

**Kari Smith (red.)**

**VALIDITY AND  
VALUE OF TEACHER  
EDUCATION  
RESEARCH**



**FAGBOKFORLAGET**

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## Forord

Nasjonal forskerskole for lærerutdanning (NAFOL) er stolt over å publisere den fjerde NAFOL-boken. Den første ble publisert i 2012, *Teacher Education Research Between National Identity and Global Trends*, og den andre boken ble publisert i 2014 med tittelen *En gang lærer, alltid lærer? Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher?*. Den tredje boken hadde tittelen *Where are we? Where do we want to go? What do we want to do next? International and Norwegian Teacher Education Research* og ble publisert i 2018. Denne fjerde boken har fått tittelen *Value and Validity in Teacher Education Research*.

I likhet med de tidligere NAFOL-bøkene er også dette en antologi av artikler skrevet av forskere som presenterte arbeidene sine på en NAFOL-konferanse. Artiklene i denne boken ble presentert på den femte internasjonale NAFOL-konferansen som ble arrangert i oktober 2018 på Hamar i samarbeid med Høyskolen i Innlandet. Konferansen hadde nasjonale og internasjonale hovedtalere og poster- og paperpresentasjoner av norske og internasjonale ph.d.-studenter.

Alle som presenterte på konferansen, ble av NAFOL invitert til å sende inn et artikkelabstrakt på 1000 ord, som ble fagfellevurdert. Forfatterne til de utvalgte abstraktene ble deretter invitert til å skrive en full artikkel, som også ble fagfellevurdert av nye fagfeller. Utvalgte artikler er revidert i tråd med fagfellekommentarene, og det er resultatet av en grundig vurderingsprosess som er presentert i denne boken.

Også denne gangen har vi valgt å bruke originalspråket artiklene er skrevet på, norsk og engelsk. Mange NAFOL stipendiater velger å skrive på engelsk, og det gjør også de internasjonale forfatterne. Derfor har boken et internasjonalt preg som samsvarer med et av NAFOLs hovedmål: internasjonalisering av norsk lærerutdanningsforskning gjennom publikasjoner og internasjonalt samarbeid.

Boken er delt inn i syv deler.

## Del 1

I den første delen finner vi bidrag fra hovedtalerne, John Ivar Sunde, Gert Biesta, Paul Otto Brunstad og Stefano Oliverio. Sunde har kalt artikkelen sin *Alle burde hatt ein forskarskule*. Han har intervjuet NAFOL alumni med formålet å lære mer om hvordan disse har erfart de fire årene de var med i NAFOL. Hvilken verdi finner de i å delta på samlingene og å møte andre stipendiater fra hele landet og ikke minst internasjonale stipendiater og forelesere? Konklusjonen Sunde kommer frem til, presenterer han som et sitat fra en av respondentene: *Alle burde hatt en forskerskole*.

Det andre bidraget i del 1 har vi valgt å presentere som et intervju med Gert Biesta. Philip Winter har hatt en samtale med Biesta om *Should we be widening the gap between teaching and research?* Biesta selv har redigert intervjuet og gjort det klart for NAFOL-boken. Dette er en uvanlig stil for en bok, den muntlige formen er blitt presentert skriftlig som et bokkapittel. Biesta uttrykker bekymring over at forskning får en for sterk plass i lærerutdanningen, og selv om han først og fremst snakker om den engelske konteksten, er det mye relevans også for andre kontekster, inkludert den norske. Biesta reflekterer over spørsmålet: «If the research eye is always looking for evidence, for what can literally be seen, I think teachers need to be able to see possibilities that are not yet present, are not yet actual» (p. 10).

Paul Otto Brunstad og Stefano Oliverio følger opp Biestas tanker ved å gå dypere inn i de gamle filosofiske skriftene i artikkelen som har tittelen *Practical wisdom and spiritual exercises in teacher education – What does being taught by the ancients mean?* De diskuterer Biestas begrep «educationally wise people», og forfatterne hevder at profesjonell klokskap og skjønn er nødvendig i utøvelsen av læreryrket: «The art of practical wisdom – knowing which skills are most useful and when, and how best to use them, can be gained through an active, sensitive interaction with the environment» (p. 13).

## Del 2

Del 2 har vi kalt overganger. Gro Marte Strand skriver om hvordan foreldre erfarer barnas overgang til ungdomsskolen i artikkelen *Experiencing the transition to lower secondary school: Parents' voices*. Det er sjelden vi hører foreldrenes stemme i et forskningsprosjekt om skolen, og artikkelen styrker på denne måten validiteten i lærerutdanningsforskningen ved å gjøre leserne kjent med stemmer som sjelden er dokumentert. Overgangen fra å være student til å bli

lærer er tematikken for Irina Ivashenko Amdal og Marit Ulviks artikkel *Å kutte navlestrengen. En nyutdannet lærers opplevelse av skolen som organisasjon gjennom sine to første år i yrket*. I artikkelen går de dypere inn på en ny lærers erfaringer i møtet med læreryrket, og artikkelen er aktuell for alle som er involvert i lærerutdanningen.

### Del 3

Del 3 tar for seg lederskap og profesjonell utvikling av ledere. Júlíana Tyrfingsdóttir og Arna H. Jónsdóttir presenterer den islandske barnehageutdanningen i artikkelen *Professional development in Icelandic preschools: A historical saga*. Fokuset er på barnehagelederne og deres rolle i islandsk lærerutdanning i et historisk perspektiv. Leserne blir her presentert for en ukjent kontekst for mange. Mette Marit Forsmo Jenssens bidrag, *Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse*, diskuterer den sentrale rollen skoleledelsen har i etablering av profesjonelle læringsfellesskap i arbeidet med å styrke lærernes profesjonelle utvikling og derved skape en positiv skoleutvikling.

### Del 4

Den fjerde delen av boken handler om holdninger til og forståelser av undervisning, læring og vurdering. De tre bidragene er noe ulike i innfallsvinklene sine, men alle bidrar med ny kunnskap relevant for lærerutdanningen og ikke minst for praksisfeltet. Wenche Hammer Johannessen skriver om *Lower secondary teachers' content-general beliefs about learning and teaching*. I denne artikkelen hevder Johannessen at læreres holdninger i stor grad styrer praksis, og det er nødvendig å lære mer om lærernes implisitte holdninger for å kunne tilrettelegge for læreres profesjonelle utvikling i arbeidet med å styrke undervisningen. Elizabeth Oltedal tar oss med inn i musikk læreres verden, og hun ser på læreres underliggende forståelser som påvirker vurderingen av elevenes fremføringer og læring i musikk. I artikkelen *Low stakes and high temperatures: a study of music performance assessment in teacher panels in terms of micropolitics* konkluderer Oltedal med at det er ikke bare det faglige som styrer lærernes vurdering, men også andre interne og eksterne faktorer påvirker karaktersetningen. Natallia B. Hanssen undersøker i artikkelen *Special educational needs practices in preschool: A practice architectures perspective* hvordan barnehager i Norge og Hviterussland tilrettelegger arbeidet for barn med språklige utviklingsbehov. Hun understreker at gjennom en faglig dialog er det mulig å styrke personalets interkulturelle kompetanse.

## Del 5

I del 5 er det de praktiske fagene som er i fokus, forskning i yrkesfagutdanningen og posisjonen til faget mat og helse i grunnskolen. Ragnvald Holst-Larsen problematiserer gyldigheten av aksjonsforskning i yrkesfag i artikkelen *Is action research about developing individual approaches to help young dropouts, valid? A Position Paper*. Holst-Larsen posisjonerer seg i henhold til diskusjonen om aksjonsforskningens verdi og gyldighet, og han trekker på egen erfaring i arbeidet med dropouts fra videregående skole. Ingfrid Veka, Hege Wergedahl og Asle Holthe retter lyset mot lærerens handlingsrom i faget mat og helse, og de undersøker lærernes egne forståelser i artikkelen *Læreplanen og det profesjonelle handlingsrommet til mat- og helselæreren*. De kommer frem til at lærerne erfarer at de har et stort handlingsrom i undervisning av faget, og at det er mer egne faktorer som styrer undervisningen enn ytre faktorer.

## Del 6

Tematikken presentert i del 6 retter seg mot kunstdidaktikk i et norsk og et islandsk bidrag. Dette er en tematikk som har fått forholdsvis liten oppmerksomhet i lærerutdanningsdiskusjonen. Monica Klungland skriver om *Forskerposisjoner i tilblivelse – intra-aksjon mellom en forsker og elever med kamera i et sammenvevd, kunstdidaktisk møte*. I denne artikkelen problematiserer Klungland forskerens forståelse av «å forske på» skolen og elever, og argumenterer for at en riktigere fremgangsmåte er å «forske med» for eksempel elevene. Didaktikken blir skapt i samarbeid med elevene. Ingimar Ólafsson Waage tar for seg bruken av kunst i arbeidet med den moralske utdanningen, eller det som på norsk hører til skolens dannelsansvar, i artikkelen *The Visual Arts in Contemporary Education: Exploring How Artworks Can Promote Moral Deliberation*. Waage påpeker at arbeidet med kunst skaper emosjonelle erfaringer som tilrettelegger for diskusjon av moralske dilemmaer og utvikling av moralsk forståelse.

## Del 7

Del 7, det avsluttende kapittelet i boken, ser lærerutdanning i et europeisk perspektiv. Vasileios Symeonidis, som er gresk og arbeider nå i Østerrike på universitetet i Innsbruck, har undersøkt hvordan lærerutdanningen er diskutert i EUs politiske bestemmelser, og hvordan disse er oversatt til praksis i Europa. I artikkelen *Tracing the value of teacher education in EU teacher-related policies* hevder Symeonidis blant annet at det EU prioriterer, er ofte økonomiske tiltak

som sikrer arbeidsplasser, og de er mindre opptatt av det kulturelle og dannede i lærerutdanningen. Dette kan være et varsko til alle som arbeider med lærerutdanningen.

Jeg vil gjerne takke alle fagfellene for støtte, dedikert lesning og profesjonell tilbakemelding på artiklene gjennom hele prosessen. Takk til Perlaug Marie Kveen for uvurderlig hjelp med de administrative sidene i arbeidet med boken og til Anna Synnøve Hovstein for å ta av seg annet administrativt NAFOL-arbeid som frigjorde tid til å arbeide med boken. Takk også til Fagbokforlaget for profesjonelt samarbeid gjennom hele prosessen, og ikke minst går takken til alle bidragsyterne. Uten dere ville vi ikke hatt noen bok.

Jeg ønsker leserne god lesing!

Kari Smith (redaktør), daglig leder av NAFOL

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Perlaug Marie Kveen for her professional assistance in preparing the book.





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# PART 1





## KAPITTEL 1

# «Alle burde hatt ein forskarskule»

Ein kvalitativ studie av tidlegare stipendiatar sine erfaringar med forskarskulen NAFOL

John Ivar Sunde, Universitetet i Bergen

### SAMANDRAG

Nasjonale forskarskular er definert som ein av strategiane for å auke kvaliteten på doktorgradsutdanninga i Noreg, ved mellom anna å tilby eit forsterka fagleg fellesskap for doktorgradsstudentar i utvalde fagområde. Denne studien tek utgangspunkt i Nasjonal forskerskole for lærerutdanning (NAFOL) som eit case for å undersøkje korleis tidlegare stipendiatar erfarte å delta i ein forskarskule. Formålet med studien er å gi ei djupare forståing av dei sosiale praksisane og kontekstane som blir etablert i forskarskulen, og som stipendiatane opplever har hatt noko å seie for deira tilvære som doktorgradsstudentar og arbeid med doktorgradsavhandlinga. Datamaterialet i studien byggjer på semistrukturerte kvalitative intervju med åtte tidlegare stipendiatar frå ulike høgskular og universitet i Noreg, som alle var deltakarar i NAFOL i stipendiatperioden.

Studien viser at forskarskulen fyller eit kritisk behov for fagleg og sosial utvikling, som stipendiatane ikkje erfarer i ordinære doktorgradsprogram. Eit sentralt poeng i studien er at faglege og sosiale praksisar i forskarskulen bidreg til å utvikle eit læringsfellesskap der stipendiatane utviklar eit felles ansvar for doktorgradsprosjekta til kvarandre. Vidare belyser studien korleis ulike tersklar i doktorgradsutdanninga blir eit hinder i å få naudsynt innsikt og kunnskap om det akademiske miljøet dei søker å bli ein del av. Her viser studien korleis andre stipendiatar i forskarskulen fyller ein viktig funksjon overfor kvarandre i å mediere ei form for taus kunnskap i forskarutdanninga og senke terskelen for kva som er legitimt å diskutere i eit akademisk miljø.

## INTRODUKSJON

I evalueringa av norsk doktorgradsutdanning i 2002 blei forskarskular introdusert som eit verkemiddel for mellom anna å heve den faglege kvaliteten i forskarutdanninga og auke graden av doktorgradskandidatar som fullfører til normert tid. Rapporten framhevar eit sosiokulturelt perspektiv på forskarutdanning med fokus på å etablere kollektive faglege miljø som kunne «bryte opp tradisjonelle individualistiske strukturer og gi liv til isolerte miljøer» (Noregs forskingsråd, 2002, s. 80). Thune et al. (2012, s. 39) peiker på at det blei det sett i gang lokale initiativ og eit nasjonalt finansieringsprogram for å etablere forskarskular, utan at ein har klart å slå fast kva slags innverknad forskarskular har hatt i forskarutdanninga:

The implementation of research schools led to great expectations, and research schools were seen as tools that could enhance the quality of doctoral education, but also improve efficiency and integration of PhD candidates; this was seen as particularly relevant for integrating doctoral education across small and dispersed units. However, there has been little evidence to show what research schools really do and how far they support PhD education (Thune et al., 2012, s. 42).

Denne studien gir eit innblikk i korleis ein forskarskule fungerer som eit supplementært tilbod i den organiserte forskarutdanninga, sett frå eit deltakar-perspektiv. Åtte tidlegare stipendiatar frå ulike universitet og høgskular i Noreg har bidrege med sine erfaringar som studentar i Nasjonal forskerskole for lærerutdanning (NAFOL). Formålet med studien er å gi ei djupare forståing av dei sosiale praksisane og kontekstane som blir etablert i forskarskulen, og som stipendiatane opplever har noko å seie for tilværet som doktorgradsstudentar og arbeid med doktorgradsavhandlinga. Eg vil søkje å forstå deira akademiske utvikling i lys av sosiokulturell læringsteori, med eit særleg blikk på teorien til Lave og Wenger (1991) om legitim-perifer deltaking i praksisfellesskap. Samtidig vil denne studien vise at eit breiare teorigrunnlag gir høve til å forstå ulike dimensjonar ved forskarskulen.

Med bakgrunn i tema og formålet med studien har studien følgjande overordna problemstilling: *Korleis erfarer tidlegare stipendiatar deltaking og fagleg utvikling i forskarskulen NAFOL?*

For å konkretisere denne problemstillinga har eg utarbeidd tre forskings-spørsmål som vil belyse ulike dimensjonar av erfaringane deltakarane har gjort:

- Kva slags behov har stipendiatar for eit supplementært utdanningstilbod i forskarutdanninga?
- Kva slags sosiale praksisar og kontekstar i forskarskulen har noko å seie for stipendiatane sitt tilvære som doktorgradsstudentar og faglege utvikling?
- Korleis kan ein forstå dei sosiale praksisane og kontekstane som bidreg til akademisk utvikling i lys av teori om legitim-perifer deltaking i praksisfellesskap?

## TIDLEGARE FORSKING

Det er eit knippe forskingsartiklar som tematiserer forskarskular. Ludvigsen og Ulfnes (2013) har gjennomført ein case-studie av to nasjonale forskarskular (begge innanfor utdanningsvitskap) med sikte på å undersøkje korleis ein kan organisere forskarutdanninga for å støtte progresjonen for doktorgradskandidatane og hjelpe dei å utvikle tilstrekkeleg ekspertise innanfor eit avgrensa kunnskapsområde. Dei peiker mellom anna på at forskarskular blei etablert som ei mogleg løysing på ulike utfordringar i forskarutdanninga, som lite rekruttering til forskarutdanninga, høgt fråfall, låg rettleiarkapasitet og små og fragmenterte fagmiljø (Ludvigsen & Ulfnes, 2013, s. 66). Deira oppsummering av forskarskular teiknar eit interessant bilete av korleis ein bør organisere forskarutdanning for å bidra til forskingskompetanse:

Basert på våre erfaringer med de to forskerskolene vi har presentert, mener vi at faglige fellesskap som er organisert for å bidra i forskerutdanning er læringsfellesskap der faglig ekspertise, disiplinbaserte kvalitetsstandarder og generisk kompetanse kan utvikles og artikuleres skrittvis. Sagt på en annen måte: Å lære seg forskningshåndverket i et domene, er en forutsetning for å utvikle generisk kompetanse. Dette læres primært i deltagelse i faglige fellesskap og forskergrupper. (Ludvigsen & Ulfnes, 2013, s. 78)

Geschwind og Melin (2016) har studert to fleirfaglege forskarskular for å undersøkje korleis ulike fag- og forskingsdisiplinar møtast rundt felles tematiske område i doktorgradsstudiet. Deira hovudfunn er at fleirfaglege miljø bidreg til at stipendiatane utviklar sterke faglege identitetar, som delvis er i kontrast med formålet til dei fleirfaglege forskarskulane. I tillegg bidreg fleirfaglege forskarskular til å utvide perspektiva til stipendiatane: «For some, new methods and theories from neighbouring disciplines were integrated and used, while

for others the empirical scope of research was affected» (Geschwind & Melin, 2016, s. 16).

## KONTEKST OG UTVAL

NAFOL bygger på to av Thune et al. (2012) sine samanfatta forståingar av omgrepet forskarskule. For det første har NAFOL status som nasjonal forskarskule, med finansiering av Noregs forskingsråd i perioden 2010–2021. Samtidig er forskarskulen skipa på grunnlag av eit nettverkssamarbeid mellom 17 norske høgskular og universitet, der NTNU er vertsinstitusjon for forskarskulen. NAFOL tilbyr eit supplementært fagtilbod i to tematiske hovudområde innanfor lærarutdanning og praksis. Det første hovudområdet er knytt til fag og yrkesdidaktikk, og det andre er knytt til samfunnsmandatet, profesjonsforståinga og profesjonsutøvinga til lærarane (NAFOL, 2017; Noregs forskingsråd, 2013).

Det kvalitative datamaterialet i studien bygger på intervju av åtte tidlegare deltakarar i NAFOL, som er ferdige som stipendiatar i forskarskulen uavhengig av korleis det gjekk med doktorgradsarbeidet. Alle så nær som ein deltakar var tilsett som stipendiatar, medan den siste deltakaren tok ein doktorgrad ved sida av anna arbeid. For å vareta anonymiteten til denne deltakaren vil ikkje han eller ho bli identifisert i studien. Av den grunn har eg heller ikkje gjort eit poeng av å skilje mellom yrkestittelen stipendiat og utdanningstittelen doktorgradsstudent og vil såleis nytte desse titlane vekselvis for å variere språkbruken i studien. Alle deltakarar som har vore tilknytt NAFOL som stipendiat, blir rekna som alumn av NAFOL og profilert på nettsida til forskarskulen. I datainnsamlingsperioden var det 66 alumnar ved forskarskulen. Eg har nytta oversikta på NAFOL si nettside til å trekke åtte tilfeldig utvalde deltakarar. To personar som var trekt ut, gav beskjed om at dei ikkje kunne delta i datainnsamlingsperioden fordi dei var midt i eit hektisk prosjekt. Ein person gav ikkje tilbakemelding på prosjektet, trass i purring. Såleis blei det gjennomført ei ny trekning av tre deltakarar til studien, der dei tre nye inviterte takka ja til å delta i studien.

For å fange opp ei eventuell breidde i erfaringar som kan knytast til akademisk tilhøyrse, har eg likevel valt å sortere deltakarane etter universitets- eller høgskuletilknytning og trekke fire deltakarar frå kvar kategori. Eg har avgrensa meg frå å inkludere andre bakgrunnsvariablar som til dømes kjønn og alder, då materialet mitt er for lite til å kunne generalisere dei funna som kjem fram i denne studien, til å gjelde personar og kontekstar utanfor NAFOL. Deltakarane er likevel tilfeldigvis jamt fordelt på kjønn, spreidd i alder og kjem frå sju ulike

universitet og høgskular i Noreg. Utvalet har såleis vore både tilfeldig og målretta (Merriam, 2010, s. 458–459).

## **METODE**

For å tilnærme meg erfaringane til doktorgradsstudentane nytta eg semistrukturerte intervju som utgangspunkt for samtalen (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Intervjua blei gjennomført i løpet av september–november 2016. Då deltakarane var spreidd utover heile landet, var det mest hensiktsmessig å gjennomføre intervju over Skype eller telefon. To intervju blei likevel av praktiske årsaker gjennomført ved direkte samtale med deltakaren. Alle intervjua blei tatt opp på lydbandopptakar, noko deltakarane gav samtykke i både informasjonsskriv og før sjølve intervjuet. Intervjua varte i snitt i tre kvarter.

Under intervjua blei ytringane til deltakarane fortløpande fortolka og fortetta av meg som forskar, og eg lét deltakarane få understøtte eller korrigere desse fortolkingane. Alle intervju blei transkribert og vidare kategorisert i NVIVO med tanke på å finne gjennomgåande mønster og klynger i materiale, og samtidig framheve avvik ved hjelp av å kontrastere intervjumaterialet. Det transkriberte intervjumaterialet dannar grunnlaget for dei funna som er gjort i studien.

## **FUNN**

I framstillinga av funn frå intervjumaterialet vekslar eg mellom å samanfatte meiningsinnhaldet til deltakarane og vise intervjuutdrag som illustrerer interessante perspektiv frå erfaringane deltakarane har gjort. I tillegg bidreg eg med utdjupande kommentarar for å løfte fram mine fortolkingar av datamaterialet. Kvar deltakar har blitt tildelt eit nummer som det blir referert til ved sitering, og der det er naudsynt å nytte kjønnspronomen, er dei valt tilfeldig av omsyn til deltakaranonymiteten.

## **Behov for supplement til ordinær forskarutdanning**

Det er særleg tre behov for supplerings av ordinær forskarutdanning som peiker seg ut i analysen av intervjumaterialet. Det første og mest framståande behovet handlar om å søkje eit fagleg og sosialt miljø med andre stipendiatar i forskarutdanninga. Sju av åtte deltakarar opplever at NAFOL bidrog til å dekkje behovet for eit stipendiatmiljø, som dei meiner ikkje var tilstrekkeleg i det ordinære doktorgradsløpet. Det andre behovet handlar om å delta i eit forsterka fagfellesskap, der stipendiatane får tilgang til kontekstar og faglege ressursar som

kan hjelpe dei i doktorgradsarbeidet. Det tredje behovet som peiker seg ut, er at stipendiatar har eit stort behov for kunnskap om forskingshandverket, som inkluderer kunnskap om kva slags plikter og forventingar som ligg i det akademiske miljøet dei søkjer å bli ein del av. Eit utdrag frå deltakar 3 illustrerer dette:

Så det her med å lære å bli ein forskar. Det å treffast i ulike institusjonar og snakke med ulike lærarar i heile Noreg. Det trur eg gav ein langsam tryggleik i rolla som forskar. Og det at ein pratar om den prosessen med andre stipendiatar, som var gjennom i nokolunde same progresjon som ein sjølv, det trur eg var veldig viktig, for det er ikkje berre å gi ut ei doktoravhandling. Ein blir på ein måte ein forskar. Både kroppsleg og ... eg seier jo til studentane mine at det å bli forskar er ikkje ein jobb, det er ein livsstil ein har. Så det er på ein måte ... og det er ein prosess. Det er ein langsam prosess. Så det å vere tilknytt ein forskarskule trur eg hjelper masse i å få dei her usagde ... og lære om dei usagde ting ein ikkje lærer berre av å lese og skrive. (3)

### **Utvikling av eit sosialt og fagleg miljø**

Det faglege og sosiale miljøet som blir etablert i NAFOL, sentrerer særleg rundt årskullet av stipendiatar. Det er tydeleg at deltakarane opplever ei tilhøyrslse til eit fellesskap med andre stipendiatar, og fleire opplever i tillegg nærare relasjonar med enkelte stipendiatar i årskullet som dei anten deler felles faglege interesser med, eller som dei kjem overeins med på eit personleg plan. Det faglege miljøet mellom stipendiatane kjem til uttrykk som både fagleg støtte i doktorgradsprosessen og faglege samarbeid i forskjellige aktivitetar og prosjekt. Fleire deltakarar gir også uttrykk for at dei opplever eit gjensidig ansvar mellom stipendiatar om å hjelpe kvarandre i doktorgradsarbeidet. Følgjande intervjuutdrag er eit eksempel på korleis ein deltakar gir uttrykk for eit samarbeid mellom stipendiatar:

*Intervjuar: Bidrog du eller opplevde du at du bidrog noko inn mot deira prosjekt?*

Deltakar: Ja, kanskje ikkje så mykje i byrjinga, for då var eg jo òg opptatt med mitt eige prosjekt med å prøve å finne ut av kva eg eigentleg heldt på med, men merka jo etter kvart så, så eg hørte jo prosjekta deira, liksom prosjektittelen og tematikken deira blei jo nemnt i fleire samtalar etter kvart som åra gjekk, då. Så når eg for eksempel kom over litteratur og litteratursøk som eg gjorde, som eg visste kunne vere relevant for dei då, så sendte eg jo dei ein e-post og sa liksom: «Å, veit du om, har du høyrte om den her studien? Den kom ut i dag» [...]

Samtaleutdraget indikerer også at den faglege relasjonen er noko som utviklar seg i løpet av perioden dei er tilknytt forskarskulen. Ein annan deltakar gir uttrykk for tilsvarande oppleving av fagleg utvikling over tid: «Eg fekk lov å vere med i eit miljø som både, eller i utgangspunktet hadde fagleg tyngde, men som skapte meir og meir fagleg tyngde etter kvart som doktorgradsarbeida til dei enkelte aktørane utvikla seg» (2). I tillegg til at deltakarane opplever større grad av kjennskap til forskinga til kvarandre over tid, handlar fagleg utvikling også om tryggleik til å dele egne meiningar om andre sitt arbeid, noko følgjande sitat illustrerer: «I byrjinga så var eg veldig sånn, ja, eg visste ikkje heilt kva eg dreiv på med, men etter kvart så blei eg meir og meir sjølvsikker, og då kan eg jo gi betre kommentarar» (7).

Bidrag frå den utvida faglege staben i NAFOL har i hovudsak tre funksjonar, der dei gir fagleg påfyll og utvida perspektiv på lærarutdanningskontekstar, driv rettleiing på doktorgradsarbeidet til stipendiatane og har eit overordna ansvar for å etablere dei spesifikke kontekstane i NAFOL som den faglege og sosiale støtta er situert i. Den faglege rettleiinga blir i stor grad opplevd som nyttig for doktorgradsarbeidet. Samtidig har deltakarane delte erfaringar når det gjeld kor mykje av førelesingane dei opplevde som relevant for eige doktorgradsarbeid. Fire av deltakarane gir likevel uttrykk for at det var nyttig å få ei breiare tilnærming til forskingsfeltet enn det dei fokuserte på i doktorgradsprosjektet.

### **Utvikling av eit akademisk språk**

Eit anna funn i intervjutekstane handlar om utvikling av eit akademisk språk eller tileigning av ein akademisk kultur. Fire av deltakarane fortel at NAFOL har bidrege til at dei utvikla det dei omtalar som eit forskarspråk, som var nyttig i forskjellige akademiske kontekstar. Eksempelet under er eit utdrag av eit lengre svar på kva slags aktivitetar ein deltok på i NAFOL, og illustrerer korleis ein deltakar vurderer si eiga faglege språkutvikling gjennom deltaking i forskarskulen:

[...] der synest eg at vi fekk eit sånt forskarspråk på ein måte som gjorde at eg ... eg merka jo veldig forskjell frå eg byrja til, til eg var ferdig på NAFOL, og at når eg snakka med andre forskarar, så var eg på ein måte meir inne i kulturen, og kunne bruke riktig språk og riktig, altså eg ante ikkje kva fenomenologi var, før [ler] eg byrja der, ikkje sant? Og sånn, sånne omgrep då, så, så det gjorde på ein måte at eg fekk sånn større deltaking, eller synest eg kunne delta betre i forskarfelleskap då. (4)

Deltakaren knyter i dette tilfellet utvikling av forskarspråk til ei form for tilhørslse til ein akademisk kultur. Ho poengterer dette ved å fortelje korleis språket bidreg til å gi ho større grad av medverknad på eigen arbeidsplass:

Sånn at sånn som det, kva skal eg seie, utvikle det der forskarspråket og den tryggleiken det er å kunne både snakke med andre forskarar, og ta plass i det forskarfellesskapet vi hadde her på jobben. Det merka eg veldig stor forskjell på. [Eg] byrja jo å føle at eg kunne ta plass blant professorane og forskingsfellesskapet her, pluss at eg byrja å rettleie desse, altså kollegaene mine, og vi kunne byrje å jobbe med FOU-prosjekt saman der på ein måte eg blei, kva skal eg seie, den som kunne tinga. (4).

Relasjonen mellom språk og akademisk kultur blir også belyst av ein annan deltakar, men vedkomande koplar i tillegg forskarspråket opp mot utvikling av ein forskaridentitet.

[...] det her med å snakke om det å bli ein forskar. Der må du snakke på ein bestemt måte med andre folk, også er det å lære å oppføre seg [ler], eller ikkje å oppføre seg, men liksom å te seg i offentlege samanhengar, og presentere deg og ditt prosjekt då. Det er jo ein, ein lærdom det. Det er ikkje berre berre, og eg trur at det er kanskje enklare for stipendiatar som kanskje har vakse opp i ein akademikarfamilie, å vite kva som forventast av deg i akademiske miljø, men eg var, eg er jo den første i min eigen familie som har tatt ein doktorgrad. Så for meg så var det vanskeleg å vite korleis ein skulle vere som forskar, viss du skjønner kva eg meiner. (3)

Dei to andre deltakarane fortel at NAFOL har bidrege til at dei i større grad kan setje ord på eiga forskning. Ein av deltakarane seier at NAFOL har lagt til rette for at ein klarer å presentere forskingsprosjektet sitt på ein kortfatta måte gjennom dei dialogane stipendiatane har med kvarandre om forskingsprosjekta sine. Ho legg til at det tvingar dei til å fortelje om seg sjølv og presentere seg og si forskning på ulike måtar. Den andre stipendiaten legg meir vekt på at han har utvikla eit språk for å kunne rettleie andre stipendiatar i deira forskingsprosjekt. Han omtalar dette som ei form for modning, der det også handlar om auka grad av tryggleik til kvarandre i ein tilbagemeldingsprosess.



## Terskel for kommunikasjon

Eit interessant funn i fem av intervjua er at deltakarane gir uttrykk for at det er ulike tersklar for kva ein kan diskutere med kven i det faglege miljøet som stipendiatane er ein del av gjennom NAFOL og sin primære utdanningsinstitusjon. Dei fem deltakarane gir eit eintydig bilete av at delar av eller heile årskullet i NAFOL gir ein arena der det opplevast som lettare og tryggare å dele eigen usikkerheit og tvil i både faglege og praktiske spørsmål. Ein deltakar omtalar denne forma for usikkerheit som «den grunnleggjande usikkerheita om kva det er ein held på med» (8). Følgjande intervjuutdrag er tatt ut av ein samanheng der deltakaren fortel om korleis behovet for støtte har utvikla seg gjennom doktorgradslauget:

Ein treng ganske mykje eller rom for å spørje dumme spørsmål. Det var kanskje det eg følte eg fekk gjennom samlingane. At ein hadde, at det var rom for å stille kanskje dumme spørsmål som du ikkje kan stille ein professor på din eigen institusjon når du er stipendiat. For då, sjølv om du er berre stipendiat, men det er litt ... ein skal prøve å ikkje verke kanskje så dum då likevel, men når ein kom på NAFOL-samlingane, så var det kanskje meir rom for å stille andre spørsmål eller «er det normalt det eg går igjennom», eller «treng eg å gjere meir av det», eller «er det ein samanheng i korleis eg tenker eller er det feil?» Sånne ting då.

*Intervjuar: Ja det er kanskje vanskeleg for deg å svare på dette, men kva er det som gjer at du opplever at det er forskjellige tersklar for kva du kan spørje om? Er det fordi medstudentane dine er meir på same nivå som deg?*

Deltakar: Ja, det er jo det. Det er jo sånn som eg sa at ein føler ei tilhøyrse til ei klasse der alle saman går igjennom det same, og då, og kanskje, og at ingen av dei er ekspert på det du skriv om, og då er det jo kanskje meir, det er du som veit mest om ditt eige prosjekt, så då er det kanskje lågare terskel for å kunne spørje, for [ler] det er jo ingen andre som vil forstå det fullt ut likevel. (3)

Det er tydeleg at deltakaren opplever at det er visse typar spørsmål ho meiner det er viktig å kunne stille i eit doktorgradslau, men at kostnaden ved å stille desse spørsmåla er at det kan skade det profesjonelle omdømet hennar. Av den grunn dannar det seg eit behov for eit miljø der ho kan senke terskelen for kva slags spørsmål det er greitt å stille i eit akademisk miljø og samtidig halde den

profesjonelle integriteten intakt. Ho skildrar samtidig eit behov for å samanlikne sin eigen progresjon og faglege utvikling med andre stipendiatar, for i større grad å kunne vere i stand til å vurdere sin eiga situasjon.

Ein annan deltakar fortel om eit tilsvarande behov for å ha eit miljø der ein kan prate om frustrasjonar og det ein ikkje forstår i doktorgradslauget:

*Intervjuar: Du sa jo at de prata om både laust og fast. Kan du berre kome med eit par eksempel på ting du snakka med dei andre om, altså tema de tok opp, sånn heilt uformelt?*

Deltakar: Ja, altså heilt uformelt blir det jo kanskje ikkje, fordi altså veldig mykje dreier seg om doktorgradsarbeidet sjølvsagt, men det blir på ein måte uformelt på den måten at ein snakkar om frustrasjonar. Ein snakkar om ting ein ikkje forstår. Utdringar ein kanskje føler at ein burde forstå, og dermed så har ein liksom ikkje lyst til å verke som ein idiot, og spørje om det i ei meir sånn open forsamling, eller til desse, ja, altså, ja, som for eksempel [forelesar] då eller andre når ein då er på desse samlingane, fordi ein har jo ikkje lyst å drite ut Noreg heller, ikkje sant, ved å framstå som ein sånn liten idiot. [...] Eg erfarte jo veldig fort at doktorgradsstipendiatar verkar, verkar jo veldig sikre på utsida. Det er veldig mykje usikkerheit, og det er veldig mykje, ja, eit sånt helvete, ikkje sant, og då, og då er det godt å ha nokon å snakke med. (4)

Deltakaren opplever såleis at den faglege eller formaliserte kommunikasjonen mellom stipendiatar og faglege nestorar hindrar stipendiatar i å diskutere vanskelege forhold knytt til doktorgradsarbeidet som er av meir uformell karakter. Deltakaren peiker i tillegg på eit gjennomgåande trekk i intervjuetekstane, som eg tidlegare har omtalt i samband med andre funn, der stipendiatane opplever ein stor grad av usikkerheit i doktorgradsarbeidet. Begge intervjuutsnitta over viser samtidig at enkelte stipendiatar opplever at det er ei frykt for tap av omdøme ved å stille spørsmål som kan oppfattast som feil eller dumme i ein akademisk kontekst.

## DISKUSJON

### Årskullet som kjerne i praksisfelleskapet

Lave og Wenger (1991, s. 29) definerer ein praksisfelleskap som ein arena der nye deltakarar over tid kan lære seg ein spesifikk kompetanse gjennom sosiale

praksisar med kvarandre og faglege nestorar. Det er eit tydeleg funn i studien at deltakarane opplever at det formar seg eit praksisfellesskap i forskarskulen over tid, både mellom stipendiatar og mellom stipendiatar og staben i NAFOL. Den mest omtalte eininga i intervjumaterialet er dei andre stipendiatane i årskullet som deltakarane er ein del av. Det er difor interessant å diskutere kva som kan forklare den sentrale rolla andre stipendiatar har for deltakarane sine erfaringar med forskarskulen.

Det er stor semje i forskingslitteraturen om at forskarutdanning er eit svært krevjande utdanningslaup, og at stipendiatar har behov for eit fagleg og sosialt miljø som støttar dei i doktorgradsprosessen (Appel & Dahlgren, 2003; Gardner & Mendoza, 2010; Geschwind & Melin, 2016; Hakala, 2009). Alle deltakarane gir på ulike vis eksplisitt uttrykk for at doktorgradsutdanninga var ein utfordrande prosess, og nokre deltakarar viser til konkrete episodar som var særleg vanskelege. Ein av deltakarane måtte til dømes gi seg midt i laupet fordi det blei for vanskeleg å meistre, og gjekk såleis inn i fråfallsstatistikken. Ein annan deltakar opplevde ein utfordrande relasjon til rettleiaren på sin primære institusjon og måtte byte både rettleiar og forskingsgruppe. Behovet for eit miljø som kan vere ein støttestruktur i eit krevjande utdanningslaup, kjem tydeleg fram mellom anna i motivasjonen til deltaking i forskarskulen. Her fortel fleire av deltakarane at dei melde seg på NAFOL fordi dei ikkje hadde eit tilsvarende fagleg og sosialt fellesskap med andre stipendiatar på sin eigen institusjon. Halvparten av deltakarane legg mest vekt på behovet for fagleg støtte, som faglege råd og tilbakemeldingar. Den andre halvparten fokuserer mest på behovet for sosial støtte, med særleg vekt på å ha samtalepartnarar der dei kan diskutere stort og smått om stipendiatlivet.

Årskullet er ein etablert sosial struktur i NAFOL der stipendiatane får møte andre som er i tilsvarende arbeidssituasjon. Eit sentralt kjenneteikn ved årskullet er at stipendiatane i kullet har nokolunde lik progresjon og forskar innanfor same spenn av tematikkar, sjølv om det er tydelege variasjonar mellom dei ulike doktorgradsprojekta. Dette er i tråd med behovet hos fleire av deltakarane som er opptekne av å delta i eit miljø med andre som er i «same båt», slik at dei får høve til å diskutere problemstillingar og utveksle erfaringar som er spesifikt knytt til eit felles stadium i doktorgradsprosessen. Ein av deltakarane omtalar dette illustrerande som utveksling av krigshistorier. Behovet for å dele på problemstillingar i doktorgradslaupet samsvarer godt med analysen til Kozar et al. (2015) av eit stipendiatmiljø. Dei legg vekt på at stipendiatar har behov

for å bli eksponert for andre som er i tilsvarende situasjon som dei, slik at dei kan relatere sine eigne faglege utfordringar med tilsvarende utfordringar som andre stipendiatar møter i forskarutdanninga. Dette kan bidra til å skape realistiske forventingar til seg sjølv i doktorgradsprosessen og redusere graden av bekymringar og risikoen for fråfall. Mark Sincell (2000) publiserte i tillegg ein populærvitskapleg artikkel med den illustrerande tittelen «Sharing the pain», som understøttar oppmodingane frå Kozar et al. (2015) om å søkje eit miljø med andre stipendiatar der dei kan dele tankar, bekymringar og utfordringar i doktorgradsprosessen.

Deltakarane er tydeleg engasjert i dei sosiale praksisane som blir etablert mellom stipendiatane i forskarskulen. Ein måte å forstå engasjementet på er å sjå det i lys av deira opplevingar av tryggleik i fellesskapet med andre stipendiatar. Intervjuutdraget under illustrerer ein måte å omtale denne tryggleiken på:

Eg veit ikkje om det er sånn i alle kull, men eg følte meg veldig trygg og ... ja, i eit fellesskap av menneske som ville deg vel, sant, på alle område. Og der var jo medstudentane ganske viktige etter kvart. (8)

Fokuset stipendiatane har på tryggleik i forskarskulen kan ein forstå i lys av studien til Appel og Dahlgren (2003), som gir eit innblikk i korleis usikkerheit pregar tilværet som doktorgradsstudent. Dei erfaringane som kjem fram i min studie knytt til usikkerheit, handlar i stor grad om manglande innsikt i kva slags forventingar og plikter som ligg i doktorgradsløpet. Såleis handlar det også om korleis stipendiatane opplever prosessen med å etablere seg som forskar i eit akademisk miljø. Appel og Dahlgren (2003) og Elmholdt (2003) illustrerer den tosidige opplevinga av etableringsprosessen ved å omtale det dei forstår som janusansiktet i forskarutdanninga. Her peiker dei særleg på kor viktig det er at doktorgradsstudentar etablerer eit fagleg og sosialt miljø for å takle utfordringar knytt til isolasjon og usikkerheit i forskarutdanninga. Samtidig er det viktig å understreke at relasjonane mellom stipendiatane har ulike trekk og styrkeforhold. Fleire av deltakarane i studien fortel at dei fekk ein nærare relasjon til enkelte av stipendiatane, anten fordi dei delte same forskingstema eller gjekk godt i lag på eit personleg plan. Dette illustrerer at stipendiatane formar ulike sosiale og faglege relasjonar innanfor eit praksisfellesskap.

## Forskarutdanning som kollektiv læringsprosess

Det sosiokulturelle perspektivet og teorien om praksisfellesskap legg tydeleg vekt på utvikling av kunnskap i kollektive læringsprosessar. Eit sosiokulturelt læringsssyn ser kunnskap som distribuert mellom ulike menneske og legg vekt på at kunnskapsutvikling skjer i deltaking i sosiale praksisar (Dysthe, 2001, s. 60–65). Eit praksisfellesskap er såleis ein avgrensa kontekst for kunnskapsutvikling. Eg vil i lys av mine funn argumentere for at det å skrive doktorgrad er eit individuelt arbeid, men samtidig konstant forankra i ein kollektiv læringsprosess som bidreg til å forme både forskaren og forskingsarbeidet. Analysen av NAFOL som eit praksisfellesskap viser at forskarskulen består av komplekse sosiale strukturar som er situert i spesifikke kontekstar. Kunnskapen og kompetansen om forskingshandverket er såleis distribuert mellom ulike aktørar i forskarskulen, som på kvar sin måte bidreg til den akademiske utviklinga hos stipendiatane. Dette er i tråd med det sosiokulturelle fokuset på distribuert kunnskap (Dysthe, 2001).

Eit interessant moment ved korleis deltakarane omtalar kunnskapsdeling i forskarskulen, er at dei samtidig demonstrerer korleis distribuert læring bygger på ei form for felles ansvar for doktorgradsarbeidet til kvarandre. Ein av deltakarane illustrerer dette ved å fortelje om at stipendiatane utveksla tips om litteratur og konferansar. Vidare fortel fleire deltakarar at den faglege leiinga i forskarskulen la opp til aktivitetar som gav stipendiatane høve til å bidra i forskingsprosjekta til dei andre. Denne tilnærminga til delt fagleg ansvar mellom doktorgradsstudentar er ein lite framheva dimensjon i forskingslitteraturen. Gardner og Mendoza (2010, s. xvi) omtalar til dømes ansvar i eit doktorgradslauf i to former: doktorgradsprogrammet, inkludert faglege nestorar, sitt ansvar for å tilby eit fagleg opplegg som førebur doktorgradsstudentane for eit vidt spekter av framtidige oppgåver, og ansvaret studentane har for å bidra til å forme sine egne forskarutdanningslauf. Det kollektive perspektivet på ansvar mellom stipendiatar blir her i beste fall ein implisitt dimensjon.

Deltakarane gir i intervju fleire eksempel på utvikling av forskarhandverket i NAFOL, og særleg tre område peikte seg ut. Det første handlar om utvikling av ei brei forståing og kunnskap om utdanningsforskning. Her gir fleire av deltakarane uttrykk for at dei gjennom forskarskulen har fått ei brei fagleg innsikt i ulike utdanningskontekstar, som har bidrege til å styrke den faglege kompetansen deira. Dette er i tråd med funnet til Geschwind og Melin (2016, s. 24–26) om at interaksjonar mellom doktorgradsstudentar med ulik fagbakgrunn gir

studentane eit breiare perspektiv på forskning. Her er det viktig å presisere at Geschwind og Melin ser på doktorgradsstudentar som deltek i forskarskular med større variasjon i representerte fagdisiplinar, men denne studien viser at sjølv ulike tilnærmingar innanfor ein fagdisiplin kan bidra til å gi stipendiatane større fagleg breidde.

Det andre området handlar om å utvikle kompetanse i å etablere faglege nettverk, noko fleire av deltakarane opplever som ein viktig del av forskingshandverket. Hansén (2003, s. 208) peiker på at doktorgradsstudentar ofte blir oppmoda av faglege nestorar til å etablere faglege nettverk, og legg til at det å etablere nettverk med formål om å utvide moglegheitene for doktorgradsstudentar til å bli involvert i deira akademiske fagfelt, er ein aukande trend. Alle deltakarane fortel om situasjonar i forskarskulen der dei har etablert kontakt med andre stipendiatar eller faglege nestorar med formål om å få til faglege samarbeid eller bli ein del av eit internasjonalt akademisk fellesskap. Bokprosjektet er eit konkret døme på eit fagleg samarbeid. Dette prosjektet illustrerer samtidig korleis eit fagleg nettverk kan fungere som ein arena der stipendiatane får utøve forskingshandverket, i dette tilfellet ved å arbeide med ein felles publikasjon.

Det tredje området handlar om å utvikle eit felles akademisk språk, ofte omtalt av deltakarane som utvikling av eit forskarspråk. Fleire av deltakarane omtalar deira språkutvikling i eit metaperspektiv, der fokuset er korleis tileigning av eit akademisk språk bidreg til å påverke sosiale praksisar, læringsprosessar og opplevinga av tilhørslse til eit større akademisk fellesskap. Samtidig erfarer fleire deltakarar at utvikling av eit felles språk gjer det enklare å bidra med sitt eige doktorgradsprosjekt og kommentere andre sine faglege arbeid utover i stipendiatperioden. Desse erfaringane teiknar eit bilete av den medierande og transformerande funksjonen språket har (Dysthe, 2001, s. 47). Lave og Wenger deler denne tilnærminga til språk i eit praksisfellesskap, der dei legg vekt på at språket er sentralt i læringsprosessar, som i sin tur gir menneske høve til å forandre seg i høve til dei moglegheitene som nye sosiale praksisar og relasjonar opnar opp for (Lave & Wenger, 1991, s. 50–53).

### **Den tause dimensjonen i forskarutdanning**

Det er tydeleg at deltakarane erfarer det som Polanyi (1967) omtalar som taus kunnskap i forskarutdanninga, som i hovudsak spring ut frå to sett med erfaringar. Den første erfaringa handlar om at deltakarane opplever ein terskel for kva slags spørsmål og problemstillingar ein kan diskutere med faglege nestorar.

Deltakarane gir uttrykk for at dei risikerer tap av omdøme eller profesjonell integritet ved å stille feil eller dumme spørsmål i ein akademisk kontekst, noko både Gardner (2007) og Rugg og Petre (2004) har belyst i andre studiar. Det er samtidig interessant at deltakarane opplever at desse spørsmåla er viktige for at dei skal meistre store og små utfordringar i doktorgradslauget, eller føle seg sosialt og fagleg «heime» i eit akademisk miljø (Felt, 2009). Det oppstår såleis eit behov for eit fagleg miljø der deltakarane har «rom for å stille dumme spørsmål», som ein deltakarar formulerte det.

Det andre settet med erfaringar handlar om korleis deltakarane handterer ei kompleks forskarutdanning, der ein del av kunnskapen om forskingshandverket ikkje er lett tilgjengeleg for stipendiatane. Desse erfaringane er såleis meir knytte til relasjonen mellom stipendiatar og den etablerte forskarutdanninga, og især i prosessen der stipendiatane beveger seg frå å vere legitim-perifere deltakarar mot ei meir fullverdig deltaking i eit akademisk miljø (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Det er tydeleg at deltakarane har eit stort behov for kunnskap både om forskingshandverket og det Appel og Dahlgren (2003, s. 107) omtalar som «usynlege veggar» i forskarutdanninga, som inkluderer kunnskap om kva slags plikter og forventingar som ligg i det akademiske miljøet dei søkjer å bli ein del av.

Begge sett med erfaringar kan medverke til at det oppstår ei kløft mellom doktorgradsstudentane som har tilgang til og ei god forståing av dei komplekse strukturane av sosiale praksisar som formar forskarutdanninga, og dei som opplever at denne kunnskapen er utilgjengeleg eller krevjande å få innsikt i. Såleis kan ein argumentere for at den tause kunnskapen også er ei form for «mektig kunnskap» (Young, 2009, s. 13), der graden av innsikt eller tilgang til denne kunnskapen kan ha noko å seie for korleis og i kva grad doktorgradsstudentane blir integrert i eit akademisk miljø. Samtidig viser fleire intervjuutdrag at stipendiatane er opptatt av å finne gode strategiar for å takle denne utfordringa. Fellesnemnaren her er at dei søkjer å etablere eit fagleg og sosialt miljø med andre stipendiatar som kan gi dei ein trygg arena for å setje ord på og dele tankar om det som ein deltakar omtalar som den «grunnleggjande usikkerheita om kva det er ein held på med». Dette samsvarer svært godt med funnet til Gardner (2007, s. 736) om at stipendiatar nyttar kvarandre som jungeltelegraf til å mediere implisitte forventingar, krav og normer i forskarutdanninga. Samtidig understrekar funn i denne studien kor viktig denne funksjonen er for den faglege utviklinga til stipendiatane og trivselen deira i forskarutdanninga.

## KONKLUSJON OG IMPLIKASJONAR

Denne studien har styrkt ei forståing av at det faglege fellesskapet i ein forskar-skule er ein god og viktig arena for akademisk utvikling, i tråd med tilsvarande konklusjon frå Ludvigsen og Ulfsnes (2013).

Vidare har denne studien identifisert korleis ulike tersklar og ei form for taus kunnskap i doktorgradsutdanninga hindrar stipendiatar i å få innsikt i viktig kunnskap om det akademiske miljøet dei søker å bli ein del av. Eg har, i likskap med Gardner (2007) og Appel og Dahlgren (2003), undersøkt dette frå ståstaden til doktorgradsstudenten. Det ville vore interessant med ein studie som undersøkte desse fenomenene i norsk doktorgradsutdanning i eit leiings- eller nestorperspektiv, der deira haldningar og tankar kom til syne. Alternativt kunne ein ha gjennomført ein kvalitativ studie med både rettleiarar og doktorgradsstudentar for å søkje å identifisere ulike diskursar som kjem til uttrykk om det å etablere akademiske normer, forventingar og standardar i eit doktorgradsloop.

Ein tredje innfallsvinkel til vidare forskning er å undersøkje korleis dei sosiale praksisane, særleg mellom stipendiatar, blir etablert og fungerer i det ordinære doktorgradsloopet. Min studie peiker tydeleg på at stipendiatar har behov for å vere ein del av eit inkluderande miljø med andre stipendiatar, og det ville såleis vore interessant å vite meir om i kva grad og korleis eit slikt miljø blir etablert i det ordinære doktorgradsloopet.

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## CHAPTER 2

# Should we be widening the gap between teaching and research?

An interview with Gert Biesta by Philip Winter

*Philip Winter: I would like to ask you some questions about the relationship between teaching and research, more specifically, about the role research might play and the role it should play in teaching. Perhaps we can begin with some more general observations and then focus on specific issues. If that is ok for you, where would you like to start?*

Gert Biesta: There are perhaps two general observations I would like to start with. The first is that, in a sense, this is not a new question. Many would argue that the relationship between theory and practice is one of the perennial discussions in the field of education, and I am inclined to agree. Ernst Christian Trapp, generally seen as the very first professor of education in the world – he took up this position in 1778 at the University of Halle in Germany – was already occupied with this question, for example in a text he wrote with the rather contemporary sounding title ‘On the promotion of effective knowledge’ (‘Von der Beförderung der wirksamen Erkenntniss’). And ever since, educators and educationalists have been discussing what the relationship between theory and practice in education could be and should be. The fact that this question is still around shows that it may be a more complicated question than what one might assume. And perhaps it simply means that the question simply ‘belongs’ to the field of education.

*PW: And the other observation?*

GB: The other point I’d like to make is that nowadays it is generally assumed that the ‘gap’ between theory and practice or, more specifically between research and teaching – let me say a bit more about that in a minute – is a problem and that this gap should be closed or at least should be narrowed. Which can, of

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course, be done by bringing theory closer to practice, practice closer to theory, or meeting somewhere ‘halfway.’

*PW: And where do you stand on that?*

GB: I don’t want to jump to conclusions too quickly and am actually interested in exploring the opposite case, that is the question whether there may be problems in trying to close the gap – which also means exploring whether there are actually good reasons for keeping the gap open and perhaps increasing the distance between research and teaching.

*PW: Before we look at that in more detail, can I just ask whether for you the theory–practice issue and the teaching–research issue are roughly similar? Or is there a difference between the two?*

GB: Thanks for asking, as this is indeed an important point for me. The concerns I have are actually about the relationship between research and teaching, because I believe that recent tendency to move research closer to teaching and to the practice of education more generally are problematic. This particular issue is not the same as questions about the role of theory in educational practice, where I would actually be inclined [to say] that good practice cannot do without theory and actually already contains a lot of implicit theory. So, if it is ok, I would like to focus our conversation on recent developments around the role of research in teaching.

*PW: Thanks for the clarification. So, if we focus on the relationship between research and teaching, what then are the developments that you would like to highlight?*

GB: I’m particularly interested in – but also concerned about – the recent ‘push’ to try to make teaching into a research-based profession. In England an important ‘starting shot’ took place in 1996 when David Hargreaves, at the time Professor of Education at Cambridge, delivered a lecture to the Teacher Training Agency with the title Teaching as a Research-Based Profession: Possibilities and Prospects. It’s instructive to look at the language he uses, so let me read a couple of lines. ‘Teaching is not at present a research-based profession. I have no doubt that if it were, teaching would be more effective and more satisfying.

The goal of enhancing effectiveness and satisfaction can be achieved only by a combination of several means, of which an adequate research base is just one. (...) However, I shall argue in this lecture that providing that research base will require a radical change both in the kind of research that is done and the way in which it is organized. To make my case I look inside the profession and the research community to examine what we now do; but I shall also look at another profession to detect what lessons can be learned about creating a genuinely research-based profession.' As you can see, this is quite 'strong' language, because it calls for radical change, thus suggesting that what educational research had achieved up to that point was largely wrong or misguided. And it may not be too difficult to guess which profession he has in mind that should serve as the example for educational research.

*PW: Let me guess: medicine?*

GB: Exactly! And he's of course not the first to think that medicine provides the template for the future of educational research and its relationship to practice. Let me come back to that in a minute.

*PW: What has happened since?*

GB: I don't think that Hargreaves' lecture was the cause of what has happened since, but it did definitely express a direction that only has become stronger over the years, not just in England but in large parts of the English-speaking world and countries that take inspiration from developments there. The school effectiveness movement is a clear example of the idea that with a different kind of research we can increase the effectiveness of teaching – an idea which we see nowadays in the suggestion that we need research about 'what works' and that large-scale randomized controlled trials are the one and only way to find this out. The suggestion that we need a different kind of research in education has also led to large investments in educational research – in the UK, for example, there was a 10-year Teaching and Learning Research Programme that sought to change the nature and enhance the impact of educational research. It ran from about 2000 to about 2010 and did indeed generate a lot of new research, but not the kind of research that Hargreaves or school-effectiveness researchers were arguing for. From the suggestion to make teaching a research-based

profession, things have increasingly moved to arguments for making teaching an evidence-based profession. Some have argued that teaching should not be evidence-based – which sounds rather instrumental – but should be evidence-informed, though for me the real question is what we actually mean by ‘evidence.’

*PW: Let's come back to that point as well.*

GB: And much of this has been – and still is – intertwined with policy and politics and, not to forget, money. The ‘New Labour’ government of Tony Blair, for example, established a ‘Standards and Effectiveness Unit’ to promote this agenda. In the US the ‘No Child Left Behind’ act led to a situation where federal funding for educational research would only go to randomized effectiveness studies. And more recently a lot of money has been channeled towards this kind of research through the work of the Educational Endowment Foundation in the UK. What also keeps emerging in these discussions are arguments for the teacher as researcher. These partly stem from more democratic agendas coming out of the tradition of action research. But they also stem from technocratic agendas that often see medical research as the ideal situation – I tend to refer to this as ‘medicine-envy.’

*PW: Has this all been going in the same direction?*

GB: Not entirely. I recently re-discovered a piece from 1993 by Martyn Hammersley, a professor at the Open University whose work I really admire, called ‘On the Teacher as Researcher.’ In the paper he examines the suggestion that research should be an integral part of the work of teachers in schools rather than an activity carried out on schools by outsiders, as he puts it. The paper is a very careful discussion of the arguments in favor and against this idea. And interestingly, Hammersley comes to the conclusion – several years before Hargreaves’ lecture – that while the arguments in favor have some force, they do not add up to a convincing case, as he puts it, for the superiority of teaching-as-research. It is not only interesting that this argument was already made in the early 1990s. It is also helpful, at least for where I would like to take our conversation, that Hammersley focuses on the idea of teaching-as-research, as it is there that my main concerns also lie.

*PW: Let's have a closer look at some of the more detailed issues then.*

GB: OK. Although it may sound a bit rhetorical, I do think that it is important to ask how much research teaching actually needs. After all, people have been teaching for thousands of years – think of Plato's Academy or Aristotle's Lyceum if you want some famous historical examples – without much or perhaps even any research going into it. So the idea that teaching is in need of research is actually a rather recent or modern idea – we might even call it a modern obsession – which raises the question where this need for research comes from, is it perhaps part of a desire for control? Has it something to do with our inability to endure uncertainty and risk, even if the risk is beautiful, as I would argue in the case of education? Have we lost the ability to think for ourselves? Has the research 'industry' perhaps been quite effective in giving us the impression that we cannot live our lives without it? Important questions, I think, that we should continue to ask so that we do not uncritically simply assume that for every problem research is the answer.

*PW: It is interesting that you use the phrase 'research industry.'*

GB: [It is] perhaps part of the problem, at least with educational research, that so many people are involved in it – which is partly due to the fact that in many countries teacher education has been incorporated into the university and suddenly teacher educators are faced with the challenge to conduct research and are therefore 'in need,' so one might say, of 'problems.' We shouldn't underestimate this part of the issue, I think, which is that the 'supply-side' of educational research has grown so big that there is a pressure to create its own 'demand.'

*PW: You mentioned medicine-envy, and seem to believe that educational research should not move too quickly in the direction of medical research. Can you say a bit more?*

GB: Sure. Again, to begin with a rather blunt but nonetheless important observation: being a student is not a disease and teaching is not a cure, and already for this reason we should be careful with assuming that the practice of medicine resembles the practice of education. There are also people who argue that the kind of research we need in education should follow the model of agriculture,

where we change the conditions under which plants grow – like the amount of light, or water or nutrients – in order to find out which combination of factors yields the highest return. Again, I would say that this is entirely inappropriate for education, because students are not plants that should grow and produce a crop, but human beings involved in educative processes. (This, by the way, is also the reason why I don't like Dewey's language about 'growth' – I think it's a category that doesn't really fit the dynamics and purposes of education. Perhaps I can return to that in a minute.)

*PW: Is there anything more to say about the comparison with medicine?*

GB: Yes, there is another really important point, because when people refer to medical research as the template for what educational research should become, they often assume that the success of modern medicine lies in the fact that it has this strong scientific knowledge-base which generates the evidence about what works, and that what medical practitioners do is simply doing what the research tells them to do. Here I keep coming back to two important books written by Bruno Latour – *The Pasteurization of France* (1993) and *Science in Action* (1988) – in which he shows that the fact that medical knowledge seems to be able to work everywhere, is not the result of the fact that such knowledge is universally true. It rather has to do with the ways in which modern medicine – and the examples Latour gives refer to other aspects of modern 'technoscience' as well – has been able to export the conditions under which certain knowledge 'works' to the very concerns of society. In the *Pasteurization of France* Latour argues, for example, that the reason why Pasteur's method initially only worked in his own laboratory and ten years later worked on all the farms in France, was not because this method was robust and based on strong scientific-evidence so that it could safely 'travel' outside of the laboratory, but because all the farms in France had transformed into the conditions of the laboratory so that Pasteur's method could work there as well. In this way France became 'Pasteurized,' so to speak; it turned into one big laboratory so that Pasteur's method and the knowledge linked to it, could travel with ease.

*PW: How is this relevant for education and educational research?*



GB: I think that it helps us to see that knowledge produced by research cannot simply travel from the research setting to the classroom but requires a change of classroom practice itself so that the research can begin to work, so to speak. This is not to contest that research can show that *in a particular setting, with particular teachers and students*, what teachers did, had a particular ‘impact’ on students. But for that knowledge to be of any use elsewhere, there is a pressure to make sure that the teachers and students in those other settings resemble the teachers and students from the research setting as closely as possible. So before you know it, research is beginning to change the practice of education, rather than that it provides interesting information. That is one of my prime concerns in relation to the current push towards, to use Hammersley’s phrase, teaching-as-research.

*PW: So are you saying then, that if we bring research too close to the practice of education, it begins to change – and perhaps you would also say: distort – that practice?*

GB: That’s exactly my worry. One way to express the problem is to say that the ‘logic’ of research, that is what research ‘is’ and how it is ‘done,’ is fundamentally different from the ‘logic’ of teaching and education more generally. To begin with, there is a very different orientation of research and teaching; they have very different purposes. The point of research is to know; the point of teacher is to educate. But research and teaching are also very different ‘actions,’ if that is the right word; they ‘operate’ in a very different way. Yet what I see happening is people arguing that research and teaching more or less operate in the same way. They argue that research is a matter of intervening in a situation in order to find out what the effects of such an intervention are. And then they say that teaching is exactly the same: it’s an intervention that should produce learning – or learning outcomes, to use that awful phrase – and the whole point is to make sure that the intervention of teaching is targeted in such a way that it produces the desired learning outcomes.

*PW: This has indeed become a rather common language in education. But you think that it’s problematic?*

GB: Absolutely. I think it misconstrues what education is about. It turns students into objects that teaching intervenes upon (rather than acknowledging that

students are human beings who can and should be allowed and even encouraged to think for themselves and make up their own mind) and it suggests that teaching is some kind of causal process and we need research to establish effective connections between inputs and outcomes. This is perhaps the logic of pig-farming – although pig farmers who care about the wellbeing of their pigs would already object to such an approach – but it is not what should happen in education or how we should conceive of education. Yet this language of teaching as an intervention or of learning as an outcome has indeed become very prominent – and even teachers and students themselves are using it, often without really being aware of how they are undermining the very process they are part of. So this is part of my concern when research moves too closely to teaching: that it actually hijacks teaching and turns it into something else.

