal; to recognise that vulnerability is at the root, in the centre and in the most intimate part of every human being.

It is impossible to approach and understand the existing reality of disability without placing it into the universal chain of culture and renaming it again as a simple “ordinariness”. And if we only open our eyes a little bit, it is this ordinariness that will appear to us as being truly exceptional.

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Julia Kristeva's Language Politics and Inclusive Education

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Introduction

One recurring issue in inclusion policies is the problem of transferring policy into action. On educational and ideological grounds alike, calls are being made to ensure the inclusion of disabled children in ordinary schools. In practice, however, schools, and the social systems in which they are embedded, have proved something of an inert mass which, by and large, have tended to uphold their segregating practices (Thomas & Loxley, 2007; Slee, 2011). One of the factors preventing inclusion is language and the categorisation practices arising from our way of talking about disability (Slee, 2011). One contribution to gaining a more sophisticated understanding of the importance of language to inclusion is Julia Kristeva's thinking and theories regarding language, politics and vulnerability (Johnsen, 2012). In this article we attempt to say something about what Kristeva's perspectives might have to offer with a view to establishing a clearer understanding of the linguistic-political aspects of inclusion. We initially explore Kristeva's concept of vulnerability before showing how her theories of the vulnerable subject facilitate political activism. We move on from there to discuss Kristeva's theories in light of recent international research in the field of disability studies and highlighting Kristeva's psychoanalytical contribution in the area.

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38. This chapter is an expanded and rewritten version of our introductory contribution to the Norwegian anthology *Annerledeshet. Sårbarhetens språk og politikk* (Engebretsen & Solvang, 2010).

The concept of vulnerability

Vulnerability is often used in a generic sense to describe various groups at risk of social marginalisation. Minorities, people with disabilities and unemployed youth are examples of such groups. A large body of knowledge has accumulated over the years on the processes of marginalisation to which these groups are vulnerable, though less has been done on factors promoting inclusion (Lundblad & Hedlund, 2010). At the same time, the concept of vulnerability has been criticised in analyses of disabling processes. By accentuating the vulnerability of disabled people, their status as rights-holders and chances of leading an autonomous life could be jeopardised (Roulstone, Thomas & Balderston, 2011: 352). But vulnerability is not an attribute reserved exclusively for marginalised groups. Vulnerability can also be a matter of common concern for everyone.

For Julia Kristeva, vulnerability is not a deviant or specific social category; on the contrary, vulnerability is an existential condition of life. It is not what divides us, but what binds us together. This conception draws on psychoanalytical theory, especially Lacan's thinking on the speaking subject. Inspired by Lacan, Kristeva sees the speaking subject as essentially divided: on the one hand language is the site at which the intentional subject is constituted insofar as language defines, categorises and gives direction and coherence to experience. On the other hand, language informs a sentient and physical subject driven by a need for social contact and intimacy as well as by feelings of aggression and revulsion. For Kristeva, our bodily relationship to language (the semiotic) is as fundamental as the ordering and informing side of language (the symbolic) (Kristeva, 1974). The symbolic, that is, meaning *per se*, would not be possible without the semiotic which compels us to use language and motivates us to create meaning at all.

In being both rational and sentient, the speaking subject is constantly confronted by its own inadequacy as user of language and the limitations of linguistic conventions. Kristeva wants us to contemplate "*the vulnerability of the speaking subject* at the boundary between the biological and signification, in a persistent state of disequilibrium, as a source of both anxiety and creativity" (Kristeva, 2010: 52, our translation). Language is a fragile relationship where meaninglessness, dissolution and collapse lie menacingly in waiting behind the façade of meaning and order. All language users recognise the sense of trepidation from knowing that communication or interaction can misfire, because conversation is a thin line, as Anders Johansen (2003) puts it. Communicating is a risky business and can fail. We have all felt how our desire to express ourselves

butts against the constraints imposed by words, or how our sentences grind to a halt or break apart into incoherent stutter. The point is that in language and as language users, we are all confronted by difficulties in adapting to conventions, and by our frailty and vulnerability as rational, percipient actors. We come face to face with “our own innermost anxiety and vulnerability”, with the “peculiar”, “illogical” and “disturbing” dreams all of us carry around but which we “can’t tell anyone about” because linguistic conventions can’t contain them, but which all find the same expression as rebellion or collapse in our speech (Kristeva, 2008). As language users or producers of meaning, we are *all* different: we are confronted continually with our own vulnerability and strangeness. According to Kristeva, it is by becoming conscious of and exploring the constraints facing us on a daily basis as language users that we can better identify with disabled subjects and the barriers facing them. The path to greater tolerance and diversity goes through a renewed attitude to language and to us as language users. By virtue of our being users of language, we can become aware of our own vulnerabilities.

Language philosophy as activism

Through her language politics Kristeva removes language philosophy from its ivory tower, as it is as a *language philosopher* that she occupies the political stage. In her research, she never assumes a position as neutral researcher or hides behind standards of scientific objectivity. She pursues the philosophy of language in the spirit of an activist. Her philosophical activism was evident as early as her 1973 doctoral thesis where she situated the poet at the centre of politics and declared the revolutionary potential of poetical language (Kristeva, 1974). The poet, says Kristeva, especially the modernist poet, challenges the most conservative elements in our society; language and its categories. Their proclivity is to defend their hegemony even when systems and institutions change.

In this philosophical activism she finds a social mandate for humanities, not least the tradition to which she herself belongs, so-called “French Theory”. “Theory”, Kristeva maintains, is a misguided concept for the humanities, at least the French version.

This is that, as I see it from my own experience, our research cannot be reduced to the production of “theory”; it is more than this, and it is something else besides. I would say that it is a process of “thinking through” or “working through” in the sense that Freud used to speak of the dreamwork. It is thinking as “disclosure”, in a way which Heidegger,

and in another way Arendt, expressed it, opposing it to thought-as-calculation. It involves a replenishing of thought in fiction, and for this reason in the sensitive body, which evokes Spinoza's "third kind of knowledge", but also the sort of rationality which belongs to "free association" and "transference" as they are manifested in the psycho-analytic experience. (Kristeva, 2004:33).

While theory is a concept which describes a sort of self-contained entity, Kristeva represents a scientific tradition which privileges the thinking and not merely the thought, emphasizing the process rather than the outcome. "It is thinking as disclosure." For Kristeva, humanities are essentially a questioning, an uneasiness, an evocation of memories and languages lingering behind calcified values and identities. They are sciences of questioning, not answering. In this way, the prime purpose of the sciences is not to create theories, but preliminary theoretical conceptualisations, not categories but metaphors, which disrupt or dislocate the deposited sediment of norms and preconceptions in our language. This is also why she believes criticism of herself and French thinking is misplaced. The critics are fighting a fabricated opponent.

That "excommunication" now seems to me to be the tragic precursor of a more recent event, more comic than tragic, in which two ambitious academics set out to unmask French "impostors" (this was the name they gave to French Theorists), by rejecting our "pseudo-scientific models", when in fact, we never tried to create scientific models, only metaphorical transfers. (Kristeva, 2004:28)

The problem with the critique is that it ignores the type of epistemological project French Theory aspires to be. The term 'French Theory' was coined to frame the productive transfer of a group of French post-structuralist philosophers into North-American intellectual context (Cosset, 2008). In the development of French Theory, one has never sought to establish scientific models. The object of French Theory is the metaphorical transfer, Kristeva maintains, which are themselves linguistic innovations. It means to hunt for new ways of expressing the familiar and customary, thereby paving the way for other modes of understanding. Here lies the 'scientific' contribution of both Kristeva herself and French Theory in general.

Revolt against normality

In 2002, Julia Kristeva was appointed by then president Jacques Chirac to head a government commission to investigate the living conditions of people with

disabilities and suggest ways to improve them. Kristeva concluded her work by writing and publishing a *Letter to the President Concerning Persons with Disabilities* (Kristeva, 2008). Kristeva's purpose was to highlight the potential inherent in people with disability. She sees herself in this project as an heir to Enlightenment philosophy, though without explicitly writing herself into the study of disability. One international contribution of key importance to which she refers is the study of the history of disability by her compatriot Henri-Jacques Stiker (1999). There are certain similarities in their approach to disability as a theme. Stiker's history deals with conceptions of disability in five separate epochs, with biblical history as the first, and the years after WWI as the fifth and final epoch. Humanity, he declares, has an innate capacity to react with violence to radical difference and to eliminate by purging. However, civilisation and society have combined to restrain these impulses. Society is a social system which shapes and curbs mankind's destructive proclivities; Stiker's book is a study of these social systems (1999).

The study of the emergence of rehabilitation, the fifth and final phase in the history of the disabled, lies at the heart of Stiker's book. In the years following the First World War, disability becomes a condition in need of repair to enable the reinstatement of the disabled person into normality. Disability as deficiency, Stiker points out, is the foil against which society defines normality, goodness and decency. Stiker takes issue with this assumption. Difference, he suggests, should be nurtured. It should be part and parcel of an educational project which begins at school. Difference, not normality and its norm, is what we need to value, Stiker maintains, as the natural and as intrinsic to humanity (1999). Nor is disability in Kristeva's thinking primarily a problem in need of accommodation, or a defect in the way the body works. Disability is about different ways of living in society. The autistic, epileptic and blind are not medical cases; rather, they are citizen-subjects. They challenge established rationalities. Rather than being in need of repair, they can act in their distinctiveness, and even remain essentially unfathomable (Kristeva, 2008).

This accentuation of the importance of otherness can be seen in connection with Kristeva's gender analyses. Women, she says, are seen as "the other" in relation to men, who occupy a privileged position as "the same". By idealising womanhood and the feminine, society shows itself incapable of comprehending difference without creating hierarchies. Woman as the other plays the role of the consolidator, cementing relations between those defined as the same (the male in a male-dominated society). In this way, the delineation of otherness

(in this case, women) can enhance society's resistance to the establishment of a non-hierarchical approach to differences (Kristeva, 1980).

In her *Letter to the President* (2008), she circles in three historical phases without employing a strictly historical analytical procedure. Her title paraphrases the title of philosopher Denis Diderot's (1749) *Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who Can See*. Diderot's letter represents the first of the three phases of the history of conceptions of disability which Kristeva outlines. In accordance with French Enlightenment philosophy, Diderot rejected the notion of disability as an act of divine retribution on a wayward humanity. It is simply, he says, a limited deficiency in a person. Diderot makes note in his letter of the impressive resources developed by the blind to compensate for a physical deficiency (Eliassen, 2002). Diderot's letter marked the emergence of social rehabilitation of disability. The disabled person was no longer seen as a repulsive monstrosity, but as an individual lacking certain abilities. It was therefore an essential task to develop technologies which could improve the individual's abilities: exercise, provision of physical aids, etc. In this way, Diderot's thinking contributed to the development of social responsibility for the disabled. At the same time, however, the disabled were increasingly confronted by a technocratic and therapeutic system in which they risked being defined out of the community, as a victim, a repository of needs and failings, or an object to be repaired (Kristeva, 2008).

In the second phase of the history of disability, the main pillars are industrialisation, collective responsibility and assistance provided by the state. Disabled people were now seen as isolated objects of care living on the margins of society. These problems introduce, according to Kristeva, the third historical phase: otherness as a norm. The main concern is no longer about repairing defects but recognising diversity in society, and different ways of being human. "Life is conjugated in the plural", is Kristeva's poetical conclusion (2008:65).

Difference as a social key category

In her formulation of difference as a standard, Kristeva aligns herself with several central contributions from American culture studies. One of these is the concept of *dismodernism*, devised by Lennard J. Davis (2003). Disability represents, he maintains, a new ethics of the body. When we discuss biotechnology, the point of reference is living with disability. More and more conditions are being subsumed under the category of disability. In Norway, for example, the Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People (FFO) has 70

member organisations, from migraine sufferers to the overweight. Moreover, the country's aging population is creating an even greater number of people with disabilities. These examples represent a social trend that makes disability a potential key category. Davis develops the observation of this trend into the idea of dismodernism: We are all nonstandard, and this must be the prism through which we understand the world (Davis, 2003: 31f).

There is a similarity between Davis' perspectives and Kristeva's thinking. Both try to constitute disability as a universal trait. Disability is not limited to a particular, finite population, or to an oppressed minority; it is a vulnerability that affects us all. Disability affects us through the potential inherent in us all to be different or to have children that are different. The vulnerable body becomes an important site of meaning-making. From this perspective, disability is a difference, not a defect, at the same time it is a difference that makes a difference. The same point is made by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum in her own work. Discussing the situation of cognitively impaired children, it is important, she says, to give them special attention since the education system is designed with so-called normal children in mind. Progress, moreover, lies in our ability as a society to realize that the normal child doesn't exist. That we, quite simply, are children with different capacities and limitations, all of whom are entitled to be seen as unique individuals (Nussbaum, 2006).

Kristeva's linguistic activism is echoed in a work of critical importance by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. She proposes *the normate*, a position against which disability is defined. The disabled person is a culturally and historically specific figure, but oppressed by notions of the normal, of the norm, and the hegemony this notion enjoys (1997). Garland-Thomson takes this analysis a step further in her discussion of staring as a bodily impulse and social relation (2009). As a scholar of cultural studies, she concentrates most on this latter point, but not to the extent of ignoring ideas concerning the biological precursors of staring. Modern culture's erasure of mortality and physical vulnerability makes the disabled body extraordinary, something to be gawped at. But all such physical conditions are an unavoidable aspect of life, of what it means to be human.

Garland-Thomson extends her understanding of staring's socio-cultural significance in an analysis of different cultural idioms or means of expression. One of them is a series of photographs by Kevin Connolly. Connolly was born without legs and uses a modified skateboard to get around on (2009). His pictures are snapshots of people staring down at him (see Connolly, 2009 as well). They accentuate the staring, says Garland-Thomson, as an act of compassion,

creating a distance to the starrer and alienating the staree. With the help of the philosophers Martin Buber and Emanuel Levinas, Garland-Thomson argues for bringing staring up to the level of social responsibility. Staring creates a responsibility that springs from our common human state. In making this move, it is possible to develop a concept of *staring management* to show how the staree can cultivate a position that can counter stigmatisation and create a space for compassion and humanity.

Our response to difference becomes the litmus test of the breadth and depth of society's humanity. As Kristeva puts it: It is knowledge and recognition of the other's vulnerability rather than the other's pre-eminence that constitutes the democratic tie (Kristeva, 2008: 70). This is the quintessence of a policy of vulnerability.

The problem

An important issue in Kristeva's thinking is the distance between her own vantage point and the role and agency of disabled people themselves. In her most important texts on disability, she appears to imply a "we" which hardly seems to extend to people with disabilities. She refers moreover to disability as pertaining to an otherness beyond this "we" (Grue, 2012). We only get a marginal impression of the disabled as organising in interest groups in order to share experiences and fight oppression. Kristeva's field of reference consists of somewhat scattered examples: a French woman who moved to Sweden and received personal assistance (Kristeva, 2008); and a documentary about an outsider artist who is referred to simply by his or her first name; and a mother fighting on behalf of her disabled daughter (Kristeva & Herman, 2010). Kristeva also refers to her own personal experience as mother of a disabled son (Kristeva, 2010).

As an academic and political campaigner Kristeva relates actively to disability, but without referring to contributions made outside France from the thriving field of Disability Studies worldwide. And there are hardly any references to Kristeva in the international literature on the subject, either in Disability Studies or special needs education. One reason is that she has not published her main ideas on the subject in English until relatively recently (Kristeva, 2006; 2010). But as she invariably speaks *about* the disabled, rather than with disabled people, this could also be a factor behind the lack of attention.

At worst, Kristeva's position could be taken as an expression of self-sufficient paternalism. But her status as humanist and political activist also allows us to

see Kristeva as representing an otherness in our attempts to situate her within an established discipline such as Disability Studies and special needs education. It is important to understand that Kristeva's professional project is basically an examination of the fundamental conditions of life, a study in which psychoanalysis plays a central role. On this point, we believe, Kristeva offers an original and challenging contribution to solidify the language of vulnerability and its significance.

The psychoanalytical perspective

Extensive psychoanalytic practice as well as Freud's and Lacan's works on the unconscious underpin Kristeva's most original contributions to an understanding of disability. In *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) she develops a discussion of the stranger, particularly of the stranger inside ourselves. For Kristeva, difference is a fundamental condition catered for by language and religion, and an independent state. She unites the co-existence of differences under the concept of cosmopolitanism. But within the identification with what is shared, the familiar, *das heimliche*, we find the stranger or alien, *das unheimliche*. We are our own outsiders, we have the stranger within us; we are disturbed by the stranger's presence, and we have to confront the stranger actively to relate to it in the form of the actually existing other. This point is what she identifies as being the existentialist basis of a cosmopolitan politics. Recognising and acknowledging the stranger in ourselves creates the building blocks for committed relationships (Kristeva, 1991).

Disability is brought into the discussion of the potential of psychoanalysis in the article "On the Frontiers of Living" (2006). Cognitive, sensory and motor disabilities do assail the non-disabled, Kristeva points out, with not only fears of castration but also the unbearable fact of our mortality. We can resist racism and discrimination on the basis of religion and social class, but when it comes to disability we are poorly equipped, she suggests, overcoming the fear it arouses in us. It is in this situation Kristeva believes the psychoanalytical ear, sensitive to vulnerability, can achieve political impact. Kristeva's point is not at all the old cliché about us all being disabled now or in the future. Disability is already in us. And when we confront our fear of castration, failings and death, a transformation takes place in which we – aided by care, patience and sense of community – intensify our experience of human life. We do not become ourselves before we have confronted the unhealable within ourselves.

When we fear disability as a foreign body in ourselves, we project that fear onto disability as a social category. An internal struggle and uncertainty in the face of otherness, that which is not us, are closely linked to the social construction of the disabled, the stranger and the insane (Kristeva, 2006). Aspects of our existential condition affect our social relations and social organisation. This can take us in two diametrically opposite directions. First, otherness can lead to exclusion. This can happen both structurally in the form of political and economic discrimination, and at the personal level in the form of hate violence (Hanisch, 2011). Second, contemplation of disability as an otherness in ourselves, Kristeva maintains, can be nursed into a foundation for community and political responsibility.

Kristeva bases admission to a fellowship associated with disability is based on the personal encounter. Not only does she address “those affected by a disability”, she stresses, “but the society of others, who, instead of integrating them, might have real interaction with them” (Kristeva, 2010: 44). In a special needs education sense, it is particularly interesting to see her challenging the notion of integration and articulating a vision of interaction. Or might friction be an even more clarifying concept for Kristeva’s ambitions? It is the acknowledgement of disability as friction – both in a psychoanalytical and sociological sense – that opens the door to liberation. Her vision is about a plurality that is allowed to flourish. The encounter with disability should be informed neither by normality nor deviance, but by surprise, ambiguity and return of language to its plurality (2010).

Kristeva’s main point is that disability is inside us, not only because disability can happen to everyone, but also because it is innate in our subconscious as a void or absence in our being. Like other fears, it needs to be excavated and exposed to the light of day. Doing so heightens our sense of being in the world. But Kristeva won’t let the subject remain on the analyst’s couch. She insists that our innermost vulnerability has a political potential. She sees the potential in a politics of vulnerability, and points to the social ties in the form of liberty, equality, fraternity ... and vulnerability (Kristeva, 2010).

Conclusion

Kristeva’s thinking on the language of vulnerability gives us two different contributions by which we may gain a better understanding of the conditions enabling and promoting an inclusive reform of education. First, it makes us

more aware of what stands in the way of establishing inclusive procedures and practices. We draw here on the symbolic dimensions of language, which creates order and discloses to us the systematics of discrimination. Second, Kristeva equips us with certain tools that we can work with to establish an inclusive approach to education. The semiotic occupies a central place here. Language disturbs and disrupts, and makes our own vulnerability productive by getting us to realise that while we are all different from one another, we are all equal to one another as well.

One element preventing inclusion efforts is the way we think in a linguistic sense of disability as a problem afflicting a particular group of people. This is evident in, among other things, linguistic activism in the field of disability studies and advocacy. Professionals and disabled people alike are working to change designations and terminology because of their stigmatising effect. An example is the word “cripple”, which was replaced with “handicapped”, which in turn was replaced with “disabled”. There are a considerable number of people with impairments who loathe to having anything to do with “disability” at all. We are seeing the contours of a process where it is virtually impossible to talk about disability in any shape or form without causing a sense of stigmatisation. One reason for this is the linguistic othering of disability. Disability is not part of the same, what we non-disabled people stand for; it is alien to us. And the stratagems employed to reduce the stigmatising effect of disability through new educational philosophies and new terminology will unavoidably be overtaken by xenophobia – and stigmatisation will continue to take place.

Taking Kristeva’s thinking as our starting point, we can see the contours of a contribution to inclusion reform which attempts to destabilise othering. At this juncture, the concept of vulnerability acts as a point of entry. From Kristeva’s perspective, disability is an aspect of vulnerability that affects us all. She is calling for us to engage with this vulnerability as a fundamental human condition, one which can form the basis of a social pact. Everybody can potentially discover disability in themselves. Doing so provides us with an opportunity to see disability as a universal attribute of life. In efforts to make schools more inclusive, it could help prevent the othering of disabled pupils. It could act as a counter force to the ever new and presumably humanising categories, such as “persons with support needs”, but which are often merely used as euphemisms for socially stigmatising practices (Slee, 2011).

In a further development of Kristeva’s language politics and activist philosophy related to an inclusive approach to education, the greatest promise lies in

the semiotic. The key question here is what type of solidarity can best promote inclusive practice. One of the main components of the concept of inclusion is that we are all different and of equal value. But what does recognition or acknowledgement mean in practice? It is into the nucleus of recognition's essential workings that Kristeva's semiotic ruminations insinuate themselves and can help us see new ways of achieving and preserving equality for all.

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Otherness, Vulnerability and Inclusion

Julia Kristeva's Ethical-Political Critique and Program concerning Disabilities

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction: principles and practice in inclusion discourse

Since the UNESCO Salamanca Statement was formulated in 1994, many countries on all continents have ratified the principle of educational inclusion. Through a series of declarations and statements on behalf of the United Nations and UN agencies, social and educational rights of all children including those with special needs have been formulated and promoted. The main documents are the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children (1989), the statement of the World Conference in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) where the principle of education for all was explicitly introduced. Subsequently, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was published in 1994 the same year as the mentioned Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education. The most recent convention is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), where the principle of inclusive education is repeated and established in an even wider context.

