PEDAGOGY, EDUCATION AND PRAXIS

Lost in Practice: Transforming Nordic Educational Action Research

Karin Rönnerman and Petri Salo (Eds.)

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PEDAGOGY, EDUCATION AND PRAXIS

Volume 7

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The Pedagogy, Education and Praxis Series will foster a conversation of traditions in which different European and Anglo-American perspectives on 'pedagogy', 'education' and 'praxis' are problematised and explored. By opening constructive dialogue between different theoretical and intellectual traditions, the Series aims, in part, at recovering and extending the resources of these distinctive traditions for education in contemporary times. The Series aims to contribute to (1) theoretical developments in the fields of pedagogy, education and praxis; (2) the development of praxis in the pedagogical professions; and (3) the development of strategies capable of resisting and counteracting contemporary tendencies towards the technologisation, standardisation, bureaucratisation, commodification and demoralisation of education.

Lost in Practice: Transforming Nordic Educational Action Research

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STEPHEN KEMMIS, MATTS MATTSON, PETRA PONTE &
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SERIES INTRODUCTION: PEDAGOGY, EDUCATION AND PRAXIS

The 'Pedagogy, Education and Praxis' series arose from shared concerns among educational researchers from Australia, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom about the relationships between different traditions of education and educational research that inform our work. The meanings of terms like 'pedagogy' and 'praxis' are contested *within* European research traditions and Anglo-American traditions and even more confusingly contested *across* or *between* traditions. These words, shared across languages and intellectual traditions, inhabit different spaces in different languages, with different characteristic ways of behaving in each.

What 'pedagogy', 'education' and 'praxis' mean in Dutch or English or Swedish – where variants of these words occur – cannot be translated precisely and without remainder into another language. The volumes in this Series aim to help readers reach better understandings of ideas like 'pedagogy' and 'praxis' as they are used in different languages and traditions, *not* by finding some foundational or essential cores of these terms about which people in different languages and traditions might agree. Rather, the Series aims to encourage a 'conversation of traditions' in which the voices of different traditions can be heard, and different perspectives can come into view. In this way, readers may glimpse beyond the English in which the conversation is conducted to the rich intellectual traditions presented by contributors to the Series from traditions constructed over centuries in languages other than English. We hope to use these key ideas – pedagogy, education and *praxis* – as windows through which we may see, even if darkly, into the rooms of other languages and traditions, and to learn what we can about those other traditions by engaging them, as best we can, in a conversation.

The international collaborative project 'Pedagogy, Education and Praxis', of which this Series is an expession, has three kinds of aims:

1. theoretical aims concerning the exploration and critical development of key concepts and associated understandings, from different educational and research traditions, of pedagogy, educational science and educational studies, and social and educational *praxis* and practice;
2. practical aims concerning the quality and transformation of educational *praxis* in settings including education, teacher education and the continuing professional development of teachers, in relation to a variety of contemporary educational problems and issues, as they emerge in a variety of educational contexts at

different levels of education and in different national contexts; and

3. strategic aims of
   a. encouraging the dialogue between different traditions of theory, research and practice in education;
   b. enhancing awareness about the origins and formation of our own (and others') presuppositions and understandings as participants in such dialogues; and
   c. fostering collaboration and the development of networks between scholars interested in these problems and issues across traditions.

The volumes in the series are intended as contributions to this dialogue. Some aim to foster this dialogue by opening and exploring contemporary educational contexts, problems and issues within one country or tradition to readers from other countries and traditions. Other volumes aim to foster dialogue by bringing together, to address a common topic, authors and contributions from different countries and traditions. These 'conversations of traditions' will be in the foreground of at least one volume in the Series that will directly compare and contrast ideas about pedagogy, education and *praxis* as these ideas are understood in different traditions, especially between different Anglo-American and continental European traditions of educational theory, research and social and educational practice.

We believe that this endeavour will renew and revitalise some old conceptual resources, and make some, old or transformed, accessible as new resources for educational theory and practice in the international conversations, conferences and collaborations which constitute the globalised educational research communities of today.

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KARIN RÖNNERMAN & PETRI SALO

1. TRACES OF NORDIC EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS

In 2008 the international network Pedagogy, Education, Praxis (PEP) published a number of books in this series by Sense. Since then the network has been actively involved in a number of collaborative research projects, which has resulted in other joint publications elsewhere. Researchers in the Nordic Network for Action Research have continued their work in investigating action research and the ways in which it is embedded in the Nordic traditions of *bildning* (*bildung*) and *folkbildning* (folk *bildung* or enlightenment). This reflective work on our own tradition, as well as an on-going conversation with other traditions in education, is highly regarded in the network and is recognised in this book. In *Nurturing Praxis* (2008), we closed the book by presenting a definition of how we would like to capture teachers' professional development in the light of the Nordic traditions and concepts of *bildung*, *folkbildung* and pedagogy:

> A reciprocal challenging of professional knowledge and experiences, rooted in the everyday practices within schools, in collaborative arenas populated by researchers and practitioners, and in the interchange of knowledge of different kinds. (Rönnerman, Salo & Furu, 2008, p. 277).

In *Nurturing Praxis*, we presented eleven case studies on action research for furthering professional development. Researchers' involvement and engagement in these studies put the emphasis on *collaboration* and *partnership*. These, alongside *sharing values*, were three recognised features which can all be related to *bildung*. In collaborative groups both practical and emancipatory issues are in focus. Based on the educational traditions where ways of learning such as study circles and dialogue conferences are used, the democratic dialogue is at the centre. To create such dialogues, openness to different perspectives (or knowledge) in the different parties in the partnership is necessary. Drawing on experiences from work life, as well as theory, are highly regarded and are a given content in the dialogue aiming at deeper understanding and the social construction of new knowledge for further development of practice. In such meetings, sharing of values becomes a natural but challenging part of the dialogue.

The Nordic Network for Action Research is still involved in several research projects where the definition of action research has been at the fore in collaborative projects with teachers and schools. We can, after ten years of involvement in the Nordic Network for Action Research, be aware of how these collaborative projects have evolved together with a more confident and deeper knowledge of our own

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traditions. Digging deeper into the history of educational traditions in the Nordic countries has helped us to understand educational action research but also to use and renew ideas and ideals from the last two centuries in our everyday practices. These include the use of the concept of research circle and dialogue conferences, and the analysis of our own way of working through the ideals set up half a century ago. But it is not just our own history that has helped us develop new understandings. Just as important are the conversations with scholars and colleagues within the international PEP network.

In a network such as PEP, collaboration and partnerships are present as well as shared values. As our annual meetings are constructed in such a way as to promote dialogue, we can also relate our own work to the traditions of research circle or dialogue conferences, explained by Gustavsen (2001, p. 24) as relationship building to create a plurality of vision to "maximize the number and quality of ideas that can be created and made real". Our work can be similar to expanding networks, and in so doing, providing a structure for allowing one another to sit as equals and develop an understanding of different perspectives on similar issues. In such dialogues, when issues and traditions are shared, one becomes more aware of one's own traditions when viewed from other perspectives. This gives a lot of input into a conversation, and leads to a deeper understanding of how traditions work and are transformed in modern times.

Relating our work to the concept and tradition of *bildung* helps us to make sense of and nurture education as praxis in a neo-liberal world, where education is reduced to rankings by means based on global testing of national learning outcomes. Using the metaphor of *bildung* as a travel (Gustavsson, 1996) fits well into our understanding of education and action research. You start reflecting on your own understandings of your practice and plan for development in a way that is congruent with your wisdom. Following the processes in a critical dialogue with other scholars, you become aware of the knowledge you need to be able to attain a deeper understanding of the issues at the fore. In collaboration with others you share and construct new understandings for developing your practice. In other words, you start from what you know, go into the unknown, and when you come back you are not the same. New knowledge is added to your understandings and experiences, which will be part of your new actions. Thereby *bildung* can be understood as a dynamic relationship between the known and the unknown. A confrontation with the unknown brings us closer to reflecting on our own practice, and gives us an opportunity to examine the taken-for-granted everyday understandings of the practice at hand. In a dialogue with others, this can be discussed and further developed. Gustavsens (2001) notion of how to set up such dialogues has been used and is of help in creating communicative spaces. These spaces can be understood as necessary conditions for possible actions for improvement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). The dialogue set up both within the Nordic Network for Action Research and in the international network of PEP can easily be said to be promoting a communicative space in which a conversation of traditions has been created. This conversation on the educational traditions, concepts and practices will continue, and we hope to open it up for you as a reader, and for this new volume to become a part of the conversation. However, one might get lost in conversations about complex educational traditions and the practices informed by the traditions. And we all do get lost. This can be seen as part of the necessity of maintaining a conversation both on our historical traditions and on the ways in which the traditions are understood and developed in our times. The title of this book, *Lost in Practice*, is to be read as dynamic and open to interpretations, understandings and negotiations – not as a judgement. It builds on the notion that professional practices on various educational sites, which action research intends to affect, are extremely complex and contradictory – easy to be lost in. This risk of becoming lost is a professional challenge, especially when the highly technical and instrumentalist views characteristic of neo-liberalism challenge education and teaching as praxis. But no matter what the educational policy or the historical-cultural context, practitioners still seem to view theory and practice in education as independent, disconnected and even as opposed to each other. Teachers and principals are often driven by an immediate need to act professionally in and on educational practices. They prefer practical guidelines ahead of pedagogical theories, and reject the latter with reference to inoperability. Further, they reject theory by referring to its historical dead weight (theorising for its own sake) and its institutional context (university and research as detached from the everyday practices in schools and classrooms). In teachers' and principals' views, theory is something to "be put into practice" rather than to "be used for" making sense of or understanding the professional challenges at hand (Lopez-Pastor, Monjas & Manrique, 2011; Wenger, 1998, p. 47-49). As action researchers we still have a lot to do, particularly in engaging ourselves in conversations with practitioners on the abstract concepts to be used to interpret and make meaningful their educational practice, or in acting as critical friends for furthering a complementary view on different forms and domains of knowledge, and asserting their usefulness in developing professional practices in various educational settings

The practice-anchored standpoint becomes quite understandable and sympathetic when relating it to Berliner's (2002) view on educational research as "the hardest science of all". The number, the power and the complexity of the contexts in which educational practices are embedded affect the conditions under which both practitioners and researchers do their work. The power of the contexts is intertwined with the ubiquity of interactions. Educational practices consist of myriads of loosely coupled interactions, some of them reciprocal, others occasionally one-sided. As Carr & Kemmis (1986, p. 180) noted some time ago, the problems of education are not about achieving known ends, rather:

> .. problems of acting *educationally* in social situations which typically involve competing values and complex interactions between different people who are acting on different understandings of their common situation and on the basis of different values about how these interactions should be conducted.

As action researchers engaged in practices at various sites, we are continuously confronted with practitioners' desire for practical guidelines and pedagogical recipe books – an understandable professional need to be able to handle the complexities of educational practices. As Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire (2003, p. 21-22) note, action researchers are to learn how to handle the "beauty of the chaos" of educational practices and to recognise the "messiness" of the professional practices at hand. In our times, when educational development and improvement of both educational systems and individual schools is of primary interest, the need for theories-for-understanding rather than theories-for-action is obvious. Translation theory (e.g. Røvik, 2007), focusing on the processes of how ideas and practices travel from one context or institution to another, is a good example of a theory-for-understanding. Furthermore, it embraces the complexity of contexts and the ubiquity of interactions characteristic of educational practices. Both the contents and forms of professional practices might be lost in the complex processes of translations, due to the manners in which these travelling practices are extracted, transported and re-embedded.

Our definition of action research, as presented above, supports the notion that the gap between theory and practice and the messiness of educational practices can be handled by focusing on the construction of local knowledge (Berliner, 2003, p. 20) or by collaborating for a co-creation of local theories (Elden & Levin, 1991). Action research stands as a practical science. It uses dialogue and conversations as means of enhancing practitioners' reflectivity and self-knowledge, to enable them "to identify and eliminate the inadequacies and limitations of the practical knowledge sustaining their practice" as well as to recognise that "the knowledge that guides praxis always arises from and must always relate back to practice." (Carr, 2006, p. 427). Hardy (2012, p. 522-524) constructs an approach in which a consciousness of the context-specific nature of educational practices is combined with an ambition to make generalisations (theorising) from particular instances of practice. This is to be enhanced by working simultaneously across multiple perspectives, and allowing researchers and practitioners to play their different frameworks and conceptualisations (e.g. on theory and practice) against each other. The aim of this interplay is to create a new common framework – a local theory (Elden & Levin, 1992, p. 132). Hardy (ibid.) draws upon sociologist Raewyn Connell's concept of "dirty theory" in handling the messiness, specificity and complexity of educational practices. Theories become dirty by paying regard to:

> both locally generated data ("actual" practice) and theoretical constructs ("understandings" of practice) in context, and for doing so in a way that acknowledges past practices and multiple ways of "knowing".

The growing interest in practice theories, labelled as a practice turn, reflects an ambition to dissolve the dualisms between mind and body, social and material as well as the one between theory and action (Nicolini, 2013, p. 1-3). For Schatzki (2005) the aim is to combine the efforts and actions of the individual practitioners with the workings of society and the way in which the society is constructed and conceptualised within organisations and institutions. However, for teachers, struggling with surviving at the chalkboard, or for principals struggling with teachers' disinterest in professional development, practice theory might represent just another grand, abstract and remote "theory" produced under the circumstances (practices) characteristic of the institutions of research and university. From the point of view of the Nordic educational tradition, when relating to the dynamics of *bildung* (both process and aim) and the practice of study circle (both as an arena and a method, bringing together individuals and collectives), the adoption of a practice approach does not result in a radical transformation of the view of knowledge or meaning (Nicolini, 2013, p. 5). At least in the ideal sense, study circles can be seen as sites in which the participants share, negotiate and develop their personal understandings and "theories" of reality and of the world they live in. Further, the ambition has been to relate this "educational" aspect to the political context that is structuring it, and to deepen its meaning in relation to historical and social circumstances. And thereby, study circles coincide with a community of practices (Wenger, 1998, p. 47-49).

It is not unusual for teachers or principals engaged in professional development to ask for guidance in "how to do" their practice rather than being prepared to confront the theories that would enable them to understand the ways in which their practices are affected and formed by the complexity of contexts and the ubiquity of interactions (Berliner, 2003; Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 59). Collaborative and participatory action research in and close to everyday educational practices enables action researchers to challenge the complexity of theories and the simplicity of practices, and to establish mediating discourses between theory and practice. Maybe as a result of the practice turn, practices and arenas for reciprocal and collaborative orientation, constructed to prevent the practitioners getting lost, are nowadays well represented in educational literature. These practices and arenas include communicative spaces, research circles, democratic dialogues, transformational partnerships and professional learning communities (e.g. Groundwater-Smith et al., 2013; Gustavsen, 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Stoll et al., 2006).

ARRANGEMENT AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

This book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of three chapters, all emphasising theoretical perspectives relating to Nordic educational traditions. In the second part, six different empirical cases are presented, connected and discussed in terms of the theories addressed in the first part of the book. The last part will follow the outline of the previous books in the series: it consists of reflections from researchers seen as experts on the specific theories presented in the first part. The concluding reflections are written by Blair Stevenson, a researcher with a Canadian background living in Finland, with experience of and insights into both Nordic and Anglo-Saxon educational traditions.

In the first part, Chapter 2, *The practical knowledge regime, teachers' professionalism and professional development,* written by the Norwegian researchers Tor-Vidar Eilertsen and Rachel Jakhelln, the practice-theory regime (PTR) is presented as a Norwegian and Scandinavian conceptualisation of pedagogy that both directly and indirectly promotes the notion of teachers' autonomy and professional development as an integral part of educational practices. In the chapter, the roots, main advocates and conceptions of this regime in Scandinavia are outlined. The role of the PTR is discussed in relation to contemporary policies of teacher education, as well as in relation to contemporary global educational trends and pressures of testing, standardisation and bureaucratic control. As a conclusion the authors argue that the Nordic conceptualisation of a practice-theory regime still has a vital position in the educational landscape.

In the third chapter, *Action research and translation studies – understanding the change of practice*, Norwegian action researchers Torbjørn Lund and Eli Moksnes Furu discuss and elaborate connections and possibilities of cross-fertilisation between organisation theory and action research. After contextualising the Norwegian tradition of action research within working life studies, they present and discuss translation theory, as developed by the Norwegian researcher Kjell Arne Røvik, as a possibility for both bridging and handling the short-comings of relating to change and development within organisation theory and action research. They present both the processes of de-contextualisation and contextualisation, and the problems of configurations during the translation processes. They also focus on translation competence, and discuss translations taking place within arenas set up for furthering translations (dialogue conferences), and in terms of networks of organisational actors (e.g. schools) developing coalitions for furthering change and development.

The Finnish researcher Petri Salo and the Swedish researcher Karin Rönnerman are co-authors of the fourth chapter, titled *The Nordic tradition of educational action research – in the light of practice architectures*. They follow the line argued in the second chapter and aim at challenging the global regime of competition and standardisation within education by dwelling on the Nordic traditions of education. They aim at formulating a kind of educational counter-movement based on, firstly, the complex idea(l) of *bildung* and the social practices of study circles, and secondly the collaborative practices characteristic of the Nordic tradition of educational action research. The exploration of traditions is furthered by discussing and analysing the Nordic tradition and practices of study circles and action research in terms of the theory of practice architectures, which is a theory outlined by Australian researchers within the international PEP network (see Kemmis et al., 2014).

The case studies presented in the second part of the book connect all the theories and overall practices presented in the first part. The Swedish researchers Lill Langelotz and Karin Rönnerman connect *The practice of Peer Group Mentoring: Traces of global changes and regional traditions* both to the Nordic traditions of collaborative forms of professional development and to the theory of practice architectures. Their chapter examines how the practice of peer group mentoring can be understood as being prefigured by the historical influences of a Nordic tradition of folk enlightenment, as presented and discussed in Chapter 2. With a focus on particular kinds of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements, they show how traces of these arrangements shape practice and come into play in group mentoring practice.

The sixth chapter, *Research circles – Constructing a space for elaborating on being a teacher leader in preschools*, is co-authored by the Swedish researchers Karin Rönnerman and Anette Olin. They use the theory of practice architectures for analysing and understanding the Swedish tradition and practice of meeting in research circles with the purpose of gaining, developing and sharing knowledge in a democratic way. The theory of practice architectures is used to examine the social nature of the language, the activities and the relationships of leading practitioners in pre-schools, as well as the particular conditions or practice architectures which enable practitioners or constrain them from taking part in a research circle.

The following chapter, too, titled *From transmission to site-based professional development – on the art of combining research with facilitation,* uses the theory of practice architectures for framing the analysis of four cases of enhancing professional development, close educational practices and collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Chapter 7 is written by a group of Finnish researchers: Liselott Forsman, Gunilla Karlberg-Granlund, Michaela Pörn, Petri Salo and Jessica Aspfors. They study the complex and challenging practices of initiating and promoting professional development in close collaboration with teachers and principals. They look into and discuss the aims, approaches and challenges of professional development from the viewpoint of researcher-facilitators, in cases where the established traditions of predetermined content-delivery are replaced with development practices based on research and collaboration on educational sites.

The Swedish researcher Ann-Christine Wennergren uses the Scandinavian practice theory presented in the Chapter 2 to analyse and discuss a professional learning project applied on a whole school level as a response to poor results in student achievement. In Chapter 8, *The power of risk-taking in professional learning*, she explores the impact of a case of a long-term critical friendship formed between teachers in relation to practices of shadowing. She highlights the importance of (professional) courage, trust and risk-taking in handling the complexities and ambivalences as well as the educational values and beliefs that become exposed when teachers engage in shadowing and documenting each other's classroom practices.

The translation theory presented in Chapter 3 is put into practice in the two remaining chapters in the second part of the book. Norwegian researchers Eli Moksnes Furu and Torbjørn Lund use translation theory in Chapter Nine, *Development teams as translators of school reform ideas,* to study and discuss how educational ideas and practices, in this particular case Assessment For Learning, are formulated on national level, and how they travel via regional reform programmes into individual schools. They focus firstly on the use of dialogue conferences as arenas for translations taking place outside schools, and secondly on the translation processes within schools, furthered by development groups and taking place in arenas such as staff meetings. As a result of the study they conclude that development groups and the translation competence the members of these groups carry are of importance for fruitful translation processes to take place and the kind of school development these processes further.

The last chapter in the second part of the book, *Research partnerships in local teaching programme work*, is written by a Norwegian doctoral candidate, Svein-Erik Andreassen. He uses translation theory to analyse the procedures by which teachers in his case study school translate the competence aims in the Norwegian curriculum (LK06) into local teaching programmes. Both the translation of the behavioural and content dimensions of the competence aims are studied. The conclusion is that the strong framing of the behavioural dimension (focusing on the pupil) in the national curriculum is translated at the school into a strong framing of the content dimension, with a range of variations with regard to the behavioural dimension. This might be due to inadequate supervision, lack of time to work with the aims, or a content-oriented tradition and culture within the school.

In the third part we are proud to be able to present reflections on the studies and themes of the book from a range of eminent professors and from around the world. We have simply asked them to reflect on the contents of certain chapters in part one and two. In Chapter 11 the Norwegian professor emeritus Gunnar Handal, one of the founders of practice theory, contributes his reflections on the contents of Chapters 2 and 8. Professor emeritus Stephen Kemmis, from Australia, is an internationally acknowledged representative of action research, and the main figure behind the theory of practice architectures. He is also involved in the PEP network and he formulates comments on the uses and understanding of the theory of practice architectures as brought forward by the members of the Nordic Network for Action Research in this book. Professor emeritus Bernt Gustavsson from Sweden has conducted extensive research on the historical ideas, the Nordic tradition of *bildung* and the practices within folk enlightenment that have evolved from the ideal of *bildung* throughout the years. He concludes his reflections by referring to the rich Nordic educational tradition, and advocates the mobilisation of this tradition for practice-based research. The concluding reflections are written by Blair Stevenson, a researcher with roots in Canada but working currently within the Nordic tradition of education in Finland. His expertise includes the use of participatory action research as a means and arena for the development and use of Inuit culture in education, specifically by Inuit teachers in the classroom. The concluding chapter, *Reflections on the politics of practice*, reflects on the political context and the underlying political artefacts which influence the Nordic traditions and educational practices as presented in the book, and have an impact on the aims and methods used in the case studies. Finally, Stevensson widens our understanding of participatory action research as presented in the book, by identifying similarities between the localised and social Indigenous knowledge and the practitioner-participant knowledge characteristic of the Nordic tradition of educational action research.

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PART 1
BACKGROUND

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2. THE PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE REGIME, TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The "practical knowledge regime" (PKR) is a conceptualization of pedagogy that directly and indirectly promotes the notion of teachers' autonomy and development as an integral part of professional practice. The purpose of this chapter is firstly to outline the roots, main advocates and conceptions of this regime in Scandinavia, and secondly how it resonates with related, international strands of educational thought. Thirdly we trace and discuss the position and role of the PKR in relation to contemporary policies of teacher education and education more generally. In spite of recent pressures of testing, standardization and bureaucratic control it is our contention that this regime still has a vital position, and in particular as a counterweight to these tendencies.

The authors have for a number of years been engaged in teachers' professional development, both in initial and in-service teacher education, and as an integral part of practice from the newly qualified stages and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

> "Pedagogy is not theory about or for practice, but theory in practice" (Løvlie, 1973).

This citation from one of the most influential advocates of the Norwegian and Scandinavian version of the international strand of educational theory and philosophy, labeled "The Practical Knowledge Regime" (Dale, 2005), describes one of its essential assumptions. Launched in the early 1970s in opposition to the predominance of mainly Anglo-American positivistic and psychometric approaches, PKR insisted that pedagogy, the Scandinavian equivalent to the broader English term "education", is first and foremost a practical discipline. According to Dale (2005), Løvlie's most original contribution was the assumption behind this definition, namely that "Practice is an independent epistemological category" (1973), referring to the Aristotelian distinction between *episteme* (science) and *techne* and *phronesis* (pedagogy). Based on this, he introduced an integrative practice-theory model that has been widely disseminated, especially in initial and further teacher education. Two of the most prominent representatives and "translators" of the PKR, Handal and Lauvås, coined the term "practical professional theory" to capture the essence of this

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model (2000). The crucial message is that teachers' professional knowledge base, their practical professional theory, should be developed in and through educational practice, integrating performance and epistemic, practical and ethical considerations. Collaborative learning, especially via pre- and in-service tutoring, is a major vehicle in this process.

The aim of this chapter is to give an account of the Nordic version of the PKR as an important contribution to the theoretical and methodological underpinning of teachers' individual and collective professional learning, particularly in the formats of action learning and research. The collective, participatory views of teachers as learners can be traced to the larger framework of Nordic educational traditions and the democratic values they are built on (see Chapter 4, in Salo & Rönnerman, 2014). Within the context of educational research in Scandinavia, there is a strong affinity between the PKR and contributions related to understanding and handling schools as organizations and cultures, and we will briefly include some of these.

The PKR is a Nordic version of a larger, and more specifically Anglo-Saxon strand of thought, represented particularly by Joseph Schwab, Laurence Stenhouse, Wilfred Carr and Steven Kemmis. In line with the more general aim of the "Pedagogy, Education & Praxis" collaboration, to promote dialogue between different traditions and understandings, our purpose is also to illuminate the relationship between the Scandinavian PRK and its Anglo-Saxon counterpart. This dialogue will be pursued and broadened in the third section of the book. The concluding part of this chapter will discuss its present status, particularly in the light of the evidence-based "turn" in contemporary educational policy, research and practice.[1]

BACKGROUND - SOURCES OF LEGITIMATION

According to Dale, opposing definitions are essential elements in marking one discourse or knowledge regime as different from another in the hegemonic struggle that often takes place within scientific disciplines. He uses the term "demarcation works" of texts that have signature status in defining and distinguishing one tradition as distinct from another. Løvlie is defined by Dale (2005) as being the most distinguished Scandinavian representative of the PKR, and uses some of his most seminal texts as data when defining and analyzing the core elements of this regime, as opposed to its most influential opposition, the theoretical-scientific regime. The Swedish philosopher and educationalist Bernt Gustavsson maintains that the latter "for a long time has been conceived as the only form of knowledge that matters" (2000, our translation). He goes on to state that a major philosophical strand during the last decade has been a contestation of this division and the formulating of alternatives to it. The theoretical-scientific regime was largely equated with the positivistic conception of science in which the natural sciences were given universal status. The international student radicalization and the positivism dispute in the 1960s and 70s fuelled the breakthrough of the PKR. In Norway this was manifested institutionally by the "Social-Pedagogical Alternative" at Oslo University. Initiated by radical teachers and students, among them Løvlie, this alternative study programme emphasized pedagogy as a practical as well as a cultural and critical discipline, in opposition to the predominantly historical, psychological and Christian-humanistic establishment. Together with the rehabilitation of practical philosophy, the reintroduction of the continental traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics in the 1970s has been another important contribution to the PKR as an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon, theoretical-scientific tradition. And last but not least, the Anglo-Saxon opponents to this regime, Schwab, Stenhouse, and also Carr and Kemmis, have been important frames of references in the development of the Nordic version of the PKR. Most influential among these has been Lawrence Stenhouse, whose seminal book "An introduction to Curriculum Research and Development" (1975) and its conception of "the teacher as researcher" has been widely included in the study literature at Scandinavian universities.

PKR – THE ARISTOTELIAN HERITAGE

The modern assumption of theoretical, scientific knowledge as being superior to other forms can be traced back to Aristotle, the originator of the tripartite model of human knowledge and reasoning introduced above: "Aristotle regarded this as the highest form of reasoning, associated with finding the truth about the nature of things…" (Kemmis & Smith 2008, p. 15). In the Ancient Greek version of scientific inquiry, *theoria*, guided by the disposition called *episteme*, was essentially seen as an activity that aimed at pursuing knowledge and eternal truths for their own sake, and with little or no relevance to everyday life. When considering human, everyday action, the other two forms of activities, *poiesis* and *praxis*, and their corresponding dispositions *techne* and *phronesis*, are more important. *Poiesis* refers to instrumental actions, to the making of material and immaterial products, and to various forms of instrumental actions based on considerations of means and ends, and on the mastery of skills and technical expertise. *Praxis*, on the other hand, refers to activities that, instead of material production, aim "progressively to realize the idea of the 'good' constitutive of a morally worthwhile form of human life" (Carr 2006, p. 426). Whereas practical knowledge, in the form of general know-how, is essential to the former, practical wisdom is an integral part of the latter, not as a universal, epistemic asset, but as realized in particular situations. Aristotle formulates the nature of *phronesis*, as opposed to *techne*, in the following way:

> For production aims at an end other than itself; but this is impossible in the case of action, because the end is merely doing well. What remains, then, is that it is a true state, reasoned, and capable of action with regard to those things that are good or bad for man… (1976, p. 209).

This implies that *phronesis* is concerned with values and the moral aspects of human conduct, focusing on situational actions and choices. These cannot be subject to universal rules and laws, and presupposing deliberations, judgments and decisions.

According to Nicolini (2013), the vast impact of Aristotle´s tripartite model on Western tradition can be divided into two aspects. First, and in line with Løvlie, by granting "praxis the status of an independent, legitimate, and worthy form of knowledge" (p. 27), and secondly by establishing "the partial incommensurability between practice and theory, and the irreducibility of practical wisdom to theory" (p. 27). In his analysis of the historical and ideological context of the PKR, Dale (2005) concludes that these propositions are at the core of the practical knowledge regime, combining *phronesis* and *techne* as the basis that pedagogy should be built on, rather than on traditional scientific theory, *episteme*, associated with positivism.