*PW: You showed me a brief piece you had written for a journal in which you claim that education doesn't work and shouldn't be made to work. Can you say a bit more about that, because it seems relevant for where we are in our conversation. I am also keen to understand why you would argue that teaching doesn't work, because many teachers would say that they have a lot of knowledge, and experience, about what works and what doesn't work – and in their everyday practice they are constantly trying to figure out what works for their students.*

GB: I tend to agree that in the everyday practice of teaching the language of 'what works' makes sense. When a teacher tells about something she did with her students, a colleague may well ask 'and did it work?' Problems arise, however, when we move this language of 'working' to a general level and connecting to the idea that research should tell us what works *in a general sense*, so to speak. The first thing I would emphasize is that 'working' is actually a category mistake, as philosophers call it; it's a category that doesn't fit the reality of education (just as, for example, it would be a category mistake to assume that a machine can grow; the category of 'growth' simply doesn't make sense with machines).

*PW: Nonetheless many teachers, but perhaps also researchers, would argue that education works pretty well. How would you explain that then?*

GB: The interesting question, I think, is not whether education 'works' – let's say, whether education can operate in (entirely) predictable ways in which

intervention 'A' will *always* result in outcome 'B' – but what [does] it take to make education work in this way. I've got a little theory that I find very helpful in addressing the latter question; it takes inspiration from systems theory and complexity theory.

*PW: Can you say more?*

GB: It starts with the question [of] where we can encounter 'strong' causality, that is, the situation where intervention A will always produce outcome B. In the language of systems theory, we can say that this only happens under very specific conditions, namely in systems that are closed – where there is no interference from the 'outside' – and that function in deterministic and linear ways. Think, for example, of the way in which one billiard ball impacts upon another billiard ball and where we can perfectly predict, if we have all the information about the trajectory of the first ball, what will happen with the second ball. This already indicates why we shouldn't expect such strong causality in education. This is first of all because education is an open rather than a closed system – children are allowed to go home at the end of the school day – so there are a lot of variables that can interfere. Education is also what I have called a semiotic system. It doesn't operate mechanically through push and pull, but through communication and interpretation. It is, therefore, not deterministic because everything depends on how students interpret what teachers say and do, to put it briefly. And thirdly, education is not a linear system but a recursive system; which is a complex way of saying that the 'elements' in the system, teachers and students, can think and act, and can decide, based on their thinking, to act differently, which impacts on the system as a whole.

*PW: So there's little chance then of any connection between 'inputs' and 'outcomes'?*

GB: In principle not, but what is interesting – and that's why I think that this way of looking at things is so relevant and helpful – is that much of what we do in education, much of the work of the teachers, is to reduce the openness and unpredictability of the system so that it begins to work. With regard to openness, for example, we have school buildings and classrooms, but also curricula, and all are intended to get some focus in the process, to help students to pay attention, to make communication possible in the first place, and to give purpose

and direction to the communication that happens in schools. So, we actively reduce interference from the outside by putting certain physical and curricular boundaries around what is happening, so that something can happen at all. Just imagine if you would have to teach in the middle of Piccadilly Circus, or similar places. It would be clearly impossible. The same with semiosis: the process of communication and meaning making. Again, what we do in education is give direction to the meanings we put in front of our students – that’s another way to think about curriculum – and to the meaning that students make of what we put in front of them – which is the important work of formative and summative assessment. So here as well we reduce the degrees of freedom for interpretation, so that something educational can happen. In some areas we reduce degrees of freedom of interpretation a lot – there isn’t that much creativity possible for instance, in mathematics or careful historical analysis, but quite a lot, in the arts, although the different art disciplines all have their own standards and traditions as well. And even with regard to recursivity – how students and teachers think about what they are doing – we reduce degrees of freedom. In teacher education we help students, for example, to think as a teacher, which is different from just any way of thinking. So by reducing degrees of freedom with regard to openness, semiosis and recursivity we are slowly pushing the whole ‘operation’ towards a situation that becomes more structured and predictable. And in a sense, there’s nothing wrong with that, as long as we see that this is something that requires quite a lot of effort rather than that it is the natural way in which education operates.

*PW: That is a helpful perspective indeed.*

GB: The point I find really helpful – which also shows that this approach tries to engage with the specific nature of the practice of education; for medicine we need a rather different account – is that if we reduce openness, semiosis and recursivity towards the very extreme, we might be able to create a system that becomes totally predictable, but such a situation no longer deserves the name ‘education’ but has become ‘indoctrination.’ So, the real challenge is to get some structure into the educational ‘operation’ but make sure that we don’t go too far in doing so and move beyond the point where education ‘flips’ into indoctrination.

*PW: Where do we encounter that point?*

GB: I'd probably say where the student begins to become an object – a 'thing' we intervene on from the outside in order to get the desired behavioral and measurable 'response' – and ceases to exist as subject; as thinking, feeling, and willing human being, so to speak. Now there are education systems that are not the least interested in the subject-ness of students – and perhaps such systems are not as far away as we may be inclined to think. But I continue to emphasize that the subject-ness of our students is what matters first and foremost. We don't want our students to become obedient clones, because we know what can happen to societies where everyone is just obeying a leader and 'forgets' to keep thinking for themselves. Here we encounter the remarkable fact of human freedom – that as human beings we have agency, we have the possibility in every situation to say yes or no, to stay or walk away, to go with the flow or offer resistance, and that what should be done is ultimately up to each of us to figure out, although we can help and encourage each other to try to do what is right (but even figuring out what is right is a hugely complex matter).

*PW: So for you education is ultimately – and perhaps also fundamentally – about freedom?*

GB: I'm happy to say 'yes' here, as long as we bear in mind that the modern idea of freedom – just doing what you want to do – is a travesty of what human freedom is and ought to be. The real question for education, therefore, is not to make sure that students just enact their freedom, just do what they want to do, but rather that they come into a relationship with their freedom. That they get a sense that their freedom is their freedom; that it is a power that can destroy [or] do good; that their freedom always relates to the freedom of others, and that it can either reduce or enhance the freedom of others, and so on. In my own work I use the phrase 'arousing the desire in children and young people for wanting to exist in the world in a grown-up way' to capture what is 'at stake' in education. The German educationalist Dietrich Benner uses the idea of education as 'Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit' – literally: summoning to self-action. This is not a summoning to be yourself (and not care about everyone else) but the summoning to be a self, so to speak.

*PW: Arousing and summoning – that’s a very different language than that of teaching as intervention.*

GB: Indeed. And the difference is that, as mentioned, in the language of intervention the student quickly becomes an object, whereas education should always aim to approach the student as subject, because as educators we ultimately want our students to leave. We want them to live their own lives, and to live their lives well.

*PW: But students go to school to learn as well? Where does that fit in the picture?*

GB: Of course they do, and it’s the job of the school to do that well. That’s why, in my own work, I keep coming back to the fact that schools have to be concerned about three ‘domains’ – that of qualification, helping students to acquire knowledge and skills become qualified in thinking and doing, that of socialization, that is, providing students with an orientation in the world, including an orientation in the topics that make up the curriculum, and thirdly that of subjectification, the encouragement to take responsibility for their own freedom, for their own existence as subject, which ultimately all of us have to figure out for ourselves. So qualification and socialization are definitely important, but even there the language of intervention and outcome makes no sense, since students as thinking, feeling and willing beings are the ones that need to gain knowledge, become skillful, find orientation, and so on. So what they achieve there is not the outcome of some kind of intervention but is literally their achievement as a result of their engagement in complex educational communication. That’s the problem with this strange word ‘teachingandlearning’ – I seriously think that for many people this has just become one word and even the idea that teaching should bring about learning. Gary Fenstermacher, an American educational scholar, has suggested that what teaching should aim at is the ‘studenting’ of students, the work they do, the attention they pay, the efforts they make. What students pick up from that is not something teachers have control over. I find that a helpful and refreshing way to look at the dynamics of teaching; one in which students can appear as subjects, not objects.

*PW: So if we bring this back to where we started, what does this imply for teachers and the way they engage with their students? Should teachers develop a researchers’*

*'eye,' so to speak? Should they look at their students in terms of the potential outcomes of their teacherly interventions?*

GB: That is what we hear a lot nowadays, for example in this strange suggestion that learning should be visible, that everything that happens in the classroom should be transparent, that students should be told where they should end up after the lesson, and that it is there that they should end up and nowhere else. Perhaps for some minor aspects of instruction this can be a helpful idea, but for the full spectrum of meaningful education this is just silly. Not just because it objectifies the student – and actually pushes them in the direction of self-objectification, that is, managing their own performance towards the stated goals – but also because it takes all adventure, all newness out of education, and just depicts it as a process of pure repetition. As a teacher I often do not know where we will end up at the end of the lesson, and a main reason for that is that I may know what I want to bring to the teaching situation, but I cannot predict what my students will bring to that situation. To deny that to happen is, in my view, rather uneducational.

*PW: Does that mean that teachers need to have a different 'eye' – and educational 'eye' perhaps?*

GB: If the research eye is always looking for evidence – for what literally can be seen – I think teachers need to be able to see possibilities that are not yet present, are not yet actual. In this regard teachers need to be able to see *more* than what is visible. They need to see potential, and orient their actions towards this potential, particularly when students themselves do not yet see this. Trust is an excellent example of this, because we only need to give trust when we cannot predict what a student will do. If we already know what a student will do, there's no need for trust. But when we say to a student that we trust them – or that we trust them with a task or a responsibility – we bring their subject-ness into play, so to speak; we open up a future which the student can step into, or not. For that we should always try to go beyond all the 'evidence' we have in front of us. That also means that, perhaps with their other eye, teachers should be able to see less than what is visible. This is the real problem with all the diagnostic thinking in education; this idea that we first need to know everything about our students, about their abilities and so on. Before we know it, we 'fix' the student

and block a different possible future for them. So the eyes of the teacher, if they are interested in education rather than the safe production of learning outcomes, are very special eyes. There lies an important challenge for teacher education, I would say. And you will understand that such educational eyes look in very different ways from the eye of the researcher.

*PW: Another reason, then, for keeping the gap open?*

GB: I would say so!

*PW: To sum up?*

GB: My main point is that teaching and research are very different practices, with a different purpose and a different logic. When we think that they are ‘roughly similar’ we not just run the risk of no longer understanding what these practices are, but also run the risk that the logic of research begins to replace the logic of teaching. And this is what I see happening, particularly as a result of this push to close the gap between research and teaching. But the outcome of this is that teaching becomes something else and that ultimately also teachers and students become someone else – and perhaps it’s even more appropriate to say that they become something else, they become objectified. This is why we should be wary of simply bridging the gap between research and teaching and should also be wary about the idea of teaching as research and the teacher, qua teacher, as researcher.

*PW: I assume that the ‘qua teacher’ is important for you?*

GB: Indeed. My point is that teaching should not be replaced by research. I am not saying that teachers should not conduct research or should not be allowed to conduct research. That would really be misinterpretations of what I am trying to say. On the contrary, I think that teachers should be strongly encouraged to have an ongoing intellectual engagement with their practice – which for me involves history, to begin with, and a range of other ways to make sense of and deepen understanding of the complexities of the practice of education. The only thing I am warning against is when the research teachers do would *replace* their teaching. So teachers who talk about their teaching as an intervention and of their assessment as research into the effects of their interventions have lost



their profession, I think, just as teachers who split their class into an intervention group and a control group and conduct a mini randomized controlled trial – which, sadly, I have encountered and, more worryingly, is proposed by some as the future of the teaching profession.

*PW: Can you say bit more about this phrase ‘intellectual engagement’?*

GB: If it sounds too ‘intellectual,’ then we should perhaps be looking for a different phrase, but what I am after are modes of engagement that help teachers to become better teachers. Such modes of engagement require observation – careful looking at the dynamics of one’s own practice-while-practicing – and theory, that is, bringing in resources to try to make sense, in a variety of ways, of what might be happening. I am looking for modes of engagement, in other words, that bring teachers closer to their teaching – whereas much research actually creates a distance between teachers-as-researchers and their teaching. The comparison with musicianship is useful here, because in order to become a better pianist you need to engage more deeply with your own playing – not conduct a research project on it. The real challenge, therefore, is to find ways in which teaching can become more thoughtful, for which we need intellectual resources, particularly educational modes of thinking, not empirical research, because these resources need to be connected to the very ‘point’ – or ‘points’ if one wishes – of education. And it perhaps all starts with the simple observation that the language of interventions and outcomes is simply the wrong language for capturing what is at stake in education. It’s as simple as that – to begin with!

*PW: Thanks very much.*

In this interview, Gert Biesta referred to the following publications:

Hammersley, M. (1993). On the teacher as researcher. *Educational Action Research* 1(3), 425-445.

Hargreaves, D. (1996). *Teaching as a research-based profession: Possibilities and prospects*. London: Teacher Training Agency.

Latour, B. (1987). *Science in action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Latour, B. (1988). *The pasteurization of France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

In 2020 the following book has been published, in which many of the ideas presented in this interview are discussed in more detail:

Biesta, G. (2020). *Educational research: An unorthodox introduction*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.



## CHAPTER 3

# Practical Wisdom and Spiritual Exercises in Teacher Education

## What Does 'Being Taught' by the Ancients Mean?

Paul Otto Brunstad<sup>1\*</sup>, Stefano Oliverio<sup>2\*\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

How can teacher educators contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of wisdom and knowledge in the life and practice of a new generation of teacher students? How can we counteract educational programs that too easily pursue a formal and theoretical knowledge abstracted from the contextualized constellations of practice? This chapter endeavors to show that to achieve this goal is not primarily a question of more knowledge, but rather of helping the individual to enhance her awareness of how she responds and acts when gaining new knowledge and encountering the complexity of real life. In this perspective, by endorsing the contemporary vindication of phronesis (practical wisdom) as an essential component for navigating the contexts of professional practice and after developing an inquiry into key notions like Donald Schön's "reflective practitioner" and Gert Biesta's "virtuosity" of the teacher, this contribution proposes the Greek tradition of spiritual exercises as a way to cultivate a "phronimos" attitude and to promote professional subjectification. This is much needed in order for teachers not to capitulate to the stranglehold of discourses dominated by a too narrow-minded technical rationality and to re(dis)cover, instead, their professional practice as primarily a kind of art and an exercise of judgement and wisdom, sustained as they should be by sound scientific knowledge.

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## INTRODUCTION

The reflections presented in this chapter aspire to contribute to the ongoing debate about how to counter the predominant trend in contemporary teacher education that so easily slips into the endeavor to provide a generation of new teachers merely with epistemologically robust knowledge and competences – in a feverish search for certainty – and with a rationality that pursues a formal and theoretical knowledge abstracted from the contextualized constellations of practice.

Two questions underlie this contribution: how can we, as teachers, become educationally wise people, that is, professionals who show *phronesis* when engaging with practice? How can teacher educators contribute to the formation of the whole person as a reflective and *phronimos* practitioner?

In foregrounding the theme of *phronesis* we join Gert Biesta's (2014) notions of "virtuosity" and "professional subjectification," which in § 1 we will read in connection with the influential idea of the "reflective practitioner." The latter represents – we will argue – a major problematization of the modern search for certainty and, in this respect, it maintains its topicality, although it needs to be re-appropriated within a broader horizon.

In this sense, in § 2 the modern flight from the rough ground of practice will be approached through some tenets of the British philosopher Stephen Toulmin, who construed the passage from the vocabulary of art and skill to that of technique, as it occurred in the domain of the "clinical arts" (that is, in the activities which operate with specific, context-sensitive and unique situations) as a consequence of the Cartesian revolution. We will interpret this shift in terms of a *methodological-mathematical subjectification*, which in modernity has presided over the technical understanding of professional practice, including teaching, by sidelining any reference to *phronesis*. However, we will part company with Toulmin on a crucial point: we detect in the Cartesian device not only the source of the modern mathematical-technical project but also the echo of the ancient tradition of spiritual exercises.

It is precisely the latter that will represent the pivot on which the "constructive part" of our chapter turns. Indeed, in § 3 we will focus on the circuit between *phronesis*/practical wisdom and spiritual exercises/*askesis* as a resource to cultivate the teacher's professional subjectification (as distinct from and even opposed to the methodological-mathematical one). Spiritual exercises represent

a formative force changing the way in which the subject exists in the world and makes experience out of it.

Thus, through our interpretation of the Cartesian device, we will not confine ourselves to suggesting the substitution of *askesis* for the cult of the scientific method, but we will insinuate that the scientific attitude itself ultimately relies upon the endeavor of the care of the self, at which spiritual exercises aim. In this way, to put it in a formula, through the reading here advanced of the Cartesian gesture, Biesta's virtuosity will be read not as an alternative to reflectivity but as the ground in which the latter should ultimately be rooted.

### **Reflectivity and/or 'virtuosity' of the teacher**

Stephen Toulmin, one of the protagonists of the post-positivist epistemological debate, concludes his last volume with a revealing prognostication, which is also a sort of appeal to a reconstruction of our understanding of the scientific undertaking:

Our first intellectual obligation is to abandon the Myth of Stability that played so large a part in the Modern age: only thus can we heal the wounds inflicted on the Reason by the seventeenth-century obsession with Rationality [...] The future belongs not so much to the pure thinkers [...] it is a province, rather, for reflective practitioners [...]. (Toulmin 2001: 214)

The phrase "reflective practitioner" has been a catchword in the educational discourse over the last three decades, specifically when teacher education has been in the spotlight. The notion has paradoxically paid the price of its success and has transmogrified into a fashionable slogan and/or undergone a process of operationalization, so that, as has been sagaciously noted,

if teachers are of an instrumental bent [...] they respond to reflection in the only way that exists in their conception of teaching and learning, that is, they adopt an entirely operational approach. They therefore constructed the strange practice of reflection by checklists, akin to "painting by numbers." They took the language of reflection – elements, stages, whatever – and turned these into procedures, which they could identify as either being completed or not, as if we can ever tell when another person has reflected enough. An elusive and generative idea [that of "reflective practice" *POB & SO*] had been made functional. (Boud, 2010, p. 28)

This is the reason why Thomas Popkewitz has considered the notion of the “reflective teacher” merely as a facet of the cultural thesis of lifelong learning and he has described it in this way:

The teacher is also classified as a lifelong learner. The teacher is self-actualized by remaking his or her biography. The “reflective teacher” researches himself or herself through action research that brings a form of problem solving into the planning of his or her career. [...] Reflection is not merely about thinking. Reflection entails particular expertise in calculating and ordering thought as a problem-solving action. (Popkewitz, 2008, p. 123)

There is a noteworthy distance between Toulmin’s view of reflectivity and Popkewitz’s: in the latter the stance of the reflective practitioner and the calculating mindset coalesce, whereas in the former they represent two diametrically distinct ways of “inhabiting” science as a rational enterprise. Moreover, clustering together the idea of problem solving and that of reflectivity, Popkewitz shows that a major semantic drift has occurred in comparison with the original meaning in Donald Schön (1983, 1987, 1991), when the reflective rationality was construed as a perspective countering the positivist understanding of professionalism (reducing this to problem solving) and a merely instrumental-technical rationality.

We are not interested here in discussing whether and to what extent Popkewitz’s interpretations are fair with the paradigm of the reflective practice (as aforementioned this has experienced such an evolution that many contemporary versions of it deserve Popkewitz’s misgivings). We have introduced them because *a contrario* they allow what is at stake in the Toulminian challenge to stand out: it consists fundamentally in thinking of modes of connection between the scientific attitude (and the related issues of research, validity, rigor etc.: see also Oliverio, 2019) and the professional practice that do not yield to the excesses of the modern concept of rationality. According to Toulmin, indeed, the main wound that Reason has incurred at the dawn of modernity is a “loss of balance,” as a consequence of which the search for certainty has become the polar star of Reason turned into Rationality that pursues a formal and theoretical knowledge, by abstraction from the contextualized constellation of the practice. When one of the advocates of evidence-based education, Robert Slavin, invoked the need for “a scientific revolution that has the potential to profoundly transform policy,

practice, and research” (Slavin, 2002, p. 15) within education and lamented that this realm had remained backward-looking in comparison with other areas of practice, he *de facto* called for a re-alignment of the field of education to the standards of the Toulminian Myth of Stability (this being the fatal conceit that it is possible to achieve absolutely sound and universal knowledge on the basis of which to operate in practice).

Against this backdrop, the ‘Toulminian’ reflective practitioner is the embodiment of a specific view of the relation practice-theory, which endeavors to redress the balance of reason and to contain the excesses of the modern-Cartesian rationality (whereas, we can say, the ‘Popkewitzian’ reflective teacher is the suggestion that the ‘project’ of reflectivity has finally been appropriated by the calculating mindset typical of the Myth of Stability).

In this chapter, we do not aim at relaunching an alleged ‘original’ version of the idea of the reflective teacher. We situate ourselves in-between the Toulmin and Popkewitz stances: from the former we take the vindication of the pivotal role of *phronesis* in order for a reasonable dealing with the contexts of practice to occur; alerted by the qualms of the latter, we will re-signify the Toulminian endeavor through a different set of interpretive tools.

In this undertaking we meet some of Gert Biesta’s concerns and embrace some of his theoretical innovations. In particular, in his decade-long problematization of the: “what works” approach to education, Biesta has been adamant in contrasting the idea of professional practice emerging therein, insofar as it “conceives of professional action as intervention, and asks from research that it provide evidence about the effectiveness of interventions” (Biesta, 2010, p. 33). This line of criticism has culminated in a recovery of the Aristotelian idea of *phronesis* as the most suitable “framework” to counter a merely technical idea of teaching:

[...] the model of professional action implied in evidence-based practice – i.e. the idea of education as a treatment or intervention that is a causal means to bring about particular, pre-given ends – is not appropriate for the field of education. What is needed for education is a model of professional action that is able to acknowledge the noncausal nature of educational interaction and the fact that the means and ends of education are internally rather than externally related. What is needed, in other words, is an acknowledgment of the fact that *education is a moral practice, rather than a technical or technological one – a distinction that*

goes back to Aristotle's distinction between *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and *techne* (instrumental knowledge). (Ibid., p. 36. Emphasis added)

This argumentative trajectory has led Biesta to introduce the interesting – albeit not uncontroversial for some scholars – notion of “virtuosity” (Biesta, 2014). Indeed, if we substitute professional judgment for the evidence-based conceit to provide effective responses to technical problems and we invoke *phronesis*, we are not allowed to ask “how to learn *phronesis*” as if the latter were one more competence, unless we want to relapse into the very framework we endeavor to evade. As Biesta appropriately highlights, the question is rather “[h]ow can we become a *phronimos*? How can we become a practically wise *person*? And, more specifically, the question is, How can we become an *educationally wise person*?” (Ibid., p. 134). This entails shifting the focus of teacher education, which should not confine itself to the providing of epistemologically robust knowledge, skills and competences but “should be concerned with the *formation of the whole person* (not, so I wish to emphasize, as a private individual but as a professional)” (Ibid., p. 135). Moreover, this kind of formation cannot be construed only in terms of socialization but is a form of “professional subjectification,” that is, “the formation and transformation of the person” (*Ibidem*). It is precisely this broader understanding of the mode of being a teacher and of her education that Biesta suggests capturing through the notion of virtuosity.

There is a sense in which it is possible to read Toulmin and Biesta as allies in a common undertaking (see Oliverio, 2019), in particular in the re-habilitation of *phronesis*. While placing ourselves in their wake, we complement them with an additional element, namely the tradition of spiritual exercises, which may represent a resource to cultivate the teacher's professional subjectification. Spiritual exercises and the care of the self do not belong to the rich panoply of conceptual tools that Biesta marshals and referring to them is also un-Toulminian, as the British philosopher has remarked that in the approach he endorses “the discipline of Philosophy becomes less a *way of life* in Pierre Hadot's sense [...] than a *calling* to put reflective analysis to work as an instrument in handling moral, medical and political issues” (Toulmin, 2001, p. 214). Instead, in our view a re-appropriation of the tradition of the care of the self can be a privileged way of fostering the teacher's virtuosity, which preserves the value of the Toulminian reflectivity without incurring the drawbacks of its calculating ‘proceduralization,’ denounced by Popkewitz.



There is one more horizon within which we meet Biesta's theorizing: by construing Popkewitz's statements in a possibly idiosyncratic manner, we could say that the reflective turn goes astray to the extent that it is unable to disengage itself from the cultural thesis of lifelong learning. In this perspective, espousing a Toulminian viewpoint towards the professionalism of the teacher implies also loosening the grip of learnification (Biesta, 2006, 2010). It is this circuit between virtuosity, *phronesis*, a different stance towards the question of research and science, and the tradition of the care of the self and its mobilization within teacher education and professional development that is at the center of the present chapter.

Against this backdrop, our argumentation will unfold as follows: first, after outlining the main features of Toulmin's views on the need for a recovery of *phronesis* against the excesses of modern rationality, rooted in the fundamental gesture of Descartes, we will elaborate on an insightful remark of Foucault and we will argue that two regimes of discourse co-exist in the Cartesian undertaking: on the one hand, the emergence of the new conception of theory – finally resulting in the invention of disciplines, in a subordination of practice to theory and in an erosion of practical knowledge – and, on the other, the reference to the ancient tradition of spiritual exercises. It is on this tradition that we will, secondly, insist as a source from which to draw insights for the professional subjectification of teachers, thereby reconnecting ourselves to Biesta's tenets.

### **From skill to technique: the methodological-mathematical subjectification**

The appeal to the reflective practitioner is, in Toulmin's device, the culmination of a grand narrative about the birth, crisis and future of modernity (Toulmin, 1991). The main thrust of his reconstruction is a charge against the Cartesian substitution of rationality (as aspiring to an absolutely solid knowledge and, then, committed to a search for certainty) and for the Renaissance reasonableness, that is, a view of reason which does not recoil from contingency, situatedness, and the recognition of human precariousness. As elsewhere (see Oliverio, 2019) Toulmin's reading of the modern project and its impact on a 'theoreticist' and formalist understanding of science (related to an emphasis upon "rigor [as] exactness, precision and predictability" [Toulmin, 2001, p. 37]) has already been highlighted (as well as the elective affinity between this understanding and the contemporary discourse about evidence-based education), here we will focus

on a specific facet of Toulmin's argument, namely the fact that the Cartesian rationality gave rise to the invention of disciplines.

This represented a change that "involved both intellectual and institutional factors" (Ibid., p. 29). As for the former, this was essentially the consequence of the prestige of the mathematical methods as advocated by Galileo and Descartes. In this perspective, modern disciplines are logically organized bodies of knowledge, which are valid as they are ultimately understood as a structured set of formal arguments rigorously deduced from certain starting points (whether the certainty is that of empirical evidence or of theoretical assumptions). Accordingly, the modern conception of disciplines emerged from an epoch-making exchange: the rigor and validity of theory atoned for its distance from everyday practice and the certainty of results (the modern ideal of predictability) atoned for the lack of focus on the specificities of the contextual constellations that are to be acted upon and known. This is the remote source of the technical reason in the Schönian (1983, 1987) acceptance of the word.

No less important are the institutional aspects of the invention of disciplines as Toulmin portrays it. In particular, he takes his cue from the military meaning of the word 'discipline'. Elaborating on some remarks of the Greek historian Polybius, he distinguishes between Roman and Greek military discipline:

The disciplined nature of [Roman] procedures was well shown [...] by the way Roman Legions set up their camps. Once the decision to camp had been taken, a position for the consul's tent was chosen. Everything else followed in a rule-governed way: the same design, pattern, and layout were followed exactly, whatever the natural features of the territory were. [...] For the Greeks [instead] the 'rationality' of a camp layout was not enough by itself: everything depended on how it could be best adapted to a particular location. A Greek military camp could be better or worse, more or less successful in execution, but there was nothing precisely 'right' or 'wrong' about it. For the Greeks, the requirements of *rigor* – exactness, precision, and predictability – were always weighed against other priorities. (Toulmin, 2001, pp. 36-37)

We want to use the Greek-Roman difference as an illustration of what is at stake: on the one hand, an insistence on a fixed method (or pattern or design), irrespective of any attention to the situation, so that no room is left for flexibility or interplay with the surroundings; on the other, the framing of a plan

according to the specificity of the context. Or to put it bluntly: on the one hand, the predominance of a technique, a method, a set of formal rules that are valid always and everywhere, precisely because they prescind the ‘where and when’ of experience; on the other, a prudent judgement, *phronesis*, that takes the specificities into account. In this reading, as modern disciplines tend to espouse the ‘Roman’ rule-governed mode of proceeding, they have represented a dismissal of practical wisdom, sacrificed on the altar of the certainty and validity of formal knowledge.

This shift has been all the more calamitous in those domains of practice which address contextualized issues – and require, therefore, a timely, ‘kairotic,’ action and not merely the application of general, a-temporal rules. Also, in these realms modern discipline-oriented rationalism has substituted “a theoretician’s rational computations” for “a practitioner’s reasonable judgments” and her “clinical’ knowledge” (Ibid., p. 111). Toulmin has captured this “disciplinization” of the domain of practice in an amazingly concise formula: “Skill gave way to Technique, Artisanry to Artisanship” (Ibid., p. 32). An interpretation of this phrase will allow us to take a step further in our argument.

We will adapt some insights of Dewey, by extrapolating them from an essay, “Individuality and Experience”,<sup>3</sup> that engages with a partly different topic. Therein Dewey tackled the question of “the relation of individuality and its adequate development to the work and responsibilities of the teacher, representing accumulated experience of the past” (Dewey, 1985, p. 55) and he deployed the idea of an introduction of a novice into a tradition of practice, as is exemplified in artisanry:

No one would seriously propose that all future carpenters should be trained by actually starting with a clean sheet, wiping out everything that the past has discovered about mechanics, about tools and their uses and so on. It would not be thought likely that this knowledge would “cramp their style,” limit their individuality, etc. But neither, on the other hand, have carpenters been formed by the methods often used in manual training shops where dinky tasks of a minute and technical nature are set, wholly independent of really making anything, having

3 Incidentally, as a sort of ‘philological’ curiosity, it is to note, that without explicitly quoting its title, it is precisely from this essay that Schön (1987) takes some tenets for the education of the reflective practitioner. However, we will make a different use of Dewey’s ideas.

only specialized skill as their aim. As a rule, carpenters are educated in their calling by working with others who have experience and skill, sharing in the simpler portions of the real undertakings, assisting in ways which enable them to observe methods and to see what results they are adapted to accomplish. (Ibid., p. 56)

In this view, the cultivation of skills is dependent upon the participation in joint, real activities and not upon the acquisition of specialized techniques through the repetition of pre-determined moves. In order for this participation to be educational – and not merely a form of drill – the introduction into a tradition should not be the passive submission to pre-given patterns of action, methods and customs because “the urge or need of an individual to join in an undertaking is a necessary prerequisite of the tradition’s being a factor in his personal growth in power and freedom; and also that he has to see on his own behalf and in his own way the relations between means and methods employed” (Ibid., p. 57).

Toulmin would be ready to advocate this Deweyan approach to counter the replacement of skill with technique as a consequence of the invention of disciplines and the subordination of professional practice to the disciplinary model. Despite the fact that this kind of apprenticeship clearly represents a formation of the person and that an emphasis is laid upon individuality, we cannot speak properly of it as an instance of professional subjectification: indeed, it is rather a form of *professional socialization*, to stick to Biesta’s terminology. What could, then, professional subjectification look like?

To answer this question, we have first to clarify the second part of Toulmin’s formula, when he mentions artisanship. Dewey invites us to imagine the case in which a pupil works for a master carpenter who prefers one and only one model of house, to which the novice has to conform if s/he wants to learn the job. That model is a standard to appropriate and, thus, no power of observation, imagination, creativity and judgement is required. Dewey comments:

The imaginary case illustrates what often happens when we pass from the education of artisans to that of artists. As a rule, a carpenter has to keep more or less open; he is exposed to many demands and must be flexible enough to meet them. He is in no position to set up a final authority about ends and models and standards, no matter how expert he may be in methods and means. But *an architect in distinction from a builder* is likely to be an “authority”; he can dictate and lay down what is right and wrong, and thus prescribe certain ends and proscribe others.

Here is a case where tradition is not enhancing and liberating, but is restrictive and enslaving. If he has pupils, he is a “master” and not an advanced fellow worker; his students are disciples rather than learners. (Ibid., pp. 57-58. Emphasis added)

The architect is a character appearing also in the text, which inaugurates the modern Myth of Stability, that is, Descartes’s (1908a) *Discours de la Méthode*: immediately after discovering the unreliability of the teachings received in the best school in Europe and, therefore, the need for a re-building of knowledge as a whole from scratch, Descartes withdrew into a room in Germany and one of the very first thoughts that occurred to him was that

there is seldom so much perfection in works composed of many separate parts, upon which different hands have been employed, as in those completed by a single master. Thus, it is observable that *the buildings which a single architect has planned and executed*, are generally more elegant and commodious than those on which several have attempted to improve, by making old walls serve purposes for which they were not originally built. (Ibid., p. 11. Emphasis added)<sup>4</sup>

The analogy with the question of our knowledge is explicitly established:

In the same way I thought that the sciences contained in books, (such of them at least as are made up of probable reasonings, without demonstrations), composed as they are of the opinions of many different individuals massed together, are farther removed from truth than the simple inferences which a man of good sense using his natural and unprejudiced judgment draws respecting the matters of his experience. (Ibid., p. 12)

In this perspective, the work of the architect, planning a completely new city, becomes the model to which (the re-building of) knowledge should conform and, implicitly, it is the anticipated paradigm of what the *cogito* should do – after the radical process of doubt has demolished and removed all the old knowledge encumbering science with uncertain and unreliable notions. As these notions

4 The page numbers refer to the French edition. For the English translation we have drawn upon the version appearing in The Harvard Classic and retrievable at <https://www.bartleby.com/34/1/2.html>. Access on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2019.

come to the individual primarily from school, we can consider the process of the attainment of the *cogito-qua-an-architect* as a sort of process of de-schooling, of removing the “accumulated experience of the past” (to mention again the Dewey of “Individuality and Experience”) of which the teacher is the representative and the purveyor.

The persistence of the architect-metaphor (and the evolution of its meaning in the passage from Descartes to Dewey) is telling: Dewey, in agreement with Toulmin’s complaint about the substitution of artisanship for artisanry, invoked the artisan’s introduction into a tradition of practice as an illustration of a balanced relation between individuality and past experience in education and as a model for the reconstruction of educational relations and, contextually, he warned against the unilaterality of the architect-mode that, in Toulminian terms, is the manifestation of a loss of balance of reason and of a rationalistic lapse, of which the rise of disciplines has been the most accomplished outcome; the Cartesian architect, instead, whose image sets the standard for the *cogito*, is the embodiment of the Myth of Stability and of that disciplinary transformation of knowledge which undermines the epistemic legitimacy of practice.

If, as aforementioned, Dewey’s vindication of the example of the artisan can be deployed as a form of professional socialization, Descartes’ process culminating in the *cogito-architect* refers to what we will call a *mathematical-methodological subjectification*. By this phrase we understand two dimensions of the process that Descartes portrays: first, the attainment of the *cogito* is the constitution of a subjectivity that can represent a rock on which to build a knowledge not infected by imprecise and obscure notions, secondly, this subject finds in the mathematical method a way of proceeding that preserves one from the imperfections of knowledge. The *cogito-qua-an-architect* is a subject that substitutes the rule-governed procedure of a method (which is ultimately a technique) for the cultivation of skills enabling one to exist in a dialogue with the world without any warranty or certainty.

However, there is one more reason why we suggest speaking of a “mathematical” subjectification. The goal that Descartes pursues is the *mathesis pura* and this expression is illuminating in two respects. On the one hand, we should remember that Toulmin, in the quotation from which we have taken our cue in this chapter, speaks of “pure thinkers” – the source of the search for the purity of knowledge and thought, that is, for knowledge not contaminated by the uncertainties of experience, lies in the Cartesian project of science as an ultimately

formal-theoretical undertaking that should abandon the rough ground of practice. On the other hand, the word *mathesis* is revealing since, according to Greek etymology, it refers to the horizon of learning. It is noteworthy that, in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Descartes, 1908b), after having – as in the *Discourse* – rehearsed the reasons for rejecting the knowledge acquired in the school (that is, any knowledge received through teaching) and having attained a certainty guaranteed by God via the *cogito*, Descartes, in the Sixth and last Meditation, re-introduces the language of teaching and speaks of a nature that teaches us. However, as nature’s teachings are trustworthy only after being passed through the discovery of *cogito*, the textual fabric suggests that teaching is made conditional upon learning and learning occurs by suspending any real experience of teaching. Here we find the *locus originis* of learnification. Or to put it more cautiously: learnification as an educational phenomenon, that is, an emphasis on learning, ultimately linked with a project of a scientific treatment of education, is the manifestation – within the field of education – of a shift connected to the Cartesian gesture, which institutes a “mathematic” subject, a subject thriving on the rejection of any teaching and on the withdrawal from any educational relationship, by replacing it with the discovery of the method as a strict set of rules.

Our reading has thus far remained fairly Toulminian in the identification of Descartes as the starting point of the modern discourse, resulting in a cancellation of practical wisdom in favor of a theoretical stance. However, things are much more complicated and nuanced and, through Descartes, we can reach a point from which to reconstruct the very project that Toulmin denounces. Indeed, as Foucault (1972, pp. 1125 ff.) has brilliantly argued, two discursive devices co-exist within the Cartesian *Meditations*: the demonstrative and the ascetic. The former is interested in establishing cogent chains of reasoning according to absolutely methodical rules and it is the kind of discourse which belongs to what we have called the methodological-mathematical subjectification. The latter – manifesting itself in the exercise (*askesis*) of “meditation”, that is, of a practice of formation of the subject not as a pure thinking machine but as a self, shaped by her own discourse – rejuvenates the tradition of spiritual exercises. In this tradition, as Hadot (2001, 2002) has shown, theory is not a deployment of purely cognitive powers but a kind of practice aimed at changing the way in which the subject exists in the world and makes experience of it. Thus, the real greatness of Descartes is that he represents the tipping point

from one epistemic horizon to another, from the ancient theory as a practice of the care of the self (which, however, still echoes in the format of “meditations” that Descartes chose) to the modern theory as a mathematical search for exactness and rigor.

We want to advance, however, a more radical hypothesis: as the *cogito* – the architect of the new understanding of knowledge founded upon the Myth of Stability – is attained through the ascetic movement of meditation, we could argue that, instead of a substitution of a modern for an ancient status of theory, we should think of a rootedness of the former in the latter. In other words, we should endeavor to think of how the scientific attitude is ultimately grounded in a practice of the care of the self. The mathematical-methodological subjectification is not the final foundation, but it is sustained by an existential subjectification, a cultivation of virtuosity through spiritual exercises, which complements the aforementioned professional socialization.

In reference to the educational domain (and to teacher education), this does not cast into doubt the role that education sciences and research can have for teaching and teacher education but it re-comprehends them within a different horizon, which re-establishes the balance of reason, recovers a different status of theory and recognizes the rights of practical wisdom. It is to this circuit between professional subjectification so understood, *phronesis* and spiritual exercise that we have to turn as the final step of our argumentation.

### **Spiritual exercises and the cultivation of a phronimos attitude in teacher education**

In this section we will take a closer look at the connection between *spiritual exercises* and the cultivation of *phronesis*, or more precisely a *phronimos attitude*. We will argue that these two threads of thinking can open up a deeper understanding of the role of wisdom and knowledge in the life and practice of a new generation of teacher students. Spiritual exercises, in accordance with Hadot’s understanding and elaboration of this concept, are a set of philosophical practices, like meditation, dialogue etc., by virtue of which the subject transforms her perspectives and attitudes towards herself and the world. They should not be understood as an activity that generates inactivity or isolated individuals (a mistake that could be induced by the adjective “spiritual”). Indeed, quite the reverse holds, since especially in times marked by a self-centered individualism seeking to develop the self by releasing or realizing one’s own potentiality in



fundamentally egotistic terms, they can be deployed in order to counter this narcissistic drift (see Oliverio, 2014). In the ancient view, the awareness of oneself predicates upon the awareness of being a part of a larger whole and the single individual must cultivate the consciousness of her connection to the human community. In the engaging formula of Jan Patočka (2002, p. 121), one of the revivers of this ancient tradition, “[b]ecause care of the soul is possible, the state is possible, and the community is possible.” In this perspective, *askesis* as a practice of care enables a self-transformative process, which is made possible by a more attentive interaction with the surroundings. Accordingly, spiritual exercises are to be understood as a dialogical project directed both inwards and outwards, aiming at the realization of those moral qualities necessary for a reasonable, wise engagement with existential (and professional) situations, especially when conflicting wills and values are encountered.

As hinted at in the previous section, the tradition of spiritual exercises represents an alternative perspective in comparison with the modern invention of disciplines, insofar as in the former both living and knowing concern the subject in the subject’s own being (Catlaw, Rawlings & Callen, 2014, p. 201). From an educational viewpoint this means that the question is not primarily one of more knowledge, but that of helping the individual to enhance her awareness of how she responds and acts when gaining new knowledge and encountering the complexity of real life. What interrupts our earlier experience and knowledge gives us the opportunity to re-evaluate and re-negotiate our relationship both with ourselves and the world around us. Spiritual exercises allow us to re-examine, but also to relativize, what is given, helping us to see that neither emotions/impulses nor traditions necessarily have the upper hand. Encountering interrupting situations, without recoiling from them or recklessly addressing them, represents a potentiality for self-transformation, not in the sense that our emotions must be tamed or suppressed, but rather that they might be directed in a way that supports and sustains ourselves as well as the community in which we live. The same holds for the traditions of which we are a part; they are not to be abandoned or eliminated, but rather re-interpreted in accordance with our governing values and goals.

We would suggest that the kind of work on oneself that spiritual exercises imply cannot be construed in terms of learning but is better understood with reference to the horizon of teaching. As Biesta insightfully argued, the latter entails an encounter with a resistance.

From the perspective of the student teaching thus brings something that is strange, something that is not a projection of the student's own mind, but something that is radically and fundamentally other. The encounter with something that is other and strange — that is not of one's own making — is an encounter with something that offers resistance (and we could even say that it is an encounter with the very experience of resistance). Such an encounter, so I wish to suggest, is of crucial educational significance if it is granted that education is not a process of development of what is already 'inside' nor a process of adaptation to what comes from the 'outside,' but is an ongoing dialogue between 'self' and 'other' (in the widest sense of the word 'other') in which both are formed and transformed — a process through which we come 'into the world' [...] and the world comes into us. I use 'dialogue' here not in the sense of a verbal exchange, but to denote a process in which there are interacting parties and where what is 'at stake' is for all parties to 'appear' [...] (Biesta, 2012, pp. 42-43).

Spiritual exercises help us to be aware of this resistance, of what is strange and unknown and of what we cannot control or easily align with earlier knowledge or insight. It is no surprise, therefore, that meditation has been a part of the repertoire belonging to the field of spiritual exercises (and it represents even the pivot of Descartes's undertaking, despite the fact that he inflects it towards outcomes ultimately irreconcilable with the ancient view). Meditation, from the Greek *melete* via the Latin *meditation*, describes a kind of 'activity' similar to that of an actor memorizing lines or a soldier undergoing military exercises and, as a demanding practice, helps us to broaden the scope of our attention and cognition. Meditation can be regarded as a form of tarrying or hesitating (Brunstad & Oliverio, 2019) that opens up a room for reflection that can unveil the depth of being when "swimming against the natural current and against all general tendencies of our mind" (Patočka, 2002, p. 125).

In what way does the notion of *phronesis* or being a *phronimos* person relate to these reflections and how is it possible to cultivate a 'phronetic' attitude or way of being within teacher education? To answer these questions, it is important to highlight some central aspects concerning the philosophical understanding of *phronesis* and the nature of the *phronimos* person. According to Aristotle, the *phronimos* is a person who knows and exercises appropriate knowledge and also deliberates well both technically and thematically (Eikeland, 2008, p. 101). A *phronimos*, a prudent person, can anticipate the consequences of actions before

they are performed. *Phronesis* is non-instrumental in its character. The *phronimos* knows the rules and is trained in the craft but she is at the same time open to the unexpected. Deliberation demands participation in and proximity to the situation at hand as well as theoretical and practical knowledge. The *phronimos* is the bridge between abstract and universal knowledge and the actual situation. This position requires some of the same qualities fostered through spiritual exercises. Curiosity, awareness, willingness to listen and to be addressed by the situation etc. are all requirements in the life of a *phronimos*. To be clever at reproducing abstract and theoretical knowledge can be important but is never sufficient to be *phronimos*. Judging and deliberation are asked for and needed within a context of uncertainty and complexity, whereas we do not need to deliberate about things that cannot be otherwise – such as eternal or unchanging things or things that change according to natural or regular laws, processes or procedures.

Professional skills can be learned through study, training and repetition, but the art of knowing which skills are most useful – and when and how best to use them – can only be gained through an active, sensitive interaction with our environment. The art of practical wisdom as it builds on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* consists in fusing situational awareness with an awareness of more theoretical and universal knowledge, and in using improvisation to find good solutions, even when the framing conditions are far from being optimal.

A person displaying practical wisdom is called a *phronimos* and this term characterizes a person who displays 'foresight' in the sense of having good insight, a broad perspective and good discretionary judgement. A *phronimos* can think ahead and foresee the consequences of prospective actions but this should not be construed in the sense of the ideal of predictability typical of the Myth of Stability but rather in that of "prudence," a word whose Latin etymology falls within the scope of fore-sight, a seeing-in-advance which does not aspire to any certainty but provides a space of maneuver for the addressing of the unanticipated, which is not subordinated to a pre-established procedure but encountered as a resistance that invokes a fine-tuning or revision of one's operations. Practical wisdom helps the *phronimos* to understand better the situation at hand and its possible developments. In addition to knowing the rules and having the necessary skills, the *phronimos* is also prepared for unexpected eventualities, and spiritual exercises can cultivate in the practitioner the ability to stay in a situation of suspension and hesitation. In a complex world, the inter-workings of human multiplicity are not a hindrance but a necessary

precondition for being able to solve life's many problems. In this confusing, complex interaction, the *phronimos* sees the value of other people and other forms of knowledge and the non-narcissistic care of the self can help one to be open to these 'alien' contributions.

Practical wisdom is the sum of everything we learn and know how to do in the course of our professional career, brought to bear in new and unexpected situations. Practical wisdom acts as a mediator between an ideal imperative, universal knowledge and concrete actions. Its rightful place is in the gap between generality and particularity. A *phronimos* turns good theory into practical action. Having good theories and principles does not help if we are incapable of translating them into practical social life. Prudent action makes the other virtues visible. With an anchor point in the past, prudence makes relevant evaluations in the present, and these evaluations lay the foundation for making the right decisions for the future.

The future is not entirely in our hands (*pace* the Toulminian pure thinkers and the advocates of predictability in professional practice), and we are only fooling ourselves if we think it is. Systems, arrangements and solutions that human reason concocts are always finite. Regardless of how far human thinking progresses, or how good control routines become, there will always be some insight lacking, something thwarting our plans, something against which we cannot protect ourselves. We cannot understand how we ended up in a particular situation or how to get out of it. We must do something, but what? We are in a grey area, a threshold where our technical expertise and theories prove to be insufficient. Practical wisdom has inherent uncertainty as part of its precondition. It kicks into action whenever the systematized world's technical insights, rules and procedures come up short, and whenever prior experience is of little use. In each and every encounter or interaction with the environment, a new reality is created that cannot be completely predicted.

This is why the notion of reflective practice must be complemented with the idea of virtuosity, of a professional subjectification via spiritual exercises. Indeed, while the former comes to terms with the recognition that we as teachers (and, more generally, as practitioners) operate in indeterminate situations, it risks missing the need to cultivate some 'moral' characteristics. In this view, we do not confine ourselves to merely gainsaying the Cartesian gesture (as Toulmin does) but we inhabit it in a different way: while Descartes had marshaled the spiritual exercise of meditation to evade uncertainty and achieve the firm ground

of a method guaranteeing absolutely sound knowledge – thus realizing the path that we have called mathematical-methodological subjectification – we suggest replacing his alliance of meditation and the Myth of Stability with that of meditation (and, more generally, spiritual exercises) and reflective practice in order to promote the ability to swim against the current and to remain in a state of dialogue with oneself and the world even when one's most cherished perspectives must be in abeyance.

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## **PART 2**

# **Transitions**





## CHAPTER 4

# Experiencing the transition to lower secondary school: Parents' voices

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores, through semi-structured interviews and observations, how the parents of students in one Norwegian school experience the transition into lower secondary school and how they experience their ability to support their adolescents during this transition. The study shows that the parents primarily have positive experiences with the transition. This is affected by how the secondary school staff organise the initial transition period by meeting and giving the parents consistent information, as well as how they facilitate the establishment of a safe learning environment for the students. The parents perceive that the adolescents adapt to the new school quite quickly and report that the transition makes them grow more mature and independent from the parents. Their adolescents' growing independence, in addition to their experience of getting less insight into and contact with the lower secondary school, contributes to an experienced change in their role as school parents. Many parents struggle to understand what role the school wants them to play, and combined with less insight into the adolescents' schooling, this affects the parents' ability to provide appropriate support. This occurs even though the parents in the present study possessed the social and academic skills necessary to help their adolescents. The article concludes that the school should facilitate a closer collaborative dialogical relationship with the parents and students, so parents develop a better understanding of the new context and how this relates to their role in the lower secondary school.

## INTRODUCTION

The transition to lower secondary school is recognised as one of the most difficult in students' educational careers (Zeedyk et al., 2003). Studies show that the transition involves both academic and social challenges for students during a period in which they also move from childhood to adulthood. The majority of students experience some difficulties in coping at the start of secondary school (Coffey, 2013; Rice, Frederickson, Shelton, McManus, & Ng-Knight, 2015; Smyth, 2016; West, Sweeting, & Young, 2010). Students in Norway transfer to lower secondary education at age 13, most commonly to the nearest public Grade 8-10 school. The government aims to make this transition as smooth as possible and states that since the students' challenges increase in lower secondary school, the requirements for good cooperation between school and home also increase (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011).

The literature shows that parents play an important role in ensuring that a smooth transition to lower secondary school takes place (Fielding, 2006; McGee, Ward, Gibbons, & Harlow, 2004; Rice et al., 2015; Smyth, 2016; Topping, 2011; van Rens, Haelermans, Groot, & van den Brink, 2018). Parental support can soothe the students' concerns and affect their school achievement both before and after the transition (Coffey, 2013; Fielding, 2006; McGee et al., 2004; van Rens et al., 2018). Parents' understanding of school procedures, awareness of the issues students encounter, attitudes towards school, and ability to support the students during the transition can prevent possible difficulties and have an impact on how the students adapt to the new context (Coffey, 2013; Hanewald, 2013). In order to provide support, parents must be aware of the changes that take place and how to deal with these. They are therefore in need of preparation for the transition (Bagnall, Skipper, & Fox, 2019; Coffey, 2013; Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; O'Toole, Hayes, & Mhathúna, 2014; Zeedyk et al., 2003).

According to Bagnall et al. (2019), efforts to smooth the transition process can only be superficial if the parents' views of the transition to lower secondary school are not included. Researchers have, however, shown little interest in the parents and their role within the Norwegian school (Nordahl, 2015). The perspectives of parents are also largely missing from the international literature on educational transitions (O'Toole et al., 2014). The aim of this paper is to explore the parents' perspectives in order to strengthen this knowledge. The paper is based on a study framed by the following research question: "How do

the parents experience the transition to lower secondary school, and how do they experience their ability to support their adolescent during this transition?"

## LITERATURE BACKGROUND

### Related research

The Norwegian Education Act (1998) states that compulsory education must take place in a collaboration between home and school. The aim of the collaboration should be the students' academic, social, and personal development (Nordahl, 2015). Norwegian studies show that lower secondary school parents perceive it as important to stay in contact with the school, and many experience the collaboration as good (Bæck, 2007). However, the collaboration is first and foremost characterised by one-way information from the school to the parents (Nordahl, 2015). Many lower secondary school parents experience receiving less information about what is happening at school than at the primary level, especially concerning the students' social development and well-being, and many perceive that the school does not invite parental engagement (Bæck, 2007; Nordahl, 2015). This coincides with international research on the transition to lower secondary school, which shows that parents report concerns about the communication at the secondary level (O'Toole et al., 2014; Zeedyk et al., 2003). Parents also experience the adolescent as less communicative than in primary school, since they are beginning to seek independence. This implies that parents still need access to information given directly from the school (Coffey, 2013). The literature suggests that the parents must be involved in monitoring the student's social life and academic work and progress during the transition. Such support is found to be most effective when the student's home environment is aligned with that of the new school (McGee et al., 2004). According to Bæck (2007) and Nordahl (2015), Norwegian parents wish to be more involved in their adolescents' lower secondary schooling, but many are uncertain about what expectations the school has for them as parents.

Parents generally speak positively about the lower secondary school and how the student settles in, but they also describe their own experience of the transition as intense and emotional (O'Toole et al., 2014; Smyth, 2016). In addition to concerns related to communication with the school, they experience many of the same concerns as the students during the transfer, especially related to personal and social issues (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; Rice et al., 2015; Smyth, 2016). However, the school staff tend to be less concerned about these

issues (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). Parents furthermore express that their role changes, since the secondary school expects students to be more independent than in primary school (Bagnall et al., 2019; Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008). Previous research on this transition concludes that the school must give more attention to the parents during the transition process, since they are in need of more information to find and understand their role in supporting the students to adjust in the new school setting (Coffey, 2013; Fielding, 2006; Zeedyk et al., 2003). According to Bagnall et al. (2019), the need for greater parent-teacher communication especially applies to first-time transfer parents, because they do not know what to expect.

### **Theoretical framework**

The current study seeks to understand the parents' experiences through the lens of a sociocultural perspective on learning. This perspective is based on a constructivist view of learning, which emphasises that human knowledge and understanding are constructed through interaction in a context (Dysthe, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). To understand human actions, one must take into account how mental functioning is situated in the institutional, cultural, and historical context (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). By taking this perspective, understanding the role and experience of the parents concerning the transition to lower secondary school is perceived as essential because a student's learning and understanding of the new school context are jointly constructed in the interaction with the parents and their home context.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the individual's understanding of his or her surroundings develops by participating in cultural and social activities, using the language as a tool. Bakhtin further developed Vygotsky's theory about the relationship between language and the development of understanding and meaning (Wertsch, 1991). Bakhtin (1986) claimed that an institution consists of its own social language, which includes culturally and institutionally conditioned values and ways to perceive the world. When entering a new institution, such as the lower secondary school, the participants therefore need to develop their own meaning and understanding of what applies in the new context. This is created in a set of dialogical and collaborative processes that allow the individual to interact with the context (Bakhtin, 1981). Such a dialogical practice is characterised by an "internally persuasive discourse." This discourse belongs to both the sender and the recipient, and it encourages contact and dialogue

between the participants (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). In line with this, there is a need to encourage a dialogue between all the stakeholders involved in the transition process, such as school-home and parent-adolescent. The opposite of such a dialogue is the authoritative discourse, which does not invite an interaction with the context. The authoritative word presupposes a kind of distance, which demands the recipients to acknowledge what is conveyed without being in dialogue with it in order to make it their own (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). As an example, such a discourse takes place if the school staff are the ones that own the authority to control the topics and the access to information about the new school context. If this takes place, the newly transferred participants' development of understanding and meaning of the lower secondary school context might be impeded.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **A case study approach and the collection of data material**

This study utilises a qualitative research design with a single case study as an approach (Creswell, 2013) to investigate how parents experience the transition to lower secondary school. One bounded case study site, a lower secondary school in a Norwegian city, was chosen for an in-depth examination. The school hereafter called Oak School (a pseudonym) was chosen through purposeful selection, since it met the criteria of being a Grade 8-10 school where the staff were interested in gaining research-based knowledge of their transition practice.

The sample of the study consists of the parents of 17 of the 165 students who transferred from two different primary schools to Oak School in August 2017. These 17 students (eight boys, nine girls) participated in a parallel study that took place during the same period (Strand, 2019), and the sample of the parents was defined by the sample of these students. The students were chosen because they, through two letters written to me before and shortly after the transition, revealed different thoughts about starting at Oak School. Some were looking forward to and enjoyed the transition, some were excited, and others had some worries. In this way, the sample of this study consists of the parents of students with different expectations and experiences regarding the transition to lower secondary school. The sample reflects that Oak School is located in a part of the city populated with families with relatively high socioeconomic status and a homogenous background. The parents had vocational or academic education and were all employed. Six of the parents knew Oak School well from previous

experiences with the students' older siblings, while the rest were experiencing the school for the first time.

The empirical material consists of observations and interviews. I visited the school during school hours several times during the students' first six months at Oak School to get to know the context, and I observed three arranged meetings between the parents and Oak School staff as a non-participating observer (Creswell, 2013). The observations were guided by the research question, and field notes were taken. Such observations can contribute as a context and a preparation for interviews (Angrosino & Pérez, 2000; Postholm, 2010) and are considered an important source of information in case studies (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative in-depth interviews were used to capture the parents' experiences by the use of a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In the interviews, I asked the parents to describe how they and their adolescent experienced the transition in general, what they expected the school staff to do to ensure a good transitioning process, what they expected of their own adolescent, their perception of the school staff's expectations, and what support their adolescent needed from his or her parents during the transition. The interviews were conducted twice: the first time two months after the students started at Oak School, and the second time about half a year after. I audiotaped and transcribed the interviews using verbatim transcription.

### **Data analysis and ethics**

The transcribed interviews constituted the primary data for the data analysis. Inspired by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and the constant comparative method of analysis, the interaction between data, researcher, and theory was emphasised during the analysis. The unit of analysis was the parents' experiences, and the purpose of using this method was to develop an interpretative understanding of this. I coded the transcriptions, and by consistently comparing these codes, I gradually found connections between them and collected them in categories. The field notes and my own memos supported the analysis. I developed four main categories: Readiness, Social Belonging and Feeling Safe, Less Overview and Control, and Academic Support. I used member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure the quality of the work. The participants read a summary of the findings presented in each category and stated that they felt the descriptions were accurate.

The study was conducted with ethical principles in accordance with NESH (2016). The experiences presented are connected to a selection of parents with relation to Oak School, but through thick descriptions, I have aimed at maximising the opportunity for naturalistic generalisation (Postholm, 2010; Stake, 1995). The presented findings may therefore have importance beyond the study context if the readers of this article can get inspiration and adjust the findings to their own context. A description of the Oak School context follows, after which the findings of the study and a discussion are presented.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE HOME-SCHOOL CONTEXT**

Oak School involved the parents in the transition process for the first time when representatives from the school attended the last parent-school meeting at each of the primary schools about four months before the start of lower secondary school. Through a collaboration between the primary school and Oak School, all 165 students were reorganised into four new classes, and each parent received information about which class their adolescent would belong to at Oak School some weeks after the first meeting. By the end of primary school, all parents were invited to a guided visit and meeting with the management and the new main class teachers at Oak School. Two weeks after the start-up, the school staff arranged a third meeting with all the parents. During these meetings, the parents received information about how Oak School organised the transition, the school, the Grade 8 students, and the teaching. In all meetings, the school staff encouraged the parents to contact them at any time if they had questions.

In addition to the three meetings between the parents and Oak School staff, the parents were invited to an individual conversation with their adolescent's new main teacher about three to four weeks after school began. The aim of this meeting was to get to know each other and to pass on relevant information about the student. A second conversation was conducted about half a year later, after the students had received their first report card. Most of the parents had attended this conversation before the second research interview. Oak School used a digital application that enabled daily and weekly communication between the school and parents.

### **FINDINGS**

The defined categories form the structure and the headings for the presentation of the findings.

## **Readiness**

Most parents said that both they and their adolescent had some concerns before the transition. As one parent explained, “It was just all the unknowns. How he would cope academically, how the teachers might be, what class he would be in, whether he would be bullied – yes, all of that.” At the same time, they perceived that their adolescent, despite some concerns, felt “ready” for lower secondary school. One parent stated, “He was ready to start at lower secondary school – he looked forward to it. I think he simply was tired of primary school.”

The parents stated that they got a positive first impression of Oak School from the three arranged parent meetings. One parent stated, “The way Oak School welcomed us as parents, and the teachers too, I think it was very professional.” They experienced the information they received as relevant, consistent, and well-founded. Several felt reassured, since the teachers gave them an impression of being prepared to take care of each student not only academically but also as a whole person. As a result, most of the parents’ initial concerns were calmed, and this made them feel ready for the transition as well. One parent said, “I think people left the meetings without worrying about things, right? You are entrusting the kid to a school that takes responsibility for your child. I feel that very much, and that is very good.”

## **Social belonging and feeling safe**

Most important for the parents was the perception that their adolescent had friends and felt safe at Oak School. One parent said, “Friendship, it’s very important. At that age, not to feel lonely, that it is safe, it’s really important.” They argued that this worked as a foundation for both social and academic development in the new school. The published class lists therefore contributed to concerns ahead of the transition for a few parents who discovered that none of their adolescent’s closest friends belonged to the new class. Still, no students had communicated worries regarding this, and the parents underlined that they had tried to avoid transferring this concern to them. However, the parents emphasised the importance of having friends in the new classes. Six weeks after the transition, one parent said, “I do not think she would have managed it if she had been alone. At least, it would have been a very bad start.” Everyone perceived that the teachers had done a fine job establishing a good and safe learning environment, and all stated that their adolescents had told them that they had friends and felt safe within the new class quite quickly. This included



those parents who, before the transition, had worries related to the composition of the new classes. Nevertheless, a few parents expressed that their adolescent rarely met friends after school anymore and, as it was half a year after the start-up, they felt unsure of how well-established their adolescent actually was in the social setting. They explained that it was difficult for their adolescent to meet friends who belonged to other classes during school hours, and they perceived that this also affected the possibility of meeting these friends during leisure time. Because of this, some parents had arranged social events in order to socialise the adolescent after school. Several said that topics such as social media, puberty, sexuality, and drugs became more visible after beginning at Oak School. This could create concerns, and they tried to talk to their adolescent about these topics in order to keep them safe. It was important for them that the school staff were aware of such issues and informed the parents if something came up in relation to such issues at school. As one mother said, "We are not enlightened enough. We need help with such things, and then I think we can contribute much more than we do today."