It is tempting to conclude that the massive acceptance of the principle of inclusion and its integration in educational laws worldwide has led to inclusion in practice. However, although some countries have tried hard to fulfil this principle, no country seems to have reached full educational inclusion in practice. The reasons for the gap between principle and practice when it comes

to exhibiting awareness of special needs education and inclusion are many and complex. This article focuses attention on individual attitudes and cultural mentalities of the majority society towards disabilities.

The French-Bulgarian scholar Julia Kristeva asks why persons with disabilities are not seen and why it is so difficult to create an inclusive society. She brings into focus an important aspect of inclusion discourse, which she calls 'our encounter with the stranger'. Who is this stranger? The stranger might be someone from another place, a foreigner or someone who seemingly is different from us. In her texts the concept 'the other' or 'the stranger in us' is developed as a psychoanalytic construction that provokes anxiety. The concept represents something which was once familiar; something mysteriously scary and hidden in our unconscious – the stranger in us – that is activated when we encounter something that we spontaneously perceive to be unfamiliar. The book *Strangers to Ourselves* (Kristeva, 1997c) describes this mental reaction towards foreigners. In a later text she argues that the intensity of this provoked anxiety is much stronger when we are confronted with disabilities.

Kristeva's message is that we need to acquire consciousness of the stranger in ourselves in order to be able to recognize the other, the stranger, as a unique and vulnerable fellow human being and citizen. This is the core of her psychoanalytic argument for an ethical-political humanism as well as for our social and individual responsibility. On this foundation she strongly criticizes current conditions for persons with disabilities in France, and applies arguments from the same scientific disciplines in her discussion of the reasons for these conditions as well as her proposed steps to improve the difficult situation. She lays out a line of arguments armed with several UN and UNESCO decrees and good examples from Canada and Sweden (Kristeva, 2008; UN, 1989; 1994; UNESCO, 1994) when advocating for making major improvements towards achieving an inclusive society; a society standing shoulder to shoulder with all citizens.

Kristeva's criticism and explanations and her optimistic engagement is in focus of this article on disability and education, where I use examples from Norwegian discourse and practice from where I draw upon the majority of my experience, in addition to other international examples. While Julia Kristeva's writing is well-known in a number of related discourses, her texts are still new to special needs education and inclusion discourse. It is therefore appropriate to provide a further introduction of her background and body of work.

Julia Kristeva

Julia Kristeva was born in Bulgaria in 1941. She learned French language and culture at a young age through her education by French nuns. Simultaneously, she was socialised within Marxist and Slavic culture, studying Russian language and literature. In 1966 she moved to Paris on a French-Bulgarian research fellowship, where she continued her studies and writing under the supervision of Lucien Goldmann and Roland Barthes. By the time she published her PhD work, *La révolution du langage poétique* (Revolution in Poetic Language, Kristeva, 1997a), she had already published several texts. She also studied clinical analysis, and is still practicing this profession alongside her academic work. As a newly qualified PhD, Kristeva was employed at the Research Institute for Text and Document Studies at the University of Paris 7 – Denis Diderot, where she is still working as Professor Emerita. She has held visiting professorships at several universities; with her most extensive connection with Columbia University in Toronto, Canada. Julia Kristeva has attracted interest and caused discussions within several disciplines both internationally and in Norway, where she was awarded as the first Holberg Prize Laureate in 2004.

Kristeva entered the Parisian linguistic and literature theory community with an outsider's ability to observe relationships between theorists from the eastern and western parts of Europe. She was welcomed into the politically radical Tel Quel Group and soon became a central figure there. She collaborated with her fellow countryman, the French-Bulgarian philosopher and linguist Tzvetan Todorov as well as with Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and other renowned persons in the French academic community.

Together with Todorov, Kristeva introduced the works of the Russian philosopher and literary critic, Mikhail Bakhtin, to the western world. It is worth mentioning that along with the texts of Lev Vygotsky, Bakhtin's works are currently amongst the most discussed and applied within special needs- and regular education as well as psychology. One of the prominent interpreters of his texts within these scientific disciplines is Norwegian scholar Ragnar Rommetveit, who has contributed an article to this book (2014).

The May Revolution, which gave the designation 'The '68 Generation' to intellectuals all over Europe made an impact on Kristeva. She mentions this in her autobiographical essay, where she describes the Tel Quel Group's central position in the intellectual and political fermentation leading to the march towards Sorbonne (Johnsen, 2010a; 2011; Kristeva, 1997b; Moi, 1987; Oliver, 1997; Witt-Brattström, 1990).

Kristeva's texts are steeped in philosophical ideas. In her development of new ideas, she argues with references ranging from Antique philosophers to Kant and Hegel and her contemporaries, and she gives Sigmund Freud and other psychoanalytical texts a central place in her analysis, as we will see later in this article. The point of departure of Kristeva's ethical-political program is a psychoanalytic analysis of the relationship between the single person's inner psyche and the collective social consciousness.

Kristeva on vulnerability and the marginalising meeting

At the request of former French President Jacques Chirac, Kristeva wrote a critical report highlighting the living conditions of the disabled in France (2008³⁹) in which she emphasizes encounters between disabled and non-disabled. She draws attention to indifference and fear being all too frequent aspects of the latter group's spontaneous response towards persons with disabilities, arguing that they appear as strangers. Even the manner in which they are excluded is different than for other groups, she argues, because more than those that are excluded due to their economic status, culture or religion, a person with a disability confronts us with our anxiety about our own vulnerability, our own incapability, and even our own mortality. In this way Kristeva places the encounter between disabled and non-disabled in the centre of marginalisation, exclusion and invisibility. We are dealing with individual attitudes towards fellow citizens that have human and social consequences, and she draws the attention to disability in an extended line of reasoning, regarding the phenomenon of being "strangers to ourselves".

As mentioned, Kristeva analyses this "excluding meeting" with reference to her previous publication, *Strangers to Ourselves* (Beardsworth, 2004; Kristeva, 1997c; McAfee, 2000). In this work the concept of 'the other' or 'the stranger in us' is developed as a psychoanalytic construction based on Sigmund Freud's discussion of the "Unheimlich", in English "uncanny strangeness". The concept represents something which was once familiar; something mysteriously scary and hidden in our unconscious – the stranger in us – that is activated when we meet something that we spontaneously perceive to be unfamiliar. *Strangers to Ourselves* describes this mental reaction towards foreigners. However, as already mentioned, in her *Letter to the President on Persons with Disability* (2008), Kris-

39. Kristeva's report was originally published in France in 2003.

teva argues that the intensity of this provoked anxiety is much stronger when we are confronted with disabilities. Even so, our reactions to physical or sensory disabilities are not as strong as when meeting a person with intellectual challenges. According to her line of argument, analysis that delves into our own psychic depths may bring to consciousness our fear of the stranger in ourselves. Our rejection of the other, the stranger, is actually about our own vulnerability. When we admit our vulnerability, we give ourselves a chance to recognise that there is a relationship between us and “the others” – those who are different – strange – those whom we are used to keeping at distance. This relationship is deeper than language categories and conventions, argues Kristeva, who continues with the thought that we must recognise our own vulnerability in order to acknowledge others’ vulnerability.

However, the stranger in ourselves is not the only uncanny phenomenon hidden underneath our consciousness which contributes to our vulnerability. Another obscure and loathsome phenomenon haunts us, creating so much self-disgust that we abject it; we degrade it and eject it from our consciousness. Kristeva gives a nuanced description of the abject in the text *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982). In line with Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic tradition, she takes the beginning of life and mental activity as her point of departure when describing the abject as the most fragile and archaic sublimation, or transformation of a human being’s initial mental energy. The abject is neither a subject nor an object; it nonetheless remains inseparable from drives. It may appear within the gaps of what in psychoanalysis is called secondary repression⁴⁰. Kristeva is unafraid to take into account the darker sides of the human mind in her construction of individual human and culturally situated reactions. She describes abjection as immoral, sinister, scheming and shady; it is essentially different from and more violent than what would be covered by the term ‘uncanniness’. Thus, although our exclusionary encounter with the stranger to ourselves and abjection are two reactionary patterns that evoke negative and even frightening emotions, the reactions are due to different internal and possibly external incentives, and they have different features. According to Kristeva’s analysis, the abject is a mental phenomenon characterised by being opposed to the conscious “I” at the same time as it safeguards the conscious mind against loathsome aspects of its complex initial development in its cultural context.

40. In psychoanalysis secondary repression is a form of repression in which conscious material that is reminiscent of repressed material is removed from consciousness.

The abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin – nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory – and meaning collapses. It is in this manner that the abject contributes to sublimation, which may lead to creativity and art (Ives, 2010). It also creates vulnerability. The “tightrope walking” of abjection in order to keep the conscious mind in balance and away from hunting the meaningless creates vulnerability. In her works *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), *Strangers to Ourselves* (1997c) and other related texts, Kristeva constructs explanations of different aspects and mechanisms of human vulnerability. Her arguments are psychoanalytic, focusing on the initial phase in the development of the human mind and using abjection as one point of departure and our confrontation with the stranger to ourselves as another. Her conclusion is that vulnerability is part of being human; in short, we are all vulnerable whether we have a disability or not. She discusses the confrontative encounter between disabled and non-disabled in order to focus attention on our joint vulnerability as human beings and promote our common solidarity as fellow citizens.

Through her analysis Julia Kristeva has provided a theoretically based explanatory model to some of the more shadowy aspects of the human mind; phenomena that have also been elucidated within the world literature, from Shakespeare and Ibsen, Tolstoj and Undset to contemporary authors. Her French colleague Charles Gardou elaborates on her characterisation of our shared human vulnerability in the following way:

We are all intermediary human beings between plus and minus, the best and the worst, above and below. Unfavourable circumstances may, without warning, smash to pieces the self-confidence we are used to as unchangeable members of the good side of destiny. In any moment, it can throw us beyond ordinary conditions. No one is protected from being a stranger in relation to collective norms; to become a stranger in relation to the usual course of life; to become a stranger in the universe of others, in the eyes of the collective (Gardou, 2014).

Within the humanities and social sciences, Kristeva’s model adds understanding to the folklore studies of *Fools, Loonies and Spookies* (Tullinger, skrullinger og skumlinger, 1998), made by Barbro Sætersdal, Professor in Special Needs Education. The studies reveal aspects of the non-official history of attitudes towards persons with intellectual challenges. In line with Kristeva’s reasoning, Sætersdal wonders if there is actually room for these kinds of human beings in modern everyday life with its hunt for more beauty, more intelligence, more trendiness and more money. She questions how inclusive we truly are in our social circles

and local communities (Engebretsen, Johnsen & Markussen, 2008). Kristeva's focus on taking individual responsibility for our attitudes in our encounter with a stranger is an important contribution to Nordic as well as international disability- and special needs education discourse. She presents a psychoanalytic argumentation for an ethical and political humanism characterised by our recognition that the other, the stranger, is both unique and vulnerable. Kristeva also argues that we must take individual and social responsibility through making a personal commitment, not for fear or pity, but towards the other's face as our fellow human being and citizen. Thus she argues for individual and social responsibility.

Revitalisation of French Enlightenment ideas

In her urge for a change of attitudes, Kristeva reveals a new and expanded form of enlightenment. Through her use of psychoanalytic arguments to gain an understanding of the individual as a point of departure, Kristeva raises the discussion to a normative manifesto aiming to make cultural and social changes regarding mentality. She anchors the main pillar of her program historically by looking back on the initial French Enlightenment ideas concerning liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus she revitalises this internationally renowned slogan, so dear to her French fellow citizens, through reinterpreting and expanding on the notions of liberty, equality, community⁴¹ by adding a fourth key concept; vulnerability. This expansion centres on recognising the community of vulnerability as well as of liberty (Kristeva, 2010).

Argumentative movements like these between the individual and culture/societal levels are characteristic of Kristeva's discussions. Oliver (1997) shows in her analysis of Kristeva's earlier works how she situates the single person's sub-consciousness in the centre of individual ethical choices that are related to the ethical mentality of the community.

41. The notions of liberty, equality and fraternity, became a slogan for the French Revolution from August 26, 1789. Kristeva refers directly to this. The emphasis on the community of brothers was, however, quickly criticised by contemporary women's rights activists. The French Olympe de Gouges pronounced the Women's Rights Declaration in 1793, and the English philosopher and educational scholar, Mary Wollstonecraft, argued for gender equality (Rustad, 2007). Against this background the initial slogan becomes less faltering by being rewritten to liberty, equality and community. The transformation from fraternity to community is done by the author of this chapter.

Social criticism and future optimism

Julia Kristeva's discussion of the strangers to ourselves follows after heavy criticism of the living conditions for persons with disabilities in France. She points to lack of governmental priorities, lack of sufficient education and social support, lack of education of special needs educators and lack of awareness of disabling conditions within other fields of education. She also points to examples of good practice in several countries, such as Sweden and Canada. However, she moves beyond the detailed social criticism and refers to current positive trends within international disability discourse manifested in a series of principle decrees on behalf of the United Nations and related organisations. In her *Letter to the President on Persons with Disability* she also shows optimistic engagement towards developing an inclusive society; a society standing shoulder to shoulder with all its citizens (Kristeva, 2008; UN, 1989; 1994; UNESCO, 1994).

Kristeva appeals to her French fellow citizens, reminding them that the cradle of care and education of the blind, deaf, developmentally and mentally disabled was in Paris. With a genealogical eye, she divides the history of modernity regarding humankind's attitudes towards disability into three stages: The first stage, the beginning in Paris in the second half of the eighteenth century, spread throughout Europe. As this optimistic wave reached the Nordic countries, Norway was one of the last to react, enacting its first Law on Schools for Abnormal Children in 1881 (Indst. O.Nr.12. 1881; Johnsen, 2000a). At that time Kristeva's second stage had already started further south on the continent. She characterises this stage by its transfer of responsibility for disabled persons from charity to the government. However, at the same time as governmental institution-building developed, another much more pessimistic tone emerged in European discourse. A new vocabulary appeared containing concepts such as uneducable, degeneration, race hygiene, eugenics, segregation and sterilisation (Johnsen, 1999–2000b; 2000a; 2001a). This change of mentality culminated with the radical eugenic experiments by the German Nazis in the genocide of Jews and Romans as well as the killings of sick and disabled. The post-Second World War awakening to these horrific facts necessitated an ideological turn towards what Kristeva describes as the third stage in humankind's attitudes towards disability, moving towards equality and inclusion.

The division into three periods does not indicate easily won simple changes of attitudes, and as the eugenic period shows, the development has not been a simple linear process towards steadily more equitable conditions for all citizens. On

the contrary, the process throughout history of modernity is complex, diffuse and often contradictory. However, Julia Kristeva hopes for an inclusive society.

The third stage in international attitudes towards education for all

According to Kristeva, the third stage of humankind's attitudes towards disability is characterised, not by "able supporting disabled", but by joint liberty, equality and mutual recognition of each other's vulnerability as well as support and care amongst all citizens. This is how Kristeva situates the idea of inclusion (2008). When this idea is applied to education, her understanding of inclusion is compatible with a core description of inclusion applied in current international research project among seven universities in five European countries; *Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06):

Educational inclusion is seen as the global policy prescribing development towards a local regular school that welcomes all children with their unique individual characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs; all children with and without special needs and disabilities; a school combating discriminatory attitudes, and offering a meaningful and individually adapted education to every pupil within the community of the class (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Johnsen, 2000a; 2007; 2013; UNESCO, 1994).

In line with Kristeva, participating researchers in this study realise that we are only at the threshold of this third stage; we are still in the initiating phase towards achieving a school for all and inclusion. As in the second stage discussed by Kristeva, this new stage is also marked by complex and contradictory ideas, priorities and practices. In the following, national and international principles, policies and practices related to the beginning of Kristeva's third step are discussed in light of knowledge independent of Kristeva's texts, but in connection with her argumentation. At first, focus is on principles related to special needs education and inclusion as they appear on the international stage and with specific attention to Nordic and Norwegian discourse. In the subsequent discussion of practical consequences of inclusion discourse, examples are mainly taken from Norwegian sources.

Efforts towards education for all in historic perspective

As Kristeva points out, inclusion is currently on the political agenda in France as in other countries, and efforts are made to realise the principle worldwide under very different conditions. In some countries national expansion of non-payment schools goes hand-in-hand with a growing awareness of children with special educational needs in joint efforts towards achieving education for all. Based on my own international experiences, I would like to mention two countries on the African continent, Uganda and Ethiopia, where governmental authorities have taken different yet significant steps in sector reforms, higher education and development of free schools for all; girls, boys and children both with and without special educational needs (Johnsen & Teklemariam, 2006; Okwaput, 2013).

What are the roots of educational inclusion; how it is related to education in general and to special needs education in particular? As long as mankind has existed, there has been some kind of formal and informal education of the upcoming generations. Europe has a long tradition of providing systematic education. Compared to the ancient writings of Ethiopia and the developing educational traditions in Europe, Norwegian writing culture and formal education is young. However, Amos Comenius' (1592–1670) theories on education for all and the German Pietist, August Hermann Francke's (1663–1727) realisation of his educational model for all children – rich and poor alike – became models for the Norwegian or free school, which has developed without interruption since that time (Johnsen, 2000a).

The Norwegian case. The roots of the Norwegian free school were founded with a Royal Decree or Educational Act) in 1739, almost one century before political parliamentarism was reintroduced in the country in 1814. This first “Act” pronounced that the school should be “for All and Everybody” (Forordning, 1739). What did they mean by a ‘school for all’ at that time? Or did they understand the full commitment of the concept “all”? As a matter of fact it took almost 150 years until the authorities realised what it really meant to open the school to ALL children, and a new act indicated that the regular school was for those children only who could handle school requirements. Some children were excluded. At that time the first Norwegian special school law had just been passed (Indst. O. No. 12. 1881).

As Kristeva (2008) also pointed to, the cradle of modern special needs education was situated in Paris, far away from Norway during the late eighteenth

century. From Paris ideas and skills spread throughout Europe. The three Scandinavian countries joined hands in following up this new knowledge through holding seminars and creating a joint professional journal. Norway was the last of the Scandinavian countries to establish special classes and schools. The mentioned special school law stated that the Norwegian special education profession should be based on regular teacher education and further specialisation in special needs. This close connection between regular- and special needs education has always been a main feature of the Norwegian special education profession, higher education and research. During nearly one century, three so-called “special school” laws were passed, the last one after the Second World War (Johnsen, 2000a; 2000b; 2001b; Lov, 1915; Lov, 1951). Thus, even though a large number of children with limited special needs were offered schooling in special classes within the regular school, development of education for children with disabilities was segregated from the regular school during this century; and many children with disabilities were not enrolled in school at all, in spite of their legal right to attend.

The turn towards normalisation and revitalisation of the school for all. Institutionalisation of persons with disabilities spread all over Europe and was accompanied by segregation of increasing numbers of groups with different special needs. How did this development change course? During the 1960s, segregated institutionalisation was seriously questioned and a turn away from this policy appeared – first in Denmark and Sweden. The principle of normalisation, and later integration and inclusion became internationally recognised⁴². Thus, educational inclusion in a school of generosity with teaching adapted to the educational needs of all pupils was confirmed as principles in Norwegian educational acts and national curriculum during the 1970s. Similar efforts were made in many countries.

Between principles and practice

Due to this turn in Norwegian educational legislation it is without doubt quite different to be a child or youth with disabilities and special needs in the Norwegian education system today than it was forty years ago. Laws and official policy indicate that the greater society has taken important steps towards realising ideas about equal access to education in local regular schools. All children and

42. For more details on the turn towards normalisation, integration and inclusion, see Johnsen (2014).

youth have access to free education at all levels. Additional finances cater for special needs education. On local level a large number of schools are developing increasing knowledge and skills in inclusive practices. However, as mentioned in the introduction, although many countries have made efforts to implement this principle, no country seems to have reached full educational inclusion in practice. This also applies to Norway, and there are still many obstacles to surmount. Thus, it is appropriate to ask, in the spirit of Kristeva's new humanism, if cultural, professional and individual attitudes have managed the radical turn from exclusion and neglect towards acceptance and solidarity with all pupils – with and without disabilities.

In spite of the many good examples of inclusive practices, it is sad to observe the creativity which many municipalities and schools display in order to find ways around the official intentions regarding inclusive schools. In the shadow of local educational responsibility, extensive segregation is practiced through organising of special units and special schools. Parents are confronted with the choice between sending their child with special needs to the local school or to another school with special expertise located far from friends. Studies indicate good and less good practices when it comes to cooperation between teachers and special needs educators within schools and between schools and educational psychological services (EPS) (Mjøs, 2007; Solli, 2004). A survey among parents and teachers of 350 primary school pupils with developmental disabilities (Ytterhus & Tøssebro, 2005) documents that 57% of these pupils were placed in special units the majority of their time at school, and 34% were in their regular class less than five hours a week. The study indicates that it was not the pupils' needs but rather practical conditions and personal opinions of the school and teachers that decided the extent of segregation. Here we are confronted with an existing widespread mentality towards pupils with special educational needs. These findings are supported by Nordahl & Hausstätter's report (2009), which documents a general increase in segregated special needs educational practices between 2006 and 2008. It also shows that 1/3 of the resources spent on special needs education was not carried out by professional special needs educators, but by assistants without any professional educational competence. The studies referred to above reveal a gap between official intentions and practice in several municipalities. They raise questions about the relationship between officially formulated attitudes and professional and individual attitudes on local level. They may even indicate that the positive trend towards Kristeva's third stage of humankind's attitudes towards disability is about to turn. Nordahl and

Hausstätter's study (2009:175) seems to support this suspicion when they conclude: "It looks as if focus on academic results in global contexts and on transfer of responsibility to local level is met by strategies reducing acceptance of divergence and difference".