THEORY IN PRACTICE – THE SCANDINAVIAN VERSION

The rejection of scientific theory as the point of departure and guide for educational practice implied a rejection of the predominant definitions of educational theory based on support sciences such as psychology, sociology, history and philosophy, rather than an independent and self-sufficient discipline. This predominant conception particularly in Norway and Scandinavia in the 1960s was heavily influenced by the writings of the English educational philosopher Paul Hirst (1966). One of the leading American spokesmen of the PKR, Joseph Schwab (1969), accepted this definition but insisted that the only way to save the "dying" curriculum studies area was by interdisciplinary "deliberations" based on "real" educational matters. Løvlie, however, rejected Hirst's position. Referring to the notion of pedagogy as a way of knowing in its own right, *phronēsis* and *techne*, rather than *episteme*, Løvlie raised a number of issues concerning power and control in school development. Who should be the initiators, teachers or "experts", and on what premises should cooperation between the two rest?

Løvlie's contention was that if mediation between theory and practice was left entirely to the discretion of theorists and experts, teachers might be reduced to being "educational assistants to expertise without necessary local and contextual insights" (Dale 2005, p. 114, our translation). Consequently, his integrated practice-theory model was based on the following assumptions: firstly that experience is primarily built on everyday educational practice, not scientific knowledge; and secondly, as a consequence of the first, that pedagogy must be defined as an autonomous discipline, building a separate knowledge base independent of support sciences. Thirdly, the dialectical relationship between theory and practice renders mediation between theory and practice unnecessary (Dale 2005). In one of his demarcation contributions, "educational philosophy for practicing teachers" (1974), Løvlie establishes a distinction between theoretical and practical justifications of educational propositions and actions: "Whereas theoretical justifications (science) refer to the distinction between true and false, the practical ones refer to the distinction between what is useful or not" (p. 23).

According to Løvlie there is, however, a crucial distinction between practical justifications based on criteria of usefulness and those who are related to critera of worthwhile-ness. The latter justifications …"clarify the ethical implications that underpin a practical proposition and help us to make the morally correct decision" (p. 24).

Løvlie highlights two major problems that have to be taken into account when using scientific, theoretical justifications as guidelines for practical propositions and actions. Firstly, all scientific results should be considered preliminary and subject to modification and/or refutation. They also tend to be contradictory, e.g. in the case of teachers' appraisal of students' achievements. On the one hand this can stimulate efforts, and on the other, it may lead to extrinsic and instrumental motivation rather than a genuine interest in a subject or activity (Kvernbekk, 2001). Secondly, and more fundamentally, based on examples from a much-used textbook in teacher education, Løvlie illuminates the risk of "categorical mistakes" by substituting practical justifications for theoretical ones. The risk, as Løvlie sees it, is that theoretical propositions are transformed into technical procedures and teachers into "educational assistants" or technicians. This notion is well in line with psychometric, positivistic conceptualizations, corrupting the moral aspects of assessment and schooling more generally.

Løvlie's main proposition is that educational, or in Carr's term, "practical philosophy" (2006), should be problem-based, addressing crucial issues that practising teachers are faced with in their daily actions and transactions. The most important task is to prescribe educational actions rather than describing and defining educational concepts. The strategy should therefore be to engage in the analysis of propositions about educational action, bearing in mind the difference between analysis and action: "Teachers' interactions with their students will always be risky and part of an existential enterprise" (p. 32). Theory, he states, can never be more than a preliminary to action, and is not capable of eliminating the complexities and the unforeseen that are integral to educational practice. This signals the existential-philosophical references of the Nordic version of the PKR, in addition to its Aristotelian underpinning. Løvlie construed a model of his practice-theory model that in modified versions has been, and still is, a vital representation of the PKR in Norway and Sweden. This model has been used widely as a tool for reflection, especially in formal and informal programmes for students and in-service teachers' professional development via supervision, peer consultation and cooperation. Originally, the model was shaped as an inverted pyramid with three layers of practice: the bottom, most pointed one, represented actual practice (P1); the second layer represented the theoretical and practical considerations (P2) based on previous experiences and criteria of usability; and the third, top layer (P3) represented the ethical and meta-theoretical justifications of actual performances and the theoretical and experience-based propositions that instructional and other educational choices rest on (Løvlie, 1972). Meta-theoretical considerations include issues raised above about the nature and status of scientific and theoretical statements, but also the overall goals and purpose of education, which is ultimately a normative and moral enterprise, or *phronesis*.

In the next section we will present one of the most common, modified and elaborated versions of the practice-theory-model, that of Handal and Lauvås (1983). Before we do so, it should be mentioned that Løvlie´s model bears a resemblance to that of O'Connor (1957), one of the most prominent representatives of the opposing, theoretical knowledge regime.[2] More important, however, is the influence from continental, especially German *Bildung* traditions, and the contribution from Erich Weniger, who also launched a pyramidal, three-layered model that has much in common with that of Løvlie and his followers: Practice (T1), teachers' theories (T2) and meta-theoretical reflection (T3) (from Imsen, 2006).

In our context the salient message of the PKR, explicitly and implicitly, is the optimistic notion of the autonomous, committed and morally informed professional, able and willing to develop his/her professional competencies as an integral part of everyday practice.

ELABORATION AND TRANSLATION

The most influential approaches for translating and consolidating the PKR from the 1980s onwards were developed by the Norwegian educationalists Gunnar Handal and Per Lauvås. Their main area of contextualization was peer and students' consultation, supervision and guidance, especially within teacher initial and in-service education and school development. Later they expanded to areas such as nursing, medicine, administration and leadership, and disseminated their translations extensively. Their main impact was, however, in teacher education and in various forms of in-service programmes and school development, not only in Norway, but also in the other Scandinavian countries (See chapter 5, Langelotz & Rönnerman, 2014 and chapter 8, Wennergren, 2014). Their most seminal book, which, according to Dale (2005), gained a regime-defining status within the field of consultation and supervision in Scandinavia was (in direct translation) "On Own Terms" (1983). It was translated into Swedish and English ("Promoting Reflective Teaching", 1987). In addition to Løvlie, Handal and Lauvås' prime international sources of reference were Stenhouse (1975) and Schön (1983). Their consultation model, consisting of a written lesson plan, pre-guidance, observation and post-guidance, has for many years been the dominant and institutionalized approach, especially in the practicum part of initial teacher education.

In their elaboration of the original practice-theory model, Handal and Lauvås "inadvertently" turn Løvlie's model upside down, but they make the point that this is not important: "The main message is that practical activities are more than the actual enactments, and that such an expanded concept of practice consists of different levels and aspects" (Lauvås & Handal 2000, p. 176). In addition, they mark level P2 and P3 as practice-theory and subsume them under the comprehensive concept "educational practice", including all three levels:

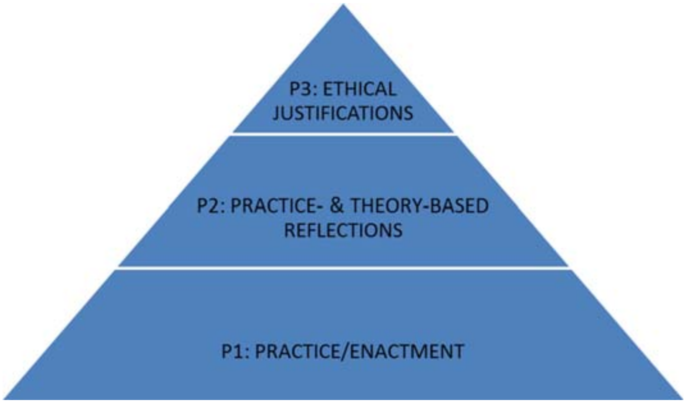
P3: ETHICAL JUSTIFICATIONS
P2: PRACTICE- & THEORY-BASED REFLECTIONS
P1: PRACTICE/ENACTMENT

Figure 1. The practice- theory model (Løvlie, 1975).

Whereas Handal and Lauvås used the concept "practice-theory" in their first book (1983), in their more recent volume, "Guidance and Practical Professional Theory" (Lauvås & Handal 2000, our translation) they changed this to "professional practice theory" (PPT) to underscore the professional context and setting of this particular version of practice theory.[3]

In their summary of the theory, Lauvås and Handal highlight the following six key elements. Firstly, the main ingredient of the theory is what Argyris and Schön (1978) define as "theory-in-use", that is, knowledge and values that are put in place in daily practices, not "espoused" professional knowledge. PPT consists of more or less tacit cognitive schemata, interpretations and action rules. Secondly, and related to the first, although PPT contains tacit and implicit elements, one should nevertheless strive to make it conscious and propositional. "This does not imply that it is unwarranted to actively investigate all that we know, but that we do not know that we know" (Lauvås & Handal, 2000, p. 184). Thirdly, the pervasive sub- or unconscious levels of PPT can be related to the fact that for many professions, notably the educational, its development starts prior to institutional and formalized education and training. Fourthly, the distinction between values, experiences and knowledge is an analytical one that are clustered together in an amalgam of all the impulses that have been internalized from early childhood onwards. The most accessible ones are the most recent and novel, while the least accessible are those that stem from deeply rooted, emotionally laden primary socialization. The fifth distinguishing feature concerns the fact that although PPT might be shared among professionals both locally and more universally, it is first and foremost an individual construct. Nevertheless, and this is the sixth feature, although it is an individual phenomenon, it develops and changes in constant interaction with the surrounding environment. PPT is part of our biography, rooted in our gender, social and cultural background and shaped in social interaction with significant others. We are not just individuals but also representatives of the local and institutional culture that we are part of.

In terms of guidance in its manifold forms, its most fundamental purpose is to assist those who seek guidance in the process of “knowing more of that he or she do not know that they know” (Lauvås & Handal 2000, p. 184). This is, however, a two-sided venture that also includes making the known unknown, identifying, conceptualizing and thereby creating distance from the taken-for-granted elements of the PPT. These might include ways of knowing and doing that represent the most valuable cultural heritage of the profession, but on the other hand also taken-for-granted (mis)conceptions and practices that are inadequate, out-of-date and sometimes even “perverted”. According to Lauvås and Handal, there are limitations as to how far individual or collective professional introspection alone is able to expose and change professionally inappropriate sayings, doings and relatings – the way practices are conceptualized, enacted and organized (Kemmis, 2008; Salo & Rönnerman, 2014, chapter 4). Based on theories of knowledge and epistemology, especially that of Polanyi (1958) and Schön (1983), and contributions from Scandinavian philosophers like Johannessen (2005) and Rolf (2006), they propose two main approaches when dealing with the tacit, or in Johannessen’s term “implicit” elements of the PPT: one is apprenticeship learning, the other is “reflective guidance”. Although the latter is Lauvås and Handal’s main focus, they accept both as important and consider reflective guidance to be a vital, complementary strategy to apprenticeship learning, which traditionally puts more emphasis on practising rather than articulating the PPT.

In addition to the strategy of planning, pre-teaching guidance, observation and post-activity guidance that are widely used in initial teacher education and to some extent also extended and translated to in-service tutoring and collaboration, Lauvås and Handal have also developed various models for professional, reciprocal consultation that have been extensively promoted and practised. These include problem-based consultation in groups of teachers in which one teacher at a time presents an authentic problem case. This is clarified and contextualized via systematic questioning by group members and is followed up by “the problem owner’s” proposals for a solution, group advice and the owner’s assessment of the advice. Another module targets participants’ professional practice theory more specifically; this is done by presenting fictive collegial discussions on educational topics for group-based analysis, sorting and discriminating between statements about actions and their practical, experience-based, theoretical and value-laden justifications (Lauvås, Lycke & Handal, 2004).

The wide-spread influence of PPT and the practice theory regime more generally, not only in Norway, but in all Scandinavia, is not only manifested by the translations (linguistic and semantic) and extensive use of Handal and Lauvås’ contributions (see chapter 5, Langelotz & Rönnerman 2014 and chapter 8 Wennergren 2014). In fact, the very concept of “practice theory” was not developed by them or Løvlie, but by the Danish educationalist Thomsen (1975). In the foreword of Handal and Lauvås’ regime-defining book “Promoting Reflective Teaching” (1987), they give credit to Thomsen who, by taking the candidates’ own theories and criteria as the point of departure for guidance and consultation, significantly influenced their own thinking and practice.

Although the use of the concepts of practice theory/professional practice theory and its corresponding visual representation had their peak in the 1980s and 90s, they are still included and widely used in core educational literature and textbooks in teacher pre- and in-service education (e.g. Imsen, 2006; Lyngsnes & Rismark, 2007). This dissemination contributes to the theory’s influence on new generations of teachers.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE

Although the PPT is fundamentally seen as an individual construct, it puts strong emphasis on the interplay between the individual and the collective levels in the development of practice theory as “the private, intertwined, but constantly changing system of knowledge, experience, and values that at each point in time significantly influences the individual’s teaching practice” (Handal & Lauvås, 1983, p.14). The collegial or organizational frame of reference is therefore an important part both of their theoretical and their more practical, strategy-oriented contributions. Schön (1983) is not only referred to in terms of the individual, reflective practitioner, but also the theories of organizational learning that he developed together with Agyris (1978). Their distinction between espoused and enacted theories (in use) resonates strongly with the distinction between propositional and tacit, or implicit, knowledge that is a crucial part of PPT. Another Anglo-Saxon reference is Schein (1992), whose multilayered model of organizational culture distinguishes between its “propositional”, visual elements, “the culture’s products and artifacts”, and the more hidden but formative structures in the forms of core values and basic assumptions, e.g. about the nature of teaching and learning. The Swedish researcher Arfwedsson (1985) has more consistently focused on school organization and culture, using school codes as a key concept. This refers to the basic, often hidden and tacit rules underlying interpretations and patterns of actions that develop over time at each school site, more or less influenced by the local, surrounding context as well as the broader, institutional one. Their formative effect on the individual and collective PPT is pervasive, and an important target both in individual and collective guidance and consultation, and in school development more generally.

The cultural-discursive backdrop represented by the practice theory regime thus promotes a conceptualization of teachers as operatives rather than as victims of circumstance. Within this framework they are seen as being capable and able to develop their own professional practice theory via individual and organizational consultation, collaboration and learning. This offensive role definition is supported by an influential concept stemming from the work of another Scandinavian educational researcher, Berg (2007), whose main focus has also been the organizational and institutional framework of schooling and education. One of his key analytical concepts is that of *free room*, represented by a visual model consisting of an inner circle that marks the cultural-cognitive definition of the possibilities and limitations of professional conduct, and an outer circle representing the factual limitations of professional autonomy. The inner circle concerns issues of cultural and informal legitimacy, the outer one those of formal and juridical legality. The gap between the two represents the free room, the scope for action that teachers should control, individually and preferably collectively, in order to develop their practice, and more generally, their professionalism.

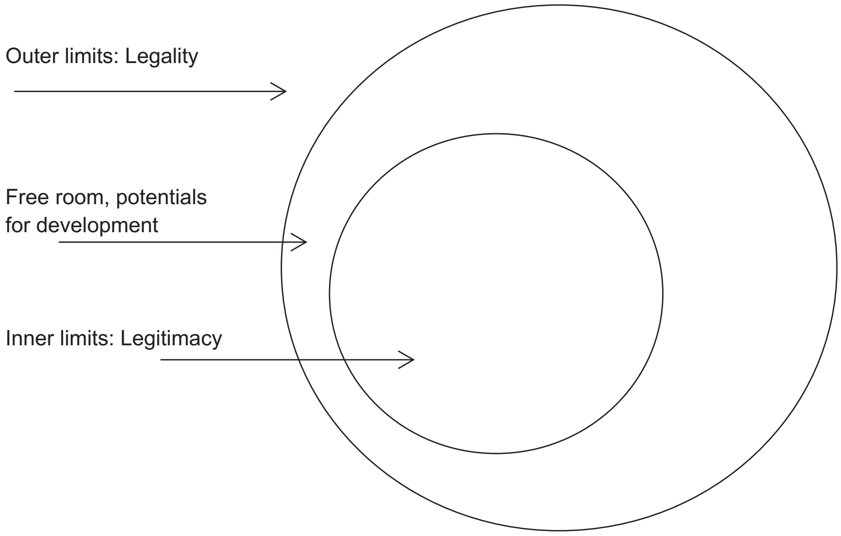

Figure 2. The free room model, adapted from Berg (1999, p.28).

Berg relates the two circles to the distinction between restricted and extended professionalism. The first refers to those whose practice is confined to the given cognitive and cultural definitions that are dominant in their local settings, whereas those who subscribe to the extended version seek to expand their practice via cultural and curricular analyses as points of departure for school development.

The pervasiveness of this model can be illustrated by the following small anecdote. At the final celebration of an in-service course for teachers, “Guidance and school development” at the University of Tromsø, Norway in the mid-80s, the gift from the students was a ceramic cake dish with the following text (in direct translation): “Thank you for our expanded scope for action!” The reference was to Berg, whose theories and research on schools as organizations had a prominent place in the list of set reading and in students’ course work. Although these theories had their heyday in the 80s and 90s, the free room model and the theories behind it are still vital frames of reference in contemporary discourses and practices, especially as far as teacher professionalism, school organization, culture and development are concerned.

THE SCANDINAVIAN PRACTICE REGIME AND BEYOND

Løvlie and those who have developed, elaborated and translated the conceptualization of pedagogy as primarily a practical discipline in Scandinavia have much in common with the most influential Anglo-Saxon spokesmen of the practical knowledge regime. Among these are Joseph Schwab and Lawrence Stenhouse, two of the most prominent international representatives of the regime, who joined forces in dismissing scientific, disciplinary knowledge as worthless for teachers' daily work, in Løvlie´s terms confined to "the ivory tower of the profession of anonymous men and women, more concerned with constructing cathedrals of eternal truths than functional school buildings" (Løvlie, 1973, in Dale, 2005, p. 113). In Schwab's rhetoric, this is expressed in the following way: "The stuff of theory is abstract or idealized representations of real things. But curriculum in action treats real things: real acts, real teachers, real children, and things richer than and different from their theoretical representations" (Schwab 1969, p. 310). And finally, in Stenhouse's version: "When it is regarded as a matter of applying the findings of these disciplines, the result is generally disastrous" (Stenhouse 1975). Stenhouse's position was, however, more radical than that of Løvlie. Whereas the latter accepted the epistemic, objectivistic concept of science as a provider of concepts or models, which should, however, be subject to the test of practice rather than defining it, Stenhouse stated that "The problem of objectivity seems to me a false one" (1975, p. 157). The argument was that any form of classroom research should aim at improving teaching and learning and therefore be made operational by teachers. This fact makes it impossible to escape the subjectivities that will always be present in the realities of classroom decisions and actions.

Consequently, Stenhouse's concept of "an educational science" defined every classroom as a laboratory, and every teacher a member of the community of researchers (Stenhouse, 1975, p. 142). He is in line with Handal & Lauvås (2000) when he suggests that teachers should alternate between the positions of teaching and observing in order to establish distance from and be able to identify, investigate, criticize and change the explicit and implicit assumptions that underlie classroom conduct. This called for the development of a joint professional language, "a general theoretical language" (p. 157), as an integral part of developing professional practice. This was a necessary prerequisite for collegial communication and for reporting on teachers' work. The establishment of "a general theoretical language" could also be supported by cooperation between "professional researchers" and teacher researchers. In this process, however, the researcher "needs to see himself as notionally employed by the teacher and accountable to him" (p.192). The case study approach was seen as a vital tool in collegial and teacher "educationalist" based research, and in the joint construction of concepts and professional language. In this process, educational and curriculum research and theory should be serving, not defining, the needs of schools and teachers.

According to Lauvås and Handal (2000) there is a strong affinity between Stenhouse´s concept of "the teacher as researcher" and Løvlie´s practice-theory model. Both serve as a basis for "theory-based planning, observation of and reflection on own practice and using own and others' experiences in constant efforts to develop and refine a consistent practice-theory as a basis for further plans and practice" (cited in Dale 2005, p. 146). Although the advocates of the Practical Knowledge Regime had a shared scepticism towards scientific knowledge in the positivistic version, which had a strong position in the post-Sputnic era of the 1960s, some of its vital elements were imported and adapted to the PKR by prominent Scandinavian translators, among them the Swedish educationalist Erik Wallin (1970). These translators extracted and imported elements of models and systems, starting from an educational technology predominantly based on behaviouristic principles and means-end reasoning. These adaptions were also influenced by classroom studies, especially in Sweden, that revealed the contextual nature of teaching and learning, particularly when implementing pre-designed and programmed educational packages. The "frame factor analyses" of Lundgren and others (1972) documented how structural-temporal, cultural and social factors were always at play in classroom settings, influencing the course of events in various and often unpredictable ways. One recurring observation was that frame factors such as curricular overload and scarce time resources often resulted in teachers "piloting" students to "correct" answers rather that guiding their quest for understanding. Within the framework of the practice regime, Handal adapted a systems model in which frame factors was one element, together with educational objectives content, methods of teaching and learning, assessment strategies and students' learning dispositions (prior knowledge, metacognition, motivations, cultural and social background, etc.). These six elements and their interplay are widely referred to as "the didactical relations model" defined, in teacher education, as the prime professional tool for planning, executing and evaluating teaching practice. The didactical relations model constitutes one of the main "carriers" of the PPT into the teaching profession, due to the fact that it is the dominant structural basis for lesson planning, pre- and post-teaching supervision and guidance. This has particularly been the case in initial teacher education, but also in in-service and collegial consultation settings in Scandinavia. It is also the structuring tool for students' case studies and other written assignments, which are often included in coursework and examination papers both in initial and further teacher education.

PKR IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING POLICIES

As indicated above, there is a close connection between the educational philosophical underpinning of the practical knowledge regime in Scandinavia, and its Anglo-

Saxon counterpart, practical philosophy, especially as advocated by Wilfred Carr (2006), Steven Kemmis (1988) and John Elliott (1987, 1991). In the case of action research these authors have criticized the methodological "fallacy": in the quest for scientific legitimacy, action research has substituted *phronesis* with *techne* and *episteme.* In the same vein, the Norwegian philosopher Hans Skjervheim (1972) used the term "instrumentalist mistake" to capture the tendency to subsume all forms of educational practice more generally within technical, narrow means-end rationalities. "Instrumentalist mistake" was formulated in the early 70s within the framework of the anti-positivist movement, and was a vital contribution to the cultural-discursive backdrop that inspired and nurtured the inception of the PKR.

Our main proposition is that the practice regime has been, and still is, a major element in the professional knowledge base conveyed and practised within teacher education and beyond. Today, 40 years after its inception, we have, however, good reason to discuss the development and present status of the PKR, especially in view of contemporary educational discourses and practices. According to Salo and Rönnerman, Chapter 4 these are characterized by globalization, testing, competition and standardization. These concepts and the policies they represent can be related to changing trends within the macro-level practice architectures of education in the Nordic countries. According to Telhaug, Mediaas and Aasen (2006), the post war development of the Nordic school model can be understood as three phases. The first one is often referred to as the "golden era of social democracy", a public comprehensive school system promoting equality of opportunity, cooperation and solidarity. The next phase, the radical left era, coincided with and inspired the inception of the PKR. The latter continued and augmented the student-centred, pragmatic and progressive ethos of social-democratic education, emphasizing the critical, subversive mission of schooling in an authoritarian, capitalist society. The third, contemporary phase, the era of globalization and neo-liberalism, and the frame of reference of Salo and Rönnerman (2014, chapter 4), implies a reduced confidence in the social-democratic, strong and egalitarian state. The remedy was instead liberalization, deregulation, decentralization, privatization and competition, based on principles of management by objectives and incentives, combined with testing and quality control, also labeled New Public Management (NPM).

Within the educational sector, this is manifested in centrally defined and specified objectives with an emphasis on core competencies, leaving decisions about methods and approaches to the discretion of local schools and teachers, and followed up via an increasing quantity of national and international test regimes. The mismatch between overarching curricular objectives and "what really counts" can be illustrated by the lack of public and professional interest in the ICCS (the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study), investigating the ways in which countries prepare their young people for citizenship and democratic participation (Kerr et al., 2010), compared to the massive media coverage of PISA and TIMMS.[4]

Despite differences between countries, neo-liberalism and NPM have been less influential in Scandinavia, mainly due to the progressive, social-democratic heritage emphasizing equality and equity in education (Telhaug et al., 2006). As already mentioned, we also consider the practical knowledge regime as a cultural-discursive force that has countered or at least mitigated the neo-liberal impact. From our vantage points as teacher educators, curriculum designers and programme evaluators we have nevertheless witnessed a growing tendency towards more instrumental practice-theory versions. Although principal educational objectives emphasizing citizenship, democracy and international solidarity are vital elements of the "espoused" national school and teacher education curricula, student and practising teachers seem more focused on the P1 and P2 elements of the triangle than on P3. This is clearly a result of the neo-liberal impact on schooling and school policies, which has implied a displacement of objectives from social to cognitive-instrumental ones.

There are thus contradictions and ambiguities in current school policies and practices that again can be related to the "counter-cultural" potentials of Nordic educational practice architectures. There has been a revitalization of education defined in terms of *Bildung*, not only in teacher education but also in higher education more generally. As the last of the Scandinavian teacher unions, the Norwegian Union of Education has recently (2012) discussed and formulated its professional code of ethics. The mission statement emphasizes the profession's contribution to developing a democratic society characterized by tolerance and respect for difference and diversity. The notion of the autonomous, morally informed and learning professional is also reflected in contemporary role definitions in policy statements and documents. A case in point is the White Paper from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research on future research policies, launching the concept of "student-active research". Student involvement in research and development activities is encouraged as an integral part of all study programmes from undergraduate level onwards (Meld. St. 18, 2012–2013). In initial and further teacher education this is strongly articulated in Finland, but also in the latest teacher education reforms in Sweden and Norway. Following Finland's example, Norway has launched a five-year pilot master programme for primary school teachers at the University of Tromsø emphasizing the notion of student-active and participatory research.

These and other manifestations can be seen as plots of different and contrasting stories, both the social-democratic and PKR ones and the neo-liberal and neo-positivist, the latter accentuating a narrow, instrumental understanding of evidence-based research and practice. Our main source for this chapter, Erling Lars Dale, has formulated a critique of what he sees as tendencies towards an unwarranted skepticism within the PKR towards research methodologies. Whereas Løvlie's position was that science disempowers and alienates the practising teacher, Dale, referring to Dewey and Habermas, sees science as a tool that enables practitioners to obtain critical distance and liberate themselves from the inadequacies of traditions. In our understanding of the dispute, the problem is not the application of scientific methodologies as such, but the "categorical" or "instrumental mistake" (Skjervheim, 1972) we have discussed above, degrading "practical reason to technical control"

(Gadamer, 1975). The rehabilitation of practical philosophy by Wilfred Carr (2006) and other representatives of the Anglo-Saxon version of the PKR do not imply a dismissal of methodology and research technique as such:

> This is not to argue that participatory action researchers should not be capable of conducting sound research, rather, it is to emphasize that sound research must respect much more than the canons of methods (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 284).

Since the inception of the PKR in the early 1970s there has been substantial development within "the canons of methods", necessitating more nuanced definitions of what counts as evidence in evidence-based practice and research, rather than randomized controlled trials and other positivist strategies that are often associated with the concept (Kvernbekk, 2011). Advances in theories of individual and organizational learning, implicated in the concept "participatory" in the quote above, have also resonated well with the Practical Knowledge Regime: the sociocultural notion of professional development in communities of practice.

CONCLUSIONS

The Practical Knowledge Regime was developed in opposition to the prevailing positivistic conceptualization of educational science and theory, as a discipline without a unified, theoretical foundation and therefore dependant on theories, concepts and research tools from more established academic disciplines. The alternative PKR provided was a shift from pedagogy as a scientific, epistemic and fragmented endeavour, to practice, and praxis, as the point of departure for pedagogical and educational knowledge building. This also implied a shift from a definition of teachers as obedient consumers of academically generated knowledge, to autonomous learning professionals integrating science-based results, experience-based knowledge and normative considerations into their everyday practice.

Although the PKR had its heyday in the 80s and 90s in Scandinavia, it is still a vital part of educational curricula for teacher education and of cultural-discursive definitions of their professional role in Scandinavia more generally. On the "arenas of formulation" (Lindensjö & Lundgren, 2000), we have seen that the notion of teachers' experience-based knowledge development is included and valued together with more traditional academic research in various policy documents. However, an analysis of the concept of profession in significant Norwegian White Papers and in the Union of Teachers' policy documents shows that whereas the latter focus is on responsibility, the former focus is on accountability (Granlund, Mausethagen & Munthe, 2011). Needless to say responsibility version is more in line with the PKR than the other.

The situation is also ambiguous with regard to the "arenas of realization". The visions of the national pilot MA programme in teacher education at the University of Tromsø, Norway, reflect core elements of the PKR. This, is done by facilitating students' motivation and capacity for more systematic ways of professional learning and development, not only via action learning and research, but also other research strategies. On the other hand, Carlgren (2013) notes that resources allocated to teacher-based research in Sweden are scarce compared to the extensive investments in in-service programs in which university-based research is condensed, distributed to schools and consumed by teachers. The mismatch between rhetoric and resources, between the cultural-discursive and the material-economic underpinnings of teacher-based development and research can also be traced in Norway. Training, inspiring and socializing future teachers to become producers of their own and collective knowledge base is thus a necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisite for realizing the ambitions and visions of the PKR. Educators at different levels and in different positions should therefore join forces to reveal this mismatch – and in doing so the argument of the Practical Knowledge Regime will still be relevant and convincing.

NOTES

[1] It should be mentioned that our account of the PKR and its broader international setting draws heavily on the extensive analysis of different knowledge regimes by Erling Lars Dale (2005), a comprehensive contribution to the discourse on the identity and framework of what he defined as an "educational science". From the early 1970s until his death in 2012 he has been one of the most versatile, articulate and influential educational voices in Norway and Scandinavia. Unfortunately his extensive publications are mainly restricted to the Scandinavian languages.