It was also important for the parents to perceive that the student experienced a safe relationship with their teachers. As one parent stated, "For me, it is important that they [the teachers] see my kid. Having teachers who know who the students are." It was important for the parents to get to know the teachers, and they appreciated being invited to a conversation with the main teacher shortly after the school year began. As one parent expressed about this conversation, "I think the teacher already had an impression of the child which fitted with how I see him. She had somehow seen him – it was good." Half a year after the transition, the parents stated that they had a good impression of the teachers and the teaching the students received at Oak School. They also stated that their adolescents primarily spoke positively about their teachers.

### **Less overview and control**

By receiving information from the teachers via the digital application, the parents felt well-informed about activities such as out-of-school lessons or events arranged at Oak School. Nevertheless, all experienced having less access to information about their adolescent's academic and social everyday life than they were used to in primary school. One parent said, "The transition to lower secondary school in relation to the information flow is really dramatic." Another said, "I have to admit – I totally lose the overview concerning what is going on

at lower secondary school.” Several parents stated that they perhaps did not pay enough attention themselves, but yet another parent stated, “I think the school has such a system, which makes it more difficult for us parents to pay attention.” This “system” was primarily related to information about the students’ schoolwork and homework. As they were used to such plans being sent directly to the home in primary school, they perceived that much of this information now was only given to the students on their digital learning platform. The parents therefore grew dependent on the adolescents to pass on this information. Not all parents experienced that their adolescent did this. As one parent said, “I do not think he feels the responsibility for informing me.”

The majority of the parents experienced a lack of information about school because of this. Consequently, as one mother stated:

I have no control over her anymore, or the schoolwork. I do not know if she has homework or not, so I just have to rely entirely on what she says. I have decided that I will do that. Then, I think that if it turns out that she does not do what she should do, I really expect the teacher to tell me that “now you have to pay more attention.” Because according to the system, we should not pay attention.

Many were uncertain about why the school staff made it more difficult for them to stay informed, but they assumed the reason to be that the teachers expected the students to work independently. The parents who perceived their adolescent as an independent or communicative person did not necessarily experience the lack of information from school as a problem. Nevertheless, several discovered a need for getting more clarifying information after some time at Oak School. As a first-time parent said, “It takes some time before you realise what you are wondering about, yes. So maybe there should have been a little more follow-up, like after half a year, for example.” Some parents also called for a clearer dialogue with the school. One parent suggested, “It could have been okay to have such a, yes, kind of discussion about our expectations with the school as well, or at least to hear about the school’s expectations of the parents.” Some expressed that the teachers might have no time to arrange such meetings, but they suggested that at least getting a monthly information letter from the school would have been helpful.

### Academic support

The parents perceived that it took some time for the adolescents to get used to dealing with the academic requirements and assessment criteria used at Oak School. They assumed that getting academic support at home could have a positive impact on the students' outcomes, but many were uncertain about what role the school wanted the parents to play concerning academic support. They stated that they were willing and able to support their adolescent with their homework if the adolescent asked. Some were often asked, and some of these questioned whether they perhaps provided too much support. One said, "It is a bit like *we* are going to write a science report. It becomes such a dilemma – it is not correct that I assist her that much. Because it is not – the teachers should not give *me* the mark." In addition, as another parent said regarding the academic level, "It starts to get a little difficult [laughs]."

Other parents were rarely involved in the homework. The ones who perceived their student as able to organise and do the homework independently in order to get satisfying results did not problematise this. Others expressed that their adolescent would benefit from more support at home than he or she might understand, but as one explained, "He doesn't think he needs it [support], no. He only sees it as noise." These parents found it very difficult to intervene because of the lack of information and overview. As another parent explained:

What should I talk to him about when he answers, "no, I have done it [the homework]" or "I have done it at school" or "I'll do it at school tomorrow because then I have this and that"? It sounds trustworthy. I have nothing I can say; I do not have the knowledge.

During the second interview, one parent was at the limit of their patience and had decided to claim more control over the homework. Others stated that as long as they lacked information, they just had to wait for the adolescent to realise by himself or herself what was required at Oak School.

The parents underlined that it was more important to them that the student did their best and mastered being a lower secondary school student than that they earned high marks. They appreciated that the teachers also signalled this attitude. Yet several perceived that a strong pressure to earn high marks existed among some students, and they worried that this could wear out their adolescent. They tried to alleviate the pressure, but as one parent said, "I have thought

a little about that, what we can do to get rid of it, but I don't know. Maybe if one, yes, got an early collaboration with the school to ease the pressure."

When asked if they had become accustomed to the new context half a year after the start-up, several said yes, but not all. One first-time parent answered, "No, I have not. No, it is just as exciting what is waiting around the next turn." Nevertheless, they all summed up the experience of the transition with phrases such as "surprisingly good" and "better than expected," and they perceived that the students experienced the transition as positive. None of the parents thought it would have been better for their adolescent to start the secondary level at the same school, as students in Grade 1-10 schools do. As one parent said, "Actually, I think it can be healthy to change schools like that. Because it kind of – it makes a difference, right? You get to feel a little more grown up, and I think that is just fine." The parents also stated that they perceived their adolescent as a youth rather than a child.

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The aim of the present study was to investigate parents' experiences of the transition to lower secondary school and their ability to support their adolescents during this transition.

It can be concluded from the study that many parents experienced something new and unknown with lower secondary school, and it is evident that the students' transition was experienced as a significant change for the parents. By using sociocultural theory and the ideas of Bakhtin (1986), I argue that parents, in experiencing their child's transition into lower secondary school, are subjected to socially and culturally conditioned practices that are unfamiliar to them. This confirms that parents need preparation (Coffey, 2013; Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008), since they need to develop their own meaning and understanding of the new context (Bakhtin, 1986). According to Bæck (2007), Norwegian parents receive less knowledge about school at the lower secondary level, but the findings show that this does not apply during the initial period of the transition. The parents receive clear and consistent information from the lower secondary school staff during the first meetings, which is important for them to feel prepared, calm their initial worries, and gain a positive impression of the new school. In contrast, the findings show that concerns arise when parents perceive the information as unclear or do not feel involved. This shows that they not only need clear information but also to feel involved. The parents'

initial concerns primarily relate to personal and social issues, which coincides with previous research (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; Rice et al., 2015; Smyth, 2016). This concern strongly relates to the composition of new classes and indicates that parents have a special need to get information and feel involved concerning social issues.

As found by Smyth (2016), the parents in general speak positively about how the students settle in at the new school. This occurs as the parents feel reassured that the teachers are aware of the importance of knowing the adolescent and establishing a safe learning environment in relation to both peers and teachers. In contrast to previous findings (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008), this shows that the parents perceive the school to be as concerned about social issues as they are themselves. Arranging home-school meetings before and shortly after school begins is important for the parents to get a perception of this. The findings also show that the parents consider their own role to be important in relation to social and personal support. This comes about through talking to their adolescents about social and age-related issues, in their awareness of not transferring their own concerns to them, and in alleviating the pressure regarding marks. Several statements show that they both want and need to collaborate with the school on such issues, not only during the initial transfer period but also after the adolescents have settled into lower secondary school. As expressed by one parent, this can help the parents assist their adolescent with social and age-related issues. This confirms that parents want to stay in a collaborative relationship with the school (Bæck, 2007). The findings show, however, that despite experiencing a preparatory and informative contact with school during the initial period, the contact weakens when the students are established in the new context. In that way, the findings coincide with previous research showing that the contact with the school weakens compared with primary school (Bæck, 2007; Nordahl, 2015; O'Toole et al., 2014; Zeedyk et al., 2003). This seems to come as a surprise for many, since they lack knowledge about why the school provides less everyday information. This shows that the parents are not well-prepared for this specific change, and it may be the reason why getting less insight into the daily schooling seems to represent the biggest change for them. It furthermore implies that parents not only need to be prepared for the changes that affect their adolescent but also the changes that primarily apply to themselves.

The findings show that the experience of getting less insight and everyday information directly from the school is understood by several parents as an

unspoken signal that the parents should not pay as much attention. This “unspoken” aspect, however, makes the parents uncertain about what role the lower secondary school wants the parents to play. This uncertainty was still present for several parents more than half a year after school had begun. This relates to research by Bæck (2007) and (Nordahl, 2015) showing that many lower secondary school parents are uncertain about what the school expects of them. Furthermore, as also found by Bagnall et al. (2019) and Jindal-Snape and Foggie (2008), many parents experience a change in their role in relation to academic support, since they perceive that the school expects the adolescents to work more independently. The parents report that the academic level has increased, and it is more demanding and time-consuming for them to provide academic support. Nevertheless, they find that they possess the necessary academic skills to provide support at this level. However, several seem to be stuck in a limbo between their own need to have control over and support their student’s schoolwork, and conversely, the perception of the adolescent’s desire and the school’s expectation for more independent work. This indicates that many parents have not developed an understanding about what is going on in the lower secondary school and, further, how this affects their role as supportive parents. In reality, this leads to different practices concerning how much academic support is given.

The use of sociocultural theory can be useful to explore why this uncertainty and lack of understanding occurs among many parents. According to Bakhtin (1981), the parents’ understanding and meaning of the lower secondary school need to be developed in a dialogical and collaborative process that allows the parents to interact with the school. Because several parents in this study called for an opportunity to discuss and be in a closer dialogue with the school at some time after school had begun, this indicates that the parents first and foremost experience receiving one-way information and not being in a dialogue with school, which coincides with studies by Nordahl (2015). A dialogue presupposes an equitable relationship between the school and the parents (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). But even though the Oak School staff invited the parents to contact them any time they had questions, the findings indicate that the parents perceived that the school had the main responsibility to maintain the contact. As stated by Wertsch (1998), this provides a reason to believe the parents experienced that the authority to control what information should be shared and when this should take place – and, thus, to define what role the parents should play – was owned by the school. This contributes to a disruption of the

dialogue and, consequently, the impairment of the parents' opportunity to learn to understand the new context and their own role in it.

The experience of lacking information and dialogue with the school made the parents more dependent on getting information from the student, something that worked well for several parents. Research shows, however, that many parents experience the students to be less communicative in lower secondary school, most likely because they seek independence at this age (Coffey, 2013). This coincides with the findings of the present study. The findings also indicate that when information from school is lacking, some parents become uncertain as to whether they can trust what their adolescent tells them, and they experience a loss of control. Statements like "I have nothing I can say; I do not have the knowledge" further show that when parents lack information, they get fewer clues that can help them start a conversation with the student. In other words, the lack of parental insight and understanding of lower secondary school may prevent the dialogue between adolescent and parent (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). Consequently, since a collaborative dialogue must take place between parent and student for the parents to support their development of meaning and understanding of the new context (Bakhtin, 1981), the lack of parental insight and understanding limited several parents' ability to support their adolescents during the transition. Considering that the literature unambiguously shows that parents play an important role during the primary-secondary transition, during which time parental support is most effective when it is aligned with the school environment (McGee et al., 2004), this implies that schools must provide more information, as they cannot rely on the students to offer this information (Coffey, 2013). Further, the school must facilitate a closer dialogical collaboration with the parents characterised by an "internally persuasive discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). If this takes place, not only does the parents' understanding of the new context develop, but the parents' ability to support their student is strengthened. The findings support that such a practice is especially important regarding first-time parents (Bagnall et al., 2019). As many parents' state that their adolescent has a different perception of the need for academic support at home than they do as parents, I also argue that the students' voice must be included in the dialogue regarding how the parents' role in lower secondary school is defined.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In sum, the parents primarily experienced the transition to lower secondary school as positive. Getting consistent and relevant information during the start-up and perceiving that the students were welcomed into a safe learning environment contributed to this experience. They further experienced that the adolescents grew more mature and independent because of the transition, but still needed social and academic support from the home to adjust to the new context. Nevertheless, many parents experienced their ability to act as limited, because after some time with the lower secondary school, they experienced missing information and a lack of understanding about what was going on at school. This provides a reason to believe that the school staff need to be aware that parents are subjected to somewhat unfamiliar practices when entering lower secondary school.

Using sociocultural theory, I conclude that parents need more than additional information to understand the new context. The school must increase its awareness concerning the importance of establishing a dialogical collaboration with the parents to help them better develop their understanding of the school (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1998). Furthermore, the students must also be included in a dialogue concerning what role the parents should take regarding support. If this is established, the parents are better equipped to stay in a supportive dialogue with the student at home, in line with each adolescent's own needs.

The sample size, including parents with relatively homogeneous backgrounds, is a limitation of this study, and further studies including more parents and schools are needed. A second area of interest might be to initiate an R&D project which seeks to develop and strengthen the dialogue in the school-home relationship during the primary-to-secondary transition.

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## KAPITTEL 5

# «Å kutte navlestrengen»

En nyutdannet lærers opplevelse av skolen som organisasjon gjennom sine to første år i yrket

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### SAMMENDRAG

Denne studien presenterer en fortelling som kaster lys over hvordan tilsettingsforhold kan påvirke en nyutdannet lærers mulighet for å utøve lærerarbeid i de første to årene i yrket. Fortellingen ble konstruert på bakgrunn av tre semi-strukturerte intervju med en nyutdannet lærer. Intervjuene ble gjennomført i det siste semesteret i lærerutdanningen, etter tre måneder i arbeid og etter to år som lærer. Studien bygger på Dalins og Kitsons (2004) modell av skolen som organisasjon, samt på tidligere forskning på nye læreres profesjonelle utvikling. Den konstruerte fortellingen gir uttrykk for en tøff start på arbeidslivet og illustrerer spenningsforholdet mellom de organisatoriske og de performative dimensjonene i lærerarbeid. Artikkelen avsluttes med en diskusjon av funn i lys av tidligere forskning på nye læreres profesjonelle utvikling. Helt til slutt foreslår vi hvordan lærerutdanningen og skolene kan dra nytte av studiens resultater.

### INTRODUKSJON

I denne studien presenterer vi fortellingen til en nyutdannet lærer, Betty. Mens nye lærere ofte blir behandlet som en enhetlig gruppe i forskningslitteraturen (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016), innebærer fortellinger, eller narrativer, en subjektiv fortolkning av erfaringene (Kelchtermans, 2016). Den personlige narrativen blir en kontrast til generell kunnskap som verken er knyttet til kontekst eller person (Craig, 2013). Gjennom en individuell fortelling får vi tilgang til spenningsforhold mellom lærerens egne forestillinger om lærerarbeid og de eksterne forpliktelsene og kravene som gjelder på arbeidsplassen (Orland-Barak & Maskit, 2011).

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Overgangen til lærerarbeid omtales i forskningslitteratur både som krevende og lærerik (Alhija, & Fresko, 2010; Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Litteraturen har ofte fokus på de performative sidene ved læreryrket, det vil si læreres praksis. Etter hvert har det imidlertid blitt en forståelse for at skolen som organisasjon, og særlig tilsettingsforholdene skolene tilbyr, også er med på å skape forutsetningene for hvordan nye lærere opplever yrket (Hermansen, Lorentzen, Mausethagen, & Zlatanovic, 2018; Ivashenko Amdal & Ulvik, 2019; Öztürk, 2014). Til tross for at nye læreres induksjonsperiode har fått en økende oppmerksomhet de siste årene (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015), er fortsatt den organisatoriske dimensjonen ved jobben mindre belyst (Hermansen et al., 2018). I denne studien vil vi se en individuell lærers erfaring i lys av de strukturelle betingelsene læreren inngår i. Vi ønsker å se den performative og den organisatoriske dimensjonen av læreryrket i sammenheng og stiller følgende forskningsspørsmål:

*Hvilken betydning har skolen som organisasjon for en ny lærers mulighet for utøvelse av læreryrket?*

Før vi presenterer studiens metodiske valg og resultater, gjør vi greie for det teoretiske rammeverket studien bygger på, og for tidligere forskning som er relevant for studien.

## TEORETISK RAMMEVERK OG TIDLIGERE FORSKNING

Utstyrt med kunnskaper og forventninger fra lærerutdanningen entrer nyutdannede en kontekst de ikke selv har vært med på å utforme, og de blir kastet inn i situasjonene som der utfolder seg (Craig, 2013). Det er mye nytt å sette seg inn i, og i Norge regnes nå nytilsatte lærere som nyutdannede og med behov for oppfølging de to første årene i yrket (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018). I denne studien følger vi Betty fra det siste semesteret i lærerutdanningen og gjennom de to første årene i yrket. Vi ser blant annet hennes utvikling i lys av tidligere forskning knyttet til læreres profesjonelle utvikling gjennom den første fasen i yrket (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). Ut fra tidligere studier karakteriseres starten på overgangsprosessen som en *forventningsfull fase* der nye lærere ser frem til raskest mulig å komme i jobb som lærer (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). I denne perioden begynner jobbsøkerprosessen, og de første møtene med skolen som arbeidsplass oppstår (Öztürk, 2014). Neste periode (*overlevelseshasen*) begynner idet skoleåret starter, og varer de første månedene. De nye lærerne trer inn i en lærerstilling, møter sine elever og deres foreldre og blir utfordret av mengden oppgaver de må løse (Ladd, 2011; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). De

møter realitetene. Etter de første månedene i arbeid stiller de nyutdannede seg ofte kritiske til sitt yrkesvalg og er inne i det faglitteraturen omtaler som *desillusjonsfasen* (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). De neste to fasene, *fornyelsesfasen* og *refleksjonsfasen*, kjennetegnes ved at den nyutdannede læreren får tilbake troen på seg selv, utvikler sin forståelse for lærerarbeid og for sin væremåte i klasserommet (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). De nyutdannedes profesjonelle utvikling avsluttes ikke med de første årene i arbeid, men fortsetter videre gjennom hele karrieren (Day, 2008). Tidligere undersøkelser har likevel, på forskjellige måter, avgrenset overgangsperioden eller induksjonsperioden til læreryrket til både de to, tre og fem første årene i arbeid. Vi har valgt å holde oss til de to første årene som beskrives som særlig krevende, men samtidig som en periode der de nyutdannede får stadig mer tro på seg selv som lærer (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999).

Det vi særlig vil rette oppmerksomheten mot i denne studien, er det som Molander og Terum (2008) omtaler som profesjonsbegrepets to sider og viser med det til den performative og den organisatoriske siden. Måten et yrke blir utøvd på, er knyttet til det performative. Når forskning undersøker læreres undervisningspraksis, klasseledelse og foreldresamarbeid, undersøkes de performative dimensjonene ved lærerarbeidet. Et yrke er imidlertid også organisert på en måte som skal ivareta de praktiske oppgavene. De organisatoriske sidene har fått mindre oppmerksomhet, selv om tidligere undersøkelser har hevdet at de nyutdannede utfordres nettopp av det organisatoriske, som handler om skolens kultur og tradisjoner og måter å organisere arbeidet på (Hermansen mfl. 2018; Ivashenko Amdal & Ulvik, 2019).

Skolen som organisasjon beskrives av Dalin og Kitson (2004) som et sosialt system som bygger på skolens omgivelser, relasjoner, strukturer, strategier og verdier, noe som til sammen konstruerer ulike arbeidsforhold for de nyutdannede lærerne (Johnson, 2006; Ladd, 2011). Skolens *omgivelser* danner de ytre rammene som regulerer skolens indre liv, rammer regulert av utdanningsmyndighetene og lokalsamfunnet. *Relasjoner* kaster lys over mellommenneskelige forhold som makt, forpliktelser, samarbeid, motivering, tillit og støtte. Det relasjonelle aspektet beskrives i forskning som sterke og tillitsfulle relasjoner mellom den nyutdannede læreren og elevene, foresatte, kollegaer og ledere (Day & Gu, 2014; Ladd, 2011). *Strukturer* handler om den formelle organiseringen av elever, ansatte, tid og de andre ressursene som er av betydning for skolens hverdag. *Strategier* illustrerer hvordan beslutningsprosessen er organisert, samt

hvordan det legges til rette for kompetanseutviklingen og delegering av arbeidsoppgaver. Skoleledelsen er her en sentral aktør som iverksetter, opprettholder og igangsetter strategier for ulike formål (Kindall, Crowe, & Elsass, 2018). *Verdier* handler om skolens ideologiske grunnlag, skolens kultur og uformelle normer. Til sammen legger disse fem elementene føringer for de arbeidsforholdene som gjør læreres profesjonelle utvikling mulig, og som ofte blir trukket frem av lærere når de vurderer å slutte som lærere (Redding & Henry, 2019).

Skolen som organisasjon beskrives i forskningen som en av de mest sentrale faktorer som legger forutsetninger for den nyutdannedes profesjonelle utvikling (Anderson & Olsen, 2006; Spencer, Harrop, Thomas & Cain, 2018). Organisasjonen danner også bestemte arbeidsforhold for nyutdannede som virker inn på hvorvidt de opplever seg som en del av fellesskapet, samt påvirker hvordan induksjonspraksisen er lagt opp (Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Kim & Roth, 2011; Sharplin, 2014). Ifølge tidligere forskning har det relasjonelle aspektet ved skolen som organisasjon en avgjørende rolle for hvorvidt den nyutdannede læreren vurderer å bli i profesjonen eller ei (Ladd, 2011).

Forskningsinteressen for nyutdannedes erfaringer med skolen som organisasjon er relativt ny ettersom forskning i hovedsak fokuserer på de performative aspektene ved lærerarbeid (Hermansen et al., 2018). Tidligere forskning har hevdet at nyutdannede kan oppleve skolen som organisasjon som noe ukjent og møtet med det organisatoriske som overveldende (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016; Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Ivashenko Amdal & Ulvik, 2019; Öztürk, 2014). Videre viser forskning at nyutdannede lærere har behov for støtte og hjelp, og at mentorordninger ofte er den mest vanlige formen for støtte (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Bullough, 2012). Samtidig tyder nye undersøkelser på at mentorordningen ofte kan være mangelfull (Ivashenko Amdal & Ulvik, 2019), og at nye lærere finner hjelp i private samtaler med sine kollegaer eller venner eller i sosiale medier (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). Forskningen drøfter også hvorvidt midlertidig ansettelse påvirker lærernes følelse av tilhørighet og stabilitet, samt hvorvidt læreren er i stand til å etablere og utvikle relasjoner med elever og foreldre (Epstein, 2018; Kidd, Brown & Fitzallen, 2015; Ulvik & Langørgen, 2012). Organisatoriske forhold har en avgjørende betydning for nyutdannedes overgang til lærerarbeid og for deres muligheter for å utføre forventede oppgaver. Dette ønsker vi å belyse gjennom å følge én nyutdannet gjennom hennes to første år i yrket.

## METODOLOGI OG METODE

Metodologisk bygger studien på en narrativ tilnærming. Vi har valgt å analysere narrativen til én av fem deltagere i et større forskningsprosjekt. Denne deltageren har vi gitt pseudonymet Betty. Hun er ikke den mest typiske nyutdannede læreren; hun er mellom 30 og 40 år, har en annen utdanning fra tidligere og har jobberfaring fra et annet yrke.

Etter utdanningen har Betty jobbet på to skoler. Den første jobben hun fikk, var på en barneskole der hun fikk en 40 %-stilling som kontaktlærer på et av trinnene. Før Betty ble ansatt som lærer på den andre skolen, tok hun ekstra studiepoeng i spesialpedagogikk og søkte så etter skoler som trengte denne kompetansen. Betty jobber nå på en kombinert skole for trinn 1 til 10 i en større by i Norge. Denne skolen har en stor andel elever som trenger spesialundervisning, og de fleste elevene har minoritetsbakgrunn. Også her har Betty jobbet som kontaktlærer, men hun ble fort sykemeldt og jobber nå i en 20 %-stilling. Hun har fått vedvarende helseplager og må muligens ta en 100 % sykemelding. Det innebærer at Betty ikke følger det vanlige mønsteret der nye lærere etter en overlevelsese- og desillusjonsfase gradvis får mer tro på seg selv og en følelse av å mestre læreryrket (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). Selv om Betty ikke er den typiske nyutdannede læreren, kan hennes spesielle fortelling tydeliggjøre allmenne erfaringer og kjennes igjen av nyutdannede lærere som har stått eller står i lignende situasjoner.

Bettys narrativ ble skrevet på bakgrunn av tre semistrukturerte intervju, det første på slutten av lærerutdanningen (våren 2017), det andre etter de tre første månedene i arbeid (oktober 2017) og det tredje etter nesten to år i arbeid (våren 2019). Intervjuene med Betty var i utgangspunktet preget av studiens forankring i narrativ teori, og det var derfor viktig å fremme en fortellende form i intervjusituasjonen (Clandinin, 2013). I det første intervjuet ble hun bedt om å si noe om motivasjon for yrket, erfaringer fra utdanning og praksisperioder, forventninger til lærerjobb og forestillinger om lærerarbeid og skole. Det andre intervjuet handlet om hvordan hun erfarte de første møtene med skolen, kollegaer og elever, om erfaringer fra veiledningsordning og ellers om kjennetegn ved en vanlig arbeidsdag. Det tredje intervjuet fulgte opp temaene fra tidligere intervju, både knyttet til nåtid og i et tilbakeskuende perspektiv.

## ANALYSE

Betty ble alle de tre gangene intervjuet av en og samme forsker, og intervjuene varte fra 60 til 70 minutter. Forskeren, førsteforfatteren av artikkelen, arrangerte deretter innholdet i intervjuene til en fortettet fortelling fremstilt i kronologisk orden (*narrativ analyse*) (Polkinghorne, 1995). I dette arbeidet var det særlig viktig å få med de såkalte avgjørende hendelsene som har hatt betydning for Bettys utvikling. Førsteforfatteren delte først de transkriberte intervjuene i mindre deler der teksten ble undersøkt med hensyn til å identifisere avgjørende hendelser og hva disse hendelsene førte til. Dette førte igjen til at førsteforfatteren kunne konstruere noe som vi kan kalle en mikrofortelling, eller en liten fortelling om en avgjørende hendelse. Videre har mikrofortellingene inngått i en større fortelling for hvert intervju (før studieslutt, etter tre måneder i arbeid, etter to år i arbeid). Dette steget i narrativ analyse ga mulighet for å konstruere en kronologisk fortelling som illustrerte utviklingen av Bettys erfaringer med skolen som organisasjon. Det siste steget i den narrative analysen var å konstruere en fortettet fortelling som sammenfattet de tre fortellingene fra hvert intervju.

Den kronologiske og fortattede fortellingen som da ble konstruert, ble godkjent av Betty (Patton, 2002) og deretter analysert (*analyse av narrativer*) av begge artikkelforfatterne. Analysen av den samlede narrativen ble gjennomført med støtte i rådataene fra de transkriberte intervjuene. Denne analysen beveget seg fra helheten i fortellingen til elementer fortellingen består av (Polkinghorne, 1995). Analysen kan karakteriseres som teoridrevet (Braun & Clarke, 2006), der begrepene fra den teoretiske bakgrunnen knyttet til ulike profesjonelle faser (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999), til Dalins og Kitsons (2004) modell og til de de performative og organisatoriske sidene ved læreryrket (Molander & Terum, 2008) danner grunnlaget. Samtidig prøvde vi å være åpne for nye tema som eventuelt ble brakt inn.

Under datainnsamlingen og dataanalysen var vi særlig oppmerksomme på det etiske ansvaret vi har. I forbindelse med deltagelsen i prosjektet har Betty underskrevet et informert samtykke, og prosjektet var meldt inn i Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD). All informasjon som kan identifisere deltageren, er fjernet fra tekstene som ble produsert i forbindelse med dataanalysen og rapporteringen (Postholm, 2010). Det faktumet at førsteforfatteren har gjennomført tre intervju med Betty, bidro til en empatisk forståelse av hennes opplevelser av skolen som organisasjon, særlig skjedde dette under det tredje intervjuet. Da var



Betty ganske oppgitt på grunn av arbeidssituasjonen som hadde ført til en rekke helsemessige utfordringer. I intervjusituasjonen var det nødvendig å finne en balanse mellom forskerrollen og det å vise forståelse slik at Betty kunne fortelle om egne opplevelser og samtidig føle tryggheten for å fortelle om den sårbare situasjonen hun befant seg i på dette tidspunktet.

## RESULTATER

Bettys fortelling er kronologisk konstruert og viser utviklingen hun gjennomgikk i løpet av de første to årene etter endt utdanning. Nedenfor presenterer vi en komprimert versjon av Bettys fortelling om skolen som organisasjon.

### Fortellingen til Betty

Jeg er en ganske voksen person og har tidligere jobbet i et annet yrke. Der trivdes jeg ikke fordi jobben var veldig mekanisk. Dessuten fikk mange kollegaer alvorlige sykdommer som konsekvens av arbeidsoppgaver vi hadde. Jeg savnet mer kommunikasjon med mennesker, og det var grunnen til at jeg begynte å tenke på lærerarbeid. Jeg tenkte at læreryrket er noe jeg kan eldes med, og at jeg kan være lærer i mange år fremover uten helseskadelige arbeidsoppgaver. Under lærerutdanningen ble jeg enda tryggere på mitt valg. Jeg trivdes både med campus-undervisningen og med praksisopplæringen. I løpet av utdanningen ble jeg kjent med mange skoler og fant ut at skolene har ulik kultur, og at det er menneskene som jobber i skolene, som danner kultur for samarbeid eller delingskultur. Jeg fikk også vite at skoler strukturerer arbeidstid på ulike måter.

Allerede på slutten av det siste semesteret på lærerutdanningen fikk jeg tilbud om en 40 %-stilling som kontaktlærer på en av byens skoler. På jobbintervjuet spurte de meg om hvilke fag jeg hadde studert, og hva jeg likte å gjøre på fritiden. Da tilbud om stillingen kom, var jeg spent på å møte elevene mine, men også usikker på om jeg ville klare å skape gode relasjoner med de voksne på skolen. Samtidig var jeg veldig skuffet over de fagene jeg hadde fått tildelt, og måtte bruke sommerferien på å lese meg opp på fag jeg ikke hadde formell kompetanse i.

En planleggingsdag i august var min første arbeidsdag som lærer. Denne dagen møtte jeg kollegaene mine. Alle var hyggelige. Det var også da jeg skjønte at det er de erfarne lærerne som avgjør fagfordelingen på min skole. Da skoleåret begynte og jeg møtte klassen, fikk jeg vite at jeg ikke fikk tilgang til

elevenes foreldre selv om jeg var kontaktlærer. Dette ble begrunnet med at det på den måten ble lettere for foreldre å forholde seg til en lærer de kjente fra før.

Helt i starten var det vanskelig å finne frem i læreplanene i fagene jeg underviste. Det var også vanskelig å finne ut hva og når jeg måtte undervise i enkelte fag på mitt trinn, og det var alltid noen andre lærere som stilte spørsmål ved mine valg. Da jeg trengte utstyr, sendte de meg bare til et lagerrom uten å forklare hvor jeg skulle lete. Siden det var en ganske gammel skole, så var det mye på lagerrommene. Det tok lang tid å finne frem til det jeg trengte.

Nå når jeg jobber på den andre skolen, synes jeg likevel at de var veldig flinke på den første skolen til å dele og hjelpe. De fortalte om forskning de hadde lest, og de snakket om læremidler de syntes var interessante. Da jeg jobbet på den første skolen, kunne jeg ikke få mentor eller veiledning siden jeg bare hadde 40 %-stilling. Men helt i starten hjalp rektor meg og svarte alltid på spørsmålene mine. Ganske snart etter skolestart fikk vi imidlertid en ny rektor som ikke hadde tid til å hjelpe meg, men han var alltid synlig og til stede. Jeg fikk også hjelp av en fagarbeider som fortalte meg om klassens forhistorie og om de elevene jeg burde være ekstra oppmerksom på. Nå når jeg har jobbet som lærer i to år, synes jeg at jeg på den første skolen har fått den beste oppstarten på arbeidslivet som jeg kunne fått. Det var tid for å bli voksen og kutte navlestrengen. Jeg synes at jeg var veldig heldig som fikk jobbe i en liten stilling og komme til en skole der det var resurssterke foreldre og elever.

På skolen jeg nå jobber, begynte jeg også først i en liten stilling. Jeg søkte målrettet på denne skolen fordi der kunne jeg benytte min kompetanse i spesialpedagogikk. Jeg kom imidlertid inn i en klasse som manglet struktur, og med en medlærer som var utslitt. Jeg fikk ingen innføring i klassens forhistorie. Jeg måtte oppdage alt selv. Kort tid etter oppstart utnyttet rektor min uttalelse om kollegaen til å fjerne henne fra klassen, og jeg fikk kontaktlæreransvar for en del av elevene. Det som var mest krevende, har vært å oppnå en forståelse blant foreldre som mangler forståelse for skole-hjem-samarbeid. Foreldrene vet ikke hvordan de skal snakke med barna sine om skolen, eller hvordan de skal gå frem i samtaler med skolen. På den nye skolen føler jeg enda tydelig at jeg må stå på egne bein, og jeg står virkelig alene. Forventningene de har til meg, er overveldende. Det er ikke så mye hjelp jeg kan få, fordi alle andre har like mye å gjøre. Jeg har heller ingen mentorstøtte og må derfor spørre og observere de erfarne lærerne. Jeg ser at noen har mange gode løsninger på ulike situasjoner, og da tillater jeg meg å spørre dem. Rektor på skolen er

helt fraværende. Han viser seg ikke med mindre jeg spør ham om å komme og hjelpe meg i vanskelige situasjoner. Det er inspektøren som har tatt en del av rektorens rolle og ansvar. Vi har ikke møter med rektor, kun med inspektøren. Siden det er så mange konflikter og utfordringer, så overskygger disse kulturen. Personalet driver med brannslukning og har ikke overskudd til noe mer. Det har vært vanskelig å spørre om hjelp siden det er så mange ansatte, både lærere, fagarbeidere og assistenter. Jeg ble så vidt presentert for personalet i starten, men jeg visste ingenting om hvem de andre 50 ansatte var.

### **Bettys møte med skolen**

I sin glede over å begynne å jobbe som lærer var Betty lik mange andre nyutdannede. Men i likhet med mange andre var hun var også litt spent, blant annet på å møte de andre voksne og bli en del av et fellesskap. Etter tre måneder i jobb beskriver hun et forholdsvis negativt møte med skolen der hun står mye alene og må undervise i fag hun ikke har kompetanse i. Hun får ingen oppfølging som nyutdannet. I ettertid endrer hun imidlertid sin fortelling om sin første arbeidsplass og beskriver starten som den beste hun kunne få. Betty fremhever særlig samarbeidskulturen ved skolen. En forklaring på denne endringen kan være at Betty ble intervjuet i den vanskelige fasen, som ofte er preget av desillusjon (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). En interessant replikk fra Betty er at hun måtte bli voksen og kutte navlestrengen. Denne replikken kaster lys over utviklingen av Bettys tolkning av de første møtene med skolen som organisasjon: fra å stå alene uten hjelp til at det var på tide å klare seg selv.

Siden Betty bare var midlertidig ansatt, måtte hun allerede neste skoleår søke ny jobb. Den nye skolen<sup>1</sup> er valgt nettopp for at Betty skal få brukt fagkompetansen sin. Men selv om hun nå har søkt skole strategisk, svarer ikke jobben til forventningene. Til tross for avtalen fra 2018 om oppfølging av nye lærere de to første årene i yrket (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018) får hun heller ikke på denne skolen noen mentor. Hun må klare seg selv, men denne gang i et krevende skolemiljø med ansatte hun opplever som slitne og med en fraværende rektor.

I presentasjoner av ulike faser en lærer går igjennom, kan en lett få inntrykk av at utviklingen følger en lineær prosess. Men som Betty selv erfarte under

1 Siden Betty har jobbet på to ulike skoler, omtaler vi videre i teksten den første skole som skole 1 og den andre som skole 2.

utdanningen, er skoler forskjellige, blant annet som resultat av dem som jobber der. På skole 2 kan det synes som at hun er tilbake i overlevelsesfasen og føler at det stilles store krav uten at hun blir tilbudt støtte. Det virker blant annet som om Betty blir dratt tilbake i en situasjon som er karakteristisk for helt ferske uteksaminerte lærere, en situasjon der forventninger, overlevelse og desillusjon følger med (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999).

Bettys fortelling synliggjør at skoler kan oppleves forskjellig, men også at opplevelser kan forstås annerledes når en ser tilbake på dem. I det følgende skal vi se på Bettys fortelling i lys av Dalins og Kitsons (2004) modell.

*Omgivelser* illustrerer de ytre rammene som omgir skolen (Dalin & Kitson, 2004). Betty opplever at lokalmiljø har stor betydning for lærerarbeid, og illustrerer dette med hvordan foreldrene er støttende for både barn og lærere. Hun har hittil jobbet i to svært ulike skoler og opplever at foreldregruppa viser ulik interesse for skolen. Selv om Betty har fått en begrenset tilgang til foreldrene på skole 1, karakteriserer hun dem som resurssterke og engasjerte. På skole 2 oppleves foreldre som fraværende og med liten interesse for skole-hjem-samarbeid. Betty synes at hun bruker veldig mye tid til først å skape et tillitsforhold til foreldrene, før hun i samtalen med dem kan rette oppmerksomheten mot elevenes læring.

*Relasjoner* omfatter de mellommenneskelige forhold, blant annet samarbeid, tillit og støtte (Dalin & Kitson, 2004). Betty opplever kollegaer på begge skolene som imøtekommende, men blir i mange tilfeller stående alene. Selv om Betty etater to år som lærer ser på skole 1 som den beste plassen å begynne arbeidslivet på, beskriver hun samarbeid på begge skolene med en følelse av ensomhet. Hun får lite hjelp med å finne nødvendig undervisningsutstyr og blir nødt til å lete på skolens mange lagringsplasser, selv på den første skolen. Betty forteller videre at kollegaer er skeptiske til hennes valg av tema i enkelte fag, og det er vanskelig å finne ut hvem hun bør spørre for å få hjelp med fagene hun ikke har formell kompetanse i. En lignende opplevelse av å stå alene vedvarer på skole 2. Når det gjelder relasjoner til kollegaer, ble hun så vidt introdusert for dem på skole 2. Siden Betty ikke visste hvem hennes kollegaer var, og hva de underviste i, måtte hun måtte igjen ta ansvar for å introdusere seg selv til hver av kollegaene.

*Verdier* handler om skolens kultur og uformelle normer. På begge skolene hvor Betty har jobbet, knytter hun skolens kultur til hvorvidt det er delingskultur til stede. Etter tre måneder i arbeid på skole 1 forteller Betty at skolen mangler en slik kultur. Hun beskriver denne mangelen med at kollegaer er lite

til hjelp når det gjelder å dele sin erfaring. Etter to år i yrket forteller derimot Betty at skole 1 hadde en kultur for å dele kunnskap. Hun opplever derimot at skole 2 mangler en slik kultur, og at det er satt av både lite tid og engasjement til å dele. Samtidig opplever Betty at enkelte kollegaer er villige til å dele med henne sine måter å håndtere ulike situasjoner på som oppstår i hverdagen. Selv om disse kollegaene er imøtekommende, må Betty først identifisere kollegaer som har gode løsninger, for så å spørre dem om hjelp. Ut fra Bettys fortelling opplever hun at begge skolene mangler en kultur for å komme nyansatte i møte. Samtidig forteller Betty at skole 1 hadde en rekke uformelle normer som bidro til at både lærere og elever opplevde forutsigbarhet og trygghet. I skole 2 er ansatte overarbeidet og utslitte, de slukker branner fremfor å opprettholde en delingskultur, ifølge Betty.

*Strukturer* handler om den formelle organiseringen av ressurser som er av betydning for skolens hverdag. Ansettelsesforhold er et av elementene som Betty tillegger stor vekt når hun beskriver sine opplevelser av skolen. Ansettelsesforhold kjennetegnes av fag- og ansvarfordeling i skolen. Når det gjelder fagfordelingen, har Betty på begge skolene fått fag hun ikke har formell kompetanse i. På skole 1 førte en slik fagfordeling til at Betty valgte å forberede seg til skoleåret allerede i sommerferien. Samtidig måtte Betty søke etter hjelp blant kollegaer som hadde noe ulik forståelse for rekkefølgen av tematikken i undervisningen i enkelte fag. Betty legger merke til at også i skole 2 bruker hun for mye tid på å planlegge undervisning i fag hun ikke har formell kompetanse i. I skole 2 opplever Betty at lærere ofte har for mange oppgaver gitt de mange ulike utfordringene de har med både skolemiljø og elevene på skolen. Til tross for at lærere i skole 2 alltid har flere assistenter til stede i klasserommet, virker det forstyrrende for elevene og Betty selv.

*Strategier* illustrerer hvordan beslutningsprosessen er organisert, samt hvordan det legges til rette for kompetanseutviklingen og delegering av arbeidsoppgaver. Ut fra Bettys fortelling har begge skolene manglende strategier for introduksjon og induksjon av nytilsatte lærere. I begge skolene skjer fagfordeling ut fra de erfarne lærernes ønske, uten å ta hensyn til de nyutdannedes formelle kompetanse. Samtidig bruker skolene lite tid på å tilrettelegge for at de nytilsatte blir ordentlig kjent med kollegaer og skolebygg. På skole 2 jobber Betty med en ganske krevende klasse, noe som tyder på en manglende strategi for å ivareta de nytilsatte og spare dem for de mest utfordrende arbeidsoppgavene. Ledelsen som er ansvarlig for å iverksette strategier, er også noe fraværende. Selv om rektor

på skole 1 var synlig i skolen, hadde rektor lite tid til å hjelpe Betty og var selv ny i jobben. På skole 2 har inspektøren overtatt rektorrollen.

## DISKUSJON

Forskningsspørsmålet i denne studien var: *Hvilken betydning har skolen som organisasjon for en ny lærers mulighet for utøvelse av læreryrket?*

Forskning har tidligere hevdet at nyutdannede lærere vanligvis er optimistiske og engasjerte (Day, 2008). Resultatene av vår studie er sammenfallende med tidligere forskning og viser at Betty i utgangspunktet er motivert for læreryrket, et yrke hun ser på som trygt og ikke skadelig for helsen. Hennes møte med to skoler har imidlertid bidratt til at hun etter to år i yrket vurderer 100 % sykemelding, noe som direkte begrenser Bettys mulighet for utøvelse av læreryrket. Tidligere forskning har hevdet at arbeidsforholdene bør tilpasses den nyutdannedes kompetanse, og at ledelsen bør ha en forståelse for at nytilsatte lærere er i starten av sin karriere (Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman & Liu, 2001). Ut studiens resultater virker skoleledelsen fraværende og med en manglende forståelse for den nyutdannedes sårbare situasjon. Det er særlig oppsiktsvekkende at Betty opplever lignende holdning på begge skolene hun har vært ansatt på. I en tidligere studie har Ivashenko Amdal og Ulvik (2019) funnet at en fraværende skoleledelse ikke er uvanlig.

I fortsettelsen vil vi utdype hvordan disse organisatoriske forholdene har fått konsekvenser for Bettys muligheter for å utøve læreryrket slik hun ønsker.

Overgangen til lærerarbeid beskrives både som krevende og lærerik (Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Bettys fortelling tyder på at i enkelte tilfeller er det det krevende som kan dominere. Dette kommer særlig til uttrykk ved at Betty legger vekt på det hun ikke får til, på utfordringene hun møter, og på det som ikke fungerer på arbeidsplassene der de organisatoriske dimensjonene ved lærerarbeid ofte fremstår som forutsetninger. Vanligvis skiftes en slik desillusjonsfase med en ny fase som er karakterisert av den nye læreres økende tro på seg selv (Tetzlaff & Wagstaff, 1999). Hos Betty, derimot, ser det ut som at desillusjonsfasen har blitt videreutviklet i en slik grad at hun har fått belastninger i form av helseplager. Det at Betty ikke lenger er i form til å drive med undervisning, fører til at hun sliter med å gjennomføre den performative siden ved lærerjobben.

Det kan også sies at møtet med de organisatoriske dimensjonene i lærerarbeid fører til Bettys læring, der hun lærer å utnytte de mulighetene hun har

i en gitt skolekontekst. Ifølge tidligere forskning benytter nyutdannede lærere ofte alternative måter å få hjelp på når skolen selv bidrar med utilstrekkelig støtte (Mansfield et al., 2016). I vår studie opplever Betty kollegaer som imøtekommende, men når det gjelder konkret hjelp, står hun alene. Ifølge tidligere undersøkelser bidrar det å måtte klare seg selv til at lærerarbeidet oppleves som stressende, og at induksjonsperioden blir ensom (Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Kim & Roth, 2011). Vi ser videre at ved å måtte stå alene mangler Betty tilgang til kompetansen som finnes i personalet. En tidligere studie viser at nye lærere ofte får mindre støtte enn erfarne nettopp fordi det ikke alltid er så lett å vite hva de skal spørre om (Caspersen & Raaen, 2014). Deltageren i vår studie finner likevel en måte å tilpasse seg situasjonen på, der hun stadig søker etter kollegaer som har gode strategier, og som er villige til å dele. Men en utfordring ved denne uformelle hjelpen er at den oppleves forvirrende ved at kollegaer gir ulike råd. Samtidig opplever Betty at hun ved å henvende seg til flere kollegaer med samme spørsmål ikke fremstår som masete; hun etterlyser derfor hjelp fra flere kollegaer enn kun fra noen få.

For de fleste nyutdannede er overgangen fra utdanning til yrke utfordrende, og de kan møte mye de ikke føler seg forberedt på (Öztürk, 2014). For Betty blir forventningene ekstra påtrengende fordi hun forventes å klare jobben uten oppfølging. Det mest overraskende for Betty er at lærere underviser i fag de ikke har formell kompetanse i. Hun er fremdeles forbauset over denne praksisen selv etter to år som lærer. Ved begge skolene hun har jobbet på, synes nyutdannede å bli nedprioritert til fordel for erfarne lærere. En konsekvens av det er at hun som nyutdannet og i en periode der det er mye nytt å lære, ikke får støtte seg på det hun kan når hun skal utøve jobben. Ved ikke å utnytte kompetansen nye lærere har med seg inn i skolen, blir de heller ikke anerkjent som ressurs (Ulvik & Langørgen, 2012). Vi legger også merke til at Betty heller ikke virker kjent med hva hun som nyutdannet kan forvente av støtte på arbeidsplassen. Våre resultatet tyder videre på at nyutdannede lærere kan bruke for mye tid på å finne ut av praktiske ting og til å lære seg fag de ikke har formell kompetanse i. Ifølge tidligere forskning påvirker skolens strategier hvordan lærere bruker sin tid på arbeidsplassen (Dalin & Kitson, 2004). Ut fra vår studie bidrar skolens strategier til å ta tid og krefter vekk fra primære oppgaver som å utvikle gode undervisningsopplegg for elever. Dette kan igjen ha negative konsekvenser for kvaliteten på de performative dimensjonene ved lærerens arbeid.

Et av elementene knyttet til Dalins og Kitsons (2004) modell er beslutningsstrategier. På den første skolen har det blitt bestemt av Bettys kollegaer at hun får ikke tilgang til foreldrene. På den måten kan fravær av kontakt med foreldre påvirke etableringen av et godt foreldresamarbeid, som videre er vesentlig for tilrettelegging for elevenes utvikling og læring (Epstein, 2018). Samtidig kan mangelfull foreldrekontakt skape hindringer for at Betty utvikler tilhørighet til elevene og skolen hun var ansatt i. Det kan selvsagt diskuteres om nyutdannede skal være kontaktlærere med den ekstra arbeidsbelastningen dette innebærer. Men når Betty først blir tildelt oppgaven, kunne det å samarbeide om oppgaven med en erfaren lærer være lærerikt. Ut fra denne studiens perspektiv synes de beslutningene som ble tatt, å ha skapt svært utfordrende arbeidsforhold for Betty, noe som ikke er en engangshendelse, men noe som gjentar seg flere ganger. På den andre skolen får Betty kontaktlærerstilling, men da er hun fremdeles en nyutdannet lærer. Hun får ansvar for en klasse som er krevende, selv for en erfaren lærer. Vi stiller oss derfor kritisk til beslutninger som nærmest utnytter den nyutdannedes lyst til å jobbe. Det er ikke så lett for nyutdannede i midlertidige stillinger å protestere, og de blir prisgitt betingelsene de tilbys (Sharplin, 2014).

Forskningen har tidligere hevdet at skolens omgivelser og lokalsamfunnet også spiller inn på utøvelsen av lærerarbeidet (Dalin & Kitson, 2004). Slik vi tolker fortellingen til Betty, har skoler ulike utfordringer, og at det var mer utfordrende å være lærer på den andre skolen. Mange av de ansatte synes å ha nok med seg selv og å løse akutte problem. Betty oppdager etter hvert positive krefter også på denne skolen, lærere som har gode løsninger på vanskelige utfordringer. Å samle disse kreftene gjennom samarbeid kunne vært til hjelp både for Betty og resten av kollegiet. Fortellingen viser videre at selv om ytre rammer, her i form av nasjonale rammer for veiledning av nyutdannede (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2018), gir føringer for hvordan nyutdannede skal følges opp de første to årene i yrket, er det den lokale skolen som først og fremst har betydning for den nyutdannedes arbeidsforhold. Dette understreker hvor viktig skoleledelsen er for nyutdannedes møte med læreryrket.

## KONKLUSJON

I denne studien undersøkte vi hvilken betydning skolen som organisasjon har for en ny lærers mulighet for utøvelse av læreryrket. Gjennom å analysere Bettys fortelling om møtet med skolen som organisasjon har vi kommet frem til at



dette møtet dessverre kan handle om en dårlig start på læreryrket. Slik starten på arbeidslivet fremstår i vår studie, har den negative konsekvenser for den nye lærerens utøvelse av sitt arbeid og kan føre til vedvarende helseplager. Håpet er at vi kan lære av fortellingen. Lærerutdanningen kan forberede for en helhetlig lærerrolle og informere nyutdannede om hvilke rettigheter de har. Skolene kan prioritere nyutdannede fremfor erfarne lærere når det gjelder arbeidsoppgaver og fagfordeling – her tror vi mange skoler har mye å gå på. Videre kan systematisk oppfølging av nyutdannede fra første dag bidra til at de bruker tiden på en hensiktsmessig måte. Vi vil også understreke betydningen av samarbeid der nyutdannede får tilgang til all den kunnskapen som bor i et personale, og der det også blir trukket veksler på deres ressurser. Det er fint for nyutdannede å møte velvillige kollegaer. Men oppfølging basert på nyutdannedes initiativ og tilfeldig velvilje fra kollegaer er ikke godt nok. Det å legge til rette for en fungerende organisasjon som støtter læreres praktisk oppgaver, er et lederansvar – ikke minst overfor nyutdannede lærere. Dette stiller store krav til skoleledere om å ha oversikt over organisasjonen de skal lede – noe som blant annet innebærer tilstedeværelse og synlighet.

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## **PART 3**

# **Development and leadership**



## CHAPTER 6

# Professional development in Icelandic preschools: A historical saga

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### ABSTRACT

Today, professional development of teachers is one of the most important aspects of educational systems to lead successful schools (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Success of the school system is based first and foremost on a well-educated and motivated profession and that preschool teachers and principals are professional leaders in charge of the development of ambitious preschool work, and they should constantly develop. The aim of the research is to investigate professional development in Icelandic preschools from 1946 to 2019. The methodology of historical analysis is used in this research to examine the past to understand the present (Wynche, Sengers, & Grinter, 2006). Various data, e.g., records of minutes, books on the history of schools of education, and other documents, were used to establish a timeline (Jupp, 2006; Wyche, Sengers, & Grinter, 2006) for a clearer view of the history. Very few people who have researched professional development in preschools have used this method. Findings support the view that preschool teachers and principals have been compliant to the needs of society and are managed and steered by the needs of parents and policymakers affecting the working conditions of the profession, all linked to professional development. The preschool teachers and principals seek professional development to close the knowledge gap that occurs when demands change. However, they need optimal conditions and opportunities to develop in their careers.

## INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of research on professional development of teachers; the emphasis has been mostly on their impact on student learning outcomes (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Jensen & Rasmussen, 2019). Professional development (PD), also known as continuous professional development (CPD) and in-service PD, ranks among the most important aspects of educational systems today (Crook, 2008). In this paper, the concept of professional development (PD) will be used with the focus on preschools. PD for preschool teachers and principals has been less frequently researched. As such, the literature review includes research from other school levels.

In many countries, including Iceland, schools are required by the government to have a PD plan for their teachers that defines development during the school year (Craft, 2000; Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011). One of the responsibilities of the municipality and the leadership and management team of the schools is to ensure that the teachers have the opportunity to develop their skills and have access to training. It is stated in the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Preschools that the role of preschool principals and preschool teachers is to lead professional work, and that the guide is responsible for ensuring that teachers add to their knowledge and receive opportunities for PD (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011).

PD is a conscious and articulated process that leads to positive development and improvement; it should be part of the daily work of school professionals and should take place in a professional learning community (Richter et al., 2011; Starfsþróun kennara, e.d.). PD of principals has not been researched as much, but what research there is shows that PD's impact on school development and student learning outcome is high (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Jensen & Rasmussen, 2019; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Preschools (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011) states that the success of the school system is based first and foremost on a well-educated and motivated profession and that preschool principals are professional leaders in charge of the development of ambitious preschool work, and they should constantly develop their careers (p. 23).

In response, this paper addresses the theory and practice of the PD of preschool teachers and principals in Iceland during 1946-2019, clarifying how they have engaged in their PD. The main question is then: *How has professional development been carried out in Icelandic preschools from 1946 through 2019 for*



*preschool teachers and principals?* The sub question is: *How have preschool teachers and principals influenced their own professional development?*

Different documents, data, and research were used to analyze the historical context of PD in Icelandic preschools.

### **Professional development**

At the beginning of his or her career, basic education lays the foundation for the student's development and learning (Bjarnadóttir, 2015). PD takes place after the completion of basic academic studies, when the professional starts working in the field (Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002; Smith, 2003). However, a basic education alone is not enough to maintain PD. Professionals need to systematically pursue PD throughout their careers, and such development and knowledge must be connected to the workplace (Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002). In short, it is further knowledge that is acquired after initial academic training (Craft, 2000; Collinson et al., 2009; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Cherrington & Thornton, 2013). For preschool teachers and principals, PD has not been as well researched compared to other school levels but is supported with the newest research on PD. Literature in this study, therefore, also includes research from other school levels over the last decade, that best serves the purpose of this study to connect PD to the preschool setting.

Craft (2000) stated that being a professional means taking responsibility for one's own PD as well as the school's. Professionals need to continuously examine themselves and become acquainted with innovations in education for the benefit of students (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Jensen & Rasmussen, 2019). By doing this, they develop individually as well as help the overall team at the school (Craft, 2000; Lessing & De Witt, 2007).

Both foreign and Icelandic research has dealt with increased demands from state authorities, and administrative factors, such as laws and regulations, which have influenced the work and working environments of professionals (Jónsdóttir, 2012; Barton, 2013; Hansen 2013; Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2018). Collinson et al. (2009) stated that there have been many changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in policy implementation, which practitioners were left to solve without funds or continuing educational training. Brock (2012) emphasized that professionals early in their careers should make themselves heard in shaping policy as experts in their fields. In Kochan, Bredeson, and Riehl's (2002) research, time is termed as one of the barriers to PD among teachers and principals, but

there is also the question of priorities, for which it must be part of their daily work (Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002). Furthermore, it has been highlighted that principals consider themselves as having less time to perform their work as professional leaders do, and therefore less time for PD (Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002; Collinson et al., 2009; Jónsdóttir, 2012; Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2018). Research shows it is important for principals and teachers to develop their careers, but this can be challenging and sometimes “uncomfortable” because it calls for difficult changes. Individuals’ attitudes are most important because they affect the results and quality of PD (Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002; Smith, 2003; MacGilchrist, Myers, & Reed, 2004).

Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Lüdtke, and Baumert (2011) said that PD enhances the professional competence of the teacher through increased pedagogical knowledge, motivation, beliefs, and self-regulatory skills gained through formal and informal learning opportunities. Fullan and Hargreaves (2016) argued that professional learning and PD are intertwined. It is important to link informal and formal development to ensure that learning has occurred.

Individual and school development are inextricably linked; you cannot have one without the other (Craft, 2000). There are indications that PD has a positive effect on teachers, students, and the school community as a whole when it is developed in practice (Craft, 2000; Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002). According to Smith (2003), the goal is to become the best version of yourself as a professional, but the path is not a fixed route and changes with time. Smith (2003) suggested that to improve the profession, maintain interest, grow personally and professionally, and advance one’s career within the profession, the main warning for professionals is to not to become fossilized in their work.

Even though many agree on the importance of PD, the ‘right way’ to accomplish it has not yet been found (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). However, there are indications that a good start would be to develop critical thinking (Dyer, 2018), do research, learn from experience, and incorporate this into daily life (Schön, 1996; Smith, 2003; Guskey & Yoon, 2009). This means that teachers and principals need support from their superiors, motivation, opportunities, and time to re-evaluate, reflect, and research their work so they can improve and develop (Craft, 2000; Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002; Lessing & De Witt, 2007; O’Keefe, Hopper & Jakubiec, 2019).

In conclusion, arguments have been made that education and the workplace play an important role in PD of teachers and principals and that skills are gained

through formal and informal learning (Richter et al., 2011). If PD is developed in practice in the workplace, there are indications it will have a positive effect on teachers, students, and the school community as a whole. However, real-life barriers such as time and work-related demands of policy implementations have negative effects on PD. This study focuses on the history and effectiveness of PD for preschool teachers and principals.

## THE STUDY

### Context

From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the women's suffrage movement had many effects on women throughout the world, and in Iceland it further affected the welfare of children (Jónsson, 2001). A coalition of women formed a women's alliance in 1917 with the goal of saving the children and others who were affected by the tuberculosis epidemic that raged through the country, leaving many orphans in its wake (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). In 1924, a privately-funded organization called Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf was established and started a last-resort daycare in Reykjavík for children of single women and for families in which the living situation of the children was severely inadequate (Sigurðardóttir, n.d.). A few years later, a new form of daycare center opened and was called a "preschool". In later years, the daycare center and the preschools merged into one center called a "preschool" (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The first women heading the daycare centers were usually nurses because of their knowledge of children's health, and with them were teachers and other good women to help (Guðmundsson & Jónsson, 1949). The data suggests that the same pattern was emerging in the other Scandinavian countries. In Norway, it was the same as in Iceland, helping women venture into the job market (Gotvassli, 2017), and in Finland, it was embedded in the welfare society (Karila, 2008).

As a result of the Second World War, many men and women in Iceland moved to the capital to find work because the armed forces that remained in Iceland brought work to the people. Over a 30-year period starting in the early 1940s, the Icelandic population increased about 70%, and over the same period there was a 149% population increase in Reykjavík alone (Indriðadóttir, 2004). The need for more daycare centers grew, especially after the war, and it is said that it left an emotional toll. Divorces became more frequent, leaving women alone to take care of the children, having to provide for them and seek help from social services in Reykjavík and Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf (Sigurðardóttir, 1998).

The Board of the Barnavinafélagið wanted only the best for the children and were inspired by the McMillan Nursery Schools in London (Sigurðardóttir 1998). From the start, the goal was to have well-educated early childhood teachers working in the daycare centers, but it was difficult because there were so few teachers with enough education (Sigurðardóttir, 1998); there was no early childhood teacher college in Iceland. There were only four early childhood teachers in Iceland during that time, and they had received their early childhood teacher education abroad (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). One of them was a principal at a daycare and preschool center in Reykjavík, who was the first to pitch the idea to the Board of the Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf of starting an early childhood teacher college in Iceland, so that young girls who did not have the courage or means to travel abroad to study could do so in Iceland (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The data suggest that she was the first to shed light on the importance and need for educated preschool teachers (Sigurðardóttir, 1998), which can be interpreted as the breaking of ground for early childhood teacher education in Iceland, which began in 1946.

## **Method**

In the *SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods* (Jupp, 2006), historical analysis is described as a method that analyses the history that has been left behind to make sense of and learn from the past. It is a social research method that is often combined with other methods and can, according to Wyche, Sengers, and Grinter (2006), be beneficial in understanding culture. This can help us understand who we are and where we are going, but we need a specific process in doing so (Wynche, Sengers, & Grinter, 2006). Historical analysis is therefore a method of discovering what has happened in the past from records and understanding implications for the future.

The point of historical analysis was to gather and search information over time and organize and connect various sources to form an overview (Wortham, 2015). Different data sources (e.g., meeting minutes, books, news reports, and reports from Iceland's Ministry of Education) were analyzed to capture the historical context of PD of professionals in preschools in Iceland from 1946 to 2019. As all data were open, official public records, no permit was required from Iceland's Office of Data Protection.

This method was used because the conclusion of the study was not clear from the start, but rather gathered through observing the data (Jupp, 2006).

The main focus of this research was to look at how PD was presented through the historical timeline. Historical analysis is a social research method (Wyche, Senger, & Grinter, 2006), and it was therefore necessary to focus on the cultural, social, and economic factors happening during the same timeframe, to gain a clearer picture on the topic, which is part of the findings and addressed in the discussion.

A descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2016) was then used to analyze the data. This is an interpretive act that summarizes the text to words, which then forms the topics (Saldaña, 2016). An inductive thematic analysis is an aim of the analysis of the data, or the topic that has been identified, from the bottom up, and describes any patterns and themes that occur (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Four periods soon became clear, as each represents a timeline. A theme was then developed from the material (Jupp, 2006; Wyche et al., 2006) to gain a wider perspective on how PD of teachers and principals in preschools has been carried out and how they have influenced their own PD in the historical context.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings are divided into four time periods. This sharpened the focus of PD in Icelandic preschools and helped with the analysis of the data.

### **Breaking new ground — Icelandic preschool teacher education: 1946-1965**

The first principal of the Icelandic teacher college was Valborg Sigurðardóttir. She received a grant to study abroad and travelled to America in 1942 to study psychology. At the time, it was not common for women to receive a higher education, and was thought of as unladylike (Einarsdóttir, 2004). Sigurðardóttir knew that women sought the same education as men, and because of the women's rights movement, they also wanted to have careers (Einarsdóttir, 2004). The data suggested the need for daycare and preschools for this to happen.