In keeping with Nordahl and Hausstätter's conclusion, there is reason to question whether the educational principle of the inclusive school has vanished in the mist of recent years' media coverage of international school-performance evaluations and new-liberal privatisation debate. It was therefore interesting to note that one of the main journals of the Norwegian teacher trade union, *Utdanning* (Education), devoted an entire issue to a status review of inclusion in Norwegian schools (Holterman & Jelstad, 2012⁴³). According to the union leader, the argument for this focus was that everybody who attends a Norwegian school is a future citizen in Norwegian society, and it is important that as many individuals as possible learn to be a part of this community. In other words, the argument for educational inclusion was social inclusion. Holterman and Jelstad interviewed leading politicians, officials and researchers and studied statistical information on educational organisation of pupils with special educational needs. Their research issue concerned what has happened with pupils with special educational needs after the close-down of national special schools and the transfer of responsibility for all children with special needs or otherwise, to the municipality level. They found that inclusion was still on the political agenda of the current Minister of Education. However, they also found a lack of priorities and systematic follow-up of the political principles on all levels of political and public administration; the national Directorate for Education (Utdanningsdirektoratet) as well as the commissioners of education on the county and municipal levels. Incomplete information gathering concerning pupils with special educational needs seemed to be one of the unfortunate consequences. The most serious finding was, however, that the number of pupils with special educational needs placed in special units or schools did not appear to have decreased. Larger municipalities had preserved former special units and schools and established a number of new ones, while some smaller municipalities cooperated in establishing similar units. Thus, it seems that several municipalities and schools have not taken into account the fundamental change of

43. Since 2012 Sonja Holterman and Jørgen Jelstad have continued to write about "the new special schools". In 2013 the first Specialized Press Association Prize (Fagpressens pris) for investigative journalism was awarded to Holterman and Jelstad in the journal *Utdanning* for their articles on "The new special schools" (Svendsen, 2013).

educational practice that is required in the principles of educational inclusion. Holterman and Jelstad's critical report was followed up on the national radio channel, NRK2, during prime time, when a number of key spokesmen were interviewed in the program EKKO (2013). Perhaps a renewed debate on inclusion and human dignity is on its way into the media?

In spite of the rather discouraging criticism expressed by researchers and journalists, substantial resources are spent on school development towards educational inclusion. The funding mostly come from the national level and is directed towards research and innovation; either directly from research funds and the Directorate for Education or indirectly on the municipal level. A recent example is the project *Model Development or Brainstorming?* (Fylling & Rønning, 2007), where the Directorate financed three years of school innovation followed by an evaluation project. The innovation activities involved ten municipalities and three counties. The intention was to develop models for individually adapted education practices in order to reduce the extent of special education as more students get a well-adapted programme within regular education. As the title of the evaluation indicates, the researchers found several new "good practices" in individually adapted education, but few of systematic models or any noticeable reduction of special needs. They concluded with asking the questions: 1) Why was there no marked reduction of decreasing special needs? 2) Could the reason be unrelated to the changes in regular education (Fylling & Rønning, 2007:13)? One might ask if they thought it was the children who did not fit into the project.

How do the stakeholders of these two related projects understand the phenomena of individually adapted education, special education,⁴⁴ regular education and the relationship between them? It seems as if special education is understood as segregated teaching and individually adapted education as regular education. Where is the special needs educational knowledge situated between these two constructed opposites? A glance at the Internet shows a wide range of different interpretations and applications of these key concepts in Norway and internationally, and there is consequently a general feeling of insecurity concerning the fundamental understanding of educational inclusion and the role of special needs educational knowledge in the inclusive school.

As shown, inclusion discourse is complex, divided into different branches and at times contradictory. Kristeva has observed this and warns against pit-

44. The term special education used here is the English translation in Fylling & Rønning, (2007) of the Norwegian concept "spesialundervisning", or "special educational teaching".

falls in attitudes in current efforts towards achieving inclusion. She directs the attention towards what she calls a reverse interpretation of inclusion which, in her opinion, implies a new reductionist ideology. This ideology, she argues, renounces special needs and at the same time praises the way a disability almost “disappears” when the disabled is given what may be called “increased social responsibility”. She points out that there may even be a desire to save money lying beneath this attitude (Kristeva, 2008; 2010). Similar reductionist views are recognised in the argumentation that special needs education does not belong in the inclusive school; an argumentation which has also been imported directly from international contexts and discourse into the Norwegian context.

Towards inclusion and Kristeva’s third stage of humankind’s attitudes towards disability

Above, the twisting path towards Kristeva’s third stage of humankind’s attitudes towards disability has been outlined by pointing to some international and mostly Norwegian educational history and current policy, and to the seeming gap between policies and practices. In view of the mentioned reductionist view of special needs education as part of inclusive practices a clarification of the role of special needs education in the inclusive school is timely.

The answer to the question on the role of special needs education must be related to regular teaching, since both teachers and special needs educators are necessary in the inclusive school. According to Norwegian educational tradition the teacher and the special needs educator have a common field of knowledge and skills that gives them a solid basis for cooperation in the common arenas of the school and the class. In addition, the teacher holds qualifications in all school subjects, something the special needs educator does not have; whereas the special needs educator has qualifications beyond the regular teacher related to the diversity of learning processes, barriers to learning and corresponding skills in educational support. In philosophical terms, special needs education develops knowledge about the ontological and epistemological situation and conditions of disability and the variety of special education needs. Therefore,

the presence of both professions and the quality of their cooperation are fundamental to creating inclusive practices in the polyphonic class and school⁴⁵.

At the centre of this cooperation are the two levels of curricula, which are the keys to individually meaningful education adapted to the level of mastery and proximal learning capabilities of each pupil in the class; the individual- and the class curricula. The relations between these two levels of curricula constitute the core of the inclusive school (Johnsen, 2001c; 2007; Vygotsky, 1978).

Conclusion

To return to the question of whether Julia Kristeva's discussion on the stranger in ourselves may contribute to the Norwegian case, the answer is 'yes' when confronted with the gap between official intentions and practices in school, as reported studies indicate. There is reason to believe that individual and cultural-social mentality towards the stranger – be it a foreign immigrant or a person with some kind of disability – functions as a serious barrier to bridging the gap between official intentions concerning educational inclusion and practices in some local communities and schools. Instead of seeing the individual pupil who is situated on the side-line of traditional teaching due to his or her unusual educational needs, the school seems to hide behind organisational, financial and even professional barriers.

Many options as well as obstacles have to be visited in the work towards inclusion in Norway and internationally within different contexts. In addition to providing sufficient professional skills, financial and physical frameworks, legislation and structure, the school needs, in Kristeva's spirit, humanistic acceptance of all pupils. It also needs the recognition and acceptance of the stranger in us, whether we are professionals, researchers or politicians. Kristeva's ethical-political challenge is therefore that each and every one of us confronts our own ghosts; that we confront the fear of our own vulnerability and lack of ability to encounter persons with disabilities. These are the prerequisites of humanistic acceptance of all individuals – with or without disabilities – as our equals as partners and fellow citizens (Engebretsen, Johnsen, Kirkebak & Markussen, 2010; Johnsen, 2010b; Kristeva, 2008).

45. According to an OECD-report in 1982 (in Johnsen, 1985) Norway had at that time the highest number of teachers with continuing education in special needs education in the regular school of all the OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

However, we may not believe that internalising appreciative attitudes to persons with disabilities happens once and for all. The stranger within us does not disappear, but reappears from situation to situation and from generation to generation.

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A Common Education-for-All & Life-Long Learning?

Reflections on Inclusion, Integration and Equity

Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta

Introduction

Social justice is a feature of all human relationships and is present in all societies. How one talks to it and about it, however, is notoriously difficult because implicit in the language one uses and the assumptions which underlie one's language are frameworks of reference which inevitably find their origins in one or other understanding of the world and the people who are within it. The discursive construction of social justice, thus, is informed by conceptual webs of meaning, which not only condition experiences of social injustice but also respond to them (Sayed, Soudien & Carrim, 2003: 231).

Two important reasons are often presented to account for the significant organizational shift at the *compulsory educational level* and for ways in which *continuing education* is conceptualized in many parts of the world in the post-World War II period. These reasons encompass ideologies related to a “common education-for-all” and a “life-long learning” perspective. They have had far reaching consequences for both individuals and collectives. Even though access to schooling and learning opportunities over the life-span are unevenly distributed across the globe, a major transition has occurred over the past five-six decades: doors to formal education have become a feasibility (if not a reality) for *all* members of society. Formal education became a possibility for groups that were previously marginalized, including, for instance, girls, functionally disabled, economically disadvantaged, individuals in rural areas, immigrants, etc., and for the post-school and college attending sections of the population.

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Education provided for all young people, including the life-long learning movement, is understood in different ways as constituting fundamental principles that many democracies currently uphold. These conceptual traditions, based upon the notions of *equity* and *human rights*, have specific implications regarding (i) what is understood as legitimate in the conceptualization of *human diversity* and (ii) *concomitantly* how teaching and learning are organized for groups that previously stood outside the educational system/s. In other words, how human difference when conceptualized *has* a bearing upon how communities have historically organized education and/or provision for “different” groups.⁴⁶ In addition and more significantly, as will be argued, what is meant by *learning* plays an important role in how education is organized for *some groups* within the framework of a “common education-for-all”.

This chapter takes the discourse of equity and rights as a point of departure in order to discuss how education for different groups of young people and adults in the post-World War II period has been organized, particularly in the contexts of the Global North. Issues related to human diversity, the meanings subscribed to different identity categories or constructs (for instance, immigrants, functional disability and gender) and the ways in which learning for different groups is framed are of focal interest here. My aim here (and in current academic work) is to theorize what can be termed the “didactics of inclusion-equity-integration”. Thus, one point is to understand the basis on which education for different groups has been argued for and organized. Given that learning and instruction were organized differently for different groups in the pre-World War II era, it is interesting to try and extract the ways in which exclusion and segregation currently get played out, particularly in the contexts of the Global North. What kinds of knowledge about *human diversity* are seen as important, privileged and relevant in educational contexts? What understandings of *learning and instruction* guide the organization of education and everyday practices in educational contexts? In other words, what are the *didactics of inclusion, integration and equity*? These constitute some of the issues that are explored in this article.

46. For some empirically driven examples and discussions, see Bagga-Gupta (1995, 2007, 2012), Färm (1999), Hjärne and Säljö (2008), Sundkvist (1994), Weiner (1995).

Reflections on the themes attended to here arise from my previous and ongoing studies in relation to different projects.⁴⁷ The cumulative empirical work this article draws upon can be understood in terms of different long term ethnographically oriented projects that are framed within sociocultural and postcolonial perspectives and that furthermore, invite cross-sectional analysis. In addition to these empirically driven research projects, the issues I raise here draw upon experiences from both large scale school development projects and national level work for Governmental and policy organisations since the mid-1990s.

Operationalizing a *common education-for-all*. A didactics of diversity?

It is remarkable that those who live around the social sciences have so quickly become comfortable in using [category terms] as if those to whom the term is applied have enough in common so that significant things can be said about them as a whole. [...] there are categories of persons who are created by students of society, and then studied by them (Goffman, 1963: 140).

Discussions in academic literature regarding tensions in the processes of creating and sustaining equity in educational practices appear to be most evident in domains commonly conceptualized as “gender”, “special education”, “class” and the education of “immigrants and minorities”. These tensions often get played out between a rhetorical or ideological position on the one hand and a praxis-institutional level on the other (see for instance Alm et. al., 2010; Sayed, Sou-dien & Carrim, 2003). Thus, while *inclusion* is prescribed for the young with functional disabilities within the framework of a one-school-for-all position in the Global North, evidence from the praxis-institutional level has made visible the parallel excluding nature of everyday life therein.⁴⁸ Similarly, *integration* strategies for immigrants and minorities – both young people and adults – are

47. Acknowledgements: The research presented here has been carried out at the Communication, Culture and Diversity, CCD research group (www.oru.se/humes/ccd) at School HumES, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences at Örebro University in Sweden. Support by the Educational Sciences Committee of the Swedish Research Council for Project LISA-21, Languages and Identities in School Arenas in the 21st century is particularly acknowledged. Critical feedback from colleagues, particularly Guy Karnung, on an earlier draft is noted.

48. For historical and analytical discussions on this theme see Haug (1998), Hjørne and Säljö (2008), Macht (1998), Varenne and McDermott (1998), Winzer (1993), Winzer and Mazurek (2000).

often said to fail short of the expectations formulated in policies.⁴⁹ Gender and class *equality* are other areas where a mismatch is claimed to exist between goals and visions subscribed to in policies drawn up to deal with marginalization and the ways in which these get practiced or played out in educational and other institutional contexts. What can be surmised is the growing awareness that despite concerted efforts over a relatively long period, a number of pupils receive education in segregated settings *within* the regular educational system for a variety of reasons. Haug (1998) highlighted this situation in terms of “segregated-integrated” (my translation).

Highlighting this tension allows us to probe further into the provision of the *common education-for-all* parallel to the provision of *different education for different groups*. Institutionalized activity systems like, “special education” and different solutions for different categories raise pertinent issues from a range of positions – not least democratic and economic ones from individual and societal perspectives (see the work of the Institute of Future Studies, <http://www.framtidsstudier.se/eng/redirect.asp?p=1602>, December 2010). For present purposes, it can be noted that human diversity becomes translated in the one-school-for-all education in terms of different solutions for different groups – immigrants/minorities within the “common education-for-all”, individuals with reading and writing problems within the “common education-for-all”, deaf children within the “common education-for-all”, etc.

There are two interrelated issues that I wish to raise with regards to the problems noted in the operationalizing *from* policy arenas *to* everyday life arenas discussion above. The *first* of these is the necessity of paying attention to these very tensions from an analytical framework, instead of the more common corrective lens position. Recognizing the analytical nature of such tensions allows us to shift focus from claims to better-superior methods and models of teaching to more fundamental issues where the *doing of learning* and the *playing out of identity* in human social practices comes centre-stage. Thus for instance, opportunities to learn *or* get socialized *or* become a member of a community – be it a language area in the curriculum or mathematics or physical education or history – within the institution of schooling becomes framed not merely in terms of a methodological issue for the learner in a specific content area in a language, or a subject area like mathematics, but more importantly in terms of the reasons

49. For analytical discussions in this area see Beach, Gordon and Lahelma (2003), Jacob and Jordan (1993), Mehan et al (1996), Peterson and Hjerm (2007), Rosén (2013).

for focusing on the specific content and membership issues in a learning community. In other words, issues of the “how” of learning get compounded with issues of the “what”, “who” and “why” of learning. While this expanded understanding vis-à-vis didactics has been highlighted in both the academic literature and institutional educational field for some time, a further amplification and (re)positioning of learning can be called for.

From an analytical point of departure, two initial differentiations can be made: *firstly*, institutionalized education and instruction are not the equivalent of learning in some neutral sense; in other words, learning is an embedded aspect of all dimensions of human life; *secondly*, empirically studying peoples’ conceptualizations of (or “talk about”) social practices is not the equivalent of studying the same social practices. Thus analytically, the interactional spaces of communities of practices and practitioners are significant and need focusing upon from didactic points of departure. Recognizing these spaces as sites where learning *gets* done and where participants, including newcomers, both receive and afford opportunities to one another in the process of getting socialized into the “ways-of-being-with-words” (Bagga-Gupta, in press) of specific communities of practices needs to be noted. Recognizing this potential shifts focus away from normative and instrumental ways of conceptualizing meaning making and human identity. Recognizing the significant didactical relevance of these interactional spaces has far reaching implications: for instance, recognizing the inherent fallacy of viewing these spaces as sites that require implementation of better models or methods of instruction for specific groups. Focusing upon interactional spaces allows for understanding human encounters, dialogues and the very journey of the ‘doing’ of learning. Accounting for these doings and spaces becomes significant both for what goes on inside and outside institutional arenas like schools, higher education, health services, work places, etc. and for theoretical-methodological implications in the human sciences generally and the educational sciences specifically.

A *second* issue related to the tension inherent in the operationalizing of policies at the praxis-institutional level or the reported mismatch between the ideological-institutional fields relates to *representations of diversity*. My interest here relates to the linguistic-turn position which, among other things, centrestaged the fact that our communication and symbol usage in itself shapes and (co)constructs human understandings and realities. This position (not always highlighted in research arenas where human identity is focused) implies that segregated identity research projects or fields themselves (co)create specific

understandings of human identity and diversity. Having said this, an important *politics-of-representation* position that has been established in the academic literature⁵⁰ is not my *prime* agenda here. Rather, it is an empirically situated analytical position with a particular interest on *an intersectional focus on representations* themselves that is my focus.

Until recently, diversity was, not uncommonly, associated with an immigrant/minority position. Today, markers of difference other than ethnicity or race are, both in policy arenas and within research, increasingly accepted as falling within the notion of diversity. Thus, diversity is not uncommonly understood as encompassing human difference marked by traditional categories such as class, gender, sexual orientation, age and various types of functional disabilities. This shift in understanding – from *difference as marginalization* to *difference as diversity* – potentially allows for newer positions and (re)conceptualizations in different academic arenas and institutional fields.

However, an explicit homogenizing dimension continues to flourish when human difference gets framed in and through traditional identity constructs such as gender, functional disability, class, ethnicity, age, etc. The *talking about* human difference in terms of these categories, thus in itself creates boundaries vis-à-vis identity. This heuristic conceptual double-edged function of language which both creates and essentializes categories – is not always recognized.⁵¹ Such categorizations become normalized and pre-theorized. The problematic issue here is an analytical one, since these categories are not composed of real, core elements; rather, they are important historical constructs that are (re)created and (re)produced in human interaction within different communities of practices and practitioners. Furthermore, norms about Selfhood are implicitly taken as points of departure in the processes involved when Otherness is focused upon (Ajagán-Lester, 2000). Positions of ethno- and Euro-centrism continue to mark our existence despite having come under serious criticism, not least from post-colonial perspectives. The point that is important for present purposes is that it is through the focus on the Other that an individual or group creates a sense of normality of its own routines and ways-of-being. It is in the very description of Others' ways-of-being that conceptual and interactional spaces are created for making possible a (re)construction of oneself.

50. See for instance Doty (1996), Gomes et. al. (2002), Lott (1999), Mehan (1996), Taylor (1992).

51. For a further elaboration on these issues, see "The Boundary-Turn" in Bagga-Gupta (2013).

A postcolonial position, among other important issues, made evident the fact that dominant communities of practices and practitioners have privileged possibilities for framing and voicing their agendas. Such communities thus wield the power to make visible specific characteristics of *other* groups who are then further marginalized in a range of ways. To illustrate my point, let us look at the following quote where I have removed key identification word items:

____ have been placed outside the societal arena in Sweden, not least in political discussions and when different policy decisions are made for the ____ group. Research that has been conducted has, for instance, often been research on the ____ not with the _____. ____ have themselves not been an active part either in giving the research a direction, the planning of the research or in discussions of the research results” (my translation, see last reference at the end of the reference list for source).

Initially, we can speculate upon and consider numerous subject positions or groups that could fit the blanks. A number of identity constructs could easily fit the message that is presented in the example above: immigrants, deaf, mentally ill, homosexuals, girls, etc. Furthermore, significant issues regarding Otherhood can be raised here. A specific issue concerns another postcolonial point of criticism, i.e. the analytical presence/absence of the Other in the processes and products of research. Democratization *for the Other*, emancipation *of the Other* remains a dominant tendency in both research and development oriented work the world over. While this is not the case in most gender-related work (especially in the Global North), the situation is quite different as far as minorities, immigrants, functionally disabled, and other groups are concerned. The *in and through*, the participation of the Other in the position and role of producers and stakeholders of change, participation in the very processes that research and/or policy work encompass, remains a bone of contention.

Returning to the issue of dominant identity positions, one can also see that these constructs receive support and legitimacy in and through policies, not least since they have historical currency and are structurally easy to focus upon, albeit one at a time. In a similar manner and as implied above, research consolidation around different identity categories – for instance handicap research, gender research, ethnicity research contributes to legitimizing human identity *in singular*. The significant point is that while every human being can potentially lay claim to a number of significant constructs, it is not a routine case that only one of these is evoked at any given juncture in the flow of practices that comprise human life. A *woman* (itself an important historical identity construct) can make claim to her *immigrantness* or her *differently*-abled status or

her sexual-orientation or her biological age or a combination of these at different moments implicitly and/or explicitly in a range of interactional spaces in different communities. However, compounding more than any one of these at any given moment immediately raises complex issues with regard to a politics of recognition and an analytical stance. What is thus mundane in interactional everyday life spaces is often a problem for the research community and policy-makers, one can say! This, however, is an essential truth of what constitutes life for the members of communities of practices.

The normative and naturalized core of any one construct lends credibility to a selective, but strong, idea whereby each is understood in terms of a homogenous entity. Despite the increased recognition accorded to the problems inherent when identity is approached from an essentialistic “mono” position, it is not difficult to understand the seemingly un-eroded position of singularly conceived identity positions. Regarding policy or administrative scales, it is pragmatic to zoom into the complexities of human identity from a compartmentalized position, since this enables the formulation of support strategies for the equality of *women*, the integration of *minorities*, the inclusion of *functionally disabled*, etc. when compared to formulating tangible support for a *middle-aged, immigrant, functionally disabled, lesbian* who finds herself displaced in a new Global North context. Furthermore, the (re)search enterprise seems reluctant to give up the comfort zone of compartmentalized academic areas.