[2] O'Connor defined education as consisting of three levels: a repertoire of methods to transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes, a set of theories justifying these methods, and thirdly, values and ideals that constitute the overall aims (1957). However, in his definition of educational theories they could only be developed through the methods of "the positive sciences and in particular the science of psychology" (p. 5).

[3] As in English there is a plethora of concepts that are used in this area in Scandinavia. Unlike in English, we have a "master concept", *veiledning* in Norwegian (In Swedish: *Handledning*), "to lead the way", that subsumes many of the others that emphasize different aspects of the relationship between those who guide and those who "seek the way". That is why we, in line with Handal and Lauvås, use "guidance" as the overall concept, and not mentoring.

[4] In the case of Norway, students' scores are above average in the ICCS tests, whereas they score average or slightly below average on TIMMS and PISA.

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3. ACTION RESEARCH AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Understanding the change of practice

The authors of this chapter work in university-based teacher training programmes. They also initiate and follow up national school improvement programmes and research programmes on the local level. Their research interest is collaborative action research and networking in schools. Their research group is a mixed group with action researchers and organizational theorists. In this chapter they elaborate connections between action research and translation theory. The purpose is to see what connective lines can be drawn between these traditions, which have so far had a life quite distinct from each other.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at building a bridge between organization theory and action research. These two research traditions have so far been quite distinct from each other, the first as a theoretical tradition, the second as a research strategy aiming to intervene and influence practice. The context of this chapter is the ongoing school reforms and globally directed processes of change in education and teaching, which are constantly influencing practices at individual schools. Some changes take place within schools as "modifications of practices" initiated by teachers themselves, while others are ideas coming from outside. Testing, globalization and internationalization are influences which seem to increase "the travelling of ideas" from outside into schools. The Pisa testing results have raised questions in Norway about how to teach students effectively, how to assess students' learning and how classroom activities should be taught. Evidence-based teaching and learning is another educational idea that is travelling around the world. On the national level these ideas are transformed into school reforms, which aim at implementing the ideas in local schools and classrooms. It is hard to define what kind of innovations are necessary to answer all the questions and problems arising when localizing these reforms. It means that innovations should be brought to the context in which they take place (Gustavsen, 2011).

For more than sixty years action research has been understood as a research strategy with the aim of understanding, supporting and changing practice. Action research has been used in industrial development and in health and education studies. Different action research strategies have evolved, and multiple variations of

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research projects have been conducted (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Action research has brought research into workplace contexts and has raised questions about the possibility of merging research and action. This has led to questions about research being of direct relevance to solving practical problems and thereby changing practice. In this chapter we study the use of translation theory as a lens to understand and promote changes through action research strategies. More specifically, we examine the development of research strategies that have evolved within the Scandinavian tradition of action research. Dialogue conferences represent one method that has developed within action research practices in the Nordic countries. As a methodology it has roots in pragmatic action research traditions and democratic perspectives on society. Networking schools is the other method that is explored in this context. Both dialogue conferences and networking rely on participation, pluralism and democracy in social, political and working life.

Modern organization theory aims at understanding how ideas travel in and between organizations as a contribution to the innovation problem in different fields. Over the last decades there has been a growing interest among theorists and researchers in understanding how organizational ideas are developed, transformed, received and exploited (Røvik, 2007). In this article we focus on translation theory, a theory mainly developed from Scandinavian neo-institutionalism and pragmatic philosophy. But we will also study the links to and inspiration from translation studies and "the cultural turn" in the tradition of translation theory.

ACTION RESEARCH IN SCANDINAVIAN WORKING LIFE

Action research connects research practices and participation directly to processes of development. The idea is that research forms a direct link to processes of change and development, and that action researchers are directly responsible or co-responsible for certain results of these processes. Action research is frequently used in reforms: by involving people, and finding new ways of organizing and improving work through social reforms. Involvement and inclusion relate to employees' own practices and tasks (Klemsdal, 2009). Action research has its origin in pragmatism and the work of John Dewey and the Chicago School. Dewey himself did not use the concept of action research. But his philosophy about acquiring knowledge through doing actions and participative democracy are strong themes in his works. Pragmatism emphasizes problems in practice and utility as the ultimate targets in knowledge seeking and reflection. Over time, action research has developed and changed. The change is understood to have taken place both within the social scientific community and in the action research tradition. Kurt Lewin, frequently mentioned as the originator of action research, had his basis in traditional experimentalism in the social sciences. However, he extended traditional experimental research, making it less formalistic, less manipulative and more participative (Berg & Eikeland, 2008, p. 7). He also challenged the division between the researcher and the researched. In spite of his clear roots in mainstream social science, Lewin (with others) started a long journey into what Berg and Eikeland describe as “parallel worlds” and “indifference”, with occasional “skirmishes” being the best way of describing the relationship between mainstream social sciences and action research dominant over the last decades (Berg & Eikeland, 2008, p. 8). It is reasonable to say that action research has, since the 1950s, lived a life separate from and under constant criticism from the rest of the social scientific mainstream community. One reason for excluding action research from social scientific tradition was that it was too close to practice, involving researchers too close to the field. As a result of this, action research has for more than 60 years “turned to practice”, and been developed separately from mainstream social science. Some of the critiques are rooted in traditional positivist attitudes, referring, for instance, to the lack of established causal relationships when testing hypotheses. Others have criticized action researchers for not documenting their research well enough, and some critics have said that action researchers do not report their research very precisely. Finally, action researchers have been accused of not relating their work to the work of the rest of the research community.

Berg and Eikeland (ibid., p. 9-10) split the development of action research since the 1950s in two waves. The first wave is seen as an expansion of the scientific attitude and practice, while the second wave was less experimental and tended to position itself against theory. From this latter wave, arising in the 1970s, different positions in action research emerged. Most of these were collaborations between researchers and practitioners, others were practitioner research where the practitioners themselves took over the research tasks. Some positions used traditional research techniques, others favoured practical self-reflection. Berg and Eikeland (ibid., p. 10) sum up the development of action research within the two waves by noting that “…critical disenchantment with mainstream social sciences has made action research normative and constructive.”

The Work Research Institute in Norway has, since the 1960s, been the stronghold of action research in Europe. It has conducted action research in real life work settings based on broad participation among workers, and on broad collaborations between employers and employers’ organizations. Hansson (2003) traces this tradition back to the socio-technical approach in England, where industrial production was influenced by action research. Action research in this tradition focused on the relationship between technology, labour, economics and mutual dependence on each other. The socio-technical tradition assumed a strong division of labour into different roles and positions, and required collaboration between the employers and operators at floor level and on the organizational level. These socio-technical traditions were brought to Norway, where traditions of social democracy had for a long time influenced the relationship between employees and employers (Hansson, ibid. p. 59). Significant to the emergent Norwegian tradition in working life, action research was to involve the workers in the changing process and how to organize these processes. The question of how to involve employees in research and development related action research to mainstream discourses within organizational theory and methodology (Berg & Eikeland, 2008, p.14). Asheim (2011) says that there is considerable evidence that co-operative participation in labour has had impacts on workers' and managers' trust, loyalty, interactive learning and problem-solving in industry in the Nordic countries in recent years.

We need to call attention, before we go on, to the fact that our contribution here is mostly related to action research in organization theory and working life research. It relates to social and organizational issues, since this is central to action research in Nordic working life. The issue of responsible innovation in action research, for instance, is linked to topics like democracy and participation (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 3). Concepts and understandings can very well be translated into networks in schools, since the network is based on participation and uses dialogue conferences as the most important arena for knowledge building.

THE LINGUISTIC TURN AND DEMOCRATIC IDEALS WITHIN ACTION RESEARCH

In the 1970s the role of language became a key issue in action research, and led to new thoughts on how research is structured. An important element was the way people deal with reality by using everyday language. In this perspective, words are an arbitrary collection of signs or sounds; their meanings are found in their use (Gustavsen, 1996). Gustavsen analyses action research in relation to positivism and finds the relationship uneasy, realizing the two traditions to be far away from each other. Analysing action research in relation to critical theory, Gustavsen finds critical theory quite radical up to the 1970s, influenced heavily by Marxism, which left little room for stepwise reforms and changes within, for example, work roles and work organizations (Gustavsen, 1996, p. 6). The connection between action research and critical theory is further seen, in the acceptance of research, as contributing to a transcendence of the world as it is and the realization of a better one.

While seeing critical theory as heavily influenced by Marxism in the 1970s, i.e. more or less unwilling to discuss any reforms in working life as long as it was a part of capitalism, this changed when the role of language paved the way for the linguistic turn from the 1970s onwards. From a positivist point of view, language gives us the possibility of painting a "true" picture of the world. On the other hand, everyday language gives us ways of dealing with reality. Its meaning is found in its use, as Gustavsen (ibid.) argues. And he continues: "in order to create a new theory, research must restructure the language out of which theory can grow. And in order to do this, it is necessary to restructure those forms of practices to which the relevant elements of everyday language are bound" (ibid., p. 7). Against this background, Gustavsen argues for a democratic turn in critical theory and claims that "…in the future extensions of critical theory, the focus will shift increasingly towards democracy as a frame of reference for formulating critical standards" (Gustavsen, 1996, p.7). He mentions Habermas as an example of this turning point. A consequence of this is that democracy is seen as what one should base standards on in research activities. Following up Gustavsen's points here, while still having the critique of positivism in our mind, we reject the idea that there is one single method of discovering truth. New ideas about social science, such as collaborative inquiry and dialogical approaches, are examples of the use of multiple methods to understand change. Common to these examples are that they treat people as subjects who act as creators of their own destiny. Relating this discussion to ongoing ontological and epistemological questions about society in the 1970s, Gustavsen argues that Scandinavia had a position between the "so called" positivist stand and the critical theory stand. From this position, Scandinavia developed a constructivist position, building on "…the ability of people to break historical patterns, institute new economic orders and generally control their fate" (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 9) As an example, Gustavsen uses the co-operation between labour politicians and labour market parties since the 1930s. The basic idea was to avoid crisis, and to make people speak to each other, rather than accepting crisis as a law in dogmatic Marxist thinking.

Summing up these points so far, there are methodological and linguistic aspects that have given direction to action research. The methodological aspect is concerned with participation and collaboration between researchers and participants. The linguistic perspective is rooted in language and communication as a basis for new knowledge and possibilities of social change. Gustavsen argues that broad participation and involvement through ongoing discourses, ruled by democratic communication, is the basis for knowledge construction and change in organizations. Based on these assumptions, the dialogue conference was established as a ground for communication between participants and researchers. Networks between actors from different workplaces were used to ensure that ideas and experiences could travel between them. Later in this article, we discuss dialogue conferences and networks as an action research methodology, and the link between these methods and translation theory.

ACTION RESEARCH IN RELATION TO ORGANIZATION THEORY.

Action research and organization theory are both focused on social change and on what happens when change take place. Even so, there is not much evidence in literature that these two theories are closely related. According to Berg and Eikeland (2008, p.7), textbooks on organization theory have few, if any, references to action research. On the other hand, there are few references in action research studies to concepts or findings from mainstream organization theory. Exceptions are in prescriptive literature on organizational development studies, where we find references to action research. The debates between action research and other research communities have gone on for as long as the action research tradition has been in existence. As Berg and Eikeland claim: "organization theory and action research may seem to be worlds apart" (2008, p.7).

In the book *Action Research and Organization Theory* (Berg & Eikeland, 2008), several authors discuss action research and organization theory. In the first chapter, the editors say, "the main purpose is to make a constructive link between action research and conventional mainstream thinking about organizations and, in so doing, also to challenge and transcend some of the disparate positions and insufficiencies within both research communities" (Berg & Eikeland, 2008, p. 7). The book is the result of a strategic research programme at the Work Research Institute which had the aim of relating action research and research within work organizations to other mainstream discourses on theory and methodology. The research programme indicates the relevance of discussing action research and organization theory and the coherence between them. Most of the articles in the book emphasize the importance of creating various forms of dialogue situations in order to enhance a common understanding of situations. But not only are very common methods in action research presented, they also link this to wider organizational thinking. Most of the authors conclude by recommending more self-reflective, self-critical and task-oriented action research approaches. In all these attempts to contribute to change, the question of theory versus practice is illuminated. Lewin, as we saw earlier, was interested in doing practical experiments. His famous dictum was that "in order to understand an organization you have to change it" (in Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009, p. 20), which invited the researcher to take part in the change process. Brøgger and Eikeland follow Lewin to a certain point, but point out that it is not enough to ask how should we change an organization, we also need to ask "how do we change an organization in order to learn as much and as well as possible from the process, in order to get to know the organization" (Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009, p. 21). From this point of view, action research is both normative and constructive.

Following up on this, we will look to organization theory, and more specifically the translation theory approach. A relevant and interesting link is the way this theory attempts to expand the traditional organizational theory approach from a descriptive theory towards a normative-instrumental theory of knowledge transfer. We are mostly interested in what concepts can be used to understand the transfer process, since this is what might enlighten our understanding of change in organizations in the action research process.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS THE FOCUS OF ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Studies of organizations often focus on organizational change. One could almost speak of continuous change, which should not be surprising, as the social world undergoes constant construction although projecting a strong illusion of stability (Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996 p. 2). Pålshaugen refers to the grand old man in organization theory, James March and his judgment over the field of organization theory since World War II. In March's view, "the field of organization studies is a large, heterogeneous field involving numerous enclaves having distinct styles, orientations and beliefs. It is integrated neither by a shared theory, nor by a shared perspective, nor even by a shared tolerance for multiple perspectives." (March 2007, p. 10, in Pålshaugen, 2009, p. 256). Pålshaugen further refers to another grand old man in the field, W.H Starbuck, who comments that the field of organization studies seems to be overloaded by economic disciplines: "The booming business school environment has allowed organization studies to develop and spread with little regard for its usefulness and relevance" (Starbuck, 2007, p. 23, in Pålshaugen, 2009, p. 257).

Pålshaugen sums up these two comments on development in organization theory not only as a theoretical shift in the field but also as a shortcoming of the methods that are used. He quotes Starbuck further: "Those who rely on the passive observation cannot learn about the potentials of complex and dynamic systems, so they do not recognize or they misunderstand important aspects of what they observe" (Starbuck, 2007, p. 24, in Pålshaugen 2009, p. 257). This critique can be found within traditional Marxist perspectives, which state that you need to change the society to be able to understand it. In a comment to Starbuck's assertion about underutilization in organizational studies, Pålshaugen claims that "it is a combination of lack of interest in creating knowledge that is useful outside the academic setting, and the connected preference of creating 'still-life' images of organizations as static systems at the expense of studies that focus on the real complexity and dynamics of organizations" (ibid.).

Pålshaugen (2009) uses the above critiques of organization theory as an inspiration to bring discussions of organization theory closer to action research strategies and case-based design, but with no bigger hope that this will improve the organization field as it moves on. He claims that theories of organizations are inherently actionable, because writing organizational theory has resulted in writings that follow traditional frameworks, which means writing out comprehensive theoretical frameworks as a necessary condition for undertaking organizational studies (Pålshaugen, 2009, pp. 233-234). This has also led to a restricted scope of methods in organizational studies, giving small amounts of rather "thin data". Pålshaugen suggests that action research contributes to the discourse on organization theory by criticizing the style of writing organization theory. His main argument is that traditional studies of organizational theory "misses essential parts of the real complexity of organizations" (ibid., p. 234)

Independent of Pålshaugen's conclusion, this opens a way of discussing action research and organization theory and their relevance to each other. Brøgger and Eikeland (2009, p. 15) point to the well-known theory-practice problem in the social sciences and suggest that there seem to be a "wave of concern about practice" in organization and management studies, either for a "turn to practice" or for more "actionable" or "practicable" knowledge. Allard-Poesi (2005) works with sense making in organizations and proposes participative action research to try to make sense of what goes on in organizations by participating in processes with practitioners. The aim is to objectify the subjectivity by looking for regularities and systematic associations. This is an important aspect in translation theory which we now turn to.

ORGANIZATION THEORY AND TRANSLATION THEORY

Over the last thirty years there has been a growing interest in knowledge transfer processes, both within and between organizations. The rise of the global society and community builds on the idea that knowledge and ideas can move from one part of the world to another and from one organization to another. This travelling practice is not only global, but also local, in the sense that organizations look for practices to be translated. Translation theory is recognized as originally being a Scandinavian-European theory, and is regarded as one of the "expanding horizons" of neo-institutionalism (Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, & Suddaby, 2007). Building on Scandinavian neo-institutionalism, translation theory has emerged as a promising analytic concept to understand how ideas and practices travel within and between organizations. In this section we lean on the Norwegian organization theorist Kjell Arne Røvik (1998, 2007), who has had an ambition to expand traditional organisation theory to a normative-instrumental theory. In his book *Trends and Translations* (2007), he gives an overview of his theory. The following two paragraphs summarize some of the main focus of this theory. Røvik's theory is a version of translation theory, building on pragmatism and aiming to understand how ideas travel between organizations. Translation theory opens up ideas as representations that can be translated and materialized in new practices in the adopting organization.

Røvik criticizes traditional institutional theory as being too abstract and unhelpful to practice. He develops a different and more pragmatic way of looking at knowledge translation. His position is closer to pragmatic institutionalism, which takes organizational theory closer to practice and aims to inform and analyse practice in organizations. He builds his theory on classical pragmatism, as developed by Charles Pierce, William James, and John Dewey, and later on by neo-pragmatists, among them Richard Rorty. A central issue in pragmatism is the relationship between knowledge about reality (i.e. ideas) and the reality itself. Dewey's philosophy builds on the assumption that the two worlds (ideas and reality) do not exist independently of each other, but relate to and interact with each other continuously. A consequence is that knowledge and ideas develop each other through slow influence on each other and thereby also make change possible (Dewey, 1923, in Røvik 2007, p. 55). Røvik uses the concept of normative-instrumental theory of translation. The normative is motivated by the ongoing debate on the contradictory relationship between organization theory, on the one hand, and organizational practice and research on the other. The instrumental is related to the belief that it is possible to outline some translation competences and rules for translations that can strengthen the translation process in practice.

Røvik takes inspiration from translation studies, based mainly on three points. The first point is that translation studies has, since the 1970s, emerged from a rather narrow linguistic perspective on translation to a more open and expanding tradition implying that more or less all forms of social interaction can be seen as translations, which also means that the development and distribution of organizational ideas might be seen as translations. In contrast with translation from one language to another, translation of organizational ideas and practices are more complicated, more unpredictable and less connected than translation of texts from one language to another. This means that translations are performed by different actors in different positions, and at different speeds. Secondly, concepts, theories and studies in translation theory have been shown to have had impacts on organization theory. And thirdly, as a result of this, if there is a potential in translation theory in relation to organization theory, it has so far not been exploited (Røvik, 2007, p. 254).

Briefly put, translation studies have developed in two steps. The first step had its origin in linguistic translations, where the aim was to produce a translation as near to the original text as possible. "The cultural turn" in translation studies in the early 1980s (Bassnett & Lefervere, 1990, in Røvik, 2007, p. 252) led to a shift from traditional linguistic translations studies to the linguistic and cultural context to which the translations were directed. Three important aspects of the translation process influenced theory of translation at this time. One was the attention to the culture into which the translation was directed. This is later called the contextualization process. The second was the attention to the translation process in the target culture. The third element was the attention to the unit of translation, which took translation theory far beyond the language itself to the cultural dimension of translation. Gentzler characterizes this as "the real breakthrough for the field of translation theory" (Gentzler, 1998, p. 6, in Røvik, 2007, p. 253). The "cultural turn" brought translation studies closer to social research such as sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Røvik, 2007, p. 253). Røvik argues that the cultural turn in translation studies has given positive possibilities and relevant theoretical foundations to understanding the transformation of knowledge and ideas between organizations. A central argument is ideas are immaterial representations represented in language and can therefore be understood in different ways, and also have the possibility of being manipulated by those who translate and by those who are receiving the ideas in an organization (Røvik, 2007, p. 254). Another argument is that translation theory is engaged in the circulation or travel of various organizational ideas between different actors and places. Important aspects of this are that ideas are "immaterial constructs" that are translated and transformed while being transferred at the same time. While other traditions, such as American neo-institutionalism, have been occupied with fixed objects being implemented in organizations, translation theory is occupied with what happens when ideas are disseminated into organizations, being shaped and reshaped. In translation theory the power of ideas travelling does not come from a single agent that sends ideas, but from the richness of possible associations that the idea triggers in each actor in a social network (Latour, 1986). In this perspective, actors are translators, not passive receivers. It means we also ask questions about how ideas are translated and what competence translators have or what translation competencies can be developed. This is also a critique of American neo-institutionalism, which emphasizes the diffusion of objects to organization rather than looking at what happens to the objects when they are contextualized. Scandinavian neo-institutionalism, together with translation theory, has been more engaged in what happens in the contextualization process. Translation theory focuses more on what happens to the ideas when they enter the target organization. Studies from this process show great variation in how actors in different organizations handle this. The concept of "translation" must be seen as inherited from the process of localizing translations (Nilsen, 2007, pp. 11-12).

Translation theory has also confronted the traditional theory about homogenization of organizations, the idea that ideas tend to homogenize organizational strategies. The homogenization perspective, represented in American neo-institutionalism, is based on the idea that organizations around the world are becoming more and more similar because they are exposed to the same ideas. Instead, translation theory has shown that local translation leads to the emergence of new versions, and consequently, to significant variation in structures, routines and practices.

The pragmatic perspective in translation theory, which is elaborated here, is first of all recognized by translations done by active translators on the local level. Secondly, knowledge transfer is about ideas and representations from a specific practice, and not the practice itself. The characteristic of ideas is that they are changeable and actors are permitted to translate and transform ideas into new practices.

TRANSLATION THEORY

In this section we take a closer look at the translations process. We do this by separating the de-contextualization process and the contextualization process into two different processes. Then we analyse aspects of the translation competences in relation to the two different processes of translation. But first, a brief introduction to the assumptions that lie behind the whole translation process. Translation studies are normally engaged in translation (of something) from one place (de-contextualization) to another place (contextualization). Røvik (2007) claims that most of translation studies are concentrated on the latter, the typical implementation studies. He points out that it is important to embrace the entire knowledge transfer processes, that is, translation from as well as to specific organizational contexts. Another point is to expand the translation approach beyond today's mainly descriptive usage towards a normative- instrumental theory of knowledge transfer. The normative-instrumental perspective is founded on three mainpoints: i) the ways in which translation of practice and ideas are performed vary with the translation modes and rules applied; ii) the outcomes of knowledge transfer processes, both successes and failures, depend on how translations are performed; iii) thus, it is possible to conceptualize, theorize and empirically identify good and less good translations, as well as skilled and unskilled translators. The aim is to illuminate the connection between translation performance, on one hand, and the outcome of the knowledge transfer process, on the other, where translation competence is a central concept in the knowledge transfer processes.

De-contextualization

The de-contextualizing process and the contextualizing process are mainly analytical separations and are tools to understand the complexity when ideas from one organization are translated into another. However, it is difficult to identify clearly what happens, because different actors are involved, and the space and time are difficult to identify. The first phase is de-contextualizing: that is, translation of a desired practice to an abstract representation (for example, signs, such as images, words, texts). Three variables are decisive in this process. First, the more explicit the unit is, the more easily it can be translated. Second, the more complex the unit is, for instance the relationship between technology and humans, the harder it will be to translate. And third, the more the unit is embedded in the context, the more difficult it will be to translate. Further, the de-contextualizing process can be divided in two different stages. The first one is detachment, where a local practice is given a certain linguistic representation as an idea. The second is that this practice can be transformed into an idea which is less contextualized or more general. This leads to questions like: Are there rules for translations? What kind of translatability is there in different practices? Who are the translators?

These questions bring us to new questions relating to the de-contextualization process. The first question is about how to transform a practice to an idea. Røvik makes a distinction between low and high configuration in this process. In low configuration, the translator omits important aspects and assumptions of the translated practice. In high configuration, the translator tries to give a precise and detailed picture of the practice being translated and all assumptions relevant to it. The configuration problem is most important when we assume that transforming ideas from one context to another is an easy affair. The reason is that the better the correspondence between the translator's version and the actual practice it represents, the more likely it will be possible to learn from it. The second question here is the translator`s competence. It relates to their position, to their knowledge background, and to their skills as translators. The positional aspect looks at what position the translators have, either as persons who have themselves developed practices, or if they are more remote participants in this process. But the positional aspect also includes, as its name suggests, where you see things from. As a manager you may have good overview, but less detailed information. And as a worker you may not have a good overview, but more detailed knowledge. The knowledge aspect includes formal education and workplace experience. Depending on what competence the translators show, it is possible to say something about the success of the translation process. The third question is what arenas are relevant to bring the ideas out. Arenas are here defined as organized meetings that are constructed to link actors from different organizations. On the one hand we talk about close arenas, meaning actors from organizations with similar backgrounds, on the other hand we talk about arenas where participants with different organization backgrounds meet. Configuration, position and the different arenas used are three elements that seem to influence the quality of the de-contextualization process.

Contextualization

The second phase of the translation process is contextualization, which is the translation from an abstract representation to concrete, materialized practice. The contextualizing process involves actors who bring ideas to arenas where ideas can be presented. According to Røvik (2007), there are two essential concerns that have to be considered. The first one is to ensure that essential features from the source unit are included. The second is to ensure that the features of the recipient context are clearly understood and taken into consideration. Existing practice in that context, often well-established over time, will often challenge new ideas, and the compatibility between the new knowledge constructs and prevailing existing practices may be critical for the outcomes. Thus, the translator clearly needs to know about established practices in the recipient context in order to determine how the newly introduced knowledge construct relates to existing practices. We will focus on arenas and actors as important aspects of the contextualization process.

As in the de-contextualization process, lots of arenas are established in order to bring out ideas and knowledge from different organizations. In traditional translation arenas, ideas tend to find their way into organizations at the top level. An example is the national school reforms, where ideas start from the national government, following a hierarchical line, before they end up in schools, at the principal's office. The AFL project (Assessment For Learning) presented in chapter 9 illustrates the translation process on the national and the local level. Analysing this project on the national level we find that AFL as an idea was adopted from Scotland by representatives from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training who met with the representatives from the Scottish department of education. Their visit to Scotland some years ago inspired them to realize a similar programme in Norway. Returning to Norway they formed the idea into the national Assessment For Learning programme, which contained similar but not the same principles that had been seen in Scotland. According to Røvik (2007, pp. 311-315), the translation took place in a modifying modus, i.e. the translators balanced the original practice and at the same time adjusted it to the Norwegian context.

Translation Competence

The third point outlined here is translation competence. This concept, Røvik claims is more or less omitted in organization theory. In his opinion, translation competence is a critical element if translations are to succeed; he defines it as the ability to translate an idea from one context to a practice in another context. His assertion is that good or bad translations are related to the translator's competence, and to the logic that better translators give better translations. He builds his arguments on the many unsuccessful translations that have been produced, and relates this to a translation competence that includes all of the elements in the de-contextualization and contextualization processes. He emphasizes that too little attention is given to the fact that ideas must normally be translated to local and concrete versions in order to be useful. Røvik uses examples where, instead of modifying ideas, translators used a copying strategy, and this led to an unsuccessful translation. A summary of literature from those who work with translations professionally shows that little attention has so far been given to translation competence as a decisive factor in the translation process (Røvik, 2007).

The normative-instrumental perspective in Røvik's translation theory implies that it is possible to identify rules for translations and through these give advice to translations in practice. Røvik argues that translations must be empirically studied, as this is the only way to define rules that can be used as advice for others going through translation processes. Røvik points to the fact that translators are often either hidden in the process or even disliked as traitors. In chapter 9 we illustrate some of these aspects. Some of the participants in the network found it difficult to promote new ideas from the network in their own schools. The question here is whether knowledge about translation competence can enrich action research studies or provide better tools for analysing processes in action research. Action researchers are involved in different kind of studies at different levels of social life. In some studies they work with single partners, sometimes with groups of participants and sometimes with organizations or networks. Those action research studies that work with networks, presented here, do have an interest in how translation competence is developed and distributed in the network as a whole, and specifically in the development team. A task for the action researcher in our research projects is to make a network as fluid as possible by using the dialogue conference. The conference is the arena where ideas travel among participants through structured communication, where every participant can let their voice be heard. This aspect of the conference is strongly emphasized. At the same time it is critical that participants are able to translate ideas represented in the conference back to their home organizations. This process starts with each participant's ability to unpack their practice in the conference so that other participants can pick up the ideas, translate them to their own contexts, and in doing so translate them to a local version if they find them interesting. This is an ongoing process throughout the conferences, and the network is set up for this purpose. There are at least three interesting points regarding action research studies related to this. First: the competence developed by the translators is important to action research in such settings and different aspects of this competence might be studied as a part of the action research process in the conferences. One question is how the translators or the development team understand the idea as it is presented by the other participants (the de-contextualization process). The next question is how the development team handle this idea in the team taking it to their home organization? This process is handled in the dialogue conferences as a part of the development team`s work programme.

The third question is what happens to the idea when it comes to the school they represent (the contextualizing process). In action research, one aim of the research is to strengthen the participants` ability to learn and transform from ideas represented in the action research programme in general and in networks more specifically. The aspects mentioned here we relate to this process.

ARENAS AND PRACTICES FOR TRANSLATION IN EDUCATION

In this section we discuss networks as an action research strategy and the dialogue conferences as the arena where translations are to be performed. Networks are a modern trend that bring organizations and actors closer to each other when it comes to innovative practices. Hargreaves says: "we now understand better than ever that innovation is very often a social, interactive process rather than one of the individual creativity, and that networks play a vital role in the creation and the transfer of new knowledge and innovation" (Hargreaves, 2004, pp. 84-85). The national programme Assessment For Learning (AFL) in Norway (2010-2014) uses networking as a strategy to implement new practices in formative assessment in the classroom. According to the programme the network should be "Arenas to develop knowledge on assessment for learning, to share experiences and reflections. Practice from classroom is the basis and theory and research should support the development of new practices" (the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training). The network consists of a number of schools represented by development teams. A basic idea in the creation of networks is to allow information and ideas to flow among the participants. The dialogic and reflecting approach to knowledge development in the network requires arenas that facilitate translations. We use dialogue conferences as an arena where translations of ideas and reflection on ongoing practices take place. In chapter 9 we analyse how ideas are translated from the dialogue conferences to the target unit, the home school. In this chapter the focus is on the conference as a translation arena.