The first two decades of the Icelandic teacher college was tough, due to funding and existence rights. The college had to move every few years during this time because it did not have proper accommodation (Einarsdóttir, 2004; Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The school needed a larger grant from the government and the municipality to survive (Sigurðardóttir, 1998), and the findings suggest a struggle between members on the Board of Barnavinafélagið, because some did not see the necessity to educate women to take care of children (Einarsdóttir,

2004). The belief at this time was that daycare centers and preschools were only for those who were less fortunate, but the idea was to change that image and that the education of teachers was important (Einarsdóttir, 2004). It seems that the change began with young men who had studied abroad and knew that preschools were more than just for those in need, and that they would benefit both men and women as a step towards equal rights (Einarsdóttir, 2004). In a memoir by a former preschool principal who graduated in 1950, she wrote that where she worked as a preschool teacher the children were from both poor and rich homes, the latter thinking that the children would benefit by spending half a day at a preschool because it was like an addition to the upbringing at home (Jónsdóttir, 2004). She also states that the parents were overall grateful to the preschool for taking care of the children and did not make any demands (Jónsdóttir, 2004). According to more recent research, it seems that demands from parents and stakeholders have not changed wholly; they think that the main focus should be that the children are well cared for (Harwood & Tukonic, 2016; Jónsdóttir & Colman, 2014), but it was not necessary that every teacher had a teaching license (Jónsdóttir, 2012), which is in harmony with views from around 50 years ago.

In this first timeline, the findings show that preschools were established throughout Iceland. The need for more educated teachers and principals increased, but, as mentioned earlier, the teacher college did not have the capacity to educate as many teachers as were needed (Einarsdóttir, 2004). Findings show that there was a need for literature written in Icelandic so that every preschool would have the same theoretical background from which to work (*Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf 50 ára*, 1976). In the 1950s, the book *Starfshættir á leikskólum og dagheimilum* (Practices in preschools) was published (Sigurðardóttir, n.d.), and it was an answer to the lack of Icelandic material.

### **Making headway in professional development: 1966-1990**

In 1956, the first participants from Iceland went to Norway (Sæmundsdóttir, Gunnarsdóttir, & Sigurðardóttir, 1975) to a Nordic preschool conference. After that there were almost always participants from Iceland, however, during the first years it was not a lack of interest but rather a lack of funding that was the reason for not attending (Sæmundsdóttir, Gunnarsdóttir, & Sigurðardóttir, 1975). The data show that much of the PD was for preschool teachers during those first years. The preschool teacher union published a newsletter called

*Fóstra* for many years where colleagues could write articles, stories, music criticism, and songs, all of which can be part of PD. For example, in a newsletter from 1980 there is an article by two principals from the municipality of Selfoss where they explained a new form of managerial and leadership structure for principals. Their idea was that the two preschool teachers should delegate the workload to lighten the burden of being the only principal (Jónasdóttir, 1980).

The first managerial and leadership seminar for preschool principals in Iceland was held in August of 1966 (*Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf 50 ára*, 1976), twenty years after the Icelandic teacher college was established. Even though there had been other seminars for preschool teachers, this was the first that focused on the managerial aspect of the job of principal. The main subject of the seminar consisted of issues at hand in the profession such as management, finance, and pedagogical work (Sigurðardóttir, 1974; *Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf 50 ára*, 1976). The findings suggest that it was difficult to get experts to speak at a seminar because there were not many in Iceland, and the distance to other countries was a hindrance (Sigurðardóttir, 1998).

In 1973, the first law regarding preschools (Lög um hlutdeild ríkisins í byggingu og rekstri dagvistunarheimila nr.29/1973) was passed, as well as a law regarding the Icelandic Teacher College (Lög um Fósturskóla Íslands nr.10/1973), 27 years after preschool teacher education began in Iceland. The teacher college (Fóstruskóli Sumargjafar) became a state-funded school, and the name was changed to Fósturskóli Íslands. The state took control of the education, and male students were accepted (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). These laws are considered the first milestone in granting preschool teacher education a permanent place in the Icelandic education system; they stipulate, e.g., the school should provide both formal and informal PD for preschool teachers (Sigurðardóttir, 1998).

The data show that the principals of the preschools began to talk seriously about higher education for preschool principals in 1972. The reason they gave was that as responsibility became greater, the work environment became wider, and demands increased from policymakers. It was necessary to reinforce and strengthen preschool education and provide a degree in leadership to those who planned to become school leaders because their education was not enough (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). It was not until 1983 that a one-year course in leadership and mentoring was funded by the government, and the first group graduated in 1984. Again, the funding was cut, and it was not until 1988 that it was re-established (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). Later, in 1997, education in school management

and leadership developed to the Master degree level when the school amalgamated with the Teacher University (Jóhannsson, 2011), making preschool leadership studies an important PD for those wanting to become preschool leaders.

The findings suggest that after the first law was passed, there was an increase in new preschools in Iceland, and Jónsson (2001) suggested that it was because of influence from the women's movement and pressure from women whose work participation had rapidly expanded. In an interview, a former preschool principal reflected on what she finds most important for the preschools: children and staff and the upbringing of children. She emphasized the need to increase pay to parents as well as teachers and shorten the work hours of parents so they can spend more time with their children (Jónsdóttir, 2004). In the early 1980s, she went to help a preschool in the countryside where she met with the CEO of a local company who was very interested in the preschool. He thought preschools were important so women could work, since they were valuable assets (Jónsdóttir, 2004).

The first Icelandic national curriculum guide for preschools was published in 1985, and another guide was published in 1987. These contained guidelines on how preschool work should be performed, and everyone had the same goals (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The guidelines also stated the principal ought to have time to get to know the children, teachers, and parents, and he/she should be a pedagogical consultant and not only be occupied with managerial work. It also stated there was not enough stability and human resource issues were time-consuming – the reason being a lack of educated preschool teachers and low salaries (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1985). The findings indicate that principals were active participants in the preschool, from sweeping the sidewalk, to collecting payments from parents (Jónsdóttir, 2004). The description of the role of the principal in a daycare center (Forstöðumaður dagvistarheimilis) was found in a newsletter from 1982 describing the principal as a manager of the centre (Geirdal, 1982). The first job description for both principals and preschool teachers was written in 1990 (Kennarasamband Íslands, e.d.). The job description says that the principal is a professional leader and must become acquainted with innovations related to the work (Kennarasamband Íslands, e.d.). However, it does not stipulate any other timeframe or description of what kind of PD is needed; the same goes for preschool teachers.

Findings from the late 1960s suggest that the Ministry of Education stressed the importance of studying OECD reports with an emphasis on improving the



teaching profession (Indriðadóttir, 2004). Even though the focus was on the primary school, this can be seen as relevant to the preschool as to how it influenced the profession later. In 1986, the Minister of Education had the OECD evaluate the Icelandic educational policy. Their findings suggest that the Fósturskóli was graduating well-educated preschool teachers and should be held to the same social standards as the other teaching professions in Iceland (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The findings imply that society saw preschools as good places that would care for children while the parents were working, and therefore were providing a service (Dýrfjörð, 2011; Jónasson, 2006). Even though society's emphasis was on care, the preschool teachers' and principals' educational views did not waver, and they continued to push for PD.

### **"The Times They Are A-Changin'": 1990-2008**

In this time period, the data shows many changes in the legal structure of preschools that had an effect on principals and other educators. In the early 1990s, preschool teacher education changed because of the offering of distance education. Communication between the teachers and students became stronger via internet and email. Distance education was a reaction to the preschool teacher shortage that existed especially in rural areas (Sigurðardóttir, 1998; Mörk, 2018).

New preschool laws in 1991 (Lög um leikskóla nr.48/1991) made preschool a part of the educational system in Iceland. The ground-breaking year for preschools was 1994, when they became the first school level in Iceland created with the passing of a new law, and every licensed teacher was called "preschool teacher" (Lög um leikskóla nr.78/1994). In the years to follow, other regulations were passed through parliament that affected preschools and principals. The regulations on activities in preschools (Reglugerð um starfsemi leikskóla nr.225/1995) instituted new criteria to mandate how many children could attend preschool. With this change, the number of children in preschool increased, and their average day became longer, but the number of teachers remained the same (Njáls, 2004). In 2001, a change was made to this regulation regarding the calculation on the preschool building and criteria listing how many children per teacher, which did not influence the work environment of teachers (Njáls, 2004). More recent research (Jónsdóttir, Garðarsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2013) finds that Icelandic children are in preschool an average of about eight hours each day. Other Icelandic research suggests that policymakers and parents do not think that everyone working with preschool children should have the education

of the preschool teacher, and focus should be on care rather than being a school that educates children (Jónsdóttir, 2012).

A new preschool curriculum was passed in 1999, and its role was to be a guide with a flexible framework for those working in preschools, however, it did not mandate any PD for preschool principals (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1999). The findings reveal that there was drop-in student enrollment when the preschool studies became a university education (Einarsdóttir, 2012). This suggests that more educated preschool teachers and increased number of children enrolling in preschools do not go hand-in-hand. Preschool principals are left to lead and manage schools without the legal standard of preschool teachers, which is that two-thirds of employees be licensed preschool teachers (Lög um menntun og ráðningu kennara og skólastjórnenda við leikskóla, grunnskóla og framhaldskóla nr.87/2008). Looking at the demands that have come forth since 1990, the data show a significant change and relationship between school leaders defining themselves as managers rather than leaders (Hansen & Lárusdóttir, 2018; Jónsdóttir, 2012; Stefánsdóttir, 2014), making PD not a priority.

### **From crisis to restoration: 2008-2019**

This period starts roughly in 2008 with the collapse of banks in Iceland and the beginning of the economic crisis. Recent research on the economic crisis in Iceland reveals many changes in the environment of preschools, including changes in the law. Findings bring to light that the impact of the crisis, which affected PD, was that funding was cut so meetings after working hours were cancelled, with less time to collaborate and consult (Davíðsdóttir et al., 2012; Stefánsdóttir, 2014; Hreiðarsdóttir & Björnsdóttir, 2017), even though laws mandate there should be time to collaborate. The crisis also affected the leadership role of the principals, which included, e.g., more reports to the municipalities (Stefánsdóttir, 2014).

There were new laws regarding education and hiring of teachers and principals (Lög um menntun og ráðningu kennara og skólastjórnenda við leikskóla, grunnskóla og framhaldskóla nr. 87/2008), and these laws (Lög um leikskóla nr. 90/2008) protected the professional status of preschool teachers. Three years later, the newest preschool curriculum was published, and two years later six series on the fundamental pillars of the curriculum were published, each in a separate book (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011). The curriculum acknowledged the growing changes in the educational environment and demands

on schools and teachers had grown and needed to be addressed (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011). In 2014, the Minister of Education published another demand, a White Book (Hvítbók) on educational reform (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2014), intended to be the basis for further discussion and consultation with all who benefit from education. The White Book's emphasis was on literacy, which affected PD for teachers and leaders in preschools, which had not previously been part of the pedagogical and theoretical background of preschool teachers (Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1999).

Findings reveal that development is a continuous process throughout a career and that stakeholders should take this into account when enacting school reforms and collective wage agreements because there is, at present, no defined time for PD (Fagræð um símenntun og starfsþróun kennara, 2016). A recent report on the PD needs of teachers, principals, and consultants shows that preschool principals and teachers choose PD that relates to the requirements enacted by authorities. The barriers they claim seem to be lack of funding, no suitable training, no flexibility to do PD during working hours, and lack of motivation (Mýrdal et al., 2016). Instead, the findings imply that principals are compelled to implement changes and novelty by higher authority.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this paper, we discussed theory and practice of preschool teachers and principals in Iceland, carried out from 1946-2019. We analyzed data collected from several places. Historical texts about the Icelandic preschools (with the focus on PD) were attained from documents, books, interviews with pioneers in the field, and newsletters, obtained from the library of the School of Education at the University of Iceland. The researcher also consulted The National Archives of Iceland (obtaining meeting minutes from Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf), and the internet (collecting steering documents and reports from Iceland's Ministry of Education and academic journal articles) to respond to the research questions: *How has professional development been carried out in Icelandic preschools from 1946 through 2019 for preschool teachers and principals?* The sub question is: *How have preschool teachers and principals influenced their own professional development?*

From the very beginning, the goal of preschools in Iceland was set: to save the children from the tuberculosis epidemic and help families (Sigurðardóttir, 1998). The first pioneers working with the Barnavinafélagið Sumargjöf were idealists and wanted only the best for the children. They were driven by a vision

for caring and educating children in Iceland after having saved them from the harsh conditions of war. This can therefore be interpreted as a necessary social resource and in harmony with the international environment (Karila, 2008; Gotvassli, 2017). The findings reveal that parents do not seem to make any demands on the preschool (Jónsdóttir, 2004) and they, as well as politicians, do not recognize preschool professionals as experts, seeing them as caregivers (Jónsdóttir & Coleman, 2014) and not educators.

The findings reveal that preschools have had an effect on Icelandic society (Jónsdóttir, 2004) and are entwined with the women's rights movement and women's job participation. Preschool teacher education was seen as a woman's job and remained that way for almost 30 years, perhaps having the effect that it is still, to this day, considered by some as 'women's work'. The working hours of the preschools were in accordance with those of the workforce in society, whether it was in the capital or in smaller towns. In spite of research, children spend more hours in preschools today than before. It can therefore be interpreted that the preschool principals and preschool teachers do not have time for PD and have not influenced the development of the work environment of the preschools, and they are still managed and steered by the needs of parents and policymakers despite research and reports suggesting that this is not beneficial for the child (Njáls, 2004); therefore, preschools provide a service.

It was detected in the findings that increasing demands on preschools throughout the decades—especially external factors such as laws, rules, and social practices—have led to changes in the work environment (Jónsdóttir, 2012; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Barton, 2013; Hansen, 2013; Stefánsdóttir, 2014). When the first managerial course was held in 1966, topics included increasing demands from policymakers in the form of managerial requirements, as well as human resource issues. Going through the timeline shows that these demands seemed to have increased even more over the decades; the calls for principals to become more professional became louder as well, but time for PD seemed to be limited as funds were managed by municipalities. These two factors seem to be interwoven in PD in preschools, which can affect the PD of the profession.

The global financial crisis critically affected the PD of preschool teachers in Iceland. Staff meetings were cut so that the scope of PD became limited; the data and research (Stefánsdóttir, 2014; Hreiðarsdóttir & Björnsdóttir, 2017) suggest that they did what they could with the limited funds and resources they had. What is interesting is that these demands came from 'above', and it was up to the

principals to implement them without having the two-thirds preschool teachers that the laws demanded. So, it can be interpreted that preschool principals were socially compliant with the authorities. Even though the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Preschools (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011) specifies that time should be allotted for PD, the municipalities seem not to have been making it a priority; this harmonizes with the stakeholders' view on the need for trained teachers in preschools (Jónsdóttir, 2012; Stefánsdóttir, 2014). All these laws and regulations were adapted into the preschools, and it seems that the principals did not have the means to stop the changes. So, the direction of the preschools in Iceland has in some way been steered in the wrong direction, affecting the working conditions of the profession, with more children per teacher and longer days for the children (Jónsdóttir, Garðarsdóttir, & Einarsdóttir, 2013). Research shows that it is not only Icelandic preschool principals and preschool teachers who call for change in their work environments, but also foreign studies that claim this results in lack of time to fulfil their professional leadership roles adequately (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið, 2011; Kochan, Bredeson, & Riehl, 2002; Collinson et al., 2009).

According to Richter et al. (2011), two important elements in teachers' PD are the importance of education and the workplace. Going through the findings shows that the two elements (Richter et al., 2011) of PD were clear, however, arguments can be made that the importance and the effects of society can constitute a third element in the historical development of PD in preschools in Iceland. The findings exposed how much influence society has had on Icelandic preschools throughout history and that it still plays a vital role. The demands by society on preschools and their role still seem to be the same, with the emphasis on the social role, thus, preschools being a service providing care rather than education.

To answer the second research question, the teachers and the principals have been involved in their PD by pushing for more education and acknowledgement, but at the same time they have been steered by society and its laws and regulations, even though this goes against their better judgement as it affects the work environment of children, teachers, and themselves. The formal and informal PD of preschool principals in Iceland has coincided with changes in the historical context in a mutually influential relationship. Findings show that in the PD of preschool leaders, changes that happen over time are in a way like a toothed wheel that works together to alter another by closing the knowledge

gap that occurs when the demands change (Zepeda, Parylo, & Bengston, 2014). Preschool leaders play a key role in schools, and as such they have a great impact on school development (Craft, 2000).

Findings reveal that preschool teachers and principals seem to have been compliant to the needs of parents and policymakers as well as society, and this has affected the working conditions of the profession that are linked to PD, maintaining the care image of the profession rather than the education. It is important to acknowledge these factors when designing PD for teachers and leaders in preschools. Using Richer et al.'s (2011) definition of important elements of PD and adding the third pillar — the impact of society — can be an effective way to work further with these findings.

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## KAPITTEL 7

# Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse

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### SAMMENDRAG

I denne artikkelen analyseres og drøftes sentrale funn om læreres arbeid i profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og i hvilken grad variasjonen i dette arbeidet kan forklares av faktorer ved skolene. Tidligere forskning viser en klar sammenheng mellom profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse. Dette er en tverrsnittstudie, og det er gjennomført flernivåanalyser av data fra 87 grunnskoler i Hedmark fylke. Data er hentet fra en kartleggingsundersøkelse i FOU-prosjektet «Kultur for læring», som ble gjennomført i 2016. Resultatene viser at det i stor grad eksisterer profesjonelle læringsfellesskap i skolene i Hedmark, men det er betydelige variasjoner som kan forklares ut fra skolen lærerne jobber ved. Skolens pedagogiske ledelse har et betydelig statistisk signifikant forklaringsbidrag på variasjoner i læreres arbeid i profesjonelle læringsfellesskap. Implikasjoner dette gir for praksis blir diskutert.

### INTRODUKSJON

I overordnet del av læreplanverket Kunnskapsløftet benyttes *profesjonsfellesskap* som uttrykk for den kollektive dimensjonen av lærerrollen og dens betydning for elevers læring (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017b, s. 18). OECD (2010) benytter begrepet *profesjonelt lærersamarbeid*, og det defineres som et profesjonelt, innovativt og faglig lærersamarbeid hvor lærere samhandler og reflekterer kritisk over sine erfaringer i den hensikt å øke egen kompetanse og forbedre undervisningen. De fremhever kontrasten til koordinerende lærersamarbeid, som blant annet kjennetegnes av deltakelse på teammøter, utveksling av undervisningsmateriell, samordning av vurderingskriterier og i liten grad genererer økt kompetanse (OECD, 2010). I koordinerende lærersamarbeid råder ofte

en «familiekultur» med gode sosiale relasjoner med lite rom for faglig kritikk og forbedring (Nielsen, 2013). TALIS-undersøkelsen som ble gjennomført av OECD (2010), viser at kompetanser knyttet til lærersamarbeid er svake i norsk skole, både når det gjelder kunnskap og ferdigheter, og at det profesjonelle lærersamarbeidet bare forekommer i moderat grad (Vibe, Aamodt & Carlsten, 2009). Studier viser at lærere som tilhører profesjonelle fellesskap, har langt større betydning for elevenes læring (Kraft, Marinell & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016), og dette synliggjør et behov for å utvikle og profesjonalisere lærersamarbeidet i norsk skole. Nasjonale styringsdokumenter belyser behovet med en betydelig vektlegging av profesjonelle fellesskap og utvikling av skolen som lærende organisasjon (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2004, 2017a).

Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap kan knyttes til flere teoretiske tilnærminger. Det kan sees i sammenheng med begrepet *kunnskapsmobilisering* (Levin, 2013), et uttrykk for interaktive prosesser hvor man i fellesskap mobiliserer kunnskap hos den enkelte som flere får ta del i. Dette resonnementet bygger på teori om organisasjonslæring (for oversikt, se Crossan, Lane & White, 1999), der denne teoriretningen postulerer et mulighetsområde for organisatorisk innovasjon og problemløsning gjennom kollektiv kunnskapstilegnelse og kunnskapsoverføring på tvers av interne organisasjonsgrenser (Easterby-Smith, Lyles & Tsang, 2008; Huber, 1991). Det er imidlertid påvist at for at denne typen læringsprosesser skal resultere i endrede organisatoriske rutiner, vil læringsprosessene nødvendigvis måtte spenne over de tre analysenivåene individ, gruppe og organisasjon (Crossan, Maurer & White, 2011). Det ligger følgelig implisitt at en rekke faktorer, blant annet visse lederpraksiser, vil influere på utfallet av læringsprosessene (Marks & Louis, 1999; Sadler, 2001). Denne studien følger dette resonnementet og analyserer pedagogisk skoleledelse tilknyttet kollektiv læring i skolens organisasjon.

Forskning om læreren som den viktigste påvirkningsfaktoren for elevers læring har ført til en debatt om skolekvalitet rettet mot enkeltlæreren og hans eller hennes handlinger i klasserommet. Dette har lettet trykket på det kollektive ansvaret og skolen som organisasjon, til tross for forskning som viser at kollektiv kapasitet har stor betydning for enkeltlærerenes undervisningskvalitet. Gode lærere er gode på gode skoler og ikke fullt så gode på mindre gode skoler, og mindre gode lærere kan løftes og utvikle seg mer i gode skoler (Marzano, 2003). Denne studien ønsker å rette fokuset mot den kollektive dimensjonen av lærerrollen og bidra til økt kunnskap om faktorer ved skolene

som kan bidra til at lærere blir gode utover sin egenkompetanse. Det er tidligere forsket på ulike former for lederskap og lærersamarbeid, men denne studien ser spesifikt på pedagogisk ledelse knyttet til det profesjonelle lærersamarbeidet. Studien skiller seg fra andre studier ved at den tar utgangspunkt i et helt fylke med tilhørende kommuner, grunnskoler og lærere. Forskningsspørsmålene er som følger: *Hvordan opplever lærere det profesjonelle læringsfellesskapet ved sin skole, og i hvilken grad kan variasjonen i deres opplevelse forklares av faktorer ved skolen de jobber ved?*

I studiens forskningsdesign ligger det en antakelse om at det er en sammenheng mellom skolefaktorer og profesjonelle læringsfellesskap. Antakelsen uttrykker ingen ensidig årsaksforklaring, og man kan ikke etterprøve og konkludere med at sterke profesjonelle læringsfellesskap skyldes bestemte faktorer. Studien kan derimot avdekke og forklare sammenhenger og mønstre som kan bidra til kunnskap om hensiktsmessig praksis.

## TEORETISK RAMMEVERK

### Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap

Paraplybegrepet *profesjonelle læringsfellesskap* betegnes i empirisk skoleforskning som en grunnleggende betingelse i forbedringsarbeidet for skoler med god resultatutvikling (Fullan, 2014). Dette konseptuelle rammeverket omfatter både kollektive læringsprosessforløp og kjennetegn ved organisatoriske læringskulturer innenfor utdanningssektoren (Louis, 2008). I denne artikkelen forstås termen *profesjonelle læringsfellesskap* i lys av DuFour, DuFour, Eaker og Manys definisjon: «An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve» (2010, s. 11).

Arbeidsformen er ikke en metode, men en vedvarende prosess med en rekke kjennetegn. Det eksisterer et gjensidig forpliktende samarbeid mellom lærerne om de fleste forhold vedrørende undervisningen, hvor fokuset i større grad er rettet mot elevers læring framfor læreres undervisning (DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2008). Tradisjonelt opererer den enkelte lærer mye alene innenfor gitte rammer, og den erfaring og kunnskap som utvikles forblir ofte taus og kun tilgjengelig for den læreren det gjelder (Ertsås & Irgens, 2014). I profesjonelle læringsfellesskap løftes den tause kunnskapen opp og bidrar til å styrke fellesskapet. Fellesskapet kan styrkes på ulike nivåer, enten innenfor den enkelte skole eller i nettverk på tvers av skoler eller kommuner. Lærere og ledere ved

samme skole kan i læringsfelleskapene utvikle felles verdier og bidra til å utvikle skolens samlede kapasitet for forbedring av elevenes læring og utvikling. Samarbeidet baseres på gjensidig avhengighet, et felles ansvar, men også en personlig ansvarlighet, og deltakerne har et felles forpliktende ansvar for alle elevene ved skolen, også dem man ikke underviser selv (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006). Dette innebærer at lærere forstår at det å involvere seg i sine kollegaers utfordringer har en verdi både for elevers læring og egen profesjonsutvikling. Engasjementet må ikke begrenses til bare å gjelde å lytte, tenke, reflektere og planlegge sammen. Det må omsettes til handling, og lærerne må ha en felles forståelse for at endrede resultater forutsetter at man må endre praksis innenfor rammene av eksisterende ressurser (DuFour & Marzano, 2015).

I sterke profesjonelle læringsfelleskap løftes sentrale spørsmål om hva som ønskes at elevene skal lære eller utvikle, og hvordan tilrettelegge for at alle elever stimuleres best mulig (Stoll et al., 2006). Like viktige er spørsmålene om hvordan man kan vite at læring og utvikling skjer, og hva lærere må gjøre dersom dette ikke skjer (DuFour & Marzano, 2015). Refleksjonene er i stor grad knyttet til forskningsbasert kunnskap, og et samarbeid med dette fokuset vil sannsynligvis ha en betydelig innflytelse på elevers læring (Stoll et al., 2006).

Selv om man fasiliteter for samarbeidet og det faktum at det finner sted, er det ingen garanti for at det vil påvirke elevenes læring. Det har tidligere vært en oppfatning at bare vi reorganiserer skolene, vil det skje endringer, men Murphy og Louis (2018) påpeker at et slikt teknisk syn på utdanning er et grunnproblem. Selv med flere utdannede lærere og bedre system er det få endringer i elevresultater. Skal vi lykkes i arbeidet, må menneskene som inngår i de profesjonelle læringsfelleskapene, trives sammen og ha tillit til hverandre. Tillit innebærer en positiv forventning om at man ikke vil bli utnyttet og på denne måten kan tillate seg selv å være sårbar, og dette forutsetter igjen et gjensidig ønske om å opprettholde tilliten kollegaer imellom (Six & Sorge, 2008). Lærere som stoler på hverandre, har bedre forutsetninger for å bygge sterke profesjonelle læringsfelleskap (Murphy & Louis, 2018). Dersom lærere stoler på hverandre, kan det å dele erfaringer, både utfordringer og suksesshistorier, bidra til å holde fokus på elevenes læring og å løse problemene de står overfor. Spørsmålene som stilles, kan da trygt omhandle kvalitet i undervisningen og gi rom for kritisk refleksjon, uten at man får behov for å forsvare seg eller flytte fokuset over på utenforliggende faktorer. Sannsynligheten vil også øke for at man tar den risikoen som ligger i å skulle gå fra noe innarbeidet og kjent til å prøve ut noe nytt.

## **Pedagogisk skoleledelse av profesjonelle læringsfellesskap**

Det er krevende å implementere kollektive arbeidsformer som profesjonelle læringsfellesskap, og skoleledelsen er en nøkkelfaktor for å lykkes. En vellykket implementering forutsetter at skoleledelsen har innsikt i det faglige og det pedagogiske arbeidet og har evne til både å lede og administrere utviklingsarbeidet over tid. For å maksimere effekten av arbeidet må skoleledelsen være strategisk når det gjelder tid og ressurser, og lærerne må ha tid til arbeidet for å sikre systematikk og kontinuitet (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012).

I tillegg til praktisk og strategisk tilrettelegging er det av stor betydning at skoleledere involverer seg i lærernes undervisning og utøver pedagogisk ledelse. Pedagogisk skoleledelse innebærer at lederen legger til rette både for elevenes, lærernes og egen læring (Møller, 1996). Skoleledere som ønsker å bidra til forbedring av skolens undervisningspraksis, må ifølge Robinson (2014) først og fremst fokusere på spesifikke dimensjoner innenfor pedagogisk ledelse, som dreier seg om å 1) etablere mål, 2) ha høye forventninger til de ansatte, 3) bruke tilgjengelige ressurser strategisk, 4) forsikre seg om at kvaliteten på undervisningen er god, 5) sikre et velordnet og trygt læringsmiljø, og 6) lede lærernes læring og utvikling. Tydelige mål synliggjør hensikten med arbeidsformen og hvilket utbytte skolen som organisasjon, det enkelte teamet, enkeltlæreren og ikke minst elevene vil kunne oppnå.

Skoler med ledere som mobiliserer, setter klare mål og inntar et aktivt lederskap ved å støtte og etterspørre lærernes utviklingsprosess, er langt foran i prosessen når det gjelder gnist, motivasjon og lærernes opplevelse av arbeidets nytteverdi (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). Synlige og engasjerte skoleledere øker sannsynligheten for at lærere opplever støtte og motivasjon, og at arbeidet skaper endring av pedagogisk praksis (Postholm et al., 2013). Ved å være involvert legger skoleledere grunnlag for positiv innflytelse gjennom gode relasjoner og mellommenneskelig tillit. Tillit kan ikke forventes eller kreves basert på ønsker, men oppstår som resultat av relasjoner, og relasjoner utvikles gjennom handling. Skoleledere som ønsker en kultur preget av gode relasjoner og mellommenneskelig tillit, må gå foran som gode eksempler. De må vise interesse og støtte lærerne i deres utviklingsprosess, og de må anerkjenne viktigheten av individenes opplevelse av sosial og følelsesmessig tilhørighet (Murphy & Louis, 2018).

## Tidligere forskning

Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap utpekes som en sentral og effektiv strategi for kompetanseutvikling. Det er gjennomført en oversiktsstudie av amerikansk empiri på profesjonelle læringsfellesskaps innflytelse (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008). En av studiene besto av klasseromobservasjoner og intervju av lærere ved 24 skoler med stabilt gode elevresultater, både barneskoler, ungdomsskoler og videregående skoler (Louis & Marks, 1998). Studien fant en klar sammenheng mellom læreres undervisningskvalitet og deres tilhørighet til sterke profesjonelle læringsfellesskap. Standarder for undervisning ble målt i læreres sosiale støtte til elevene og utøving av pedagogikk kjennetegnet av engasjement, elevdeltakelse med fokus på dybdelæring og kritisk tenkning. Samlet sett finner Vescio, Ross og Adams (2008) at lærere som arbeider i profesjonelle læringsfellesskap, både endrer måten de snakker om sin daglige praksis på, og forbedrer sin pedagogiske praksis. Arbeidsformen endrer skolekulturen ved at fokuset kontinuerlig rettes mot elevenes læring og læreres egen profesjonsutvikling.

Skolelederes rolle og betydning fremheves i en omfattende femårig studie av 106 amerikanske skoler, hvor det ble undersøkt sammenhenger mellom ulike former for lederskap, læreres samarbeid og elevers læring. Resultatene viste at skoleledere som var aktive deltakere i læreres utviklingsprosess, som observerte deres praksis, støttet dem og involverte seg i deres utviklingsprosess, hadde større sannsynlighet for å påvirke skolekulturen og det profesjonelle fellesskapet positivt. Studien fant klare sammenhenger mellom denne formen for lederskap og elevenes læring (Louis, Dretzke & Wahlstrom, 2010).

Den norske skolekonteksten er forskjellig fra mange av OECD-landene som mye skoleforskning kommer fra. Bosettingsmønsteret er mer spredt, det er flere små skoler og flere fådelte skoler (Høiskar & Turmo, 2003). I praksis innebærer dette en skolehverdag hvor lærere har færre elever å forholde seg til og færre kollegaer å samarbeide med, og skoleledere har færre lærere å lede. Det er likevel grunn til å tro at klassiske grunnkvaliteter for god undervisning er de samme, uavhengig av land. Det som virker læringsfremmende for elever i eksempelvis USA, virker også for norske elever (Laursen, 2015). I evalueringen av satsingen på kvalitetsutvikling i norsk grunnskole fra 2000 til 2003, ble 1200 norske skoler sammenlignet (Dahl, Klewe & Skov, 2004). Studien fant stor variasjon når det gjaldt individuell og kollektiv orientering, samt sammenhenger og mønstre mellom skolekultur, endringsvilje og elevenes læringsutbytte. I kollektivt orienterte skoler var det større sannsynlighet for at lærere var mer



endrings- og utviklingsorienterte, og for at elevene oppnådde bedre læringsresultater. Evalueringen fant også kjennetegn ved skoleledelsen på kollektivt orienterte skoler, ved at den hadde større sannsynlighet for å være mer involvert i utviklingen av læreres undervisningspraksis og tettere på evalueringen av elev-ers læringsutbytte. Lærere og skoleledere hadde en sterkere felles forståelse av skolens utviklingsområder, og relasjonen mellom lærere og ledere var generelt bedre. Evalueringen viste ingen sammenhenger mellom kollektivt orienterte skoler og skolestørrelse eller trinn (Dahl et al., 2004), og disse funnene bekreftes i en studie av Skaalvik og Skaalvik (2013), som i tillegg fant svake sammenhenger med læreres kjønn.

På Island ble det gjennomført korrelasjonsstudier ved tre skoler for å finne sammenhenger mellom lærerorganisering og elevresultater, for deretter å iverksette intervensjoner for å utvikle profesjonelle læringsfelleskap ved den ene skolen. Både korrelasjonsstudien og intervensjonsstudien viste sammenhenger mellom nivået på arbeidet i profesjonelle læringsfelleskap og elevenes læringsutbytte, og ved intervensjonsskolen oppnådde elevene høyere karakterer på nasjonale prøver (Sigurdardóttir, 2010).

## **METODE**

Alle grunnskoler i Hedmark fylke deltar i innovasjon- og forskningsprosjektet «Kultur for læring». Det ble i den forbindelse gjennomført en elektronisk kartleggingsundersøkelse i 2016, og resultatene fra denne undersøkelsen er utgangspunkt for studiens analyser.

### **Utvalg**

Informantene består av 1940 grunnskolelærere som representerer 87 av i alt 111 grunnskoler i Hedmark, og alle 22 kommuner er representert. De resterende 24 skolene har færre enn 10 informanter, og de utelates av hensyn til metodiske betraktninger. Ved små skoler med få informanter vil konfidensintervallet være så stort at det vil være vanskelig å trekke sikre slutninger både når det gjelder gjennomsnitt og variasjon (Skog, 2004). Dette innebærer at svar fra 163 lærere er ekskludert fra det opprinnelige datamaterialet.

Skolene i utvalget omfatter både barneskoler, ungdomsskoler og kombinerte barne- og ungdomsskoler. Det er fådelte, mellomstore og store skoler, og det er byskoler og skoler fra mellomstore tettsteder og mindre bygder. Antall lærere som informanter per skole varierer fra 10 til 62, og svarprosenten er 95.

Datagrunnlaget kan ut fra dette betraktes som representativt for grunnskolelærere i Hedmark, og med høy svarprosent og stort utvalg vil resultatene med stor sannsynlighet være interessante også utover Hedmark fylke. I variansanalysene er de ti skolene med høyest skår på *profesjonelle læringsfellesskap* slått sammen (skolegruppe A) og de ti skolene med lavest skår på samme variabel slått sammen (skolegruppe B). Det samme er gjort for variabelen *pedagogisk skoleledelse*. Hensikten med variansanalysene er å finne variasjon mellom sterke og svake skoler, og for å unngå at enkeltskoler med ekstremt svake eller sterke resultater representerer ytterpunktene, samles de ti skolene i hver ende av skalaen.

Alle lærere ved alle skoler ble invitert til å delta i undersøkelsen, og skolene ble oppfordret til å sette av 15–20 minutter av et personalmøte til gjennomføringen. Deltakerne ble i forkant av undersøkelsen informert om undersøkelsens hensikt og prosedyrer, de ble forsikret anonymitet, og det ble understreket at deltakelsen var frivillig, og at de når som helst kunne trekke seg fra undersøkelsen. Kartleggingsundersøkelsen er godkjent av Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD) i henhold til norsk lov.

### Måleinstrument

Lærerne besvarte et elektronisk spørreskjema med i alt 47 spørsmål om skolens miljø, undervisningen, relasjon til elevene og skoleledelsen. Utvalgte områder utgjør datamaterialet for analysene, og studiens teoretiske rammeverk og forskningsspørsmål har vært førende. Tabell 7.1 viser en oversikt over måleinstrumentet med områder, variabler, kilder, antall spørsmål på hvert område, skala (minste og høyeste skår) og reliabilitetsverdi (Cronbachs alfa).

**Tabell 7.1** Måleinstrumentet

Områder	Variabler	Kilde	Antall spørsmål	Skala	Cronbachs alfa
Skolens miljø	Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap	Grosin (1991, 2004), Sørli & Nordahl (1998)	6	1–4	,83
Skoleledelsen	Pedagogisk skoleledelse	Robinson (2014)	9	1–5	,86
	Trinn		1	1–3	
	Skolestørrelse		1	1–4	
	Kjønn		1	1–2	

### **Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap**

Det er anvendt en skala om skolens miljø utviklet av Sørli & Nordahl (1998) med bakgrunn i Grosins (1991, 2004) validerte måleinstrument om skolens klima (Hultin et al., 2018). Skalaen består i sin helhet av 15 spørsmål. På bakgrunn av studiens forskningsspørsmål benyttes kun de seks spørsmålene som omhandler profesjonelle læringsfellesskap, da disse teoretisk kan knyttes til etablerte skalaer på området (Stoll et al., 2006). Faktoranalyse viser at disse går sammen i en faktor med Cronbachs alfa = 0,83. *Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap* er en lærervurdert skala fra 1 til 4 (1 = passer ikke så godt, 2 = passer noenlunde, 3 = passer godt, 4 = passer meget godt), og lærere vurderer deres opplevelse av det profesjonelle læringsfellesskapet ved skolen. Lærere svarer på spørsmål om forpliktende samarbeid, om samarbeid om innhold og metoder i undervisningen, om felles ansvar for alle elever, felles forståelse, interesse for alle elevers interesser og i hvilken grad de hjelper og støtter hverandre i utfordrende situasjoner. Høyeste verdi indikerer stor grad av samarbeid.

### **Pedagogisk skoleledelse**

Lærere svarer på spørsmål om *pedagogisk skoleledelse* på en verdiskala fra 1 til 5 (1 = aldri, 2 = sjelden, 3 = noen ganger, 4 = ofte, 5 = svært ofte). Skalaen er utviklet for hovedprosjektets formål på bakgrunn av teori om pedagogisk ledelse (Robinson, 2014) og består i utgangspunktet av ti spørsmål. Ni er inkludert i denne studien, og faktoranalyse viser at spørsmålene går sammen i en faktor med Cronbachs alfa = 0,86. Lærere vurderer i hvilken grad de opplever at skoleledelsen (rektor/inspektør/assisterende rektor) støtter og følger opp lærerne, bidrar til å utvikle et godt samarbeidende arbeidsmiljø med klare, overordnede pedagogiske og sosiale mål for skolen, og i hvilken grad de observerer lærernes undervisning og veileder deres undervisningspraksis. Høyest skår indikerer god pedagogisk skoleledelse.

### **Bakgrunnsvariabler**

Læreres kjønn, trinn og skolestørrelse er inkludert som bakgrunnsvariabler. Læreres kjønn ble målt i to kategorier (0 = kvinne og 1 = mann), trinn ble målt i tre kategorier ut fra hvilket nivå i skolen de jobber på (1 = småskoletrinn, 2 = mellomtrinn og 3 = ungdomstrinn), og skolens størrelse ble målt i fire kategorier (1 = 0–99 elever, 2 = 100–199 elever, 3 = 200–299 elever og 4 = 300 eller flere).

## Manglende data

Analyser viser 0,2–1,0 % manglende data på enkeltspørsmål tilhørende variabelen profesjonelt lærersamarbeid, og 0,9–2,3 % manglende data på enkeltspørsmål tilhørende variabelen pedagogisk ledelse. Samlet sett vurderes dette til liten forekomst av manglende data i materialet. Det ble gjennomført EM-imputering, hvor det ble regnet ut sannsynligheten for hva informanten ville svart på manglende spørsmål på bakgrunn av de besvarte spørsmålene i skalaen (Graham, 2009, 2012).

## Statistiske analyser

Denne studien er en tverrsnittstudie og kan betraktes som en survey. De statistiske analysene er gjennomført i IBM SPSS versjon 25. Det er gjennomført Principal Component faktoranalyser på de to aktuelle variabelområdene, og Kaisers kriterium med egenverdi over 1 er satt som kriterium med påfølgende reliabilitetsanalyser. Det er gjennomført frekvensanalyser på avhengig og uavhengig variabel og variansanalyser (ANOVA) for å undersøke forskjeller mellom skoler. Det er målt vektet signifikans mellom skoler innad i skolegruppe A og innad i skolegruppe B. Korrelasjonsanalyser er gjennomført for å undersøke styrken på en systematisk relasjon mellom variablene *profesjonelle læringsfellesskap* og *pedagogisk skoleledelse*.

Flernivåanalyser er gjennomført for å undersøke i hvilken grad variasjonene i læreres vurderinger kan forklares på lærer-, skole- og kommunenivå. Artikkelen har fokus på lærer- og skolenivå, men kommunenivå inkluderes i analysene da data er hierarkisk strukturert over tre nivåer. Flernivåanalyser tar hensyn til at sammenhengene på nivå 1 (lærernivå) påvirkes av konteksten på nivå 2 (skolenivå), og dette er vesentlig for å forstå individet som en del av de kontekstuelle forholdene. Hver skole kan ha en egenart som gjør at lærerne ved denne skolen ser ut til å være mer homogene enn lærere fra ulike skoler, fordi det er faktorer knyttet til den samme skolen som kan påvirke individene (Hox, 2010). På grunnlag av analysene ble det trinnvis bygd tre modeller ved bruk av ML-estimering (maximum-likelihood) for å finne best mulig fit-informasjon. Redusert fit-informasjon fra én modell til en annen indikerer en forbedret modell (Christophersen, 2013). Det ble først bygd en nullmodell uten forklaringsvariabler og deretter to modeller med forklaringsvariabler hvor bare konstantleddet varierer. De kontinuerlige forklaringsvariablene er sentrert etter Grand-mean-prinsippet i forkant av analysene for å oppnå stabile løsninger (Kreft & Leeuw, 1998),

bortsett fra de dikotome variablene. Det er også testet for heteroskedastisitet, autokorrelasjon, multikollinearitet og skjevhet, og variablene tilfredsstillende alle krav som stilles til en flernivåanalyse (Hox, 2010).

## RESULTATER

### Deskriptive analyser

Det er gjennomført frekvensanalyser av lærervurderingene på *profesjonelle læringsfelleskap* og *pedagogisk skoleledelse*, og det er gjennomført variansanalyser av skoler kategorisert i skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B og mellom de to skolegruppene.

**Tabell 7.2** Frekvensanalyse, profesjonelle læringsfelleskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse

	N	M	SD	Min.	Maks.	Skjevhet	Kurtose
Profesjonelle læringsfelleskap	1940	2,98	0,547	1	4	- 0,327	0,010
Pedagogisk skoleledelse	1940	3,49	0,678	1	5	- 0,290	0,161

### **Profesjonelle læringsfelleskap**

Frekvensanalysene (tabell 7.2) viser at det i relativt stor grad eksisterer profesjonelle læringsfelleskap. Det er likevel lærere som vurderer det profesjonelle læringsfelleskapet lavt, og hele skalaen fra 1 til 4 er benyttet. Spredningen er forholdsvis lav, og fordelingen av lærervurderingene er svakt høyrevridd med relativt høye skårer på de fleste. Skjevhet og kurtose er innenfor akseptable grenseverdier, mellom -2 og 2 (George & Mallery, 2011). På itemsnivå vurderer lærere samarbeid om innhold og metoder i undervisningen noe lavere enn samarbeid om elevene.

**Tabell 7.3** Frekvensanalyse, profesjonelle læringsfelleskap, skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B

	N	M	SD	Min.	Maks.
Skolegruppe A	169	3,41	0,414	2	4
Skolegruppe B	203	2,55	0,539	1	4

Analysene av lærervurderingene på skolenivå viser signifikante forskjeller mellom lærervurderingene i skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B (tabell 7.3). Det er ingen signifikante forskjeller mellom gjennomsnittskårene for skolene innad i skolegruppe A og for skolene innad i skolegruppe B. Lærere i skolegruppe A har betydelig høyere gjennomsnittskår, og ingen har benyttet verdien 1 på skalaen. Lærere i skolegruppe B har lavere gjennomsnittskår og større spredning, og hele skalaen er benyttet. Det er signifikante forskjeller mellom skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B:  $F(2, 18) = 247,2$ ,  $p = ,00$ . Cohens  $d = 1,28$  og indikerer stor forskjell mellom lærervurderingene i skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B når det gjelder vurdering av profesjonelle læringsfelleskap.

### **Pedagogisk skoleledelse**

Frekvensanalysene (tabell 7.2) viser at det utøves mye god pedagogisk skoleledelse i skolene med en gjennomsnittskår på 3,49. Det er også lærere som vurderer den pedagogiske skoleledelsen lavt, og hele skalaen fra 1 til 5 er benyttet. Spredningen kan anses å være forholdsvis lav, og fordelingen er svakt høyrevridd med relativt høye skårer på de fleste. Skjevhet og kurtose er innenfor akseptable grenseverdier, mellom  $-2$  og  $2$  (George & Mallery, 2011). På itemsnivå vurderer lærere skoleledelsen relativt høyt på det pedagogiske samarbeidet og noe lavere på observasjon og veiledning.

**Tabell 7.4** Frekvensanalyse, pedagogisk skoleledelse, skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B

	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Maks.</b>
Skolegruppe A	216	4,13	0,477	2	5
Skolegruppe B	308	2,80	0,635	1	5

Lærervurderingene på skolenivå viser signifikante forskjeller mellom lærervurderingene i skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B (tabell 7.4). Det er ingen signifikante forskjeller mellom gjennomsnittskårene for skolene innad i skolegruppe A og for skolene innad i skolegruppe B. Lærere i skolegruppe A vurderer den pedagogiske skoleledelsen langt høyere enn lærere i skolegruppe B, spredningen er lavere, og ingen lærere har brukt verdien 1. I skolegruppe B er hele skalaen benyttet, og gjennomsnittskåren er betydelig lavere. Forskjellen mellom skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B er signifikante:  $F(2, 18) = 546,3$ ,  $p = ,00$ . Cohens  $d = 1,45$

og indikerer stor forskjell mellom lærervurderingene i skolegruppe A og skolegruppe B når det gjelder vurdering av pedagogisk skoleledelse.

## Korrelasjonsanalyser

**Tabell 7.5** Korrelasjonsanalyse, profesjonelle læringsfelleskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse

Variabler	Profesjonelle læringsfelleskap	Pedagogisk skoleledelse
Profesjonelle læringsfelleskap	–	,525**
Pedagogisk skoleledelse	,525**	–

\*\* =  $p < ,01$  (2-sidig).

Korrelasjonsanalysen viser en betydelig sammenheng mellom variablene *profesjonelle læringsfelleskap* og *pedagogisk skoleledelse*. Pearsons  $r = ,53$  og korrelasjonene er statistisk signifikant med  $p$ -verdi  $< ,01$  (2-sidig). Dette innebærer at variablene gjensidig kan forklare maksimalt 28 %, og at minimum 72 % forklares av andre faktorer. Denne verdien er likevel såpass høy at det må vurderes hvorvidt variablene måler det samme, men spørsmålene i undersøkelsen er substansielt så forskjellige at dette ikke er tilfelle. Dette ser ut til å være to uavhengige faktorer som korrelerer godt, og resultatene indikerer at lærere ved skoler som skårer høyt på profesjonelle læringsfelleskap, også skårer høyt på pedagogisk skoleledelse og vice versa.

## Flernivåanalyser

Det ble bygd tre modeller for å undersøke hva som kan forklare variasjoner på den avhengige variabelen profesjonelle læringsfelleskap (tabell 7.6). M0 inkluderer bare avhengig variabel, M1 har også med bakgrunnsvariablene skolestørrelse, trinn og lærers kjønn, mens fullstendig modell (M2) også inkluderer forklaringsvariabelen pedagogisk skoleledelse.

Flernivåanalysene viser at læreres oppfatning av det profesjonelle læringsfelleskapet i stor grad kan forklares ut fra hvilken skole de jobber ved. Etter at det er kontrollert for skolestørrelse, trinn og kjønn, og pedagogisk skoleledelse inkluderes som forklaringsvariabel, kan 11,1 % av variasjonen forklares av faktorer på skolenivå og 87,5 % på lærernivå. Dette viser at det er større variasjon mellom alle lærere enn variasjon mellom lærere fra ulike skoler. Andelen

**Tabell 7.6** Random intercept model, profesjonelle læringsfellesskap

Fixed effects	Profesjonelle læringsfellesskap					
	M0		M1		M2	
	estimat	SE	estimat	SE	estimat	SE
Intercept	2,974***	0,031	3,093***	0,085	2,931***	0,070
Skolestørrelse			-0,014	0,029	-0,046	0,024
Trinn			-0,075***	0,020	-0,030	0,017
Kjønn			-0,118	0,028	-0,010	0,024
Pedagogisk skoleledelse					0,444***	0,017
-2LL	2974,248				2307,182	
AIC	2982,248				2323,182	
BIC	3004,530				2367,456	
Kommunenivå %	0,88		1,31		1,39	
Skolenivå %	16,11***		13,21***		11,1***	
Lærernivå %	83,01***		85,50***		87,47***	

\* =  $p < ,05$  \*\* =  $p < ,01$  \*\*\* =  $p < ,001$

forklaringskraft på skolenivå viser likevel at det er faktorer ved skolen som bidrar til større homogenitet mellom lærere ved samme skole, enn det er mellom alle lærere i undersøkelsen. Christophersen (2013) viser til en grense på 5 % for vurdering av homogenitet.

Bakgrunnsvariablene skolestørrelse, trinn og kjønn har ut fra disse analysene liten forklaringskraft på profesjonelle læringsfellesskap. Disse negative funnene kan forklares av at flernivåanalyser forutsetter lineære data. Analyser bekrefter kurvelinearitet når det gjelder skolestørrelse og tilnærmet linearitet for trinn, men det er små forskjeller. Det kan altså ikke ut fra disse analysene fastslås at skolestørrelse, trinn og kjønn er uten betydning. Flernivåanalysene tar høyde for at det er variasjoner innenfor eksempelvis skoler av samme størrelse, og at skolestørrelse i seg selv ikke kan forklare styrken på profesjonelle læringsfellesskap.

Den siste modellen (M2 i tabell 7.6) viser at pedagogisk skoleledelse har et betydelig statistisk signifikant forklaringsbidrag ( $p < ,001$ ) på variabelen profesjonelle læringsfellesskap. Dette betyr at dersom lærere opplever sterke



profesjonelle læringsfellesskap, kan dette sannsynligvis ha sammenheng med god pedagogisk skoleledelse.

## **DISKUSJON OG KONKLUSJON**

### **Studiens teoretiske bidrag**

De deskriptive analysene viser at det foregår mye godt profesjonelt lærersamarbeid i skolene i Hedmark, og at mange lærere opplever et sterkt profesjonelt fellesskap ved sin skole. Nyanser i frekvensanalysene viser tendenser til at lærere vurderer samarbeidet om elevene noe høyere enn samarbeid om innhold og metoder i undervisningen. Dette kan forklares av at den enkelte lærer tradisjonelt opererer mye alene i klasserommet, og at lærere i grunnskolen ofte er organisert i trinnteam på tvers av fag. Det er derfor naturlig at elevene kommer mer i fokus enn faget og undervisningen.

Resultatene kan ses i lys av endrede forventninger til lærerrollen uttrykt i Kunnskapsløftet (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). Innføring av kompetansemål skulle bidra til å flytte fokuset fra lærerens undervisning til elevenes læring, og den kollektive dimensjonen av lærerrollen løftes frem i ny overordnet del (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017b). Det er grunn til å tro at det er krevende å endre tradisjoner knyttet til læreridentitet og lærerrollen, og at noen lykkes bedre enn andre. Lærervurderingene i skolegruppe A ligger 1,28 standardavvik høyere enn lærervurderingene i skolegruppe B. Dette indikerer at det eksisterer vidt forskjellige samarbeidskulturer blant skolene i Hedmark, og at lærere har ulike betingelser for profesjonsutvikling. Lærere i skoler med høy skår vil sannsynligvis fokusere mer på elevenes læring og ha bedre tilgang på hverandres kompetanse, og dermed ha gode muligheter til å utvikle egen undervisning (Vescio et al., 2008). God tilgang til kollegaers kompetanse har ekstra stor betydning for lærere med lav innflytelse på elevenes læring, og kan således bidra til å redusere forskjellene i undervisningskvalitet mellom lærere, jamfør Marzanos (2003) forskning om enkeltlærere i gode skoler. I skolegruppe A vurderer ingen lærere det profesjonelle læringsfellesskapet på laveste nivå, og kan dette indikerer stor sannsynlighet for gode betingelser for profesjonsutvikling. Derimot opplever lærere i skolegruppe B større variasjon, og muligheter for profesjonsutvikling kan ved disse skolene i større grad baseres på tilfeldigheter.

Denne studien viser, som tidligere studier, ingen sammenheng mellom profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og læreres kjønn, hvilket trinn de jobber på, eller skolestørrelse (Dahl et al., 2004; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Derimot viser

korrelasjonsanalysene en sterk sammenheng mellom profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse. Pedagogisk skoleledelse har et betydelig statistisk signifikant forklaringsbidrag og kan forklare opp mot 28 % av variasjonen i læreres vurdering av det profesjonelle læringsfellesskapet.

De deskriptive resultatene viser at det forekommer en relativt aktiv og god pedagogisk skoleledelse i mange av skolene i Hedmark, men frekvensanalysene viser noen nyanser. Lærerne vurderer skoleledelsen noe sterkere på det pedagogiske samarbeidet enn på observasjon og veiledning. Dette kan indikere at skoleledelsen er utviklingsorientert og har høye forventninger til de ansatte, men i mindre grad velger å involvere seg i selve undervisningen. Skoleledere står i et krysspess mellom utviklings- og administrative oppgaver, og det kan være krevende å prioritere. Variasjonsanalysene viser stor variasjon i hvorvidt skoleledere i Hedmark mestrer dette. Lærervurderingene på pedagogisk skoleledelse i skolegruppe A ligger 1,45 standardavvik høyere enn lærervurderingene i skolegruppe B, og dette indikerer at lærere i Hedmark har svært ulike opplevelser av skoleledelsens rolle i sin profesjonsutvikling.

Flernivåanalysene viser at læreres vurderinger i betydelig grad kan forklares ut fra hvilken skole de jobber ved. 11 % av variasjonen i læreres vurderinger kan forklares på skolenivå. Dette indikerer at lærere innenfor en skole og med samme pedagogiske ledelse formes av den kulturen de er en del av, og at det er større likhet mellom dem enn det er mellom alle lærere i undersøkelsen (Hox, 2010). Det er altså store variasjoner mellom skoler, selv om skolene tilhører samme distrikt og jobber med samme strukturerte stimuli i regi av «Kultur for læring»-prosjektet. Variasjonene kan forklares av at målingen er foretatt i prosjektets oppstartsfase, og man vet at endring krever systematikk og kontinuitet over tid (DuFour et al., 2008), eller at skolene befinner seg på ulike stadier i organisasjonsutviklingen. Det kan også handle om at det finnes sterke kulturelle betingelser som styrer skolene sterkere enn prosjektet har mulighet til å utligne.

### **Implikasjoner for praksis**

Studien viser at det eksisterer høy kompetanse på profesjonelt lærersamarbeid i Hedmark, og at mange skoleledere er dyktige til å legge til rette for læreres læring. Mange skoler har sterke profesjonelle læringsfellesskap og gode forutsetninger for å lykkes med å sikre god læring for alle elever, men langt fra alle lærere opplever det slik. De største variasjonene finnes, ifølge flernivåanalysene, mellom individene. Lærere innenfor en skole er mer forskjellige enn de

ulike kulturene som utspiller seg på de forskjellige skolene. Utfordringen for en skoleleder kan da bli å legge til rette for at skolen utnytter den kompetansen som eksisterer, og ikke risikere at den enkeltes kompetanse forblir taus eller forbeholdt noen få innenfor den enkelte skole, for eksempel teamet som læreren tilhører. Det vil da være tilfeldig hvilke elever som får tilgang til god undervisningskvalitet. Disse tilfeldighetene vil sannsynligvis reduseres i en skole med god pedagogisk skoleledelse som legger til rette for læring på tvers av team, slik at ulikheter mellom enkeltlærere og team utjevnes og skolens totale kapasitet styrkes (Robinson, 2014).

Store variasjoner både mellom skoler og innad i skolene viser at man har mye å lære av hverandre, og både lærere og skoleledere kan i større grad utnytte potensialet som ligger i dette. Man må ikke nødvendigvis reise over landegrensler for å lære, da kompetansen kan finnes i nærområdet og sågar internt i egen skole. Forskning om kollektivt orienterte skoler og elevers læringsutbytte viser at man sammen kan oppnå langt mer enn om man står alene (Dahl et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010). Variasjonene viser samtidig at skolen er en kompleks organisasjon bestående av mange ulike individer. Det kan være like krevende for skoleledere å bidra til alle læreres læring, som det er for lærere å bidra til alle elevers læring. Lærere, team og skoler er ulike og må møtes på ulike måter, men differensierte tilnærminger kan ikke være så individualiserte at de undergraver den kollektive dimensjonen av skolens utvikling. Skoleledere kan ikke pålegge lærerne det ansvaret å skulle lede sin egen utviklingsprosess (Louis et al., 2010), men være bevisst sin rolle og sin betydning og gjøre mer enn å fasilitere for lærersamarbeid. God pedagogisk skoleledelse innebærer at skoleledere er aktivt deltakende, at de har innsikt i læreres praksis og dilemmaer de står i, og at de lærer sammen med dem ved blant annet observasjon og veiledning. Tidligere forskning både fra USA og Norge viser at aktiv handling fra skolelederen bygger tillit og relasjoner (Dahl et al., 2004; Louis et al., 2010). Ved å være rollemodell og støtte lærere i deres utviklingsprosess legger skolelederen til rette for sterke profesjonelle fellesskap. Denne dimensjonen av pedagogisk ledelse oppleves ulikt av lærere i Hedmark, også innenfor en og samme skole, og det kan være hensiktsmessig for skoleledere å vektlegge systematisk observasjon og veiledning i større grad enn resultatene i denne studien viser.

Datagrunnlaget i studien gir ingen direkte informasjon om graden av trygghet og tillit, men ut fra det teoretiske rammeverket for studien vil det sannsynligvis eksistere større grad av mellommenneskelig tillit både mellom lærere og

mellom lærere og skoleledere ved skoler med høy skår. Tillit øker sannsynligheten for at lærerne er trygge nok til å utøve kritisk refleksjon rundt pedagogisk praksis, og at de har støtte i kollegaer og skoleleder når de skal våge å endre undervisningen (Murphy & Louis, 2018). Hvorvidt refleksjoner bidrar til endret praksis, er vanskelig å si ut fra denne studien, og det er mange faktorer som kompliserer arbeidet med å etablere ny og forbedret praksis. Det krever hardt og systematisk arbeid over tid. Lav forklaringskraft når det gjelder skolestørrelse, viser at det finnes sterke profesjonelle læringsfelleskap både i store og små skoler, noe som kan være interessant for skoleeierskapet å se nærmere på i arbeid med kommunenes skolestruktur. Det er andre faktorer som bidrar til kvalitet enn skolestørrelse i seg selv.

### **Metodiske vurderinger**

Det må tas i betraktning at det eksisterer andre faktorer i skolen og individuelle forutsetninger hos lærere som har betydning for læreres vurderinger både av profesjonelt lærersamarbeid og pedagogisk skoleledelse, men som ikke er inkludert i denne studien. Det kunne vært interessant å undersøke hvorvidt tillit og trivsel mellom lærere og mellom lærere og ledere har en innvirkning. En annen faktor er læreres arbeidshverdag og forholdet mellom bunden og ubunden tid, og hvor mye lærere er pålagt å samarbeide. Dersom krav til planlegging og logistikk er stort og tiden man har til rådighet er lite strukturert, vil det bli lite tid igjen til arbeid i profesjonelle læringsfelleskap. Da hjelper det lite selv med stor vilje og gode intensjoner. Disse faktorene kan redusere den pedagogiske skoleledelsens forklaringskraft, og det vil være viktig å ikke overkommunisere denne ene variabelens betydning i formidling av resultatene. Studien viser likevel noen tendenser som støttes av eksisterende teori og tidligere forskning.

En styrke ved studien er at den gir informasjon om mange læreres vurderinger av de fenomener som undersøkes. Datagrunnlaget er stort, det er svært høy svarprosent, og resultatene kan derfor anses som representative for lærere i Hedmark. Lærerne representerer ulike skoletyper fra både land og by, og det er grunn til å tro at lærere i andre fylker ville svart tilnærmet likt lærere i Hedmark. Resultatene fra denne studien er derfor relevant for andre deler av landet.

Faktorløsningene viser høy grad av reliabilitet, men de har likevel noen svakheter knyttet til validitet. De er hentet fra skalaer satt sammen av Sørli & Nordahl (1998), som er et utvalg av Grosins (1991, 2004) validerte måleinstrument, og må tas i betraktning i tolkning av resultatene. Det kan også være en

svakhet for studien at lærere vurderer profesjonelle læringsfelleskap på skole-nivå og ikke på individuelt nivå. Dette kan være en av årsakene til at forklarings-kraften øker på individnivå og synker på skolenivå etter hvert som modellene utvides (tabell 7.6), noe som er motsatt av hva man forventer i flernivåanalyser. Fit-informasjonen (-2LL, AIC og BIC) har likevel en tilfredsstillende utvikling med reduserte verdier fra første til siste modell (Christophersen, 2013), noe som er en indikasjon på at modell 2 (tabell 7.6) med inkluderte forklaringsvariabler er en forbedret modell. En svakhet er at modellen kun utnytter variasjon innad i skolene, og at det derfor forutsetter et stort antall informanter per skole for å sikre statistisk sikkerhet (Christophersen, 2013). Jo færre informanter, desto mer sårbare vil resultatene være for konsekvenser av tilfeldig variasjon både innad og mellom skoler. Utfordringen er at mange skoler i Hedmark er små med få lærere, og for å få med flest mulig skoler ble det satt en nedre grense på ti informanter i denne studien.

## Avslutning

Et sentralt funn i denne studien er at det eksisterer mange skoler i Hedmark hvor det arbeides i tråd med hva forskning viser er hensiktsmessig. Det finnes stor grad av godt profesjonelt lærersamarbeid, og det finnes mange skoleledere som utøver aktiv og god pedagogisk ledelse og tilrettelegger for læreres læring. Dette gir gode forutsetninger for lærere og ledere å kunne lære av hverandre i profesjonelle læringsfelleskap, både innad i skoler og på tvers av skoler og kommunegrenser. Resultatene viser samtidig at det er store variasjoner mellom skoler, og at lærere i Hedmark har ulike betingelser for profesjonsutvikling. Det er en sterk sammenheng mellom læreres opplevelse av profesjonelle lærings-felleskap og pedagogisk skoleledelse. Dersom lærere skal få like muligheter for profesjonsutvikling, er det vesentlig at skoleledere utøver god pedagogisk skoleledelse og bidrar til å utvikle skolens kollektive kapasitet.