Emic perspectives, intersectionality and post-colonialism

Complex heterogeneity emerges when the everyday lives of seemingly homogenized groups or individuals are studied empirically.⁵² Attempting to attend to the intersecting and fluid nature of human identity in interactional spaces, the agency of human subjects-in-situ and the playing out of diversity on the scale of praxis-institutions is a complex enterprise. Recently an intersectional position arose within research in order to attend to the mismatch between the singular construct of gender and the lived experiences of scholars who themselves focused upon gender, but who also attended to (an)other prominent identity-construct(s) or subject position(s). *Intersectionality* brought some equilibrium within an area of identity related research in that it racialized and ethnicized

52. See Mykkänen (2001) for a striking critical biographical account relevant to the present discussion.

gender in newer ways (Crenshaw, 1995; De los Reyes & Mulinari, 2005; McCall, 2005). Simultaneously, and from a similar vantage point, postcolonial scholars challenged the tensions inherent in their academic discussions and personal life experiences (Bhabha, 1994). Such contributions to the academic literature were and are made, not least since these researchers themselves can be “understood as paying allegiance to a number of different representations simultaneously. [...] postcolonial theorists are migrants in their personal lives and [...] are often situated at the crossroads of different academic disciplines as well” (Bagga-Gupta 2007: 6). Racializing and ethnicizing gender on the one hand and living within the boundaries of intellectual and academic disciplines opened up the proverbial Pandora’s Box. Theorizing human identity and identification processes is no longer seen as a task reserved for the field of Gender/Woman Studies or Postcolonial Studies within academic scholarship. Both analytically and academically, individuals as well as academic disciplines need to be understood in terms of historically situated identity trajectories that do not easily (or only) belong to any one category, community or construct.

While emic and intersectional positions vis-à-vis identity lie closer to social experiences and realities, they are by no means easy to deploy in research that takes the linguistic-turn or a boundary-turn position as a point of departure (Bagga-Gupta, 2013); these positions analytically recognize the didactical significance of interactional spaces. Furthermore, as noted earlier, an intersectional point of departure is harder to conceptualize and operationalize at the policy or organizational levels. For instance, many of the ombudsman offices have been instituted in Sweden along the lines of singular identity constructs: the Justice Ombudsman, JO in 1809, the Equal (Gender) Opportunities Ombudsman, JÄMO in 1980, the Ethnic Discrimination Ombudsman, DO in 1986, the Children’s Ombudsman, BO in 1993, the Disability Ombudsman, HO in 1994 and the Gay and Lesbians (or Sexual Orientation) Ombudsman, HomO in 1999. In January 2009, JÄMO, DO, HO and HomO were integrated into a new joint ombudsman “Discrimination Ombudsman, DO”. JO and BO currently constitute independent ombudsman institutions outside DO. The recent integration of the older singular identity ombudsman institutions is perhaps illustrative of the tensions inherent in the complexities of attending to citizens’ lived experiences on the one hand and democratically oriented communities’ attempts to provide equity related support for its members on the other. While tension in the organization of the new DO institution has already surfaced, one can ask whether such a shift enables a community/state to attend to the *intersecting*

fluid identity of the fictive example illustrated above: a middle-aged, immigrant, functionally disabled, lesbian displaced in a new Global North context.

Inclusion-equity-integration? Some closing reflections on didactics and identity

One of the difficulties for those of us who, for whatever reason, feel outside the central discourses is that we remain ill-identified when we defy definition by the modernist doctrine. [we are] the ‘pilgrims’ of modernism, with [our] life-plan journey, as opposed to the ‘nomads’ of postmodernism/deconstruction who remain nebulous in identity (Corbett, 1996: 100).

Provision of education over time can be understood in terms of different waves: *from isolation to integration* and *from integration to inclusion*. The history of special education had until the 1980s been conceptualized in terms of a shift: “from isolation to integration” (Winzer, 1993). Concepts such as *inclusion* and *integration*, often linked to the branch of education that is called special education and immigrant education, are in fact borrowed from discourses of *equity* (see also Sayed, Soudien & Carrim, 2003).

As noted above, all children and young people today have in principle access to a common education-for-all. Thus, previously marginalized groups currently have access to a common education (at least in the Global North). While gender segregation in school settings can be observed in both Global North and South contexts, such segregation in schools is uncommon in Scandinavian settings. Similarly, while merit based academic streaming can be observed in both the Global North and South, it is less conspicuous in present day Scandinavia. Educational provision for functionally disabled young people is probably an area that is particularly challenging when it comes to assuming a common education-for-all position. For instance, in Sweden almost all types of functional disabilities are accommodated (at least) physically within the common education-for-all provisions. While this is far from the case in many other geopolitical contexts, the following issues can be noted and discussed.

Accommodating young people with and without functional disabilities in the same physical space is not the equivalent of a common education-for-all provision. Academic discussions during recent decades and shifts in policies from an *integration* of the functionally disabled to an *inclusion* of functionally disabled in educational institutions both captured and attended to this continuing marginalization and need for (re)accommodation. That is, accommodating

needs of *differently*-abled young people in educational settings together with able-bodied young people was recognized as a way of going beyond a mere physical co-existence in institutional interactional spaces.⁵³ Studies of social practices in institutional settings, however, continue to highlight that (i) inclusion remains an elusive vision, and (ii) different types of education are made available for different groups of young people within the same physical spaces. Here the following conceptual point can be raised.

No parallel shift in the academic or institutional discussions can be noted in the instance of education for minorities and immigrants. Immigrants – young children, youth and adults, regardless of their entry points into educational systems – are expected to be *integrated*. Accommodating the needs of the wide range of experiences (linguistic, community-based, life-based, to name a few) of people who move voluntarily or find themselves displaced into settings where the norm is a national language and a geopolitically framed idea of a homogenous culture, continues to be framed in terms of integration in institutions like schools, workplaces and general society. A similar case can be made for the situation of minorities like the Sami, Finns and Roma in a national geopolitical context like Sweden. While political recognition is accorded to the latter, and in the case of the Sami and Finns language profiled general educational provisions exist in some parts of Sweden, it is the norm of a national majority language and the myth of a homogenous monolithical culture that upholds the ideology of a one-way integration for immigrants in general, including officially recognized minority groups (see also Hult, 2004). The significant issue here is the linguistically framed organizational principle and role accorded to a national language in the common education-for- all provision.

Another illustrative example of the tension surrounding equity lies in the organization of educational provision for deaf children and young people in Sweden. Sweden remains the only country in the Global North that provides a segregated education for its young deaf population and has done so since the establishment of a common education-for-all in the 1960s. Despite the parallel and dichotomized view of deaf human beings in terms of non-hearing functionally disabled on the one hand, and as members of unique language communities on the other, deaf young people have had access to a physically segregated educational provision in Sweden since the end of the nineteenth century. Different models of education based upon oral and manual methodo-

53. See Corbett (1996) for a differently-abled critical analytical contribution to the literature.

logical ideologies over the past 150 years notwithstanding, deaf young people in Sweden have, in other words, had and continue to receive their education today in physically segregated schools.⁵⁴ A central policy shift in the 1980s, when Swedish Sign Language was decreed a *language of instruction* in this segregated educational system, was seen as conferring a linguistic minority status to deaf children (and adults). Apart from the language specifications, a national curriculum and achievement goals (similar for deaf and hearing pupils) are seen as representing an inclusive perspective in an otherwise compensatory segregated school system. The Swedish schools for the deaf thus represent a fundamental paradox between on the one hand an inclusive democratically based one-school-for-all framework, and on the other a physically segregated institution that currently rests upon a linguistically organizational principle and a compensatory-categorical idea. Accordingly, a linguistic minority status, including the parallel categorical-compensatory situation that legitimizes the continuing segregation of educational provision for this group, constitutes a paradox. Furthermore, addressing the needs of this group within the framework of other institutionalized special educational provision is seen as difficult. Academic discussions regarding the deaf are also segregated from both general and special educational domains. Metaphorically, the organization of educational provision for this group in Sweden can thus be understood as being situated at the crossroads between special educational services, disability provision and support for marginalized minority groups.

Didactically relevant implications regarding what is conceived of in terms of education-for-all thus gets played out in terms of the *inclusion* of some, the *integration* of others and the diffuse but tangible *segregation* of a few. This can be further illustrated through the comparison of the language learning contexts that are conceptualized and created in the common education-for-all for the immigrant child/adult (or the national minority Sami child) and the language learning contexts that are created for the national ethnic-majority adolescent who experiences difficulties with the national language, Swedish in the school context. The *didactics of integration* in the first case has, for instance, given rise to a large number of specialized institutional activities in schools and teacher education programs, and has created both pupil identity positions (e.g. Sami, immigrant, Roma, “blatte”, etc.) and professional identifications (e.g. teachers of

54. For empirical and theoretically driven discussions on this school system in Sweden, see for instance Bagga-Gupta (2002, 2004), Holmström (2013).

a second language for adults, teachers of first language(s), teachers of [national] minority language(s), bilingual researchers, second language researchers, etc.). Similarly, the *didactics of inclusion* can be said to have contributed to specialist institutional activities in schools, within teacher education programs and both pupil identity (e.g. deaf, disabled, etc.) and professional identity positions (e.g. special needs educators, teachers of the deaf, disability researchers, special needs educational researchers, deaf researchers, etc.).

The compartmentalization of discussions vis-à-vis language didactics in different academic arenas – language issues for immigrant children/adults, language issues for the deaf or the language impaired national ethnic majority adolescent – can be raised (see also Bagga-Gupta, in press). Another notable characteristic that is common to both the areas of integration and inclusion in academic writings is the (pre)theorizing vis-à-vis learning, or rather the absence or simplification of the same. In the domain of learning illustrated here – i.e. language learning – specialized knowledge for the specialist professional (for instance, special education for the language impaired, teacher of the national language for the immigrant child, teacher of “Swedish as a second language of the deaf”) is not uncommonly conceived instrumentally in terms of the learning of language structures. One can say that a monological perspective on language (Linell, 2009) and language learning has arrived at centre-stage when integration of immigrants – children and adults – and inclusion of functionally disabled children and young people (language impaired, the deaf) are concerned.

The ways-of-being and the ways in which the organization of and/or the representation of diversity occurs in educational contexts – through the management of provisions for different groups, as exemplified above, constitute aspects of the didactics of representation. In addition, the ways in which identity constructs are framed in and through the interactional spaces of educational provision and how identifications emerge in the curriculum and classroom texts are aspects of this didactics (see Bagga-Gupta 2004, 2012, in press). Learning gets back-staged when pupils are for any reason viewed as being weak – learning gets relegated to a normative “applied” position, and the thrust of didactics as the science of learning risks getting reduced to issues of methodologies where a “mono” identity is focused upon.

As a final point – attending to the complexities of human existence currently in the Global North at the compulsory school level also raises parallel issues at post-college level education for older citizens within the framework of life-long learning. Inclusion, integration and equity constitute fundamental ideas in

societies' democratization at institutional learning arenas here, too. Traditional identity categories including age are, as I have argued, significant and need to be accounted for analytically. The subtle ways in which identity constructs are framed and enacted in these arenas is an analytical enterprise that has a bearing on the didactics of diversity. The changed context of educational provision – *from* a provision for a few *to* the provision for all and *from* a provision for a particular age group *to* provision that encompasses the entire life-span – is both dramatic and has far-reaching consequences for society. This article contributes to ongoing discussions as to how this changed landscape, including the tasks entrusted to educational institutions, need to be critically approached from what has been termed 'the didactics of diversity'. How we attend to issues of diversity and social exclusion in (i) society-at-large, including institutional arenas, and (ii) the analytical enterprise of research itself highlight complexities of attending to and the risks of (co- and re)producing specific identity positions. This constitutes a fundamental dimension of not only the provision of education but also the research enterprise itself.

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PART FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Action Research in Qualitative Classroom Studies

May Britt Postholm

Introduction

How research is conducted depends on its purpose. The point of departure for traditional qualitative classroom research has been a research question that is formulated on the basis of learning and teaching processes in the classroom. Furthermore, relevant theories are used to illuminate the teachers' and research participants' perspectives. The aim of traditional qualitative classroom research is to inspire and initiate reflection and discussion in order to improve practice (Gudmundsdottir, 1997; 2001). There is no expressed intention in this research tradition where researchers help practitioners to develop practice during the ongoing research process.

Several theoreticians have raised questions about such a research approach (Carr & Cemis, 1986; Wardekker, 2000). Usually, researchers in school have teacher experience or knowledge about teaching practice in school. Bearing this in mind, Wardekker (2000) raises some interesting ethical issues. He wonders if it is proper that experienced and competent researchers who also have knowledge about or experience of teaching in school refrain from contributing to and supporting development in schools when they are in, what is for them, a familiar context. Wardekker also maintains that the quality of research should be evaluated on the basis of the changes the research work has inspired in the research field. For many years Carr and Kemmis (1986) have claimed that it is not enough to describe actions and reflections connected to practice. Rather, they contend that if there are problems in a

teaching situation, researchers should not just describe the processes, but also try to improve practice in their ongoing research. Thus, according to them, both research and development work (R&D work) should be conducted side by side. “Action research” and “action learning” can be juxtaposed with the terms “research” and “development work”, and in this article I use these terms side by side. Action learning is perceived as learning processes undertaken by participants in research (Revans, 1982; 1984). Action research is research conducted on these actions.

Many classroom studies have aimed at presenting best practice examples. If this is the purpose of the studies, they can be conducted by using traditional qualitative research strategies. The researcher can collect and analyse data, and then present an understanding of the practice as a text intended as a thinking tool. This means that readers can perceive the described processes as parallel experiences and adapt them to their own situation or practice, thus conducting naturalistic generalizations (Stake & Trumbull, 1982). However, the question is whether or not all teaching can be improved. I think this question can be answered in the affirmative; all teaching processes can be developed. However, written texts are not necessarily read, and if they are read there is no guarantee that they lead to change and improvement in practice. Hence, the conclusion must be that classroom researchers with competence in teaching and learning should have two roles at the same time, both to conduct “research with” and “research on” the teachers in their practice, meaning that they develop practice together with the practitioners, as well as conducting research on it and writing research texts about this practice.

Working as an action researcher is challenging. The purpose of this article is to describe action research processes in school and, furthermore, outline researchers’ and research participants’ possibilities and challenges within this tradition. In the following I will write about the start-up phase of such a research project, and about how teachers can observe each other’s teaching processes and reflect on them afterwards as a basis for learning. First, I will focus on the research question as the frame for the research as well as the development work. Examples and experiences presented in the article are mainly taken from the first year of an action research project conducted in a lower secondary school

in Norway⁵⁵. The teachers at the school were divided into three teams. I was connected with Team 3, which contained 12 teachers who were responsible for the pupils in the eighth, ninth and tenth grades, and this is therefore the micro society (Krogh, Ichijo, & Nonaka, 2000) referred to in this paper.

The question framing the research and development work

The initiative for action research can come from the practice field as much as from researchers. A headmaster at one school said the following to the researcher:

We invited you here because you know something about our way of working. At the same time you're an outsider and probably see things from another perspective than we do (Postholm & Madsen, 2006).

We see that the research or thesis question can be the teachers', the researchers' or their jointly formulated question. Regarding the action research project focused on in this text, the researcher and teachers formulated the question or problem formulation together. Such collaboration between researchers and subjects is called by Engeström and Sannino (2010) formative interventions. The researchers do not know the overall goal for the work ahead of time, and the researchers' role is to provoke and sustain a transformation process led and owned by the practitioners.

The main focus at the selected school was the development of pupils' learning. The headmaster eagerly invited researchers into her school to help her develop the teachers' practice and the premises necessary for improving it. She motivated the teachers to take part in the project and also reminded them that research and development competence is an important part of their total competence, as stated by the central authorities (Ministry of Teaching and Research, 2004).

The researcher and teachers arrived at the following research question for their project: "How can various work methods which focus on learning strate-

55. The study, to which the article refers, was part of a larger research project called "The Lade Project' – A Learning Organization for Pupils' Learning". The selected school was situated in a suburban area and has pupils from the first to tenth grades. Forty teachers were working at the school, which had 400 pupils. The pupils were for the most part from middle-class families, and there were few immigrants at the school. The duration of the project, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, was two years in the practice field.

gies contribute to each pupil's academic and social development?" (Postholm, 2008a) This functioned as an overarching question for the teachers, and also helped me, the researcher, focus my research. From this overarching question that functioned as a vision or milestone for the teachers, several sub-goals were established: "Making the pupils more aware of various ways of working"; "Helping the pupils become more aware of how they learn"; "Making teachers more aware of what they are doing in this connection." The teachers also formulated questions connected to specific lessons to focus their reflections on these conducted lessons. These questions were also formed within the frame of the goal and sub-goals. I will return to how they observed and reflected on the teaching and learning processes below.

The overarching question for the work also functioned, as mentioned above, as a guide for the researcher, but the research questions show that I took a step aside or perceived the processes from a meta-level, thus performing research. It also took some time before I could form these questions, because I did not know beforehand in what direction the process would develop. Two research questions that were formed gradually over the first semester were: "What importance does the reflection process after each observation of the teaching have for the development of teaching?", and "What does the start-up phase mean for further development?"

Even though the researchers and teachers develop the research question together, it can take some time before the teachers identify with the project as their own. I have found that the start-up phase in an action research project is vital and lays the foundation for further development (Postholm, 2008a).

The start-up phase

Whether the research question that functions as the guide for the work is the schools', the teachers' or the researchers', further development depends on the teachers' feeling that the project and the work is theirs; that they identify with the project. When they start working together, the researcher must therefore make the teachers feel that they are equal partners (Postholm & Skrøvset, in press). During the start-up phase researchers should observe the participating teachers in their lessons to get acquainted with teachers and pupils in their work situation. Furthermore, teachers in a micro society (Krogh et al., 2000) should be given the opportunity to develop intersubjectivity with regard to their teaching practice and be assisted in developing an overarching goal before

initiating the development processes, which they should also break down into sub-goals that can assist them in their attempts to attain the overarching goal or answer the research question. The teachers must also be given time to discuss and develop a common understanding of their vision and sub-goals. A common understanding is a premise for learning in teacher teams (Senge, 2006). While the teachers in this project were given time to develop several sub-goals to help them attain the overarching goal, the start-up phase ended up lasting the entire autumn semester. During this period the teachers began to perceive the project as their own.

Early in the semester the teachers said that they saw the benefit of reflecting on their own and other's teaching, but they were afraid it would take a great deal of the time they had at their disposal, which was already fully booked. During a meeting in the middle of October in the first semester, a teacher said that she found it very useful that colleagues teaching the same subject at different levels reflected on the teaching and actually shared ideas. During the same meeting one teacher in the tenth grade commented that they had already begun to talk more about their teaching in their class teams. She found it positive because their focus was on other things than just some of the pupils' bad behaviour. "Then we can develop instead of just talking about some of the pupils, which is a rut I think we sometimes get stuck in", she said. Thus, the teachers began to see the meaning of focusing on their teaching guided by the goals to enhance pupils' learning.

The team leader, who was also one of the teachers, believed there would be continuity in their work if they found it useful: "We do the things that we feel are right, from what we know inside, and then I think we manage to achieve continuity in our work". She added that they also needed to be prodded, which means that researchers have to be sensitive and balance between prodding and supporting teachers. "But for some time now the project has been rooted in the teachers' intentions, and already I think they feel it's their project," the team leader concluded. This was said in the beginning of November, and before the month was over, I made a formalized plan for observations of teaching and reflections in subject-team meetings, class-team meetings and meetings in Team 3.

Observation and reflection

The formalized plan was made on the basis of the teachers' expressed wishes, and it guided the organization of observation and reflection processes during the spring semester. The plan is shown in Figure 1 below.

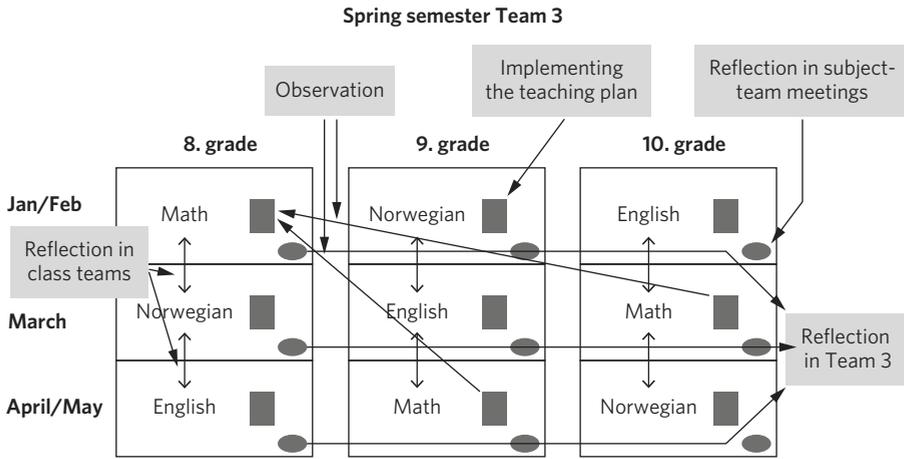


Figure 1 Formalized plan.

The figure shows that the teachers teaching the same subject observe each other, afterwards reflecting together on the observed activity. For instance, while the 8th-grade mathematics teacher is instructing his pupils, the 9th and 10th-grade mathematics teachers observe him. Before teaching the class, the teacher sends a planning document to the observing teachers and me, the researcher, who is also taking part in the observation and reflection processes. This document describes the subject/theme and lesson aims, and the teacher writes questions about his own planned practice and what he wants feedback on. As we see, the intention is that the teachers reflect together in each of their own class teams after each observation (and in Team 3 with all the teachers) when one-third of the process has been completed. Additionally and as already mentioned, the teachers teaching the same subject reflected on the observed activity the same day as the observation session.

It is necessary to add that the teachers were paid extra for the time they used on reflection after each observation session. The long-term intention was that these teachers would find this activity so useful that they would add it to their repertoire on a permanent basis during the time they already have at their disposal. It must also be said that the teachers intended to follow the same plan the following year. They wanted to include the activity in the total time-frame at their disposal, meaning there was no extra pay for it. So the intention has been realized; they have perceived their development work as meaningful (Postholm, 2008b).

Teachers' learning

Learning from making reflections about one's actions is called action learning (Revans, 1982; 1984). Action learning implies looking as much forward as backwards. According to Revans, reflection means asking questions about one's own practice and foreseeing possibilities for change and development. Thus, it is important for teachers to look ahead and not get stuck on their experiences. Concurring with Revans, Engeström (1999, 2001)⁵⁶ contends that teachers have to see possibilities in their teaching and ask questions about it with this overall goal in mind. They must therefore have some ideas and foresee some consequences, as Dewey (1916) put it. In Figure 2 below presenting The Expansive Circle, we see that questions are the point of departure for development.