Networks and Dialogue Conferences

The Nordic context in action research is, in other words, a context to which translation theory can be more closely related. The Nordic countries have been held up as good examples regarding participation in the political sphere, in voluntary organizations and in working life (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 6). We frequently read and hear about the "Scandinavian model" or the "Nordic model", concepts that are often characterized with reference to international studies showing that the Nordic countries have high scores on important matters such as welfare, employment and quality of life. Gustavsen (2011, p.10) says that this is a misleading concept and that it blurs the most important feature these countries have, the ability to learn from each other. The one thing that these countries have in common lies in the organization of learning processes. As this might be an interesting point of entry on a macro level, it is even more interesting to put forward to the discussion a Nordic model for action research promoting democracy, participation and pluralism as a basis for innovation and learning on micro levels, i.e. smaller school networks. The co-operation between researchers and participants in networks results in a joint production of new practices within the network – using dialogue conferences as a strategy, but also as a practice in itself. The dialogue conference is an arena where participants share practices from their workplace. The dialogue conference has three principles that guide the construction of communication. First is the theory-practice relation. Gustavsen express the relation between theory and practice like this: “Experience is the locomotive, theory is a resource in making experience as useful and strong as possible in providing a platform for new actions” (Gustavsen, 1998, p. 439). Secondly, there is a relationship between past and future. This means that change depends on understandings of the already existing practice and on reflections on the ongoing practice. Thirdly, dialogue conferences use both plenary sessions and dialogues in groups. The plenary session is used for theory presentation and presentations from ongoing practices. As a principle we do not use more than one third of the time for plenary sessions.

The development of these practices is carried out within a network in a certain region with certain people being subjects. This is research together with people, rather than research on or about people. Shotter & Gustavsen (1999) claim that this participative stance take the research from “a concern with patterns of forms to practical meanings, from things in general, externally related nature to a set of internally interconnected particularities to with the region (or network) – for it is in terms of these particularities that members must make sense of the opportunities actually open to them” (Shotter & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 13). Following this thread we refer to Wittgenstein and Bakhtin’s (1986) remarks that “we exhibit our practical understandings of one another in our spontaneous responses to each other and that such understandings are inevitably novel” (in Shotter & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 4). This perspective allows us to promote responsive understanding from within the life in a network or region, represented by individuals from each of the organizations involved. As such, each member shares and makes contributions to the development of the network and the region. Activities in the network will, from this perspective, be understood as each responding to the others within certain and adjusted borderlines formed by the network itself.

To ensure that conversations about the innovative work are informed by the assumptions above, and to enrich possibilities for learning, the conferences are structured on the notion of the democratic dialogue, later changed to oriental directives. These directives are what Wittgenstein would call “resourceful reminders” (in Shotter & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 15), features we needs to pay attention to, in the actual situation we are involved in at the moment. In other words they are a special kind of extra linguistic practice that can support and supplement existing social practices. The intention of establishing such rules or directives is not to generate some theory about a social practice, but rather to help each member of a network or a social landscape to position themselves within the activity. The network itself functions as a relational landscape where each example and each practice needs to be presented, and participants need to represent themselves, guided by internal relations. A few examples of these directives will here be presented with reference to Shotter & Gustavsen (1999) and Gustavsen (2001). They are themselves an example of a travelling idea moving across countries in the Nordic landscape. One example of the oriental directives is that work experience is the point of departure for participation, and concrete examples are important. Another example is that all concerned with the issues should have the possibility of participating. And a third example is that the dialogue is based on a principle of give and take, not of one-way communication. This must be understood as a principle related to the meaning of responsiveness mentioned above. Altogether there is a set of 13 oriental directives structuring the conferences. The directives or criteria are tools to structure communication in order to let different perspectives from different actors be on stage. They are not the substance of the innovation itself.

Development Teams in Networks

To some extent, action research takes place in arenas where more than one group of people and more than one organization are involved. In industrial action research this is often described as "clusters", involving a certain number of companies. In education we find the terms "network of schools" or "school networks" more common (Lund, 2011). In recent years there has been a growing interest in creating enterprise clusters for industrial innovations. In education the rise of network thinking and school networks is evident. Ongoing school reforms in Norway, initiated at the national level, are influenced by the networking strategy. This invites us to understand the idea of the network as a strategy, and to find concepts to analyse this modern trend in innovations in general and in school development especially. The concept of region is understood as a social landscape not restricted to a specific size. It may refer to smaller networks of different workplaces, smaller teams in a single workplace, or even larger companies in a larger geographical landscape. It means that we expand the concept of learning organization to a learning region or a learning network. School networks are constituted by representatives from each school, a developmental team. As representatives they are chosen in order to bring practices and ideas into and out of the network.

The concept of "development teams" will here be used for a group of actors representing schools in a network, using dialogue conferences as the translation arena. A network of schools operates within a local or regional context, working with innovative practices initiated on either the local or the national level. The development team is the link between the network and the school. The development team can further be seen as a bottom-up horizontal co-operation, involving the participation of actors from different backgrounds. Essential to the development team's work is to absorb experiences and ideas from the flow of ideas that moves through the network activities, to translate them in the group and to their home organization. These are the de-contextualization and the contextualization processes. The development team is composed of actors from different levels and with different work experiences. According to Ennals & Gustavsen (1999), there is a connection between learning organizations and a development team that is characterized by the organization's ability to change its patterns, to continuously transcend what is, to take on new shapes and new forms. (Ennals & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 16, in Asheim, 2011). This ability to learn and transform distinguishes learning organization from other organizations that show reproductive learning. What this means is that we look for those links that produce learning from the network and take it into each school, transformed and translated by the development team. The development team's ability to do this is related to the competence it has, and is rooted in the concept of translation competence in translation theory as we discussed earlier.

Another aspect of this is that each development team represents a planned action; they also represent a social capital rooted in the workplace, not in formal education systems. This social capital is embedded in the social system as a region or network while being played out in the same. The potential is either explored or not, depending on what kind of arenas are established and how these arenas do or do not promote ideas and practices in the region. This perspective allows us to discuss the relevance of using bottom up strategies like networks, as an alternative to the more traditional top down approaches, when it comes to strategies of innovation in schools. This strategy, seeing social capital in the light of a region or network as a collective effort, confronts the ongoing dominant ideas in the education system, aiming to reward individual students, teachers and schools (Gustavsen 2011). As we have seen, there has been a long tradition in the Nordic countries of going the other way, to find collective solutions based on employees' experience and opinions.

As we have now set the scene, the network as a collective innovative knowledge landscape, the dialogue conference as an arena for the network, and the development team as the link between the school and the network, we turn to three concepts in translation theory which might be helpful to analyse and understand the knowledge transfer process in the network. Our focus here is the aspect of configuration, the arena and translation competence.

The Configuration Problem in Translations

Obviously there are interesting features in the stages of the translation process, the de-contextualization and contextualization in networks. Some of these are outlined further in chapter 9. In this section we discuss the relevance of the concept of "configuration", taken from translation theory. We discuss it in relation to the de-contextualization process but are aware of its significance in the contextualization process as well. Participants involved in networks (i.e developing teams) set up by dialogue conferences bring ideas from their practice using the language of practice they use as everyday language. Using this language offers possibilities for a rich and varied presentation of their practice. De-contextualization means two things, detaching a practice from its source and packing it into a certain linguistic representation as an idea. The idea is something other than the practice; it is less contextualized and more generalized. At the same time, it is an example of a kind of practice developed in a certain place by certain people which has never been seen before. This means it is an innovation worked out by participants in their local context. Bringing examples and ideas into motion through a dialogue with others is crucial to the network and to innovations in the network. The dialogues are constructed to invite people to be listeners, not only speakers, and the oriental directives are set up to ensure this. This is a basic assumption in dialogical networks.

But as we saw from translation theory, there are variations in the transfer from practice to representations, which we earlier called configuration. In low configuration, the translator omits certain aspects and assumptions of the translated practice. In high configuration the opposite occurs: the translator gives a detailed picture and all the assumptions related to it. To some extent, the quality of the translations will vary in relation to these two positions. In translation theory it is asserted that the more the idea is presented with "less tails", the more problematic it is to translate it to the new source. What seems interesting here, from the point of action research in education, is that the oriental directives are set up to enrich dialogues. We might contend that there is a connection between whether high or low configurations are achieved or not, and the way the dialogue criteria are practised in innovations. As we saw earlier, high configuration gives better translation opportunities, which benefit all participants in a network using dialogue conferences. It seems to be possible to link action research and translation theory here.

Studying such dialogues certainly gives access to variation among participants and in the network as a whole, and thereby to finding out how good or bad translations are performed. With regard to changing practices as a result of the action research work presented here, it seem to be of primary importance to spend as much time as possible constructing dialogues that elaborate different ideas regarding the background of a practice. Using the concepts of low and high configuration would possibly give more attention to the de-contextualization process as a part of the whole transfer process. An outcome of an action research project focussing on high figuration could be of great interest to researchers and participants. From a normative-instrumental perspective it might be interesting to create rules for such dialogues, leading to rule-based dialogues regarding the configuration aspect of translation.

Arenas for Translations

The second point outlined here is related to the contextualization process and more specifically to arenas and actors. In the previous section we analysed dialogue conferences as an arena for the translation process. Such conferences can be seen as a development arena. In action research programmes they are structured in different sections, all set up to ensure translations and learning in formal surroundings. In the translation process these arenas can be understood as a part of a hierarchical translation chain. Even if one believes in these arenas as important to translation processes, it seems that there is an explosion of other arenas that feature outside the formal and hierarchical arenas (Røvik, 2007, p. 296). This means that ideas travel from outside, and not along the translation chain following a hierarchical line. Røvik explains that this is for two reasons. One is that people in general are more analytical, and thereby more interested in finding ideas outside traditional channels. The other is that people working in modern organizations equipped with modern technology look for ideas everywhere. And it is hard to control this idea-hunting process. This point is interesting with regard to observations from dialogue conferences and the outcomes of these. When we talk with participants they often relate their ideas from the internet or from when they have met other teachers in other settings than the conferences. And sometimes they mix ideas from different sources. A consequence is that it is difficult to observe what role the conference has, other than being a melting pot of ideas coming from all sides. A strong notion in translation studies is that translations are rule-based and regulated. And lots of studies have tried to identify such rules to see if there are patterns that can be outlined. It certainly does not make the translation easier having multiple, mixed and even crossing ideas coming at the same time. But as this is also a part of the network idea, we might regard this as an ongoing process that it is quite difficult to find a way out of. On the other hand, action research and the use of different arenas are an important element which must be considered. In chapter 9 this is outlined further in relation to a local innovation project.

Another interesting characteristic of the de-contextualization process is related to the distance between performed practice and where this practice is presented. Røvik (2007) shows that the further away the translator operates from the source, the more abstract and less configurative the translation seems to be. And, in contrast, the closer to the participants' home arena and common practices, the more detailed and concrete the translations are. It means that time, directives and distance are central elements to consider in the de-contextualization process, to ensure that high configuration is achieved. In chapter 9 the participants refer to the network meetings outside school, in a hotel, as an oasis in which to reflect and think and talk about their practice. Physically this area is not far from school in time or distance. But it is far enough to allow the participants to find time to reflect and plan new actions. And it is close enough with regard to time. This short move from "front stage" to "back stage" is seen as important to deepening reflection and to learning from practice. In action research using network strategies and dialogue conferences, the configuration aspect and the arena we choose must be taken seriously, as it is the basic assumption in the idea of network learning and innovation.

The thread we follow here is to what extent it is possible to make rules in the contextualizing process. There are at least two different positions to be observed. One is inspired by Actor Network Theory (ANT) on the one hand and pragmatic action research on the other. They both argue that translations are processes of associations, meaning that all ideas are objects to associations and not possible or even required to be identified. The other position focuses on patterns in the translation process. This is Røviks critique of ANT and the power of association and transformative power as the foundation. The alternative, Røvik says, is to make rules for the translation process, and based on classical translation theory he outline a number of modes for translation. These guidelines may be expressed explicitly, but they are more often informal and implicit and come to expression in practice; that is, the ways in which actors conduct translations de facto. The three modes of translation – the reproducing, modifying, and radical mode – constitute the main approaches to translating knowledge between two organizational contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The point of departure in this chapter was that action research and organization theory have been kept quite distinct from each other for a long time. Translation theory, with a pragmatic and normative-instrumental perspective, takes organization theory closer to practice. In this article we have looked for ways in which this theory can be used as analytical tool in action research strategies that involve schools in networks. The use of networks and dialogue conferences opens up dialogues between actors from different schools working with local innovations. It assumes that the transfer of practices is internal to networks and exists as a potential that can be realized through dialogue conferences. In this chapter we have outlined the translators' competence, the configuration and the arenas as three important aspects of the translation process in a network. We see this as an invitation to a further discussion on the relationship between action research and translation theory.

If we conclude by referring to relevant concepts from translation theory, it is also relevant to consider whether action research may contribute to organization theory in general and to translation theory in particular. In this chapter we have discussed the network strategy and dialogue conferences as methods in action research. These are methods that bring research closer to practice. In Røviks normative-instrumental theory, he asserts that it is not possible to study the translation process from a theoretical point of view. It must be based on studies using empirical research. This is possible by using action research strategies that address translation processes as an important part of the strategy. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 9. Against this background, action research may contribute to organization theory because it might reveal inherent limitations that mainstream contributions do not consider.

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4. THE NORDIC TRADITION OF EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH

In the light of practice architectures

The authors of this chapter share an interest in the history of education in the Nordic countries, specifically the tradition of *bildung* (in Swedish bildning) and folk enlightenment (in Swedish folkbildning) and how these traditions have influenced adult education. In times of neo-liberal trends it is also shown how these traditions, or rather, forms of them, are coming back in different guises, being used for, among other things, professional development. In a global world, with trends coming and going, it is easy to get lost in practice. In this chapter we try to hold on to the educational traditions from our countries and scrutinize them from particular theoretical perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Education has become an instrument of competition for the globalized economies of knowledge. The outcomes of international comparisons of education are transformed into huge national investments in specific professional learning programs, tightly coupled with the subjects highlighted within the testing regime. Furthermore, specific standards are set up for teachers and teaching. In the globalization of standardized educational procedures and means, the notion of *site* becomes - paradoxically - important. The site is where education as a professional practice takes place. Both the site and the practices are prefigured by certain cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements, forming a certain kind of practice architecture. Site refers to the local conditions for education, and can be understood in terms of a specific municipality, school or classroom. State-driven policies, homogenous professional learning programs and assessment plans circumscribe the time and possibilities for teachers to come together on their site as a professional collective, and hinder them from responding in a collegial manner to the particularities of the site. Our aim in this chapter is to challenge the global regime of competition and standardization by dwelling on our Nordic tradition of education, based on the idea(l) of *bildung*, and reflecting further on our Nordic understanding of action research. Furthermore, our aim is to do so in a dialogue with another tradition, an Australian one, and formulated in terms of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Growes, Grootenboer & Bristol 2014).

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The various forms of educational practices teachers are engaged in are enabled, constrained and prefigured by particular practice architectures. These are exposed, for example, via the insistence of educational systems on testing, assessments and meeting curriculum goals, or requiring teachers to follow prescribed teaching methods or to "teach for tests" in their work. Teachers can, in this way, be seen as being de-professionalised, as politicians and policy prescribe and regulate their work, thereby limiting the scope of their professional judgment and action. De-professionalization is also about prescribing techniques for producing mandated 'learning outcomes'. The global landscape of educational performance is characterized, nowadays, by standardization, control, test-based accountability, teaching for pre-determined results and focus on certain subjects (Sahlberg 2011, pp. 179-181).

The Nordic tradition of *bildung* can be viewed as a counter-movement to competition and standardization, as it is founded on democratic values emphasising collaboration, communication, meaning-making and growing as a human being. Within this tradition, a specific form of sites, named study circles, are organized as arenas for informal learning, especially within the tradition of folk enlightenment. Study circles are sites for growing as a human beings and acting as citizens. They have become organic arenas for collaboration and participation in action research, enabling practitioners within education to share experiences and construct new knowledge collectively. In this chapter we want to further investigate the study circle as a site for collaborative learning, especially in the light of the theory of practice architecture. Our aim is also, as suggested above, to widen the debate to alternative views, by looking at education and the teaching profession from the perspective of educational tradition. We do this by investigating the Nordic tradition of educational action research, based on the tradition of folk enlightenment. We ask whether there might be alternative ways for teachers to participate in communities, based on collaborative learning and development in their local schools, and, if the answer is yes, if it would be possible to do this through deliberative dialogues. We suggest that educational practices ought to be recognized in terms of *bildung* rather than as *education*, where the latter is understood to be an instrumental and institutionalized form of professional action, i.e. schooling. As such, rules, roles, functional reasoning, and a strong administration and management of teachers and students prescribe are prescribed. Furthermore, education is characterized by the production of prescribed learning outcomes as if they were products external to the persons "doing the learning" (Kemmis et al 2014, p. 26).

In this chapter we will focus on the study circle as a site for collaborative meetings occurring as part of educational action research. The purpose of this chapter is twofold; *firstly* to describe the Nordic tradition of educational action research, with its values and practices based on *folkbildung* and *bildung*, as a counterpart to globalised neo-liberal ideas, and *secondly* to analyse the idea and form of a study circle and action research beyond its practice architecture. In doing so, we hope to open up a conversation between different educational ideals and traditions.

THE ROOTS AND VALUE BASE OF NORDIC EDUCATION TRADITION

The Nordic model of education, which was tightly coupled, in the past, to Nordic welfare regimes, relied historically on the aims and achievements of French revolution, with its distinctive mark of *liberty*, *equality* and *fraternity*. In late 19th century these ideals and aims were to be realized by the enlightenment of and for the people. In the Nordic countries this was realized by people coming together in study circles in order both to make meaning from and affect the world and society in the midst of change. From the Second World War onwards, Nordic education systems, from comprehensive primary education to higher education, have been developed in order to further "*equality* of educational opportunities". This has resulted in high levels of participation both in compulsory and adult education. Sweden was among the first countries to establish compulsory schooling (7-16 years) in 1962, followed by Finland in 1968 and Norway in 1969. Besides formal education for the young population, a variety of opportunities for adult education has been characteristic of the Nordic model. Folk high schools, study associations and other kinds of adult educational organizations can be found in all Nordic countries.

The liberty and fraternity aspect of the Nordic model is tightly coupled with the overall ethos of Western democracies. *Liberal* education, also in an Anglo-American sense, is about freeing and inspiring human beings for critical thinking and self-reflection. The Anglo-American adult educational tradition during the 20th century has explicitly been about freeing adults to reflect and think critically. The *fraternity* aspect (Bron 2007, pp. 24-27) can be reflected on from a humanistic angle (sense of belonging, togetherness), political perspective (solidarity with our fellows, being a citizen of a nation), and from a pragmatic perspective (collaboration, collegiality, networking). The two aspects, *liberty* and *fraternity* are also central to the idea and aims of *bildung,* the German concept of education, adopted as guiding principle for Nordic (adult) education in the late 19th century. *Bildung* refers simultaneously to a free, lifelong process of becoming more human, and to a predetermined goal or aim, for example, of becoming a (cap)able citizen. *Bildung*, as a concept and ideal, transcends and integrate several (artificial) dichotomies, namely those between theory and practice, individual and collective, integration and specialization, as well as between expertise and everyday experiences. The concept of *folkbildung*, referring to a collaborative way of constructing and gaining knowledge, emphasizes the social, cultural and political aspects of *bildung*. It resembles somewhat the Anglo-Saxon concept and tradition of popular education, in aiming at heightening individual citizens' awareness of and commitment to act for social change and justice (Rönnerman, Salo & Moksnes Furu 2008, pp. 21-23). The long tradition and the political importance of *bildung* is still reflected in all Nordic countries, in various public documents and strategies within education (e.g. the Swedish curriculum for the compulsory school (LpO-11) report on the central contents of higher education in Norway, as described by The Norwegian Association of Higher Education

Institutions, 2011, and the future vision for education in Finland, as formulated by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, 2011).

In relation to the educational policies of the 20th century, *bildung* in the Nordic welfare states can be summarized in terms of generality, equality and accessibility (Siljander 2007, p. 71). What mainly differentiates the Nordic model of education from the Anglo-American, has been the equal and open access to formal education. The outcomes of the principles and practices of open access have been reflected in high levels of participation and thereby high levels of basic skills. From a welfare state perspective, open access was related to the aim of diminishing the inequalities of social opportunities. All citizens were ensured possibilities of human growth in the personal, political and professional arena. This view was particularly used in Sweden and Norway in establishing folk high schools (mostly as boarding schools) and education-through-study circles. Study circles were used, firstly, to educate the industrial workers in the 1930s as a means of making workers part of a social democratic society a social democratic society, and secondly to educate the Swedish people so as to enable them to vote on societal reforms, such as establishing nuclear plants or entering the European Union. In our work in action research we have also been able to observe how the study circle is used as an arena for professional meetings between teachers and in partnerships between schools and universities (Rönnerman, Salo & Moksnes Furu, 2008).

When further investigating the roots of educational action research in the Nordic countries, we find our way to the research being done within the discipline of work science in Swedish universities and at the work research institute in Norway. Concepts like collaboration, empowerment, enlightenment and democratic action have been recognized as both forms and content. Action research in work science mostly takes place in small companies. Dialogue conferences are used to involve all parties in decision-making, and for furthering change based on democratic decisions and values. In education, dialogue conferences are used and directed towards professional learning and site-based education development (Lund 2008).

The study circle, and more recently the research circle, have also been used as an ideal form for meeting in small groups and as a collaborative approach for discussions, with a focus on questions jointly decided upon by the participants. (Rönnerman, Salo & Moksnes Furu 2008, see also chapter 6, Rönnerman & Olin 2014). Furthermore, these circles serve the purpose of enhancing the participants' understanding of their situation and acquiring the knowledge necessary to change it (cf. Freire 1972). As such they will involve a problem that should be scrutinized from different perspectives by using the participants' experiences. The intention is not to solve the problem but to inquire into it and thereby to widen the participants' knowledge of it. A study or research circle is not a uniform concept, but can be described as a meeting in which participants conduct an organized search for and development of knowledge in co-operation with other participants and a researcher. According to Holmer (1993), this process of developing knowledge can be seen in three manners: as gaining knowledge, as developing participants' capability, and as participating in the social production of knowledge.

Study circles are used to construct an arena in which teachers and the researchers can come together, in order to develop an understanding of the practices they are a part of and form a public sphere (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon 2014). Here, practice refers to a school, or even a classroom, as being the base for teachers' development, and in which the issues addressed by the conversations in a circle arise. In the Nordic tradition of action research, the researcher is an organic part of these meetings and is seen as equal to the other participants (or at least striving to be so). The meetings are set up and organized in such a way as to fulfil the aim of gaining, developing and constructing knowledge by bringing the dialogue to the fore. The view of dialogue is based on Bakhtin's notion, in which the purpose of dialogue is to emphasize the importance of being listened to and giving responses to one another. Furthermore, Bakhtin emphasizes multivoicedness, which is in line with Nordic values of democratic and participative partnerships (Rönnerman & Wennergren 2012).

A THEORY OF PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES

In our quest to deepen and refine our understanding of study circles and of Nordic educational action research, we will consider them as practices taking place on identifiable sites, and prefigured by given practice architectures. By doing so, we strive to maintain a fruitful dialogue between educational traditions and contemporary practices, as well as developing the educational practices we ourselves are part of and engaged in. We find a practice theory, such as the theory of practice architecture, suitable for our purpose for many reasons, but for two in particular. Firstly, a practice approach has the capacity to dissolve dualisms between theory and action, body and mind or actor and system. Secondly, it enables us to relate to and understand meaning-making and knowledge as shared collaborative processes (Nicolini 2013, pp. 2-5)

To begin with, practice is defined as "socially established cooperative human inquiry in which characteristic arrangements if actions and activities (doings) are comprehensible in terms of arrangements of relevant ideas in characteristic discourses (sayings), and when the people and objects involved are distributed in characteristic arrangements of relationships (relatings), and when this complex of sayings, doings and relatings 'hangs together' in a distinctive project" (Kemmis et al. 2014, p. 31). As such, practices are complex, yet coherent and comprehensible. The comprehensibility of, for example, educational practices are due to the characteristic arrangements by which they are prefigured. These arrangements form the practice architecture of a certain practice. In general, practice architectures are constructed by and constituted of three complementary bundles of arrangements: material-economic, cultural-discursive and socio-political. Firstly, the material-economic arrangements exist in the dimension of physical space-time, and they are constituted by the medium of work. Secondly, cultural-discursive arrangements exist in the dimensions of semantic space, and they are communicated via the medium of language. Thirdly, socio-political arrangements exist in the dimension of social space, and they are enabled and constrained by the medium of power and solidarity. In summary, practices are constituted, and thereby both enabled and constrained by *doings* (what people do and how they act), *sayings* (how they communicate and meaning making among themselves) and *relatings* (how they understand and relate to each other). For example, a study circle can be looked at as a distinctive project, in which doings, sayings and relatings hang together in an identifiable and comprehensible manner (Kemmis & Heikkinen 2012; Kemmis et al. 2014, pp. 28-41).

The theory of practice architectures is inspired by Theodore Schatzki's (1996, p. 2002) work on social practices. Still, in this chapter we will refer just briefly to his notion of the 'site'. Practices are interconnected with and take place on social sites. The site of a certain study circle is "the realm or set of phenomena of which is it intrinsically a part." (Schatzki 2003, p. 177). And, when it comes to social phenomena, these can be understood as being comprised of mental states, relations and actions. When focusing on the site of a study circle, our orientation is guided towards its context, and we are engaged in answering the question of where it takes place. Bur a site is more than just a context. Schatzki uses the metaphors of location and broader region to further clarify the notion of site. But the spatiality of these metaphors represents only one of the many dimensions of a site. Sites are also constituted of the hierarchies of purposes, tasks and ends that are characteristic of certain practices. In summary, the practice of a study circle is located in a complex activity-place space (ibid. p. 176).

When it comes to using the theory of practice architecture as an analytical framework, we assume that the material-economic arrangements (doings) are often in the foreground, and can quite easily be identified and grasped. When it comes to the socio-political arrangements (relatings), however, and especially the cultural-discursive arrangements (sayings), these are much harder to uncover and articulate. Still, from a methodological point of view, doings and especially relatings have to be discovered and explicated in the semantic space, via sayings (e.g. narratives and metaphors). These three dimensions of practices, realized in values, norms, purposive actions and their linguistic grounding, are, in the case of study circles and action research, to be considered and understood both from a collective point of view and in terms of individual features. While the extra-individual features of the cultural-discursive arrangements that prefigure a practice are temporally located in tradition, the socio-political arrangements prefigure a practice in the historicity of the institutions at hand (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008). Furthermore, the material-economic arrangements prefigure a practice in space-time, and the individual features are temporally located in the narrative. All these features hang together and constitute a practice at a particular site. Nevertheless, all three kinds of features hang together to constitute a practice at a particular site. As in the case of educational action research, they hang together in the project of collaborative learning that takes place in study circles or collegial professional learning and school development initiatives in an individual school or education system.

From a practice architectural point of view, educational practices, settings and aspirations are understood as prefigured. They are designed and constructed by particular people, including different kinds of practitioners within and outside a certain site. In what follows, we will describe and reflect on the practices of study circles and the Nordic tradition of action research. We begin with identifying sayings, doings and relatings characteristic of the tradition and practice of the study circle. Thereafter we deal with action research. Study circles and educational action research are shaped, in various ways, by a multitude of contextual arrangements, both in the past and in the present. These meta-practices include educational policy-making and administration, curriculum development, teacher education and educational research. Practice architectures prefigure but do not predetermine practices; they are also continuously reconstructed, changed and configured by the practitioners. This constant process of maintaining and reconstructing takes place in the everyday interactions on a site. Certain socio-political arrangements, such as curriculum renewal or expectations on goal-oriented development, are often used to intensify the negotiations concerning certain arrangements that compose the practice architectures that enable and constrain practices. In doing action research, for example, particular cultural-discursive arrangements prefigure the language used, such as ´circle´, ´dialogue´ and ´facilitation´. Material-economic arrangements prefigure the activities of action research and study circles, based on a long tradition, such as meeting in a certain way and for a certain time. We suppose that participants’ understanding of and methods used when conducting action research or learning in study circles become at times unconscious and unintentional as well as instrumental. As established practices, these processes are carried out without further reflection or ambitions of updating them. Our aim is thereby to pay attention to the tacit, in traditions, structures and culturally embedded experiences characteristic of these practices.

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES AS A LENS IN ANALYZING STUDY CIRCLES

The study circle is often presented as a Swedish invention for furthering democracy and maintaining the function of a civil society. In the late 20th century, during a period of vast societal changes, they were formed as a spontaneous arena and collaborative practice for relating to and making sense of the social, political and structural changes taking place in the society (Larsson & Nordvall 2010, pp. 8-13). Oscar Olsson invented the study circle inspired by the study methods used by the Chautauqua movement in USA in the late 20th century. In doing so he drew on his experiences of leading a course within the Swedish temperance movement (Parjo 2003, pp. 131-133). Olsson, among others, was an opponent of lecturing, which he viewed as passivizing people. A study circle could be led by anyone. Olsson emphasized the participants’ active search for knowledge. They were to visit the library, read literature and reflect on it. Furthermore, they were to relate and refer to collective experiences together with others in the circle (Mentora 2002). The study circle can be understood as the core arena and method for the realization of folk enlightenment. Furthermore, it is one of a range of practices characteristic of the Nordic educational tradition. The concept ‘study circle’ in itself contains and represents the ideal expressed in the cultural-discursive arrangements for the educational practices characteristic of Nordic countries and of the social democratic welfare state ideology. The same applies to the concept of ‘folk enlightenment’. These concepts refer to practices which are both pedagogical and political. One is to study and thereby enlighten oneself (the pedagogical dimension). This is done through the practice of a circle characterized by a freedom, equality and sense of belonging (the political dimension). Furthermore, the long-term political aim is to develop a sense of belonging to a collective and identifying oneself as a part of a larger unity – a folk (Korsgaard 2002).