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## **PART 4**

# **Beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment**



## CHAPTER 8

# Lower secondary teachers' content – general beliefs about learning and teaching

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching. Ongoing educational developments have aimed at changing and developing teachers' practices to meet the future demands of student skills. Assuming that teachers' beliefs govern teachers' practices (Fives, Lacatena, & Gerard, 2015), the exploration of teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching is essential in developing teachers' practices. This study brings new insight into lower secondary teachers' content – general beliefs about learning and teaching as three dominant beliefs were identified and broadly described using a phenomenographic analysis (Marton, 1981). The findings indicate that the content and continuum of the dominant beliefs is broadly in line with those proposed for secondary teachers. Some of the dominant beliefs were deficient regarding meeting the future prospects of student skills, indicating limited learning possibilities for the students.

## INTRODUCTION

The current paper explores lower secondary teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching, which is accomplished using reflective dialogues about learning and teaching. The purpose of the paper is to provide knowledge and understanding of the beliefs underlying the teachers' practices to stimulate professionals to challenge existing beliefs and thus develop existing practices. Articulated beliefs can facilitate professional growth and can be used as a tool for reflection (Fives et al., 2015).

According to the future student skills outlined in the work on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (NOU 2014:7; NOU 2015:8; OECD, 2009), teachers need to create active learning environments to stimulate students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration and curiosity (OECD, 2009). To meet these new demands, teachers must be involved in continuous professional development involving activities such as updating their knowledge and skills, reflecting and collaborating with colleagues (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). A reflection of teachers' underlying beliefs that they rely on when teaching needs to be uncovered (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Dewey, 2013; Fives & Gill, 2015; Schön, 2001).

### **Teachers' beliefs about learning and/or teaching**

*Beliefs* are a significant element in teachers' professional competence (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Mausethagen, 2015; Nordenbo, Søgaaard Larsen, Tiftikçi, Wendt, & Østergaard 2008) and are recognized as an individual's subjective and personal interpretations and judgement of the community's agreed-upon knowledge (Calderhead, 1996; Fives & Gill, 2015; Levin, 2015). *Beliefs* overlap with other constructs, such as conceptions, meanings and values (Fang, 1996; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Pajares, 1992). Beliefs are held as strong predictors of an individual's decisions and actions (Fives & Buehl, 2008; Fives et al., 2015), and they exist in a complex cognitive system (Kagan, 1992). Here, beliefs may be described as the teachers' espoused theories; the beliefs that guide their actions (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1978; Schön, 2001).

In educational research, scholars have often differentiated between two underlying beliefs: learning and teaching (Fives & Gill, 2015; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Beliefs about learning and teaching influence and govern teachers' approaches towards teaching and how they facilitate student learning and the teachers' professional development (Calderhead, 1996; Dewey, 1972; Fives & Gill, 2015; Pajares, 1992). Consequently, these beliefs are strongly connected

to effective teaching and successful student learning (Calderhead, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987).

Teachers' beliefs about *learning* are often conceptualized as *what* is learned (content) and *how* (the ways in which learning takes place) it is learned (Marton & Booth, 2000); these beliefs are closely connected to teachers' beliefs about how knowledge is defined, constructed and justified (Fives & Buehl, 2008). Säljö (1979) identified five concepts of learning: *increasing knowledge, memorizing and reproducing, applying, understanding and developing new insights*. Later, a sixth conception, *changing a person* (Marton, Dall'Alba, & Beaty, 1993), and a seventh conception, *collective meaning-making* (Paakkari, Tynjälä, & Kannas, 2011), were identified. The first three are associated with reproductive approaches towards learning (subject matter orientation), while the last four are connected to a meaningful approach towards learning (student oriented).

Teachers' beliefs about *teaching* have been found to include beliefs about instructional strategies, classroom management, students and the teachers themselves as professional (Levin & He, 2008). The close relationship between learning and teaching was proposed by Pratt (1992), who conceptualized *teaching* as *content* (what is to be learned), *learners* (the nature of learners and the learning process), *teachers* (roles, functions and responsibilities), *ideals* (education purposes) and *context* (external factors influencing teaching and learning).

Research on teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching tends to be dichotomized, either focused on the subject matter (knowledge transmission/teacher oriented) or a student orientation (constructivist; de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Buehl, 2012; Hancock & Gallard, 2004; Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, & Bergen, 2009; OECD, 2009; Pedersen & Liu, 2003; Prawat, 1992). The subject matter orientation is referred to as teacher-centered knowledge transmission, where teachers orient to the whole class instead of the students' individual needs, hence ensuring calm and concentration in the classroom (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). The student orientation, however, focuses on students actively constructing their knowledge through social interactions, developing knowledge and competencies and having teachers facilitate individual student needs (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). Studies have found that a student orientation is the best approach (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015; Prawat, 1992).

Boulton-Lewis, Smith, McCrindle, Burnett and Campbell (2001) explored secondary teachers' content-specific conceptions about teaching and learning and identified four categories of both conceptions, as shown in Table 8.1.

**Tabell 8.1** Categories of the conceptions about teaching and learning (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001)

Teaching as	Learning as
Transmission of content/skills	Acquisition and reproduction of content/skills
Development of skills/understanding	Development and application of skills/understanding
Facilitation of understanding	Development of understanding
Transformation	Transformation

The results from Boulton-Lewis et al.'s (2001) study indicated a congruence between the conceptions of teaching and learning as transformation/transformation. Also, the conceptions of teaching as transmission of content/skills were congruent with the conception of learning as the acquisition and reproduction of content/skills. Other scholars have found that student-oriented and subject-matter-oriented beliefs appear as two distinct dimensions of teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching (OECD, 2009; Van Driel, Bulte, & Verloop, 2007). Consequently, teachers possess characteristics of both views (de Vries et al., 2014). In a recent study, de Vries et al. (2013) found that the more student-oriented beliefs teachers had, the more they participated in continuous professional development (CPD).

More qualitative research on teachers' beliefs in general (Ferguson & Bråten, 2018; Fives & Buehl, 2008; Munthe, 2005; Nordenbo et al., 2008), especially research exploring teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching at a general content level, is still needed (Fives et al., 2015). Aiming to contribute to the relatively limited literature on lower secondary schoolteachers' general content beliefs about learning and teaching, the research question guiding the current paper is as follows:

*What content-general beliefs do lower secondary teachers express about learning and teaching?*

## METHODS

Placed within a social constructivist paradigm with a phenomenographic design (Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Marton, 1981; Åkerlind, 2012), the current study sought to explore the qualitatively different beliefs teachers have about learning and teaching. The present study explores the phenomena "teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching", which is a second-order perspective, and is one of the reasons that justify the adoption of a phenomenographic approach to this study

(Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Marton, 1981). The other reason that justifies this approach is based on the assumption that the beliefs of a single phenomenon differ among people (Marton, 1981). In line with a phenomenographic design, reflective dialogues can elicit teachers' beliefs, which are embedded in their espoused theories (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1978; Marton, 1981; Schön, 2001; Åkerlind, 2012). The present study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Study.

### **Participants and context**

Seven full-time lower secondary school teachers who teach in all three grades (8-10) volunteered for the study; the teachers worked in rural schools (grades 1-10) in Norway with few students (<100). The cohort was comprised of male and female teachers with more than 3 years of teaching experience. They all signed an informed consent form. All are quoted as "she" to enhance anonymity, and they are consecutively named 'T1', 'T2' and so forth. The teachers' experience ranged from 4 to 27 years; therefore, they are not defined as recently graduated teachers (Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Ludtke, & Baumert, 2011).

### **Data generation**

Data were generated in two individual reflective dialogues: a *reflective dialogue about learning* and a *reflective dialogue about teaching*. Both dialogues were conducted during 2016 in the participants' natural school settings (Hatch, 2002) with the aim of establishing broader beliefs about learning and teaching. A reflective dialogue, and especially think-aloud dialogue protocols, is typically used when exploring teachers' beliefs, (Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Fives & Gill, 2015; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The dialogues were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The first dialogue, *the reflective dialogue about learning* (100-120 minutes), explored teachers' beliefs about learning. A dialogue protocol was written inspired by the literature and was used as a benchmark throughout the dialogue (Fives & Gill, 2015; Kelchtermans, 2009; Laursen, 2004; Pratt, 1992; Shavelson & Stern, 1981). The dialogue started out with the teachers' narratives (Fang, 1996). Framed by an active and confrontational dialogue (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), themes such as teacher professionalism, learning and students' learning possibilities, student motivation, students and content were explored.

The second dialogue, *the reflective dialogue about teaching* (80-100 minutes), explored teachers' beliefs about teaching and was inspired by the think-aloud protocol (Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994). The dialogue included reflections on teachers' past, present and future teaching plans for the various subjects in which they taught. The plans were presented either as handwritten notes or digital documents. The reflections were developed individually and were stimulated by the researchers' elaborative follow-up questions. One question was posed to each participant at the start of the dialogue: "*How do you understand teaching?*".

### **Data analysis**

The transcribed texts (14) were analysed using a phenomenographic approach focusing on the relationship between the participant and phenomena (Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Åkerlind, 2012). Initially, the individual texts were read iteratively, and familiar words and phrases were highlighted. Then, quotes were labelled using the Nvivo11. The present study differs from previous ones because it identifies beliefs about learning and teaching together and how they are interrelated. In this context, mapping can provide insight into what kind of beliefs are held and how they are structured and related (Novak & Cañas, 2006). Based on the analysis, individual belief maps were constructed (Johannessen, 2019) corresponding to the techniques outlined by Novak and Cañas (2006). The maps visualised the teachers' espoused beliefs about learning and teaching and how they were related. The maps were used as analytical tools throughout the process and later for member checking (Hatch, 2002). Still in line with the phenomenographic approach, the analysis shifted to also include a collective perspective (Marton, 1981). As the reflective interpretative process proceeded, the quotes were grouped based on similarities and differences and reorganised or added to the different emerging categories. Finally, the three categories were described and labelled. In a readthrough of the transcribed pilot interviews, no new dominant beliefs about learning and teaching were identified.

### **FINDINGS**

Three dominant broad beliefs about learning and teaching were identified. Two teachers (T5 and T6) are associated with 1) *learning as the transmission of important knowledge and teaching as dialogic "chalk and talk"*; two (T3 and T7) are associated with 2) *learning as the application of useful skills and knowledge and teaching*



*as doing and reflection*; the final three teachers (T1, T2 and T4) are associated with 3) *learning as individual social and professional growth and teaching as dialogic collaboration*. A description of the three dominant beliefs follows, illustrated with representative examples of the teachers' espoused beliefs.

### **Learning as the transmission of important knowledge and teaching as dialogic "chalk and talk"**

Within this dominant belief, learning is described as a process of giving and receiving knowledge. Learning is explained as a result of teaching; students learn when the teacher explains and reviews the subject, which is often followed by individual assignments:

- T6 Teaching is when students learn what I intend to teach about. A teacher is a good transmitter. That's most important as a teacher. You can have many credits in a subject, but if you cannot impart the knowledge, the kids will not learn. A teacher is first and foremost a transmitter [...] I think learning and maturing are closely related.
- T5 To learn is what you end up with after being taught. Learning is when you have received knowledge, skills and competence. You have to understand to learn. Understanding is more important than doing.

The examples illustrate how the teachers value imparting knowledge to the whole class and also that learning occurs when students understand the content, but this depends on how mature the students are and whether they have completed the assignments. Indeed, these teachers primarily see themselves as knowledge transmitters. Furthermore, the teachers believe in the national curricula, but add content they find important or necessary:

- T5 I am totally against including learning outcomes which aren't stated in the Curriculum, besides one thing, and that is the capitals of Europe. In my opinion, this belongs to the general knowledge.

Here, teachers with this belief seem committed to the learning outcomes, controlling both what kind of knowledge students learn and how they should learn it. This is further supported by how the teachers explain their teaching as unidirectional communication and the imparting of knowledge. Perceiving

themselves as good imparters and claiming to value dialogue, the preferred instructional strategy is to “chalk and talk”. Besides loving to teach in this way, the teachers argue that “chalk and talk” is necessary because of a heavy syllabus and assessments and that the students are not capable of reflecting and taking part in discussion:

T7 You chalk and talk, and it becomes more like unidirectional communication, from teacher to student.

T6 Teaching is fun as long as I can do the talking. When I teach and the kids say: ‘Yeah, now I got it!’, then it is fun to be a teacher. Sometimes I think it is quite okay that the students keep quiet and do as I say. There isn’t much discussion. Some students aren’t capable of reflecting [...]. Discussions with students depend on how mature they are.

The quotes above may indicate that the teachers primarily choose an activity that gives them a good feeling. Indeed, students are seen as passive recipients of knowledge, sitting still and keeping quiet. Being in control of the situation seems important for teachers within this dominant belief.

A further elaboration about their beliefs about teaching includes memorizing, repetition, assignments, listening and reading, all of which are described as mainly individual work. The textbook is the main source of knowledge. If the students work together, it is described as sitting together doing the same work but individually. Teachers reason that how students work together is not important, while other teachers justify the choice of activities as preferred by the students or that collaboration has no effect:

T6 Many of the students say they prefer working individually. In the next social science lesson, they can either read together or individually taking notes, or they read and write questions.

T3 Collaboration doesn’t lead to learning; you learn when the teacher teaches.

These teachers see little value in student collaboration and that students work primarily individually with assignments. The teachers are fully aware of the importance of variation because it enhances learning and avoids boredom. Variation is preferable when in the form of a competition, but it is mainly explained as how students work:

- T3 Variation enhances learning. We must have some variation [...]. Because I find it very boring sitting still for like three hours. When they are working on assignments, it can be a bit boring. Then we need some variation, now and then. You have to vary, but at the same time not too much variation. So, variation is the way we work, students working by themselves or teaching.
- T6 They find this quite funny, the noun-relay, they have a competitive spirit. [...] I try as hard as I can to vary what we do, but most of the time I give lectures and the kids do tasks. [...] I think it has something to do with me not willing to release control.

These teachers see variation as either teaching or as students working and that variation might weaken the teachers' control. The teachers talk of few motivational strategies, admitting that stimulating student motivation is difficult. The chosen approaches to stimulating motivation are done through using the learning outcomes, competitions (T6 above), teacher engagement and assessments, as illustrated by T5:

- T5 I can only use my learning outcomes, and time will show if I get some questions from the group to work with. [...] I normally get their attention because I have a funny approach to stuff. They want to listen to me because I may say some funny things.

As indicated above, the teachers reveal few motivational strategies, and the strategies they have seem loosely related to the students' individual learning processes.

### **Learning as the application of useful skills and knowledge and teaching as doing and reflection**

Teachers within this dominant belief see learning as the acquisition of the useful skills and knowledge necessary for students to master the skills they will need in the future. They believe that students learn when they participate in practical activities followed by reflection:

- T3 We learn by doing things, building on something you already know. They also need social skills. I think the students learn more from a field trip outside than reading 30 pages in a book, [there is] much more learning.

T2 Learning is when you use something you have newly learned. You should be able to use the knowledge for something, use it in new contexts. You have to build brick-by-brick. Learning by doing and reflection.

These teachers focus on the utility value of social skills and knowledge and see learning as a result of practical teaching based on students' preconceptions. This is also supported by how they describe the importance of learning practical knowledge:

T6 I want to educate them on how to be self-conscious and aware of their responsibility, study technique, behaving properly, and becoming a good and decent human being. Knowledge also, of course, but that does not have priority. They have to be raised into becoming a resource for the society and for themselves. They have to learn how to screw something together or cook a meal. How to rent an apartment or apply for a mortgage or a job.

Typified in the quote above, teachers talk of students as youngsters who need to be equipped and trained into adulthood by the teachers, depending on the teachers' effort to equip their students; hence, teachers play a role as mediators of the knowledge and skills necessary for students to master life.

Elaborating on how to facilitate the knowledge application process, teachers talk of demonstrations, instructions and informal lectures. The teaching includes short introductions, illustrations or modelling by the teacher, followed by student assignments, practicing and experiencing on their own, either in pairs or small groups. According to the teachers, students need to participate in different practical activities, such as arts and crafts, theatre, laboratory work and field trips:

T4 I don't think we have to learn about deciliters and stuff like that by baking a cake, but on the other hand it might provide a possibility to measure stuff. Because the kids don't always comprehend [...] we are so lucky to have visits from our local bank teaching about personal economy.

T1 We have to free ourselves from the textbook and orient towards doing things. This can also be writing, you know. I am convinced that there are many students who have other strengths than theory and should be given the opportunity to flourish in school. We have to get across to those who are

not that good working with Pythagoras in the math book. If we go outside to calculate and explore things, they find the solutions right away. They know how to gut a fish.

Here, teachers recognize that learning processes can be diverse. Indeed, the teachers believe in learning practical skills related to the local context, trying to free themselves from the textbooks. The teachers highly value visits from the local community in the classroom.

Teachers stimulate student motivation by using playful and fun approaches to the content, hoping that extrinsic motivation will lead to intrinsic motivation:

T7 They aren't very excited about old-fashioned 'chalk and talk'. They think it's very nice to cooperate and to be able to do something practical. [...] It is possible to stimulate the competitive nature of the students – be the best or the first. It is possible to do that in the subjects, the extrinsic reward of mastering something, hoping that it will lead to intrinsic motivation.

Hence, these teachers try to meet the students' expectations regarding different instructional strategies and show how the teachers link intrinsic motivation and 'mastering something' together. This is the main reason for varying the teaching and the chosen assessment methods, which are necessary to give all the students the possibility to "show off their best":

T4 We have to adjust the teaching related to variation between lectures and exercises; I have to facilitate methods of assessment.

T7 Every student should be assessed in the way which works best for them.

The quotes exemplify how the teachers facilitate and encourage the students to master an individual skill level.

### **Learning as individual social and professional student development and teaching as exploratory dialogues**

Teachers within this dominant belief see learning as a holistic process whereby students can grow and develop socially, professionally and linguistically. Learning is reasoned to be something students have to actively participate in and reflect on, and it is actively planned and initiated by the teachers:

- T4 Learning is everything: students developing [in] professional, social and linguistic [ways]. As a teacher you want to see how the students are capable of solving, thinking, exploring problems.
- T2 Learning is active work done by the students. We as teachers have to actively facilitate the work as well as we possibly can. It is a mix between social and individual perspectives constituting 'learning'. Students will always be in a learning process.

Learning, hence, is both an individual and collective continuing process where all parties are active participants. According to the teachers, learning happens when students can think and reflect freely and participate in discussions with peers and their teachers:

- T1 You succeed when you facilitate in a way that enables students to explore on their own, giving them tasks that are open-ended and where the students have a certain freedom of choice. It is better if students themselves can explore the knowledge, so that it increasingly becomes more like a part of themselves. I want to be a catalyst enabling the students to come forward with what they know.
- T2 Teaching is an activity initiated by the teacher. The activity can be very varied. I often like to start with common thought processes. A lot of dialogue and conversations with the students.

The quotes above show that the essential part of teaching is to facilitate both students' individual thought processes and reflection and the classroom's common reflections and discussions. These teachers see themselves both as catalysts and facilitators of the different individual learning processes, encouraging students to construct their knowledge either on their own or in collaboration with their peers. The content is perceived as expandable and individually oriented knowledge. These teachers talk about how students should be meta-cognitive, supervising their own learning:

- T2 I want them to be meta-reflective. I want to hear many different answers and many different thoughts, because it is the learning process, which is very exciting for the students also. Not searching for the correct answer right away, but the process leading us to the answer. How to work smarter when doing your assignments, working on their own learning strategies.

The teachers value diversity of meanings and thoughts, focusing on students' meta-reflection to develop learning strategies. Recognizing that students are in a process of exploring and defining themselves as persons and shaping their identity, the teachers support these processes:

T1 They are in a little rebellion, of course. And they are undergoing rebuilding, trying to find themselves and choosing their own paths.

Indeed, these teachers see the students as unique persons developing individually within the community. In addition, the most important factors providing learning are the good relationships between teachers and students and the relationships among students. The teachers express their belief that honesty, respect, diversity and equality are important values in the class community. Pursuing the good experiences and feelings is important for the learning process:

T2 Relations and making sure that the basic elements are in order, only then you can focus on learning and the learning activity. [...] Honesty, that you collaborate well, respect each other; respect how we differ in [our] minds, perspectives and levels – in everything. Be gentle and happy. Be good to each other within a larger cooperation like a society or a class. Everyone has to contribute in their own way.

Implementing values as a basis for instruction is important for creating a good relationship, and these teachers expect the students and themselves to contribute and collaborate for each other's mutual learning process.

Teaching within this dominant belief is also described as a process of different dialogue types. To facilitate the individual and collective learning processes, the teaching is varied, actualized and inquiry based. Teaching includes different instructional strategies to facilitate learning: presentations, exercise, field trips, assignments and different materials to concretize the content. Most of all, the teachers value the dialogue, collaboration, free thinking, reflections and discussions:

T4 You have to vary, always being in a dialogue with the group, a dialogue with the students – what is best for the individual student and what is best for the whole group. I have to get to know the students, their strengths and

weaknesses. How to involve each student to the best for the group. And everyone has to practice on working with everyone.

- T2 The dialogue between me and the students is the premise provider when it comes to defining good teaching. It is all about a combination of plenary review, plenary discussion and thinking out loud about what they should have learned.

The quotations above show how the teachers value, monitor and facilitate the class community, encouraging student collaboration. One of the teachers uses what she describes as a “learning conversation” when presenting content. The following quote describes, among other things, what the teacher values in the conversation:

- T1 Working together, grapple [with] each other, you can do a lot more together than on your own. When we have this learning conversation, I am quite straightforward when hearing an answer or a reflection that I want to appreciate, pursuing a positive circle all the time, getting feedback on what you achieve. To get to know the ‘good feeling’, that is if you receive an assessed test or a good evaluation, and you can experience the good feeling, working and getting good feedback. Then you want to repeat it.

Indeed, these teachers value curiosity, engagement, positive feedback, positive feelings and awareness of one’s own learning and responsibilities, and they encourage mutual sharing and responsibility for each other’s learning, resulting in a ‘*we did it*’ feeling.

To help the students learn, the teachers actualize the content by using real-life examples. This is necessary because these teachers talk of how they educate ‘*world citizens*’ (T2). In the excerpt below, T2 explains how she uses an ongoing international conflict to actualize plenary discussions about ethics and culture:

- T2 What is going to be more and more important, and you can tell by the characteristics of the society, is students learning about different meanings, religions and getting more insight into other cultures than we do now. Using the conflict between North Korea and USA as an example, we can talk about ethics, trying to understand cultures and how they think.

Here, these teachers value students developing tolerance for other meanings, cultures and perspectives.



## DISCUSSION

The present study identified and broadly described lower secondary teachers' dominant content-general beliefs about learning and teaching. The beliefs are broadly in line with previous research when it comes to the content and continuum of dominant beliefs ranging from subject matter orientation to student orientation (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001; de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015; Marton et al., 1993, Säljö, 1979). Overall, these findings show that teachers talk about teaching when asked about learning. Here illustrated by T6, when asked about learning, stated that *“teaching is when students learn...”* This may indicate that some of the teachers have limited language and/or awareness of students individual learning processes. This may also give a reason to believe that teachers beliefs are contextually bound, referring to the action in the classroom when expressing own beliefs about learning and teaching.

The first dominant belief, *learning as the transmission of important knowledge and teaching as dialogic “chalk and talk”*, corresponds to the subject matter orientation (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). The data show that teachers believe learning is a result of teachers imparting important knowledge to students (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001; Marton et al., 1993). This indicates a perception of knowledge as a kind of “package” that is controlled and held by the teacher and transmitted to the students and that relates to a content and teacher-centered view of teaching (Fives et al., 2015). The findings indicate that teachers are committed to the national learning outcomes controlling both the content (what) and the learning process (how). Consistent with a subject matter orientation, these teachers see themselves as transmitters and the students as passive recipients (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). Consequently, student learning depends on the teacher. However, the data also reveal how these teachers actually “love to chalk and talk” (T6), something which adds nuance to the existing perception of the teacher as transmitter. Characterizing students as less able to participate in discussions (T6) or to collaborate with peers (T3) indicates a kind of deficit view of students, believing that these abilities are fixed and not able to change. This view is in line with a reproductive approach to learning (Marton et al., 1993; Säljö, 1979), revealing few beliefs concerning how to facilitate the diversity of students' learning, stimulate motivation, collaborate and vary the teaching. The findings indicate a weak correspondence with the demands needed for obtaining 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (NOU 2014:7; NOU 2015:8; OECD, 2009) and participating in CPD (de Vries et al., 2013).

The second dominant belief, *learning as the application of useful skills and knowledge and teaching as doing and reflection*, is competence-oriented. This orientation partly connects to both the subject matter and the student orientations (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). Here, learning is believed to be the process of participating in different practical activities and reflection, referring to the levels of learning as the application (Marton et al., 1993) and development of skills/understanding (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001). This is also supported by how the teachers believe that they must equip students with the competences necessary to master life. Student learning seems to depend on the teachers' and local actors' mediation of the knowledge and skills prescribed by the national curricula and the local context; this may indicate a teacher-oriented view of learning (Hancock & Gallard, 2004), hence a subject matter orientation (de Vries et al., 2014). The data show few variations and motivational strategies, indicating a teacher-centered view of teaching (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015; Hancock & Gallard, 2004). However, these teachers also focus on the utility value of the content and the practical activities in school, which indicates a student-orientation (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015; Pedersen & Liu, 2003). Overall, these findings show a meaningful approach towards learning (Marton et al., 1993; Säljö, 1979) combined with an approach towards teaching as the development of skills/understanding (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001). The findings suggest that this dominant belief meets the demands of collaboration and communication (NOU 2014:7; NOU 2015:8; OECD, 2009) and that teachers are participating in CPD to some degree (de Vries et al., 2013).

The third dominant belief, *learning as individual social and professional growth and teaching as dialogic collaboration*, corresponds to the student-orientation (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). The beliefs about learning relate to previous research describing learning as the development of new insights and changing a person (Marton et al., 1993), hence being about transformation (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001). This is supported by how the teachers perceive themselves as catalysts (T1) facilitating the students' holistic growth and change and that they acknowledge students can learn in different ways. Here, students change because of the teachers' effort, not in a controlling but rather in a supporting way. Several data illustrate that these teachers believe in students' freedom of choice when exploring knowledge, constructing and extending their own knowledge base, referring to the transformative levels of the learning and changing of a person (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001; Marton et al., 1993); this may indicate

a student orientation (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015). As the data show, these teachers' beliefs about teaching show their beliefs to be teaching as transformation (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001) and the teaching as student-oriented (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives et al., 2015; Pedersen & Liu, 2003). The data indicate that teaching is believed to be both an individual and collective process that develops free thinking and meta-reflection, collaboration and the mutual sharing of knowledge. Here, the teachers recognize the importance of how the class community and relations are fundamental parts of individual learning processes, referring to the transformational level of both learning and teaching (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001) and learning as collective meaning-making (Paakkari et al., 2011). These teachers use classroom interactions to boost individual motivation. Together with how they speak of creating curiosity, actualizing the content and varying the teaching to facilitate diversity refers to a student-centered approach towards teaching (Fives & Gill, 2015). Overall, these teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching correspond to the student-orientation (de Vries et al., 2014; Fives & Gill, 2015) and meet the demand for learning vital future student skills: collaboration, communication, curiosity and critical thinking (NOU 2014:7; NOU 2015:8; OECD, 2009). The findings also indicate that these teachers participate in CPD (de Vries et al., 2013).

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The findings show that some of the dominant beliefs about learning and teaching include few concerns about how to facilitate and motivate different student learning processes within the class community. Concerning future prospects of student competencies as outlined in the document on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (NOU 2014:7; NOU 2015:8; OECD, 2009), it is worrying that student collaboration, communication, critical thinking and curiosity seem more or less absent in some of the teachers' articulated beliefs. Given the strong relationship between beliefs and behavior, students will probably have limited learning possibilities in some of the teachers' classrooms (Dewey, 1933; Fives & Gill, 2015; Kagan, 1992; Nordenbo et al., 2008; Pajares, 1992). Having participated in several national educational developing programs over the last decades, teachers still seem to have beliefs corresponding to conceptions of learning and teaching dominant almost 20 years ago (Boulton-Lewis et al., 2001); this indicates that prior developing programs have provided limited opportunities for teachers to explore and challenge the beliefs underlying their practices.

The current study might be utilized as an analytical tool for teachers' individual reflections or as part of teacher development programs aiming to raise awareness of the range of beliefs held by teachers, as well as help in exploring alternative ways of thinking and indirectly changing teacher approaches towards teaching. Future research should explore how to facilitate both student teachers and current teachers in developing and maintaining beliefs that reflect a student-orientation. Referring to prior research on how teachers' beliefs relate to participation in CPD (de Vries et al., 2013; de Vries et al., 2014; Timperley et al., 2007), in future programs, or in daily life in school should provide the possibility for teachers to explore their own beliefs about learning and teaching.

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## CHAPTER 9

# Low stakes and high temperatures

A study of music performance assessment in teacher panels in terms of micropolitics

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### ABSTRACT

For instrumental teachers, who often have differing views and intentions concerning music education and who teach students individually, assessment by social moderation presents particular challenges. Not only is the assessment meeting an arena in which multiple aspects of teachers' professional identities intersect, including a threefold role of teacher, assessor and colleague, but, like all social interactions, this is a context in which individuals present themselves to each other, making room for various kinds of vulnerability and power. This study draws on theory from micropolitics and ethnomethodology to explore the discussions of instrumental teachers in a Norwegian upper secondary school as they assess student performances on their principal instrument. Results suggest that the teachers were enabled and constrained by a range of different interests with regard to making assessments in grading meetings. They used available situated and situational resources to establish epistemic authority, for example privileged knowledge of student, domain expertise, and projection of the spontaneous, "pure" judgment as unassailable. Assessment discussion is revealed as a layered social interaction in which teachers use available resources strategically to achieve their aims, with implications for student outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

For instrumental teachers, who often have differing views and intentions concerning music education and who teach students individually, assessment by social moderation presents particular challenges. Not only is the assessment meeting an arena in which multiple aspects of teachers' professional identities intersect, including a threefold role of teacher, assessor and colleague, but, like all social interactions, this is a context in which individuals present themselves to each other, making room for various kinds of vulnerability and power. Any attempt to separate the activity of assessment from the relational interaction between participants would therefore be to neglect important dimensions of the situation, yet this has not been a focus in the assessment literature. Drawing on theory of micropolitics (Ball, 1987; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) and Goffman's (1971, 1972b) concepts of face-work, I attempt to provide insights into these issues through an exploration of the discussions of instrumental teachers in a Norwegian upper secondary school as they graded individual student performances on principal instrument.

### Research in the field

Recent research in music performance education highlights the ways in which the views and practices of instrumental teachers are informed by different professional and institutional discourses (Angelo, 2012; Gaunt, 2011; Nerland, 2007). Teachers' aims for students range from the development of flexible skills for all-round musicianship, to induction into the specialist skills and dispositions of professional musicians (Angelo, 2012; Ellefsen, 2014), and aspects such as gendered discourses have been problematized (Green, 1997; Rowe, 2008; Zhukov, 2008). The research also reveals student-teacher relationships as close and complex (Ellefsen, 2014; Gaunt, 2011; Schei, 2007).

That assessing music performance is problematic is reflected in the many studies addressing aspects of the validity and reliability of assessment systems, for instance on the merits of using pre-ordained criteria and atomistic or holistic assessment (e.g. Mills, 2005; Stanley, Brooker, & Gilbert, 2002); the construction and usage of criteria and rating scales (e.g. Abeles, 1973; Wesolowski et al., 2017; Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013); and multifarious influences on judgment (e.g. Elliott, 1996; Platz & Kopiez, 2013; Wapnick, Ryan, Lacaille, & Darrow, 2004). Links have been made between student outcomes and teachers' prestige



(Maugars, 2006), and between severity of assessment and the student-teacher relation<sup>1</sup> (Davidson & Da Costa Coimbra, 2001).

Research into music teachers' perceptions about assessing performance reveals ambivalence. While there are concerns about validity, equity and consequences for students' self-confidence and motivation, there are also perceptions that the system of social moderation provides enhanced validity and reliability and enables the development of teachers' assessment literacy (Oltedal, 2018; Vinge, 2014). Studies of authentic contexts using moderation have found that teachers have difficulty in verbalizing and exchanging conceptions of quality, with some criteria remaining implicit (Davidson & Da Costa Coimbra, 2001; Gynnild, 2015; Stanley et al., 2002). While the large body of research in this field concerns Western art music, Zandén (2010) suggested that this problem is even larger for performance in popular genres, linking this hypothetically to resistance to framing popular music in the same conceptual terms as art music, and the notion of opinions about musical quality being a private matter, involving taste.

These studies reveal music performance assessment as a complex and multifaceted field, and social moderation as a context with the potential for both enhancement of teachers' assessment practices and the crisscrossing of various different interests, having implications for student outcomes and collegial relations. Given the evidence in assessment literature about the conflicting interests that can imbue assessment contexts (e.g. Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall, & Serret, 2010; Orr, 2007; Yorke, 2011), there is surprisingly little research on these tensions in the field of music performance education. In the current climate of accountability, gaining more understanding of the inner workings of social moderation in this field seems highly pertinent.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Social moderation as micropolitics

Social moderation is held to be a system assuring assessment quality and professional development (Maxwell, 2010), defined as "a socio-culturally structured collective activity that involves teachers in a coordinated effort to develop shared meaning" (Adie, Klenowski, & Wyatt-Smith, 2012: 225). However, a review by

1 In Davidson & Da Costa Coimbra's (2001) study of assessment of vocal performance it is suggested that teachers can be more severe on their own students, while those who know their students pastorally might be more lenient.

Thornberg & Jonsson (2015) finds that results are unclear on the effects of social moderation, and Orr (2007: 647) describes the assessment process as a “messy practice” involving contextualized power relations. While a view of the teacher panel as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) emphasizes the development of particular interpretations of a mandate through participatory interaction, Wenger (1998) refuted the idea that such communities are democratic arenas in which decisions are reached freely and fairly. Rather, such tasks are likely to involve micropolitical activity, defined as a dynamic process in which power is operationalized and legitimized according to context, depending on the interests, resources and strategies of those involved (Ball, 1987). Previously seen as the unrespectable “dark side” of schools as professional organizations (Hoyle, 1982: 87), a more positive view of micropolitics is that this is not only an inevitable but a natural and necessary part of the life and development of the organization (Achinstein, 2002; Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991).

Three categories of professional interests that might be present simultaneously within the interaction are described by Kelchtermans & Ballet (2002)<sup>2</sup>. *Cultural-ideological interests* denote values, ideals and norms that are acknowledged as legitimate and defined through processes and interactions within the professional culture. For teachers, these involve both pedagogical principles specifically related to a subject domain, and universal ideological principles such as equality and justice (Ball, 1987). *Social-professional interests* concern the quality of interpersonal relationships in the school context, including both teacher-student relations and those between colleagues, and often seem to weigh heavily in teacher decisions (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). *Self-interest* infers the construction of professional identity, as in “the sense of self or identity claimed or aspired to by the teacher” (Ball, 1987: 17), involving self-esteem and framings of self, as well as perception and definition of the tasks of the teacher (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). While more than one category of interest is often at stake in specific interactions, the protection of self-integrity and professional identity is central (ibid.). The interactive character of the assessment meeting puts teachers in a vulnerable position in which their actions can be “perceived, interpreted and judged” (p. 111) by other colleagues. This has particular relevance for a context in which the interaction requires the individual to articulate

2 Material interests and organisational interests are also among the categories identified by Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002).

a subjective, intuitive response informed by connoisseurship (Eisner, 2003) and the kind of practitioner knowledge that is always richer in information than verbal descriptions can provide (Schön, 1983: 276). These concepts seem particularly apt for instrumental teachers coming from “private” teaching practices in specialist domains.

### **Epistemic authority and face-work**

At the micro-level, the decision-making work of the teacher panel requires participants to use a variety of resources as they negotiate rights concerning who is entitled to have or evaluate specific types of knowledge relevant to context (Telenius, 2016). The term *epistemic authority* (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) is used in describing the ways a particular view becomes established as more significant or authoritative than another within a moment-to-moment interaction. While legitimate authority is found in the formal structures and roles of the organization, epistemic authority denotes “an incessant situated accomplishment” (Mondada & van Dijk, 2013: 598) which can be challenged and negotiated as participants position themselves through the operationalization and legitimization of various “situated” and “situational” resources (Goffman, 1983) according to context. The former are contingencies of habitus in the form of participants’ predispositions and knowledge, formalized status and role which might have implications for the situation, including such factors as gender. The latter are the contingencies of “procedural form” (ibid.), involving opportunities within talk for navigating the situation in one’s interests, using domain-specific knowledge and conversational practices such as turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), preference organization (Pomerantz, 1985), and repair organization (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Viewed in this way, micropolitical activity is a matter of agency based upon the affordances within the situation. However, there are certain principles fundamental to interaction of the individual with the social that micropolitical theory is in danger of glossing over; Goffman’s work on social interaction can give important insights to a micropolitical approach.

For Goffman, social intercourse is constrained and conditioned by an inherent moral contract of reciprocal respect between social actors (Treviño, 2003). Using the metaphor of Ritual, Goffman (1972a) explains how the “sacred self” is affirmed through rules of courtesy and deference. The importance of “face” as a sacred object of the self is evidenced in *face-work*, involving the individual’s

attempts to guide and control the impressions others have of her, and the cooperation and collusion of others in order to affirm this impression. At every stage of a conversational encounter, participants have obligations to be sensitive to the consequences of the interaction on both their own and others' selves, and to avoid anyone losing face (Williams, 1980: 220). In the event of embarrassment, face-work involves the corrective work of aligning behavior with face, in order to maintain the "ritual equilibrium", either through defensive action to demonstrate self-respect, or protective action, using tact and rules of courtesy in order to save others' face (Goffman, 1972b). Such action, involving the handling or management of talk through patterns of verbal and non-verbal action, is itself expected to be achieved without apparent effort and without becoming a topic of conversation. In this way, ritual elements structure and impinge on interaction, and talk can be seen not only as a medium of communication, but as an activity in which acts and gestures comprise "communication about communication". Concomitantly, while any interaction involves its own particular constellations of power relations, certain ways of talking might have "cultural salience" according to context, for example a tendency for women's conversation to be more collaborative and less competitive than men's (Coates, 2003). These conceptions of interaction enable a deeper understanding of how cultural-ideological and social-professional interests, and self-interest (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) are interrelated and might overlap in a workplace context such as teachers' assessment meetings.

### **The context of the study**

In Norway, the three-year elective upper secondary program, Music, Dance, Drama (MDD) offers a specialized arts subject in combination with subjects qualifying for entry to general higher education. The music program includes principal instrument as a subject domain, traditionally organized as one-to-one tuition. Instrumental teachers, who often work part-time in several educational settings, might see their students only for principal instrument instruction, while others may have more extensive knowledge of students through teaching in several disciplines (Ellefsen, 2014). The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006) stipulates broad goals for the subject, devolving responsibility for interpreting these to the local level. Term tests are commonly arranged, giving students the opportunity to perform a self-chosen repertoire for a teacher panel, consisting of the teacher of the student

(hereafter termed ToS) and other teachers with appropriate competence, such as similar instrumental expertise. The work of the teacher panel in this context thus contains an inherent asymmetry with regard to the knowledge each teacher has of the student in question, representing interesting challenges. In the present study, I have undertaken an exploration of instrumental teachers' assessment meetings from a perspective of micropolitics, using the above concepts and guided by the following research questions:

- *RQ1: In what ways is epistemic authority American spelling: operationalized in the social moderation of instrumental teachers?*
- *RQ2: In a perspective of micropolitics and social interaction, what challenges can be identified for instrumental teachers participating in school-based social moderation?*

## **METHODS**

The article draws on empirical material from an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) at an upper secondary school in Western Norway, in which 14 assessment meetings were video recorded between December 2014 and November 2015. Observation of teachers' assessment meetings can give insight into an authentic context of music performance assessment with the potential to provide insight into defined issues for which the case itself is a "functioning specific" (Stake, 2000: 437). The case school was selected through purposive sampling, seeking a range of instruments and a system for social moderation that could yield about five meetings per term, as well as geographical accessibility. Relevant permissions were obtained from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data, the school leadership, music department, and individual teachers across instrument groups. Due to possible third-party identifiability, informed consent was procured from students who were mentioned in the assessment meetings, with data concerning the two students who did not give consent removed from transcriptions.

The 14 meetings yielded 10 hours 37 minutes of video data, during which 87 student performances were assessed, averaging at 7 minutes of discussion time per performance. Because several meetings were scheduled simultaneously, I was not present at all meetings, setting up the recording equipment beforehand, and for two meetings only partial data was procured. These variations in the research situation are acknowledged as limitations. Eighteen teachers participated in the study, 11 males and 7 females, with various Nordic and non-Nordic backgrounds

and expertise variously ranging from orchestral instruments to guitar, electric bass, piano and singing. For all the meetings, panels of 3-5 teachers grouped by similar instruments came directly from the student performances to the meeting-room in order to discuss and grade the performances. While formalized lists of criteria were not used, most teachers had written comments during the performances and brought these to the meeting. At each meeting, one teacher had a fixed role of moderator with responsibility for managing the interaction and ensuring a decision was reached. The moderator role was decided in advance by the teacher groups, favoring teachers with long experience, and the same teacher often had this role over several meetings. Normal meeting structure was for each teacher to give an account of the performance, with the ToS coming last. Whether grades were proposed in this initial account or not, varied from meeting to meeting.

The recordings were transcribed verbatim using elements from Jefferson (2004) and including non-verbal behavior I considered to contribute to meaning-making. The transcriptions were sent back to participants for verification in order to ensure that I had heard correctly with respect to diction and pronunciation, rapidity or overlapping of speech, and the use of domain-specific terminology. According to Oliver, Serovich & Mason (2005), a transcriber hears the recording through her own cultural-linguistic filters, affording her “significant interpretive and representational power that could affect analysis and results.” Sending the transcriptions seemed particularly important for two reasons: my own instrumental expertise had its domain-related limitations, and, while a range of geographical accents was represented, Norwegian is not my first language. There was, therefore, also a reciprocity in assuring participants of the authenticity of the data I would be using in my analyses.

My analytic approach was abductive, based on multiple readings of the data and progressively informed by readings of literature in what Layder (1998) termed a “zigzag” process (p. 76). Following an initial coding process, close readings were made of passages I identified as “hotspots”, inspired by MacLure’s (2013) use of the concept of “glowing data” (p. 661). These were points of the interaction that seemed to hold tensions with regard to epistemic direction, having significance as sites for multiple interpretative framings. The analytic framework uses theory and tools of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Gibson & Lehn, 2018). The purpose of this methodology is not to uncover “what this means for this person”, but how individuals display to one another

what they think through their use of interaction rights, and how they use these meanings for social purposes (ibid.).

In this article, three excerpts from the study are explored in detail using constructs as described. All data are translated to English by the author, and fictitious names are used for all participants.

## FINDINGS

The three excerpts illustrate significant ways in which participants use resources strategically in the management of interactions in the assessment meetings. After a brief introduction explaining the local context, the interaction is presented in numbered utterances with speaker identification, and then discussed.

### Excerpt 1: Epistemic positioning (M01)

In this interaction, four teachers of guitar, bass and percussion convene to discuss student performances. Tom, the percussion teacher, is also the moderator of the meeting. The first performances to be discussed at this meeting are those of Adam and Ben, who each performed a side-drum *étude*, and then played a rock duo together on drum-set. Although meetings generally follow a rule that the ToS waits until the other teachers have given their accounts of a performance, Tom starts the discussion as follows.

- 1 Tom So, in Year 2 I have one that can get a six (.) So:: and:: the other two won't be getting sixes
- 2 Max You're probably talking about Adam
- 3 Tom No, I'm talking about **Ben**, about Ben, yes (.) But Ben, he played outside of his comfort zone today (.) He played something he's ehh:: actually quite unfamiliar with (.) so::
- 4 Max (hhh)
- 5 Tom Yep (.) Now let's see (.) There's the side-drum bit (.) a formality (.) and suchlike and: yes, and that's it (1,0) Or do you want to-
- 6 Pete Nah:: I've written:: that ehh (1,0) OK for those (.) There is some flow missing and forward drift in what they're playing, but ((glances at Tom)) OK
- 7 Tom Hm, no, Adam could have practiced a bit more (.) but ehh:: but:: it's OK
- 8 Rob Ehm:: I think Adam had best flow
- 9 Tom Yehyeh ((shrugs shoulders))
- 10 Rob <at least on the side-drum, and::

A turn-by-turn description of this episode shows how Tom uses his double authority as both moderator and ToS to give information he has privileged access to as ToS at the outset of the interaction.

Turn 1: Tom produces an evaluative statement predicting potential levels of achievement for three of his students for the next year, presenting this as fact, not opinion, yet not mentioning names. (Whether he is referring to discourses of talent/ability, or students' work ethics, or a combination, is not clear). In this way he sets up a frame of reference, having the first position statement of the sequence, and invites the participants to see one student as having more potential than the others.

Turn 2: Max responds by offering information on his own positive evaluation of Adam's performance, affiliating with what he assumes is Tom's opinion.

Turn 3: Tom makes a negative response, correcting Max and naming Ben as the student he meant, and reinforcing this by repetition. He then produces an evaluative statement presenting information about the conditions for Ben's performance (playing something unfamiliar). This is information he has access to as ToS and is presented as fact.

Turn 4: Max makes a small sound demonstrating that the previous utterance did not go unnoticed.

Turn 5: Tom produces an affirmative, which might be a reinforcement of his previous statement, or an opening for a new topic. Either way, this projects certainty of something, said with the authority of his combined role of ToS and moderator. His next statement is the set phrase "Let's see", an imperative to himself which nevertheless focuses attention on the managerial role. He then presents the side-drum *étude* as a formality, i.e. not part of the test to be graded. However, after a short pause, he produces an incomplete question to the panel, making the status of the *étude* in the assessment ambiguous.

Turn 6: Pete's negative is a confirmation that he will not include the *étude* in the grade. Then, referring to his written notes, he offers an evaluation of the *études* of the two students, claiming epistemic authority by referring to domain-specific knowledge (on flow and forward drift). His evaluation does not differentiate between the two, and he makes eye contact with Tom as he ends up with a non-committal, though positive evaluation.

Turn 7: Tom's response of "Hm, no" suggests a combination of both alignment and skepticism to Pete's evaluation. He then supplies new information about Adam, referring to perceived lack of practice. In this way, knowledge to which Tom



has access as ToS is used to give negative valence to one student and it is stated as fact, not opinion. He ends the turn by making an evaluative statement (“it’s OK”) that could be understood to mean either that the performance was adequate, or that Pete’s evaluation is adequate. Either way, Tom claims epistemic authority as the person with particular expertise for stipulating requirements for quality.

Turn 8: Rob carefully initiates his first turn with a minimal token. Producing an evaluative statement as an opinion rather than fact, his claim to epistemic authority is thus nuanced by an indirect acknowledgment that others might think differently. Nonetheless, his reference to domain-specific knowledge is a warrant for authority. What he says resonates with Max’s indirect evaluation (turn 2) in placing Adam’s performance higher than Ben’s, but this is the first direct articulation of this standpoint.

Turn 9: Tom aligns to Rob’s statement with physical accenting. He is agreeing, but expressing that Rob is only telling him something that is both “old news”, and inconsequential to him. In this way, he positions himself again as the expert and downgrades the authority of others.

Turn 10: Rob quickly adjusts his previous statement. By saying “at least on the side-drum”, he opens up the possibility that Adam might be considered the better performer also when it comes to the main piece. Having already heard that Tom considers Ben to be a potential top achiever, Rob’s comment opens a different scenario here, with the potential for more serious conflict with Tom.

Throughout this excerpt, Tom uses his formalized authority as moderator to take the floor and provide a certain backdrop for the discussion of Adam and Ben’s performances. A clear picture is drawn of Adam as the less able and the lazier of the two students, and of Ben as a potentially high-achieving student who has taken the risk of going outside his comfort zone. In micropolitical terms, Tom operationalizes the situated resources of formal authority and expertise, as well as contingent situational resources of conversational practices, with an immediate agenda we can to some extent extract: to influence his colleagues to view Ben in a positive light. In the process, Tom positions himself as having primary rights to evaluate the performances, downgrading others’ authority to do so. While his actions can be understood to be in the interests of providing fair judgment for both his students, he is also displaying an understanding of his role as ToS having high epistemic authority and a legitimate agenda of influencing colleagues.

The other participants can be understood to be at a disadvantage in view of Tom’s combined role as ToS-moderator, but they nevertheless display their

independence and manage to avoid confrontation (turn 4, 6 and 8), keeping an equilibrium in which face is not overtly threatened for any of the actors.

Interestingly, Pete's reference to his written notes is one of many such allusions in the data corpus, and sets the written account apart as the documentation of a spontaneous response to the performance, a "judgment-in-time". This aspect of separateness or distance gives the possibility for a teacher to use this artefact in different ways, bracketing it as a "pure" judgment made on the basis of professional discernment (Schön, 1983), as well as disclaiming liability for it. This has importance for the next example.

### Excerpt 2: Suspension of epistemic claims (M06)<sup>3</sup>

This interaction occurs at the end of a meeting, four months after the previous example, in which Tom, Pete and Max grade five performances on guitar, bass and percussion. From the start of this meeting, Pete has been a stringent marker, commenting that he has "not gone Rambo with the grades", and his proposals have consistently been below the others'. However, when the moderator Tom summarizes the tallied grades at the end of the meeting, Pete understands that he has placed himself in a difficult situation with regard to his own student. A crisis is played out, with the additional pressure of Max needing to get to his next teaching appointment.

- 1 Max You must just say the grades, 'cause I gotta run
- 2 Pete Just say it again
- 3 Tom Adam, five minus, Ben, six to five. Cass, five plus. Eric, five plus. Felix, five minus (5,5) I feel that Felix has been poorly paid for level of difficulty, actually (.) I think we, we, Felix (.) he performed better than Adam
- 4 Pete If, yehyeh, you said Adam, didn't you, then (.) In relation to **Adam**, he performed better than Adam, yeh (.) Ehh:: ((leaves through notes))
- 5 Max ((to Pete)) But if we think about the combos, I think Felix played very well in Adam's piece (.) and had a very good combo in his own piece, didn't he? But (.) ((to Tom)) let's get him up to a five ((tries to give his notes to Tom, who resists))
- 6 Tom No, don't go (.) This here is important, it's important (.) We're looking
- 7 Max Ehh, is it going to be corrected (.) up to five, maybe? Just decide, five minus
- 8 Pete ((to Tom)) I had both of them ehh: on the same grade
- 9 Tom OK (.) Hm::

3 Three turns are omitted from the excerpt on grounds of relevance.

- 10 ((Max sits down again))
- 11 Pete And now Adam has got (.) was it five (.) plus?
- 12 Tom Five minus
- 13 Pete Five minus (.) And Felix is getting five minus, as well
- 14 Tom Well (.) I'm dizzy with all this
- 15 Max OK, so if you adjust Adam's grade ehh:: in relation to Felix, just to get that little difference between the two of them?
- 16 Tom Mm: ((non-committal))
- 17 Max We'll take Felix up to five
- 18 Tom **Look**, you have five-to-four, and five-to-four for Adam, and I have five (.) Whereas, for Felix, he has five, five, and five-to-four
- 19 Max Should we just::
- 20 Pete What?
- 21 Max We are **stuck** ((laughs slightly))
- 22 Pete Yes, no, I am stingy, stingy today (.) But ehh (.) what happens if I give ehh:: give Adam ]ehh::
- 23 Tom [No, look (.) but do you feel it's right with a five-minus?
- 24 Pete No, I don't really feel it's right for Felix with a five-minus (.) But I haven't given him a better grade here, either, in a way (.) But in relation to the others-
- 25 Max ((looks at the clock, suddenly stands up)) No, I have ]to go
- 26 Tom [No:
- 27 Max I have to **go**, man. What is the discussion, we're agreed!
- 28 Tom No, we aren't agreed, I mean-
- 29 Max ((sits down again, shakes his head))
- 30 We are not done
- 31 Pete Compared with the others, see, Felix (.) he ehh:: he should maybe (.) he ehh:: he is a candidate who should maybe be over ehh:: yes
- 32 Tom Mm (.) Put him one higher? 'Cause really he is a strong-
- 33 Pete He is strong (.) Ehm::
- 34 Tom I don't think we should pull down another student because of this (1,0) See, I feel we shouldn't put Adam lower because it doesn't feel right with Felix's grade (.) I'd rather we give Felix a five than pull Adam down
- 35 Pete ((writing)) Yeah, no, give him a five then, and I'll give him up, so he can get himself a five
- 36 Tom OK ((writing)) (.) We'll do that.
- 37 Max So it's gonna be a five?
- 38 Tom It's a five for Felix
- 39 Max That's what I said five minutes ago. ((gets up again)). OK, are we done, then? Now I have to go.

In the course of this episode, epistemic authority is suspended in a delicate set of maneuvers in which both Pete and Tom have something at stake. All three teachers express discomfort with an outcome of the same grade for both Adam and Felix, and Tom, using the nuanced epistemic verbs “I think”, “I feel”, starts the work of persuading Pete to adjust his grade. This work requires Pete to reconcile his conflicting loyalties between his high standards and equity for his own student, Felix. This might not seem so difficult if it were a case of blaming his colleagues for being too lenient. However, after looking in his papers, Pete sees that his initial evaluation was the same grade for the two. To adjust the grades now involves retracting the spontaneous judgment-in-time, something he has valued as a product of reflexive professional practice (Schön, 1983). Tom’s comment at turn 9 suggests that he is sensitive to Pete’s predicament, but might equally signal concern about another, related matter. Indeed, while Max has been pragmatically offering various solutions to the problem (turn 5, 7, 15, 17), one suggestion is for Pete to lower the grade for Tom’s student, Adam. That the grade for Tom’s student might be at stake is confirmed at turn 23, when Tom cuts Pete short and appeals to him to consider Felix’s grade without the normative comparison. Pete, admitting the grade seems too low, yet still hanging on to the written notes as a “true” representation of his standards for achievement, again links the problem to the difference between students. At turn 31, he falteringly begins a rationale for Felix’s grade to be raised, finally making the decision (turn 35), after Tom has reasoned both that Felix is a “strong” student, and that to lower Adam’s grade is not a solution he would support.

This episode illuminates problematic issues at the heart of the system of social moderation. Without a common calibration of criteria and standards for quality, assessment processes can run into trouble. The normal bargaining tone of the assessment discussions is replaced in this interaction with a crisis in which something, or somebody, has to “give”. The problems are partly due to one teacher’s independent stand for his principles, reflecting complex relationships between crossing interests (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), but also giving a glimpse of the sacred self and the attempts of all parties to maintain ritual equilibrium (Goffman, 1972b). In this situation, epistemic authority is suspended, and Pete holds the key to its restitution. Despite the solution-oriented contributions of Max, who is not ToS for either of the students discussed, he offers these only as suggestions. The turning-point comes at turn 31, when

Pete begins to reason that he can raise Felix's grade, and it is at this point Tom resumes his tactics of persuasion through the use of epistemic resources.

### Excerpt 3: Aspersions and reparation (M07)

This excerpt is from a meeting of three female singing teachers, Jen, Kathy and Ingrid. As a panel, they take pride in being a cohesive group who have "tuned into each other" and often agree. This interaction comes at the end of a lengthy discussion about a performance involving the song 'Defying gravity', from the musical *Wicked* (Stephen Schwartz, 2003). While Jen and Kathy have described the performance as somewhat uneven, Ingrid, who is both moderator and ToS, disagrees. She has reasoned that the song is both unusually demanding and is little-known in Norway, adding that it means "incredibly much" to the student performer. Kathy has suggested a grade five-minus for the performance, and Ingrid repeats how difficult this repertoire is.

- 1 Ingrid It's difficult to (.) it's very difficult to compare such different demands (.) And to understand some of the challenges (.) It's totally, it's almost **impossible** (.) For that, they would have to sing in the same (.) deliver something sort of in the same genre (.) That seems, that seems wrong, to me (.) yes-
- 2 Kathy At the same time I'm very concerned that one shouldn't attempt bigger songs than one can master (.) So is, if (.) one shouldn't automatically get a plus just because the piece is so difficult
- 3 Ingrid No (.) Yes (.) <that's not what I'm saying, that's not what I'm saying (.) That would be too stupid!
- 4 Kathy It's that (.) <no no, I know, I know you don't mean that (.) not **that**, yeh-
- 5 Ingrid That's not what I'm talking about
- 6 Kathy So, eh, but, no but, well (.) I can go with a five there
- 7 Ingrid Now, I think the clock is beating us
- 8 Jen ((laughs))
- 9 Ingrid Now to [name]. I don't think we'll manage to be finished by quarter to, actually. But it is rather tricky with these (.) I took, I think this forum, it's very important for us
- 10 Kathy ((nods))
- 11 Ingrid Instead of just (0,5) And that we do listen to each other a little, that I think is important (.) [Name], who's student is she? Is she yours, Jen?

In this interaction, Ingrid's interest in her student receiving a higher grade leads to a chain of face-threatening moves, and it is Kathy who must make the repair. Ingrid begins by claiming epistemic authority in reasoning that the premises for

assessment should allow for varied repertoire of different levels of difficulty, yet that understanding and comparing such differences is difficult. In this, she is indirectly saying that particular competence is required in order to assess performances at multiple levels. By the end of the turn, she has oriented her talk to how unfair it would be to limit students to narrower repertoire, giving this argument force by referring to her own sense of justice. Kathy counters this with the argument that students should not be rewarded on the grounds of difficult repertoire, if they cannot master it. In this way, Kathy has claimed epistemic authority to produce a new, altered version of what Ingrid said. Instead of a rationale acknowledging the need for teachers with appropriate assessment competence, Kathy's version assumes such competence, but points out the folly of rewarding poor choice. Ingrid takes defensive action by being offended, and the next four turns comprise denial, retraction and repair as Kathy restores equilibrium by protective action (turn 4) and raising her grade (turn 6). The shifting elements of this interaction seem to illustrate how assessment practice is prey to conflicting interests. Although both teachers base their arguments on cultural-ideological premises, when Kathy adjusts her grade it seems to be in order to pacify Ingrid, rather than because she herself is persuaded of the merits of the case. The epistemic rupture has thus only been superficially repaired, and when Ingrid hurries on to the next topic this prompts a laugh from Jen, who has not taken sides in the matter. Nevertheless, in her legitimate defining power as moderator, Ingrid then shifts focus again, commenting on how she values the assessment forum and the way the teachers "listen to each other a little." In this way, she moves the discourse to a "safer place", in which the potential for social moderation as a forum for the development of assessment literacy seems to be the focus.

## DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were to investigate how epistemic authority is operationalized in a context of instrumental teachers undertaking social moderation, and to identify challenges for this type of school-based assessment. From the three excerpts, assessment discussion is revealed as a layered social interaction in which teachers use available situated and situational resources strategically to establish epistemic authority, for example privileged knowledge of student, domain expertise, and projection of the spontaneous "judgment-in-time" as unassailable. Although there is little talk about the music performances themselves, the examples illuminate issues that are central for music teachers'

assessment practices. The *topic* of talk reflects the participants' cultural-ideological interests (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) and a shared aim of making valid assessments and providing equity for their students, yet in the interplay of collegial relations this aim is clouded and diverted, and social-professional interests and self-interest (*ibid.*) are heavily implicated in the moderation process.

Of particular significance are the roles of moderator and ToS. Excerpt 1 illustrates how high epistemic authority can be established through micropolitical activity, as Tom uses the combined role of moderator and ToS to influence his colleagues. The moderator's responsibility for managing the assessment discussion legitimizes use of situational resources to direct the interaction. Thus, Ingrid, in Excerpt 3 also has the advantage over Kathy first by asserting epistemic authority, then taking offence, and finally defining a new epistemic narrative of the assessment meeting as an arena for teacher development. Nevertheless, the availability of these resources is by no means exclusive, and even within these brief excerpts it is clear that legitimate authority is only half the story – indeed, it is often the other participants who carefully manage the ritual equilibrium (Goffman, 1972b). The importance of such face-work is shown in a particularly tricky situation in Excerpt 2, when Pete experiences a crisis of conflicting loyalties. In the delicate work of moving towards a compromise, epistemic claims are suspended, and it seems that even in a context such as a low stakes term test, there is much at stake. Interestingly, while the three examples come from same-sex groups of teachers, the careful face-work of each excerpt reveals both men and women as competent and sensitive handlers of interactions.

Several challenges emerge from this analysis related specifically to the assessment of music performance. In an understanding that assessment involves connoisseurship and the invoking of professional discernment (Eisner, 2003; Schön, 1983), the individual's spontaneous judgment can become a problematic "black box" for the assessment discussion. This can involve distancing oneself from a judgment and projecting it as an independent resource produced more purely and spontaneously in response to the performance, superior to a recollection and reconstruction of the experience. Conversely, such judgments can be devalued to something less trustworthy than a reflection made after the event, indeed, after the whole sequence of performances.

In addition to this, the asymmetric relations within an assessment panel represent challenges, for example when there is pressure to acquiesce to a dominant view. Orr (2007) described assessment dialogue in terms of a "dance" or

a “skirmish”, noting that teachers with seniority seldom changed their grade proposals, while others seemed to “reckon the cost” in connection to the chances or of succeeding. While the context of an assessment meeting may have its own procedural form and rules for politeness, the present study reveals instrumental teachers using the contingencies of the situation with care, attempting to avoid direct conflict and disagreement. Particularly challenging is the possibility that tensions between cultural-ideological interests, socio-cultural interests and the maintaining of “face” might lead to the adjustment of students’ grades.

A third general challenge is the practical parameters of time limits for the assessment discussion itself. The particular construction of the assessment meeting as social interaction in an institutional context involves the imperative to arrive at a result, as illustrated in the mounting pressure “to be finished” in Excerpt 2 in which Max has another appointment to meet. As communities of practice, the assessment teams have a task to fulfil from which they cannot reasonably abdicate.