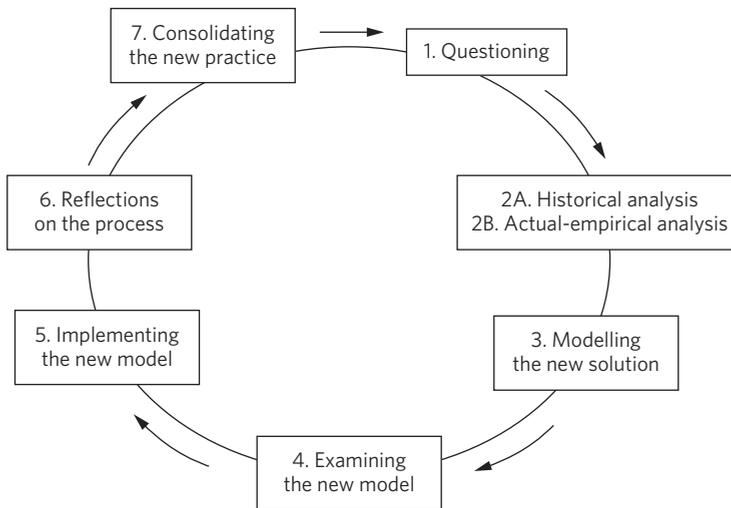


Figure 2 The Expansive Circle

The overall goal or vision for the teachers in Team 3 is to vary their work methods and focus on learning strategies to contribute to each and every child's academic and social development. Figure 2 shows how researchers and research participants ask questions about the current practice at the outset of their work. There is tension, and there are some conflicts that have to be resolved and even

56. It is important to be aware of the fact that action research and developmental work research (DWR) or intervention research have different foundations. In intervention research, which is the research method used by Engeström and colleagues at the Change Laboratory and University of Helsinki, the cultural historical activity theory is the theoretical framework. Culture, history and collective processes are central aspects in the research. Thus, the research methods have various origins, and during action research the abovementioned aspects are not necessarily in focus.

possibilities that have to be strived for. To make progress, Engeström suggests that both historical and actual empirical analyses should be conducted before a new solution is framed. The next step is to analyse the new model from various angles prior to implementing the new practice. After the implementation process, the involved parties, and this can be both teachers and researchers, reflect on their practice before the new practice is eventually consolidated. New thesis questions will again be focused on current practice to move it towards what is envisioned for the work (Engeström 2001, Engeström & Sannino, 2010). In this way The Expansive Circle will be the foundation for spirals of development illustrating the constantly changing practice. This circle was introduced to the teachers as a planning tool that also visualised for them the development processes they were in. The research conducted on the development work shows that the teachers actually learnt from the collective reflection processes (Postholm, 2008b; Postholm, 2011). The fact that teachers learn in their own school along with other colleagues in reflection processes conducted on the basis of observations of teaching practice is also supported by international research on teachers' learning (Postholm, 2012). In the following I will describe strategies that can be used to conduct research on development processes.

The researcher collecting and analysing data

During the autumn term I visited the school several times to get to know both pupils and teachers. I observed the teachers during learning activities, and also observed and reflected together with the teachers in class team meetings and in meetings with all the Team 3 teachers present. Furthermore, I took part in some meetings in the leader team in which the headmistress, deputy head and three team leaders took part. I also have observation notes from seminars on action learning, and tape-recordings from a one-day seminar. In addition I had group interviews with the teachers in the three class teams, conversations with all the team teachers and interviews with the team leaders. The data material from these meetings, including observation notes and tape recordings of interviews and conversations, provided me with information about the project's start-up phase. At the same time this information functioned as a context for understanding the processes during the observation and reflection activities of the spring semester, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The data material from the spring semester and remainder of the project – altogether comprising a two-year period – includes the teachers' planning docu-

ments for the observed lessons. I observed every lesson and took observation notes. I actively took part in the joint reflections afterwards, which were tape-recorded. I was also present, with my tape-recorder, at class team meetings and meetings of all the teachers. At the end of both spring semesters, all the teachers at school attended a meeting to present their experiences as participants in the project up to that point. These presentations were also tape-recorded, and all tape-recordings have been transcribed.

The notes and transcriptions were analysed by using the constant comparative method of analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The coding and categorising process structured and reduced the data so that their particular characteristics were reportable (Garfinkel, 1967; Sachs, 1992). Member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) was used to ensure the quality of the research project. This means that all the teachers in Team 3 have read the texts I wrote, checking for both accuracy and commenting on the ethical dimension. This shows that during an action research project, the researcher collects and analyses data in the same way as in a traditional qualitative study. The great difference is that these data are also used to change practice during an action research project in addition to serving as the basis for the research report.

Challenges and possibilities for teachers and researchers

The close cooperation between teachers and researcher places a number of demands on both parties when the intention is to develop practice during the process. Researchers have to be honest and responsive, building relationships founded on trust. As regards the relational discursive situations, the researcher must be both an active listener and supportive interlocutor, have a high level of competence in teaching and learning and be willing to share this competence with teachers. These ethical codes challenge the researchers' communicative, social and knowledge competence. Researchers need social competence in order to show sensitivity towards persons or activity settings. For participants to trust researchers and really believe in and be willing to contribute to the development of the studied practice, this competence must be honestly and openly communicated (Postholm, 2008a, b; Postholm & Madsen, 2006, Postholm & Skrøvset, in press). Last but not least, teachers must see the need for development and be willing to take part in developmental processes, listening to and using researchers as resource persons.

During an action research process, researchers write log book entries, observation notes, transcriptions and preliminary analyses and interpretations. These texts are the first formulations making up the basis for articles based on the study. It is the researchers' task to write the texts based on the data material collected during the process (Bjørnsrud, 2005). During this writing process researchers also have to take ethical considerations into account, meaning that they have to protect the teacher's privacy and therefore have to be sensitive to what information should be used in the text so that the participants are not placed in a bad light. Researchers can use pseudonyms so that the teachers are not recognized. The teachers can also read the text and eventually approve the content, and if not, they can write their own version and include it in the text (Postholm, 2010). The teachers can also be active writers and co-authors of final research texts. This means that researchers and teachers cooperate closely right up to the moment when the last word is written down. Even if the teachers do not take part in writing the actual research texts, one of the premises is that they can write during the developmental phase when they are planning, undertaking and reflecting on their practice. Observation notes and log book entries can be useful tools in dialogues on practice with researchers. Using these notes as an aid, teachers can retell events from practice with related reflections. The teachers' notes contribute to the researchers' total material collected from the practice field.

To find out how pupils perceive the teaching, information can be collected by using questionnaires or interviewing a sample group. Researchers and teachers can formulate questions or themes for discussion. The teachers know their pupils best, and it is therefore most appropriate that they are responsible for and lead the conversations with pupils. The researchers should also be active in these processes so that they and the teachers have a common basis for making reflections afterwards. In this way both parties develop an understanding of the teaching practice and how it can be improved.

Concluding comments

Both teachers and researchers can develop an understanding of the teaching practice during action research or a research and development project. During development work the researchers and teachers work together to improve practice. They have a common overarching goal and sub-goals they strive to attain. The participation in such a community can in my opinion be called "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As mentioned, while

the research is being conducted, both researchers and teachers develop their understanding of practice. Teachers are also in a position to gain more insight into the researchers' strategies for collecting and analysing data. In this way both parties can move from a peripheral to a more adequate understanding of each other's practices (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Researchers can then use their developed understanding of the teaching practice in their subsequent research work and in their teaching of teacher students, and the teachers will have more insight into how various strategies can be used to systematically obtain information about their own practice as a basis for further development. In this way both teachers and researchers learn more about their own and the other party's work during action research.

During an action research study researchers can use the same strategies to collect and analyse the data material as in traditional qualitative research. The research will also conclude with a research text that may function as a thought provoking tool initiating and inspiring reflections and discussions on teaching practices, leading to a developed practice. This is also the aim of traditional qualitative research. In action research the aim is to improve practice during the research process; this form of qualitative classroom research produces a high level of quality and utilitarian value.

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Action Research in Implementation and Evaluation

Outline of a Study of a Training Programme for Kidney Transplant Recipients

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Introduction

The claim of evidence-based practice is strong today within all sectors of society. There is general consensus that routine practice and decision making within fields such as education, social work and health care should be informed by the best available research evidence. However, there is a need for more systematic knowledge of how to implement research in practice. We need rigorous methods for putting the research into use and evaluating the process and results of implementation.

This article provides an outline of the methods and analytical approaches used in the implementation of a research-based patient-training programme for kidney or renal transplant recipients. The project is cross-disciplinary, borrowing from health science, comparative literature, philosophy and education, and the methods developed are expected to be applicable in research- and professional disciplines such as medicine, education, special needs education and psychology. While the article describes implementation strategy and cooperation between professionals and researchers, its main focus is on research methodology.

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Background

Each year, approximately 300 kidney or renal transplantations are performed in Norway, all at a national centre at Oslo University Hospital (OUS). To reduce the risk of rejection of the new kidney, it is essential to ensure that the patient understands the importance of maintaining life-long immunosuppressive treatment. This includes the awareness that their medication must be taken at fixed hours both morning and night, and measures need to be taken if these patients are prevented from taking their medication. It is equally important for the patients to be able to recognize the signs of rejection and what they can do to reduce the long-term effects of medication in terms of diet, exercise and other lifestyle changes (Murphy, 2007; Transplant Work Group, 2009).

Individually adapted or customized patient education has shown to increase the learning outcome for patients with chronic diseases (Noar, Benac & Harris, 2007; Rimer et al., 1999; van der Maulen et al., 2008). Recently, this has also been shown in a study of renal transplant recipients in Norway (Urstad et al., 2012). In a randomized controlled study undertaken at OUS, a newly developed, customized training programme was compared to a standard programme (“Veien Videre” [“The Road Ahead”]) for renal transplant recipients. It showed that patients who had undergone the customized programme had better knowledge about transplantation as well as higher levels of compliance and life quality, and they also coped better than those who had undergone the standard programme. The customized programme is based on educational theory and has been devised on the basis of previous research on training programmes for patients, knowledge about transplantation and clinical experience (Urstad et al., 2012). The programme starts during the first week after patients have been discharged from the ward and runs over the initial 6–7 weeks after the renal transplantation. The programme consists of five weekly individual training sessions. To ensure individual adaptation, the principles of “academic detailing” are used (Kim et al., 2004; Soumari, 1998; Soumari & Avorn, 1990). These include identification of baseline knowledge and needs (measured by a knowledge test), definition of evident training areas, a skilled instructor, encouragement of active participation, repetition and elucidation of key areas as well as feedback on any behavioural changes. The main difference between current training practices and the customized programme consists in the method of knowledge transfer, timing of the start date, number of training sessions, user co-determination and individual adaptation.

The division management and transplantation experts at OUS wish to improve current training practices by implementing the new training programme in routine practice. In order to do this in a qualified manner and also accumulate scientific information about this type of implementation process, we have designed an implementation study based on the FORECAST framework for programme implementation and evaluation (Katz et al., 2013). The aim of FORECAST is to ensure “... *that programs are successfully planned, implemented, and evaluated so that they may produce the desired outcomes*” (Katz et al., 2013: 44). The model ensures broad participation involving different stakeholders as well as the opportunity to investigate and develop new insight into the importance of knowledge transfer from a research context to an applied setting. Thus, studying how implementation processes are planned, facilitated, undertaken and monitored can generate valuable insights into knowledge transfer between research and practice. Systematic methods for implementation and evaluation of implementation processes might reinforce the basis for evidence-based practice in patient education as well as in education in general.

Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this study is to understand and appraise processes involved in the implementation of patient-training programmes that are developed and tested through research and for research purposes in applied practice – in this context referring to renal transplantation. The study seeks to elucidate the following research questions:

- What motivates initiation of the intervention in applied practice, and how can the intervention help mitigate the challenges involved?
- How are the drivers and barriers for the introduction of a new method of patient training perceived?
- How are the outcome objectives of patient training described and understood in applied practice, what preconditions need to be fulfilled and how can they be achieved? How do these objectives concur with the outcome objectives used in the study of the training programme?
- How is the new training programme adapted to and situated in applied practice?
- Is the training programme functioning as planned in applied practice, and does it achieve the objectives that are considered important?

- What proves to be the key factors for knowledge transfer between research and applied practice in an implementation setting related to patient training?

Theoretical framework

As mentioned, the study is inspired by the FORECAST framework for programme implementation and evaluation developed by Goodman & Wandersman (1994). Implementation research is an expanding field based on the recognition that the introduction of new knowledge and services in applied practice involves a complex social process that requires careful planning and monitoring. A number of models have been developed to describe multi-stage implementation processes (Marshall, Pronvost & Dixon-woods, 2013; Rogers, 2003). The framework for this study differs from alternative approaches in placing more emphasis on user participation at the planning stage and by allowing for adjustments and improvements as the process unfolds. Hence, the study involves elements of action research design. However, it also differs from the latter by distinguishing between an implementation team responsible for the planning and organisation of the training programme, and a research team responsible for the evaluation (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

The FORECAST framework consists of three main stages: 1) planning, 2) implementation and 3) impacts. During the two first stages, implementation and evaluation are integrated in such a way that the evaluation results will have an impact on further implementation. It is also based on close collaboration between the evaluation and implementation teams.

During the planning stage the evaluation team uses the collected data to develop 1) a problem model summarizing the main challenges for successful implementation and 2) a solution model summarizing the expected outcome as well as drivers and barriers for implementation. The implementation stage is introduced by the implementation and evaluation teams in collaboration operationalizing the problem and solution models into “markers”, “measures” and “meanings” that will guide the further process. Markers designate the expected outcomes, measures consist of the timeline according to which the markers are assessed, and meanings are the qualitative standards or criteria of a successful result. The completion of the implementation stage is followed by an impact stage, where results are measured.

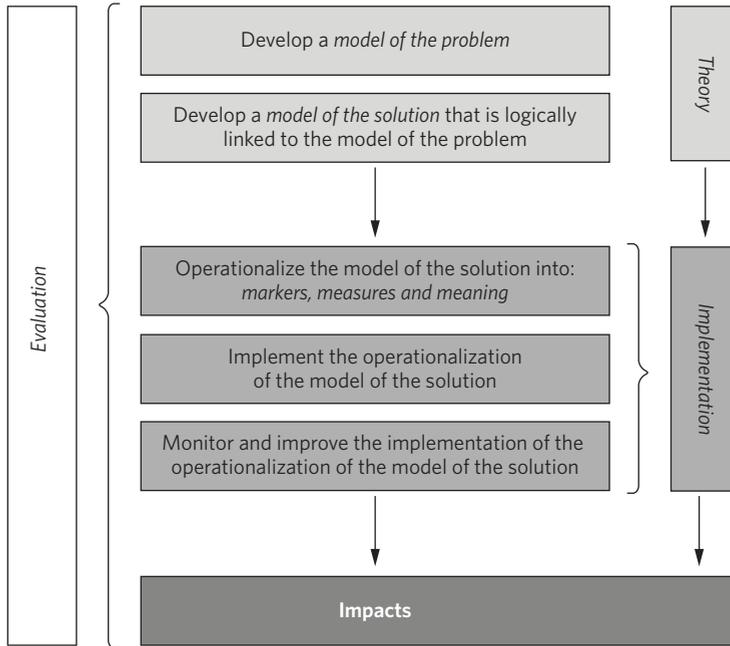


Figure 1 FORECAST logic model.

Research design

Our study of the implementation process has a prospective, dynamic mixed-methods design. It is prospective in following a real time implementation process and mixed by drawing on qualitative and quantitative methods to elucidate the same overall objectives.

Research method

In light of the FORECAST framework, the planning stage of our study focuses on how to adapt the training programme to practice. The implementation stage partly consists of a training phase for health personnel and partly of a phase during which the training programme itself is applied with patients. The impact stage includes monitoring and evaluation of the training programme's results, as well as development of guidelines for programme application and patient counselling. An executive group will be established at OUS to be charged with

the practical implementation, as well as a research group at UiO, Institute of Health and Society, in collaboration with OUS and the University of Stavanger. The head of the executive group at OUS will have a dual role in serving as a liaison between clinic and researchers, acting as a kind of “knowledge broker” while being part of both groups (Ward, House & Hamar, 2009). The stages of the FORECAST framework (planning, implementation and impacts) are broken down into six activities for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Each of these activities includes practical implementation elements with appurtenant research activities. In the following description, the main focus is placed on the research activities.

Phase 1: Planning and implementation

This phase includes three activities: identification and analysis of the current situation, development of an implementation plan and training and competence enhancement for health personnel. The research activity seeks to elucidate how preparations for the introduction of new measures are made, especially with regard to facilitators and barriers.

Research activity 1: Identification and analysis of the current situation: This activity includes focus-group interviews with stakeholders in the implementation process (health professionals, patients, supervisors and researchers involved in the reference study). A total of four groups are involved, each consisting of eight participants. The evaluation team encourages the participants to reflect on two sets of questions: 1) Which challenges related to the current situation have motivated the initiation of the intervention, and how can the intervention mitigate these challenges? 2) How do they foresee that the expected outcomes can be achieved, and what preconditions need to be present in order to succeed?

Transcriptions from the focus-group interviews form the basis for elaboration of problem and solution models (Figure 1 FORECAST logic model taken from Goodman & Wandersman, 1994). In the efforts to develop these two models, data are analysed in light of two main approaches: First, the data will be reviewed with a focus on *what* kinds of knowledge the participants focus on (the knowledge objects), *how* they express their knowledge (knowledge forms) and *who/what interests* they are speaking on behalf of (the knowledge position) (Lillehagen et. al., 2013). Thereafter, we seek to identify the participants’ perceptions of 1) who are awarded active and passive roles respectively in the implementation of the intervention (subject/object), 2) who will deliver it and who

is intended to benefit from it (sender/recipient) and 3) what can be expected to promote success (facilitators/barriers) (Greimas, 1973). The analytical tools used here are innovative in combining the FORECAST framework with concepts from disciplines such as comparative literature and sociology of science.

One of the researchers in the team develops an initial analysis memo which is discussed in the interdisciplinary research team before the analysis is summarized in a problem model and a solution model in accordance with the FORECAST framework. The two models that follow from this analytical process will then be submitted to the members of the implementation team, who develop an implementation plan.

Activity 2: Development of an implementation plan: A key research question related to this activity is how an implementation plan is established and the factors that characterize such a process. This is an element in obtaining knowledge of how the new training programme is being adapted to and situated in clinical practice. As part of Activity 2, the executive group at the hospital is responsible for establishing a shared understanding of “the situation” and preparing an implementation plan based on Activity 1, including milestones, measures and meanings, with a clarification of necessary and available resources, roles and progress schedules. Researchers at UiO monitor this process through participant observation in planning sessions and other activities. The head of the executive group writes reflection memos from this process, and these are combined with the memos from the participant observers to form the basis for the analysis of the material as described in Activity 1.

Activity 3: Training and competence development for health personnel: This activity involves training and competence development for those who will deliver the new training programme. A key research question in this context is how knowledge transfer is achieved in the programme and what factors are conducive or unfavourable to this process. Approximately 100 nurses are employed at the department. They will all undergo the training component, and they will all be asked to participate in the related research activity. Observations of the training sessions, pre- and post-training questionnaires and interviews of the participants during the process are used to monitor and appraise the training process. The questionnaires mainly focus on job satisfaction, expectations for coping, competence development and knowledge transfer. The interviews concentrate on knowledge transfer in particular. We seek to uncover the cognitive process that the participants undergo from their first encounter with the new knowledge (the patient training programme) via intellectual process-

ing to a possible adjustment of behaviour/practice. The conceptual framework for analysing this process of obtaining knowledge is taken from the philosopher Bernard Lonergan (1992), who regards knowledge acquisition as a process consisting of a number of different activities. Questionnaire data are analysed using the statistics program SPSS, version 20, and descriptive and interpretative analyses are undertaken to uncover trends and characteristics related to the main focus described above.

Phase 2: Delivery of the implementation and appraisal of the process

Activity 4: Process implementation of the programme. Following Activities 1–3, the implementation of the new programme goes live. This phase includes process evaluation and concurrent monitoring of the implementation. The researchers interview different participants, such as health professionals, patients and division managers. In addition, selected cases are observed by monitoring of randomly selected “patient situations” throughout their entire pathway with regard to patient training. In addition to the interviews and observations, the project seeks to monitor patients through the aid of questionnaires that measure knowledge, expectations for coping, and quality of life. Text data from Activity 4 will be analysed according to the same principles as during Phase 1, seeking to reveal whether the actual implementation corresponds to the plans. Moreover, there will be a focus on the participants’ cognitive process, as in Activity 3. The questionnaire data are also analysed as described in Activity 3. If the implementation process appears to deviate from the planned markers, measures and meanings, necessary adjustments are made as the process unfolds. When this phase is completed and the new programme is established in the clinic, Phase 3 is initiated.

Phase 3: Implementation – appraisal of impacts

Activity 5: Evaluation and monitoring of the implemented programme and related issues: An impact appraisal of the new training programme is undertaken on the basis of Activities 1–4. Here, the research focuses on whether the programme functions as foreseen (as in the research study) and in concurrence with the objectives established in Phase 2. An appraisal of impacts associated with the introduction of the new programme is planned and implemented in collaboration between the executive group in the clinic and the researchers at

UiO. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used. We measure the patients' development of knowledge, degree of coping, ability to comply and quality of life before and after the completion of the training programme. These results are compared to those of the reference study and historic figures on rejection of organs from the period preceding the introduction of the new programme. In addition, we investigate user satisfaction among patients, job satisfaction among the health professionals and management satisfaction among managers. Questionnaires (patients and health professionals), focus groups (health professionals) and individual interviews (patients) are here used and analysed through statistical analysis and content analysis, collating general features from the various data analyses.

Phase 4: Development of guidelines for implementation of patient training programmes

Activity 6: Development of guidelines: Today, no guidelines for evidence-based implementation of training programmes in clinical settings are available. Relevant research and knowledge on the development of guidelines in general as well as research findings from Activities 1–5 will be able to form the basis for elaboration of guidelines for implementation, monitoring and appraisal of this type of intervention. The planning and development of this activity is undertaken by the researchers at UiO in collaboration with the implementation group at OUS. They use the consensus method referred to as the nominal group technique, which is a recognized method for the development of guidelines.