The study circle as a concept and practice operates on various levels and dimensions. It is simultaneously an arena for creating deliberative dialogue, and the ideal for furthering the educational practices that form civil society and maintain its functioning. As both concept and practice it has become a kind of canon or a holy grail. It seems to escape exact definitions or attempts at operationalization, by being inclusive rather than exclusive and by avoiding orthodoxies regarding its content or form. Furthermore, the practice of study circles is supposed to respond to the context and the circumstances at hand, and it is therefore highly dynamic (Andersson & Laginder 2012). Interestingly, the concept and practice of study circle resembles such popular contemporary concepts and practices as learning organizations, communities of practice and distributed leadership, which are characteristic of educational research and development in our times.

Relatings in the Social Space of the Study Circle

The practice of the study circle is largely prefigured by its social-political arrangements. The grammar of the study circle is characterized by idealistic descriptions of the social and political preconditions to be met and to be strived for. Participation is to be voluntary and based on personal interests, motives and commitment (Andersson & Laginder 2012, p. 101). From a collective point of view, the interests of the individual are to be met by open access and an absence of requirements or qualifications for becoming a member of a circle. Voluntariness and openness are together supposed to result in pluralism and diversity with regard to age, gender and ethnicity, as well as political or religious orientation. The processes of growing and becoming are to be furthered by democratic self-organization and participation in a collective and deliberative dialogue. The ideal study circle is often compared with informal and open everyday conversation among equals on topics and interests anchored in their real life worlds. When “doing a study circle”, the members are supposed to relate to each other in an equal and informal manner, rely on a shared leadership and be able to bear with certain level of non-intentionality regarding the motives, vehicles and outcomes of the collective learning processes (Larsson 2001, 201-205; Larsson & Nordvall 2010, pp. 13-16). The study by Andersson and Laginder (2013) shows that participants in study circles acquire power through the knowledge and skills developed in the circle and by relying on the democratic abilities they acquire. They also note the complex pattern created by intertwined individual and collective interests and purposes.

Doings in the Physical Space-Time of the Study Circle

The economic-material arrangements that prefigure a study circle are deeply rooted in the social democratic tradition. In this tradition, a study circle thereby forms the physical space-time for voluntary and intentional gathering and meeting, in which one is enabled and encouraged to grow as a human being and become a citizen. The individual aspects of *bildung* are intended to coincide with its collective aspects. The activities consist of intentional, but not strictly goal-oriented, deliberative and informal conversations, ideally described as dialogue. These conversations are to deal with certain topics, but not in the manner they are dealt with in the grammar of schooling, with given and quite strictly defined contents or subjects, to be related to in a highly systematic manner. Study circles are characterized by openness to and a broad range of topics/issues: culture (literature, arts, music), civic issues (social and political issues, practical skills for functioning in the civil society) as well as general knowledge (economics, mathematics and languages, sometimes also in the form of school subjects). Even if study circles are often presented as an alternative to the grammar of schooling, the way in which they are organized has certain similarities with the grammar of schooling. Thus, a study circle is a form of social organization with about 5-10 persons gathering for two to three hours per week over a period of 10-15 weeks in order to deal with a certain topic or issue. Active participation in these gatherings is supposed to further a feeling of belonging and togetherness. Participation is often free of charge and, because sometimes they are organized at work places the sessions are easily accessible (Larsson 2011, pp. 205-212; Larsson & Nordvall 2010, pp. 13-17).

Sayings in the Semantic Space of The Study Circle

Education, both from a research and an everyday professional practice point of view, takes places within the realms of language, prefigured by the particular cultural-discursive arrangements to be found in the site. Educational research is, almost without exception, about scrutinizing language with language, especially in the case of study circles, where social-political preconditions are interwoven with cultural-discursive ones. We begin to change the world by naming the world; the political aspect relies on the educational aspect (Freire 1972). While the possibility of doing a comprehensive linguistic or discourse analysis of study circles is inappropriate for the aim of this chapter, we will focus briefly on some of the slogans and expressions that are characteristic of both study circle and folk enlightenment ideology. One such slogan, from one educational association, was ‘ if you want to go forward – join a circle!’ Most of the ideals characteristic of the canon of the study circle can be traced back to the slogans of the French revolution – liberty, fraternity and equality. In short, liberty refers to liberation from all forms of oppression, the possibility of enjoying freedom of speech and thought. Fraternity refers to the freedom of a civil society, and an emerging capacity to build and act, together with others, for the common good of that society. Equality indicates open access to knowledge and a (humanistic) belief in the capacity of human beings to develop as individuals in a respectful and ethically sustainable manner (Bron 2006, p. 21). In the Swedish context, study circles are said to rely on free and voluntary participation, enabled by the absence of barriers for participation. The study circle and the folk enlightenment tradition both rely on various forms of self-education, but not in the sense of individual self-direction or transformation that are characteristic of the Anglo-American tradition of adult education. Rather, they rely on collective self-education, often expressed through the slogan “not only for but also through the people”, used by Oscar Olsson (the founder of study circles) and also by Ellen Key (author of the book *The Century of the Child*). Another slogan used by Olsson was “To ennoble the spirit, to cultivate knowledge” (Mentora, 2002). The collective educational practices of the study circle are to liberate its members and the group as a whole from irrationalities, misconceptions and other forms of mental oppression. The study circle thereby builds mainly on two of the three root metaphors of education, namely education as guidance and education as liberation (education as growth being the third (Leino & Drakenberg 1993, pp. 38-43, 46-47)).

Korsgaard (2000) uses ‘light’ as a metaphor included in the concept of ‘folk enlightenment’ to illuminate the history of ‘enlightenment’ throughout the centuries. The idea of the light of knowledge coming from above (religion and the bible) was replaced by the idea of light coming from the side (nature – encyclopedia – science) was replaced by an idea of light coming from below, from (among) the people in order to form the people. From a cultural point of view, the sense of belonging to an identifiable group was furthered by the widespread Romantic, 19th century nation-building activity of compiling music and songs of different ethnic groups into booklets of folk songs to be sung in expression of a new sense of national belonging – belonging to a folk. Some decades later, the ideological message for joining the individuals together in a working class, the Communist Manifesto (Marx and Engels 1848/1969), had a similar function. Workers were to free themselves from the enlightenment from above and from outside, by studying science, as well as economical and social conditions. The Swedish concept of ´bildning´ (or *bildung* in German) refers simultaneously to the open process of forming oneself (in a free and self-directed manner), and to a certain ideal as the aim and goal of learning processes (an educated worker capable of social and political action, or a capable citizen able to construct a collective welfare). We summarize the practice architecture of study circles by presenting the predominant cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements that prefigure it in Figure 1.

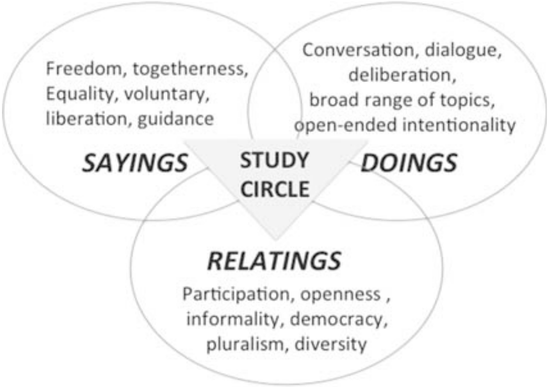
Freedom, togetherness,
Equality, voluntary,
liberation, guidance
Conversation, dialogue,
deliberation,
broad range of topics,
open-ended intentionality
SAYINGS
STUDY CIRCLE
DOINGS
RELATINGS
Participation, openness ,
informality, democracy,
pluralism, diversity

Figure 1. The practice architecture of study circles.

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES AND THE NORDIC TRADITION OF ACTION RESEARCH

Education in the Nordic countries aims to ensure that all citizens have the possibility of bildung. This is done by providing access to diverse dimensions and arenas of human growth – in the personal, political and professional arenas. These three areas coincide with Noffkes (1997, 2009) exploration of the multiple layers of purposes and practices of action research within education. The personal dimension is about (teachers') personal growth and development, based on and furthered by a deepening understanding, self-awareness, self-confidence and personal fulfilment. Professional experiences form the inventory to be mobilized. The political dimension includes democratic, participatory and collaborative processes for knowledge creation and development, rooted in local conditions and needs (bottom-up) in order to extend social consciousness and justice, emancipation and equity. The professional dimension relates to the knowledge base and the production of knowledge in relation to educational aims, methods and outcomes, as well as to teaching as a research-based professional practice. These dimensions are intimately related to a view of the profession as such (its status) as well as the means, practices and sites for professional development, and, in a broader perspective, to such things as school reform and curriculum development (Rönnerman & Salo, 2012).

In the Nordic tradition of action research, research serves personal, political and professional purposes on the local level. In the following we present three definitions of action research from various researchers in Nordic countries. Elden and Levin (1991, p. 132) define participatory action research as "a way of generating knowledge where participants in the research process function as equals because of their different kinds of experience and frames of reference. Rönnerman and Salo (2012, p. 3) look at action research as "A reciprocal challenging of professional knowledge and experiences, rooted in everyday practices within schools, in collaborative arenas populated by researchers' and practitioners, and in the interchange of knowledge of different kinds." Finnish action research theorists Huttunen and Heikkinen (1999) regard action research as applying the principles of democracy to school development in a manner that enables the formation of communication mechanisms that promote a collective discursive consensus-building. When bringing these definitions together, one can note that some of the material-economic arrangements (such as communication mechanisms for generating knowledge for school development) can be distinguished from the socio-political arrangements (collaborative arenas relying on the principles of democracy and enabling the participants to function as equals). Yet they are realized in collective discursive consensus building and in reciprocal challenging.

Relatings in the Social Space of Educational Action Research

As in the case of study circles, the Nordic tradition of action research is prefigured by particular kinds of socio-political arrangements. It aims to consolidate theory and practice; and to combine two fields of knowledge: to combine theoretical frameworks to close-up hands-on practical experience. This assumes willingness and an ability to handle the tensions and dilemmas between researchers' aims and participants' needs (Lendahls Rosendahl & Rönnerman 2000). Action research should result in local theories, with relevance for both theory development and school improvement. Therefore, in the Nordic conceptualization it is strongly anchored in the practice, and represents a bottom-up perspective. Plans of action are intended to create changes in the practice, while theoretical models and concepts are to enlighten, support and inspire the participants, both to improve their professional activities and to become active citizens. Action research is conducted in joint partnerships between universities and schools, in collaboration with researchers and practitioners, co-generating knowledge in democratic dialogues. In action research, the relationship between researchers and practitioners is understood as equal and reciprocal, and the production of knowledge and action plans is furthered by mutual recognition (Moksnes Furu, Lund & Tiller 2007; Rönnerman 2012). In short, action research is intended to empower and include educational practitioners, enable them to improve their professional practices.

Doings in the Physical Space-Time of Educational Action Research

When using the practice of study circles is adopted as a means of conducting action research, two sets of arrangements come into focus: providing space and time for dialogue, and applying tools for inquiry. The provision of space and time is part of the educational infrastructure at local level. Teachers and other practitioners have to be freed from their work duties in order to become involved in study circle and engage themselves in research. Furthermore, they have to be provided with a space in which to meet. Most importantly, democratic values are to guide the conversation and the collaborative inquiry into the practices which are to be researched and developed. This is done by giving all participants time and space for their voices to be heard. A research-oriented conversation and inquiry can challenge taken for granted assumptions about practice, and about professional strategies for teaching and education. Mostly this is done through (the doing of) facilitating, either by a researcher or by a colleague who has experience of action research and has developed methods for and capacities in facilitation (Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman, 2013). In order to engage the participants and promote dialogues and conversations (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005), participants need to be prepared. The tools of inquiry are of help to the participants in engaging them in research practices such as formulating questions, collecting and analysing data. These activities form a platform for the discussions and reflections in the group with the purpose of deepening sharing, and developing, generating and constructing knowledge. If it is to do so, the dialogue must allow the participants to be challenged by one another, acting as each other's critical friends (Rönnerman 2008; Rönnerman & Wennergren 2012).

Sayings in the Semantic Space of Educational Action Research

The discourse of Nordic action research is political rather than pedagogical. Even the vocabulary of research and research methods is subject to political purposes in a quite pragmatic sense. Action research builds on collaboration, participation and facilitation within working groups (e.g. in teacher teams) and partnerships within local communities of practice. Action research aims at bridging and bringing knowledge forms and fields, further discourses and institutionalized practices (in universities and schools) together. Knowledge construction is interactive and social. Relationships between researchers and participants are to be mutual and reciprocal. Developments based on local knowledge stem from interaction, meetings and dialogues. Research is expected to be close to and relevant for practice. (Rönnerman & Salo 2012; Lund, Postholm & Skeie 2010; Heikkinen 2008). Some Norwegian researchers prefer the concept of "action learning". This is in order to focus the collegial processes of learning-through-reflection within everyday practices, rather than engaging themselves in systematic and analytical inquiries into the contextual frameworks forming the practices. More generally in Nordic action research and action learning, educational practitioners are invited to join in co-generative partnerships and joint projects, and become active participants in democratic dialogues. The concept of 'critical friend' has become something of a root metaphor for the partnerships within Nordic action research. In most cases, the relationship to a critical friend is understood as highly mutual. At times, researchers are metaphorically invited to become partners on journeys, dances or skiing tours, in which the achievements are dependent on the collaboration of both partners (see Furu, Lund & Tiller 2007).

We summarize the practice architectures of educational action research in Nordic countries by presenting their predominant cultural-discursive, material-economic and socio-political arrangements in Figure 2.

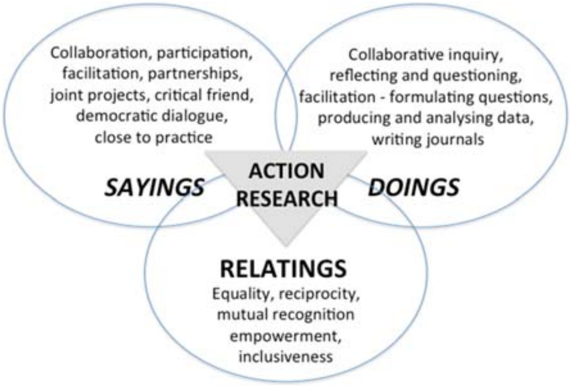
Collaboration, participation, facilitation, partnerships, joint projects, critical friend, democratic dialogue, close to practice
SAYINGS
Collaborative inquiry, reflecting and questioning, facilitation - formulating questions, producing and analysing data, writing journals
DOINGS
ACTION RESEARCH
RELATINGS
Equality, reciprocity, mutual recognition empowerment, inclusiveness

Figure 2. The practice architecture of Nordic educational action research.

From the interconnections evident in the analyses of Nordic research and study circles and action research, it is apparent that the sayings, doings and relatings that compose each of these practices are not separate; they hang together in each of the practices. What happens in the practice is dependent on the ways that the cultural-discursive, the material-economic and the social-political arrangements cohere with one another (sometimes despite contradictions and tensions). In the practices of study circles and action research, people meet in small informal groups in order to learn from each other by listening and posing questions in relation to a joint issue. It is quite easy to trace this happening back to the cultural-discursive, the material-economic and the social-political arrangements that support these practices. Furthermore, both study circles and action research are interactive and inclusive. Participants present problems and challenges to be reflected upon collectively and collaboratively. They aim for meaning-making through knowledge-sharing, deepening one another's knowledge by constructing new knowledge together (Holmer, 1993). Research activities include producing data together, documenting it and discussing it with others within and outside the practice at hand. In the Nordic tradition, it is obvious that experiences from the field of work science research have been important. The practice of study circles is a well-established 'model' distributed through in-service training for teachers in accordance with the political agenda for school development. Nevertheless, we can also see how global perspectives have influenced these practices. The manner in which school development is connected to the ideals of professional learning communities (Stoll et.al 2007) or the establishment of communities of practices (Wenger 1998) is related to efforts of guaranteeing quality in schools. Current policy initiatives accord with the practices of the study circle and of action research. In Sweden, study circles are to be used as means for massive continuing professional development undertakings, with the aim of developing teachers to become facilitators of their colleagues. The basic idea is to put together local projects, to conduct on-site research and to organize it as formative assessment (Skolverket 2014). The purpose of this massive effort is not further *bildung* or enlightenment; it is merely to meet the global PISA standards. This is an example of how global influences and the Nordic tradition are combined into a new practice with the aim of developing the students' skills in mathematics, thereby enabling Sweden to lead the world in education. With regard to the historical, political and social formation of the practice architectures of study circles and action research, as presented above, however, it remains to be seen whether this innovative instrumental use of study circles and action research will be successful or sustainable.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have tried to challenge neo-liberal policies for education by explaining anew the Nordic tradition of education based on democratic values for education. In this tradition, a specific form for meetings, the study circle, is used as a means of enlightening the participants in order that they may act as citizens. We have also discussed how study circles have become a means of creating dialogues in action research, initially within work sciences, with the focus on dialogue conferences. This counter-movement of ours is important, as we live in a time and a world with various and opposing tendencies. Future challenges are constantly described as extensive and disruptive. New Public Management aims at control, quality and efficiency through marketization, managerialism, rankings and highly disciplined self-governance. However, ICT and the Internet have democratized both access to and the construction of knowledge. We are able to join global study circles and take initiative in worldwide action research projects, within the teaching profession and in educational research. However, the more global we become, the more locality we might need.

The development of education based on the Nordic tradition of action research highlights the notion of site. In a global world, and especially in education, the site becomes even more important for humans to act within. In the introduction, we defined it as the place where education occurs, i.e. a school or a classroom. We emphasized the importance of creating arenas for meetings, bringing teachers together to discuss and reflect on their professional practices in dialogues and in an equal manner, and referring to these meetings as study circles. It is thus obvious that the ongoing global transition, from the production, logic and principles of organization characteristic of an industrial society to an ambiguous and multifaceted "logics" of an information and knowledge society, have resulted in a transformation of the principles and practices of study circles. However, they are discussed "in the disguise" of learning organizations, communities of practice, distributed leadership, transformative learning, open learning environments or professional learning communities.

According to Stoll et al. (2007, p. 221) professional learning communities (PLCs) have been widely understood and conceptualized as being promising for building capacity for sustainable development in educational settings. On the surface, and when defined as *"a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way"* (ibid. p. 23), PLCs seem to resemble study circles. When PLCs are to be characterized by shared values and visions, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, and the promotion of both individual and collective learning, they begin to resemble action research. However, there seems to be one crucial difference between PLCs and the study circles used in action research. From the point of view of the Nordic educational tradition, the ideological aim of study circles and action research is to promote further changes by shared, collaborative and collective knowledge developing, knowledge building, sharing and construction. PLCs seem merely to be about coping with and adapting to change. The main aim and function of PLCs seems to be to promote effectiveness (Stoll et al. pp. 221-227), by letting students' performances guide discussions and collaboration. As pointed out above, however, study circles aim to promote growth among teachers and to empower them to make decisions on how best to meet students' needs. And this can only take place in a site. Haydon (2007, p. 24) notes that "effectiveness is always relative to purposes", and further that the measurement of being effective is dependent "on the value of the ends". If formulated bluntly (and with a certain political touché), the paradigm of school effectiveness seems to be about as logical as means without ends. However, as Haydon also points out, education is always about certain aims, purposes and values – ends. Especially during the last century, education has been understood as various kinds of fusion of cultural transmission, of liberal education (for self-fulfillment and personal development) and of development and progress as measured in economic terms. These three ends and purposes coincide with the political, personal and professional dimensions of action research (Noffke 1997).

From a Nordic perspective, it seems that much contemporary Anglo Saxon literature on education expresses a quest for constructing meetings and enabling dialogue based on the values characteristic to folk enlightenment. Still, this is not enough when being distinctively impregnated with the global competition. It is also necessary to build, in societies at large, a climate of professional trust in teachers' work – work that is done at every educational site. It is necessary to build trustful communities, for communities to become part of a dialogue about *bildung*, not just to discuss students' outcomes. Arenas for meetings have to be built into the system of education at a particular site, rather than being used merely for planning and test discussions. Such communicative spaces have to build on dialogue and meaning-making, and the values of democracy. Belonging to such a community, based on these values, is to be a part of the process of building, developing and constructing knowledge from the teachers' experiences and questions, and for the students' learning and development. In the long run, it will strengthen the collective and, as a consequence, make it possible to recapture building into the realm of education again, not just on paper or in official reports, but for real. This can only be done within a site; it cannot be achieved by direction or policies alone.

From the point of view of practice architectures, it will be of great importance for practitioners to get out of their own classroom, and make a difference as a collective. By understanding the practice architectures and how the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements are influencing a specific site, the collective can influence the shape of these arrangements and take responsibility for developing education in ways that are needed for bildung, for the people and communities at a particular site.

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PART 2
CASE STUDIES

LILL LANGELOTZ & KARIN RÖNNERMAN

5. THE PRACTICE OF PEER GROUP MENTORING

Traces of global changes and regional traditions

The authors of this chapter share a research interest in teachers' continuing professional development (CPD). They are both active as teachers in university courses and they participate in various collaborative research projects within schools. The chapter draws on such a collaboration with a Swedish secondary school, involving a teacher team encouraged by the principal to participate in peer group mentoring (PGM), which can been seen as a specific kind of continuing professional development. In this CPD the teachers used a constrained and well-structured nine-step model of PGM. The purpose of the mentoring project was to share teaching experiences so as to enhance professional and pedagogical development, with the aim of improving the teaching of a "new multicultural student group" that recently had started at the school. One of the authors, Lill Langelotz, followed this mentoring process over two years. In this chapter this process will be examined in relation to the Nordic tradition of folk enlightment (*folkbildning*), with a point of departure in the Swedish tradition of adult education through study circles.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) and professional learning (PL) are two of a number of concepts related to teachers' knowledge development. Day & Sachs (2004) consider all activities related to teachers' professional progress, formal as well as informal, as CPD. This includes various kinds of formal and informal discussions among colleagues, as well as such things as university courses (ibid.). CPD is about improving teachers' pedagogical skills and actual teaching, as well as gaining new insights into students' learning. In this chapter, CPD was used to get a deeper understanding of how to handle a "new" group of incoming students at the school. These students were moving in to a city school from the suburbs. The teachers and the principal of the school described the student group as "multicultural", and some of the teachers expressed the concern that they were not used to teaching such students. The principal of the school wanted teachers to support each other so that "all students were able to succeed in all classrooms", as he expressed it. He imposed a peer group mentoring project in one of the teacher teams at the school in order to enhance common professional learning and to develop pedagogical knowledge among the teachers. This manner of conducting

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CPD, in a group engaged in discussions and knowledge sharing, can be traced back to the tradition of popular education known as *folkbildning*. Since the 19th century the movement of folk enlightment and *folkbildning* has aimed to educate and inform Swedish people (Rönnerman, Furu & Salo 2008). Study circles are used as a pedagogical model to emphasise a democratic dialogue among the participants. In chapter Four in this volume, the model of study circles is further described by Salo and Rönnerman (2014) in chapter Four. The pedagogical model of study circles can be seen as being reinvented in the way the peer group mentoring sessions were carried out.

Former results from this study (see Langelotz 2013) show that the specific model of peer group mentoring adopted by this teacher team was described as successful by the teachers and the principal. It enhanced new and complex educational processes, such as personal and professional growth, as well as democratizing and disciplining behaviours in the teachers' everyday practices. By this, the teachers meant that they listened to each other in new and (as they expressed it) better ways. Furthermore, they acted in new ways in their classroom practices and began to involve both parents and students in decisions concerning the classroom environment (see Langelotz 2013). Although the principal required the teachers to participate in the PGM practice, and some of them were against it during the first year, they all described PGM as meaningful. These results are significant for this study, as former research (e.g. Lauvås et al, 1997; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006) emphasizes the necessity of teachers' involvement in practices of professional learning being voluntary (Langelotz 2013). Andersson & Laginder (2012) stress that voluntariness and participants' genuine engagement is important features of study circles. Hence, regarding the case of PGM considered here, the question arises of how and why this constrained practice of PGM – not voluntary and indeed resisted by some teachers – could be successful.

The intention of this chapter is to examine how the practice of PGM was prefigured by the historical influences of a Nordic tradition of folk enlightment. Furthermore, the aim is to show how this practice of PGM was prefigured by particular kinds of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements, and to show how traces of these arrangements shaped and came into play in the group mentoring practice, in particular in the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of the teachers involved. In making this analysis, we have employed the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Kemmis 2010), which insists that, to understand practices, it is not enough to study only the practice itself, but also to study the practice architectures (the relevant cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements) that constrain and enable the practice.

The chapter begins with a short description of the school in which the study took place. It is followed by a description of how the PGM project was set up and organized. The next section describes the theory of practice architectures, data and analysis. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) show how practices – such as professional development practices – are held in place by distinctive preconditions, in the form of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. These arrangements enable and constrain the particular kinds of language (or ‘sayings’) that will be used in a setting, the particular kinds of activities (or ‘doings’) that will occur, and the particular kinds of relationships (or ‘relatings’) between people and between the group and the world that will occur. These ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ ‘hang together’ to constitute a practice, of one kind or another (like teaching or PGM). Practices shape and are shaped, in interrelated ways, by these conditions and the historical traces of past educational practices that exist in a particular site (such as teaching and learning in a classroom, or professional development in groups with other teachers). Furthermore, a practice and its practitioners are mutually dependent on each other.

The theory of practice architectures has been adopted as an analytical framework to analyse the data in two steps. The first step focuses on the influences of traditional popular education and on how educational practices in Sweden are undergoing excessive changes in a neo-liberal and globalized society. The second part of the chapter focuses on the ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ in the specific practice of peer group mentoring. Finally, we discuss the results and draw some conclusions.

AN IMPOSED PEER GROUP MENTORING PROJECT

The practice of CPD studied in this research took place in a teacher team in an inner-city secondary school in Sweden. For some years, the teachers had been organized by the school management into teacher teams, teaching the same students but in different subjects. Although organizing teachers into teaching teams is common in Sweden (Ohlsson 2004), teams are realized differently in different schools.

The school was in a period of change. Previously, the school had mostly been attended by students from a well-educated, white middle class neighbourhood. In recent years, however, the composition of the student body had changed with the arrival of a new student group. This group of students lived in the suburbs but had chosen to go to an inner-city school. They all had different school backgrounds and some of them had not been born in Sweden. A majority of these students had a mother tongue other than Swedish. According to the principal and the teachers, teaching this new “multicultural” student group required another kind of pedagogical knowledge. The teachers emphasized their lack of “teaching tools” and the principal was concerned about the fact that “the students succeeded in some classrooms but not in others”. Together with some of the teachers in one of the teacher teams, the principal suggested that the teachers use a constrained nine-step model of Peer Group Mentoring (PGM) to enhance their continuing professional development. They adopted the approach of PGM (*Kollegahandledning* in Swedish, originally developed by Lauvås, Hofgaard Lycke & Handal (1997), described in more detail in the book *Peer Mentoring in school/Kollegahandledning i skolan)*. PGM aims to facilitate individual teachers to become aware of their praxis-theory of teaching and the teaching profession. Furthermore, it aims to develop a common professional knowledge, professional ethics and practice (Lauvås et al. 1997, p. 11). Teachers involved support each other and moderate the PGM process themselves. The nine steps discipline the group to focus on one thing at a time by following strict rules about how the conversations and support should be accomplished (Langelotz 2013). In autumn 2008, the teacher team decided, by a majority decision, to participate in the PGM project, although two of the teachers voted against the majority. The following description shows the nine steps of the PGM model adopted in this study:

1. Each participant gets the opportunity to present a case or a problem.
2. The participants choose one case to focus on.
3. A moderator and a secretary are appointed (in the study, a researcher was the secretary throughout, while the moderator role was circulated among the teachers).
4. The "case owner" describes the case/problem carefully, without anyone interrupting.
5. Each participant raises one question each about the case until there are no more questions left.
6. Each participant formulates his or her perspective on the case.
7. Good advice is presented from each participant, one at a time.
8. The case owner describes how she is going to handle the problem, and everyone reflects.
9. Summing up: Meta reflection: what do we need to consider in order having the most fruitful next session? (This description, translated from Swedish by the authors, is a simplified version of the approach developed by Lauvås et al. 1997, p. 69-70.)

According to Lauvås et al. (1997, p. 11), PGM encourages teachers to construct common professional knowledge, professional ethics and professional practice, starting in the teachers' own everyday practice. Lauvås et al. emphasize that the teaching profession often involves working alone and that teachers need to come together to critically reflect and discuss their teaching and classroom experiences. Although all teachers, students and classrooms are unique, many experiences are similar. Peer mentoring is a way of sharing each other's' experiences. This kind of shared experience may inspire teachers' daily work, and even help to prevent teachers' mental illness (ibid, p. 21).

The nine-step approach to PGM described above was presented and handed out to the teachers by a consultant from the social services office in the local municipality.

The role of the university researcher engaged in the process varied over the years. The teachers and the researcher negotiated how to cooperate. The university researcher ended up as the 'story teller' of the project, as she summarized each mentoring session. The research approach was based on action research methodology, where interaction and sharing are crucial features of the research process (e.g. Kemmis & McTaggert 2005; Salo & Rönnerman 2014 chapter Four).