While there might be a “truth regime” where assessment ostensibly is practiced according to “rules”, the study demonstrates that there are openings in the restricted space of the assessment discussion for multiple alternative functions. Indeed, while a panel might develop particular axiomatic principles for assessment, the social interaction between teachers is of crucial importance for assessment outcomes.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

What can these findings mean for the practice? They demonstrate that there is a need to think seriously about the claims made for social moderation, and the challenges this poses for instrumental teachers who work in variegated contexts, often without membership in the larger community of teachers in school. Although the assessment meeting is an important arena for both the development of assessment literacy (Adie et al., 2012) and of collegial relations in a profession marked by isolation, there are challenges which should be considered. In the climate of accountability, the ability of music teachers to verbalize conceptions of quality is seen as an urgent matter, yet equally it is feared that a “doctrine of verbal clarity” may lead to trivialization and the undermining of music subjects in schools (Zandén, 2013). However, it may be that in focusing on inadequate vocabulary and articulation of quality, we miss something more fundamental: by glossing over the power relations implied in the interactions



of social moderation, important issues that we need a better understanding of, go unaddressed. These issues have relevance not only for the field of music education and music teacher education, but also for teachers in general.

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## **PART 5**

# **Vocational Education**



## CHAPTER 10

# Is action research about developing individual approaches to help young dropouts valid? — A Position Paper

Ragnvald Holst-Larsen, Oslomet

### ABSTRACT

I argue that participatory action research (PAR) is valid in a quality-based research project about dropouts, in small groups with an individual approach. All research must be thorough in data collection but PAR must be especially careful to add other voices to the research, and not only tell the story as the researcher experiences it. Different theories of validation in PAR are discussed, and finally I put forward some criteria and guidelines that must be followed to ensure a higher recognition of the validation among the research community. Research on dropouts is difficult to plan because of the need to adapt the work methods and the pedagogy in the process to the young person. Even in these individual approaches it is important for the research community to see good, valid examples documented in a thorough way so that they can be trusted.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is a position stand for research on small groups of dropouts using different methods of data collection connected to action research. The term validation is sometimes used in qualitative research but often replaced with terms like truth, value and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some researchers still believe that valid is a better term because:

the term validity offers immediate recognition and understanding within the scientific community [...] Validity is broadly defined as “the state or quality of being sound, just, and well-founded” (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 527)

Leung L (2015, p. 325) defined validity in qualitative research as “appropriate-ness” of the tools, processes, and data. He continued: “Whether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology is appropriate for answering the research question, the design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, and finally the results and conclusions are valid for the sample and context.”

I think it is important to use the term “valid” in qualitative research and not let this be something used exclusively for quantitative research. I will use some examples from my own ongoing Ph.D. project on dropouts, and connect this to other researchers that have been working with this topic of validity. Finally, I will try to present a checklist for validity in action research projects.

## **RESEARCH ON SMALL GROUPS**

Qualitative research has often been related to small groups and this is maybe one of the main differences from quantitative research that normally has a large pool of participants from which to gather data. One of the main challenges in working with small groups is to conduct the research in a way that it can be understood and trusted by other researchers using other methods. Whilst quantitative research can give the percentage of dropouts in schools, qualitative research can give information about the distinct nuances among young people that drop out, giving some indication as to why they gave up on school. This is not possible in quantitative research with its generalizations. For me, it is important that both these research approaches are seen as valid. Subjective data has its own value, and stories from young people experiencing difficult years as dropouts are also important data.

Action research is a part of this contribution to qualitative research. It is not a method but it is an approach, a way of working that differs greatly in how the research process is done. One problem has been that many researchers have made their own version of Action Research. I have chosen to look at contributions from great researchers in the community of quality researchers in the same “tradition” as Elliot (1991), Carr & Kemmmis (1986), Reason & Bradbury (2008), Hiim (2010) and my main focus has been on McNiff (2017). Several researchers using Action Research face distrust concerning the question of the validity of their research. It is important to discuss some of these arguments. I agree with some of the concerns raised by critics in how some action researchers are failing



to prove their validity. This paper will try to position my understanding of the validity of research on small groups with action research.

### **PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)**

Some of the researchers in this tradition do not use the word “participatory” in front of “Action Research.” For me this is a very important word, and I position my understanding of Action Research to strongly involve participation from and with others.

I will start with a definition of PAR from Reason & Bradbury (2001, p. 1):

A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview ... [and bringing] together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities.

For me it is important that at least four parts must be included in a definition of PAR: 1) Participation with others in research, 2) Collaboration in work, 3) Individual approach related to actions taken, and 4) Action and reflection together. This definition from Reason & Bradbury (2001) includes more, and other scholars bring in other topics, but these four parts have been instrumental for why I have chosen to work with this approach. It is important to consider that I, as a researcher, am not alone in the research – I need assistance from students, co-workers and other participants, as well as other researchers, to do a good job in PAR through collaboration. I also think that it is essential that these four parts should be documented with good methods of data collection that include the “voice” of every participant ensuring that both positive and negative experiences appear. I will come back to this discussion later when I look at validity in PAR.

McNiff encourages teachers to undertake simple “practitioner research”, “teacher attempts” or developmental work. One’s own practical work is documented, reflected and displayed to other professionals. McNiff is clear that “action” is something other than “work” and “labor”, which she believes are the 3 parts that make up a “teacher’s work” (McNiff, 2017). She clarifies the expectations of such work by saying “you state the reasons and the purposes for

your actions [...] thinking becomes a main form of action” (McNiff, 2017, p. 19). Reason & Bradbury (2008, p. 14) have a similar definition: “Action research is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice...”

One should not attempt to prove anything, but rather state that there are reasonable grounds for supporting one’s claim to knowledge. McNiff (2017) believes that one’s “diary” notes, emails and other notes created when learning something new must be considered as data in such a process. As to what others have learned, it is important to prompt them to tell stories of how they acquired new knowledge through your teaching. Following this one needs to reflect and analyze. Elliot (1991, p. 13) shows us examples of “how to facilitate the professional learning of teachers through action research [...] a process of reflectively analyzing his experience.”

My experience is that PAR has the possibility to give answers to more questions than just those connected to learning, just as Eikeland (2012, p. 270) discussed the “surplus value”:

In general, action research needs to be more explicit about its theoretical and research methodological prospects, pretensions, and ambitions, and in what ways it can deliver ‘surplus value’ compared with other research methods.

As a researcher I am obliged to make my research “true”, but do I need to use the term “valid.” I think that Whitehead & McNiff (2006, p. 2), pointed out something important:

The practitioner research community needs now to do serious work on identifying its own criteria and standards of judgement to show both that they know what quality means in action research and also that they are capable of articulating those standards and producing theories that stand the test of the standards in achieving originality, significance and rigor.

Reason & Bradbury (2008) discussed the same challenge and argued that it is not useful to use validity as a measure in all research. They argued that a key dimension of quality is to be aware of one’s choices, and to make those choices clear, transparent and well-articulated to yourselves, to your inquiry partners,

and, when you start writing and presenting, to the wider world. “This is akin to the ‘crafting’ of research that Kvale (1995) advocates [...] away from ‘validity as policing’ toward ‘incitement to dialogue’” (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 7).

Before I go on discussing the validity of PAR, I will give some details of my own Ph.D. project. At the end of the paper, I will try to show how this challenge of validity has been of great importance to me.

### **MY PH.D. PAR ON DROPOUTS**

I am conducting an action research project on a vocational didactic program in a training office in the sales profession. The project is for young people who have dropped out of high school after one or two years. The goal is to achieve the motivation to learn through practical challenges without experiencing it as a school. In my vocational didactic program, it will nevertheless be important to include Math, English, ICT, the environment and Social Studies as I believe these are included in the skills needed to become a good sales worker, as well as an active and conscious citizen. The students will attend 2-6 weeks full time in my training office to learn the basics of behavior at work, and some subjects related to sales. One important aspect is to learn values concerning time, appointments and the value of money and assets that are necessary in a job. The leader in the company needs to know that the young person will arrive at the right time and be able to take some responsibility. After these weeks with basic training, the youngster will work four days a week in a company related to sales. I will attempt to find companies with some products or services that are interesting for the young person. Motivation for education is better when the young people can relate to the tasks involved in their work. It is also an important goal to spend time discussing real work tasks with the leader in the company, and other goals for training related to sales work.

### **VALIDITY IN PAR**

Fundamental to conceptualizing validity in PAR is the challenge of how to make judgements about the quality of the research. Altrichter et al. (1993, p. 74-81) argued that four key questions should be considered when formulating criteria to evaluate AR quality:

Have the understandings gained from research been cross-checked against the perspectives of all those concerned and/or against other researchers? Have the

understandings gained from research been tested through practical action? Are the research aims compatible with both educational aims and democratic human values? Are the research design and data-collection methods compatible with the demands of teaching?

Karen Watkins (1991) discussed Argyris and Schon's (1991) view on this. They noted that appropriate rigor also involves a critical test of the claims of the researcher.

Perhaps the interventions "work" because other conditions in the context (e.g. financial exigency) force them to and hence they are not likely to work again in other contexts. They call for, at a minimum, an operational description of what the researcher actually did, and a critical reflection on the claims or attributions he or she makes about the achievements of the process. In this way, the research can be replicated and competing explanations (the negative case example) may be examined for the research results. (Watkins, 1991, p. 7)

I find these criteria very interesting, because I believe that action research must also be able to be replicated to check if other explanations could be possible for the findings.

Stephen Kemmis looked to Habermas and his way of talking about validity.

The four most important presuppositions are (a) publicity and inclusiveness: no one who could make a relevant contribution with regard to a controversial validity claim must be excluded; (b) equal rights to engage in communication: everyone must have the same opportunity to speak to the matter at hand; (c) exclusion of deception and illusion: participants have to mean what they say; and (d) absence of coercion: communication must be free of restrictions that prevent the better argument from being raised or from determining the outcome of the discussion. (Habermas in Kemmis, 2008, p. 127)

It is difficult to consider whether a project is valid or not, especially based on one or two researchers working with only one or two young people in an individual approach. To do such a job there must be some criteria. Firstly, simply spending 12 months working with a person does not qualify a researcher to take or advise the appropriate actions. The first criteria must be external validity through a critical

friend (Stenhouse, 1975) and a resource group where one could discuss findings, or a conference to which one invites fellow researchers to discuss one's findings. If there would have been room in this article, I would have included material about "Future workshop," which I admire. In this text it will only be possible to include a short comment from Nielsen (2006, p. 112): "The social experiments related both to Search Conferences and Future Workshops clearly includes, an ambition of external validity of their results and of analytical generalization."

The SAGE handbook of Action Research has several articles that relate to validation in PAR. In one article Heinz Moser proposes some criteria that I think would be important:

The first one was transparency, which meant that all the participants were able to trace the whole process of the PAR, its functions, aims and methods. The second criterion was compatibility of the aims with the methods and means with which they are reached. The researcher who participates in research with the community cannot claim the traditional researcher's distance and thus have a view as an independent observer. Thirdly, the participant researcher should be able to claim that she knows the situation better than does any outside observer and that she has honestly set forth all the aspects of which she had become aware. (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 43)

Another version of criteria is based on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985), adapted to a use in PAR without using the concept of validity (Watkins, 1991, p. 15).

- 1) Trustworthiness/Usability: How can we both establish confidence in the research finding while developing both action and research skills among participants and ensuring that the solution works in context?
- 2) Relevancy/Applicability in Context. How do we determine the relevance of findings to the needs of the problem context?
- 3) Dependability/Competency. To what extent are we able to determine the adequacy of the process and are problems solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system?
- 4) Normative/Reductive: How consistent are procedures and outcomes with the normative theory guiding the research? In other words, do participants learn, are situations transformed as predicted by the theory?

I consider these useful points as practical tools in my own research. However, I will discuss some critical comments on these points. Eikeland (2006, 2012) had several, especially regarding trustworthiness. He referred to Mishler's (1990, p. 420) conclusion that "validation is the social discourse through which trustworthiness is established." He is totally against this idea that validity can be reduced to just any such social discourse. Eikeland (2006, p. 41) said:

...that the primary purpose of an action research process is hardly to find out whether whatever is said also gets done either ... but rather to find out whether what actually gets done (or not done) by Action Researchers and others, is also what is said, not "covered up" in some way by language. In order to secure validity, research processes must be opened up, not covered up.

Eikeland was very concerned with openness before and throughout the research: "Action research is normative, and requires [...] its own preconditions" (Eikeland, 2006, p. 38). He also used two expressions to show the difference between working "onstage" and critical reflection "backstage." He thinks that it is vital to show both these parts for any organization that wants to make a valid PAR project:

...on stage, we perform our roles and appointed tasks. Backstage, we discuss and analyze critically experiences from performing on stage, we practice to improve, we switch roles and plays, etc. Thus the action research cycles shifting between reflecting and acting receive organizational form. (Eikeland, 2006, p. 38)

Howe and Eisenhart (1990, p. 3) commented that research must be "anchored wholly within the process of inquiry." Another question is: "Are warranted conclusions obtained about some important educational questions?" (ibid, p. 6). Watkins (1991, p. 14) also gave some questions that all PAR researchers should ask themselves before and after doing their work:

Was it reflexive and dialectical? Was it ethical and collaborative? Did participants learn new research skills, attain greater self-understanding, or achieve greater self-determination? Did it solve significant practice problems or did it contribute to our knowledge about what will not solve those problems? Were problems solved in a manner that enhanced the overall learning capacity of the individuals or system?

To strengthen my argument in that PAR with dropouts could be valid, I will propose to do some additional work with the data collection and the presentation, based on an idea I studied from the Allan Feldman (2003) article on validity in self-study, which is a research form with many similarities to PAR. The first criterion is important because it generally encourages a researcher to use several ways of collecting data. Not only in logs, reflections, minutes from meetings and other written texts, but also film, video and installations and pictures that could show some of the process :

Extend triangulation beyond multiple sources of data to include explorations of multiple ways to represent the same self-study. Because one data set can lead to a variety of representations it is important to show why one has been chosen over the others ... However, multiple representations that support and challenge one another can add to our reasons to believe and trust the self-study. (ibid, p. 4)

The last criterion is possibly the most important:

Provide evidence of the value of the changes in our ways of being teacher educators. As I have discussed, self-study is a moral and political activity. If a self-study were to result in a change in the researcher's way of being a teacher or teacher educator, then there should be some evidence of its value. A presentation of this evidence can help to convince readers of the study's validity. (ibid, p. 4)

When transferring this approach to PAR, the greatest evidence of my research being valid should then be the results I can show from a presentation of the results in text, but also on video, film and pictures published on internet where the young people have an opportunity to explain how their lives have changed.

Watkins (1991) refers to Argyris criteria of generalizability of the knowledge.

If action research is going to be accepted as science, validity criteria will have to demonstrate validity in both action and research communities. Only Argyris appears to do this in that he adds to the preceding criteria the idea of generalizability of the knowledge produced in action research, specifically the knowledge of intervention or of interpersonal action. (Watkins, 1991, p. 8)

## IMPORTANCE OF EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY WHEN WE DISCUSS VALIDATION

The search for validity in PAR made me interested in the connection between epistemology, methodology and ontology as a basis for all research.

The methodology justifies the methods used, which are the practical activities of research: sampling, data collection, data management, data analysis, and reporting. These concepts are interconnected: epistemology influences and justifies methodology, which again influences and justifies methods, and methods produce knowledge, which means that methodologies have epistemic content. (Helskog, 2014, p. 16)

My human vision, and my epistemology will ultimately be what determines my methods. I have so far worked with 8 unique people who each have their own story, but they have many common features. As an action researcher, I know each one of them very well. They might call me in the middle of the night and ask if I can lend them money to pay-off a debt. They use all the “tricks in the book” to avoid practicing or working towards an exam. How should I evaluate their development and my efforts in helping them? A test with criteria to find a score could have measured their performance before and after they got help in my project, but I believe that it is ethically immoral to set the same requirements for pre and post tests on those who struggle in many ways in life. The question is really what I should test and why, if it does not help them to get a job.

For a long time I thought that every research method would give the same type of answers, but Carter and Little (2008) gave an overview and a model of how epistemology influences the relationship between the researcher and the participant, they commented: “Epistemology profoundly shapes the researcher’s conceptualization of the participant in data collection and analysis.” (ibid, p. 8). They discussed a situation where the research would be done very differently only out of the epistemological way of thinking between two professors advising their students: “He (*the professor*) is more likely to encourage her (*the researcher*) to interact freely with them (*the young people that are research on*), to be herself, within the constraints of what is ethically and socially appropriate, to form a caring relationship with them, to allow the unexpected to happen, and to be alert to multiple ways of seeing.” (ibid, p. 8 explanations in parenthesis). They also explained how another professor with another epistemological view instructs



his students differently, and gets totally different results. I have through these examples understood that the results, and also the validity of the research would depend on how I must thoroughly explain both my methodological and epistemological stand.

Can validity be used when measuring human dignity, joy, expectations of life, care and quality of life? It is important to point out that no researcher who would sit for a week, or 10 weeks, with us to look at me and my students would have the same level of insight as I have after working closely together with them professionally for 12 months. So what must I do to be respected and understood as a researcher with valid research? I could say that my research is correct, recognizable, real, relevant and of high quality, but is that enough? After working with this paper, I have found that “validity” is really not the problem – it is about doing things the right way. Kvale (2007, p. 4) said that “Validation rests on the quality of the researcher’s craftsmanship throughout an investigation, continually checking, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings.”

### **PAR IS OFTEN A HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT MAKES VALIDATION EVEN MORE DIFFICULT**

The question is then really what would be regarded as criteria for validation for a researcher “walking” with people in everyday life. Traditionally a distance to the person researched to maintain objectivity is a core value. If an action researcher should follow the criteria on distance it would not be possible to do PAR. But if the criteria were more general, such as the right use of research methods, then validity in my view should be possible. We must accept that walking with a person through a landscape, and not just walking, but also choosing to be together with them and other persons, makes the researcher not only a part of the journey, but also a guide in the journey. In PAR one of the core values is that the researcher is a person with professional knowledge. This means that the researcher works in landscapes that are well known. As a professional he can lead the person he is helping not only by choices that this person “feels” are right, but the researcher can use his professional judgement to discuss with the person which choices are possible, and through this process help them to make a choice based on the options that the professional has made clear. This kind of counselling is well known to PAR researchers (cf. The World Bank participation sourcebook, World Bank 1996) and it gives the research quite a different outcome than it would if the researcher had only listened to the subject, and just followed their way

through the landscape. A mathematic calculation would show us that even after just 5 different choices, there are actually several hundred “paths” that could be taken. The action researcher should have a high formal education, but even with much experience they should work together with other well-trained people in other professions. This is possibly also one of the strengths of PAR – looking at people in a holistic way (World Bank, 1996). This would mean that we would not separate a problem area into different disciplines, but we would try to find people from different disciplines to cooperate in solving one problem. This would mean that when we arrive at a place in the “landscape” where we understand that knowledge about learning is not enough, we would try to work together with other professional people, get them to help us find the right path, and to find several choices again to help the person.

Regarding validation, this would mean that we, in a holistic way of working, would be better off understanding one person’s problem in a “true” way than another researcher looking at one theoretical detail of a large problem area.

### **FINDINGS: A LIST WITH 10 DIFFERENT CHECKPOINTS TO MAKE PAR VALID**

In this position paper I have tried to show how important it is for PAR to show the “backstage” and also be transparent about its process. I have looked at many different views on validity and found that it is possible to claim that the work is valid as long as one follows some important “rules” or checkpoints. Validity is not only related to quality of data but to the whole research process. Since it has been difficult for me to find this list of checkpoints in one place, I have created the following new list from the theory presented above. I have reduced it to 10 checkpoints that I believe will be valuable to me in my further research and I hope this list will be of help to others also.

- 1) Transparency: All the participants are able to trace the whole process of the PAR, its functions, aims and methods.
- 2) Perspective: Have the understandings gained from the research been cross-checked against the perspectives of all those concerned and/or against other researchers?
- 3) Relevancy: How do we determine the relevance of findings to the needs of the problem in context? Are the research design and data-collection methods

compatible with the demands? Is there compatibility of the aims with the methods and means with which they are reached?

- 4) Values: Are the research aims compatible with both educational aims and democratic human values?
- 5) Professionalism: The researcher who participates in research with the community cannot claim the traditional researcher's distance and thus have a view as an independent observer. He/she should be able to claim that he/she knows the situation better than any outside observer and that he/she has honestly set forth all the aspects of which he/she had become aware.
- 6) Ethical: Was it ethical and did it give equal rights to engage in communication: everyone must have the same opportunity to speak to the matter at hand; reflexive and dialectical.
- 7) Triangulation input and output of data: Extend triangulation beyond multiple sources of data to include explorations of multiple ways to represent the same study. Present results in text, but also on video, film, pictures and social media with explanations of how lives have been changed.
- 8) Open research: We must find out whether what actually gets done (or not done) by Action Researchers and others, is also what is said, and this it has not been "covered up" in some way. How consistent are the procedures and outcomes with the normative theory guiding the research? A criterion must be external validity through a critical friend, and a resource group that one could discuss findings with or a conference where fellow researchers are invited to discuss your findings.
- 9) Practical test: Does the "solution" work in context? Have the understandings gained from the research been tested through practical action? Did it solve significant practice problems or did it contribute to our knowledge about what will not solve those problems?
- 10) Learning outcome: To what extent are we able to determine the adequacy of the process and are problems solved in a manner that permits ongoing learning of the individual or system? Are situations transformed as predicted by the theory? Did participants learn new research skills, attain greater self-understanding, or achieve greater self-determination?

These checkpoints will not only help the research to be valid, but it will also help us to remember the great responsibility we have in working with people that we often meet in problematic situations. We must never be tempted to use

people to prove our research questions, but we must work together with them to help them in a democratic way so that their voice can be heard. For me this is a core value in PAR.

We must also remember that all qualitative research has its problems with validation in several ways, for example the small number of people that are involved. Quantitative research can also struggle with validation sometimes – even if their schemes and questions are thoroughly worked out, there might be misunderstandings, or mistrust by the person answering. All research must live with this challenge that even if we think we are well-prepared and have taken validation seriously, faults can appear because of cultural misunderstanding, problems concerning power questions, and sometimes because people have no interest in the research.

### **IMPLICATIONS AND CHALLENGES IN MAKING MY PH.D. PROJECT VALID VS CHECKLIST**

It is difficult to argue what the main reasons are for young people becoming dropouts, and which activities can help them get back “in the game.” In my current work I have seen that for some youngsters it is important just to be seen as a person, and not as a problem. For other youngsters they only need some more practical examples from a real company to understand the theoretical principles of a textbook from school. Other youngsters will never understand all the theory that is necessary for a full “school” education in sales, however, a company would be able to teach all the skills that are needed to be an excellent employee.

I have tried to work with validation of my project in many ways. Each week, the students will attend an action research meeting where we consider what we have done the last week, and at the same time make plans for the next week based on the students’ wishes, thoughts and what they have experienced. Similarly, the business leaders who are involved in the project will be invited to a breakfast meeting each month to offer their reflections on the project and, together with the students, agree on the work going forward. The actual data collection will last for about 12 months and through this time there will be 12 major actions of which the last 6 are only work related. The main focus of the data collection is to get feedback and work together with leaders and students to promote good vocational didactic programs in training offices and in business. I will also use an “expert group” of teachers and other people working on similar projects to comment and criticize my work three times throughout

the project. The goal of this group is to give inputs, from different perspectives than those of the participants and my coworkers. The framework for the project will be linked to the didactic relationship model (Hiim and Hippe, 2001) where the participants and I will discuss the different parts of each action. It is also important in the data collection to get the participants to reflect on Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) 5-step model for vocational competence as well as theories from Lave and Wenger (1991) on Communities of Practice.

The main challenge in my work is not to find practical ways to teach these different youngsters how to become a salesperson. The problem is more as a researcher to find a way to generalize other challenges and find ways to resolve them. Some of them are only minor “issues” that some unlucky youngsters have had in their childhood and that, in some cases, have never been understood by the school, but have become THE problem for the child. These problems are related to lack of trust in other people, difficulties in understanding social situations, problems related to anxiety and addiction. Some of the problems with “dropouts” can also be related to other learning disabilities, ADHD and other diagnoses (Rumberger, 2011). Still, most young people just need to have some extra time, a person that is willing to listen to what they say and a person that can be creative and find other solutions to learning than just reading a book.

I have tested the checklist that I have developed in my own practice and discovered failure in completion. This taught me valuable lessons in adjusting collection of data and practice moving forward in my research.

My challenge will be to bring other professionals into my work and discuss my findings with them in regular meetings throughout the project “Building the capacity to systematically alternate between performing “onstage”, and reflecting critically “backstage”, may challenge organizations stifled by routines and habits, or led by power and rhetoric. However, this is what research validity needs” (Eikeland, 2006).

These youngsters need individual help, and our problem as a society is that individual help is expensive and demands a great deal of resources. I will try, through my action research, to show that it is worth the extra efforts and costs to invest in these youngsters. I believe that my research will be valid even if I will not be able to generalize a group with dropouts as many do. I do not think it is right to generalize persons as subjects, but still it is possible to generalize some of their “attributes”; behaviors, problems, ways of acting, problem-solving methods and relationships to public systems such as school and health. In the

same way I will try to see if there are any ways of generalizing my methods for teaching, helping and guiding them.

Many action research studies appear to abort at the stage of diagnosis of a problem or the implementation of a single solution strategy, irrespective of whether or not it resolves the presenting problem (Watkins, 1991). In my research I would be very thorough in explaining the result of the PAR, showing the young people's stories, their "path" and the results together with my thoughts and theirs. To this we will also add discussions on what went wrong and other situations where we should have made other choices together, and situations where my professional judgement was not good enough. Watkins (1991) claimed that both validity of process and of outcome must be established. Her findings emphasize action over research, which is the major reason methodologists have tended to suggest that action research is not really research at all, but a kind of applied problem-solving process.

## CONCLUSION

PAR struggles to be understood as a research approach with the possibilities to validate its work, and maybe researchers have themselves to blame as they have presented research without opening the "backstage" process. Another reason may be that the methodological and epistemological ideas have not been clarified. Some researchers have an idea that PAR is just telling the story of a researcher in Action. I have tried to show that good PAR work will need much (extra) work to qualify it as valid, but I am convinced that it is worth the extra effort. I have produced a checklist to try to assist myself and others to do a thorough job as a PAR researcher, so when my validity is challenged, I can refer to having used these 10 steps. It is important for me to show that my research on dropouts is valid in the same way as any other research on dropouts. This is my position.

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## KAPITTEL 11

# Læreplanen og det profesjonelle handlingsrommet til mat- og helselæreren

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### SAMMENDRAG

Denne artikkelen setter søkelyset på hvordan lærerne oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet, og artikkelen inngår i en doktorgradsavhandling som undersøker opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet. Studien er en sammenlignende casestudie av tre fulldelte barneskoler. Datainnsamlingen ble gjennomført på 6. trinn på hver skole og fulgte samme struktur: først individuelt intervju med mat- og helselærer, deretter intervju med rektor og til slutt innhenting av dokumenter. Handlingsrommet er presentert gjennom de personlige rammene, de indre rammene og de ytre rammene.

Resultatene viste at lærerne hadde et stort profesjonelt handlingsrom i planleggingen av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget. Videre viste resultatene at de indre og de ytre rammene hadde mindre betydning for hvordan lærerne oppfattet handlingsrommet, mens lærernes personlige rammer hadde stor betydning. Lærerne hadde stor autonomi når de planla opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget, og de var tilfredse med en slik autonomi.

### INNLEDNING

I norsk grunnopplæring må rektorer og lærere forholde seg til læreplanverket,<sup>1</sup> som er en nasjonal forskrift som regulerer hvilken opplæring som skal foregå i skolen (Engelsen, 2009; Gundem, 2008; Hopmann, 2008; Jarl, Kjellgren & Quennerstedt, 2007). Ifølge Aasen et al. (2012) fastsetter læreplanen mål for

1 Læreplanverket består av generell del, prinsipper for opplæring, læreplaner for fag og fag- og timefordelingen. Gjeldende læreplanverk har fått navnet Kunnskapsløftet (LK06).

opplæringen og gir lærerne metodefrihet og frihet til å velge lærestoff. Dette gir lærere et profesjonelt handlingsrom, som det forutsettes at de utnytter. Gudem (1990) hevder at læreplanen må studeres i et samfunnsperspektiv, som noe som formes og tolkes i en samfunnskontekst, i tillegg til i et skolefaglig perspektiv (som noe som regulerer opplæringen). Goodlad (1979) omtaler samfunnsaspektet som «læreplanens sosiopolitiske område», det vil si hvordan læreplanen fungerer i den samfunnsmessige sammenhengen den er en del av.

Goodlad, Klein og Tye (1979) beskriver ulike nivåer som kan benyttes for å fortolke læreplanen. I denne artikkelen presenteres de fortolkningsnivåene som er mest sentrale for det profesjonelle handlingsrommet, altså ideenes læreplan, den formelle læreplanen og den oppfattede læreplanen. Ideenes læreplan er de samfunnspolitiske og fagligpedagogiske idéstrømningene som ligger til grunn for læreplanen (Engelsen, 2009; Øzerk, 2010). Den formelle læreplanen (Goodlad et al., 1979) er her læreplanverket (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). Den oppfattede læreplanen (Goodlad et al., 1979) er den formelle læreplanen slik den oppfattes av ulike aktører, som rektorer og lærere. Ifølge Øzerk (2010) spiller rektorenes og lærernes pedagogiske grunnsyn og samfunnssyn sammen med erfaringsbakgrunn en viktig rolle i omformingen av den formelle læreplanen til den oppfattede læreplanen. Den oppfattede læreplanen kan avvike i større eller mindre grad fra den formelle læreplanen fordi innholdet tolkes ulikt (Goodlad, 1979). Goodlad et al. (1979) beskriver avvik eller «gap» mellom læreplannivåene som at lærerne fra tid til annen underviser etter «en læreplan som ikke eksisterer». I undervisningssammenheng kan det oppfattes som at læreplanen gir lærerne et handlingsrom til å velge pedagogikk og metodologiske strukturer (Aasen et al., 2012). Det handlingsrommet vi ønsker å belyse i denne artikkelen, er ikke det faktiske handlingsrommet, men det handlingsrommet lærerne mener at de har, og det er dette handlingsrommet vi ønsker å belyse i denne artikkelen. Forskningsspørsmålet er: Hvordan oppfatter lærerne det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet? Denne artikkelen inngår i et doktorgradsarbeid knyttet til mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet.

Læreplanverket (LK06) har vært gjeldende i ti år. Det er derfor interessant å undersøke hvordan læreren oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i faget. Læreplanen i mat og helse beskriver formålet med faget, faginnhold og kompetansemål som uttrykker elevenes kompetanse

etter 4., 7. og 10. trinn. De fem grunnleggende ferdighetene<sup>2</sup> er integrert i fagplanen. Timefordeling beskriver omfanget av faget i skolen, men planen gir ikke nærmere anvisning for hvilke trinn timene skal tas ut på, eller hvordan timene skal fordeles mellom 1.–4. trinn og 5.–7. trinn. Skoleeier kan dermed fastsette timefordelingen innenfor rammene som er gitt (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006).

## BAKGRUNN

### Teoretisk rammeverk

Det vi kaller handlingsrom i denne artikkelen, er omtrent det samme som det som ofte kalles *agency* i engelskspråklige tekster (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Priestley, Biesta, Philippou & Robinson, 2015). Ifølge Helleve, Ulvik og Smith (2018) bygger tanken om «agency» på «at mennesket handler intensjonalt, det vil si i tråd med egne mål. Dette skjer gjennom personlige tolkninger og tilpasninger av rammevilkårene i interaksjon med omgivelsene». Ifølge Bandura (2006) er *agency* den muligheten det enkelte menneske har til å gjennomføre en målrettet handling. Overført til skolen og lærere vil det handlingsrommet være knyttet til lærernes egne mål, oppfatningen av læreplanen og rammevilkår, og den muligheten læreren oppfatter at han eller hun har når for eksempel undervisning i mat- og helsefaget skal planlegges. Biesta, Priestley og Robinson (2015) beskriver hvilken rolle «tro» (*beliefs*) spiller i lærernes oppfatning av handlingsrom. Ifølge Biesta et al. (2015) og Wallace og Priestley (2011) vil lærernes oppfatning og gjennomføring av læreplanen i stor grad handle om hvilket pedagogisk grunnsyn de har, og i den sammenheng inkluderes tro, vilje, autonomi, frihet og valg. Lærernes pedagogiske grunnsyn vil dermed kunne avgrense eller utvide handlingsrommet, og dette grunnsynet blir da viktig for hvordan lærerne oppfatter handlingsrommet. Tidligere forskning (Toom, Pyhältö & Rust, 2015; Van der Heijden, Geldens, Beijaard & Popeijus, 2015) viser også til at lærernes pedagogiske grunnsyn i opplæringen har stor betydning for hvordan de handler, slik at egne forståelser, oppfatninger, muligheter og mål ivaretas. Hvordan lærerne handler, vil i tillegg være avhengig av deres egne erfaringer (Bandura, 2006; Priestley, Edwards, Priestley & Miller, 2012). I Buchanans (2015) begrepsapparat er handlingsrom muligheten til å undervise

2 De fem grunnleggende ferdighetene: lesing, regning, skriving, muntlige og digitale ferdigheter.

i tråd med egen fagkompetanse og egne holdninger og være den læreren man ønsker å være. Men i hvilken grad man opplever å ha dette handlingsrommet, avhenger ifølge Buchanan av hvilke erfaringer man får tidlig i yrkeskarrieren, siden nyutdannede ofte gir opp idealene sine i møte med ytre rammer og mål. Priestley et al. (2012) og Imants, Wubbels og Vermunt (2013) mener at to lærere kan oppleve handlingsrommet ulikt selv om konteksten er lik, fordi de har ulike erfaringer i skolen.

Lærernes handlingsrom kan også beskrives med utgangspunkt i ramme-faktorteori (Arfwedson & Arfwedson, 1995). For eksempel vil overordnede styringsrammer for opplæringen i skolen kunne sies å være det Arfwedson og Arfwedson kaller «ytre rammesystemer», mens slike ting som lokale forventninger, skolens kultur og undervisningspraksis er «indre rammesystemer». I denne artikkelen bruker vi rammefaktorteori for å undersøke hvordan lærerne oppfatter handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet.

### **Tidligere forskning**

Tidligere forskning viser at det er et fåtall av de lærerne som underviser i mat- og helsefaget, som har utdanning i faget (Hjälmeskog, 2013; Holthe & Wergedahl, 2014; Lagerstrøm, Moafi & Revold, 2014). Mat- og helsefaget oppfattes av lærere som et praktisk fag, noe tidligere studier har sett i sammenheng med lærernes manglende fagkompetanse (Benn, 1996; Hjälmeskog, 2013; Holthe & Wergedahl, 2013; Höijer, Hjälmeskog & Fjellström, 2011). Veka, Wergedahl og Holthe (2018) fant at lærerne vektla det å lage mat som den viktigste komponenten i faget, og at matoppskriften var dominerende for planlegging og gjennomføring av opplæringen. Helleve et al. (2018) fant at lærerne langt på vei handlet i tråd med egne mål. De tar sine egne valg og beslutninger innenfor det de opplever som sitt handlingsrom, når de for eksempel planlegger opplæringen.

## **METODE**

### **Design og utvalgsriterier**

Som metode i studien har vi valgt det Yin (2007) kaller kvalitativ sammenlignende casestudie.

En kvalitativ sammenlignende casestudie er ifølge Yin (2007) en undersøkelse der man kan undersøke mer dyptgående hvordan mennesker samhandler innenfor sin egen kontekst. I denne studien bruker vi metoden til å undersøke

mer dyptgående hvordan mat- og helselærerne oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet. Sammenlignende casestudie ble foretrukket for å få tak i variasjoner i lærernes erfaringer og oppfatninger. En casestudie sikter ikke mot å generalisere, men mot å gi en forståelse av det som blir undersøkt (Postholm, 2010). Tre barneskoler i Hordaland fylke deltok i studien. Utvalgskriteriene var at skolene skulle ha samme skoleeier, og at det var fulldelte skoler. Videre var det et krav at skolene hadde mat- og helsefaget på 6. trinn. Skolene ble valgt ut ved strategisk utvelgelse blant fulldelte barneskoler oppført på kommunenes hjemmesider. To av tre skoler aksepterte å delta i studien etter første utvelgelse, den tredje etter andre gangs utvelgelse.

Studien ble meldt til personvernombudet for forskning. Før studien startet, fikk informantene skriftlig informasjon om studien. Informantene samtykket muntlig under intervjuene i at de ønsket å delta, og i at intervjuet ble tatt opp elektronisk.

### **Datamateriale**

Data ble innhentet gjennom individuelle intervju med tre mat- og helselærere som underviste i faget på 6. trinn. I tillegg ble rektorene på de tre skolene intervjuet for å få et skoleperspektiv. Dokumenter som var relevante for mat- og helseopplæringen på den enkelte skole, inngikk også i datamaterialet.

### **Intervju**

Til intervjuene med lærerne og rektorene ble det utarbeidet en halvstrukturert intervjuguide (Grønmo, 2016) med åpne spørsmål. For å belyse forskningsspørsmålet ble intervjuguiden utviklet med sikte på å undersøke lærernes oppfatning av læreplanen, og det ble formulert spørsmål knyttet til fagets formål og kjerneverdi samt rammebetingelser for mat- og helsefaget på skolen. Rektorene ble intervjuet for å supplere resultatene som fremkom hos lærerne. Det ble gjennomført en pilotundersøkelse på en barneskole i Hordaland fylke, og etter piloten ble det gjort noen justeringer i intervjuguidene. Spørsmål som informantene oppfattet som uklare, ble reformulert slik at budskapet i spørsmålene ble tydeligere.

### **Dokumenter**

Lokale læreplaner i mat- og helsefaget og ukeplaner ble innhentet. Hensikten var å se om skolene hadde praksis for å utarbeide lokal læreplan i faget, og

om mat- og helsefaget var mer eller mindre synlig enn de øvrige skolefagene på ukeplanene.

### Datainnsamling

Datainnsamling ble gjennomført i april–juni 2016, på et tidspunkt der tre fjerdedeler av opplæringen i faget var gjennomført. Datainnsamlingen fulgte samme struktur på alle de tre skolene: først dagsbesøk med individuelt intervju av mat- og helselæreren som hadde opplæringen på 6. trinn, deretter et andre dagsbesøk med individuelt intervju av rektor. Intervjuene med hver av de seks informantene varte i cirka en time. Førsteforfatteren gjennomførte alle intervjuene.

### Presentasjon av casene

Tabell 11.1 gir bakgrunnsinformasjon om de tre lærerne som underviste i mat- og helsefaget på 6. trinn.

**Tabell 11.1** Lærernes kjønn, lærerrolle, fagkompetanse og undervisningserfaring i mat- og helsefaget på 6. trinn

Skole	Kjønn	Lærerrolle	Fagkompetanse	Undervisningserfaring i mat- og helsefaget
A	Kvinne	Mat- og helselærer og kontaktlærer	Allmennlærer med 15 studiepoeng i mat- og helsefaget	5 år
B	Kvinne	Mat- og helselærer og kontaktlærer	Allmennlærer. Har ikke fagforydning i mat- og helsefaget	3 år
C	Kvinne	Mat- og helselærer	Allmennlærer. Har ikke fagforydning i mat- og helsefaget	Mer enn 30 år

Rektorenes bakgrunn er vist i tabell 11.2.

**Tabell 11.2** Rektorenes kjønn, utdanning og erfaring som rektor

Skole	Kjønn	Utdanning	Erfaring som rektor
A	Mann	Allmennlærer	Mer enn 27 år
B	Kvinne	Førskolelærer med påbygging til allmennlærer	5 år
C	Mann	Allmennlærer med tilleggsutdanning, rektorskolen	3 år

## Analyse av data

Analysen ble gjennomført i en stegvis prosedyre, hvor analyseprosessen har fulgt stegene i metoden systematisk tekstkondensering (Malterud, 2011). Malterud beskriver fire steg:

- 1 helhetsinntrykk – fra villnis til temaer
- 2 meningsbærende enheter – fra temaer til koder
- 3 kondensering – fra kode til mening
- 4 sammenfatning – fra kondensering til beskrivelse

I den systematiske tekstkondenseringen ble de indre og de ytre rammene fra rammefaktorteorien (Arfwedson & Arfwedson, 1995) benyttet. I første steg ble transkribert tekst lest flere ganger for å få en oversikt over temaer. Teksten ble så nærlest linje for linje for å finne meningsbærende elementer (fase to), og på dette steget ble irrelevant tekst skilt ut. Temaer som var relevante for forskningsspørsmålet, ble kodet, som «de indre rammene» og «de ytre rammene». Alle tekstelementer som omhandlet temaet «de indre rammene», ble samlet under koden «de indre rammene», og tilsvarende ble gjort for de ytre rammene (Malterud, 2011). På tredje steg ble alle tekstelementene som var merket «de indre rammene» og «de ytre rammene», lest på nytt og sortert i underkategorier, det Malterud (2011) kaller subgrupper, for eksempel «arbeidet med innholdet i lokal læreplan i mat og helse» (de indre rammene) og «skoleeiers satsingsområde» (de ytre rammene). Enkeltutsagn (kondensater) fra informanter som relaterte seg til underkategoriene, ble i tillegg markert, for eksempel «vi har ikke en slik felles plan, jeg lager min egen plan». Fjerde steg i prosessen er sammenfatning av tekst, og som Malterud (2011) påpeker, bør teksten formidles på en måte som er lojal overfor informantens stemme. Underveis i hele firestegsprosessen fremkom det i intervjuene tekstelementer og enkeltutsagn som ikke lot seg kategorisere inn i de to teoridrevne rammene. For at resultatene ikke skulle gå tapt eller miste mening, ble det konstruert en tredje kategori, «de personlige rammene». De personlige rammene dreier seg om i hvor stor grad lærernes egen oppfatning av læreplaninnholdet påvirker handlingsrommet i opplæringen.

De indre rammene dreier seg om i hvor stor grad lokale forventninger, skolens kultur og undervisningspraksis påvirker lærerens handlingsrom i opplæringen, og i denne kategorien fremkom det to undergrupper: arbeidet med lokal læreplan i mat og helse og kontaktlæreren som mat- og helselærer. De ytre rammene

dreier seg om i hvor stor grad de overordnede styringsrammene for skolen og nærmiljøet påvirker lærerens handlingsrom i opplæringen. I denne kategorien er det to undergrupper: skoleeiers satsingsområde og samarbeid med nærmiljøet.

## RESULTAT

### De personlige rammene

Lærerne hadde tilgang til den formelle læreplanen i mat og helse, men uttrykte alle at de ikke brukte læreplanen aktivt i planleggingen av opplæringen. Lærer C hadde over 30 års erfaring og sa det slik:

Det er jo ikke læreplanen jeg tenker på til daglig, kan du si. Det er ikke ofte jeg slår opp i den og i alle fall ikke i dette faget. Jeg sjekker den av og til for å se om jeg har glemt noe.

I intervjuene ble lærerne spurt om hvordan de oppfattet læreplaninnholdet, og lærerne mente at læreplaninnholdet var lite konkret: «Den er ikke så konkret, vi må innom og arbeide med alle de der punktene i læreplanen. Hva er det jeg vil, og hva er det læreplanen mener?» (lærer A). Lærerne begrunnet «lite konkret» med at læreplaninnholdet åpnet opp for eget pedagogisk grunnsyn, altså en stor frihet til selv å bestemme: «Det er jeg som bestemmer hvordan jeg skal gjøre det, og hva elevene skal lære å lage» (lærer B).

Lærernes intensjoner med faget var praktisk arbeid: «rett og slett få gjøre noe praktisk, det å få bruke hendene» (lærer C). De oppfattet en metodefrihet til selv å kunne bestemme opplæringsøktenes temaer, fagstoff og oppskrifter. I intervjuene fortalte de at valg av temaer ble også bestemmende for fagstoffet de formidlet til elevene gjennom interaksjoner i det praktiske arbeidet, og at det ofte var relatert til at elevene skulle tilegne seg kunnskap om det å spise næringsrik og sunn og nok mat, men ikke så mye om hvordan de skulle lage sunn mat. Lærernes frihet medførte at de i tillegg hadde muligheter til å velge det læremiddelet de selv ønsket å bruke. Lærer A og B brukte i stor grad læremidler som var tilgjengelige på skolen, og som de hadde erfaring med, men påpekte at de i tillegg brukte egne oppskrifter. Lærer C skilte seg ut ved at hun gjennom lang undervisningserfaring hadde utarbeidet egne læremidler basert på oppskrifter fra sin egen heimkunnskapslærer. Oppskriftene hadde hun gjennom årene tilpasset og videreutviklet, og nå underviste hun i en jordbruksbygd og tok hensyn til tradisjoner i bygda når hun valgte oppskrifter.



I det praktiske arbeidet mente lærerne at det var god mulighet til samspill mellom dem og elevene og til å vise omsorg og skape trygghet. De så på dette som betydningsfullt for at elevene skulle oppleve inkludering: «Det er mange elever som har et behov for å bli sett og vist omsorg for. Derfor er det viktig at jeg som lærer i tillegg bryr meg om hva elevene gjør utenfor skolen» (lærer C).

De tre rektorene oppfattet i liten grad at de skulle ha innsikt om læreplaninnholdet i faget, og de hadde klare intensjoner om at det var lærernes ansvar: «Det er lærerne som kan faget, ikke jeg, jeg administrerer» (rektor A). Omsorg og trygghet mente rektorene derimot var deres ansvar, og dette relaterte de i stor grad til skolens arbeid med å ivareta elevenes psykososiale miljø. Rektor A og B omtalte det som en del av skolens visjon, her illustrert med rektor A: «som læring for livet gjennom trygghet og trivsel». Rektor C oppfattet motivasjon og mestring som avgjørende for at elevene skulle oppleve inkludering på skolen og knyttet det til de praktisk-estetiske fagene:<sup>3</sup>

Dagens skole «dreper» enkelte elevers motivasjon med alle teoritunge fag. Det å få lov til å koble av med å gjøre noe praktisk blir opplevd av enkelte elever som mestring, og det kan være avgjørende for elevenes motivasjon for å gå på skolen.

## **De indre rammene**

### **Arbeidet med lokal læreplan i mat og helse**

De tre lærerne oppfattet lokalt læreplanarbeid i mat- og helsefaget som sitt ansvar, og de mente at også rektorene oppfattet det som deres ansvar. Lærer A og B hadde begge erfaring med kollegasamarbeid i faget, men det fremstod som lite forpliktende. Lærer C hadde ikke slik erfaring i faget: «Det er det jeg som gjør, og det har jeg alltid gjort aleine» (lærer C).

Rektorene, bortsett fra rektor C, hadde en annen oppfatning enn lærerne om skolens praksis for utarbeiding av lokal læreplan. Rektor A hevdet at det ikke var nødvendig å utarbeide lokal læreplan i faget hvert år: «Det ble gjort for noen år siden. Så på en måte ruller og går det i forhold til sånn skal vi ha faget her.» Rektor B fortalte derimot at på hennes skole ble lokal læreplan i mat og helse, som i alle andre fag, utarbeidet hvert år. Avdelingslederne i samspill med lærerne på trinnet hadde ansvaret for det arbeidet. Rektor C tildelte ansvaret til den læreren som hadde opplæringen i faget.

3 De praktisk-estetiske fagene: kunst og håndverk, musikk, kroppsøving og mat og helse.

På spørsmål om progresjon mellom de ulike trinnene (barnetrinnet og ungdomstrinnet) svarte lærerne at de i liten grad visste hvilken kompetanse elevene hadde i faget når de begynte i 6. klasse, og at de derfor planla opplæringsøktene ut fra tidligere erfaringer:

Jeg begynner veldig forsiktig med at elevene skal bake rundstykker. Ikke for mye arbeid, fordi jeg har erfaring med at elevene har mer enn nok med å bli kjent på kjøkkenet og venne seg til å være på et kjøkken. (Lærer A)

Når elevene begynner om høsten i 6., så begynner jeg fra scratch fordi jeg har ingen erfaring med hva elevene kan, og hva de har lært hjemme. (Lærer C)

Lærerne oppfattet det imidlertid heller ikke slik at de var ansvarlige for at kompetansemålene i faget etter 4. trinn skulle inngå i deres opplæring.

Rektorene hadde derimot en annen oppfatning enn lærerne om ansvar for kompetansemålene etter 4. trinn. Rektorene mente at timerressursen i faget fra 1. til 4. trinn var så liten at de ikke gjennomførte egen opplæring. Rektorene presiserte at det var kontaktlærers ansvar å innlemme kompetansemålene i undervisningen til elevene i de øvrige skolefagene på barnetrinnet.

### **Kontaktlærer som mat- og helselærer**

De tre lærerne fortalte at rektorene prioriterte kontaktlærerrollen på barnetrinnet fremfor fagkompetanse eller et ønske om å få ha opplæringen i mat og helse når de fordelte fag på de ulike lærerne. Lærer A og B, som hadde uttrykt et ønske om å undervise uavhengig av kontaktlærerrollen, opplevde at rektorene overtalte dem til å være kontaktlærer med å fortelle hvor betydningsfull kontaktlærerrollen var. I intervjuene sier lærer A og B at de aksepterte rektorenes begrunnelse for at kontaktlærerrollen ble prioritert, fordi de selv også opplevde kontaktlærerrollen som betydningsfull for elevenes psykososiale miljø. Rektorene ønsket at kontaktlærer skulle ha flest mulig timer i sin egen klasse, og at kontaktlærer fulgte klassen gjennom barnetrinnet. Dette gjorde at det ikke var mulig i særlig grad å vektlegge fagkompetanse eller et ønske fra lærerne når fagene skulle fordeles i personalet. Rektorene fortalte i tillegg at de hadde som praksis å organisere mat- og helseopplæringen slik at klassen ble delt. Dette gjorde rektorene for at kontaktlærer skulle ha begge gruppene i mat og helse, og faget ble lagt parallelt med et annet fag som også skulle deles, for eksempel kunst og håndverk.

## **De ytre rammene**

### **Skoleeiers satsingsområde**

Rektorene var helt enige i at de aldri hadde diskutert mat- og helsefaget i noen møter med skoleeier eller på skoleeiernivå. Her illustrert med rektor B: «Jeg har aldri diskutert mat- og helsefaget på skoleeiernivå eller vært invitert til noen samtaler der mat- og helsefaget har stått på agendaen.»

Skoleeiers satsingsområde var de grunnleggende ferdighetene, med vekt på lesing og regning. Alle unntatt rektor C var enige om at lesing og regning inngikk som en del av opplæringen i alle skolefagene, men det varierte hvordan de så på at ferdigheten inngikk i mat- og helseopplæringen. Lærerne fortalte imidlertid at de hadde erfaring med at ferdigheter i lesing og regning var viktig når elevene skulle omsette innholdet i en oppskrift til praktisk arbeid, og lærer A og C presiserte at gjennom å lage mat fikk elevene i tillegg innsikt i å konkretisere, og at dette var grunnleggende for læring. Rektor A og B hadde noe ulik vektlegging av lesing og regning som en del av mat- og helseopplæringen. De var enige om at leseferdigheter var avgjørende for å forstå en oppskrift, men rektor B fremhevet i tillegg regning som avgjørende for å forstå en oppskrift med bakgrunn i ulike målenheter: «ikke minst regning, det er jo veldig vesentlig». Rektor C mente dette: «Vi har ikke noe bevisstgjøring inn mot mat og helse, det er i disse tre fagene, norsk, engelsk og regning, elevene ble testet i nasjonale prøver.» Rektor fortalte videre at nasjonale prøver gav skolen kunnskap om elevenes grunnleggende ferdigheter i lesing, regning og engelsk, og som gjennomføres på ulike trinn.

### **Samarbeid med nærmiljøet**

På spørsmål om samarbeid med nærmiljøet svarte alle lærerne skole-hjem-samarbeid, og de fremhevet ranselpost som viktig. Lærer A og B (kontaktlærer) hadde ansvaret for å lage ukeplaner. Ukeplanen ble sendt hjem med ranselpost, og dokumentet ukeplan viste at lærer A hadde skrevet inn tema og hva elevene skulle lage. Hos lærer B og C skilte mat- og helsefaget seg ikke ut fra de øvrige skolefagene: Undervisningsdag og -tidspunkt fremkom på planen. I intervjuene presiserte lærer C at hun også benyttet ranselpost selv om hun ikke var kontaktlærer. Hun sendte hjem informasjonsskriv om temaet og hjemmeoppgaver elevene skulle utføre.

Lærer A var den av de tre lærerne som i tillegg til ranselpost benyttet sosiale medier, Facebook, i skole-hjem-samarbeidet. Hun oppfattet Facebook som et

betydningsfullt medium i kontakten med foresatte og sa det slik: «Jeg legger ut dokumentasjon i form av bilder og tekst om opplæringsøktene, til stor begeistring for både elevene og foresatte.» Hun hadde åpnet opp for at de foresatte kunne kommentere innleggene eller etterspørre informasjon, noe de foresatte ofte gjorde.

Foreldremøter og elevsamtaler inngikk i tillegg til ranselpost som et skole-hjem-samarbeid for lærer A og B. I foreldremøtene til lærer A var mat- og helsefaget et punkt på agendaen. Hun fortalte at hun informerte tematisk om hva elevene skulle arbeide med i løpet av året. Lærer B uttalte at hun ikke informerte om mat- og helseopplæringen på foreldremøtet, men sa: «Kunne fortalt at elevene kanskje kom til å få en oppskrift som leselekse, og at de kanskje skulle prøve å lage dette hjemme, for eksempel, men nei, det gjorde jeg ikke.» Lærer A og B tok ikke opp mat- og helseopplæringen som tema i elevsamtalene. Lærer C ble ikke kontaktet av kontaktlærer for informasjon om elevenes utvikling i faget.

Rektorene stadfestet det de tre lærerne fortalte om skole-hjem-samarbeidet, og at det var det samarbeidet med nærmiljøet som påvirket opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget. Utover det hadde rektorene ingen refleksjoner om samarbeid med nærmiljøet.

## DISKUSJON

Denne studien har utforsket hvordan lærere oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet. Resultatene viste at lærerne mente at de hadde et stort handlingsrom når de planla opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget.

Studien viser at læreplanen i mat- og helsefaget i liten grad var styrende for planleggingen av opplæringen i faget. Rektorene hadde liten innsikt i lærernes arbeid med fortolkning av læreplanen i faget og påvirket dermed ikke lærernes profesjonelle handlingsrom i planlegging av opplæringen. Lærerne oppfattet innholdet i læreplanen som lite konkret og mente dermed at de i stor grad selv kunne bestemme opplæringsøktenes innhold. Det vil si at lærerne hadde stor tro på eget pedagogisk grunnsyn, som kunnskap, erfaring, frihet og autonomi (Biesta et al., 2015; Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Priestley et al., 2015), og dermed «skreddersydde» de innholdet i opplæringen ut fra denne troen. Tilsvarende funn er beskrevet i tidligere studier (Granberg, 2018; Granberg, Olsson & Mattsson Sydner, 2017; Veka et al., 2018), der det også fremheves at mat- og helselærernes autonomi og frihet i stor grad bestemte innholdet i opplæringen.

Resultatene viste at lærerne hadde en klar intensjon om at mat- og helsefaget er et praktisk fag, og ut fra dette kan resultatene forstås som at lærerne hadde lite fokus på læreplanens teoretiske perspektiver eller samlede kompetanse uttrykt gjennom fagets formål og kompetansemål. Når lærerne oppfattet læreplanen som lite konkret, kan resultatene tyde på at lærernes autonomi og frihet (Granberg, 2018; Granberg et al., 2017; Veka et al., 2018) var bestemmende, og dermed brukte lærerne sitt eget handlingsrom til å fokusere på det praktiske arbeidet i faget. Men resultatene kan i tillegg tolkes som at lærernes sterke fokus på det praktiske arbeidet i faget gikk på bekostning av det teoretiske arbeidet i faget, og dermed har lærerne en begrenset fortolkning av læreplaninnholdet. Resultatene kan også forklares som at lærerne etterspør en læreplan som er tydeligere og mer konkret i beskrivelsen av pedagogiske metoder. Som en av lærerne (lærer B) sier det: «Det står at det skal være sunn mat, men ikke så mye om hvordan en skal lage sunn mat.» Det kan også forstås som at lærerne mangler kompetanse til å avkode læreplanen. Veka et al. (2018) viser i en tidligere studie at oppskrifter var helt dominerende i planleggingen og gjennomføringen av undervisningen, og dermed kan funnene fra Veka et al. (2018) og resultatene i denne studien tyde på at lærerne hadde en forventning om at læreplaninnholdet skulle være mer detaljert. Lærernes etterspørsel etter tydeligere læreplaninnhold kan også forklares med at de mangler et faglig fortolkningsfelleskap på skolen. Resultatene viste at det bare var lærer A som hadde et faglig samarbeid med kolleger om opplæringen i mat og helse. På de øvrige skolene hadde ikke mat- og helselæreren denne typen faglig fortolkningsfelleskap. Styrken ved faglige fortolkningsfelleskap er at de personlige rammene får mindre betydning, og at de indre rammene styrkes. Det manglende faglige samarbeidet på skole B og C kan forklares med at skolene i denne studien var relativt små, og at det var få mat- og helselærere som underviste på 6. trinn. Priestley et al. (2012) hevder at to lærere i lik kontekst kan handle helt forskjellig på grunn av ulik erfaring og forståelse av læreplanens handlingsrom. Handlingene deres baseres på egen oppfatning av muligheter og begrensninger, og dermed blir egen erfaring mer avgjørende i handlingsrommet enn et fortolkningsfelleskap.

Som vi tidligere har vært inne på, er det rektor som avgjør hvem som skal ha opplæringen, og hvordan timene skal fordeles blant personalet. Ifølge Biesta et al. (2015), Edwards (2015) og Priestley et al. (2012) blir individets handlingsrom påvirket av strukturelle, kulturelle, materielle og sosiale faktorer som ligger utenfor individets kontroll. I vår kontekst kan vi si at lærernes handlingsrom blir

påvirket av rektors avgjørelser, som ligger utenfor lærernes kontroll. Rektorene i studien prioriterte strukturelle faktorer som fordeling av mat- og helsefaget med delingstimer med et annet fag, at opplæringen ble gjennomført på 6. trinn, og rollen som kontaktlærer. Når det gjelder rektorenes prioritering av kontaktlærerrollen, kan dette muligens forklares med at allmennlæreren (kontaktlæreren) har en basiskompetanse i alle fag. Tidligere studier (Holthe & Wergedahl, 2014; Lagerstrøm et al., 2014) bekrefter våre funn med at det ikke er uvanlig at allmennlæreren prioriteres til opplæringen i mat og helse på barnetrinnet fremfor lærer med fagfordypning. Rektorene begrunnet tildelingen av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget til kontaktlærer med at en kontaktlærer skulle ha flest mulig fag i sin egen klasse. Rektorene påpekte i tillegg at de oppfattet kontaktlæreren som en avgjørende sosial faktor, da det å ha samme lærer i flest mulig fag var fordelaktig for elevenes opplæring. Lærerne oppfattet også kontaktlærerrollen som betydningsfull på barnetrinnet og fremhevet det praktiske arbeidet i faget som en vesentlig faktor for å oppnå godt samspill mellom dem og elevene. Øvrebø (2008) viser til at læreren kan oppfattes som en morsfigur av elevene på barnetrinnet, fordi det praktiske arbeidet i faget relateres til hjemmet. Funnene viste i tillegg at kontaktlærerrollen inneholdt et skole-hjem-samarbeid. Som kontaktlærer hadde lærerne ansvaret for å skrive ukeplaner, gjennomføre møter med foresatte og ha elevsamtaler. Resultatene kan forstås som at skole-hjem-samarbeid i mat og helse fremkom mer som en pålagt oppgave i rollen som kontaktlærer fordi faget ikke skilte seg ut fra de øvrige skolefagene på ukeplanen. Lærer A og B utførte oppgaver som var forventet i rollen som kontaktlærer, men i tillegg viste funnene at lærer A og C engasjerte seg ut over det som kom frem på ukeplanen. Lærer A benyttet Facebook, og lærer C sendte informasjonsskriv hjem med ranselpost, selv om hun ikke var kontaktlærer. De informerte med andre ord de foresatte og elevene om opplæringsøktenes temaer ut over det som var forventet, noe som vitner om fagengasjement.

Tidligere i artikkelen er det vist til Arfwedsons og Arfwedsons (1995) artikkel om rammesystemer, der forskerne også påpeker en kompleksitet i rammesystemene og den innflytelsen rammene kan ha på for eksempel opplæringen i skolen. Våre resultater viste at de personlige rammenes påvirkning på handlingsrommet styrket lærerens autonomi. Det vil si at lærerne oppfattet en frihet i det profesjonelle handlingsrommet til å planlegge opplæringen etter egne erfaringer og tro på sitt pedagogiske grunnsyn (Biesta et al., 2015). Dette kan tolkes som at de ville være den læreren de ønsket å være, og dermed oppfattet de ikke læreplanen

i mat og helse som viktig i sin planlegging av opplæringen. Elmore (2004) viser til at det ved innføring av nye læreplaner skjer en innovasjon, ofte ved at læreplanen blir tilpasset tidligere praksis. Dette bekreftes av vår studie: Lærerne «henger fast» i gamle læreplaner eller erfaring, og de gjør i stor grad som de vil i henhold til nåværende læreplan i faget. Lærerne «skreddersyr» opplæringen og legitimerer det med at læreplanen i faget er så lite konkret. Når det gjelder de indre rammene innflytelse, var bildet komplekst, siden lærerne og rektorene hadde ulike oppfatninger om ansvar for opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget fra 1. til 4. trinn. Rektorene overlot alt ansvaret til kontaktlærerne og mente at det var deres ansvar å sørge for at elevene fikk den opplæringen de hadde krav på i det enkelte trinnet. Rektorene mente at timeressursen i faget var for liten til at de kunne gjennomføre timeplanfestet opplæring i mat- og helse fra 1. til 4. trinn. Lærerne delte ikke rektorenes oppfatning om ansvar for å innlemme kompetansemålene etter 4. trinn inn i de øvrige skolefagene. At lærerne ikke oppfattet dette som sitt ansvar, kan forstås som at de heller ikke oppfattet at de selv hadde muligheter i handlingsrommet i opplæringen fra 1. til 4. trinn. Resultatene viste at lærerne heller ikke oppfattet kompetansemålenes progresjon fra barnetrinnet til ungdomstrinnet. Funnene viste at de ytre rammene hadde liten innflytelse. Rektorene hadde aldri opplevd at mat- og helsefaget var på agendaen i møter med skoleeier. Både lærerne og rektorene oppfattet de grunnleggende ferdighetene, med vekt på lesing og regning, som skoleeiers satsingsområde, men de hadde ulik tolkning av hvordan de inngikk som en del av mat- og helsefaget. Lærer A og C oppfattet lesing og regning som grunnleggende for læring, ved at elevene omsatte innholdet i en oppskrift til praktisk arbeid, mens rektor C knyttet de grunnleggende ferdighetene til nasjonale prøver som nasjonal satsing for å kontrollere skolens kunnskapsnivå. Det kan forstås som at rektor C ser på de grunnleggende ferdighetene som noe separat, og ikke som noe som er integrert i faglæreplanen (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006).