Concluding discussion

If the project is successful, it is expected to provide a method for systematic implementation and evaluation of training programmes which may have relevance far beyond the domain of health care and patient education. This type of method is important for promoting evidence-based practice. The evidence-based practice movement has developed tools to help practitioners to access and make use of research knowledge. Within evidence-based medicine, systematic reviews and clinical guidelines are key instruments. The Cochrane Collaboration has provided methods for systematic reviews of clinical trials as well as frameworks to distinguish between different kinds of research evidence and to evaluate the quality of the studies. However, a weakness of evidence-based

practice both within medicine and elsewhere is the lack of guidance on how to implement the research knowledge. Research has to be combined with experience and preferences of both practitioners and users (Engebretsen et. al., 2014). The FORECAST-framework provides an instrument for putting knowledge into practice in a systematic way, paying attention to the expertise of practitioners and users. In addition, it provides a method for monitoring and evaluating interventions in a real world setting.

FORECAST is also a tool for promoting user involvement, which is currently an ideal in most human research activities. However, this ideal is often difficult to operationalize. FORECAST provides a method for integrating user preferences in all parts of the implementation process, from planning to evaluation.

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Methodological Diversity in Common Explorations

Seven Research Communities Collaborating in International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

How does school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process? What are the recourses, barriers and dilemmas in schools' development towards achieving inclusion?

These are the two main research questions in the joint *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (Johnsen, 2013; WB 04/06). The overall objective of the project is to identify and examine teaching and learning activities in regular classes related to development of inclusive practices.

Seven universities in six countries participate in this project; the universities in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo⁵⁷. While international research traditions are expected to have some fundamental similarities, there are differences as well. A vital element of achieving a mutual understanding of each other's research interests and methodological choices has to do with learning to know the contextual features of each university. So, what characterises the participating universities; what is the context of their studies, and what is their cultural and historical background? The first section of this article discusses these issues. The subsequent sections treat the following issues: The

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57. The research groups in the seven universities presented individual research plans based on a joint plan in Anthology no 1, Part Four (see Johnsen, 2013).

nature of international comparative studies in education of specific relevance for this project. The joint research plan contains some common theoretical aspects. What are these? And what are the different methodological choices under the ‘umbrella’ of this joint exploration into the development of inclusive practices?

The participating research communities

The seven universities are located on the North-West and South-East outskirts of Europe. Focusing on the participating countries in the West-Balkan region, the research project has “regional internal” comparative possibilities, as these countries share a history of having the same education policy and governance as one point of departure. As another perspective the project invites comparative analysis between the south-eastern and north-western European regions with different welfare society models, as well as history and social-economic conditions. These different levels of comparison make the project an interesting methodological example in light of overview studies showing that only a minority of comparative studies relates to more than one country of those reported in international journals (Broadfoot, 1999; CIES Bibliography 2013; Halls, 1990; Rust et. al, 1999).

So, who are the participating universities? They belong to countries that share a post-world-war history of having established and maintained welfare societies. However, whereas Norway has developed its welfare model without major interruptions, currently being a prosperous oil and industrial export nation, the West-Balkan countries have experienced rapid major changes in their political systems, national fragmentations, large-scale industrial downturn and war. The new countries are facing both economic and social-structural setbacks from which they are attempting to recover in spite of the slow-down caused by the recent financial crisis in Europe. The process of recovery differs between the countries, not least due to their different relationships with the European Union (EU). Developing from joint Yugoslavian legislative frameworks, each of the new countries emphasizes their unique political and legislative perspectives. This also involves taking different steps in order to meet international standards of educational rights and development towards inclusion (UN, 1991; 1994; 2006; UNESCO, 1991; 1994; 2000). The comparative analysis of the seven studies is anticipated to present indications of contextual diversity, variety in the foci of the seven studies and similarities as well as differences in findings regarding development of inclusive practices in school.

Opportunities and challenges of international comparative research

As an internationally anchored project an important theoretical pillar consists of comparative studies. An implicit purpose of this research project is "...that of reform, learning from other situations with the express intention of borrowing ideas that might enable reform in one's own country context" (Watson, 2001:11). Phillips (1999) offers a number of reasons for undertaking comparative educational studies of relevance for this project:

- To provide a body of descriptive and explanatory data demonstrating various practices and procedures in a wide context that helps to throw light upon them
- Shows what is possible by examining alternatives to provision "at home"
- Helps to foster co-operation and mutual understanding among nations by discussing cultural differences and similarities and offering explanations for them

Watson (2001) points out that perhaps the greatest challenge in comparative studies is the use of decontextualized data gathered from many countries for policy decisions. Problems discussed in international comparative studies of specific relevance to this joint project are related to the already mentioned "educational borrowing", to comparative classroom research and to the problem of cross-national comparison. These are all problems highlighting the socio-cultural context from different angles (Alexander, 2000; Osborne et. al., 2003; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

International and comparative education methodology has been subjected to criticism and revisions since it started out more or less as "travelling tales" (Crossley & Watson, 2003), developing as a "cause – effect" discipline inspired by natural science (in line with other main-stream educational research), moving towards anthropology (Schriewer, 1999; Seeberg, 2003), confronting Euro-centrism, even "Western-European/North-American-centrism", identifying and seriously discussing problems such as those mentioned above. Thus, Broadfoot grasps a common understanding of the purpose of contemporary and future comparative education in her argument:

I suggest that the goal of comparative education is to build on systematic studies of common educational issues, needs or practices as these are realised in diverse cultural settings in order to enhance awareness of possibilities, clarify contextual constraints

and contribute to the development of a comprehensive socio-cultural perspective (Broadfoot, 1999:26)

Alexander (1999) describes the development of cross-cultural comparisons during the 1990s as two parallel traditions, one of largely-quantitative pre-test/post-test sampled studies and the other more intensive qualitative-ethnographic investigations. Classroom studies belong to the latter of these traditions. School effectiveness studies have gained increasing attention in recent years, as debate related to the so-called PISA project shows (<http://www.pisa.no/>). In this research project we chose the concept of 'quality-study' instead of 'effectiveness-study'. Case study is a well-established methodological design within comparative studies, as described in the prestigious International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Berg-Schlosser, 2001). Ragin (1987: 16) argues that "the comparative method is essentially a case-oriented strategy of comparative research". Studies of cases from other countries may allow implicit comparisons, which again may lead to critical reflection on policies and practices in one's own country (Buk-Berge 2005), which, as mentioned, is an implicit aim of this project. Alexander (1999; 2000) has conducted a major cross-cultural comparative study of primary education in five countries on three continents. His search for and choice of main categories for studies, analysis and comparing teaching serves as an inspiration in this project.

A main challenge – and vital element – of international comparative educational research relates to this project's attempt to provide a body of descriptive and explanatory data demonstrating various practices and procedures in the different contextual cultures of the participating universities (Johnsen, 2013; Phillips, 1999). This challenge lies in the two opposing questions:

- How many aspects of the seven research plans from each of the universities should be obligatory or similar for all participating universities?
- How great can the differences between the seven studies be without losing the opportunities to comparison?

These questions need consideration related to choice of theoretical and methodological perspectives in each of the studies. Variation in predominant research discourses between the participating universities is an important contextual factor since these universities possess expertise within different methodologies as well as theoretical traditions. This anthology provides insight into a selection of relevant theoretical and methodological perspectives that have been the focus of a common knowledge quest and discussions in the international research

group. The seven presentations of research methodologies following this article indicate variations as well as similarities in methodological choices.

Common theoretical frameworks

Finding a balance between common theoretical foci and individual choices of each research group may be compared to tightrope walking. What are the common denominators for the joint project? The following three theoretical traditions are central elements; 1) Vygotsky and the culture-historical approach to teaching, learning and development, 2) educational inclusion and the interplay between regular and special needs education, and 3) inclusive practices in didactic-curricular perspective (Johnsen, 2013; WB 04/06). Several articles in this book describe and discuss aspects of these theoretical constructions. One of them – inclusive practices in didactic-curricular perspective – has a specific role when it comes to defining and delimiting each of the seven studies and thus accounting for choices made by each research group. The choices are derived from the selected research topics and are incidental to the choice of research methodology. What characterises the didactic perspective employed in the joint

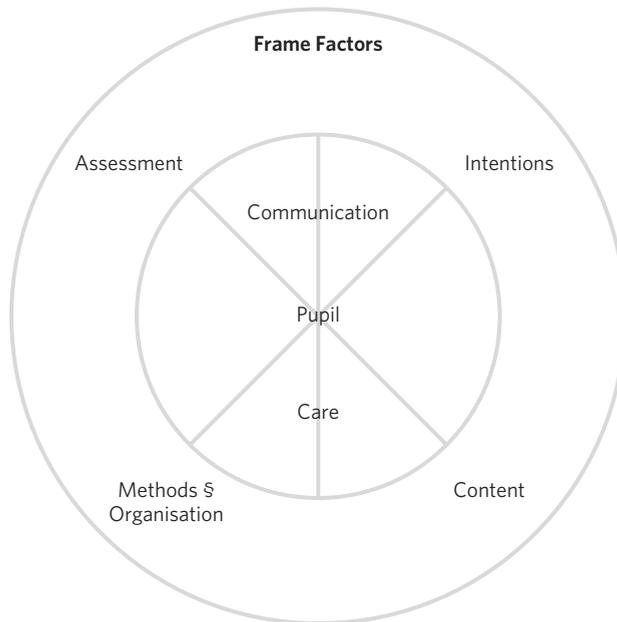


Figure 1 The Curriculum Relation Model revised in Johnsen (2007)

project and in what way is it suitable for clarifying and delimiting the single studies? This perspective is thoroughly accounted for in the article *A Curricular Approach to Inclusive Education* in this book (Johnsen, 2014) and the description in this article is therefore limited to repeating the didactic-curricular main aspects through displaying the model that demonstrates the eight aspects and their interrelationship.

These didactic-curricular concepts (Johnsen, 2007; WB 04/06) are used in the classroom studies as topical sub-questions, directing focus towards joint main categories of classroom activities. The eight aspects are seen as the educator's professional tool in planning, implementing and evaluating the teaching-learning situation and process from the perspective of the development of inclusive practices. Within this common denominator – the Curriculum Relation Model – each of the participating research groups has the flexibility of selecting their centre of attention in their study related to:

- number of pupil/s in focus
- kind of special need/disability/vulnerability in focus
- which of the eight topics to study in depth (in the foreground of attention), and which ones as background aspects

Methodological flexibility within common denominators

The question of validity, in the sense of whether reported findings represent the experienced phenomena to which they refer, is a key factor in all research (Hammersley, 1990 in Silverman, 2006). Moreover, an important argument related to validity is that a strict regime of obligatory or standard procedures applied to different cultural contexts as well as within various research-methodological traditions and conceptual interpretations may dissociate reported findings from the experienced phenomena. This is a crucial problem in international comparative research where findings from different cultures are presented in a joint report. In other words, it may give a local reader of a concluding comparative report the impression that the presented findings are theoretical constructions, having little or no connection with his or her perception of reality.

As mentioned, the chosen solution to this challenge is to design a joint research plan with a high degree of flexibility also when it comes to methodological choices. Thus, case study methodology, preferably with qualitative or a

combination of qualitative and quantitative approach, is recommended, but not obligatory for all the single studies (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; 2006). Data collection methods may consist of combinations of interviews of key informants and/or focus groups, observations and gathering documents and material related to the topics of the Curriculum Relation Model. Document analysis and systematic use of field notes is expected to create a basis for triangulation of information (Creswell, 2007; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1995; 2006). The words 'expected' and 'recommended' are used here to signalise that each research group is assumed to select design, methods, instruments and ways of analysing relevant to their operationalised research questions within the frames of the joint project. The common main focus of research is placed on schools' internal activities, on teachers, special needs educators and other professional staff's interaction with single pupils and the class. However, other aspects of the development towards inclusion are also treated.

When it comes to choice of methodology or research design and methods, the following list indicates similarities as well as diversity among the seven studies in these joint international comparative classroom studies towards inclusion:

Methodological approaches

- Case study: 5
 - ▶ Single-case study: 3
 - ▶ Multiple-case study: 1
- Longitudinal study: 2
- Pilot study: 1
- Action research: 3
- Qualitative approach: 3
- Quantitative approach:
- Mixed methods approach: 3

Methods

- Interview: 5
- Observations: 6
 - ▶ Non-participative observation: 1
 - ▶ Participative observation: 3
- Document analysis: 3
- Analysis of school documents, teaching materiel and pupil work: 3

The following seven articles from each of the participating universities give more detailed and nuanced accounts of their methodological considerations and choices.

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Methodology in the Study of Implementation of Legal Frameworks for Supporting Children with Disabilities in Regular School

Dragan Rapačić, Goran Nedović, Irena Stojković
and Snežana Ilić

Introduction: Background, aims and main questions of the study

Serbia has a long tradition of providing special education for children with special needs and disabilities. Special education is provided in special schools and in special education classrooms within regular schools. At the same time, a large proportion of children with special needs and disabilities have been educated within regular school classes according to the regular curricula for several decades (e.g. Nikolić & Janković, 2007). However, their education within regular school classes has not been recognised by educational authorities, and no systematic adjustment of educational processes and support for pupils with special needs has been provided within regular school education (Rapačić, Nedović, Ilić & Stojković, 2008).

In accordance with the international trend, the country's educational legislation has been moving towards the development of inclusive education over the last decade. However, research has shown that attempting to implement inclusive policy into practice meets many challenges, some of which include 1) regular school teachers' insufficient knowledge regarding development and

realization of individualised education programmes; 2) persistence in numerical evaluations of children's achievements according to general standards; 3) lack of coordinated and comprehensive training of teachers in skills needed for teaching tailored to the individual needs of each student; 3) sparse material resources and deficient support for teachers participating in inclusive programmes; 4) lacking knowledge concerning abilities of children with special needs and of successful models for their inclusion, forming the basis for prejudice toward inclusive education among teachers and parents (Jablan & Hanak, 2007; Rapaić, 2001; Todorović, Vuković & Hanak, 2003).

With this backdrop, the aims of the present study are:

- To analyse legislative regulations regarding educational rights of pupils with developmental disabilities in the Republic of Serbia
- To investigate an innovative programme of inclusive education based on possibilities arising through recent changes in Serbian legislation on inclusive education. Characteristic of this programme is cooperation between regular schools and a special school in the process of inclusive education (for more detail, see the section on participants)

The overall research questions of the joint classroom study project, of which this study is a part, are the following: How does school teach in accordance with the pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process? What are the recourses, barriers and dilemmas in school's development towards inclusion (Johnsen, 2006)? In accordance with these broad questions, the more specific research questions of this study are the following:

1. What are the educational rights of pupils with developmental disabilities according to Serbian educational legislation?
2. What challenges do regular schools face in the process of developing inclusive education, and what are regular school teachers' suggestions regarding further development of inclusive practices?
3. How is the teaching process adjusted according to special needs of pupils in an inclusive classroom (what accommodations and modifications are provided)?
4. How is the learning process of pupils with special needs affected by different types of classroom organisation and by different types of teaching methods? Is there a relation between different types of classroom organisation and teaching methods and the engagement in learning tasks of pupils with special needs?

5. What are the characteristics of communication of pupils with special needs with teachers and other pupils during lessons?

Regarding the eight main areas of research forming the theoretical model upon which the joint project is based (Johnsen, 2006; 2008), this study focuses on the following: a) legislation on inclusive education as a frame factor; b) classroom organisation and teaching methods; c) and communication.

Research design

A case study research strategy is used involving an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). The phenomenon investigated in this study is the innovative programme of inclusive education within the legislative context. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected using the following sources: legislative documents, interviews and observations.

Participants/Data sources

The programme of inclusive education which is the subject of our study is realised in twelve regular primary schools in the city of Novi Sad, Serbia. These schools are participating in a cooperation project with a special education school called “Milan Petrović”. During the project period, special educators from “Milan Petrović” provide support for pupils with special needs and regular school teachers through offering the following activities: individual and group work with pupils both within and outside inclusive classes, identification of pupils’ special needs and determination of the type of support needed, cooperation with regular school teachers in the process of planning, realisation and evaluation of the learning process, and cooperative and counselling work with parents of pupils with special needs (Marković, 2008). Twelve teachers (who teach grades one to four), and twelve principals in the regular schools have been interviewed for the purposes of this study.

During the observational part of the study, six inclusive classes are observed during all lessons (5) in a school-day. Pupils with special needs who attend the observed classes have the following disabilities: autism (n=2), leucodystrophia (n=1), cerebral palsy (n=1), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (n=1), and mental retardation (n=1).

Concerning legislative regulations of inclusive education, The Law on the Foundations of the System of Education of the Republic of Serbia from years 2003 and 2009 has been reviewed.

Research methods

Interview. A semi-structured interview guide has been constructed for the purposes of this study. The interview consists of open-ended questions concerning the following areas: 1) support provided to pupils with special needs and teachers in the teaching/learning process (kinds of support, providers of support); 2) challenges met by teachers due to possible deficiencies in support; 3) teachers' and principals' opinions on the effects of inclusive education in the areas of academic achievement and socio-emotional development of pupils with and without developmental disabilities; 4) what factors, according to them, determine the efficacy of inclusive education and what should be done in order to promote the process of inclusive education.

Observation. Observation methods are used to obtain data regarding the teaching/learning process in inclusive classrooms. The observation is focused on the following aspects of the process: 1) classroom organisation and activities/patterns of interaction; 2) types of tasks in which a pupil with disabilities is supposed to be engaged in, and whether he/she engages in the task; 3) accommodations and adaptations provided to him/her; and 4) communication between the pupil with disabilities and other pupils and between the pupil with disabilities and teacher. Event coding strategy is used with recording of onset and offset times of each "codeable" event (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997).

Categorisation of types of classroom organisation and activities/patterns of interaction takes place using a coding scheme developed by Klette et al. (2005). The scheme contains three categories of organisational structure (whole class instruction, individual work, and group work) and fourteen categories of activities/patterns of interaction (whole class instruction-monologue, whole class instruction-dialogue, question/answer sequences, whole class discussion, pupil's reading aloud, pupil presentation, task management, comments on misbehaviour, messages and comments, individual guidance, involving the whole class in the individual pupil's question, group guidance, teacher out of classroom, and no interaction between teacher and pupils).

The types of tasks that a pupil with disabilities is supposed to be engaged in is coded according to a scheme which contains the following three categories:

tasks which are related to the general curriculum of the class, tasks which are related to a grade level other than the pupil's current grade, and tasks that are linked to an individualised educational plan (IEP). These categories are adopted from a coding scheme developed by Wehmeyer et al. (2003). We have omitted some categories from the original scheme related to accommodations and adaptations because they are coded independently of types of tasks in our study. In addition to the coding of type of task a pupil is supposed to be engaged in, whether the pupil engages in the task or not is also coded.

No pre-defined coding scheme is applied when obtaining data on communication between pupils with disabilities and teacher, and between pupils with disabilities and other pupils. We have adopted a narrative descriptive approach where observers make field notes describing a) type of communication, b) who initiates it and c) the emotional tone of the interaction.

Procedure

One-to-one interviews with school principals and teachers have taken place in their schools in spring 2008. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study, assured confidentiality and asked permission to make notes. Interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

Dates for observation are agreed upon in advance with teachers of the respective classes. The researchers have accepted suggestions made by teachers that pupils would be less affected by the presence of observers who are already familiar to them. Consequently, special needs educators who participate in the project of inclusive education are given the observer's role. Each lesson is observed and coded by two observers. Prior to data collection, observers are engaged in training sessions in which two of them observe classes, followed by discussions of disagreements concerning coding between coders and members of the research group.

Data analyses

Based on the answers obtained by interviews, categories were formed through discussion between the study's authors. Frequencies and percentages for each answer category were calculated.

As regards the observational data, percentages of time spent in different categories of activities were calculated. In order to test the relation between dif-

ferent categories of classroom organisation, activities/interaction and pupils' engagement, χ^2 test was used.

Data concerning communication were recorded and analysed using a narrative approach.

Research ethical considerations

Teachers and school principals participating in the study have been informed about the study's procedures and goals, and they are told that they are free to withdraw and discontinue their participation at any time. Parents of all pupils who attend observed classes are informed about the study at parents' meetings, and they asked for their consent to conduct classroom observations. In order to minimize pupils' discomfort, the teachers have told pupils at the start of each classroom observation that the observers are merely "interested in learning what their school day looks like" and that they therefore have no reason to feel upset. In reporting study results participants' anonymity is has been ensured.

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Methodology in the Study of Inclusion of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Slovenian School System

Damjana Kogovšek, Martina Ozbič and Stane Košir

Introduction: Research topics

The Curriculum Relation Model revised in 2006 (Johnsen, 2007) is used as a framework for classroom studies, analyses and comparisons. The topic frame factors in the project are communication, pupil, care, assessment, intention, content, methods and organisation.

The Slovenian contribution to the international research project *Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (WB 04/06) focuses on investigating the following research topics selected in relation to frame factors: communication, pupil, care and knowledge of inclusive practices. Our intention is to 1) give a description of the social care of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and their communication and social-emotional well-being and 2) try to define main aspects of a positive inclusion process in Slovenia.