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Professional development activities, such as PGM in this study, should themselves be understood as professional practices like other professional practices (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008). Schatzki (2002, p. 77) defines practice as organized nexuses of actions – 'sayings' and 'doings' – that hang together to constitute a specific practice. To 'sayings' and 'doings', Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008, p.38; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer & Bristol 2014) add 'relatings', drawing attention to the intersubjective dimension of power and solidarity that, they argue, also constitute practices. In the view of Kemmis et al. (2014), people's 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' constitute practices that hang together in a *project* such as education, teaching and peer group mentoring.

Practices are understood as socially, discursively, culturally and historically constituted (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Kemmis 2010; Nicolini 2013). A practice is prefigured and under the constant influence of *cultural-discursive arrangements*, in the dimension of the semantic space that enables and constrains a practice in the medium of language ('sayings'), *material-economic arrangements* in the intersubjective dimension of the semantic space, that enable and constrain a practice in the medium of language ('sayings'); *material-economic arrangements* in the intersubjective dimension of physical space-time, that enable and constrain a practice in the medium of activity or work ('doings'); and *social-political arrangements* in the intersubjective dimension of social space, that enable and constrain a practice in the medium of power and solidarity ('relatings') (Kemmis et al. 2014). Those arrangements constitute the architectures of a practice, and prefigure but do not determine it. Kemmis (2010, p. 141) emphasizes that neither practice itself nor the process of changing practice can be adequately understood without reference to these extra-individual features. Different practices, such as PGM, are a product of and are related to other practices, like teaching, students' learning and school leadership, all of which are also shaped by cultural, material and social arrangements, individuals and prior history.

A practice is also embraced by its aim or project, which in this study is the teachers' learning how to handle and teach a "new" group of students. Drawing upon the theoretical position described above, we argue that understanding PGM entails a wider investigation of the arrangements that enable and constrain it: what made continuing professional development possible in this context? Nonetheless, it is not enough to understand a practice just in terms of the arrangements that make it possible and hold it in place; the voices of the professionals participating in the practice are also crucial in order to get a detailed picture. Therefore, the analysis is twofold, considering both of these dimensions, as the following will show.

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES AS ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

The analysis in this chapter is presented in two parts, although a practice, its participants and its structure hang together intimately in a mutual and generative sense (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Nicolini 2013). First we examine the prior arrangements that evoked and enabled the practice of CPD in the form of PGM. This is done by tracking and uncovering connections between the practice of PGM and its corresponding historical and contemporary practices. In addition, we study how these connections are held in place by various arrangements. In the second part of the analysis, we zoom in (Nicolini 2013) on the practice of PGM, scrutinizing the teachers' 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings', in order to show how the prefiguring arrangements described in the first part of the analysis have shaped, enabled and constrained the practice of PGM.

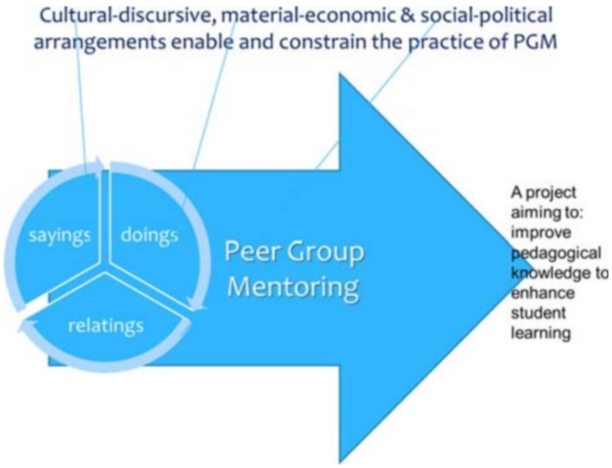
Cultural-discursive, material-economic & social-political arrangements enable and constrain the practice of PGM
sayings
doings
relatings
Peer Group Mentoring
A project aiming to: improve pedagogical knowledge to enhance student learning

Figure 1. External arrangements' impact on the practice of peer group mentoring.

The arrangements described in Figure 1 are interconnected but can be separated analytically. In the analysis, the data sources are educational policies relating to recent changes in the Swedish school system, research literature concerning adults' (professional) learning, and data from the study, mainly based on the peer group mentoring sessions. The data derives from 19 sessions of PGM (16 audio-recorded) and five teacher meetings (all audio-recorded) held to prepare or evaluate the PGM sessions over the period 2008-2010. Three summaries of the PGM sessions were written (by the researcher following the project) and handed out as a basis for the teachers' evaluation of their peer group mentoring project. Field notes were taken by the researcher at each meeting. The field notes include, for example, data about who participated each time, how the teachers placed themselves in the room, and what PGM topics they chose (i.e. what they talked about during the PGM sessions). They also include the researcher's reflections and ad hoc analysis (for further descriptions of the data, research methodology and ethical considerations see Langelotz (2013). To reveal possible pre-conditions for the specific form of continuing professional learning observed here, we also included three interviews with the principal and individual interviews with six of the teachers. The main focus in the analysis was on tracking *what* pre-figured the specific practice of professional development observed, and what impact these arrangements had on the practice of peer group mentoring.

PRE-FIGURATIONS THAT ENABLE AND CONSTRAIN THE PRACTICE OF PGM

In the following we describe a Swedish tradition of adult education and go on to outline how this historical tradition and its cultural-discursive arrangements prefigured the practice of CPD in this study. This is followed by an analysis of the present material-economic circumstances in Swedish educational practice. In the second part we outline a micro-analysis of the practice of PGM.

Traces of A Swedish Tradition of Adults' Learning

In the Nordic countries an ideological social movement, *folkbildning*, based on the philosophy of Enlightenment, developed in the middle of the 19th century (Rönnerman, Furu & Salo 2008, p. 23). The tradition of *folkbildning* can also be understood as a form of resistance to a normative educational philosophy and pedagogy based on hegemonic ideas, according to which adult education was accessible to a privileged group. According to Bergstedt and Pernerman (1990/2003), the tradition of *folkbildning* was built on a notion of pedagogy wherein the participants' knowledge and experiences were valued and provided the point of departure for further knowledge production. These ideas can be traced in the model of PGM, where teachers' knowledge and experiences from their everyday practice are emphasized as sources for professional learning and development (cf. Lauvås et al., 1997). Bergstedt and Pernerman emphasize the tradition of *folkbildning* as unique to the Nordic context. They highlight the people's struggle for better circumstances, through enhanced understanding of the their own situation and the development of knowledge on the way to empowerment and equality. However, Nordvall (2002) for example, stresses that the Swedish tradition of popular education, or *folkbildning*, is often described in a romantic manner, emphasizing the emancipation of the people, whereas in fact this social movement could also be stigmatizing, disciplining and male-norm-dominant. Despite these shortcomings, Nordvall stresses that the movement of *folkbildning* hastened the democratization process (e.g. universal suffrage) in the Swedish society, partly through the establishment of public libraries and folk high schools, but also through the practice of study circles for adult education, on topics of interest to people in their communities.

The epistemology of study circles is based on the idea(l) of the participants' involvement, evolving from their own life world interests. According to Rönnerman et al. (2008, pp. 24-25), for example, the source of knowledge in study circles is the participants themselves, and the study circle process always employs methods of sharing participants' experiences. Furthermore, the concept of truth that underpins study circles is not based primarily on the authority of science, but on every human's experience. The development of the individual is not the main focus, but rather the development of the group and its increased capacity of collective learning are seen as the most important (Rönnerman et al., 2008). Sometimes study circles are organized in association with the universities. A slight shift in the epistemological approach can be distinguished when the circle leader is a lecturer from the university; under these circumstances, the study leader may become an 'expert' rather than one of the participants. This modified form of study circle is described as a 'research circle'.

There are a number of study associations with different interests, focusing on *folkbildning* and adult learning, which are financed by public funds in Sweden. *Folkbildning* is also recognized and funded by all political parties in Sweden as it is seen as contributing to democracy. When great changes are afoot in the society, there seems to be a Swedish tradition of encouraging people coming together in study circles to develop knowledge and collective understanding. In connection with the referendum on nuclear power in the 1980s, or the referendum on Swedish membership of the European Community (EU) in the early 1990s, study circles were organized to meet and discuss questions related to these topics. Ever since the beginning of the 20th century, study circles have been used in the Swedish labor market, often arranged by the unions. In many cases, these study circles were conducted in collaboration with universities, with the aim of engaging workers to develop both new competencies and knowledge for development in their profession. Study circles also aim to create common understandings of what is happening at times of major change and to help those affected to feel empowered (Holmer 1993). In other words, when material-economic arrangements are being transformed in times of expansion or cutbacks the historical practice of study circles increases in Sweden.

In the nine-step model of PGM used in this study, the epistemological approach can be traced to pedagogical ideals of *folkbildning* and study circles; each participant's professional knowledge and experiences are expected to contribute to collective learning and knowledge production. No one is seen as an expert – or rather, everyone is regarded as an expert who contributes to the collective. The moderator role of the PGM conversations is passed between the participants in the nine-step model. PGM is also built on principles of voluntariness and participants' willingness to share their expertise. In PGM, as in the tradition of *folkbildning*, the human desire to learn and to develop is regarded as fundamental. In Sweden, the way PGM sessions are conducted is obviously inspired by the model of study circles: 'the round' where every participant is heard and encouraged to leave a contribution, or at least to say "I pass this round/time", fosters a democratic approach where all voices are important (cf. Langelotz, 2013). The approach to PGM taken in this research does differ slightly from study circles, since study circles do not use a nine step model to facilitate knowledge production.

It seems that the tradition of adult education, as well as that of *folkbildning*, can be understood as a historical and cultural-discursive arrangement that prefigured the specific form of CPD used in this study. The practice is familiar to teachers because study and research circles are very often used as strategies for implementing various political reforms in Swedish schools. These reforms are often implemented by the Swedish agency for school improvement, as the following section will show. But first, we will briefly consider certain social changes and material-economic prefigurations, which contributed to the expressed need for professional development in this study.

A Segregated Society and the Neoliberal Principle of User Choice: Triggers for Development

Like other European countries, Sweden has been defined as a multicultural society in various policies since the 1970s. The concept of multiculturalism is often related to ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity. The concept is however significantly less often referred to indigenous minorities or cultural diversity because of class background (e.g. Eklund 2003; Langelotz & Jämsvi 2008). Although Sweden has a political ideology of multiculturalism, the city in which this study took place is one of the most segregated cities in Northern Europe. It is characterized by a housing policy that both segregates and stigmatizes certain people (Beach & Sernhede 2011; Lunneblad & Johansson 2009). Segregation is also the status quo in compulsory school education, where sometimes nearly 100% of a school's student population has a native language and background other than Swedish (Bunar & Kallstenius 2008). In the city where this study took place, the inner city schools are attractive, as many students and their parents perceive them as 'better', compared to the 'multicultural' schools in the suburbs. The schools are valued for their symbolic values, such as their academic reputation and their rather homogeneous social and ethnic ('Swedish') composition (Kallstenius 2010, p. 227). As a result, many suburban youths find their way to the inner city schools due to their symbolic values, as was the case in the school in this study

These circumstances can be related to (global) neo-liberal policies where the cultural-discursive, social-political and material-economic arrangements that prefigured this practice of PGM are visible. One such obvious example is the neo-liberal principle of user choice (*valfrihetsreformen* in Swedish), implemented in the Swedish educational system by law (Prop. 1991/92, p. 95). According to this law, all Swedish students have a tax-funded 'voucher', allowing them to choose to attend any school, public or independent, in their municipality. Parallel to this reform, independent schools (tax-funded by the 'voucher' system) have increased in number. Bunar & Kallstenius (2008) highlight the fact that the students' decision to leave the suburban schools often leads to disappointment rather than an experience of something 'better' because, historically, the teachers in the inner city schools have not been well prepared to teach this multicultural student group. The suburban teachers, on the other hand, have often had a long experience of this group and are well trained in teaching, for example, Swedish as a second language (Bunar & Kallstenius 2008; Kallstenius 2010). The lack of teachers' multicultural knowledge and experiences are also highlighted by Nordenstam & Wallin (2002), who emphasize that about 30 % of the student population in upper secondary school have their roots in countries other than Sweden, but most teachers are still educated for a 'Swedish homogeneous' student group (cf. also Bunar & Kallstenius 2008). Nordenstam & Wallin (2002) also criticize teacher education institutions for continuing to train teachers for a monocultural society.

Some of the teachers in this study were trained 20 or 30 years ago for a monocultural school system very different from today's. Their lack of experience of teaching from a multicultural perspective was highlighted both by the principal and by the teachers. The teachers' expressed need for enhanced pedagogical competence was one of the main reasons for the principal suggesting and facilitating a practice of continuing professional development. In short, the CPD in this study was prefigured by the above-mentioned neo-liberal policies, together with suburban students' desire to change their circumstances. Furthermore, this instance of continuing professional development was enabled by material-economic arrangements and by a strong discourse of diversity in educational settings at the beginning of the 21st century. This is further developed in the next section.

A Discourse of Diversity and Financial Support Prefigured the Practice of PGM

In Sweden, diversity was emphasized in the educational agenda at the beginning of the 21st century. The city in which the school is situated was one among 32 municipalities provided with extra financial resources for diversity efforts from the Swedish Agency for School Improvement (MSU). The agency had a commission from the government to support schools in ethnically segregated parts of Sweden, whose students had low achievement levels in compulsory education. MSU had the task of conducting 'developmental dialogues' with the municipalities, in order to sort out what kind of facilitation/education the schools needed (Sandahl 2009). The government funded programs for professional development, characterized in educational discourses by expressions such as "diversity" and "all teachers have responsibility for all students' language development". For example, teachers of languages other than Swedish and second language teachers in the municipality in the study participated in various forms of CPD supported by MSU. This professional learning focused on diversity and language development. In other words, for a couple of years diversity and language development (both Swedish and students' own mother tongues where these were not Swedish) became – at least rhetorically – the responsibility of all teachers and principals in educational settings.

These cultural-discursive and material-economic arrangements, related to students' diversity, were noticeable in the school in the study. The principal attended the 'developmental dialogues' arranged by MSU. The school got extra funding for temporary employment of special teachers, i.e. second language teachers and teachers of native languages, to support language development. Some of them attended CPD for teachers of native languages, arranged by MSU. To meet the teachers' call for professional learning and teaching improvement relating to diversity and immigrant students' needs, in May 2008 the principal arranged a day of professional learning for all the teachers in the school. The program for the day focused on various forms of dialogical approaches and methods of enhancing the teachers' collective learning and pedagogical knowledge development. The constrained and well-structured model of peer group mentoring (PGM) was also introduced that day. One of the teacher teams decided, as mentioned above, to try this model to enhance their collective professional learning. They were encouraged (and pushed) by the principal, who also provided the team with time for fulfilling this task. Some of the teachers expressed their doubts about the benefits of peer group mentoring, but they were more or less forced, through majority decisions in the teacher team and the principal's urging, to participate (see also Langelotz 2013). The organization of Swedish teachers in teacher teams can be understood as a social-political arrangement in line with the Swedish tradition of supporting cooperation and collective learning. In the next part of the chapter we zoom in on the team and the practice of PGM. The teachers in the examples from the study are named as 'T1, T2' etc., firstly so as not to omit any individual and, secondly so as not to disturb the reader with associations triggered by their names. The university researcher is named R and the principal P.

PREFIGURATIONS IN THE PRACTICE OF PGM

As shown above, social-political, material-economic and cultural-discursive arrangements (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008), traced both to historical traditions and contemporary social conditions, had an impact on the principal's choice of a dialogical method (PGM) of organizing continuing professional development at the school that is the focus of this study. We will show that these external arrangements not only prefigured the choice of PGM for CPD – they also shaped the approach adopted to PGM and the actual practice of group mentoring, as the following will show. We are well aware of the difficulty of separating 'sayings-doings-relatings' and the practice architectures that make them possible, and emphasize that they are treated separately in what follows only for analytic purposes. In a practice, 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' hang together and are deeply interconnected.

Traces of Popular Education in the Teachers' 'Doings'

The nine-step model of PGM is built on the notion of dialogical and democratic conversations where the participants contribute to the discussion – an arrangement that can be traced (in Swedish experience, at least) to the traditional practice of study circles. In the specific practice of PGM, we can also see how these notions became reality through particular kinds of ‘doings’. Some of these ‘doings’ are described as follows:

The participants (the teachers and the researcher) met in a circle around a table, asking everyone in turn for their opinions and suggestions. This procedure was named ‘the round’ by the teachers. They highlighted this procedure as important since everybody talked in turn and was listened to. The model also compelled every participant (except the researcher) to take part in the conversation, even if they had nothing to contribute, in which case they said ‘I pass this round’. Through this routine, the teachers developed what they described as ‘an open and permissive atmosphere’. This democratic way of talking and listening was also transferred to other practices. Twice every semester the teachers had meetings either to continue or to evaluate the PGM project. They also decided whether they would continue or finish the project. The disciplined way of talking in turn was transferred to these meetings. They used ‘the round’ to allow all voices to be heard. In the meetings they also considered parents’ and students’ suggestions about how to improve teaching practice. The parents’ and students’ voices became important. For example, the teachers used the parents’ participation in the classroom to prevent bad behaviour (see also Langelotz 2013).

The teachers’ ‘doings’ during the PGM sessions – such as careful listening, democratic voting, involving all participants’ voices and cooperating to solve and understand problems – were highlighted as an important development by both the teachers and the principal. These ‘doings’ can clearly be traced to the Swedish tradition of adults learning in study circles and to a strong educational discourse concerning the importance of collaboration and democracy. The collaboration discourse was present in the teachers’ ‘sayings’ and in their perceptions of team function, as the next section will show.

Strong Collaboration Discourses – Enabling A Democratic Practice

In the theory of practice architectures, Kemmis & Grootenboer (2008) highlight the concept of ‘relatings’ as a third element of a practice, in addition to ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’. ‘Relatings’ can be traced both to artefacts and to other practices, as well as occurring between individuals in a specific practice.

The relationships between the participants (the teachers) were often selected as a topic of discussion in the PGM meetings. Over the three years, a recurring issue concerned how to improve teacher team work and collaboration among the teachers. At an early stage, one of the teachers expressed how he did not feel satisfied with the collaboration within the teacher team.

> I am not comfortable in the teacher team. (Teacher 2, field notes, 2008)

In the quote, Teacher 2 admits that he was not pleased with the teacher team. He also emphasized that teacher education taught him that a teacher team was supposed to support and facilitate the team participants. According to Teacher 2, this expectation had not been fulfilled in this team (field notes, 2008). The teachers had different views and expectations of teamwork and there were also underlying conflicts between some of the teachers in the team:

> We have not chosen each other, you know! (Teacher 1, PGM meeting, 2008)

This quote indicates that the teachers were organized by school management into teacher teams. Teacher 1 was not pleased with the composition of the team and she thought this was a source of the lack of relationship and collaboration that she felt characterized the work of the team. The principal of the school stated that collaboration within teacher teams is crucial for school development (field notes, September, 2008). For some of the teachers, the underlying conflicts and different views in the teacher team were nevertheless a key issue, since they appeared to limit the capacity of the team to enact the principal's requirement that they participate in the PGM project. The majority of the teachers and the principal were convinced that collaboration within the team would enhance professional development, collective learning and, ultimately, improvement in the classroom.

> We can learn from each other, you know. (Teacher 3, field notes, 2008)

> The PGM makes us united around the problems or around the same problem and we are united as a team. A functional team! (Teacher 2, PGM meeting, December 2009.)

In the first of these two quotes, the discourse of collaborative and shared knowledge is visible. Teacher 3 is explaining to the researcher why PGM is a way of enhancing professional development. In the second quote, uttered after one and a half years of PGM, the importance of a united team that shares problems is emphasized. Teacher 2 seems pleased that the teachers in the team are finally united and are thereby a "functional team". At the end of the first semester of 2008, Teacher 6 suggested that the colleagues have an informal team meeting. She thought that cooking supper together while planning and discussing their work would be a nice way to develop their teamwork. The suggestion was more or less ignored by the team at that point. However, at the end of the spring semester 2010, the teacher team went on a field trip over a weekend. When they were planning this trip, most of the teachers in the team expressed joy and happiness about their enhanced collaborative work and their future trip.

> Everyone seems to be happy and they are looking forward to their trip – except Teacher 4. He seems tired… (Field notes, February 2010).

The ideas of the teachers and the principal about how to organize and support CPD can be related to a strong discourse of collaboration, common in discussions of various kinds of educational practices. Added to the tradition of *folkbildning*, which is built on the notion of collaboration and shared knowledge, the discourse of collaboration was also influenced by discourses of teacher education and by some educational policies (e.g. curricula Lpo 94, Lgr 11). According to Knutas (2008), the emphasis on teachers' collaboration in the Swedish curriculum (Lpo 94), is one of the main reasons for organizing teachers into teacher teams. In the latest curriculum (Lgr 11), this continues to be emphasized, not only among teachers but also in terms of the important interactions between school, kindergarten and after school care, as well as interactions with the students' parents and home. Furthermore, there is an expectation on all teachers to collaborate to enhance individual and collective educational practice both in the teacher team and in teams related to their specific teaching subject. Collaboration is a concept highly valued in Swedish educational practices, providing a strong cultural-discursive arrangement that both prefigured and shaped the content of the PGM practice as it was observed in this study.

Material-Economic Arrangements – A Threat to a Democratic Practice

In the teachers' 'sayings' there are also traces from the discourse of user-choice. Global influences and material-economic arrangements had, as previously mentioned led to a changing student group in the school. This student group consisting of immigrant students with 'problems' related to the new landscape of multiculturalism and segregation, prompting recurring discussions during the PGM sessions over the three years of this study. Several times, multiculturalism was highlighted as the main topic or issue, as in the following examples:

> We have students with language difficulties coming from another culture, from a country far away, commuting a long way and they do not understand the language. (Teacher 1, PGM meeting, January 2009)
>
> Problems related to multicultural students from the suburbs (PGM meeting topic, March 2009)
>
> How can one teach class 7A with 28 students from 11 different countries and from six different schools? (PGM meeting topic, September 2009)
>
> It is another kind of students (mm) we have nowadays compared to a couple of years ago. It is suburban students with suburban problems (mm) and it is immigrant problems and it is /…/ single mothers who do not cope and maybe drugs... (Teacher 2, PGM meeting, December 2009)

These 'problems' related to immigrant and/or suburban students were, however, generally highlighted as teaching problems (*How can one teach…*) and only occasionally as a problem related to the individual student(s) *(/…/student with language difficulties*). The teachers often discussed these 'problems' in terms of shortcomings in their pedagogical practice as teachers. They wanted to improve their teaching practice in relation to this 'new group' of students.

Nevertheless, when material-economic arrangements changed in spring 2009, as teachers were made redundant, there were shifts in the teachers' 'sayings'; the discussion of the practice of teaching was put aside and the focus was on external features. The teachers expressed an anxiety about losing all the ‘Swedish’ students due to the problems the teachers connected with the ‘new’ student group. The teachers stated that, ever since the ‘new’ student group showed up, more and more of the students from the ‘old’ group (i.e. the ‘Swedish’ middle class students) choose to attend independent schools rather than their public school (PGM data 2009, 2010). Kallstenius (2010) shows how the inflow and outflow to and from different schools is related to parents and students seeking to attend schools with stronger positions and with a higher status in the educational market.

Another aim related to material-economic arrangements was how to handle big classes in teaching. This issue was often mentioned as problematic and was highlighted during the mentoring sessions, although it was never picked as the main topic for discussion at a PGM meeting. When some of the teachers complained about the workload, crowded classes and the management’s (“bad”) practice of accepting all students who sought entry to the school, one of the teachers defended the principal:

> He (the principal) wants to have students so no one has to be sacked./…/ He thinks it is difficult that we have to have crowded classes and he just rejected one troublesome student. A difficult student. It is not like he is sitting there hoping for us to work to death… (Teacher 4, February 2009)

The neo-liberal discourse in which students are described as customers related to future financial contributions or costs, finds its realization in particular kinds of material-economic arrangements, visible in the principal’s ‘doings’ and in the teachers’ ‘sayings’. For example, according to Teacher 4 in the quote above, the principal rejected a ‘troublesome’ and ‘difficult’, and thus probably an ‘expensive’ student. Teacher 4 highlighted this action as something ‘good’, and as a proof of the principal difficult task of balancing the economic realities of today’s school. External conditions and material-economic arrangements obviously had a deep impact on the work of the principal and the teachers, and were often on the agenda in the PGM sessions.

The worries of the teachers became a material and economic reality when the number of students at the school declined in 2009. Some temporary and some permanent staff were made redundant. Whether this reduction in the numbers of students was an effect of the “reform of free school choice”, or of something else, was not discussed or problematized during the PGM meetings. Several times in spring 2009, the teachers talked about the big economic cuts that they expected would eventuate in the following semester. The university researcher’s field notes from May 2009 record this observation:

> There is an uneasy feeling in the team; no one wants to take the moderator role. M & M are writing their vote of topic on a tiny little piece of paper to ‘save’ paper… (Field notes, May 2009)

This PGM session (May 2009) started with resistance among the teachers: no-one wanted to take the moderator role. These 'doings', in the form of the ironic use of a tiny piece of paper and the teachers' refusal to moderate the PGM session, seemed to be a resistance and protest against the school's economic situation. The teachers were frustrated and dejected over austerity measures in the school. Some of the teachers tried, however, to discuss whether organizational problems could be a topic during the PGM session. Finally, they decided to focus on the 'slimmed down', future organization of the school:

> How will we work in the future streamlined organization? (PGM topic, May 2009)

One of the solutions presented during this session was to cut the numbers of 'expensive' students. Their need for (extra) resources like mother tongue teachers or special education teachers was highlighted as incurring extra costs, which could be reduced if the school ceased to accept a particular type of student. In the face of the huge economic cutbacks that occurred, the teachers' description of the problem as a *teaching* problem – requiring them to strive for better teaching practice for all students and to develop their pedagogical knowledge (often discussed in the earlier and later PGM sessions) – was reduced to a problem concerning the ('expensive') *students*. The material-economic arrangements constrained the practice of PGM to focus on economic cutbacks and thus altered the discourse from a discourse of pedagogical knowledge development to one about students' shortcomings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have used the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Kemmis et al. 2014) to show how a constrained model of PGM, understood here as a professional practice, was influenced by historical traditions and prefigured by practice architectures, i.e. particular cultural-discursive, social-political and material-economic arrangements.

We illustrated how teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) was triggered by changes occurring in a neo-liberal globalized society. Changed material-economic circumstances such as migration and the neo-liberal principal of user choice prefigured the teachers' and the principal's expressed needs for professional development. The principal's choice of CPD was a constrained and well-structured nine-step PGM model, which provided a space for the teachers to share knowledge and reflect on their teaching, as well as to be inspired to change their classroom practices.

This model of PGM can easily be traced back to the tradition of adult education in study circles, and to the notion of *folkbildning* in the form of democratic and collective practices. Collaborative discourses, related to teachers' work, prefigured the constrained model of PGM and made it possible to implement it in this specific context. The model, similar to a study circle, was recognized by the teachers as a well-known way of participating in the social collective production of knowledge (cf. Holmer 1993).

By using the theory of practice architectures to investigate the teachers' 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' in this specific practice of PGM, we were able to seize upon the way global issues affected the teachers' discussions, and the ways in which these factors were related to their everyday work in the local school. Influences from policy changes such as user choice were noticeable in the discussions. In most of the PGM conversations, the teachers expressed their own lack of knowledge and their need for professional development in other fields than they were used to. They referred to their inexperience of teaching students with Swedish as a second language (as well as students of a different socio-economic status than before). When material-economic arrangements became a reality in the form of declining numbers of students entering the school and in teacher redundancies, the teachers began to discuss how to exclude these 'expensive' students rather than how to include them by increasing their (the teachers') pedagogical knowledge. The tradition of *folkbildning* is built on an idea(l) of democracy and a pedagogy which highly values inclusiveness (Nordvall 2002; Rönnerman et al. 2008). These values are also emphasized as crucial in the Swedish curriculum Lgr 11 (Skolverket 2011). Nevertheless, when pushed by economic cutbacks, these values were questioned and challenged during the PGM sessions. In other words, a democratic practice depends fundamentally on the existence of the kinds of material-economic arrangements that make democracy possible. In particular, this study shows that regarding schools as competing in a market place, and thus viewing students as customers and costs, poses a threat to inclusive and democratic education – and teachers seems to get lost in practice.

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6. RESEARCH CIRCLES

Constructing a space for elaborating on being a teacher leader in preschools

The authors of this chapter are involved, as teachers and researchers, in continuing professional development courses for teachers, provided by the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. This chapter draws on a long lasting partnership with preschool teachers who participated in a year-long program for action research, in which they conducted a case study facilitated by the researchers. After finishing the program, many of those teachers took up positions in which they facilitated colleagues in their own and other preschools. It was obvious how an episode of practice in the action research program (facilitating) gave impetus to changes in their own practice (i.e. facilitating colleagues). However, this new role for the teachers made them frustrated about how to deal with their new situation and they turned to the university for a discussion about collaboration on this matter. We were all lost in practice but the researchers were able to rethink ways of establishing collaboration and partnerships with the teachers, grounded in the Nordic tradition of research circles.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will present how we (two researchers), together with preschool teachers, organized research circles with the purpose of discussing and sharing knowledge of leading quality work in preschools. According to the Education Act (SFS 2010:800), preschool teachers have a clearly stated responsibility to strive for and lead quality work in their preschools. This means they need, in one way or another, to take a leading role. The concept of teacher leaders is recognized in a fairly new field of research connected to professional learning. However, this research mostly concerns teacher leaders in schools (Muijis & Harris 2006), rather than preschools. In this article we look at the educational leadership that is undertaken by the preschool teachers who have been involved in an action research program. For such a group, a recent study emphasizes the connections between learning and leading, and how these processes nurture one another in the way the teachers take up a position of leadership (Edwards Groves & Rönnerman 2013). A second point to stress is that teachers generally lack time to meet and discuss issues relevant to them in the role of educational leaders. To meet the teachers' request, we suggested

K. Rönnerman & P. Salo (Eds.), Lost in Practice: Transforming Nordic Educational Action Research, 95–112.

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that our meetings should take place in a research circle. Two groups of preschool teachers met in a research circle, together with a researcher, over a year, with the purpose of discussing issues related to the role of an educational leader, and of sharing knowledge about these issues. This article draws on the theory of practice architectures to examine the social nature of the language, the activities and the relationships of leading, and the particular conditions or practice architectures which enable or constrain taking part in a research circle. The following questions form the basis of this chapter:

- What factors enable and constrain the setup of the research circles?
- How do the teachers experience the research circle as a space for sharing knowledge?
- How do the practice architectures contribute to the development of different kinds of knowledge?