Oppsummert kan funnene i studien tyde på at lærerne ikke oppfatter noen form for rapporteringskrav knyttet til opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget, og de personlige rammene blir dermed avgjørende for hvordan lærerne oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet i planleggingen av opplæringen på barnetrinnet. Rektorene, som skolens ledere, ansvarliggjorde lærerne for opplæringen i faget på barnetrinnet, men det var i liten grad systematisk arbeid med faget på skolene. Dette kan forstås som at mat- og helsefaget i mindre grad er prioritert på skolene, blant annet fordi skoleeier i liten grad har fokus på faget.

## KONKLUSJON OG IMPLIKASJON

Artikkelen har satt søkelys på hvordan lærerne oppfatter det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget på barnetrinnet. Lærernes handlingsrom ble i liten grad påvirket av de ytre og de indre rammene. Derfor ble de personlige rammene til lærerne styrende for handlingsrommet i arbeidet med å planlegge opplæringen i faget. Når de personlige rammene blir så dominerende, vil det kunne svekke læreplanen som styringsdokument og føre til variasjon i opplæringen til elevene på barnetrinnet.

Implikasjonen av denne studien er at det er behov for mer forskning om opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget og lærernes profesjonelle handlingsrom. Denne studien viser også at det er et behov for etterutdanning av mat- og helselærere for å gi lærere større læreplanforståelse og for å bygge fortolkningsfelleskap.

Denne studien har noen sterke og svake sider som det må tas hensyn til når dataene tolkes. Styrken ved studien er at datamaterialet består av individuelle intervju med mat- og helselærere og rektorer samt dokumentene lokal læreplan og ukeplan. Vi satte søkelys på lærernes egne oppfatninger knyttet til det profesjonelle handlingsrommet for planlegging av opplæringen i mat og helse. Det er i tillegg en styrke at studien setter søkelys på et skolefag hvor det er lite forskning. En svakhet er at studien inkluderer få lærere. Til tross for et lite utvalg gir denne studien viktig informasjon om hvordan mat- og helselærerne oppfatter sitt pedagogiske handlingsrom for planlegging av opplæringen i mat- og helsefaget.

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# Special educational needs practices in preschool: A practice from an architecture perspective

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## ABSTRACT

The present study explores special educational needs (SEN) practices for children with developmental language disorder (DLD) in Belarus and Norway. The theory of practice architectures, which was first presented by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008), is used to portray a comprehensive picture of the SEN practices employed in Belarus and Norway. Drawing on empirical data from several studies, the results of this research were analyzed through the theoretical lens of practice architectures and placed into three categories: material–economic, social–political and cultural–discursive arrangements. In this way, the architectures of the SEN practices that were studied in both countries are demonstrated and compared. The results consider the questions of the development of preschool staff “intercultural competence”, “perspective consciousness” and the promotion of a dialogue among the professionals involved in SEN practices concerning how to improve support for children with DLD.

## INTRODUCTION

In both Belarus and Norway, about 4-10% of preschool children, most of them 5-6 years old, have DLD as their primary difficulty. These groups receive the most attention in terms of special educational needs (SEN) assistance (Nordahl, 2018; Bal & Drozdova, 2010). SEN assistance has also been described as a *practice* and is commonly undertaken to provide adapted support and education for children with DLDs. However, in both Belarus and Norway, there are different understandings about what SEN practices are. SEN practice has come to mean simply “what is done” and is coined in everyday phrases like “best practices”

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(Druznin, 2009; Hausstätter & Reindal, 2016; Khitruk, 2017; Nordahl, 2018). SEN practice has also been described as knowledge, meaning and language (e.g., Hanssen & Hansén, 2017; Gajdukevich, 2016; Steinnes, 2014), as the social relations associated with staff–child relationships, namely emotional and instructional support (Hanssen, 2017; Nordahl, 2018). Moreover, SEN practice is depicted as the physical space, which creates visible physical frames that form, shape and create the context for the SEN practice and entails the involved rooms and materials such as furniture, decorations and so forth (Hanssen & Hansén, 2017; Nordin-Hultman, 2004). In addition, SEN practice is understood from the perspective of “policy” as a statutory right and assistance for children who need adapted support or education (Code on Education in the Republic of Belarus [CE] 2011, Art. 14; Kindergarten Act [KA], 2006, § 19). Thus far, the diversity of these definitions shows that SEN practice can somehow be reduced to one of these aforementioned aspects; hence, there is a lack of multidimensionality regarding what SEN practice truly entails.

In both of the studied countries, governments, agencies and academics have significantly claimed that the one-sided perspective of SEN practices may hinder an expanded conception of SEN practices and may result in understanding SEN practices as “floating across the surface”. This superficiality of SEN practices may blindly disrupt children’s language, learning and social development. Moreover, the perfunctory ways of carrying out SEN practices can also mirror the challenges in the representation and identification of the preschool staff as professional practitioners in their work with children who have DLD (Belokurskaja, 2010; Hanssen, 2019; Groven, 2013; Nordahl, 2018).

Therefore, it is timely to consider a framework that can promote a more complex view of SEN practices and that can assist practitioners in underpinning and developing their practices, making preschools a high-quality arena of development and giving children with DLD appropriate qualifications for further learning, social development and future work life (Bishop, 2017; Belokurskaja, 2010; Hanssen, 2018; Khitruk, 2017; Nordahl, 2018).

Responding to this demand, via a comparison between Belarus and Norway, the current article specifically explores the following questions: *How are the SEN practices in preschools orchestrated? Which possibilities and obstructions exist in the development of those practices in preschools?*

Studies aimed at utilizing the potential of comparing SEN practices in traditional Eastern and Western European countries are still sparse (Hanssen, 2017).

Therefore, comparisons of two countries, such as, in the current case, Belarus and Norway, are of particular interest. These countries represent diverse social, political and ideological contexts. Therefore, a comparison of them can help contribute to the literature by providing an additional perspective, demonstrating a variety of views and multidimensionality of SEN practices. Using a comparison is an epistemological strategy, a powerful conceptual mechanism for sharpening attention of several attributes, unique qualities complexities and illustrations of how SEN practices occur in different contexts (Kubow & Blosser, 2016; Stake, 2005). In this way, the hidden assumptions that construct and shape practices may be uncovered, thereby encouraging a conscious and fruitful discussion about what underpin, form and constrain practices (Kubow & Blosser, 2016).

The main reason that guided the selection of the studied countries is that the author has a personal interest, background and understanding of preschools and SEN systems in both Belarusian and Norwegian culture and languages.

SEN practices are heterogenic and complex phenomena, originating in the combined influence of diverse traditions and disciplines (Hanssen, 2018; Nicolini, 2013). Striving to avoid ambiguity and confusion over terminology and to find lenses that make it possible to comparatively examine SEN practices, in the current article, SEN practices are explored by conceptualizing them as a specific kind of practice in terms of a theory of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon, Francisco, & Kemmis, 2017). The present article proposes the possibility of applying the theory of practice architectures in SEN contexts as both a theoretical grounding and a conceptual framework, steering analyses towards an exploration of the constituents of SEN practices.

The first part of the current article exposes the theoretical foundation for the selected topic by providing an overview of the current research. Arguments are then presented for the selection of the two countries, along with a description of the contexts in each country. The selected research methodology and analytical approach are described and analyzed, which is followed by a brief presentation of the results, along with discussion and conclusions.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Language difficulties are defined in various ways, and the terminology used in both countries studied greatly varies. Aiming at reaching a consensus to decide on better ways of diagnosing and referring to children with language

difficulties, the more specific term DLD has become prevalent (Bishop, 2017). However, the term DLD is not a single condition where every child is the same. Children present a whole range of different types of problems, thus affecting grammar, semantics or use of language or speech sounds, working memory and ability to produce words. Hence, the term DLD can be used for children who have persisting problems with language in their everyday life in the absence of a specific biomedical conditions (Bal & Drozdova, 2010; Bishop, 2014, 2017). In both Belarus and Norway, a DLD diagnosis is included in the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Mental Disorders (ICD-11). Still, clinicians and practitioners are unsure about the use of diagnostic criteria, particularly regarding preschool-age children (WHO, 2019). Therefore, the present study focuses on children receiving SEN assistance because of a DLD, which is consistent with the official diagnostic criteria but comes without a formal diagnosis (Bishop, 2017; Hanssen, 2017, p. 3; 2019).

### **SEN practices seen through the features of the theory of practice architectures**

SEN practice is a heterogenic and complex phenomenon that originated from the combined influence of diverse traditions (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2017; Nicolini, 2013). These traditions include an Aristotelian conception of praxis as action demonstrating moral goodness in what is done, the Marxist understanding of praxis as a socio-historical, sensuously human activity aimed at cognition and transformation of the world, and Lave and Wenger's distinction of practice as a set of relations among persons, activities and the world over time (Kemmis et al., 2014; Nicolini, 2013). Broadening Schatzki's (2002) theory of practices as a set of doings and sayings, Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) defined practice as socially established cooperative human activity involving utterance and forms of understanding (sayings), modes of actions (doings) and ways in which people relate to one another and the world (relatings), which all happen together in various ways (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 8). Drawing on Kemmis' (2008) theory, SEN practices are interpreted as the various ways preschool staff conduct SEN activities in both mainstream and special settings (doings), the various expressions, words and language staff use to describe, interpret and explain what is going on in their SEN work (sayings) and the relationships (relatings) that are also assigned to ensure connectedness and support between the preschool staff, children and other individuals and

objects involved in the SEN practices (cf. Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 57; Mahon et al. 2017, 34; Hanssen, 2019, p. 3).

For a more comprehensive view of practices in general, one must consider practices as bound within the site of the practices. Kemmis et al. (2014) emphasized that practices do not occur in a vacuum; instead, they are shaped by and shape the prefigured arrangements that together constrain and enable practices (sayings, doings and relatings) and make these possible (p. 31). The theory of practice architectures identifies cultural–discursive, material–economics and social–political arrangements that here are referred to as the architectures of practice (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, p. 57). Practice and architecture are connected and always enmeshed with one another, thereby constituting the ‘three dimensions of intersubjectivity’ (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 23) or ‘spaces’ (Mahon et al., 2017, p. 11).

From the theory’s outset, cultural–discursive arrangements and sayings are realized in the semantic space, and here, focus is placed on the *cultural–discursive arrangements* that enable or constrain what is relevant for preschool staff to say and think when describing, interpreting and justifying their SEN practices (*sayings*). The development of SEN practices depends on the cultural arrangement as well, for example, the [preschool’s] culture, which is defined by Kelchtermans (2006) as the deep level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by the members of an organization (p. 230). The individual culture gives each practitioner room for individual choice, but this can be considered isolating in that there is a lack of common understanding of what SEN practices are and how they should be implemented. The individual culture can also be considered dynamic and creative, encouraging new thinking in SEN practices (Finkevich, Veremejchik, & Pavlukovec, 2015; Groven, 2013; Eik, 2014). The close-knit ‘family’ community is another common culture; it focuses on nurture and common views in SEN practices – working together in harmony. The common culture that follows the ideal of equality sees preschool staff’s own personal experiences as more important than their professional knowledge, justifying the idea that their personal abilities, values and attitudes are more important than formal professional competences (Steinnes, 2014). However, the development of such a culture may weaken the qualified preschool staff’s confidence in their own knowledge and displace an individual culture. Groven (2013) noted that a common culture can come with a ‘blueprint’ nature, emphasizing solutions that are linked to more popular views on special needs education. The power of

the cultural arrangement can both contribute and counteract children's learning and the quality of SEN practices.

Cultural–discursive arrangements may also include various discourses. For example, consider preschool staff working within the discourse of “special needs education”. Haug (2016), Nordahl (2018) and Khitruk (2017) found that this discourse is realized in sayings such as the conflict between categorical (individual and diagnostic solutions) and relational perspectives (inclusion and social relationships) in special needs education, and that this is the main point of contention, showing that special needs education suffers from a legitimacy crisis. This lack of clarity makes SEN practices conceptualized differently with contrasting overtones of meaning (Hanssen, 2018; Nordahl, 2018). This controversy may lead to the trivialization and an undermining of SEN practices in preschools, and the possibility for the autonomic sayings and thinkings of practitioners may be seriously undermined by this (Beach & Bagley, 2013, p. 390). As such, the “special needs education” discourse has the potential to blind what is actually happening and reinforce stereotypes; for example, special needs education's power to displace children threatens the pathway to inclusion, and children's learning can hence be disrupted (Hanssen, 2018; Vargas-Barón, Janson, & Mufel, 2009).

Another example is related to the contradictory discussion and significant criticism of the validity and usability of DLD as a diagnostic category. As mentioned before, there is still considerable variation and insecurity among clinicians and practitioners regarding the understanding and interpretation of diagnostic criteria, particularly regarding preschool-age children (Bishop, 2014, 2017). The power of this discourse may potentially enable and allow a consensus in diagnosing and referring to children with language difficulties (Bishop, 2014, 2017).

Material–economic arrangements and doings are realized in the physical space-time, and in this context, attention is paid to the *material–economic arrangements* that enable and constrain what, when, how and by whom SEN activities can be done (doings) at a certain time and in what environment (Kemmis et al., 2014). Again, taking SEN practices as an example, the material and economic arrangements may involve resources such as decorations, furniture and architecture of rooms and how they are maintained (Hanssen & Hansén, 2017). Aforementioned resources, along with the economic situation of each country and as well as socioeconomic status of employees and children enable and constrain what is done in the SEN practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). For example, carefully selected, systematized SEN activities that contain



preplanned elements and objects in accordance with the activities can influence and maximize the stimulation of children's language development. On the other hand, diffuseness and instability of the prefigured elements may obstruct the provision of SEN activities, constraining children's access to the experiences of stimulating their language development (Hanssen & Hansén, 2017; Hanssen, 2019; Nordin-Hultman, 2004).

Social-political arrangements and relatings are realized in the social space, and in the current article, attention is paid to the *social-political arrangements* that make possible and constrain how individuals working in a preschool connect to each other (relatings), along with the rules and roles in an organization and how these relate to national policies (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2017). In the case of SEN practices, the power of social arrangements is visible in the differences and asymmetries or similarities and symmetry found in the division of duties and responsibilities shared, for example, between preschool staff in a way that supports children with DLD or does not support the children. Preschool staff can poorly divide the labor and responsibilities, yet at the same time, the clear character of division of duties and responsibilities may be present (Mazovko & Kravcova, 2017; Steinnes, 2014; Steinnes & Haug, 2013). On the one hand, the lack of clarity can give rise to instability and the diffuseness of the practices that are implemented, thus challenging the quality of help practitioners can give. On the other hand, the clear standards regarding the division of responsibilities of preschool staff can contribute to developing sustainable and functional SEN practices through which practitioners seek improvement for children with DLD (Hanssen 2017, 2018; 2019).

Another important feature of social-political arrangements stems from political directives and governance. The implementation of SEN practices into actual practice largely depends on political arrangements, such as how the national laws and curricula for preschools guide and shape SEN practices. Several studies have reported that loose directives may result in an unsystematic variety of individual practices without a common understanding of what these practices are and how they should be handled (Hennum & Østrem, 2016; Hanssen & Hansén, 2017). Indeed, these directives may give each practitioner autonomous room for individual choice, but this room can be considered isolating in terms of a lack of common understanding of what SEN practices are and how they should be implemented (Groven, 2013; Thoresen, 2015). However, uniform ways of governance may reduce professional autonomy, thus generating conformism and

a mechanical and reproductive practice. As a result, it is difficult to make changes from the top echelons of ministries to the bottom where specific SEN practices occur (Mazovko & Kravcova, 2017; Shipickaja, 2014; Vargas-Barón et al., 2009).

## **CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

In the following, I will expand on the current understanding of SEN practices by looking at the Belarusian and Norwegian preschool contexts, examining the overarching values of preschool education, legislative frameworks and principles for providing SEN practices.

Both in Belarus and in Norway, the principal aim for preschool is to contribute to children's development, learning and formation (Code on Education in the Republic of Belarus (CE) 2011 Art. 2; Kindergarten Act (KA) 2006 § 1).

Looking at the laws in these countries, SEN practice in both countries is seen as SEN assistance and a statutory right for children who, according to expert assessment, need adapted support or education (CE, 2011 Art. 14; KA 2006 § 19). The Belarusian education culture is slowly moving towards inclusion. Therefore, the large number of children incorporated into SEN practices are still placed in full-time or part-time segregated groups for children with similar disabilities, and these groups are integrated into ordinary preschools. Parents can individually or in consultation with the preschool apply for an assessment of their child's needs. Based on a psychological, medical and educational assessment at a regional centre – the Correction and Development Training and Rehabilitation Centre (DC) – the child's need for special educational assistance is assessed (CE, 2011 Art. 279; Art. 265). A specific professional competence is available and required at all stages of the SEN assistance – from the assessment of the child's needs to the implementation of SEN assistance (CE, 2011). Nonetheless, in the case of Belarus, special attention to individual support to meet the specific needs of children is given, and orchestration and implementation of SEN practices may lead to a discrepancy between the requirements for inclusion and the realization of it in practice (Hanssen, 2019).

In the Norwegian system, inclusive educational settings are already well established, and children with DLD attend ordinary preschools. Parents may individually or in consultation with the preschool request that the Educational and Counselling Service (PPT) – an independent, expert authority – assess their children's need for special education assistance. Based on the expert assessment of the PPT, the preschool owner makes a decision to grant or deny the request for special

educational assistance. This assistance consists of individual facilitation and is included in ordinary preschool education, focusing on the equality and inclusion of all learners. In the Norwegian KA (2006), it is not specifically stated that special qualifications are required to provide SEN assistance. In addition, a person with pedagogical education should initially give SEN assistance (KA, 2006). In practice, though, the preschool staff – with or without the proper education – will often carry out SEN activities, while the employees of the PPT and other external competence agencies contribute with counselling and guidance to staff, parents and children. The criticism here is that the lack of clarity can be challenging for all parties involved when it comes to anticipating the kind of help a SEN teacher can give (Hausstätter & Reindal, 2016). Indeed, the general unclear law may impede stable and lasting dispositions for SEN practice (Hanssen & Hansén, 2017).

The two countries seem to share similar values, as manifested by their overarching principles for education, as well as the statutory right for children with DLDs to obtain special educational assistance. Despite some similarities between Belarus and Norway, the differences are obvious and principled and could be assigned to historical and cultural traditions, ideological foundations, material-economic situations and the social and political character of the countries (Hanssen & Hansén, 2017). One of the most noteworthy differences is that Belarus still lacks consciousness of the inclusion principle and therefore is slowly moving towards inclusion, while in Norway, inclusion is already well established as a fundamental principle of all activities in the entire education sector (Arnesen, 2017; Hannås & Hanssen, 2016). Another remarkable difference is that Belarus has clear standards regarding the qualification requirements and the division of responsibilities of preschool staff. Highly skilled professionals are available and required at all stages of SEN assistance, from assessing the child's needs to implementing SEN activities (CE, 2011). The Norwegian system does not specifically state that special qualifications are required to provide SEN assistance, being characterized by vague formal divisions in labor between qualified and unqualified staff (KA, 2006). Therefore, differences in the countries' solutions concerning the orchestration and implementation of SEN practices in preschools are the most visible.

## **THE STUDY: ORCHESTRATION OF SEN PRACTICES**

The current study is based on a larger study that aimed to deepen the understanding of, expand knowledge about and gain a nuanced insight into the SEN

practices for preschool children with DLD in Norway and Belarus. The empirical basis for the current chapter is a comparison of two cases – one from Belarus and one from Norway (Yin, 2014). The case study approach focuses on preschool staff and how they described, perceived, carried out and related to the people and objects when conducting SEN practices (Hanssen, 2019). The preschool staff who were responsible for planning and carrying out SEN activities for children with DLD were chosen. Altogether, 10 informants presented a long and relevant description of working within the chosen area and were recruited from five different public preschools in each country. To achieve my aim, several instruments were used for data collection, such as semistructured interviews, video observations and video-based conversations. The semistructured interviews were carried out with five preschool employees in each country. Each interview lasted between one and a half and two hours and included the employees' educational background and professional interests, descriptions and perceptions of SEN practices, along with the specific tasks and key experiences or challenges from their SEN work. The data also include video observations of four to six individual and group SEN activities that were carried out with each employee. The observable SEN activities in each country were organized both as individual and group sessions. The groups were about the same size: approximately four to six children. However, the group sessions in Belarus included only children with DLD. In contrast, the sessions in Norway were individually adapted to each respective child and included other children without DLD. The focus was on the visual representation of video observations when the staff were implementing the SEN activities: physical environments (rooms, furniture, objects and decorations), the organization of the activities (regulation and planning), SEN activity phases (beginning, introduction, performing, summarizing and evaluating), and the organization of the events (singing, dancing, drawing, listening and games).

Finally, in an attempt to gather the perspectives of the preschool staff on the data and validate my interpretations of the observed SEN activities, the next step was returning data to the field for comments and discussion (Knoblauch, Schnettler, Raab, & Soeffner, 2006). Thus, 20 video scenes with Belarusian and 18 with Norwegian employees were chosen and used as a base for conducting video-based conversations. This selection was made in connection to Pianta's (1999) theory on describing relationships, and the scenes showing emotional and instructional support were of particular interest (Hanssen, 2017). While watching the selected video together, the employees were asked to assume what

was happening, how they would describe it and how they would explain and understand it. They were also asked to describe several other examples from similar situations (Hanssen, 2017).

All gathered qualitative material was transcribed in the participants' respective native languages, analyzed and then reported in several publications (cf. Hannås & Hanssen, 2016; Hanssen & Hansén, 2017; Hanssen, 2017; Hanssen, 2018; Hanssen, 2019). The results from these studies have helped to shed light on several important aspects of SEN practices in both countries (for details see Hannås & Hanssen, 2016; Hanssen & Hansén, 2017; Hanssen, 2017).

In accordance with the aim of the current study, the collected empirical material was reanalyzed to produce new insights into how SEN practices are orchestrated. The two national datasets were again reanalyzed on three levels: an individual level, a case level and a macro level across the two cases (Hanssen, 2018; Hanssen, 2019, p. 7). A qualitative content analysis (QCA) with a deductive approach was used (Elo & Kyngös, 2008). The theory of practice architectures' main concepts of *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* were applied as the frames of unconstrained categorization (Elo & Kyngös, 2008; Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). The data were coded according to the chosen categories. The first step was to organize the data through open coding to seek emerging themes and subcategories; this process identified the features of the sayings, doings and relatings. The next step was to more systematically search for consistent categories. The preliminary themes were compared for similarities and differences, and when they shared a similar meaning, they were grouped into the same category. Finally, by following the same process again, the dominant features of the sayings, doings and relatings that constituted SEN practices were identified (for details, see Hanssen, 2019, p. 9).

A summary of the findings regarding the orchestration of the SEN practices depicted in the Belarusian case showed SEN practices as strongly marked and monolithic with an apparent and theorized conceptualization of practice (sayings), a consistent sense of coherence in the doings and clearly defined hierarchical and authority-framed relationships (relatings) among the people involved. Here, the SEN practices have been established and steady, and the preschool staff described, perceived and experienced performing these practices as pleasurable.

The Norwegian case represents a SEN practice with vague contours, with a diffused and unclear conceptualization of practice (sayings), and a heterogeneous sense of coherence in the doings and symmetrical and nonhierarchical

relationships (relatings) among the people involved. Here, the SEN practices are difficult to identify, and the position of SEN practices is vulnerable and labile. The preschool staff described, perceived and experienced these practices as a point of contention in their work.

The aforementioned results provided a framework for a narrowed structuring of the SEN practices studied in both countries (cf. Hanssen, 2018, 2019). Consequently, the orchestration of the SEN practices that differ between Belarus and Norway in such conspicuous ways constitutes a more complex and multidirectional picture than I managed to show through these lenses aimed at “seeing” practices. Here, Mahon et al. (2017) suggested that the orchestration of practices constitutes a more complex and multidirectional picture. Therefore, the current chapter moves the focus forward and discusses which possibilities and obstructions exist in the development of SEN practices in preschools. In the next section, I discuss how the cultural–discursive, material–economic and social–political arrangements appear to impact, form and inform what practitioners can say, do and how they can unfold various relationships in SEN practices (cf. Kemmis et al., 2014).

### **PREFIGURING THE CONDITIONS OF SEN PRACTICES: POSSIBILITIES AND OBSTRUCTIONS**

From the perspectives of the preschool staff, when it comes to the prevalent and influential *cultural–discursive arrangements* that prefigure SEN practices, the discourses framing the image of the child were the most significant.

According to the employees, specific interpretations of the concept of *child* in Norway seem to be associated with motherhood and home. Work with children may often be more related to practical issues and nurturing rather than educational experiences. The preschool staffs’ role can also frequently be seen as leaning on maternal instincts, giving children protection and personal experiences. This interpretation potentially constrains the importance of formal professional competence and the possibilities of the role and legitimacy of preschool staff as qualified and knowledgeable agents in the SEN practices, instead directing focus to a nurturing approach involving emotion and personal commitment and support (Hanssen, 2017, 2018; Hennum & Østrem, 2016; Steinnes, 2014; Thoresen, 2015). The power of this discourse seems to legitimize the impression that the implementation of SEN practices is something that “everyone” can do.

This seems to challenge the understanding of what SEN practice is and what the practitioners as professionals represent in preschools (Hanssen, 2018; 2019).

In Belarus, the concept of *child* is also associated with motherhood and home. However, it seems that children are not always seen as equal, competent, potential resources and contributing and creating subjects. It seems that practitioners first perceive children as the objects of educational activity, to whom a specified activity is directed as receivers of knowledge and as receivers of prescriptions of regimes and only thereafter as a personality. This interpretation promotes a conviction that schooling and the achievement of results should be maximized. In essence, only highly skilled professionals are required to accomplish work with children. As such, specialized professional competence is valued more highly than personal experiences of the employees (Belokurskaja, 2010; Brikova, 2014; Mazovko & Kravcova, 2017). A distinct identification and representation of staff as professional practitioners can be interpreted as reflecting the idea that children with DLD are so “special” that they need specialized teachers and “special” training. The risk may lie in the power that a discourse can have on specialists’ behavior, in particular on their orientation as they talk to the child with a DLD, listen to the child and treat the child using special measures (Hanssen, 2018; Vargas-Barón et al., 2009).

These examples reinforce claims that SEN teacher education and preschool teacher education in each country qualify professionals for what is their own interpretation of the discourses framing the concept of the child, thus maintaining certain practices without any possibility of redefining them to increase the quality of support for children with DLD (Gajdukevich, 2016; Hanssen, 2018; Steinnes & Haug, 2013).

From the perspective of preschool staff both in Belarus and Norway, the *material-economic arrangements* of SEN practices were strongly emphasized through their activity and work. According to the employees in both countries, economies strongly shape what they can do and how they unfold various SEN activities. The Belarusian and Norwegian staff were interested in developing and updating their own professional competence and teaching practice. However, in Belarus, this was a challenge in that the employees themselves would have to pay for various courses, course materials, instruments and other tools they thought useful in language-stimulating work with children. In Norway, a lack of time and economic support was expressed, which primarily concerned the frequent updating of their own professional competence and teaching practice. It seems

that preschools in both countries lack economic systems and procedures that enable them to maintain and develop SEN competence among the staff. These examples highlight how the arrangement of economic support that prefigure practice, can constrain what employees who carry out the SEN practice can do in real ways.

The material resources are another very real material-economic arrangement that was outlined by the staff in both countries. The staff expressed that availability of resources such as books, furniture, audio-visual equipment, facilities and so forth as influencing the organization and implementation of their SEN practices. However, a lack of resources was mentioned as a hindrance for the development of SEN practices both in the Belarusian and Norwegian cases.

Ultimately, the material-economic conditions of the SEN practices have the potential to shape what practitioners do and do not do, impacting the development of children's support and also the employees' possibilities to update their own professional competence (Groven, 2013; Khitruk & Ponomareva, 2014; Steinnes & Haug, 2013).

The *social-political arrangements* can be seen at work in the preschools' functions, rules and roles and in the shared understandings preschool staff have about how to interact with particular SEN practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). An example of a thoughtful consideration of these arrangements is evident in how the practitioners were positioning themselves within SEN practices. In the Belarusian case, the distinct frames and boundaries of SEN practice reflect the practitioners' "visible" positioning. This can give the impression that preschool staff feel enabled to achieve the tasks expected of them, which also most likely contributes to the employees maintaining a high level of self-esteem and sense of mastery. However, as the system moves towards inclusion, employees may be reluctant to abandon what is considered their role in favor of a more inclusive system of services. As such, the potential to create a basis for the development of sayings and doings concerning inclusive SEN practices must be considered as very fragile (Hanssen, 2018; 2019; Khitruk & Ulianova, 2012). Ongoing efforts for the recognition of the professional status of employees, as Khitruk and Ulianova (2012) claimed, should now also be focused on being "generalist and ready for inclusion", so resistance is expected regarding abandoning their status and professional role in favor of a more inclusive system of service.

In the Norwegian case, the looser frames and boundaries of SEN practice mirror challenges in the representation and identification of SEN practices as



any one specific practice. To some extent, my results cohere with previously reported research showing that looser frames and boundaries of practice confirm the “invisible” and diverse position of the practitioners and can give rise to instability and diffuseness of the implementation of SEN practices, thus challenging the quality of help SEN practitioners can give and threatening rather than supporting children with DLD (Groven, 2013; Hanssen, 2019; Hausstätter & Jahnukainen, 2014). The position of the practitioners can also be attributed to the emerging trend of considering special needs education as polarized and as a threat towards the realization of inclusion (Arnesen, 2017; Nordahl, 2018). As such, these contradictions may lead to a discrepancy in the ways preschool staff define themselves as professionals and legitimize themselves as competent, and this discrepancy may bring out the observed tendency towards having a low level of self-esteem and a good amount of exhaustion and insecurity in their SEN practices (Hannås & Hanssen, 2016; Hanssen 2019; Hennem & Østrem, 2016).

In concluding this article, I reemphasize that sustainable SEN practices are a central challenge in both countries. As shown through selected examples, the theory of practice architectures offers various perspectives on SEN practices, having the conceptual approach, scope and potential to define, influence and change these SEN practices. Despite this, there are a number of limitations in the current study and to using the theory of practice architectures in this context that should be acknowledged.

There are limitations to what a theory or a certain method of analysis can offer. Indeed, there is a risk of picturing SEN practices in such a contrasting way that a clear distinction might appear reductive and simplified. The profiles could be seen as too simple to capture the complexity of reality. Moreover, interpreting practices through the “architecture” metaphor runs the risk of providing an overly superficial placement of the results in a seemingly schematic and strictly framed figure (Hanssen, 2018). The current article focuses on SEN practices and practices` prefigured arrangements from the preschool staff’s point of view. The perspectives of families, children and other actors involved in SEN practices were not included. As such, the one sidedness of this perspective may have hindered an expanded understanding of SEN practices and conceivably impeded several different ways of interpreting SEN practices (Hanssen, 2019).

Despite these critical limitations, the divergent profiles express an assembled densification of characteristic and obvious features of SEN practices, thereby

showing how the prefigured arrangements enable and constrain these practices in their respective countries.

In conclusion, the current article leads to several suggestions. First, it is necessary to have a high level of reflexivity and sensitivity in the arrangements surrounding SEN practices in both countries. It is important to clarify a basic view of what SEN practices are and how they should be enacted when different considerations conflict with the understanding and functions of those practices now and in the future. Second, an attempt to open a dialogue aimed at redefining and changing preschool conditions to support children with DLD is needed. The current study is the first to compare empirical data from Norwegian and Belarusian preschools. Therefore, the research sits in a unique position: it may help preschool employees in both countries deepen their “intercultural competence” and “perspective consciousness”. This competence and consciousness might equip practitioners with the expertise to systematically explore the issues influencing their own SEN practices (as well as those of others) and develop discussions about who they are, what they can do and what they will do in the public exchange of opinions concerning special needs education and inclusion.

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## **PART 6**

### **Art didactics**



## KAPITTEL 13

# Forskerposisjoner i tilblivelse

– intra-aksjon mellom en forsker og elever med kamera i et sammenvevd, kunstdidaktisk møte

Monica Klungeland, Universitetet i Agder, Fakultet for kunstfag

### SAMMENDRAG

Undersøkelsen i denne artikkelen er en del av doktorgradsprosjektet *Veve i åpne dører* som er knyttet til skolefaget kunst og håndverk. Sammen med elever på sjuende trinn og deres lærere har forskeren gjennomført et utendørs veveprosjekt. I denne teksten rettes oppmerksomheten mot forskerens posisjon, og spørsmålet som stilles, er hva slags forskersubjekt som blir til i intra-aksjon med elever og kameraer. Målet er å utfordre vår forståelse av hva som regnes som gyldig og verdifull kunnskap. Som metodisk grep blir elevene invitert til å filme med action-kamera. Forskerens intensjon med dette er å tilby elevene betydningsfulle posisjoner og åpne for deres perspektiver. Kameralinsen rettes dermed mot forskeren. Forskeren gjøres til det observerte objekt. Aktuelle funn i filmene leses gjennom Karen Barads begrep intra-aksjon. Denne lesingen får frem betydningen et kamera kan ha for maktsirkulering og for forskerens og elevenes posisjoner. Forskeren tildeles subjektposisjoner i sin egen forskningspraksis. Diskusjonen om maktsirkulering og subjektposisjoner kobles mot spørsmål om kunnskapsproduksjon. Hvordan vi som forsker innenfor lærerutdanning, forholder oss til vår egen og andre deltakers posisjon, vil påvirke diskurser og læreplaner. I neste runde vil det ha betydning for elevenes skolehverdag.

## MAKTSIRKULERING OG POSISJONERING AV SEG SELV OG ANDRE

Klasse 7A har sagt seg villig til å samarbeide med en forsker. De har vært ute i skogen og hatt med seg garn. De har beveget seg med nøster i hendene og forvandlet stedet. En vev av snorer som krysses og binder hverandre, har spunnet seg ut mellom trærne. Noen av elevene har hatt et filmkamera festet til kroppen sin. Vi er tilbake på skolen, og forskeren er interessert i å vite hvordan elevene opplevde å filme vevingen i skogen:

- På hvilken måte var det annerledes da du tok kameraet av?
- Da kunne jeg gå rundt litt mer.
- Gå rundt litt mer? Tenker du på at det var lettere å bevege seg omkring?
- Ja!
- Hvorfor var det det?
- Jo, fordi da filmer du ikke de andre.
- Tenkte du på det mens du gikk omkring, at de andre kom inn på filmen?
- Ja. Litt!
- Ja, men det er jo naturlig. Spesielt hvis du vet at noen ikke har lyst til å bli filmet. Så da trengte du ikke lenger ta hensyn til det, da?
- Nei!

I denne teksten rettes oppmerksomheten mot min egen posisjon som forsker i det jeg har valgt å kalle et sammenvevd kunstdidaktisk møte. Spørsmålet jeg stiller, er: *Hva slags forskersubjekt blir til i intra-aksjon med elever og kameraer?* Jeg oppfatter undervisningssituasjoner som spenningsfylte og komplekse, og en forskers inntreden øker kompleksiteten. Forskeren er i utgangspunktet tildelt en maktfull posisjon. Jeg vil samtidig vise at makten sirkulerer. Elevene inntar posisjoner og beveger på maktforholdene, og vel så interessant er det kanskje å diskutere hvilken makt *ikke-levende* ting, som for eksempel et kamera, kan utøve. Gjennom diskusjonen om posisjonering er det samtidig noe annet som blir fremtredende. Uavhengig av hvilken startposisjon vi kom fra, var vi på hvert vårt vis engasjert med våre oppgaver og plikter. Det tegnes et bilde som viser hvordan vi på ulike måter hjalp hverandre.

Eleven jeg siterer innledningsvis, uttrykker sin opplevelse av at et filmkamera fikk betydning for hvordan han plasserte seg i forhold til de andre elevene. Han kjenner på et ubehag over å være den som filmer andre. Filmingen foregikk



på oppdrag, og filmen ville inngå i en forskers datamateriale. De som ble fanget på filmen, ble dermed posisjonert som forskningsobjekter og ville få en sentral rolle i forskerens videre observasjoner og fortolkninger. Hans egen posisjonering medførte at andre ble posisjonert. Michel Foucault redegjør gjennom sitt omfattende forfatterskap for hvordan vi konstituerer oss selv og hverandre som subjekt gjennom at vi tildeles og inntar posisjoner. Tildeling av posisjoner er knyttet til diskurser. Diskurser kan forstås som premissene for hva som kan sies, hva som blir oppfattet som sant og meningsfullt, og hvem som kan uttale seg om hva. I alle diskurser finnes utelukkelsesmekanismer. En av disse mekanismene kaller Foucault *viljen til sannhet* (Foucault, 1999). Forskeren står svært nær på denne mekanismen gjennom sin posisjon til å generere kunnskap. Kunnskapsproduksjon er på denne måten forbundet med utøvelse av makt. For Foucault er ikke makt noe man har, det er noe som utøves, og som bare eksisterer i handling. Han sier at det er nødvendig å stille spørsmål ved hva slags kunnskap og hvem sin subjektive erfaring man utelukker i det øyeblikk man påberoper seg å bidra til en vitenskapelig diskurs (Foucault & Gordon, 1980). Foucault utfordret den tradisjonelle, humanistiske forståelsen av det menneskelige subjekt. Hans bidrag til en annen subjektforståelse består i at subjektet ikke kan forstås som et enhetlig, rasjonelt og tenkende individ. Det finnes derimot et mangfold av subjektiviteter som er tilgjengelige. Han sier: «We have to promote new kinds of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality that has been imposed on us for several years» (Foucault et al., 2001, s. 336). Hva slags subjekt som *blir til*, er altså ifølge Foucault relasjonelt betinget. Det henger sammen med hva slags posisjoner det er mulig å innta. I feltarbeid i etnografisk forskning gjelder dette både for forskeren og andre deltakere.

## **FORSKERENS POSISJON NÅR BARN ER DELTAKERE**

Spørsmål som omhandler forskerens posisjon når barn er deltakere, er diskutert i flere studier. Det pekes på at forskningsresultater påvirkes av implisitte fordommer og av hvordan forskeren er posisjonert i forhold til nasjonalitet, språk og paradigmer (Moss, 2016; Gulløv & Højlund, 2003). Autofotografering som metode er prøvd ut og diskutert av forskere som gjør feltarbeid sammen med barn. Denne metoden innebærer at deltakerne i et forskningsprosjekt blir bedt om å fotografere. Metoden omtales som intervenserende eller performativ fordi den gjør noe med både feltet, forskeren og kunnskapen som dannes. Et barn utstyrt med kamera har mulighet til å innta andre subjektposisjoner

både i forskning og i den aktuelle konteksten (Magnusson, 2018; Staunæs & Bramming, 2011; Staunæs & Kofoed, 2015). Andre forskere har skapt og vist eksempler på hvordan posthumanistiske og nymaterialistiske teorier kan kaste lys over og utvide vår forståelse av pedagogiske praksiser ved å spørre hvordan vi skal forstå læring og kunnskap hvis vi ser på mennesket som *del av* verden og ikke som en utvendig observatør og kunnskapsprodusent (Dahl et al., 2019; Lenz Taguchi, 2012, 2013; Magnusson, 2017; Otterstad & Reinertsen, 2015). Hillevi Lenz Taguchi har selvkritisk problematisert hvordan posthumanistisk pedagogisk forskning har utviklet seg til et paradigme som løfter frem materialers betydning, men på en måte som viser hvordan de har betydning for *oss selv*. Det handler om å forstå vår egen læring og tilblivelse. På den måten er det vi selv, mennesket, som likevel er i fokus. Hun argumenterer samtidig for at vi, ved å åpne opp ulike virkelighetsforståelser, kan la posthumanistisk tenkning bidra til å utvikle våre forskningsmetoder (Lenz Taguchi, 2013, 2017, 2018).

I fortsettelsen vil jeg først redegjøre for metode og aktuelle funn i mitt materiale. Deretter vil jeg utdype hvordan Karen Barad bygger videre på Foucaults teori om diskursive praksiser og utvikler sin posthumane og nymaterialistiske vitenskapsteoretiske tilnærming og begrepet *intra-aksjon*. Jeg vil så lese de aktuelle funnene gjennom dette begrepet og undersøke hva som kommer ut av møtet. Møtet vil ikke forløpe smertefritt. Motsetningen mellom å spørre etter subjektivering og på samme tid benekte subjektets uavhengige eksistens avsløres. Avslutningsvis vil jeg komme med mine tanker om hva som gjør denne diskusjonen relevant innenfor lærerutdanningsforskning.

## **METODOLOGISKE REDEGJØRELSER FOR ET SAMMENVEVD, KUNSTDIDAKTISK MØTE**

Undersøkelsen i denne artikkelen er en del av doktorgradsprosjektet *Veve i åpne dører*, som er knyttet til lærerutdanning og skolefaget kunst og håndverk. I samarbeid med elever på sjuende trinn i grunnskolen og deres lærere har jeg gjennomført et undervisningsopplegg i form av et utendørs veveprosjekt. I tidligere forskning (Klungland, 2016) har jeg vært opptatt av subjektiveringsdimensjonen i utdanning (Biesta, 2014). Denne interessen er med meg videre når jeg overordnet stiller spørsmål ved hva som kan oppstå hvis undervisningssituasjonen betraktes som et *kunstdidaktisk møte* (Skregelid, 2019), og hvordan materialer kan inngå som aktør. Interessen er også med meg når jeg i denne sammenheng stiller spørsmål om hva slags forskersubjekt som blir til.

I løpet av noen uker i april og mai 2018 ble undervisningen i kunst og håndverk, på mitt initiativ, lagt opp med fokus på *hendelsen*. I introduksjonen til elevene snakket jeg om samtidskunst. Jeg fortalte dem at noen ganger er ikke kunst en fysisk gjenstand, men en hendelse eller noe som oppstår i et møte. Jeg sa til dem at jeg var interessert i å undersøke hvordan innholdet i kunst- og håndverksfaget kan handle om noe mer enn de produktene eller tingene vi lager, og de ferdighetene vi opparbeider oss. Jeg fortalte at jeg ville prøve ut hvordan vi kan la *kunst som hendelse*, for eksempel et møte mellom elever, materialer og et sted, være en mulig tilnærming til undervisningen. På et område i skogen i skolens nærområde ble elevene invitert til å leke og eksperimentere med en mengde snorer og garn. I løpet av noen få minutter forandret stedet seg fordi et nett vokste frem mellom trærne.

Både forskeren og noen av elevene bar et action-kamera i en brystsele. Valget om å invitere elever til å filme med action-kamera under gjennomføringen av veveprosjektet ble tatt på bakgrunn av Donna Haraways teori om kritiske posisjoner og situerte kunnskaper. Hun er opptatt av den kunnskapen som kvinner, minoriteter og barn kan bidra med fra sin posisjon, og mener at denne kan være mer gyldig, bærekraftig og objektiv enn den som kommer fra forskerens observasjoner. Hun omtaler dette som «the view from a body» (Haraway, 1988, s. 589). Staunæs og Bramming argumenterer for hvordan *blikket fra en kropp* kan få forskeren til å «tre ut av sin egen forskerkropp og se feltet med feltets egne øyne» (Staunæs & Bramming, 2011, s. 109). Det var mitt ønske å få tilgang til elevenes blikk på situasjonen og åpne for at elevene skulle innta subjektposisjon. Det var åtte av tjueto elever som meldte seg frivillig til å filme med action-kamera. Jeg hadde tre kameraer. Vi lagde et system for hvordan de skulle fordeles, slik at alle som hadde lyst, fikk prøve.

Underveis i gjennomføringen ba jeg elevene om å skrive en liten tekst der de skulle beskrive hva vi hadde gjort, og hvorfor. Jeg ville gjerne høre om deres opplevelse, uten at jeg hadde kontroll over hva de skulle skrive om. Filmene fra elevenes kameraer er mitt hovedmateriale når jeg søker svar på spørsmål om forskerens subjektposisjon. Samtidig velger jeg å inkludere elevenes tekster som støttemateriale, fordi jeg opplever dem som relevante når spørsmål om posisjon skal besvares. Jeg har fremhevet, og muligens også overdimensjonert, elevenes tanker om at forskeren trenger hjelp.



**Figur 1** | Løpet av få minutter forandret stedet seg mens et nett vokste frem mellom trærne. Foto: Monica Klungland

## ETISKE OVERVEIELSER

Når barn inviteres til å delta i forskningsprosjekter, er forskerens etiske forpliktelser betydelige. Kim Rasmussen har skrevet om hvilke etiske overveielser som bør foretas når barn inviteres til å fotografere eller filme i forskningsprosjekter. Han sier at det viktigste er kritisk å spørre seg selv hvorfor barn inviteres til å fotografere. Intensjonen om å fremme barnets perspektiv er god, samtidig peker han på at forskerens vitenskapelige og praktiske interesser alltid ligger under, og at disse må klargjøres (Rasmussen, 2014, s. 7). Jeg har begrunnet mitt valg om å la elevene filme med action-kamera med at jeg ønsket å tilby dem en betydningsfull posisjon og fremme deres blick på situasjonen. I hvilken grad jeg oppnår dette, problematiseres gjennom diskusjonen.

NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) presiserte i sin godkjenning av prosjektet at elevene selv, ikke bare foreldrene deres, skulle informeres og gi sitt samtykke. Jeg ble derfor ansvarliggjort på å gjøre informasjonen tilgjengelig for elevene. Jeg forfattet et formelt brev til elever og foreldre med informasjon om forskningsprosjektet og forespørsel om deltakelse. Læreren ba meg om i tillegg å skrive et forenklet brev. Hun var opptatt av at det formelle språket kunne være utfordrende, både for elever og foreldre, og ønsket at alle skulle bli informert på en måte som gjorde dem trygge på valget om samtykke. Jeg fulgte lærerens oppfordring og skrev i tillegg et uformelt brev som var adressert til elever på 7. trinn. Dette brevet inneholdt fremdeles de påkrevde opplysninger, men

alle fremmede ord var enten fjernet eller forklart. Elevene fikk med hjem begge brevene, både det formelle og det uformelle. Jeg kommer tilbake til dette i min drøfting, fordi jeg oppfatter at situasjonen som oppstod omkring informasjons- og samtykkeskrivet, forteller noe om forskerens posisjon.

Det kan stilles spørsmål ved om de elevene som meldte seg frivillig til å filme, har forståelse for hva de sa ja til. Jeg argumenterer for at et kamera som er festet til elevenes kropp, kan bidra til at elevene får mulighet til å innta andre posisjoner. Innledningsdialogen i denne artikkelen får samtidig frem at det å filme andre ikke nødvendigvis oppleves som en god posisjon å være i. Når man må tenke igjennom sin egen plassering for at andre ikke skal oppleve ubehag, får det betydning for hvordan man opplever seg selv. Det er heller ikke til å komme utenom at jeg som forsker sitter på filmmaterialet og har dokumentert på film hva elever med kamera sier og gjør. En av elevene uttaler på en av filmene at man skal jammen passe på hva man sier når man har et kamera på seg. Klassekameraten svarer med å betvile at jeg kommer til å bruke tid på å se gjennom alle filmene. Svaret kan indikere at de muligens ikke har helt klart for seg hva deltakelsen innebærer. Dette krever en ydmyk innstilling fra forskeren. Behovet for alltid å være åpen for å revurdere hva som er barnets interesser, påpekes av forskere som er opptatt av å ivareta barneperspektivet (Kampmann, Rasmussen & Warming, 2017). Rasmussen presiserer at det må alltid finnes en vei ut for barna (Rasmussen, 2014, s. 7). De åtte elevene som filmet med action-kamera, hadde alle meldt seg frivillig. Det var forskjellig hvor lenge elevene valgte å gå med kameraet. Noen kom og ga det tilbake til meg etter kort tid, mens andre hadde det på seg helt til jeg ga signal om at vi skulle bytte.

## **FUNN I DATAMATERIALET**

Som et resultat av at elever sa seg villige til å filme, fikk jeg mulighet til å se meg selv på film i situasjonen. På elevenes filmer fremstår forskeren som et objekt. Jeg som *forskersubjekt* fikk se meg selv som *forskerobjekt*. Jeg fikk se forskeren fra elevens posisjon. Etter å ha studert meg selv som forskerobjekt stiller jeg spørsmål ved om elevenes blikk på situasjonen får frem et bilde av en forsker som tror hun åpner for elevenes subjektposisjon, men som i virkeligheten tviholder på sin egen maktfulle posisjon og lar elevene være forskningsobjekter. Det jeg ser når kameraet er rettet mot meg, er hvordan jeg forklarer til elevene hva de skal gjøre for at kameraene skal virke. Jeg ser meg selv vise hvordan de må justere på kameraet for at det skal fange hender i arbeid, og ikke bare filme

bakken eller himmelen. Jeg ser at jeg til stadighet kommer bortom dem og spør om det går bra, og om de husker å følge med på kameraet.



**Figur 2** Jeg ser meg selv vise og forklare hva de skal gjøre for at kameraet skal virke. Foto: stillbilde fra elevkamera

I elevenes tekster var det spesielt deres tanker om *hvorfor* som gjorde inntrykk på meg. Jeg fant ingen direkte henvisning til min interesse for å undersøke hvordan vi kan la *kunst som hendelse* være en tilnærming til undervisningen. Flere av elevene hadde likevel en klar oppfatning av at de var med på forskning. Jeg kunne i tekstene lese:

- «Monica skal forske på dette, tror jeg.»
- «Vi hjelper henne å skrive en doktorgrad for at hun skal bli bedre med det hun driver med.»
- «Vi gjorde det på grunn av at Monica skal skrive noe viktig.»
- «Siden Monica skal skrive en oppgave på skolen hun går på. Så hjelper vi hun.»

Dette gjorde inntrykk på meg. Jeg satt der på mitt kontor og leste at de gjorde dette for å hjelpe meg, og jeg måtte jo erkjenne at det var sant. Jeg var helt

avhengig av deres samtykke til deltakelse i studien for å kunne gjennomføre den. Svaret på spørsmålet om hvorfor vi gjorde dette, var forskjellig for dem og for meg. Jeg vil finne ut noe om didaktisk potensial i kunst- og håndverksundervisning. De var ikke så opptatt av det, eller muligens hadde de ikke begreper og språk til å kunne uttrykke det med. Men de hadde forstått at jeg trengte hjelp fra dem, og de var villige til å hjelpe meg.

### **APPARATER, INTRA-AKSJON OG SAMMENVEVD AGENS**

Barad har, ved å lese teori fra forskjellige disipliner gjennom hverandre, utviklet en posthumanistisk, vitenskapsteoretisk tilnærming som hun kaller *agentisk realisme*. Hun bygger på fysikeren Niels Bohrs banebrytende arbeid innenfor kvantefysikk, feministen Judith Butlers teori om materialisering og Foucaults teori om makt, viten og diskurser. Barad anerkjenner altså Foucaults arbeid, men savner det hun forstår som en presis redegjørelse for forholdet mellom diskursive praksiser og materielle fenomener (Barad, 2007, s. 200). Barad oppfatter at Foucaults begrep *diskursive praksiser* er begrenset til menneskelige, sosiale praksiser, og at agens da blir forstått som noe som bare tilhører mennesker. Hun mener at dette ikke er tilstrekkelig i en samtid der teknologi har fått en så betydelig funksjon innenfor vitenskapelige studier. Ved hjelp av Bohrs innsikt om apparatet og materialitetens betydning omformer hun Foucaults diskursive praksiser. Samtidig utvikler hun Bohrs apparatforståelse ved hjelp av Foucault. Diskursive praksiser er dermed ikke lenger begrenset til menneskelige, sosiale praksiser, og apparater er ikke lenger statiske og avhengige av menneskelige konsepter. Dette åpner for å forstå apparater som diskursive praksiser hvor både det menneskelige og det ikke-menneskelige blir produsert (Barad, 2007, s. 148).

Barad konkluderer med at hvis det er slik at både det menneskelige og det ikke-menneskelige bestemmes i diskursive praksiser, kan ikke en forståelse av diskursive praksiser som prioriterer mennesket, legges til grunn. Dette innebærer en endret rolle for mennesket. Hun mener at det er behov for en posthumanistisk forståelse av diskursive praksiser. Ut fra dette lanserer hun sitt begrep *intra-aksjon* (Barad, 2007, s. 149). Dette begrepet er et nøkkelbegrep i hennes vitenskapsteoretiske rammeverk. Hun sier at *intra-aksjon* som begrep «signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies» (Barad, 2007, s. 33). Hun utdyper med å vise til det velkjente begrepet *inter-aksjon*, som forutsetter adskilte individer med egen agens. Hun oppfatter at agens ikke er en egen-skap ved mennesker eller ting, men derimot knyttet til selve relasjonen eller

hendelsen (Barad, 2007, s. 175–178). Agens er ikke å forstå som menneskelig intensjon eller subjektivitet. Det er mer å forstå som handling eller mulighet for handling i en spesifikk situasjon (Barad, 2003, s. 826–827).

Foucault har redegjort for hvordan subjektiveringsprosesser foregår gjennom at vi tildeles posisjoner. Barad hevder at begrepet posisjon bare gir mening når et måleapparat er i bruk. Hun mener at enhver måling av posisjon ved hjelp av et måleapparat beskriver et fenomen. Dette fenomenet mener hun kan forstås som forholdet mellom det observerte objektet og observasjonsagensen (Barad, 2003, s. 814). Det fenomenet jeg er ute etter med mitt spørsmål, er forskersubjektet. Måleapparatet er den praksisen som forskeren selv har satt i gang når hun har utstyrt elever med kamera og bedt dem gi sin beskrivelse av hva som skjer.

### **INTRA-AKSJON MELLOM FORSKEREN OG ELEVER MED KAMERA**

Mitt spørsmål i denne artikkelen er hva slags forskersubjekt som blir til i intra-aksjon med elevene og kameraene. Barad forklarer som nevnt begrepet intra-aksjon som gjensidig og sammenvevd agens. Jeg oppfatter observasjonsagensen som de muligheter for handling og hendelser som åpner seg i måleapparatet. Forskersubjektet blir til i møte med ulike muligheter for handling. I handlingene eller hendelsene er ulike posisjoner tilgjengelige. Forskeren tildeles altså subjektposisjoner i sin egen forskningspraksis.

Situasjonen som oppstod omkring informasjons- og samtykkeskrivet, er egnet til å vise at forskeren i utgangspunktet innehar en maktfull posisjon i møte med feltet. I det formelle brevet brukte jeg ord som *konfidensielt* og *direkte* eller *indirekte personidentifiserende*. I den forenklede varianten stod det ganske enkelt av det ikke skulle være mulig å kjenne igjen hverken skolen eller elevene på bilder, og at riktige navn ikke skulle brukes. Informasjonsbrevet inneholder ord og er knyttet til menneskelige, sosiale praksiser. Episoden kunne derfor diskuteres ut fra Foucaults tanker om hvordan vi posisjoneres i diskursive praksiser. Jeg kan samtidig velge å se på brevet som en fysisk ting, en komponent i en intra-aksjon. Det var et papirark som ble puttet i elevenes sekker og brakt hjem til foreldrene. Trykksverten på papiret brakte ord og diskurs inn i hjemmet og posisjonerte både forskeren, elever og foreldre. Jeg oppfatter at det som skjedde i denne spesifikke situasjonen, fikk tydelig frem at min intensjon om å informere grundig og saklig ikke strakk til. Det fantes en agens i hendelsen som rykket på denne intensjonen og pekte mot min maktfulle posisjon. På samme tid oppstod det en mulighet til å bevege på posisjonen og la makten sirkulere.



Bakgrunnen for at jeg inviterte elevene til å filme, var et ønske om å tilby dem en subjektposisjon. Jeg var opptatt av hvordan jeg skulle gå frem i feltet for at elevenes syn og stemme i minst mulig grad skulle reduseres i mine fortolkninger. Haraway argumenterer for at kunnskapsobjekter skal betraktes som aktører eller agenter (Haraway, 1988, s. 592). Dette var bakgrunnen for at jeg ønsket å la dem få komme til orde fra sin subjektposisjon. Et kamera som følger elevens posisjon, gjør noe med forskerens posisjon. Forskeren blir gjort til det observerte objekt. Action-kameraenes muligheter for å følge med kroppens bevegelser og filme fra elevenes posisjon kan stå som et eksempel på Barads påstand om at vi i dag forholder oss til langt mer avansert teknologi som har effekt på mennesker og maktfordeling (Barad, 2007, s. 145–146). Eleven som siteres innledningsvis i denne artikkelen, viser til ubehaget ved å skulle fange andre på film. Jeg tenker at dette ubehaget peker mot selve kameraets påvirkning på maktrelasjonene. Kameraet utfordret posisjonen både til den som filmet og dem som ble filmet, og dermed forholdet mellom dem.

Hvor forskeren plasserer filmkameraet, er vesentlig for konstruksjonen av måleapparatet. Filmkameraet er i seg selv et slags apparat, men det er på samme tid en komponent i forskerens måleapparat. Barad hevder at både menneskene, tingene og ordene *blir til* i praksisen eller apparatet (Barad, 2007, s. 150). Et kamera som er festet til en menneskekropp, tilbyr helt andre muligheter og skaper andre begrensninger enn et kamera som står stille på et stativ. Et menneske som har et kamera festet til kroppen sin, endres betydelig, som eleven så klart beskrev i innledningsdialogen. Staunæs og Bramming omtaler hvordan sammensmeltingen mellom barnet og kameraet, og de muligheter for deltakelse som det gir, er med på å konstituere feltets posisjoner og maktforhold. De beskriver det som at forskningsmetoden intra-agerer med feltet (Staunæs & Bramming, 2011, s. 109). Når posisjoner og maktforhold utfordres, bidrar dette samtidig i utformingen av praksisen eller måleapparatet. Dette peker mot at agensen som finnes i hendelsene, kan være ganske annerledes enn menneskenes ønsker eller intensjoner.

Det at forskeren ble gjort til det observerte objekt, åpnet muligheten for at jeg kunne betrakte meg selv fra en annen posisjon. Jeg kan på filmene se hva jeg som forsker gjør og sier, og distansere meg fra det på en annen måte enn gjennom min egen, direkte opplevelse. Filmene viser at selv om min intensjon var å tilby elevene subjektposisjon, holder jeg fast i min egen subjektposisjon. I intra-aksjon med elever og kameraer blir jeg en forsker som designer mitt

apparat eller måleinstrument, og som instruerer deltakerne for at apparatet skal virke etter hensikten. Denne avsløringen av at forskeren justerer på apparatet underveis, peker mot Barads poengtering av at både det menneskelige og det ikke-menneskelige bestemmes i diskursive praksiser. Hun sier at noe av vanskeligheten med å drive vitenskap er å få apparatet til å virke i en bestemt hensikt (Barad, 2007, s. 203). Dette peker mot hvordan hun omformer Bohrs forståelse av apparater som statiske. Både måleapparatet og forskeren blir til i prosessen.

En ting er hva forskeren tror at apparatet er konstruert for, noe annet er det hva apparatet faktisk er i stand til å avsløre om forskeren. Når jeg viser og forklarer til elevene hvordan kameraene virker, og hvordan de skal filme, er det for å forsikre meg om at jeg får brukbart materiale. Det ville vært ille for meg om kameraet ikke hadde vært slått på. Da ville jeg sittet igjen uten filmmateriale. Dette ønsket om å ville få apparatet til å virke etter min hensikt og frykten for at det ikke skal gjøre det, viser et forskersubjekt som liker å ha kontroll, og som er redd for at resultatene ikke skal bli bra nok. Dette bidrar til å synliggjøre Barads forståelse av agens. Agens kan ikke forklares med hva som var min intensjon. Når Barad redegjør for hvordan agens er knyttet til hendelsen, sier hun at det er ikke alltid ting viser seg slik som vi helst vil at de skal (Barad, 2007, s. 215). Agensen i hendelsen i forskerens måleapparat avslørte den utelukkelsesmekanismen Foucault kaller *viljen til sannhet*. Jeg posisjonerte meg til å bidra i en vitenskapelig diskurs. For å kunne hevde at den kunnskapen jeg var i ferd med å skape, oppfylte vitenskapelige krav, måtte jeg forsikre meg om at dokumentasjonen var tilstrekkelig.

Jeg har tidligere nevnt at det ble synlig at vi hjalp hverandre. Avsløringen av hvordan jeg holder på min egen subjektposisjon og posisjonerer meg selv, er ikke den eneste måten å forstå situasjonen på. Jeg hadde fått slippe inn i elevenes skolehverdag og fått lov til å gjennomføre mitt eksperiment sammen med dem. Det at jeg som forsker, med mine kameraer og garnnøster, ble en del av deres fellesskap, kan på flere måter ha utfordret elevenes posisjon. Ikke nok med at de skulle arbeide praktisk med materialer ut fra en uvant og svært åpen oppgaveformulering, men det som ble gjort og sagt, skulle i tillegg fanges på film. De hadde fått en vanskelig oppgave. Det skulle bare mangle om jeg ikke forsøkte å hjelpe dem etter beste evne. Denne tanken leder meg videre til elevenes tekster. Jeg var tilbake på mitt kontor på universitetet da jeg hentet dem frem og leste dem. Jeg satt der og skulle forberede meg til en muntlig presentasjon jeg skulle holde. Presentasjonen var eksamen til et av de obligatoriske kursene jeg som

stipendiat måtte gjennomføre. Det stod noe på spill. Hva slags posisjon var jeg nå i? Jeg visste at jeg måtte prestere slik at sensor ville godkjenne min eksamen. Hvis jeg ikke fullfører de obligatoriske kursene, vil min posisjon som forsker på et universitet forsvinne. Så stod det skrevet, på elevenes håndskrevne ark, at de hjelper meg. De hjelper meg med en oppgave jeg har på den skolen jeg går på. De hjelper meg slik at jeg har noe å forske på. De hjelper meg med doktorgraden min. Det kjentes så sterkt nettopp fordi jeg så tydelig følte på behovet for hjelp der jeg satt. Elevene inntok subjektposisjon og beveget dermed på min posisjon.