The relation between research topics and development towards the inclusive school: Research design - informants - research methods

The paradigm of the education system and schooling for children with special needs has changed due to raised awareness and respect for the rights of every human individual. In this connection education of the deaf and hard of hear-

ing population has significantly changed. This is a particularly deprived group with special needs that encounters many problems in acquiring knowledge and having access to professional education and employment due to communication problems. At the same time this is a very heterogeneous group when it comes to their hearing remains as well as when during their life time their hearing began to deteriorate. Furthermore, their immediate as well as extended social context may either enhance or inhibit these individuals in their communication development and, consequently, in their realisation as social beings. Our research is based on the following methodological considerations:

Research design. Logically, our contextual problem leads to the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative research design, also called a mixed methods approach.³ We mostly use non-experimental and experimental methods and in certain parts case study. The study is descriptive, describing characteristics of the deaf and hard of hearing population in detail, because this is important in our Slovenian educational process. Understanding what it means to be deaf or hard of hearing is also an important goal of our qualitative research. Case studies help understanding each instance of deafness on its own terms and in its own context. Understanding the deaf culture and development of deaf and hard of hearing participants is essential to figure out in what ways human development within different communities are similar, and in what ways they differ (Rogoff, 2003). Having acquired this valuable knowledge about opinions, attitudes and practices, we want to inform educational policymakers and start initiatives to improve existing educational conditions for pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Informants. The focus in our studies is on deaf and hard of hearing individuals, who are our main informants. The research is divided into several studies where the sample of informants varies depending on which aspect is being covered (communication, comprehension of speech, socialisation, social emotional well-being, care, inclusion, etc.). In the study of communication and speech comprehension, there are 91 deaf and hard of hearing individuals from 5 to 23 years of age. In the study of socialisation, intercultural communication and self-esteem, there are 102 deaf and hard of hearing individuals from 15 to 23 years old. The sample for comparison of deaf and hard of hearing with hearing peers includes 130 adolescents. They are split into two groups with the method of equal pairs established on the basis of gender, age, form and programme of schooling and nationality. The sample group is also divided into two subgroups; 65 deaf

and hard of hearing adolescents and 65 hearing adolescents. The research study focusing on the inclusion process involves 67 teachers as informants.

Research methods. A cross-sectional study using qualitative and quantitative methods has been decided. We have designed different kinds of studies that cover the main topics of research and planned to take samples from our main groups of informants. We have selected samples that in certain cases represent a defined population of deaf and hard of hearing informants and in addition informants in case studies. We will collect all data and analyse them utilising different procedures and statistical techniques related to educational research. Thus, multivariate methods such as factor analysis, discrimination analysis and regression method are used.

Brief description of the studies' context and completion

Following the doctrine, the school system in Slovenia has changed significantly in recent years, aiming to increase educational quality and ensure the right to education for people with special needs. Persons with different types and levels of impairments have been integrated into the regular school system, including persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Children who are deaf and hearing children have the option to attend different units in the Slovenian school system; mainstream schools and nursery schools, schools offering adapted programmes, units at mainstream schools with adapted programmes and units at special institutions. A large majority of children who are deaf and hard of hearing attend mainstream schools where they are provided with additional professional assistance as determined by a counselling commission. Some children who are deaf and hard of hearing still attend special institutions; some of them have one or more additional impairments besides their main disability (hearing loss), and some mainly use sign language as their first language. The world of the deaf is a small world living within the hearing world, and they situate their own specific world with their own culture and language. We are obligated to understand and give them the chance to learn and live using their own language, even though for some it is sometimes very difficult to understand that people can use other language codes to communicate with each other than oral language.

As the efficiency of the social care system increases when it comes to individual satisfaction and professional and personal realisation, communication and social network – all life-aspects that are developed during adolescence – it is

considered reasonable to study the school system at the secondary level of education. Our goal is to obtain reliable data from deaf and hard of hearing persons who can inform us about what deafness means and how persons who are deaf and hard of hearing can live within the hearing community. In fact, we all know that human beings learn from their cultural community even before birth, and language learning is also supported by biological and cultural features of human life giving infants opportunities to hear or see their native language and begin communicating with those who use it. Healthy human infants are equipped with ways of achieving proximity to and involvement with other members of society, imitating others and protesting when being left alone (Rogoff, 2003).

As mentioned, the deaf population is very heterogeneous, and we have to clarify when talking about deafness as a general phenomenon and when dealing with individuals with their different kinds of hearing loss; those who use hearing aids to communicate efficiently with hearing persons, and those who do not as well as those who use sign language as their main language. This is why our research is based on the three main aspects mentioned above; 1) speech comprehension and communication, verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication, 2) socialisation emphasising self-esteem and 3) the inclusion process from teachers' perspectives. These topics are also parts of broader investigations within two doctoral studies (Kogovšek, 2007; Ozbič, 2007), and due to this, the sample is not always the same. The objective is to answer the research questions through combining the different aspects. We have chosen as large population in Slovenia as possible (the adolescent group covers all deaf and hard of hearing students except at-risk groups, persons who do not attend schools and/or have additional and complex needs) in order to analyse and clarify the scope of the inclusion process. In addition we have several single case studies with individuals in inclusive settings.

Analysis

The main categories of analysis are: organised social concern for deaf individuals as a system and the practical implementation of this system, including the status of the deaf individual in an inclusive school, communication and knowledge, readiness of the hearing environment to offer support, as well as the school's didactic and technical equipment, as indicated above. The analysis is based on findings related to the following research questions:

- What kind of communication mode is used in the classes?
- How does the communication take place (verbal and non-verbal) between teacher and deaf pupils, between hearing and deaf peers, etc.?
- What knowledge does the teacher possess of deafness and hard of hearing?
- Which teaching methods are used in teaching pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing in special- and mainstream schools?
- Are persons who are deaf or hard of hearing invited to communicate verbally and/or non-verbally?
- What are the concrete barriers to effective communication and why?
- Can we predict speech comprehension of pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing?
- To what extent are pupils' immediate environment -family and peers – and teachers ready to respond to the communication challenges with which deaf pupils are confronted?
- What does the socialisation of and the self-concept and self-esteem of pupils who are deaf and hard of hearing look like?
- What kind of support do pupils who are deaf and their teachers need?
- What are the resources, barriers and dilemmas in schools where pupils who are deaf and hard of hearing are mainstreamed?
- What are the resources, barriers and dilemmas concerning inclusion?

We have analysed the existing records and legislation applying questionnaires, checklists, tests and video-clips. For this purpose, the existing scales and questionnaires which were used in similar studies within the WB 04/06 project were applied or they were compiled for the purpose of this research. The following tools have been used in relation to the different areas of study:

The school system:

- Document analysis of current legislation (*Zakon o usmerjanju otrok s posebnimi potrebami*, 2004), determining the education of deaf children from the point of view of fundamental children's rights principles (UNESCO, 1994; 2004; UNICEF, 2000)
- Assessment of the inclusion for pupils who are deaf or hard of hearing in different types of programmes through analysis of social records

The support system for pupils who are deaf and hard of hearing:

- The descriptions are acquired through analysis of regulations and current state of affairs

Knowledge status of deaf student in view of prescribed curriculum in mathematics and Slovene language:

- The description has been obtained through testing objective type tasks (official and unofficial tests) (Košir, 1998)

Didactic and technical school equipment:

- Assessment through questionnaires (Kogovšek, 2002; Ozbič & Žolgar, 2007)

Communication:

- Verbal and non-verbal communication of the deaf student assessed with video observations and checklists (Ozbič, 2007; Kogovšek, 2007; Kogovšek, Ozbič & Košir, 2009), through interview and questionnaires (Ozbič, 2005; 2007)

Social-emotional well-being:

- Self-concept of the deaf assessed with questionnaire (Kogovšek, 2003; 2004; 2007)
- Basic risk factors for health and socialisation assessed through questionnaire (Kogovšek, 2003; 2004; 2007; MKF, 2006)

Other items regarding methodology. Parts of the information are obtained by examining laws and analysing existing records. Other findings are revealed through concrete questions posed to a selected group of 15–25 deaf students included in the secondary school along with hearing peers, and to a group of 15–25 deaf students in classes for pupils only, who are deaf and hard of hearing. Thus, the respondents are mostly pupils, their teachers and peers of different age groups at the secondary level who, as mentioned, constitute the sample. Focus is mainly on adolescents for reasons already described. There is, however, an additional research-pragmatic reason related to communication possibilities in the sample, because some of the informants use sign language as their first language, some use speech and others both communication modes. This communication aspect is a challenge for all of us, and from the point of view of the study, we find this to be a very important aspect for academic success of the target pupils. In this particular study, we have also observed several informants who are deaf and hard of hearing and in this way increased the possibility for generalising the data. However, still we have to be careful making generalisations because the deaf population is very heterogeneous. The research project is the first of its kind in Slovenia and provides an excellent basis for further studies.

Research ethical considerations

Our study mostly involves data collection from human participants, and it is therefore important to be very careful when we plan, design and implement the field studies in order to protect all participants from possible harm (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). In this study it is of specific importance to protect the well-being and self-esteem of the informants who are deaf or hard of hearing and their comparison with hearing peers. All questionnaires have been sent to institutional review boards at schools and university, and we have received approval of our research from medical and ethical commissions. The question of confidence is the first ethical question we have considered in this research process, as it may be difficult to gain confidence of individuals with hearing loss. All participants are requested to give their permission to be involved in the study, their names are kept anonymous, and they are informed about the purpose of the investigation and their role in it (especially in comparison with hearing peers).

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Methodology in Studies of Support for Pupils with Speech and Language Impairments in Regular Primary Schools

Sadeta Zečić, Selma Džemidžić Kristiansen,
Selmir Hadžić and Irma Čehić

Introduction

This article describes and discusses the methodology used in the research of the Sarajevo University research team in order to find out how two selected regular primary schools support pupils with speech and language impairments in classrooms developing inclusive education⁵⁹. The primary intention of this research is to gather and discuss the great variety of aspects of this support in accordance with the eight main areas of the teaching and learning process.⁶⁰

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59. Inclusive education is a process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity. Through this process the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend and, in so doing, reduces all form of exclusion and demeaning of pupils be it for their disability, ethnicity, or anything that could render the school life of some children unnecessarily difficult (ETF-European Training Foundation, 2009).
60. The pupil/s, Assessment, Educational intentions, Educational content, Class organisation and teaching methods, Communication, Care and Frame factors – The Curriculum Relation Model is developed by Johnsen (1998; 2001; 2003 & 2007).

Research design

The nature of the phenomenon being investigated in this study, as well as the main research question, has required a qualitative⁶¹ approach based on multiple sources of information gathered through observation, individual interviews and document analysis. This approach allows for an in-depth investigation of phenomena of various support forms which has been given by teachers, peers, professional school team, parents and other persons applying different activities. During the process of data collection, and in comparing the data of two schools, our research team partly applied action research,⁶² which occurred as a consequence of real needs and current situation in one research school that has not participated before in seminars, training or interactive workshops about inclusive education. The workshops for teachers were implemented using the themes: speech and language impairments, pupils with special needs and individualization in the teaching and learning process and, at the same time, individual and group advisory sessions to teachers in this school.

Purposeful sampling of the two primary schools and classes in Sarajevo

The purposeful sampling procedure that was used is typical for qualitative research (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Robson, 2002). Among 64 ordinary primary schools in the Canton of Sarajevo (Ministry of Education and Science, Canton Sarajevo, 2008), two primary schools were purposefully selected for this research. For the sake of anonymity, the two schools are given the labels School A and School B.

School A. Several projects focusing on child-centred education had already been implemented in School A, including the long-term project entitled *Institutional Competence Building and Cooperation with two Bosnian Universi-*

61. Qualitative research is multi-method in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Creswell, 2003).

62. According to Gall, Gall & Borg (2003) Action research in education is a form of applied research whose main purpose is improvement of an educational professional practice. Action research done for personal purposes is generally intended to promote greater self-knowledge, fulfilment and raise professional awareness among other practitioners.

ties: Special Needs Education towards Inclusion, financially supported by the Norwegian Cooperation Programme with South-East SØE 06/02 (see also Johnsen et al, 2007). One of the goals of this project was to develop through innovation, teaching approaches that support learning of pupils with special educational needs within the development of the inclusive classroom (Johnsen, 2007). Thus, this school has had relevant training in the field of inclusive education and many other educational projects. The school is located in an urban part of Sarajevo with multicultural diversity, and minority pupils with bilingual backgrounds such as Roma and Albanian languages, are parts of the total population⁶³.

School B is located outside of Sarajevo in a neighbouring municipality. Participation in this project is the first opportunity for School B to take part in an educational project or in seminars concerning development of interactive education and inclusion, although the school has children with special needs, including several who are intellectually challenged and diagnosed with Down syndrome. School B also has pupils with bilingual backgrounds (Albanian) and children with speech and language impairments. In both schools, many of the pupils' families are fractured and deal with very difficult social-economic situations.

The two selected schools therefore represent significant variations when it comes to their former participation in innovation projects and their development of approaches to support pupils with special educational needs, such as speech and language difficulties, which are in focus in this project.

Selection of classes. The reasons for choosing 2nd graders in these schools are their age, learning experiences and the fact that the class has at least either one child with speech and language impairments or a bilingual child. Teachers in these 2nd grades were part of the research focus. They were all women with approximately 15 years of working experience, and they were selected because they taught in classes with pupils with speech and language impairments.

63. The population in BiH consists of a diversity of groups who have inhabited the country for centuries. They have different cultural characteristics, such as more or less different language traits, religions and demographic mobility. The three main groups are: Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian, and in addition there are smaller groups such as Jews, Romas, Albanians, Sandzaks and other minority groups.

Table 1 Sample procedure

Primary School A	3 classes from 2 nd grade	1 Pupil with stuttering (Boy)
		1 Pupil bilingual (Girl –Roma pupil)
		1 Pupil with dyslalia and dyslexia (girl)
Primary School B	3 classes from 2 nd grade	1 Pupil bilingual (Girl –Albanian pupil)
		1 Pupil (dyslalia)
		1 Pupil (dyslexia and dysgraphia)

Methods and instruments

The use of more than one method of data collection is called triangulation in research methodology literature⁶⁴ (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Flick, 2002; Yin, 2003). In this sense and with the intention of satisfying the principle of validity, this research applies observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis in addition to outlining the contextual aspects of this research.

Observation is applied as a main method where a team of researchers systematically watches, listens and records the phenomenon of providing different kinds of support to pupils with special needs. The research team conducts a direct, non-participant observation. The intention is to gather data from an etic⁶⁵ perspective about the phenomenon. Observation entails listening and watching what happens during the teaching and learning processes of pupils with speech and language impairments (Robson, 2002). Before observations are conducted, the research team visits the class with the intention of reducing reactivity and bias. Still, there is a possibility that the researchers influence the teachers, class activities and pupils' behaviour through their presence and use of video recordings. Six observations were conducted; 3 observations per each school for a duration of 45 minutes. The video recorded data (about 4 – 5 hours in total) was transcribed into written form. Transcripts were summarised and analysed through previously developed categories. The observations were structured by using a pre-prepared observation guide form based on activities in the interaction between teacher-pupil/pupil-pupil through the main aspects of: The

64. Multiple sources of information are used because no single source can be trusted to provide comprehensive information (Patton, 1990).

65. The etic perspective is defined as the investigator's viewpoint, while the emic perspective presents the participant's (teachers, pupils) viewpoint of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003).

pupil/s – Assessment – Educational intentions – Educational content – Class organization and teaching methods – Communication – Care – Frame factors.

The interview method is used as a thorough follow-up of pupils' and teachers' answers in order to obtain more information and explore specific statements of different kinds of support in the development of inclusive practices. The main purpose is to attempt to understand the phenomenon of teaching and learning processes and give/receive support to pupils with special needs, as it is perceived from the teachers' and pupils' points of view (emic perspective). The prepared interview guide and mp3 recording of the interviews (with permission from the teachers and pupils) were used in order not to lose valuable information. A tape recording provides a complete verbal record, and it can be studied much more thoroughly than data in the form of interview notes. Recording also reduces the tendency of interviews to make an unconscious selection of data favouring their biases (Gall, Gall & Borg 2003).

Document analysis is a suitable additional method related to our Bosnian and regional/international conceptual aspects of research. Documents are basic sources of information about research background, school activities and teaching and learning processes, as well as teachers' activities, including professional development/education. Various documents are used from school/pedagogical archives about the pupils, pupils' notebooks, school reports, pedagogical reports, documents from government and non-governmental institutions (NGOs).

Conducting the study and analysing the data

When the research team is satisfied with the modifications of the instruments and piloting, we start visiting the selected research schools several times according to our action research outcomes and proceeding with fieldwork activities. This means that the research team, besides data collection, also implements workshops, lectures, consultation discussions with teachers related to the inclusive education issues, but also mediates in certain activities in order to support children with speech and language impairments.

The data collection is always performed in pairs in order to ensure the validity of data, and the transcription is completed on the same day to safeguard the results' authenticity.

The collected data from different multiple sources of information are analysed qualitatively. The analysis started during the field work while data collection was still in progress. Based on extensive data collected from both research

schools, the research team has first developed the main categories of the research phenomena, subsequently developing the sub-categories belonging to the issues of the main categories according to their characteristics. Both similarities and differences were observed between the research schools A and B, with a brief summary after the interpretation of every category. The process of analysis was related to categories and sub-categories so that similar data categorized under similar conceptual labels (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Ethical issues

Given the fact that every research project in education that involves human subjects implies ethical issues (Creswell, 2003), the Sarajevo University research team follows these steps:

- Securing informal consent from school principals and teachers for conducting the research project
- Permission is applied for and gained from the pupils' parents. Parents are informed that the study includes observations, video recordings and interviews of their children
- All data obtained during data collection are treated with confidentiality
- In order to secure the schools', teachers' and pupils' privacy and anonymity, none of their names are used in research reports; participants are referred to with labels.

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Methodology in Action Research on Provision of Education and Rehabilitation Support to Children with Special Needs in Regular Classrooms

Nevezeta Salihović & Alma Dizdarević

Introduction

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the term “special needs” is not clearly defined in official documents and refers mainly to children with various developmental disorders: mental retardation, physical disability, hearing loss, visual impairment, multiple disabilities, and behavioural as well as speech disorders (Official Gazette of the Tuzla Canton br.7/2004).

The right of children with special education needs to access to regular schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated by the provisions of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003). Analysis of the legal provisions of the Framework Law indicates that it regulates formally the right of all children to receive appropriate education, including children with special needs. However, although children with special needs are “legally allowed” attendance in regular schools, there are at the same time several issues not clearly defined such as 1) ensuring support for the children with special needs in regular schools, 2) issues regarding individual programs and 3) teamwork and involvement of parents and local communities in ensuring support.

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In order for these new general legislative regulations on educational inclusion to function, a number of more specific regulations are needed concerning identification and provision of support for children with various special needs, individualised teaching processes and provision of expert classroom professionals, such as educators-rehabilitators, speech and language pathologists, experts on hearing impairment and social pedagogues. Furthermore, some teacher education programmes have reputation for holding arid lectures and relatively few practical exercises as well as little introduction of new forms of flexible and creative teaching approaches focusing on children with different abilities.

A large number of studies conducted in the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina show that in our schools – especially primary schools – you will find a large number of pupils who struggle to comprehend the subject matter (Muminović, 2000; OSCE, 2001; Ibralić, 2002; Hatibović, 2002; Smajić, 2004; Salihovic et. al, 2007; Dizdarevic et. al, 2008). Ensuring educational and rehabilitative support for children with special needs in regular classes is based on their human rights. However, many schools are faced with problems of adapting their entire educational practices to these children's educational needs. Planning and maintaining adequate levels of support through identification of teaching resources and learning opportunities to meet the diversity of educational needs, individual educational programs, adequate instructional procedures, and individualised evaluation are significant steps to support children's special educational needs in inclusive classrooms.

Research assumptions and objective

The educational challenges faced by children with special needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina are various and extensive. This research project is based on the assumptions that 1) in regular schools there are a number of children who do not master the expected learning content due to a variety of special needs, and 2) children with special needs can successfully learn and develop in regular school environments with appropriate educational support focusing on their potential.

The overall objective of this study is to upgrade teachers to develop individually adapted education for pupils with special educational needs through collaboration between special educators, regular teachers and school administration.

Research design

The assurance of education and rehabilitation support for children with special needs in regular classrooms is the focus of this study on behalf of the University of Tuzla, to the joint project *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion*, with participating universities from Belgrade, Ljubljana, Skopje, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zagreb and Oslo (WB 04/06). This is an action research project involving mixed methods applying quantitative and qualitative elements.

Linking the terms ‘action’ and ‘research’ elucidates the essential characteristics of this approach, namely: exploring new ideas and approaches and using them in practice to expand knowledge about the field of research. Action research as described in research methodology, involves the action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time. Rapoport (1970) points out that the aim of action research is to contribute not only to understanding and solving practical dilemmas of people involved in research, but also in elucidated dilemmas that emerge in the research. It may be said that the action research process progresses and is shaped as the understanding of the phenomenon of study grows; it is also a circular process that leads to better understanding. In most cases, action research is participative (among other reasons, changes are easiest to achieve if the individuals who are expected to change participate in the changing process themselves) and qualitative. Action research is useful in “real”, concrete situations when it is difficult to control variables, given that the situation is specific and complex during the changing period (Dick, 1995; Armstrong & Moore, 2004). Dick (1995) and Armstrong and Moore (2004) point out that action research is used by researcher-practitioners in complex situations that are difficult to control in conventional research terms.

In light of this research contribution, action research provides the opportunity to evaluate the process of teaching and learning in six case studies, examining and testing new ideas, methods and materials; assessing the effectiveness of new activities; providing feedback to other team members and joint decision-making about the most effective ways to approach pupils, learning, adjustment of programs, instructions and pupil assessment methods. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2003), one of the basic characteristics of qualitative research is its focus on specific instances, the ‘cases’ of a phenomenon. The phenomenon in focus in this research is the process of providing support to children with special needs who attend regular primary school.

Sample

The sample included in this study consists of 97 subjects divided into four sub-samples:

1. **Subsample of pupils with special needs**, which consist of 6 pupils with special educational needs (intellectual difficulties, speech-language difficulties, hearing impairment, behavioural disorders, motor disorders, chronic diseases and visual impairment), aged 8–13
2. **Subsample of pupils without developmental disabilities** consisting of 81 pupils who are in classes with pupils with special educational needs
3. **Subsample of parents of pupils with special educational needs** consisting of 6 parents of pupils with special needs, both genders
4. **Subsample of teachers of pupils with special educational needs** consisting of 4 teachers, both genders, who are working in the classes with the pupils of the abovementioned samples.

Measuring instruments

Three scales have been applied to follow up the innovation process during the action research project. The assessment instruments are used to follow up the development in the action research study, exploring whether and how the action research and action methodology contributes to increase the understanding and solve practical dilemmas for the participants involved in the project, and also shed light upon dilemmas in the teaching collective, the family, as well as in the immediate and extended context. Investigation of the six case studies has a short-term goal of focusing on the increasing levels of the children's functional status and annual goals of achieving good results in comprehending the teaching curriculum and teaching of social communication in the teachers' collective, the family, and in the immediate and extended surroundings.