This chapter begins by offering a description of what a research circle is, including relevant academic literature on research circles, followed by a description of the theory of practice architectures, which is used to understand and analyse the factors that enabled and constrained the setting up and continuation of the research circles. It continues with a brief background on the quality in preschools and the preschool teachers involved, followed by a description of how the two research circles were constructed. Finally, the research circle as a space for sharing knowledge is emphasized, demonstrating that the participants were able to gain and develop knowledge as well as construct new understandings together with the researcher in an intersubjective space.

THE RESEARCH CIRCLE: A CONSTRUCTED SPACE FOR SHARING KNOWLEDGE

In Sweden, study circles are grounded in the tradition of folk enlightenment (*folkbildning*), and have been used since the 1930s to encourage people in workplaces to become 'educated' and active citizens. The basic idea of the study circles was to gather participants and, under the guidance of a knowledgeable person and in democratic ways, to learn about a specific subject. Building on this tradition of study circles as used in folk enlightenment, research circles were later established at Lund University in Sweden in the 1970s, when the labour unions became interested in cooperating with universities in collaborative knowledge production, during the major crisis of the shipping and car industries (Holmer 1993). Since then, research circles have been used in different ways, mainly within work sciences and social work, with the purpose of encouraging collaboration between parties in a democratic way, where different perspectives or understandings of a specific issue are in focus. In educational contexts, research circles were not introduced until the beginning of this century (Holmstrand & Härnsten, 2003), and have since been used in various ways for participatory research. An illustrative example is presented by Enö (2005), who describes the daily experience of the use of research circles to create a space for reflective dialogue with the teaching profession. Enö's thesis is based on meeting with eleven preschool staff once a month on 27 occasions. Her analysis shows how the project revealed a clear potential for change and emancipation, but also the importance of hope and meaning making. Furthermore, in Wingård's (1998) thesis, the research circle is used as a way of understanding the specific situation of being a female principal. Eight female principals met the researcher once a month for two years, discussing and analysing issues relating to their experiences as principals. Some of the findings indicate that, rather than focusing on school development, the principals tended to prioritise administrative tasks and problems relating to personal relationships. Interestingly, in both these examples the researcher met the participants during evenings (the participants were unable to meet during working hours), and in both examples the research circles developed into an important space for meetings and collaborative discussions, with a focus on questions relevant to the participants' daily work.

Our study connects to both these examples, as the participants are preschool teachers as well as teacher facilitators (leaders). They also had an interest in participating in the research circle, in order to learn more about becoming more skilled as facilitators, and to share their knowledge of their roles as facilitators. According to Holmer (1993, p. 150), the process of being part of a research circle could be perceived in three different ways: gaining knowledge, developing knowledge and participating in the social production of knowledge. In this study, the research circle served the purpose of enhancing the participants' understanding of their situation as teacher facilitators, as well as sharing their knowledge in order to develop it further. However, as researchers we were also interested in whether, being part of a research circle, participants would develop any competences for further actions within their practices.

A research circle can generally be described as a meeting in which participants conduct an organized search for and development of knowledge in co-operation with other participants. As such, a research circle always starts with a problem that has been jointly decided upon. The problem is then scrutinized from different perspectives. The intention is not to solve the problem but to analyse it and thereby to widen participants' knowledge of it. Sharing knowledge among the participants of being a teacher facilitator was therefore important, but equally important was to add research conducted within the field of leadership. Reading relevant articles and presenting specific research was therefore connected to each meeting.

Although the approach to dealing with identified problems differs between situations, Holmstrand and Härnsten (2003, p. 21) point out that in all research circles the participants' knowledge and experiences, the researchers' knowledge of the identified problem, the researchers' competence as researchers (systematic knowledge), and other researchers' knowledge that might throw light on the problem, are all of importance. The overall aim of a research circle is to contribute to democratization through a model of co-operation between researchers and practitioners, acting for a mutual transmission of knowledge. A relevant question, therefore, is what participants (teachers and the researcher) gain from such collaboration, apart from gaining, developing and participating in the social production of knowledge. Do they also reach any agreements as a basis for mutual understanding of how to act in their own practice?

Recent research emphasizes the research circle as a foundation for action research being conducted in the Nordic countries (Rönnerman, Salo & Furu 2008; Rönnerman & Salo 2012). As the participants and the researchers are involved in action research, our purpose with the research circles was also to encourage the participants to act and develop or change their practice. Persson (2009, p. 9) lists some tools teachers might develop by being part of a research circle:

- To analyse educational situations and relate them to a wider context
- To use concepts to better understand their teaching practice and other educational issues
- To use knowledge about research to understand and improve their practice
- To read and understand relevant research within their field of interest
- To present their findings
- To use knowledge to improve their own practice and in projects within the school

However, since a research circle also involves researchers, one might ask what the benefits are for the researcher. It is therefore necessary to add to Persson's list some aspects related to the practice of the researcher. Thus, in the role of leader of the research circle, the researcher might gain:

- Deeper knowledge of what it means to be a teacher today
- Long-lasting and sustainable partnerships with teachers and principals
- Insights into teachers' practice through the authentic issues being discussed in the circle
- A foundation for further research and for teaching in different programs at the university

In a later section we will present the structure of the research circles used in this study. In the following section we will outline the theory of practice architectures used here to analyse the data collected through the research circles.

THEORY OF PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES

In this chapter we investigate the research circle as a social practice. According to Kemmis & Grootenboer (2008) and Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer and Bristol (2014), a practice is composed of *sayings*, *doings* and *relatings* that hang together in an intertwined way. *Sayings* are expressed in a common language where varied expressions occur and where mutual understanding is possible, e.g. when talking about being a leader or facilitating the work of colleagues. Here, in the research circle, the language spoken during the meeting is based on the tasks the teachers are presenting and on the researchers' presentation of research. *Doings* are the participants' interactions in joint activities being held, e.g. the meeting taking place, tasks being presented to each other or small group discussions. *Relatings* are expressed as relationships through communication, including both power and solidarity, e.g. the relationships between teachers from different municipalities or the relationship between the teachers and the researcher. In keeping with the tradition of study circles from the folk enlightenment, relating in our research circles are built on trust, democracy and collaboration. Also included in relationships are artefacts, e.g. the relationship to the specified tasks/articles, or curriculum and Education Act. These sayings, doings and relatings hang together in a *project*. Here the project is about constructing a space with the purpose of gaining and sharing knowledge of being a teacher facilitator.

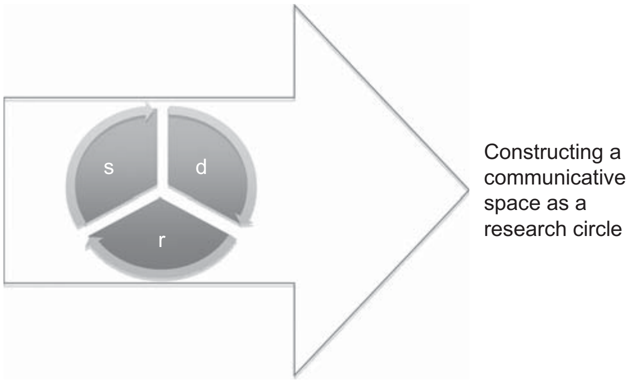

Figure 1. How sayings, doings and relatings of a practice analytically hang together in a project.

A practice is surrounded by its own local and particular *practice architectures.* The practice architectures consist of cultural-discursive arrangements, which enable and constrain practice through the medium of language (sayings), e.g. specialist discourses used in the practice; material-economic arrangements, which enable and constrain activities in practice through the medium of work (doings), e.g. the resources and set-ups necessary for the practice to take place; and social-political arrangements, which enable and constrain practice through the medium of power and solidarity (relatings), e.g. the roles and relationships necessary for the practice. What people say, do and how they relate to one another and to artefacts as part of the practice is prefigured (but not determined) by these arrangements, and they will also enable and constrain how a practice can be realized at the site, which, in our case, is where the teachers and the researcher meet in dialogue, sharing knowledge of being a facilitator. Practice architectures can be visualized through traditions, structures and contemporary regulations and conditions (see Chapter 4, Salo & Rönnerman 2014). In the next section we sketch the practice architectures for our practice of research circles.

QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL AND BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH CIRCLES

Learning and quality have become major concepts in the discourses of early childhood education and are strongly emphasized in the revised curriculum (Skolverket, 2010). However, while the discourse foregrounds children's learning, teachers' understanding of these processes is rarely explored.

At a national level, the quality of preschools was first evaluated in 2005, and between the years 2005-2011 quality reports had to annually be sent to the Swedish National Agency for Education. Quality is even more accentuated in the Educational Act 2011 (SFS 2010:800), in which it is stated that the principal at each preschool is responsible for quality and that this should be achieved in collaboration with the preschool teachers. In a recently released report from the School Inspection, 42 preschools in 14 different municipalities were investigated. Interestingly, two out of the four recommendations made mention that improving quality has to be part of the everyday work of the preschool, and that leadership in relation to quality has to be strengthened (Skolinspektionen 2012, p. 3).

Although Swedish preschool teachers generally work in teams, the importance of dialogue, collaboration and meaning making is not at the forefront. However, these are aspects that are emphasized and developed in research circles generally. The teachers in our research circles all facilitators of action research in their teams, skills learned through a one-year course in action research. However, a course on its own is not enough; knowledge and understandings have to be nurtured, shared and discussed with others. The teachers involved have facilitated colleagues' work for about eight years and during this period of time have participated in seminars run by the university. Some teachers have frequently presented their research publically, giving lectures at teachers' seminars organized by different municipalities. In addition, three of the teachers, together with one of the researchers, have published a book together (Nylund, Sandback, Wilhelmsson & Rönnerman, 2010). Other teachers have struggled on their own, sometimes together with their closest colleagues. However, all have expressed a need for more contact with peers, as well as with the university.

As a response to these needs, we invited the teachers to take part in a research circle that corresponded with the new Education Act 2011, which emphasizes that education in both preschool and school should be built on a scientific base and on proven experience. The main focus was to establish a meeting between two fields of knowledge – the scientific field, with relevant research and theory, and participants' own experience of acting as facilitators for colleagues. Such meetings are shaped by experiences, expectations and legitimacy (Rönnerman 2005; Lendahls Rosendahl & Rönnerman 2006).

Two research circles started in January 2012. One of them included ten teachers from different preschools in three different municipalities (circle A), while the other included nine teachers from nine preschools in the same municipality (circle B). In the latter circle, the number was reduced throughout the year and in the end, there were only six teachers left. The two researchers led one circle each. The researchers had both been involved in teaching the course in action research since 2004. Each research circle met five times during 2012 and each meeting lasted four hours. The conversations during the meetings were recorded and the researchers collected all written material from the teachers. How the research circles were structured will be presented in the next section.

STRUCTURE OF THE MEETINGS IN TWO RESEARCH CIRCLES

To follow the tradition of enabling democratization through research circles, the two groups were small (ten and six teachers and a researcher) and the meetings were structured so as to encourage all voices to be heard, listened to and a dialogue to be at the fore. Meetings in small groups also relates to Holmer's (1993) definition, that a research circle has the aim of gaining, developing and participating in the social production of knowledge. The dialogue was concerned with the meeting between science and proven experiences, in line with the Education Act. We use the term *dialogue* to emphasize the importance of sharing by being listened to and responding to each other (Bakhtin 1981). According to Bakhtin, multivoicedness leads to the creation of new meanings. To achieve such a dialogue in the meetings, all participants had to prepare by completing a given task. This was done in two ways: a) the researcher presenting a scientific article or paper containing a specific theory or research relevant to the theme, and b) the teachers presenting their experiences in a given task related to their work as facilitators.

The researcher planned the first meeting, and she first gave an overview of the scientific foundation of a research circle and then discussed *change agents* (Blossing 2008) and *teacher leaders* (Muijis & Harris 2006). The teachers came with answers to tasks sent out beforehand, a) by answering the question: What do you think of when you hear the term *leadership*? and b) by constructing a mind map out of their experiences as facilitators. The teachers shared their mind maps and discussed them in more detail with other teachers in small groups. A joint mind map was thereafter constructed by the whole group, involving experiences of all the teachers. After the meeting the two articles by Blossing and Muijis & Harris were sent to the teachers for further reading. Time was also used to discuss relevant themes for investigation during the following meetings. The following themes emerged:

- Learning for leading – understanding your role as a leader
- Searching for patterns – analysing data from you as a leader
- Professional learning communities
- To find a balance – how to create necessary conditions for learning, as a leader

In the second meeting, with the theme *Learning for leading,* the teachers had the task of looking back at their career as teachers, to understand how they came to assume a leading role. The task was to identify critical incidents of importance that led them to make specific decisions during their career path. During the meeting, the teachers shared their stories with each other in small groups, followed by a joint discussion identifying similarities and differences in entering the field of leadership. The researcher presented an article on 'generative leadership', which was discussed in relation to the teachers' own stories (the voices in the article included some of the teachers involved in the research circle). The article was later distributed to the group for further reading (Edwards Groves & Rönnerman 2012).

In the third meeting, with the theme *Searching for patterns,* how to analyse data was the topic in focus. The teachers were prepared through a task of composing a narrative about how they acted as facilitators for groups of teachers. At the meeting, the researcher talked about analyses in general and gave various examples. Afterwards the two groups proceeded in somewhat different ways. In circle A the teachers were divided into small groups of three (one from each municipality), with copies of all the narratives. Their task was to find patterns and label them. All groups presented their analyses to the whole group. The meeting ended with an additional analysis set up by the researcher with predetermined categories in a table (table 2).

Table 2: Table for a joint discussion in a research circle about being a facilitator for colleagues

Always works in facilitating a group	Intuitive tasks turning up when facilitating a group
Sometimes works in facilitating a group	Well-founded tasks turning up when facilitating a group

The researcher marked the different fields while the teachers presented examples and explained them. In this process, a pattern related to the role of being a facilitator and confronting these dilemmas became evident.

In circle B the teachers were divided into two groups, of which one tested peer group mentoring (Lauvås, Lycke & Handal 1997) as described in chapter 5 (Langelotz & Rönnerman 2014). Dilemmas that the teachers had described in their narratives were analysed through this method. The other group analysed their narratives with the help of the predetermined categories in table 2. Both groups did both tasks and finally the whole group discussed the results of the analyses together. Suggested literature on analysis was given (Bjørndal 2002).

The fourth meeting concerned *professional learning communities*. The teachers were asked to read two portraits of two teachers from a thesis, using Wenger's theory of communities of practice (Gustafson 2010). One of the portraits was about a teacher having a positive view on changing practices, while the other was about a teacher having a negative view. The portraits were discussed in the whole group at the beginning of the meeting, as an introduction, in order to investigate how changes in schools were viewed from the individual perspective. The researcher followed up the discussion by providing the theoretical background to communities of practices (Wenger 1998), and also to professional learning communities (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas 2006). The discussion focused on identifying what enables and constrains such communities in general. The session ended by giving the teachers 30 minutes to write down what they thought enabled and constrained them as teacher leaders in developing a professional learning community in their practice, facilitating colleagues. The researcher collected the handwritten papers and typed them.

This theme was followed up in the fifth and last meeting, which was entitled *How to find a balance*. The teachers wrote a text on what they thought enabled and constrained them as teacher leaders in developing a professional learning community in their practice. At the meeting these texts were orally shared and discussed among the teachers. To finalize the discussion, all the teachers were asked to write down what they thought they were able to do as teacher facilitators to enable the creation of a professional learning community. Additionally, in circle B, the teachers collectively agreed upon some collective actions, e.g. setting up a meeting with the principals and director in their municipality, about future work as facilitators.

The way the research circle was conducted was to create a space in which to gain, develop and participate in the social production of knowledge by sharing experiences with other teacher facilitators and relating the reflections to research results. At the beginning of each meeting, we emphasized the teachers' experiences by letting them perform certain tasks and thereafter discuss these in relation to relevant research. We also deliberately chose to hand out the readings after the discussion. The aim of this procedure was to allow their experiences to be understood in the light of the literature given. By this design, data for the study was produced at each meeting. All discussions were recorded and the teacher responses were handed over to the researcher in written form. Each meeting ended with a question to the teachers, phrased in terms of "What will you take with you to your practice from this meeting?" The responses were collected and later typed by the researcher.

In the following section we will present some findings from this process of data production, by using the theory of practice architectures as the lens through which to understand the practice of a research circle. In the first section we identify how cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements enabled and constrained the set-up for the meetings in the circles. In the second section, we will analyse the sayings, doings and relatings that constitute a practice of sharing knowledge, and will elaborate on how the research circle as a constructed space supported sharing knowledge, but also how it allowed the teachers to build up competences for actions in their own practical situations. In the third section, this analysis is taken further, by investigating in more detail what happened in research circle B, where the participants were all from the same municipality.

WHAT ENABLES AND CONSTRAINS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESEARCH CIRCLE?

For the research circle to occur, we can clearly see how the long-lasting partnership between the university and the two local authorities removed many obstacles. Collaborations between the teachers and the two researchers around quality issues in preschools throughout the years enabled the teachers to become part of a space with the researchers. From the lens of practice architectures, the social-political arrangements are in fact a crucial factor for the initiation of the present or the research circles under discussion. Quality issues in preschool are stressed in the revised curriculum (Skolverket 2010) and in the new Education Act (SFS 2010:800), and were also singled out as a field in need of general development in the School Inspection report of 2012. In the new Education Act, it is clearly stated that principals and preschool teachers are mutually responsible for issues relating to quality improvement. There are, in other words, clear *relatings* between the national documents and the directors acting in the municipalities, that have enabled the research circles to occur. In this way, the social-political arrangements have laid the foundations for these kinds of meetings.

Furthermore, the material-economic arrangements supported participation in the research circle for both preschool teachers and researchers. The activity took place either at the University of Gothenburg or at a town house in a municipality, where all participants met to present tasks, discuss literature and reflect on being a teacher facilitator (*doings*). In circle A, all the teachers were allotted time to attend the research circle, to read the literature and to travel to the University of Gothenburg. In circle B it was up to the individual principals at each preschool whether the teachers would be allotted time and support to participate in the meetings. One of the teachers was not allowed to include meeting time in her normal working hours during the first period and she therefore chose not to attend the first three meetings.

The course that all the facilitators had previously attended represents another material-economic arrangement influencing the doings in the meeting. The teachers all share a repertoire of doings, having being part of a group previously facilitated by the researcher, where specific activities took place e.g. discussing and sharing experiences for learning. The teachers mention how this format also enables learning through sharing knowledge.

> Through our discussions you get a broader understanding and that changes your views. (Circle A)

Yet the data also show how the background constrains other people from taking part in the meeting. In circle B one person had a different professional background. He was facilitating preschool teachers as an expert on ICT, but had no experience of action research. It was already obvious at the first meeting that this participant differed from the others in terms of background experience and learning preferences. He declared, for example, that his personal learning style was based on listening rather than participation – a statement that was contested by other participants, who argued that learning is most efficient in discussions where everyone contributes. The result was that this participant chose not to attend any other meetings. Similar events occurred in circle A. Three of the participants had not been part of the action research course but were facilitating the implementation of the new curriculum in the municipalities. One of them left after the first meeting but the other two stayed. This demonstrates how the arrangements constrain but do not determine participation.

The cultural-discursive arrangements strongly influenced the themes picked up by the teachers to frame each meeting. All teachers were trained preschool teachers with many years of experience. They had all been enrolled in the one-year course in action research for quality work in preschool, and later joined a series of seminars about becoming peer facilitators. As a result of that process, they used much the same language (*sayings*) and could easily understand each other when sharing knowledge about how they facilitated groups in their municipalities. But, as mentioned above, this strong frame also prevented others from taking part in the circle.

The meetings in the research circle were structured in a specific way, emphasizing that education should be built on science and proven experiences. This can be connected to how material-economic arrangements (e.g. the Education Act) influenced the structure of the meetings. The activities were conducted as dialogues around experiences based on a specific task and scientific articles. Every meeting began with the teachers presenting their experiences related to the task, followed by sharing knowledge around that meeting's topic. After that the researcher presented relevant research connected to the topic, followed by further discussion and reflection. This was a way of enhancing the point that theory or science is not seen as superior to experiences but rather as a tool for reflecting on experiences to make them meaningful. Within this structure (social-political arrangements), the researchers strived to work in a balance of power (in which no-one's knowledge is more valuable than the others), which was necessary in order for the meetings to be beneficial to both the teachers and the researchers. There was one exception in the second meeting in circle B, where the meeting started by discussing the article first. In the written reflections from the teachers after the meeting, and also later on in the evaluations, it is clear that this was the least meaningful discussion for the preschool teachers. One of them comments, in her evaluation, that it…

> …felt like a rather heavy theory because the article was in English. I think it could have been more interesting (Circle B)

SHARING KNOWLEDGE IN THE RESEARCH CIRCLE

In the overall findings, the teachers reported a high satisfaction with each meeting. They found the meetings challenging, and a useful way of participating in the dialogue around new knowledge. One teacher describes the importance of *gaining and developing knowledge* in discussion with others in this way:

> That we as facilitators have had more time together and by that had the opportunity to ventilate much about our commitments as facilitators, i.e. how to go on, together with good feedback and concrete things to change, it feels like we are working to improve our facilitation and I have got more knowledge to take with me. When you discuss and put words on what you are doing it gives a different meaning and significance for yourself. (Circle B)

More specifically, the teachers talked about how they gained new knowledge by reading research articles. This also led to new perspectives, which *deepened* their knowledge about leadership practices, e.g. what it means to be a supportive teacher facilitator or what it means to interact with teachers in a community.

> Deepening my knowledge about learning communities, very interesting text to read and that created many thoughts in my head (Circle A)

In the third meeting the teachers sat together and analysed their own data. This can be viewed as a *social production of knowledge*. The teachers commented on this occasion as rare but very satisfactory, since analysis gets very little attention in their own practices. By doing this activity, the teachers learned how to use tools for analyses. Concepts used in research were presented to the teachers in order to develop their knowledge and to give input for them to further develop their own practice. In the following quote, this is expressed by one of the teachers:

> Analysis is fragile because you may mix it with your own views. This occasion gave new tools to use and I have got a new picture about how to analyse. The whole thinking has been refreshed and I have got deepened knowledge in how to analyse (circle A)

Deepened knowledge was also one of the things commented on by the teachers when they emphasized the importance of being able to share their knowledge. An example comes from the last meeting, when the teachers were given the opportunity to comment on or add to their individual writings. Through their discussion, similarities in experiences were highlighted but also different interpretations. One teacher in circle B commented during the meeting that she realized that she always wrote about what she should do to make things better as a facilitator (when a team does not want to be facilitated, for example), but she could see that another facilitator in the group was writing about the same issue as a problem that she cannot do much about (the lack of support from the principal being the problem). The facilitator concluded that the possibility of understanding the situation in different ways deepened her knowledge. The teachers' knowledge was also deepened by similarities and differences in how one thinks about different articles and, as mentioned by a teacher in circle A:

> Very interesting reflections around the readings. I observed how differently and similarly we perceive the concept of learning communities and I will bring that back to my group and discuss it further. (circle A)

ENHANCING COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN RESEARCH CIRCLE B

The underpinning ideas of action research in these research circles provided participants with an aim to strive not only to gain new knowledge but also to direct this new knowledge towards how to act in their own local practices. At the end of the series of meetings the teachers were given the task of thinking about themselves as leaders (facilitators) in their practices, and of making a list of what would enable and constrain their leadership practices in creating a learning community with the participants they were facilitating. From the teachers' experiences, the lists gave examples of a number of things preventing them, as teacher facilitators, from creating a learning community with their colleagues. Most of these were related to what happens in the practice, in relation to the principal or to the local authority, but some were also related to the culture and tradition of preschool in Sweden, as exemplified in these quotes:

> It is not obvious that teachers in preschools reflect and talk together about their practice. (circle A)
>
> There are no traditions of how to evaluate children's learning and what the preschool means for their development. (circle A)

Although preschool teachers work in teams, the preschool environment is not *per se* an environment supporting a forum for sharing knowledge on everyday issues. When the teachers listed factors that could enable them to create a professional learning community together with the groups they facilitated, a number of both conditions and actions were mentioned, for example in circle B:

> Possibilities through a good principal giving the best pre-requisites
>
> That there are teacher teams who want to be facilitated
>
> Support from the directors of the local authority and that it is conveyed to every principal that action research is important and should be worked on
>
> Higher demands are required for the principals in the steering group for action research

The researchers categorized the suggestions from the teachers in both circles and found out that *legitimation* was a strong factor, e.g. the teachers stressed that if they do not get support from the principal in their roles as facilitators, it is hard to create a learning community for the teachers they facilitate.

A condition that differs for the facilitators in municipality B compared to municipality A is that they attend the research circle as a homogeneous group, sharing the same situation of all working in the same municipality. This situation gives power to the teachers in municipality B to make intersubjective agreements in a different way than in circle A. In the last meeting the teachers were all engaged in the discussion of how to act collaboratively for a better situation as facilitators.

Collectively specific actions were agreed upon and written down. Some agreements addressed the teacher-facilitators' own work. For example, dealing with the enabling and constraining conditions of legitimacy led to agreements like:

> How do you put pressure on everyone who has been participating in the action research course to use it? We who have attended the course should go out and "advertise" action research and make sure it gets introduced at our own preschools. (circle B)

Other agreements aimed at affecting the arrangements for quality work in preschools in the municipality

> In what ways can the resources that have been invested in action research become a visible part of the municipality's quality work? Set up a meeting with the director for the preschools at the municipality about conditions, structure and future. Action research must be an on-going theme in the Thursday meetings of the preschool principals every week. (circle B)

What is interesting here is the proceeding from deepened knowledge around the phenomena being scrutinized, to an action-oriented attitude where concrete suggestions about what to do were emphasized. In the written reflections after the meeting, one of the teachers concludes:

> I think it is incredibly important that we take hold of the planned actions that we agreed upon; you could say we need to act to enable our facilitation to improve. (circle B)

The action-oriented attitude emerging through the discussion, and also visible afterwards in the written reflections, is understood here as action competence, a central concept in the field of sustainable development (Björneloo 2007). Action competence combines a critical attitude, built on expanded knowledge, with a faith in the possibilities to make changes through acting out of better judgments. In the research circle, so far, the participants had gained knowledge about their practice, and this knowledge now became the starting-point for moving into a more action-oriented attitude.

Using the practice architectures as a theoretical lens for understanding why collective actions get planned in circle B, the cultural-discursive arrangements could be considered. As mentioned earlier, a common language is continually being developed in the circles through the process of producing knowledge together. Additionally, in circle B, the experiences being shared are grounded in the same local situation, due to the material-economic arrangement that a whole group of facilitators from one municipality is participating in one research circle. Thus, knowledge being expressed in the discussions gives meaning for the participants and gets applied to the same situation. This also makes it possible for participants to understand how the knowledge gained and developed could be transformed into collectively planned actions.

When going through the evaluations it becomes obvious that all teachers considered their collective agreements important and that they felt empowered and obliged to actually follow their intentions through. This leads to the possibility of reconfiguring the social-political arrangements for preschool leadership in the municipality. The teachers have been strengthened through their participation in the research circle and are now prepared to act in new ways. As a group, building on deepened knowledge, they express how they plan to affect their own and also the principals' and directors' work. This is all about how different practices of leadership have impact on one another in the municipality (Rönnerman & Olin 2013).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to present how two groups of preschool teachers met with two researchers in two research circles and how these research circles can be viewed as constructed spaces in which to gain, develop and participate in the social production of knowledge about being a teacher leader in preschool. The two research circles were initially constructed in the same way in the planning phase, and we expected to find similar outcomes from the two circles. But, when considering data from the two research circles, the outcome was richer than expected. The results show that the social production of knowledge evolved differently in the two circles. It is apparent that the impact of the practice architectures is significant for what can happen within different practices.

In circle A it is obvious that the participants, although coming from three different municipalities, use common experiences of action research (cultural-discursive arrangements) to make comparisons between the conditions for their practice as facilitators. Furthermore, in those municipalities there are well-developed prerequisites for the teachers, for example they are all given time to participate in the research circle. For those facilitators, the outcomes of sharing in meetings and deepening their knowledge were relevant and meaningful.

In circle B the conditions were not that well developed from the start, for example one teacher could not join the circle until after three meetings because she was not given time by her principal. However, conditions like this became the content of collective reflection in the circle, and as the whole group came from the same municipality (material-economic arrangement), it was meaningful for the group as a whole to make collective agreements on a more concrete level than in research circle A, the development of action competence. Hence, the research circle made it possible for those facilitators to re-evaluate what they had earlier seen as their own shortcomings, e.g. not being able to motivate teacher teams for action research, and instead agrees on actions towards the leaders of the municipality to put pressure on them to act to legitimize the facilitators' work. This can clearly be viewed as an example of how the practice is not determined by practice architectures, but contributes to prefiguration of its practice architectures.