Dette får frem hvordan makten sirkulerer. Barad sier i et intervju at begrepet intra-aksjon nettopp sier noe om maktubalansen i et komplekst felt av krefter. Hun mener at det første skritt på veien for å gjøre rede for maktubalanse er å erkjenne at agens ikke kan lokaliseres i det menneskelige subjekt (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, s. 55). Det finnes en annen agens i hendelsene enn den intensjonen forskeren, eller eventuelt elevene, måtte ha. Agensen i hendelsene avslører hvordan forskeren beveges mellom ulike posisjoner. Når min intensjon var å tilby elevene subjektposisjon, ble det avslørt at jeg helst ville beholde denne posisjonen selv. Når elevene fikk en åpen invitasjon til å beskrive hva som foregikk, inntok de subjektposisjon og posisjonerte meg som den som trengte hjelp.

Jeg oppfatter at Barads teori og begrepet intra-aksjon åpner for å utvide min forståelse av begrepet *materialer* og av hva som skjer i møter. Hennes forståelse av at alt er i tilblivelse, er interessant i en pedagogisk sammenheng der ting og materialer har en viktig funksjon. Begrepet er aktuelt også inn mot spørsmål om forskerens posisjon. Poenget med begrepet intra-aksjon er at *jeg* som forsker ikke eksisterer uavhengig av den konteksten jeg er en del av. *Jeg blir til* i den spesifikke situasjonen som et fenomen. Elevene, deres foreldre og lærerne er også komponenter i dette fenomenet. Det samme gjelder for alle de materielle tingene vi forholder oss til, de fysiske omgivelsene vi er en del av, og de rådende pedagogiske og politiske diskursene.

Jeg stilte spørsmål ved hva slags forskersubjekt som blir til i intra-aksjon med elever og kameraer. Når forskeren intra-agerer med elever og kameraer, vises ulike tilgjengelige subjektiviteter eller bevegelige subjektposisjoner. Jeg ser i mitt materiale en forsker som kommer fra universitetet, som er i kontakt med personvernombudet og uttrykker seg i et formelt og vanskelig språk. Dette tenker jeg kan oppfattes som en maktfull posisjon. Forskeren er vevd sammen med og representerer de organisasjonene hun er i kontakt med, og posisjonerer elever og foreldre i forhold til dette. På samme tid kan jeg se at forskeren setter

sin maktfulle posisjon i bevegelse og tilbyr betydningsfulle posisjoner til sine medforskere. Jeg ser en forsker som ber lærerne og elevene om hjelp. Uten deres deltakelse blir det ikke noe feltarbeid. Om hun skal beholde sin posisjon og utføre sin forskning, er hun helt avhengig av å vinne tillit hos elever, foreldre og lærere. Når elevenes kameraer rettes mot forskeren, vises en forsker som justerer på sitt måleapparat, fordi hun er redd for å sitte igjen med datamateriale av dårlig kvalitet. Dette kan avsløre en forsker som tar tilbake sin maktfulle posisjon. Elevene og deres kameraer blir igjen redskaper eller komponenter i forskerens apparat. Når elevene uttaler seg skriftlig om hvorfor de deltar, gir de seg selv en betydningsfull posisjon med mulighet til å utøve makt. Forskeren tildeles posisjon som den som skal hjelpes. Og de har rett, i denne sammenheng er det forskerens posisjon som står på spill.

### **HVA FØRER VÅRE FORSKERPRAKSISER TIL?**

Når jeg spør hva slags subjekt som blir til, og svarer med å vise til bevegelige subjektposisjoner eller ulike subjektiviteter, tegner det seg en konflikt. Skal man uttale seg om subjektivitet, er subjektets egen stemme eller *selvet* sentralt. Når agens flyttes bort fra selvet og over i relasjonen, desentrerer subjektet. Denne motsetningen kan spores mellom linjene i teksten. Når forskeren betraktes og beskrives fra et tredjepersonsperspektiv, er det ikke forskerens egen stemme som slippes til. Det kan dermed hevdes at det ikke er et forskersubjekt som blir til, men et forskerobjekt. For Barad er skillet mellom subjektet som observerer og objektet som observeres, meningsløst fordi hun oppfatter dem som sammenvevd og betinget av hverandre (Barad, 2007, s. 145). På samme tid er skillet mellom disse to posisjonene aktuelt når det er subjektivering som etterspørres. For meg, med bakgrunn fra kunst- og håndverksfaget og med interesse for materialers og objekters betydning inn mot subjektivering, er denne motsetningen interessant. Den åpner for å stille spørsmål omkring hva kunnskap er, og hvordan kunnskap blir til.

Barad bruker begrepet intra-aksjon til å argumentere for at man i stedet for å tro på ordenes makt til å representere virkeligheten, bør stille spørsmål ved hva forskningspraksisen fører til (Barad, 2003). Om vi tar denne oppfordringen på alvor, oppfatter jeg diskusjonen om forskersubjektet og forskerens posisjon som relevant inn mot spørsmål om gyldig og verdifull kunnskap i lærerutdanningsforskning. Spørsmålet om hva våre forskningspraksiser fører til, kan knyttes til en diskusjon om hva som er utdanningens formål. Aktuelle

pedagoger og kunstdidaktikere argumenterer for å flytte utdanningens fokus bort fra oppnådde læreplanmål og formidling av etablert kunnskap i retning mot betingelser for subjektets eksistens og potensial for tilblivelse (Atkinson, 2018; Biesta, 2018; Illeris, 2012; Skregelid, 2019; Svingen-Austestad, 2017). Hvordan vi som forsker innenfor lærerutdanning, forholder oss i vår forskerpraksis til vår egen og deltakernes posisjon, kan ha stor betydning for hva som kommer ut av kunnskap. Dette vil igjen kunne påvirke utformingen av læreplaner og i neste runde elevenes skolehverdag. Som forsker har jeg et håp om at mitt arbeid vil komme til nytte og være til hjelp for fremtidige skoleelever. Jeg er derfor svært takknemlig for at elevene jeg samarbeidet med i dette prosjektet, med stort alvor påtok seg ansvar for å hjelpe meg.

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## CHAPTER 14

# The Visual Arts in Contemporary Education: Exploring How Artworks Can Promote Moral Deliberation

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### ABSTRACT

The current interest in moral education reflects the need for holistic education that embraces the broad spectrum of human life. It has been suggested that the arts have a significant role in this respect, mainly through the insights they provide into human life and experiences from which an audience can relate and learn. This chapter discusses the results of a research project that aimed at discerning how analyzing artworks in an elementary school setting could provide insights into the potentials of the arts for moral deliberation. The theoretical background draws on Aristotelian virtue ethics, especially to a fruitful branch of Neo-Aristotelianism that has been termed as Aristotelian character education, and contemporary accounts of the moral and epistemological value of the visual arts. Results suggest that artworks induce emotional experiences that give insights into real situations, suggesting educative elements which can be a precursor for moral development. The artworks discussed in this chapter generated student reflections on various issues, ranging from general social justice threatened by civil wars, racism, misogyny and poverty, to the moral virtues such as courage, compassion and empathy, and to emotional responses where pupils related what they saw in artworks to their personal challenges and experiences in life. The results suggest that the visual arts are an untapped educational source that can have a significant impact on teacher education and classroom practices in addition to interdisciplinary opportunities. In general, giving moral issues an educational focus through pictorial and philosophical analysis appears to help opening new pathways for value-based education.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers and theorists at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham in England have argued that current educational discourse could benefit from Aristotle's virtue theory to give education a much-needed focus on character and moral sensitivity (Kristjánsson, 2015; Jubilee Centre, 2017). Their view is diametrically opposed to the narrow instrumentalism about educational aims that is prevalent in our western educational systems (Biesta, 2010, 2018; Kristjánsson, 2015). The Jubilee Centre's research has shown that its program, Aristotelian Character Education, has had an impact on educational prospects in England (see e.g. Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse & Jones, 2015; Carr & Harrison, 2015). However, the implementation of these educational aims is not only dependent upon teaching materials but also on teachers' professional development and identity as role-models in moral education (see, e.g. Sherman, 1999). This calls for greater emphasis on teachers as role-models and facilitators in ethical deliberation and the first steps in that direction are through teachers education (Arthur, Fullard, Watts & Moller, 2018).

The development of character and moral sensitivity rests on a person's cognitive and emotional ability to reflect on life's challenges. In this regard, the teacher's role is to provide a playground for children to exercise these abilities, in which critical thinking is a key concept (Sanderse, 2012). While the objective is well established, it remains a challenge to implement character education in schools. There is, however, evidence that the arts can have an essential role in this respect, primarily because they invite the audience to think for themselves, helping them to evaluate ideas on personal grounds and experiences involving both cognitive and emotional processes (see, e.g. Carr & Harrison, 2015 on the value of literature for character education). However, the neglect of the visual arts as a suitable vehicle for character education is surprising given the recent emphasis on literature, music and cinema for that purpose (see, e.g. Sanderse, 2012; Kristjánsson, 2015; Kim, 2016; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse & Wright, 2017).

As a visual arts teacher, I have been doing experiments in classes by inviting pupils to participate in philosophical discussions about artworks in addition to suggesting that they create art inspired by the virtues and what it means to lead a good life. My professional development led me to gather my reflections on the value of the visual arts for character education in a doctoral research project in



which I designed an intervention for visual arts classes of 13-year-old pupils. The intervention was created to develop teaching methods to enhance virtue literacy and moral sensitivity through art creation, philosophical group discussions and the writing of short texts about selected works of art.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings from the philosophical part of the project and the qualitative analysis of student writings. The research question guiding this part of the project is: How do pupils respond to ethical questions about five works of visual art that have a virtue related theme? I approached the research question from three perspectives, which I suggest are present in the artworks I chose to use in the project: social justice, moral virtues and moral emotions. I chose four oil paintings and one artwork in textile that are rather conventional figurative artworks with a narrative structure.

In 1830, Eugène Delacroix painted *Liberty Leading the People*<sup>1</sup>, a painting which he intended to be his contribution to the civil war when Charles X was overthrown during the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris (Delacroix, 2001). The painting depicts a female form symbolizing liberty leading a group of citizens who had overpowered the King's soldiers. The first impression of the picture suggests the notion of bravery, freedom and leadership. However, closer inspection invites the onlooker to discern the horrors of the war and whether real justice and freedom could be reached through violence.

Norman Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With* (1964)<sup>2</sup> depicts young Ruby Bridges escorted to school by four U.S. Marshals. She was the first black child to attend an all-white school in New Orleans in 1960 after desegregation became law in the U.S. She had to endure constant threats from white citizens who opposed desegregation (Bridges, 1999). Despite the challenges, Ruby persisted in her intention to break down the walls of racism and hatred. This painting raises many pertinent questions about social justice, racism, courage and determination.

The textile artwork *The Fisherwomen* (1971)<sup>3</sup> by Hildur Hákonardóttir shows a group of women working in a fish plant under the watchful gaze of the manager. The artwork addresses women's rights and displays the inherent hierarchy in society and the power underlying it.

1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty\\_Leading\\_the\\_People](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People)

2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Problem\\_We\\_All\\_Live\\_With](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_We_All_Live_With)

3 <https://www.arkiv.is/art/878>

Briton Rivière's *Daniel's Answer to the King* (1890)<sup>4</sup> illustrates a biblical story from the Old Testament. Although the religious content of this painting is not of interest for the present research, the artist depicts how Daniel shows composure when locked up in the lions' den. The picture can raise questions about courage and the importance of controlling fear when faced with an adverse situation.

Edvard Munch's *The Sick Child* (1895-96)<sup>5</sup> is an autobiographical painting that portrays his older sister on her deathbed fighting tuberculosis (Messer, 1985). A close relative is by her side, hiding her face in despair. Despite these circumstances, the young girl seems to be comforting the older woman. This picture can raise questions about dignity and equanimity when facing the inevitableness of death.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### The role of the arts in education

The role of the arts in education has been debated for decades or even centuries or millennia. Many accounts have focused on a clearly defined instrumental value of the arts, such as the idea that the arts could promote learning in unrelated subjects, skills or qualities (Biesta, 2018), or that they could be beneficial for health (see, e.g. Mastandrea et al, 2019 about the relaxing effect of visiting museums). In contrast to the instrumental value of the arts, proponents of the arts maintain that aside from providing aesthetic experiences, the arts have no practical usefulness whatsoever and should have their place in education for their own sake with no further need of justification (Biesta, 2018, see also Carroll, 2010 about *Art for Art's sake*). In the present-day educational discourse, these incompatible options seem to cancel each other out, leaving us with art programs in education that are increasingly marginalized (Biesta, 2018).

Gert Biesta (2018) proposes, instead, that the value of the arts in education is not to be found in predefined instrumental benefits but in their open-ended nature and how they relate to human cognition and emotions in a multi-layered fashion. This suggests that, in education, the arts allow for educational experiences that give pupils and teachers a mutual playground to delve into issues of human life that invite unexpected learning experiences. Through the arts, we can turn our focus to issues that are of real concern for human development,

4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_in\\_the\\_lions'\\_den](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_in_the_lions'_den)

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Sick\\_Child](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child)

including sustainable moral growth. When I refer to sustainable moral growth, I am referring to Aristotelian virtue ethics, especially to a fruitful branch of Neo-Aristotelianism that has been termed as Aristotelian character education (Kristjánsson, 2015).

### **Aristotelian character education**

The concept of character was a concern of the ancient Greeks. Socrates (Plato, 1941) insisted that if a human agent knew what was good, he or she would want to act accordingly (Arthur, Crick, Samuel, Wilson & McGettrick, 2006). However, the main inspiration for character education in modern-day educational discourse is Aristotle (384-322 BC), whose works are the primary inspiration of contemporary virtue ethics (Kristjánsson, 2015; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse & Jones, 2015). Aristotle maintained that virtues comprised various components, the most salient one, perhaps, being the emotional *qua* motivator of action that moves us to act virtuously.

According to Aristotle, the virtues require abilities to reason about human good. Therefore, people need to practice moral deliberation to become entirely virtuous, although children take the first steps towards moral virtue through habituation and adult guidance (Aristotle, 1955). To be sure, there can be proper actions without virtue as duty and personal advantages can guide our actions, but virtuous individuals would know what was good, want the good and possess the abilities to act accordingly (Arthur et al., 2006, see also Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; and Carr & Harrison, 2015). According to Aristotle, full virtue requires practical wisdom in addition to natural virtue, or natural goodness, which is primarily emotional. Becoming a virtuous human being is a life-long task that incorporates both virtuous actions and the ability to reflect on moral issues and conflicts (Arthur, Harrison, Carr, Kristjánsson & Davison, 2014).

Each virtue, e.g., courage or honesty, consists of seven distinctive components: perception, knowledge and understanding, emotion, identity, motivation, reasoning, and action and practice. Three of these are interrelated and concern virtue literacy. Virtue perception “is concerned with noticing situations involving or standing in need of the virtues”, and virtue knowledge/understanding relates to the acquisition of language usage through familiarity with virtue concepts. Lastly, virtue reasoning focuses on making reasoned judgements on moral situations (Jubilee Centre, 2017, pp. 5-8). Virtue literacy as the ability for moral reflection and deliberation requires a command of relevant concepts

and vocabulary. Moral development as an educational objective is an attempt to develop virtue literacy, which could provide pupils with the basic ethical concepts for further moral cognition and deliberation (Jubilee Centre, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2015).

### **Truth, beauty and morality**

In *The Republic*, Plato (1941) considered the arts to be subversive of knowledge, truth, and morality in the ideal state. His harsh judgement of the arts derives from his theory of forms, according to which reality reflects substantive, but non-physical, ideas or forms. True knowledge could only be obtained via rational deliberation, not through sense experience or imagination. In contrast to Plato, Aristotle (1988) described imitation as an important educational aspect of the arts that might arouse morally appropriate emotions and thereby help people to become more virtuous and wiser. This would draw on the human ability to relate to experience through imagination.

Aristotle cited various types of poetry and music as modes of imitation that are distinctive in three respects: the medium, the objects and the manner (or mode) of imitation. In this respect, the medium refers to the artwork itself, the object to the content, and the manner to the performance or execution, the style of the artist. In *Poetics*, Aristotle (1988) characterized arts as the mediation of the possible, an open-ended educational quality, which could allow for the expanding of the learning horizon (Marini, 2013). In *Politics*, Aristotle pointed out the power of music to express or represent anger or courage and writes that “if a man enjoys looking at a statue of someone for no other reason than that he likes the look of it, then inevitably he will enjoy looking at the original, whose likeness he is at the moment contemplating” (1962, p. 309).

According to present-day discussions, works of art can promote inquiry and reflection, even emotional responses, that remind us of our shared humanity and collective experiences (Carroll, 2003). Works of art and fiction can sometimes even be “twice as true as facts” (Oatley, 1999, p. 101), and they can appear to us as good examples for moral development (Wivestad, 2013). In this aspect, images can be seen as refined representations where we can articulate or imagine experiences and objects, and these would be essential in communication and generally understanding others’ worldviews (Eisner, 2002). In other words, “art-works can provide an understanding of reality” similar to “scientific hypotheses and historical narratives” (Young, 2001, p. 23).

## METHODOLOGY

My doctoral project uses a pragmatic theoretical framework that focuses on the concept of education as a values-based practice (Biesta, 2010, Kristjánsson, 2015). One hundred and fifty pupils, all 13-years-old in an upper elementary school in the capital region in Iceland participated in the research. In the participating school, each year group is divided alphabetically into two groups when attending classes in arts and crafts; half of the pupils are in the visual arts for the autumn semester and the other half in textile crafts and vice versa during the spring semester.

I designed an intervention (see introduction) for the visual arts classes which took place from late September through November 2018. Before and after the intervention, pre and post tests were administered to the whole year-group, where the pupils in textile crafts served as a control group for later quantitative analysis. In these tests, pupils were asked to write short reflections, or vignettes (Gray, Royall & Malson, 2017), based on open questions on four artworks. This procedure allowed me to collect responses from the whole year-group on four artworks resulting in 150 texts on each artwork; *Liberty Leading the People*, *The Problem We All Live With*, *The Sick Child* and *The Fisherwomen*. In addition, the pupils participating in the visual arts classes reflected by writing about one additional artwork, *Daniel's answer to the King*, resulting in 75 texts. The tests were only marked by random numbers without any personal identification.

I used thematic analysis to analyze the data using a theoretical approach that “tends to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytical interest in the area” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). In line with this, I looked for texts that expressed virtue-related themes: How do pupils perceive the need for virtue in a given situation? Do they possess a conceptual understanding of what ethical virtues are and why they are important? Do they express emotional dispositions to the situations displayed in the artworks, or do they demonstrate the ability to deliberate on circumstances when two or more virtues collide? Since the pupils’ texts were handwritten, I transcribed them on a computer into a word processing program, which is usually considered to be the first step in getting familiar with the data. The analysis included reading and re-reading the texts; I took notice of concepts and ideas that seemed pertinent, I developed initial codes across the dataset since I was interested in how the participants as a group responded to the artworks. Eventually, I generated themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that

allowed me to draw conclusions about the potentials of the arts for enhancing moral deliberation and virtue literacy.

In addition to general ethical concerns in research, the sensitive position of minors in educational studies requires attention and care. In this research project, I did not collect any sensitive information and my methods are consistent with the ethical requirements laid out by Shamoo and Resnik (2009, p. 276). Before the intervention and data collection took place, I received informed consent from parents and pupils, who were free to opt-out of participation at any time. The research was conducted in compliance with guidelines from The Icelandic Data Protection Authority and was acknowledged by the University of Iceland's committee on ethical conduct in research.

## CENTRAL FINDINGS

### **Justice, hypothetically speaking**

When do we need to step in and put our efforts into seemingly unresolvable conflicts? Are our actions guided by particular and personal benefits or by a broader universal notion of morals and justice? To what extent would our efforts be well spent? As one pupil bluntly put it in regard of Delacroix' painting of liberty, "[w]hy sacrifice yourself for peace?"

Pupils perceived the need to fight for justice in proportion with their own reality. An artwork with a high level of conceptual abstraction and fewer options to identify with those portrayed, such as Delacroix' *Liberty Leading the People*, generated ideas that were more hypothetical and less infused with emotions. However, this disinterestedness allowed for a philosophical analysis that revealed the paradoxical and controversial nature of wars and fight.

How can she [liberty] declare peace and victory by waving the flag, even though a lot of people have died and a lot of people are still ready to kill?

Justice was not only perceived as a result of, but also as an essential quality of, the agents in question, and the contradiction between freedom and fight became apparent. "The goddess of liberty was holding a gun and threatening to kill", as one pupil pointed out. Pupils recognized that persistent repression and injustice could eventually bring about disastrous consequences. They commented on "how many people get killed in civil wars", and they asked, "why are wars needed?." It was suggested that "greed was the root of all evil", but humans were also to

blame because “people could be unjust and cruel.” Participants recognized the importance of internal cohesion in social structures. They feared that these could collapse if “widespread anger” was left to ferment until reaching the point of total disruption where “each was against all” and the distinction between “the good and the evil” could no longer be made.

While pupils’ reception of *Liberty Leading the People* was rather passive, pupils responded differently to artworks that examined issues of social justice that were closer to their reality. These include the Norman Rockwell’s *The Problem We All Live With* and *The Fisherwomen* by Icelandic textile artist Hildur Hákonardóttir. Both these artworks induced intense indignation about racism and misogyny.

The 1963 painting by Norman Rockwell, *The Problem We All Live With*, produced worries about injustice in societies in which racism, hatred and xenophobia are prevalent. Norman Rockwell’s message is even more pertinent today. Pupils expressed bewilderment over and strong repulsion to the fact that people would fight against human rights and try to hinder young children from going to school on the grounds of skin color. One student wrote: “I am angry. One should not maltreat people just because of their race.” Another asked: “What is wrong with people when they are against people of different origin, colored people, or a different religion.” Many students expressed their disapproval and lack of understanding as to why the state of affairs in the world needs to be this way and asked in disbelief: “Why do people always have to think so much about other people[’s] race.” Pupils also wondered about why a girl would need to be escorted to school, and why she was threatened by her community. “It gets on my nerves. Nobody should need to be escorted to school by soldiers, threatened by flying fruits and tomatoes. It’s ridiculous!” Although Rockwell’s painting describes the situation in the US almost sixty years ago, similar conditions prevail in many parts of the world. As one participant put it, “[i]t hurts to think about that the world once was like that, and it kind of still is.”

Pupils’ responses to Hildur Hákonardóttir 1971 textile work *The Fisherwomen* focused on women rights, class struggles and labor. A student pointed out that the work appears to be “from the period when women didn’t have any rights, and it is irritating.” The artwork even generated contempt.

The man is in a higher position than the women and gets better paid, but the women do all the work. They are likely to revolt and reject how they are treated. I feel humiliation and shame when looking at this image.

The uneven distribution of resources and workload was also criticized. "It is unfair that the women are doing all the work while the man is just standing there and looking at them." Many pupils recognized that, in the past, women seldom had any choice about their jobs or working hours. A participant predicted that the women would revolt against the injustice and oppression.

These women cannot choose their jobs. They have always been working in this place to have money for food. One day, they will revolt and fight for women's rights because they are tired of others making the decisions that concern them.

Pupils seemed to be able to discern the cruelty sometimes present on the labor market, especially regarding women.

They are standing by a table while their boss is standing over them. Most of them are exhausted and irritated because they have been working for long hours without breaks for resting or eating. They had asked for a break many hours ago, but their boss denied it and decided to monitor them.

### **Virtue is desirable**

In the pupils' responses, virtue seems to be of significant importance for a good life. Displaying virtues such as courage and setting a good example is considered to be praiseworthy. Ruby Bridges, a young black woman who represents a marginalized group in her community, is regarded as a good example because she showed courage in attending a desegregated school despite of the obstacles inflicted on her by anti-desegregation protesters in her town.

She is brave going to a school of white kids only. She is proud of being the first, and she is a pioneer, both as a girl and as a black person.

Showing virtue is considered as something good. Ruby acts as a role model by showing character traits to which others can aspire. According to student interpretation of the painting, she is proud of her actions and proud of herself; being



virtuous is a part of her identity. “She shows courage because she cannot change how she appears.” Pupils wrote that, when facing adverse situations, courage would not only be seen in actions, but also in her fearless manner of encountering a challenge. “She is courageous because she stands straight and walks as if she has nothing to fear.” Being fearless is one thing but being dedicated and energetic when entering a difficult situation is considered even more admirable. “She shows courage and strength because she walks briskly, and it looks like she is not scared.” Being courageous involves a certain level of confidence, which becomes obvious to the audience. “She is self-confident because she walks calmly with the soldiers and her face is calm.” Another student described her as being “upright, with good confidence and doesn’t seem to be afraid.”

### **Virtue makes a difference**

According to pupils, the virtues are not only desirable as character traits, but they also seem to be a necessity for motivation and drive. Courage is also considered to be beneficial in many respects and has a significant practical dimension in dealing with other people. All leadership needs courage, as in the case of *Liberty Leading the People*. As a student stated, “[f]or a leader, it takes courage to lead the people.” Pupils ascribed virtues specifically to women, both in the case of liberty, who a pupil described as “strong and courageous”, and in the case of the Fisherwomen, where pupils recognized how women would sacrifice themselves for their children and families.

They are likely working for their families, to be able to feed their children when they are not able to feed themselves. They will most certainly spend the last minutes of their lives doing something for their families, like working or cooking.

Here, the fisherwomen are considered to represent the idea of motherhood, commitment and unconditional love. Despite adverse conditions and oppression from powerful men, these strong women are toiling through their difficulties in hope of contributing to the greater and higher good.

One of the practical aspects of courage can be seen in the pupils’ thoughts about Rivière Briton’s painting of *Daniel’s Answer to the King* (often referred to as *Daniel in the Lions’ Den*). When communicating with others, appearing confident and courageous is considered to be important in regard to mutual trust and respect. Pupils appear to ascribe these qualities metaphorically to

Daniel amidst the lions, since hungry lions are not likely to care about mutual respect and fearlessness. The idea of mutual respect as a result in interactions or communication was described as a conscious decision from showing courage.

It looks like the man is showing courage in not being afraid of the lions, then the lions are not afraid of him and have nothing to fear.

However, such a fearless appearance can be empowering and could influence the lions in such a way that they would not only hesitate to attack the man, but also become afraid of him. “The lions are afraid of him because he doesn’t show any fear and they become afraid instead.” This line of thought suggests that, in similar cases, the real intention of the antagonists would be unveiled by their reactions; bad intentions would result in fear but good intentions in peace. “The man shows courage and peace. He shows peace by not hurting the lions.” While most pupils focused on the benefits of virtues for a good life, some warned against vices. “He knows that if he shows weakness, the animals will not hesitate to eat him.”

### **Virtue for personal development**

While the virtues have a practical, outward looking dimension, they are equally important for personal development and character, and not least, for a good life. Pupils described the notion of courage as a conscious decision that helps you become better or stronger:

When we show courage, we are increasing our comfort zone, which results in our capacity to deal with more challenges later on and show more courage.

Courage was also seen as a key element in doing the right thing or guiding others in order “to be able to stop bad things from happening or stop people from doing wrong things.” Courage is also important for self-development because it allows you to “conquer your fears”, and courage allows you “to get through life in the right way and deal with new and exciting things.”

There is also present an idea of courage as a character trait regarding acceptance, meeting your destiny with dignity. When describing what Daniel might be thinking, the notion of equanimity seems to be present. It was suggested that, as Daniel looks up through the window and into the light, he could be thinking

of “how wonderful it is outside.” As a pupil wrote, “he has accepted the fact that he is going to die.” Equanimity is also ascribed to the lions as fellow prisoners with Daniel, as everyone in the dungeon is waiting for the inevitable. “Instead of running to the door and trying to get out, they just look into the light and wait for it to come to get them.” Courage plays also an essential role when facing the inevitable, according to one pupil, who said that “[t]he man knows that he will die, and you have to be courageous to face the facts. Also, he knows that there is no way out of these circumstances.”

In the pupils’ texts, the virtues seem to be essential for our inner lives, health, future prospects and relationships. Edvard’s Munch painting of his dying sister induced serious deliberation about life’s challenges. Pupils noted that the reality of life can be harsh and that we needed to accept the facts of life and find a way to cope. “I think it is sad, but this is how life is, and you must be brave.” In a similar vein, but with added importance on gratitude, one pupil wrote that:

I think the woman with the red hair is seriously ill and maybe dying, she is possibly thanking her daughter ... for a good life and much help. I think the painting is sad because it hurts to lose someone, but you’ll have to go on because such is life.

With a similar focus on difficult moments, pupils wrote that virtues such as appreciation and forgiveness could be of great importance for psychological well-being after having been through emotional suffering. As such, Munch’s painting can be perceived as a reminder of appreciating life, and that each moment could be the last one. “Love your family and enjoy your friends. Because you’ll never know when you’ll lose someone.” The importance of forgiving and not holding grudges was emphasized in this vignette:

In the last days, they had a fight which ended badly, and they hadn’t spoken since. Then the mother gets a phone call where she is told that her daughter had been in a car accident ... They both realize the importance of forgiving. After some crying and laughing, the daughter dies, and five days later the mother dies of sorrow.

### **Virtuous emotions**

The third facet of the pupils’ responses to the artworks concerns affective and emotional issues. Looking at an artwork can foster emotionally induced moral virtues through perception and imagination. The emotional charge in Munch’s

painting seems to arouse similar emotions with the audience. One pupil wrote that “[h]er husband is so sad that he is praying for her. You perceive the sorrow and anguish of death in this painting, because of how sad he is, and she is afraid.” In some accounts, pupils expressed compassion and empathy with a hint of hope. “I feel sad for the woman who is crying and hiding her face in the other woman’s lap. It is as if she is saying: ‘Everything will be alright’.”

The prospects of imminent demise are also accentuated by the pupils: “I think the redhaired one is going to die, and I sense much fear and sorrow in this painting.” Other pupils added how the dark and heavy colors in the painting evoked similar feelings in them. For example, one wrote that “[t]his painting is somber, and I became sad when I looked at it.” Another remarked that “[t]he dark colors are bad for the atmosphere in the painting. If the artist had used brighter and more vivid colors, the painting would have been different.” One pupil commented on the darkness in the room concerning, saying that the darkness “makes me feel as if nobody has been around to help her.” Although the presence of sadness was pronounced, there was also a positive emotion that could counter the difficulties.

There will be much sorrow over the next days. The emotions I feel are sorrow because of the demise of the woman. But also, a lot of relief because the woman had been going through much pain and it is good to leave.

In some instances, Munch’s painting made pupils to relate to their own painful experiences. One pupil wrote that the painting “is tragic because I know how it is to lose someone who is close, and whom you love.” Another pupil took a precise example from her own experience:

They were like working outside because it looks like it is in the old times, then suddenly she passes out, but then she recovered. I get this feeling as it hurts in my stomach and things. This happened to my grandfather, but he is alright now.

In a similar vein, a pupil wrote that he or she felt “sorrow, anger and resentment. I feel these emotions because my grandmother is fighting cancer.” In one account, a pupil related to the situation as something that could happen to her.

She became suddenly very ill, so her mother took her to the hospital and there it was discovered that she suffered from an incurable heart disease. Then, they were sent home to be together until she would stop breathing. It feels sad because it could, in a way, be my mother and me.

## DISCUSSION

In line with theoretical literature on the value of the arts for moral development, my results suggest that when analyzing artworks, pupils can articulate moral concepts and relate them to both their external and internal reality. Pupils were not only able to objectively describe the events depicted in the artwork, but they were also able to justify their responses: what they thought or felt and why. Their responses also demonstrated that their reactions were dependent on the extent to which they could relate to the persons depicted in the artwork: this can be seen in their deliberations on social justice. In many instances, pupils' responses were infused with virtuous emotions: they expressed resentment, anger and shame, and they recognized sorrow and grief and showed empathy towards the persons depicted. Some described the importance of gratitude and forgiving, they perceived equanimity and tranquility, and they expressed admiration when beholding the virtues of others. They outlined how courage can be beneficial in many ways in human life, both regarding others and for personal guidance when facing fear or obstacles. Colorful and imaginative texts displayed how each participant brought his or her own experiences and background into the interpretation. This shows that art can be the bedrock for the open-ended deliberation that contemporary educational discourse emphasizes. This also follows Aristotle's theory about the development of the virtuous human being, which says that in our conduct and judgement, we need to be sensitive to a variety of different situations, which we must evaluate from various perspectives. Although the open-ended nature of art could, in theory, allow for moral relativism in our responses, these attitudes did not appear. Despite the colorful variety of texts, they shared an inner coherence which can be observed in how the main themes in the analysis are constructed.

At the heart of moral deliberation is the ability to think about moral issues and experience feelings and emotions as a result. Aristotle (1955) wrote that these qualities need to be developed through habituation, upbringing, and, not least, practice. Artwork such as that used in this research project seems to allow for deliberation about various moral issues. Through representation and imitation, visual images provide a playground for free and unhindered thinking

about how to deal with moral challenges in real life, and in some instances, the artworks allow for a deeper reflection on pupils' own (sometimes painful) experiences. Although it remains unknown whether pupils would act in accordance with their writing in situations similar to those presented in the artwork, their deliberation remains an important rehearsal or practice through imagination in which they can evaluate their thoughts and feelings.

Although my results are promising, it must be kept in mind that my project is limited in some respects. For instance, this research explores a single age group, and a different collection of artworks could have produced different findings. However, my experience in teaching the visual arts and philosophy in an upper elementary school tells me that the artwork chosen for analysis always induces emotional and cognitive reactions that allow for discussion and reflections, regardless of the pieces chosen.

Despite these limitations, I believe that my research project unveils an untapped educational source that can have a significant impact on teacher education and classroom practices. My research also suggests interdisciplinary opportunities, since the introduction of art into other school subjects could enrich learning. In general, giving moral issues an educational focus through pictorial and philosophical analysis appears to help open new pathways for value-based education.

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Hildur Hákonardóttir: *The Fisherwomen [Fiskikonurnar]*: <https://www.arkiv.is/art/878>



## **PART 7**

# **The European Perspective**



## CHAPTER 15

# Tracing the value of teacher education in EU teacher-related policies

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### ABSTRACT

During the past twenty years, an accelerating process of Europeanization of national policies related to teachers and teacher education has been witnessed, so that various policy initiatives have emerged at the level of the EU. The aim of this article is to examine how teacher education is defined and consolidated in EU teacher-related policies over time and what changes this implies for teacher education policy and practice in Europe. The analysis draws on document review of official EU policy documents, focusing on those developed after the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, when the EU formally adopted an education policy. Process tracing helped to analyze the data on chronological order, clustering the findings on distinct historical periods. The findings suggest that teacher education has received increasing value in EU policy discourse over time. The focus of EU policy cooperation in teacher education gradually shifted from cultural towards economic and employment priorities, in line with the developments of the EU's education and training agenda. Professional mobility remained a key priority for policy cooperation, but new trends emerged over time, with most prominent the continuum of teacher education, the development of teacher competence frameworks and the support to teacher educators.

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, education systems both within and outside Europe are confronted with new challenges caused by the acceleration of globalization. Since the 1990s, national governments have been trying to reform education in a quest for modernization, striving for constant change and improvement. Similar education reforms are being applied around the world in countries that are highly diverse in cultural and economic terms, giving rise to “global education policies” (Verger, Novelli, & Kosar-Altinyelken, 2012, p. 3), shaped by the interplay between transnational and national policy level processes. A pivotal role in this globalized context is played by supranational organizations, such as the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which influence national policies through international comparisons of education systems’ performance and policy advice.

The OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is one of the most prominent large-scale assessments that has had a significant influence within the context of education policy developments worldwide. By correlating student achievement to the quality of teachers and teaching, PISA and other international comparative studies brought teachers to the forefront of the global education policy agenda (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Tatto, 2007; Weidman, Jacob, & Casebeer, 2014) and many countries have striven to reform their teacher education systems in order to improve student performance (Murray, Swennen, & Kosnin, 2019; Tatto & Menter, 2019). This global reform wave is characterized by standardization, posing several challenges to teacher education, including the “primacy of policy” in terms of the politicization of teacher education and a new focus on the value and usefulness of teacher education (Trippestad, Swennen, & Werler, 2017, p. 9).

In Europe, the reform of teacher education is also influenced by mechanisms, processes and key agents of Europeanization, internal or external to the functioning of the EU (Symeonidis, 2018). The term Europeanization is hereby understood as a process of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of both formal and informal rules that are first defined at the EU level and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse (Radaelli, 2004). Although teacher education systems are firmly rooted in national histories and conditions (Kotthoff & Denk, 2007), an accelerating process of Europeanization of national policies related to teachers and teacher education can be observed, particularly

since the launch of the EU's Lisbon Strategy in 2000 (EDiTE, 2014; Stéger, 2014; Vidović & Domović, 2013). The results of this process are convergences among European countries, such as the “universitization” of teacher education (Zgaga, 2013), the development of competence-oriented teacher education curricula (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018) and their orientation towards learning outcomes (Halász, 2017), as well as a lifelong learning approach regarding teacher quality (Nordin & Walhström, 2019; Stéger, 2014).

Against this background, the following research question is guiding this article: how is teacher education defined and consolidated in EU teacher-related policies and what changes this implies for teacher education reforms in Europe? Focusing on transnational policy discourses as one mechanism of Europeanization, the article attempts to understand the underlying values that are uploaded into the concept of teacher education. Previous studies have analyzed such policy discourses with regard to teacher quality (Nordin & Walhström, 2019) and teacher competence frameworks (Caena, 2014), but not specifically regarding teacher education. Empirically, the article gives an account of how teacher education developed as a term in the context of EU policy cooperation and reveals the main trends characterizing the European thinking in teacher education. It thus follows a chronological order starting from the signing of the Treaty of Rome, in 1957, up until 2018, focusing on the policies developed after the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, when the EU formally adopted an education policy.

## **THE EUROPEANIZATION OF (TEACHER) EDUCATION**

Teacher education became a field of policy cooperation between Member States in the broader context of EU policy cooperation in education and training. Education remained for many years outside the authority of the Union, because it was considered a sensitive topic for Member States aligned to the notions of citizenship and national identity. According to Pépin (2007, p. 130), “it took the Union 30 years (1976-2006) to design a coherent framework of cooperation for the fields of education and training.” It was only in the Lisbon European Council in 2000 that education became a key policy field for Community engagement in which the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was applied. The OMC is a form of intergovernmental policymaking that was originally created in the 1990s as part of employment policy, in order to spread best practices and lead to convergence towards the main EU goals (Council of the European Union,

2000). Under the OMC, the countries are evaluated by one another, in the form of peer pressure, with the role of the Commission being limited to surveillance.

However, the legal competence of the EU on Member States' education systems has traditionally been weak, because it is governed by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, meaning that the EU can only intervene in a complementary way:

The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. ("The Lisbon Treaty – Article 165", 2006)

Through the term "quality", the EU has discovered "an entrance to the education sector" (Alexiadou, 2007, p. 106), allowing the Commission to intervene in areas that were generally considered to be of national concern. Since 2000, the wider integration process through the OMC has intensified and formalized, resulting in the emergence of a European model of education with distinct features (Alexiadou, 2014). Dale (2009) argued that a "European Education Space" and a "European Education Policy" developed within particular historical, economic, political and educational contexts, which allowed education to find its "place" in European policy. The basic argument behind the idea of a distinct "European education" is that it must be somehow different from Member States' national education. Different in what it does, but also in how it does it.

However, the Lisbon agenda "does not acknowledge education as a 'teleological' policy area, an area in itself", but rather as "part of social policy, labor market policy and overall economic policy" (Gornitzka, 2005, p. 17). Similarly, Halász (2003) argued that the European interest on education originates from pressures of the wider social policy area, particularly the employment area. Since the middle of the nineties, various actors not belonging to the education sector succeeded in extending the scope of employment policies to cover aspects belonging to the education sector and uploading these to the community level (Halász, 2003). Thus, a number of social and employment policy-related interventions involve educational inputs and an increasing number of education policies are dealt within the framework of employment, leading some researchers to question how far European education can be considered a distinct sector in its own right (Dale, 2009).

With regard to the field of teacher education, Symeonidis (2018) has previously argued about the emergence of a European Teacher Education Area, governed by the following institutional mechanisms of Europeanization: (1) policy coordination, (2) cross-sectoral instruments, (3) evidence-based management, (4) the Bologna process, (5) educational programs, and (6) stakeholder pressure. By means of reciprocal interaction, the specific mechanisms produce significant effects on policy formation and implementation, transforming the strictly nation-bound conception of teacher education and resulting in a number of common trends across Europe. Rather than a strictly top-down process, Europeanization in teacher education is conceptualized as a reciprocal relationship between political negotiations at the domestic and the European level.

Specifically, policy coordination refers to the OMC working groups related to teacher professional development, as well as policy texts and presidencies focusing on aspects of teacher policy. Cross-sectoral instruments lead to the transfer of policies from one sector to another and help the Commission to launch policy initiatives in the sector where Member States are most receptive to them. In teacher education, relevant cross-sectoral instruments are the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), European structural and research funds, and the European semester. Evidence-based management refers to the knowledge produced by EU agencies and Europe-wide associations that inform the process of national policymaking. A significant impact on the structure of European teacher education has also occurred through the Bologna Process, which proposed a common restructuring of higher education systems, based on a two-cycle structure of bachelor and master degrees, in order to make them comparable and compatible. Educational programs, such as the Erasmus+, are also widely recognized as having an impact on teacher professional development. Finally, stakeholder pressure refers to the European social partners, international organizations and networks contributing to educational cooperation in the area of teacher education as mediators between European and national level processes.

## **METHODS**

This article was developed as an outcome of a doctoral dissertation on the topic of Europeanization in teacher education, conducted within the framework of the European Doctorate in Teacher Education (EDiTE). The aim of the study was to analyze the influence of European developments on teacher education

policies and practices in three European countries, namely Austria, Greece and Hungary. To this end, the first part of the analysis focused on process tracing of the EU policy cooperation in the field of teacher education. Data sources included EU policy documents, such as European Commission Communications and Council Conclusions, peer learning activity reports, policy handbooks and literature reviews with a consulting character, produced over the years and particularly after 2000. These documents were selected as relevant sources to examine the European thinking in teacher policy and teacher education, because they depict the policy decisions and recommendations provided by EU bodies to Member States.

Process tracing was employed to explore the development of EU policy cooperation in teacher education (George & Bennett, 2005; Vennesson, 2008). This method shares some basic features of historical explanation and uses qualitative data to expose causal mechanisms by providing a detailed description of the studied case. All documents were scanned inductively in order to trace references with regard to teachers and teacher education and help categorize the data according to distinct historical periods. The analysis process was assisted by the software MAXQDA that allows the user to organize and analyze a diverse range of data in a flexible and quick way. Specifically, after becoming familiar with the documents, MAXQDA was used to break the empirical material into units through theory guided and inductively developed categories. These categories were revised after twenty percent of the material and were eventually reduced to main categories. According to the research question, categories were formulated to depict the predominant way that teacher education is defined and consolidated into EU teacher-related policies over time.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF EU POLICY COOPERATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

During the period between 1957 and 2000, European cooperation focused on economic issues and education was not formally recognized as a field of cooperation between Member States. Until 1971, cooperation was officially acknowledged only in the context of vocational education and training. Due to the absence of Community engagement in the field of education, there are almost no references to teachers and teacher education in official policy documents between 1957 and 1971. The 1963 Council Decision appears to be the only reference to the need for suitable training of teachers and instructors in



the field of vocational training. In 1971, cooperation in education started indirectly by adopting general guidelines for a Community action program, which was eventually approved in 1976. This program suggested that Member States should take into account a number of actions in order to improve the preparation of young people for work. Among other measures, the initial and continuing training of teachers received particular attention so that young people could be more effectively prepared for working life and for choosing alternative opportunities in employment, further education and training (Council of the European Communities, 1976, p. 2). The Council considered teacher training as a way to strengthen the links between education and employment.

Following the Gravier Case in 1985, when the European Court of Justice included higher education in Article 128 on vocational training, the European Commission used the new legal opportunities to launch first, in 1986, the Commett Programme, and right afterwards, in June 1987, the Erasmus Programme. Under this new umbrella framework that enabled teacher exchanges and mobility, teacher training received a new task, linked to the cultural aspect of education, that is, to introduce and promote the European dimension in education. Specifically, the 1988 Resolution of education ministers documented the commitment of Member States to make every effort to give greater emphasis to the European dimension in initial and in-service training, “within the limits of their own specific educational policies and structures” (Council of the European Communities, 1988, p. 5). The specific resolution triggered various non-governmental initiatives on teacher-training links, whilst the Commission was even authorized to organize a European Summer University which led to the *Réseau d’Institutions de Formation*, or network of teacher training institutions to promote the European dimension in teacher training.

With the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and until 2000, the notion of lifelong learning redefined the purpose of educating teachers. The 1993 White Paper on *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*, by Jacques Delors, promoted the idea that investing in knowledge through education and research is necessary for employment, competitiveness and social cohesion. The role of teachers is considered essential towards the new information era. Teachers and teacher training need to use new technologies, whilst universities can support this process by offering lifelong education, for example retraining primary and secondary school teachers (European Commission, 1993, p. 120). The 1995 White Paper *Towards the Learning Society* overcame the traditional division between education and

training and acknowledged the transformation that the teaching profession is undergoing as a result of technological advancements and the growing needs of a learning society (European Commission, 1995). New teaching approaches and innovation, validation of non-formal competences, second chance schools, recruitment of the “best teachers”, and mobility opportunities are the main recurring themes attached to the interests of lifelong learning. The growing significance of lifelong learning for a knowledge society was further promoted by choosing 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning and was given constitutional status with the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty.

### **2000-2007: Linking teacher education to the quality of education and training in Europe**

The role of teacher education starts to receive a more prominent status with the signing of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. At that time, a shift in the legal competences of the EU allowed for education to be officially recognized as part of cooperation among Member States. Education was linked to the goal of a knowledge economy and the term “teacher education” started to appear as a condition for improving the quality of education in Europe. In the Education and Training 2010 program, teacher education became the first objective for improving the quality and effectiveness of education. Specifically, “attracting and retaining qualified and motivated people in the teaching profession” was set as an overarching goal, whilst the need to receive general consensus within the Community regarding the skills that teachers must have was raised to a key policy issue (Council of the European Union, 2002, p. 7). Similar to other education policy areas, the European Council defined indicators for measuring progress and themes for exchanging experience, good practice, and peer review.

Following the recommendations of the Kok report in 2004 and the first progress report of the working group on teacher education in 2003, in a joint interim report, the Council and the Commission raised the issue of the competences and qualifications needed by teachers as a “matter of priority” (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2004, p. 11). The specific report is important because it identified the teaching profession as one of the main change agents for the realization of the Lisbon objectives and promoted the idea of developing common European references and principles for teachers’ competences that could support national policies. The report also recognized that initial teacher education was not yet an integral part of the Bologna process

and the European Higher Education Area. Therefore, it proposed a strategy for developing indicators for the professional development of teachers, as a first step to link teacher education with the Bologna process (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2004).

In 2005, the draft document *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications* was adopted in a Brussels conference. The document linked the quality of education and training directly to the quality of teacher education, acknowledging that teachers are “key players in how education systems evolve and in the implementation of the reforms, which can make the European Union the highest performing knowledge-driven economy in the world by 2010” (European Commission, 2005, p. 1). Furthermore, it defined the following European principles for the teaching profession as an impetus for developing policies: a well-qualified profession, a profession within the context of lifelong learning, a mobile profession, and a profession based on partnership (European Commission, 2005, pp. 2-3). The recommendation document also specified “key-competences” which European teachers should acquire, meaning the abilities to “work with knowledge, technology and information”, “work with fellow human beings” and “work with and in society” (European Commission, 2005, pp. 3-4). These transversal and rather abstract competences leave room for interpretation and are underpinned by the lifelong learning paradigm of the Lisbon agenda. This means that teachers are expected to develop such competences throughout the continuum of their professional lives and that teachers’ qualifications should be integrated within the EQF.

### **2007-2010: Improving teacher education for better learning outcomes**

A growing interest with regard to teacher education and a stronger emphasis towards the notion of teacher quality supported by evidence can be observed in EU policy documents following the 2007 Communication on *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education*. This specific document connected the quality of teacher labor force to the students’ school performance, using evidence produced by educational experts and the OECD. During this period, a trend towards more evidence-based policymaking could be observed (Holdsworth, 2010, p. 45) and studies such as the 2005 OECD report and the 2007 Barber and Mourshed report shifted the perception of the role of school and teachers towards achieving high quality education outcomes (Vidović & Domović, 2014).

Individualized and autonomous learning, formative assessment, reflective practice, student outcomes, and competences were some of the recurring themes in the abovementioned studies, which received increasing relevance in European policy discourse from that point in time onwards. Several Member States were employing relevant practices that were made visible through the OMC working groups and in this way knowledge from Member States was uploaded to the European level. Specifically, through the 2007 Communication, European policy actors recognized that teacher education plays a crucial role for the quality of teaching, which in turn is key for the EU in order to “increase its competitiveness in the globalized world” (European Commission, 2007, p. 3). Teacher education is framed by the complex demands placed upon teachers in a constantly changing world in which students come from diverse backgrounds and have different levels of skills. Students are increasingly expected to become autonomous learners and have the responsibility for their own learning “by acquiring key skills” (European Commission, 2007, p. 4). These challenges were seen as hastening the need for a competence-based approach to teaching and a greater emphasis on learning outcomes (Council of the European Union, 2007). In this context, it became increasingly evident and accepted that initial teacher education is not enough to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills for a lifetime of teaching.

Intertwined with the idea of lifelong learning, the education and professional development of teachers was seen as a lifelong learning task, which needs to be structured and funded accordingly, so that teachers can develop continuously. The continuum of teacher professional development started to appear as central in improving the quality of teacher education. Specifically, it was defined as “a seamless continuum of provision embracing initial teacher education, induction into the profession, and career-long continuing professional development that includes formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities” (European Commission, 2007, p. 12). In concrete policy suggestions, the continuum translated as follows: (a) teachers should take part in effective induction programs during the first three years in the profession, (b) have access to structured guidance and mentoring by experienced teachers or other professionals throughout their careers, and (c) take part in regular discussions regarding their professional development within the context of their institution’s development plan (European Commission, 2007, p. 13).

The Commission’s recommendations were endorsed by the Council which highlighted the need to take measures for improving teacher education at the

national level (Council of the European Union, 2007). The Council further requested that teachers hold a qualification from a higher education institution, receiving adequate balance between research-based studies and teaching practice, as well as between specialist subject knowledge and pedagogical skills (Council of the European Union, 2007, p. 8). Member States were also asked to provide a “coordinated, coherent, adequately resourced and quality assured” continuum of professional development for teachers, and to “consider the adoption of measures aimed at raising the level of qualifications and the degree of practical experience requirement for employment as a teacher” (Council of the European Union, 2007, p. 8). As in previous Council Conclusions, suggestions were made towards partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools, teacher competences and professional mobility opportunities.

The continuing efforts of the Commission and the Council to promote policy cooperation in teacher education are evident in two Council Conclusions that followed the one in 2007. In 2008, the Council emphasized the need “to promote teaching as a profession and to improve initial and in-service training for teaching staff and school leaders” (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 4), as one out of three priorities for European cooperation on school education. Specifically, the Council invited Member States to focus cooperation on enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession, on enabling beginning teachers to benefit from early career support programs, on improving the supply, quality and take-up of continuing professional development (CPD) programs, on reviewing teacher recruitment, placement, retention and mobility policies, on expanding opportunities for professional mobility, and on improving the recruitment and training of school leaders (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 6).

In 2009, the Council reaffirmed that “the knowledge, skills and commitment of teachers, as well as the quality of school leadership, are the most important factors in achieving high quality educational outcomes” (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 4). Once again, the Council included teacher education within the context of lifelong learning, promoting the idea that “education and development of teachers should be a coherent continuum spanning initial teacher education (with a strong practical component), induction and continuing professional development” (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 6). Therefore, the Council invited Member States to ensure that they attract and retain the best candidates for the teaching profession, make appropriate provision for induction programs

offering both personal and professional support, provide regular reviews of teachers' CPD needs, promote mobility programs, review the responsibility of school leaders towards shaping the teaching and learning and thus reducing their administrative workload, and ensure that high quality provision exists to develop teacher competences (Council of the European Union, 2009, p. 7).

### **2010-2015: Teacher education in the context of effectiveness and efficiency**

Following the end of the Education and Training 2010 working period, and considering the fact that the EU's ambition to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy faced significant challenges, including the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2007/2008, the Commission developed a new strategy in 2010 entitled "Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth." This new strategy aimed at overcoming the structural weaknesses of Europe's economy, improving the competitiveness and productivity and establishing a sustainable social market economy.

Europe 2020 also implied a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training for the decade, namely Education and Training 2020. New instruments for policy coordination were employed and expanded to the field of education, such as the European semester which coordinates economic policies across the EU. According to Nordin (2014), this phase of Europeanising education in the wake of the crisis discourse is characterized by a parallel process in holding the European education policy space together. On the one hand, the use of numbers is strengthened, particularly through the use of the European semester, and on the other hand there is a reintroduction of a normative discourse around a common European identity represented by common cultural symbols and values (Nordin, 2014).

Within this context, the European Commission, in 2012, developed the Communication *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes* with the aim of reforming education systems across the EU in order to meet the growing demand for higher skill levels and to reduce unemployment. Specifically, the staff working document on *Supporting the Teaching Professions for Better Learning Outcomes* suggests to Member States to undertake policy action for improving the recruitment, initial education, induction and CPD of teachers, school leaders and teacher educators that are called teaching professions (European Commission, 2012). The Commission proposed ten key actions, five

for teachers and trainers, three for school leaders, and two for teacher educators to support the teaching professions in Europe. The reason for this policy action was considered to be a more effective and efficient use of public funds, given the importance of the teaching professions for learning outcomes (European Commission, 2012).

At the member state level, the actions proposed to support teachers and trainers are framed by the economic argument that investing in teaching staff is likely to bring biggest returns in terms of efficiency of education systems. Therefore, attracting, educating and retaining high-quality teachers means first of all to define the competences and qualities required of teachers. According to the Commission (2012, p. 60), “teaching competences are complex combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in situation, and thus are likely to resonate differently in different national contexts.” However, a shared understanding of teacher competence frameworks, based on teachers’ learning outcomes, is considered to be the necessary starting point for teacher education and professional development in Member States. Such frameworks of professional competences can be used as a basis for other education policies, whilst their multiple uses in teacher education, professional development, school development, teacher evaluation, and recruitment and selection processes, “can bring significant gains from more efficient investment” (European Commission, 2012, p. 61).

The second key action refers to redesigning recruitment systems to select the best candidates into teaching. This policy response is again addressed differently across Member States, but some aspects are held to be common, as for example the need to ensure that the number of teacher education graduates matches the demand of school population, as well as the existence of appropriate quality assurance measures and a competence framework (European Commission, 2012, p. 61). The Commission also prioritized here the importance of finding the right balance between job security and workforce flexibility, the salary levels, and the opportunity of mid-career professionals to enter the teaching profession. The same as in previous policy documents, two of the key actions to support teachers were a systematic induction support for beginning teachers and the opportunity for teachers to take part in CPD throughout their career.

Induction support should be delivered by way of a coherent program, meaning providing teachers with personal, social and professional support (European Commission, 2012, p. 62). The design and implementation of induction requires

a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders and involves all key actors, including teachers, school leaders, mentors, teacher educators, trade unions and policymakers. Moreover, induction should be the first part of teachers' career-long professional development, whilst regular provision of induction policies is necessary to ensure they are updated. With regard to CPD programs, these should be part of the overall school development plan and should be seen as an integral part of teacher activities (European Commission, 2012, p. 62). Here virtual mobility opportunities, such as the EU's eTwinning action or the European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe can be employed for in-service learning provision. Furthermore, a compulsory element for professional development in school development plans is considered important, as well as providing salary or allowance incentives to increase participation. Finally, the fifth key action suggests basing teacher development on regular feedback on their performance. This action is linked to CPD provision and competence frameworks, because feedback is seen as related to evaluation based on standards and implies support through professional development activities.

Moreover, with the 2012 Communication, the profession of teacher educators entered dynamically into the EU teacher education policy discourse, after intensive collaboration among experts which took place with PLAs in Iceland (2010) and in Brussels (2012). The European Commission went one step ahead of the Member States in raising the issue of support to teacher educators, a concept which arose in the European context and contributed significantly to member state policy (Stéger, 2014). Specifically, the Commission proposed two policy actions for the selection and professional development of those who educate teachers, namely to develop an explicit profile of the competences required by teacher educators, and to reinforce collaboration between all the key actors in all phases of teacher education (European Commission, 2012, p. 64).

The orientation towards effectiveness was also evident in the 2014 Council of the European Union *Conclusions on Effective Teacher Education*. The specific document conceptualizes teacher education as a continuum and suggests policies for the different phases. With regard to initial teacher education, the Council invited Member States to ensure that teacher education programs develop teachers' transversal competences, promote effective digital teaching and learning, and involve a broad range of stakeholders in the design phase of the programs. Once again, the development of comprehensive professional frameworks of teachers for the different stages of their career is promoted, whilst this time



the establishment of competence frameworks refers also to teacher educators (Council of the European Union, 2014, p. 4).

The mid-term review of the Education and Training 2020 further strengthened the need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education systems in “raising the skill and competences of the workforce” (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2015, p. 25) and identified six new priority areas for work until 2020. The fourth priority area refers to “strong support for teachers, trainers, school leaders and other members of educational staff, who play a key role in ensuring the success of learners and in implementing education policy” (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2015, p. 29). This priority area implies policy measures for improving teacher education towards the direction that previous policy documents have outlined.

### **2015-2018: Reinventing the European dimension of teaching**

In response to terrorist attacks in France and Denmark in early 2015, education ministers met in Paris to discuss how education and training can best meet the challenges of radicalization, resilience and citizenship. Social cohesion, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue appear as urgent priorities, on which the ministers agreed to boost EU-level cooperation, offering the support of EU tools and the Erasmus+ programme. Among the six objectives formulated for strengthening policy action, there is one that refers to empowering teachers to stand against discrimination and racism, to educate their students in media literacy, to address the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, and to convey common fundamental values (Council of the European Union, 2015, p. 3).

The role of teachers and teacher education is further redirected towards promoting the European identity and the European dimension of teaching through two policy documents published in 2017 and 2018. The 2017 Communication on *Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture* strongly emphasized the need for professional mobility and cross-border cooperation, also using the opportunities provided by the eTwinning network and other virtual platforms. The role of teachers “in fostering international perspectives early in a young person’s life” (European Commission, 2017, p. 7) complements what the Commission up to this date defined as the quality of teachers and of teaching, which in previous Communications was predominantly related to the development of skills, competences and knowledge.

It is also worthwhile to mention that the 2017 Communication opened up the discussion of a European Education Area, to be established by 2025, building on various European initiatives and including the goal of “giving more support to teachers” (European Commission, 2017, p. 11). Setting up this vision is an indication that the Commission and Member States envisage reviving and strengthening the idea of social cohesion, which for many years was overlooked by the focus on economic and employment priorities. In 2018, the Commission moved in the same direction by proposing a *Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching*. The Commission suggests that Member States should support teachers to impart common values and deliver inclusive education through measures to promote active citizenship, exchanges and peer learning programs, as well as guidance and mentoring for teachers and academic staff (European Commission, 2018, p. 17).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of this article was to examine the way that the value of teacher education is defined and consolidated in EU teacher-related policies, considering the changes this implies for teacher education reforms in Europe. The analysis of EU policy cooperation in the field of teacher education indicates the growing significance and value attached to the specific field over the years, resulting in what could be called European thinking and action in teacher education. Teacher education transformed European policy discourse over time and was influenced by social, cultural, political and economic changes taking place across Europe. Up to 1992, policy coordination started to be formally organized, mainly through the establishment of various programs fostering professional mobility and institutional partnerships. Between 1992 and 2000, it becomes evident that the role of teachers in European policy discourse is framed by the discovery of “knowledge” and the need to adapt to the new information era. Although the role of teachers and teacher education is scarcely mentioned in official policy documents, teachers’ contribution is considered important in transforming people’s knowledge and skills to promote a knowledge society.

The 2000 Lisbon Strategy signified a “transformation” for EU policy cooperation and the period until 2007 shows on one hand, the growing interest of European institutions to gain influence of teacher education in the Member States, and on the other hand, the growing interest of Member States to use European institutions to modernize their teacher education systems. Between

2007 and 2010, teacher education received particular attention within European institutions, following international evidence, which had proved a positive correlation between teacher quality and student in-school performance. This phase of Europeanization in teacher education is characterized by a shift towards evidence-based policymaking and teacher education practices are examined in relation to students' learning outcomes. Following the Education and Training 2020, teacher education was framed by the policy objectives of effectiveness and efficiency. This implies an ambition to ensure a better allocation of resources to achieve the best possible education outcomes, measured in terms of students' performance. From 2015 onwards, socio-political circumstances pushed the EU policy cooperation towards reinventing the European dimension in teacher education. Thus, a focus on fostering common European values and strengthening the European social model becomes apparent, whilst at the same time the influence of the Commission on teacher and teacher education policy increases through shifting priorities across sectors by employing the European semester.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the focus of EU policy cooperation in teacher education gradually shifted from cultural towards economic and employment priorities, in line with the developments of the EU's education and training agenda. This change of focus gave an impetus and led to the growth of European policies in teacher education, though redefining teacher education in terms of ensuring the global competitiveness of each member state's education system. Over the years, the goals of EU policy cooperation in the specific field became more precise, implying a hidden harmonizing discourse, as other studies on lifelong learning have also noted (Rasmussen, 2009). Although the Maastricht Treaty officially excluded harmonization, the strategy of intergovernmental coordination through the OMC and peer learning enabled a certain degree of convergence of objectives and activities. This convergence was strengthened by the stakeholders and mechanisms operating within the broader landscape of European teacher education (Symeonidis, 2018).

Professional mobility remained a key priority for policy cooperation in teacher education, but gradually new trends emerged as the result of reciprocal Europeanization. The analysis revealed that some of the trends defining the European thinking in teacher education include the recruitment and retention of the teaching profession, the development of teacher competence frameworks and profiles, the continuum of teacher professional development, including policies for the different phases of initial education, induction and professional

development, teacher quality assurance, and the focus on teacher educators. Such policy trends give rise to an educational “policyscape” (Carney, 2009) which implies the spread of policy ideas and teaching practices, in bits and pieces rather than as complete policy packages (Ball, 2016), across different systems.

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