1. **The Scale of Adaptive Behaviour/II Behaviour Rating Profile BRP-2** (Brown & Hammill, 1990). This instrument is used to assess the behaviour of pupils or students with special needs at home and school based on relations between student-school; student-parent and student-teacher. It consists of six measurement instruments that assess student behaviour in various contexts by teachers, parents, pupils and peers. The teacher assessment scale contains

30 negatively formulated statements that describe inappropriate behaviour of pupils at school. Teachers assess whether the behaviour is very common for students, usual, unusual or not at all common for students. The parent assessment scale contains 30 negatively formulated statements that describe inappropriate behaviour at home. Parents assess if the behaviour is very common for students, usual, unusual or not at all common for pupils. The pupil assessment scale includes 60 negatively composed statements that describe behaviour at home, at school and in the company of friends. The students evaluate their own behaviour in response to the allegations of 'true' or 'false'. This is a sociometric questionnaire intended to determine the level of acceptance pupils with learning difficulties receive within regular classes. The questionnaire contains 8 criteria, 4 of which are affirmative and 4 negative. When answering each question, pupils gave the names of three students with whom they wanted or did not want to participate in class activities.

2. Scale of Adaptive Behaviour AAMD I & II part (Igrić & Fulgosi-Masnjak, 1991). The Scale of Adaptive Behaviour-AAMD Scale is a two-part standardized scale used to assess adaptive and non-adaptive behaviour in school children. The first part of the scale is related to two kinds of behaviour: 1) universal and essential in order to perform daily activities and 2) significant only in certain situations dependent upon characteristics of the group to which he/she belongs. The first part is divided into 10 areas (independence; use of money; language development; numbers and time; household activities; work activities; self-determination; responsibilities and socialization), which are important aspects of personal responsibility and independent living. The second part of the scale is used for measuring non-adaptive behaviour in relation to individual and behavioural disorders and comprises fourteen areas (tendency to display aggressive behaviour and destruction; non-social behaviour; resistance toward authority; irresponsible behaviour; withdrawal; stereotypical behaviour and mannerisms; unsuitable and unusual habits; self-destructive behaviour; tendency to display hyperactive behaviour; unsuitable sexual behaviour; psychological disorders; use of drugs).

3. Expressive scale using the Bosnian language to assess language abilities (Jewett & Echols, 2005) has been adapted for the purpose of this research. Relating to semantic abilities, the following aspects are examined: receptive and expressive vocabulary, ability to provide definitions, categorical knowledge, associations, comparison and contrasts, sequential storytelling and the ability to tell stories. Relating to syntax assessment, these aspects are examined: receptive

comprehension and grammar, general expressive syntax and grammar, gender/vocabulary suffixes, number, case suffixes, comparative and superlative, verb tenses, and sentence development.

Action research methods

Data have been collected by using specific methods and techniques of data collection. We have used interviews, observations (non-participant and participant observation of pupils in their regular educational environment, activities outside of school and at home) and unobtrusive research methods (analysis of school documents, pupil work, school assignments and tests). Information has also been collected using scales (see above), tests and checklists, which allow the creation of pupil profiles containing individual characteristics, contextual characteristics, learning and playing, and suggestions for educational (curriculum adaptation, instructional procedures and evaluation methods) and rehabilitative approaches (in accordance with certain special needs areas).

Based on a holistic team approach (child, teacher, educator, parent, educator-rehabilitator, and hearing impairment- and speech therapist, social pedagogue and other experts as needed), data have been collected and analysed relevant to the needs and interests of pupils. The pupils' educational needs have been determined through focusing on the following areas: educational-rehabilitative, social, occupational, physical, psychological and recreational in pupils' different contexts and interests; identification of potential aims necessary to program adaptation or development of special needs support programs was performed as a team.

At the beginning and end of each academic year, an assessment was made by using the scales, tests and checklists. The pupils' progress has been analysed in academic- as well as other developmental areas, which served as the basis for providing a descriptive analysis of this study's results as well as proposals for improving further research in this area; improvements to providing support for children with learning difficulties in the regular classroom and the creation of effective inclusive schools.

Implementation of the research

The following are criteria for purposeful selection of a case school:

- The school has a large number of pupils

- It does not have support systems for children with special needs at the project's start
- The school director and administrative staff are receptive to cooperation
- It is an urban school
- None of the staff are educated for working with children with special needs
- It has welcomed children with different special needs in several classes

Within the school itself, classes have been purposely selected in order to work with six different categories of special needs. The selection criteria are:

- Pupils of both genders
- Pupils whose teacher and project researchers have assessed as having difficulties in comprehending the applied curriculum
- Classes with pupils with different special educational needs due to the categories: intellectual difficulties – language and speech disorders – psycho-social / behavioural difficulties – visual or hearing impairment – mobility disabilities – chronic disease/s

Preliminary studies have been implemented in order to select one school to be the research arena. We gained access to a school fulfilling our selection criteria and started base- line studies. However, when the school decided to withdraw from the research cooperation, we set out finding another school that fulfilled all the participation criteria and it is now participates in our project. The school is a regular primary school having 841 pupils enrolled at the beginning of the study. The study includes pupils from first to eighth grade, both genders. This research is implemented in collaboration with the school's teaching staff (director, educator, class teachers, etc.). A total of 400 pupils have been examined and 85 of them have been found to have special educational needs that may be divided according to the following disabilities: 6 pupils with intellectual disabilities, 70 pupils with speech and language difficulties, 1 pupil with hearing difficulty, 6 pupils with behavioural disorders, 1 pupil with motor disorder and chronic disease and 1 pupil with visual impairment.

One pupil was selected from each category of special educational needs based on the consent of the child's parents and their willingness to cooperate as well as the teachers' willingness to cooperate with a special needs educator during the research period. The beginning of the study with the first actual assessments and creation of individual educational and rehabilitation programs may be said to have started at the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year and ended at the end of the 2008–2009 school year. During this period additional assess-

ments were performed – two medial and one final measurement – in order to observe the results of applied programs for all six case studies related to the six selected pupils.

Analysis

The positive results of this study that were gained through the close cooperation with all participants, have led to positive experiences and development of positive attitudes towards diversity and acceptance of all children regardless of their personal characteristics. At school level, a team has been established to support inclusion, specifically focusing on children with special needs (educator-rehabilitator, speech therapist, expert in hearing impairment, social pedagogue, regular teacher, educator, parents). In-service workshops for regular teachers have been carried out concerning characteristics of learning / teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms. Advisory work with teachers and parents / caregivers / families was conducted regularly throughout the project period. Through implementation of project activities, adequate technical support has been ensured by participants in the project and students of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Tuzla, for 6 pupils with different special needs included in regular classes of the project school. Detailed information about these findings is expected to appear in Anthology no. 3 of this series.

Ethical considerations

When conducting any research, we must take into account ethical considerations during the process of collecting data, analysing results and writing a narrative report. In this study we prepared an application for approval to conduct research in a regular school in the form of 'a letter of consent' signed by the head of school. A memorandum of confidentiality of data was also signed, guaranteeing confidentiality of all information collected during the investigation of children, school and informants.

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Supporting Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

Methodology in the Pilot Study on Mobile Expert Teams

Ljiljana Igrić, Daniela Cvitković and Natalija Lisak

Introduction

The aim of this research is to scientifically evaluate efficiency of the support of a new organisational model for classroom support for the benefit of both pupils with disabilities and the whole class, focusing on 1) a mobile expert team and classroom assistants and 2) cooperation between teachers – mobile team – assistants. Croatian schools do not have the necessary conditions for inclusion because of the lack of special needs teachers in the ordinary school and teachers' lack of specific knowledge and skills concerning pupils with various difficulties and disabilities. The practice of inclusion in Croatia as in the rest of the world indicates that we need changes made in school that will provide professional support for children with special needs.

A model of inclusive support is the focus of this evaluative study. The model has been developed in the non-governmental organization (NGO) called IDEM and consists of mobile expert teams and classroom assistants. The mobile team plans activities and gives advice and supervises classroom assistants who directly provide support to the child with disability as well as the other children in class. In this study attention is particularly directed towards evaluating the teaching efficiency for pupils with ADHD in regular classes.

Research design

This study may be called a pilot study because until now there has been insufficient information concerning evaluation of the effects of the organisation of support within the regular education system that this model offers. The project provides support for the development and implementation of this model of support for educational inclusion in Croatia. Therefore, evaluation of its effects is necessary for initiating the further implementation of this support model.

This pilot study has a qualitative approach, as there are no previous studies in accordance with the model of support for educational inclusion in Croatia. Consequently, it is very important to evaluate the impact of this program, in this case on pupils with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in regular school, in order to identify deficiencies and revise the model in accordance with the findings and principal aim of developing an inclusive school. This qualitative research involves descriptive qualitative methods to understand barriers to implementing the guideline recommendations and to refine the intervention strategy to becoming useful in creating an inclusive environment for every child. This pilot study is intended to be baseline for creating further action research in the area of educational inclusion and thus develop a model of support for children with disabilities in Croatia as well as be an incentive to improve educational legislation. Action research is neither quantitative nor qualitative research, but it may use techniques that are involved in either or both of these approaches. The phases of action research are (Stringer, 1996):

- Identification of the problem
- Discussion and negotiation between researcher and practitioners
- Literature review
- Re-definition of the problem
- Selection of research and evaluation methods
- Implementation of change, data collection and feedback. This often involves revisiting earlier steps in a cyclical process of research and change
- There may be an overall review of the study, recommendations and dissemination to a wider audience

Action research typically cycles through the following phases: targeting an area of collective interest; collecting, organizing, analysing, and interpreting data; and taking action based on this information (Calhoun, 1994). Action research is a systematic process of observation, description, planning, action, reflection, evaluation, modification (McNiff & Whitehead (2002). In our research it is the

basis for the development of an inclusive environment in regular schools and for the implementation of this support model through legislative acts.

Informants

One regular primary school second grade class (8–9 yrs.) has been selected as the case school for this study. There are 25 pupils in the class, and 3 pupils have individual educational programs (IEP). An assistant mostly provides support to one boy, D, with ADHD on the recommendation of the teacher and mobile team of experts, who have estimated that this boy needs this kind of support more than other pupils.

The boy D is 9 years old at the beginning of the research project period. He is an only child. He finished first grade with excellent marks. He is excellent in abstract thinking and logical inference, in mathematics, very creative in visual art, very fast in doing tasks and capable. Pupil D has difficulties in writing and has developed resistance toward writing and rewriting. He is very motivated for success, but frustrated because of his many mistakes. He also needs frequent changes of activities and becomes very frustrated when this need isn't recognised. He shows his need for the teacher's approval and attention. Very often, he does the opposite of the learning tasks he is given. When he makes a mistake, he becomes very angry and shows undesirable behaviour. He is easily provoked and was therefore very aggressive in the first grade. He frequently causes conflicts in group work if not allowed to take the lead.

There is good cooperation between parents and school. There is general agreement that the described difficulties have made an impact on the boy's educational progress as well as personal development.

The mobile expert team has selected a graduate of some social studies program to be classroom assistant. In the selection process the team took into account the fact that the assistant needs to have personality traits that will accommodate the special needs of boy D. The assistant has prepared for the task by going through preliminary education for duration of 5 hours with additional related literature studies. During her practice she has had regular consultations and supervision with the mobile expert team.

Observations are done in the selected classroom. The team used a preliminary period of observations in the classroom in order to try out the most appropriate observation methods. In the main observation study the observers are participants, but they do not interact with the pupils. There are three observ-

ers on the team. They take account of the pupil's characteristics and needs as well as the classroom environment. Two researchers observe pupil D's actions and reactions, and the third observer observes the teacher, who is actually the class-teacher (the observation interval of each is 15 minutes, descriptive way). The fourth and fifth researchers record the work of the assistant and the general classroom atmosphere using video cameras.

Research method/s

Observations are conducted once a week during one teaching lesson and in accordance with the school schedule; every other week in the morning and biweekly in the afternoon. The observation method is divided into minute-observation intervals with one minute to take notes in between. After every observation session, the team of observers gives their comments and consolidates the information.

In addition to the observations, interviews are conducted with the assistant and teacher (approximately three times), and two interviews are conducted with the boy's mother. The interviews have been tape-recorded. Information about estimations of the pupil's progress and the impact of the mobile team and assistant are collected. There is also one focus-group interview with boy D and some of his classmates. This is also tape-recorded. They talk about their experiences with having a class assistant. Additional information is collected through school documentation and notes taken by the mobile expert team and the classroom assistant.

Analysis

We are trying to answer research questions through qualitative methods; observations/interviews/ document studies – transcripts – definition of analysis units – compression – data compaction and interpretation.

Framework analysis used in this research starts with former research and some theoretical frameworks. In this study framework analysis has been partly obtained from previous studies and predetermined categories.

In the analysis of pupil D behaviour, the categories were: appropriate – acceptable – inappropriate – interfering behaviour.

In the analysis of assistant behaviour, the categories were: communication (with pupil D, with other pupils, with teacher) and interventions- guiding, ignoring and stopping, toward pupil D and other pupils.

The intention of the analysis is to filter some components of transcripts via category system and assess relative frequency of these components (Novak & Koller-Trbović, 2005).

We have made some research ethical considerations about the way the research is conducted. One aspect that we need to clarify is the double role of the observers, who are also supervisors; therefore, there may be some subjectivity in analysis as well as in the counselling process. One important research ethical aspect is the assurance of anonymity, which we have guaranteed. Doing classroom research also has ethical aspects that need to be considered; for example, the presence of the research team in the classroom probably affects natural class dynamics.

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A Single Case Classroom Study of Inclusive Practices

Methodological Considerations in the Oslo Contribution

Berit H. Johnsen

Introduction

How does the school teach in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process? What are the recourses, barriers and dilemmas in schools' development towards achieving inclusion? The two research questions of this study are identical with the main research questions in the joint *International Comparative Classroom Studies towards Inclusion* (Johnsen, 2013a; 2014; WB 04/06). As may be seen in the other six studies comprising this project, there are several ways of answering these questions (Igrić & Cvitković, 2013; Jachova, 2013; Kogovšek, Košir & Ozbič, 2013; Rapačić et al., 2013; Salihović, Dizdarević & Smajić, 2013; Zečić et al., 2013). In this study the questions have been attempted to be answered using a longitudinal qualitative single case study of a purposefully selected class in a Norwegian regular school. This article is about methodology.

Methodological considerations and choices

As the research questions indicate, the phenomenon that is the focus of this single case study is 'inclusive practices'. Attention has been paid to the school's – teachers', special needs educator' and assistants'- activities and interaction with single pupils and the whole class. The research questions or issue directs the attention to the complexity of this phenomenon. In order to provide direction to data gathering and structure of description, analysis and discussion, the eight

didactic-curricular main areas forming a basis for the joint research project (Johnsen, 2014) are applied. These are: The pupil/s – assessment – educational intentions – educational content – class organisation and teaching methods – communication – care – context.

The site of study has been carefully selected through choosing an approximate prototypical Norwegian municipality and asking the local educational office to select one school, class and class teacher for participation as well as secure the consent of the school to participate. I asked specifically for “a good case”, in the sense that the selected school was considered to create positive learning contexts for all pupils. In this manner the study relates to other “good case studies” highlighting a selected example of a school demonstrating good practices (Travis, 2014). In other words, the study intends to explore the nature and extent to which educational practices have a constructive impact on single pupils as well as the whole class.

This is a longitudinal qualitative case study. What characterises this kind of study? Literature review reveals extensive longitudinal qualitative research within social sciences, whereof some are case studies within education (Holland, Thomson & Henderson, 2006). How long does a longitudinal study have to be? Farrall (1996:2–3) states:

There is currently no definition – nor will there ever be I suspect – of how long studies should last, nor is there any guidance in the literature as to how long the time intervals between interviews ought to be. It is clear that, depending on the subject matter at hand, these sorts of decisions will need to be left to researchers and guided by their preferences and the nature of their studies.

I have found longitudinal research reports of studies lasting from one semester up to several years. This study takes place over the course of approximately four and a half years, from spring semester of second grade with seven- year-old pupils, until the end of spring semester of seventh grade, before these pupils move up to lower secondary school.

What kind of case study is this? It is obvious a single case study, since the site of study is one school class. In Stake’s terminology (1995) the case study is ‘instrumental’ because of the implicit assumption to generate understanding beyond this particular case to inclusive practices in other Norwegian schools, the participating project countries and in a wider context. Triangulation or the multi-method approach is typical for case studies (Brantlinger et. al., 2005; Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). In this study two main data collection methods supplement each other; a combination of non-participatory and participatory

classroom observations and open interviews with pre-informed themes. Additionally, gathering of information in texts, documents and teaching- and learning material is important, as well as oral and written statements from pupils, teacher colleagues, principal and other officials.

The selected class consists of 21 pupils at the start of the study and 27 pupils in grade seven, when the school has merged with another school and moved to brand-new buildings. There have been three contact teachers having primary responsibility for the class during the research period. They are the main informants in this study⁶⁶.

The classroom study contains 25 all day school visits over the study period. Each visit consists of classroom observations in three to five lessons, a two-hour open interview with the class teacher and other interviews and information gathering.

Traditional qualitative information-gathering means are used, including on the spot note-taking combined with non-participatory observation and post-observation note-taking the same day after participatory observation. Thus, all information is written down. No electronic devices are used except for photographing activities in the classroom and schoolyard. The main reason for this “old-fashioned anthropological style” is to create optimal conditions for what Silverman (2006) calls contextual sensitivity through blending naturally into the daily school work, participating as educational assistant during individual- and group work and having conversations with pupils, teachers and other staff during breaks. Another reason is that filming the classroom activities would not be accepted by all of the parents nor pupils; some of whom also reject being photographed. The fact that this is a low-cost study is thus only a minor reason for using very few electronic devices.

At the end of each school day, the class teacher and I have set aside two hours for an open interview or dialogue, consisting of information about one or a combination of the didactic-curricular main topics described above, of activities during the preceding school day as well as earlier visits. This is an opportunity for me to ask questions that have arisen during my observations and check whether my interpretation of observed events is consistent with the class

66. Contact teachers or class teachers, as they were traditionally called, teach almost all subjects during the first school years, whereas the number of subject teachers use to increase over the years. This class has had subject teachers in gymnastics, arts and crafts and English. Other teachers and staff related to the class are special needs- and other cooperating teachers, assistants and after-school programme staff members.

teacher's. I also raise issues of convergence between previously stated intentions and observed events, which also serves to check whether my recorded notes from observations and interviews corroborate with the teacher's understanding, as well as to "dig deeper" into topics of specific relevance for the main issue of study. In this way the interviews serve as information gathering as well as validation. Thus, validation is an ongoing process from the very beginning of the study applying information- and method-triangulation (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2006; Stake, 1995).

The process of analysis

There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. (...) Analysis and interpretation are the making sense of all this. How is this part related to that part? Analysis goes on and on (Stake, 1995:71).

As Stake points out, the process of analysis has long begun when the main information gathering is concluded. The further process of data or information analysis in this study consists of 1) transferring the information from handwritten logbooks to the computer in accordance with every study visit, and 2) systematising the "raw material" of information in accordance with the eight predetermined didactic-curricular aspects or topics of this study – as well as upcoming supplementary categories. At this point, a great deal of work remains when it comes to gathering and clustering cohesive information – or aggregating, as Stake (1995) calls it. This process of interpretation leads to a final compilation answering the two research questions; 1) whether and how the school teaches in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process and 2) revealing findings concerning barriers, recourses and dilemmas in the school's development of inclusive practices.

Emic and etic dimensions. One of the challenges of this study concerns whose voice is given space, or the problem of emic and etic dimensions of meaning-making and the grey zone between them. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) point out that case studies characteristically strive to present the researcher's etic, external perspectives as well as the emic, internal perspectives of the case and its informants. Stake (1995) gives examples of how the planning process, including the development of research questions and issues, tends to have the researcher's etic perspective, while questions from emic perspectives may appear during the field study. Even though many research reports attempt to distinguish between the

two in presenting the findings as emic and discussions as etic, in “real research life” the two perspectives are more or less merged into one another throughout the research process. Olive (2014) points out that a solely emic perspective is impossible to achieve due to the inescapable subjectivity the researcher has acquired through past experience, ideas and perspectives. This case study is based on an etic perspective with the intention of being an instrumental contribution to a comparative study with a joint pre-determined basis of research questions and main aspects or categories. Concurrently, the emic perspectives of the participants’ information along with the observed activities and materials represent the ‘real-school-life’ sources needed in order to answer the research questions trustworthy.

Trustworthiness. The following three questions concern validity or trustworthiness: 1) Does the reported study make sense to the participants? 2) Is it meaningful to all participants in the international comparative study? 3) Is it meaningful to readers across cultures? Underlying these are the basic questions: Has the study managed to answer the research issues it set out to investigate? Is it dependable and consistent? Qualitative case study methodology has developed tools to decrease the danger of bias and ensure trustworthiness. The three most applied are a) triangulation of methods, b) inquiry audit through systematic documentation of all aspects of the study and c) member checking where the participants examine the findings at different stages of the research process in order to check the consistency between the researcher’s texts and their perception of the phenomenon in focus. Member checking is likewise a technique used to accentuate the abovementioned emic perspective. As indicated in this article, the study makes use of triangulation, step-by-step construction of answers to the complex issues are documented, and – in spite of as well as because of “the old-fashioned” anthropological information gathering – the informants read and comment on the researcher’s texts at different “checkpoints” in the research process (Borg, Borg & Gall, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Golafshani, 2003; Olive, 2014; Stake, 1995).

A number of ethical considerations are connected to this research, being a single case study of inclusive practices, as discussed in more detail in Johnsen (2013b). In focusing on a school’s ability to teach in accordance with the educational needs of all pupils in the class, particular sensitivity must be exercised in descriptions of educational differentiation to ensure the anonymity of all individual pupils and their families. A number of measures are being taken to solve

this dilemma, and further precautions will be taken and discussed in further reports and articles on this very interesting and informative study.

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