To meet in research circles is *per se* to take part in a dialogue with others, with the purpose of deepening one's knowledge about a given topic. The preschool teachers were all facilitators, and highly appreciated the opportunity to learn more about their own positions in their preschools, even though it happened in different ways. A research circle can be viewed as a community of practice, defined by Wenger (1998) as groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and who learn how to do it better through regular interaction. The basic assumption of a community of practice is the idea of learning as a process of social participation. The results indicate that this happened, and can be further emphasized in circle B, where the teachers agreed on how to act collectively after the research circle finished. As a teacher leader it seems to be important to take part in a community where the potential to develop teacher leadership capacities is present.

Furthermore, learning in the research circle can be related to our work on action research, where we draw on the aims stated by Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 164) that action research is about developing a practice, the understanding of this practice and the understanding of the situation in which the practice takes place. The last point connects to what has been shown in this study – that knowledge created collectively and in democratic ways in a research circle enables the participants to go beyond the individual view and thereby to be more critical of the situation, by improving their understanding. This was more apparent in circle B, where the teachers, through gaining new knowledge, realized that they are reaching a new place, where it becomes more likely that they will be the motor of change, and not only try to adapt to situations that are troublesome. Further connected to the Nordic traditions of *bildung* (see chapter 4, Salo & Rönnerman 2014), this could be viewed as professional development in the sense of growing as human beings, citizens and co-workers (Rönnerman & Salo 2012, p. 7).

The results also show that these preschool teachers, through participating in research circles, have grown in their role as teacher leaders in their preschools, which meets the demands of the curriculum.

As a last point we also want to stress the impact of participating in research circles for us as researchers. Persson (2009, p. 9) lists tools that teachers might develop, and in this study most of them have occurred. We added tools that the researcher might gain, e.g. deeper knowledge about the teachers' work and insights into their practices, long-lasting and sustainable partnerships with practitioners and municipalities, and a foundation for further research and teaching at the university. Through participating in and analysing what happened in our research circles, we have definitely gained more knowledge that will be used both for further research and for higher education. Constructing and taking part in the research circles can also be seen as a means of building long-lasting and sustainable partnerships, which in itself become practice architectures enabling on-going collaborative learning and knowledge building.

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7. FROM TRANSMISSION TO SITE-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

On the art of combining research with facilitation

The authors of this chapter are engaged as teachers and researchers at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. They work at the Faculty of Education, which is responsible for educating teachers for the Swedish-medium schools in Finland. Besides the authors' professional background within schools and university, this chapter draws on experiences of facilitation of professional development in schools. It illuminates how roles, expectations and ambitions with regard to research-based professional development at school sites are challenged by and have to be adjusted to the organizational, administrative, economic and professional conditions that characterize professional action within education. Without adjustment, the researcher might be lost in the practice he/she aims to research and develop.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we study the complex practices of initiating and promoting professional development (PD) of teachers and principals. More specifically, we look at the aims, approaches and challenges of replacing practices of predetermined content-delivery with practices based on research and collaboration on educational sites. We focus on two sides of the coin: we discuss PD from the viewpoint of the cooperation and confrontation between ourselves as researchers with teachers as practitioners, and from the viewpoint of being in the complex role of the researcher as facilitator. Our aim is to reach a deeper understanding of the prerequisites of site-based education development by discussing four projects in which PD was realized in an action research manner in schools, municipal organizations and local, regional and national networks. The educational sites considered vary from individual classrooms (with subject focus), to school leadership development in a municipality, and to promoting PD and well-being within a network of small schools. The initiatives for PD were mainly prompted from outside, by national, regional or local authorities or organizations, and in the context of a new evaluation-based policy culture. Within this new educational policy culture, authorities in Finland, as elsewhere, aim to engage researchers on educational sites to promote PD. We use the theory of

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practice architectures for conceptualizing our projects. They are discussed in terms of the cultural-discursive (sayings), material-economic (doings) and social-political (relatings) arrangements shaping the prerequisites for and the realization of PD in a research-oriented manner (Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer & Bristol 2014).

FROM IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND LOCAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS SITE-BASED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

We interpret the orientation towards collaborative, on-site forms of professional development in two manners; firstly in relation to the tension between contemporary global educational trends and local professional challenges, and secondly in the light of the recent emphasis on collaborative forms of learning, meaning making and development (e.g. professional learning communities). As a consequence of the global evaluation and evidence-based policy movement, educational practices are to be developed and researched on simultaneously, with research taking place close to everyday practices and on site. Traditional forms of institutionalized in-service training are to be replaced with collaborative forms of PD. Researchers are to involve themselves in partnerships with educational practitioners (e.g. Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell, Mockler, Ponte & Rönnerman 2012; Hardy 2012). Thus, momentary, delivery-oriented and content-focused, strongly curriculum-related PD activities are being challenged by on-site enquiry and observation, collaboration, coaching and mentoring within various kinds of professional networks (e.g. Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä 2012; Opfer & Pedder 2010; Stanley 2011).

Educational action research seems to have entered the arena anew (e.g. Cain & Milovic 2010; Lopéz-Pastor, Monjas & Manrique 2011). Within the context of the Nordic countries, the emergence of educational action research and local school development is related to reforms and policies for decentralization, deregulation and professional development in the early 1990s. Schools and local municipalities were to respond to local needs and circumstances. Delegation of decisions on curriculum and teaching to municipalities and schools can also be understood in terms of professionalization (Johnson 2006, pp. 98–100; Rönnerman & Salo 2012, p. 4). In the first stage, local school development took place in a welfare-state system steered mainly by rules. More recently, this kind of centrally administrated development has been loosened up, and is nowadays realized within a system steered by frames and goals (Berg 2007, pp. 584–588) and in relation to effectiveness and outcomes (Uljens & Nyman 2013, pp. 38–40). Still, the development of education in the different Nordic countries varies from the 1990s onwards. In the case of Finland, with a strong conservative trust and research-based teacher professionalism combined with loose educational standards and flexibility (Sahlberg 2007; Simola 2005), the move from local school development towards collaborative site-based education development is therefore of special interest.

In order to elucidate the characteristics of various forms of PD we use a matrix developed initially by Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brasset-Grundy and Brynner (2004, pp. 24–29) to study the effects of lifelong learning (see Figure 1). It consists of two dimensions: the horizontal one, representing the object and beneficiary of PD practices (the individual or the professional community), and the vertical one, which distinguishes PD practices focused on sustaining and strengthening the existing structures and cultures from PD practices that focus on questioning and transformation of the same.

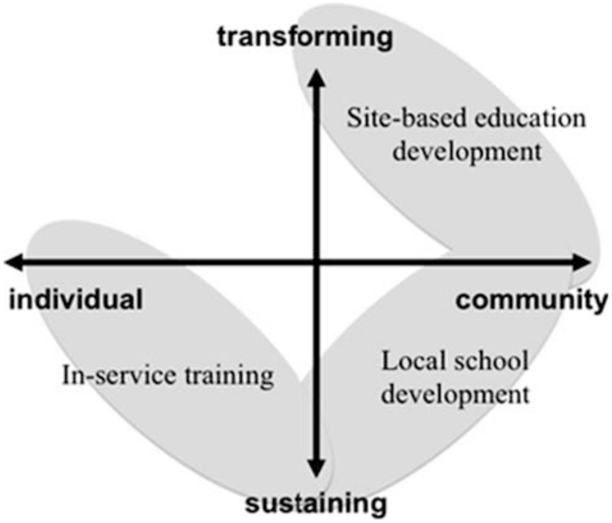

Figure 1. Three forms of professional development.

In our understanding, traditional in-service training and local school development rely on the existing education system, its traditions, values, culture and structures. PD is about furthering stability, integration and functional co-ordination (Burrell & Morgan 1979, p. 13), either individually (with a focus on classroom practices) or within the local school community (with a focus on participation in development practices). It is based on the transmission of expertise or of previously developed practices from outside into the school. Site-based education development is not only about an ambition to transform educational practices, or to research and question local school cultures and structures (for example). In our view it is also about applying a collective subjectivist approach to the site and practices at hand, as well as about a voluntaristic view of human nature and ideographic understanding of the methodology for research and development (ibid. pp. 3–7). With reference to Schuller et al. (2004, p. 27), site-based education development could be called professional community activism. Whereas local school development represented an administrative system perspective, site-based education development mobilizes a methodological perspective. For an individual teacher or principal, the change of concepts could be interpreted as a turn from being a representative of a system to being a researcher and developer of the system. A change of discourse, from in-service training to site-based education development, has various professional implications.

By introducing site ontology and the concept of 'site', Schatzki (e.g. 2005) aims to establish a path in between ontological individualists and societists. In his view, the assumption held by individualists, that social phenomena are constructed of individuals and by their relations, and are influenced by the mental states (values, attitudes, beliefs) that individuals act on within their relationships, is not sufficient. It has to be complemented with ontological societism. This means that social phenomena are dependent on and understandable only by systematically taking the "facts about and the features of collections of people" (ibid. p. 466) into account. Site ontology assumes that social life, for example PD in a school setting, is inherently tied to the various educational contexts and practices in which it transpires. In other words, the practice architecture of PD is nested in and shaped by ecologies of practices in the education complex, i.e. student learning, teaching, leading and researching (Kemmis et al. 2014, pp. 31–54). Realizing PD in a collaborative manner would inherently transpire as part of a particular sort of context, whereby the character of the context has to be taken into account when analysing and explaining collaborative professional development as a social phenomenon. According to Schatzki (2005, p. 469), "properties of individuals are ontologically continuous with the distinct social contexts in which they exist."

Site is the arena or broader setting, a type of tightly coupled context for social phenomena. In the words of Schatzki (2005, p. 468), it "surrounds or immerses something and enjoys powers of determination with respect to it." Within a site, "the context and contextualized entity constitute one another." Sites can but do not need to be spatial. In case of professional development and action research, sites, especially the local ones, both enable and constrain the intentions being formulated outside the site. Development is a matter of interpreting and adapting to the local circumstances, listening to the (many) voices of the sites. More concretely, both PD and action research are dependent on insiders' views of the site(s), and the practices the site(s) are constructed on. PD is dependent on teachers and school leaders inhabiting the sites at hand, and especially on their engagement in reflecting on and developing their professional practices, both individually and collaboratively. The site of the social constitutes both *doings* and *sayings* (Schatzki 2002, p. 73), but social practices, taking place on a site, are more than the sum of doings and sayings. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) elaborate Schatzki's view on social practices into a notion of practice architectures. They do this by presenting a third constituent, *relatings*. The term is used both for the personal and professional relationships between practitioners involved in a certain practice, and for the manners in which material and cultural meta-practices are related to and dependent on each other (see also Groundwater-Smith et al. 2012, p. 154).

In a practice such as professional development, sayings, doings and relatings hang together in an intentional and identifiable manner in a "larger project" with an overarching purpose. The larger project is also related to and constructed by other practices in complex webs of overlaps and interactions. When we, in this article, study collaborative forms of professional development, we do so in four different cases of PD projects, each of them with slightly different purposes. These are constituted within specific conditions and arrangements of practice architectures. They are enabled and constrained by cultural-discursive arrangements (which shape the language used in the practice, *sayings*, in semantic space), material-economic arrangements (which shape the activities of the practice, *doings* in physical space-time) and social-political arrangements (which shape how people relate to each other, *relatings* in social space). Whereas the material-economic, tangible resources and aspects of practice architectures are often quite easily identified and grasped, the social-political, and especially the cultural-discursive dimensions constituting the practices, are much harder to uncover and articulate. The practices of collaborative PD are furthermore shaped in various ways by a multitude of practices, within ecologies of practices, consisting of educational leadership and administration, curriculum development, teacher education and educational research and evaluation (Kemmis et al. 2014, pp. 43–54; Kemmis & Heikkinen 2012).

Educational practices and the sites are thus always prefigured. They are designed and constructed by the practitioners within and outside a certain identifiable and definable setting, and are likewise continuously reconstructed, changed and altered by the practitioners. This spontaneous and simultaneous process of maintaining and reconstructing takes place in the everyday interactions within a certain setting. Extraordinary features, such as expectations relating to goal-oriented professional development, often work to intensify the negotiations with regard to certain practice architectures. At the same time, pressures and challenges, and also clashes of traditions and methods, ought to further the possibilities for articulating and reflecting on the very character and significance of the practice architectures at hand, and particularly on the various manners in which they prefigure – enable and constrain – the practices to be developed.

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AND PD IN FINLAND

Finnish teachers are seen as being among the most autonomous and well-educated teachers in the world. This is partly due to a research-based teacher education, which entails both theoretical studies and periods of practice in authentic settings. Teacher education, as in other Nordic countries, is realized within a broad and rigorous framework. It forms the basis on which professional experiences and development are built. It results in an extended but also somewhat conservative professionalism when it comes to enhancing active learning or reciprocal professional collaboration within schools (Ostinelli 2009, pp. 301–305). The teaching profession is characterized by strong autonomy and trust-based professionalism (Sahlberg 2007, p. 152). Nevertheless, the view on PD in Finland is instrumental and rational, highly content-oriented and measured in mandatory days of training per year. The emphasis in the policy documents regarding teachers' PD during the last decades has been on structure, contents and provision, not on collaborative educational practices (Hardy, Rönnerman, Moksnes Furu, Salo & Forsman 2010, pp. 83–84).

Considering the Finnish PISA success, it is somewhat of a paradox that the continuous PD of teachers and school leaders is not better developed. Although the Ministry of Education and Culture has invested millions into PD projects (Kumpulainen 2011), there is a risk that these efforts do not reach all education personnel. Local authorities have a responsibility for surveying local needs. The resources for promoting PD and funding teachers to attend study sessions or in-service training during work time vary greatly between municipalities (Jakku-Sihvonen & Kuusela 2012). A report from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Hämäläinen & Hämäläinen 2011, abstract) stresses the importance of "further advancement of education personnel's professional development, such as a recommendation for better integration of initial and continuing teacher training so as to create a solid foundation for development of professional competence throughout the teaching career as a lifelong learning path."

FOUR PROJECTS OF SITE-BASED EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

In the following we will compare and bring together experiences from four different cases of PD projects among Swedish-medium schools in Finland. More specifically, we focus on our professional experiences as researchers with an array of extended roles in these PD projects, which were established independently of each other. Goodnough (2003), on facilitating action research with a group of science teachers, concludes that she was able to foster collaboration within the group of participating teachers and provide them with support at various stages of the project by assuming a multiplicity of roles throughout the project, by shifting roles to meet changing circumstances and needs, and by assuming several roles simultaneously. In addition to that of a facilitator, Goodnough describes her role as a challenger, a supporter and a teacher. As we will show, we found our situations to be much more complex and challenging. However, as Goodnough also points out, each action research experience is unique, and as a consequence the roles of the participating researchers will vary.

Our separate projects were initiated by educational authorities at local and national levels, who contacted us as researchers at the Faculty of Education. The PD projects we use as case studies were in various stages of realization at the time of our cross-case study, some of them only beginning and some of them already finished. All four projects were set up with activities in cycles characteristic of action research (observation, planning, acting and evaluation). However, various working methods, different tools for studying the professional practices, and meetings in various formats, were used in the projects. With these variations we were able to adjust the approaches to PD and action research to the educational sites at hand.

This chapter is a result of a professional study circle (see chapter 4, Salo & Rönnerman 2014) for collegial deliberation on our experiences: firstly of working and researching closely with practitioners, and secondly of being in charge of PD practices on site. Our professional and personal narratives of acting as action researchers in schools and being fellow academics are interwoven with an aim of understanding and making meaning of the prerequisites of PD in its various forms. As a community of practice characterized by mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoires of practice, we find ourselves at a confluence of practice architectures of research, university and school, reconstructing these architectures via discussion and reflection (Hardy 2010, pp. 133–135; Smith, Salo & Grootenboer 2010). As noted above, the study we present is a kind of cross-case study, including an analysis and synthesis on independent, yet similar, case studies. These are brought together to be able to consider the contextual variables at the four sites in a holistic manner. Furthermore, we aim to identify processes and relationships related to the simultaneous undertaking of researching and facilitating PD across sites and cases. This is done with the ambition of generalizing beyond the individual cases (Merriam 1989, pp. 153–157; Yin 2003, pp. 133–137). In the following we present a thematic and comparative content analysis, building on and conceptualizing themes and categories from each of the four cases.

Through this endeavour we aim at understanding site-based education development from a collaborative professional development point of view in various contexts. With an overall aim of explicating the prerequisites and challenges of moving from traditional forms of PD towards site-based education development and collaborative research, we begin this study by identifying and discussing the similarities in the various cases of PD projects. An overall thematic and categorical analysis, with a focus on interaction and collaboration throughout the development projects, gave us a way into unfolding and outlining the possibilities and challenges of professional development at the educational sites at hand. Ultimately, our focus is on the challenges we, acting in the professional role of the researcher, have been confronted with on site. Consequently, we focus on the three themes below.

A. Aims and motives for site-based education development.
B. Procedures for initiating and maintaining collaboration and professional development.
C. Challenges on site and researcher roles

We will illustrate our analysis of site-based education development and collaborative PD through selected examples from the four cases. Table 1 below provides an overview of the initiatives, aims, focuses and working methods of the PD projects.

Table 1. Overview of the four cases of PD projects

Project	*Initiative*	*Focus - aim*	*Working methods*
The teacher in the small school – Development of in-service education (Salute 1)	National Board of Education, Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University.	Create new in-service education that meets the PD needs of teachers and principals in sparsely populated areas and small schools.	Reflective inquiry and facilitation in dialogue with the participants, successively empowered to plan and arrange the activities
Communicative Finnish (CF)	Faculty of Education approached voluntary teachers of Finnish as a second language	Developing classroom practices for a more communicative approach to language teaching in Finnish	Researcher-teacher discussions of on-site observations on Finnish lessons and regional networks for supporting individual PD
School Language Strategies (SLS)	National Board of Education approached school leaders	Finding strategies for supporting the development of the school language in all subjects	Schools to plan for, try out and document strategies, preferably in small groups, according to local needs
Local Leadership Praxis (LLP)	Negotiated together with the researcher and local authorities	Collegial support for developing leadership practices on site	Group gatherings and development projects for supporting individual/ collaborative development

In the following, we will firstly describe how we gained access to the four sites under discussion, and how we aimed at establishing professional development practices. Thereafter we will focus on analysing and reflecting on the researchers and their extended roles, and in particular the challenges related to transforming the approaches to PD from transmission to collaborative practices evolving on site

A. Aims and Motives for Site-Based Education Development

The three overlapping aims for all four projects were (a) to *support collaborative professional learning of teachers and school leaders (b) to develop new practices for collaboration and (c) to conduct (varieties of) participatory and collaborative* *on-site educational (action) research.* All projects were initiated from outside the school, on the national or local level. This was done on the basis of needs identified in previous research or themes encountered in earlier professional development activities. We were, as researchers, contacted or connected to the projects at an early stage, and were thereby more or less able to negotiate on the prerequisites, aims and methods to be used. The perspectives and focuses within the development projects were quite well in line with both our expertise and our current research interests and profiles. Three of us have a professional background as teachers, with on-site working experience of the subjects and the contexts under discussion. Therefore the projects were, to some extent, driven by an insider or practitioner perspective. The educational, pedagogical and instructional practices to be studied and developed took place on three interconnected and overlapping educational sites: in classrooms, in particular schools and in local, regional and national groups of educational professionals.

B. Procedures for Initiating and Maintaining Collaboration and Professional Development

The initial contacts with the sites were arranged either via principals in individual schools, through personal contact with the municipal authorities or by sending out letters to groups of teachers identified beforehand. After establishing contact, different combinations of questionnaires and interviews were used in all the cases, to survey individual needs and interests with regard to professional development, and/or to chart former experiences of projects or developmental work (from a collegial and collaborative point of view). In addition, observations and video-recordings of lessons were used to gather data in both the Communicative Finnish (CF) and the School Language Strategies (SLS) project. To sum up, when initiating the projects it was important to use different research tools to investigate the needs of the participants.

At the next stage, the teachers and school leaders were brought together in local, regional or national groups or networks. This was done in order to share the information and data gathered so far, and to use the overviews of teachers' practice-based experiences as a platform for engagement in collaborative professional development. These gatherings were constructed as arenas for scrutinizing and negotiating experiences and interests, and for raising awareness of professional practices as a basis for professional learning. These gatherings were also to function as platforms for collaborative planning, based on mutual interest and dialogue. Here the role of the researcher shifted to being that of a facilitator, opening communicative space (cf. Kemmis & McTaggart 2005).

On the basis of the initial discussions in the Local Leadership Praxis (LLP) project, bringing together school leaders from a municipality, the prerequisites for PD as site-based education development could be summarized in three preliminary notions. The development groups were to be put together according to school size (on the basis of the character of their employment, i.e. part or full time). Gatherings should be organized during working hours (through the use of substitute teachers) and physically on a neutral site (not at school). Principals expressed a great need to share everyday professional experiences in a trustful and informal manner among colleagues, but without systematizing them by documentation. These notions can be interpreted in terms of realization of a professional identity and a sense of belonging to a "small enough professional group" with similar kinds of working conditions and views on everyday practices. From a practice architecture point of view, material-economic arrangements coincide with social-political arrangements, i.e. physical space hangs together with social space.

The principles and procedures for initiating collaboration and introducing working methods can be further exemplified with the Communicative Finnish (CF) project, the one involving Finnish language teaching. The project was anchored in the local community, which was partly a result of public criticism of Finnish language teaching in Swedish-medium schools. The purpose of the initial meetings was to enable negotiations with regard to the aims, foci, working methods, researcher role, gatherings and the resources that would be made available. Participation relied on authentic interest and the teachers were invited to engage themselves in decisions regarding areas of the development work and the schedule of the professional development. Initially, all teachers had a particular interest in developing the teaching practices in Finnish. The negotiations with regard to aims, foci (oral activities in the classroom; teacher-parent cooperation), the use of working methods (on-site observation by the researcher and network gatherings), tools for studying the professional practice (observation schemes and log books) and the resources made available were documented after the first meeting in a contract signed by all parties. The project was responsible for costs and the network meetings were organized after working hours, sometimes at a local school or at the University. The researcher's role in the network meetings was to act as initiator and facilitator: organizing the meetings, initiating discussions, listening and reflecting upon experiences and providing feedback on the ongoing work. In summary, the focus was on establishing favourable material-economic arrangements.

In order to raise the teachers' awareness of their teaching practices, teachers in the CF project were given research literature on teachers' language teaching practices in Finnish. The literature showed that the students had too few opportunities to use Finnish in oral communication situations in the classroom. The teacher-researcher discussions about this study came to affect the teachers' awareness of their own classroom practices. In addition, the researcher made on-site observations in the classroom twice per semester and provided feedback on the on-going work, followed by reflective discussions on the classroom practices. These on-site observations raised the teachers' awareness, helping and motivating them to go forward with a specific focus on the areas that needed to be developed.

The Salute 1 project aimed at creating new forms of professional development. Earlier studies had highlighted a call for projects that would identify and meet the needs for PD and collegial support, particularly in the context of small schools, thereby overcoming geographical isolation (Karlberg-Granlund 2009; Sandén 2007). The PD programme was developed in continuous dialogue with the participants through reflective inquiry. The first study session explicitly invited the teachers to reflect on their actual work situation. This was done by using a research-based analytical tool, which helped them to articulate their inner motives for working in a small school, as well as to reflect on the constraints of this working environment. The teachers expressed mainly positive experiences of their work and found that they had a lot in common, which was an important step towards creating an atmosphere of confidence and openness in the group. During the first year, however, several obstacles for participation had to be overcome in order to enable the ten participants to attend the meetings and e-conferences. There was an apparent need for personal computers and technical support, as well as for the essential support and goodwill of the municipalities in the form of the provision of substitute teachers and time for PD. As described above, material-economic arrangements coincided largely with social-political arrangements. Salute 1 focused on PD through three parallel activities: (a) tailored professional development, (b) personal development projects (professional, school or classroom development issues), and (c) collegial mentorship and support. The participants were gradually empowered to plan and arrange the programme and the local, regional and national meetings by themselves. Collegial group mentoring was promoted in the group, which consisted of teachers of different ages. The long-term aim of the project was to create sustainable collegial networks, where external facilitation would no longer be needed. The participants agreed on five important values regarding the social-political arrangements of PD: (a) a willingness to share, encourage and support, (b) courage, risk-taking and openness, (c) appreciation of learning, (d) considering every participant as important and able to contribute their professional experience, and (e) a willingness to overcome obstacles and problems. These values are in line with previous research, for example in virtual networks being able to empower the participants (Jyrkiäinen 2007; Niemi 2002).

The SLS project involved four Swedish-medium schools covering grades 7–9, which were to choose their areas of language strategy work according to their own interests and local needs. In this initial process, the researchers were to act as "consultants" on strengths and challenges. The researchers were also in charge of leading meetings, providing feedback and discussing the ongoing work with the teachers, mainly in the form of whole school meetings, but also in small groups according to the needs of the schools. In the third and final year, the schools were offered additional support for further implementation of a number of strategies involving shadowing in small peer groups.

The initial interest in the purpose and the content of the PD project varied between the sites. This was partly reflected in the way school staff were committed to the work. This experience of demand, however, did not match the results from the initial chartings completely: the tendency was for the most committed staff to have more strengths to build on, in particular in the form of awareness of the challenges at hand

and initial strategies to work from, whereas the less willing staff either did not see much cause for concern or, at the other extreme, had already more or less given up on a situation they no longer thought they could affect.

C. Challenges on Site and Researcher Roles

The professional development practices, as described above, may seem straightforward. However, the fundamental challenges of collaborative site-based education development are realized and expressed in the interaction and collaboration between the different institutional traditions and practice architectures of the schools and universities involved. In the following we will move on from describing the projects to reflecting on and drawing conclusions from them. This is done by discussing the challenges of establishing and maintaining collaboration, and by focusing on the various overlapping roles and tasks of the researchers on site. We will also use the theory of practice architectures as a reflective sounding board.

When PD is initiated from outside it ought to be well anchored in the everyday practices of the site concerned. And when it is combined with research, researchers ought, from the very beginning, to be involved in the negotiations considering the aims, foci and the resources made available. In order to enhance sustainability, participation should be voluntary and based on authentic interest. The organization responsible for the project ought to demonstrate its engagement by providing both tangible (time/money) and intangible support (encouragement). Material-economic (doings) and social-political (relatings) arrangements are – once again – intertwined. This is a core issue for legitimizing the collaborations between practitioners, as well as between the researchers and practitioners, and the local authorities and employers. Practical obstacles, such as time constraints, scheduling and provision of required equipment (e.g. laptops for enabling online meetings) and substitute teachers, need to be taken care of to ensure the involvement of all participants. Despite differences with regard to the initiatives, objectives and scopes of the four development projects, the collaborative manner of realizing professional development seems to give rise to very similar ways of "professional behaving and acting", due to the practice architectures of educational sites.

Teachers and school leaders seem to have an immediate (professional) need to use the time and space provided for them to point out and explicate, to make inventories of the state of affairs and the challenges characteristic of their everyday professional practice. Meetings and gatherings are often used for narrating experiences in a highly spontaneous and unstructured manner. Schools as sites seem to lack time and space for reflection and meaning making – and this fact strengthens the cultural-discursive arrangements that prefigure the PD. The same applies to expressing the complexities of acting as a professional. It seems that collegial groups of teachers and school leaders need "a catalyst" that initiates the shift from spontaneous expression to reflection and analysis. The researcher might serve as such a catalyst, and needs to create different strategies for opening communicative space (Kemmis & McTaggart 2005). This is illustrated by the following examples.

As a consequence of the fact that the development work in the Communicative Finnish project was individual and took place at the local school level, the network meetings, where the teachers were given the possibility of discussing different problems, were highly appreciated. In Salute 1 the teachers expressed the importance of being engaged in both structured sessions led by a moderator, and more informal discussions. It was also important to share leisure time together by eating dinner, or enjoying a canoe safari in the vicinity of one of the participant's schools. The principals in the Local Leadership Praxis project also emphasized the need and importance of various kinds of informal meeting and arenas, beyond the school day, just for coming together.

The CF project began by mapping teachers' problems and their need of support regarding the development of their professional competencies. Interestingly, the professional problems experienced were outsourced; teachers related them to the students' lack of motivation or competence in and to the parents' negative attitudes towards the Finnish language. None of the teachers highlighted the need for support regarding the development of classroom teaching practices. Thus, the challenge in the beginning was to raise the teachers' awareness of their own professional needs regarding their teaching practices. The spaces created for collaborative professional development were turned, at least initially, into opportunities for consolidating existing ways of acting on and making meaning out of everyday professional experiences. This exemplifies how the cultural-discursive (sayings), social-political (relatings) and material-economic (doings) arrangements hang together, affect each other, and shape the prerequisites for and the realization of collaborative professional development.

Despite the participants' authentic interest in PD, we had some difficulties when trying to structure the need for expressing and sharing experiences. This applies both to reading literature as a means of enhancing professional reflection, and to overcoming scepticism about the importance and benefits of documenting one's professional activities. The School Language Strategies project was anchored differently at different sites throughout the project: at some of the sites, many teachers gave voice to concerns and frustrations that indicated that they were trying to fulfil the needs of the project, seemingly without experiencing any additional benefit or sense of commitment to the developmental work on their own part. At other sites, teachers expressed more agency. This could also be seen, for instance, through the large number and imaginative kinds of developmental initiatives that were born throughout the project. Overall, though, the consensus was that the workload put upon the teachers was too heavy, with not enough support in terms of allocated time (e.g. for reading literature, planning with colleagues and documenting work), and the lack of explicit PD on methods in the field. From an outsider's perspective it was obvious that the required resources and necessary commitments were not given enough consideration in the initial negotiations, and all participants were negatively affected as a result.

Schools as sites for professional development are both complex and contradictory. Entering educational sites accompanied by multiple aims, tasks and roles is a challenge with various dimensions and layers. In general, our role could be described as that of a guide, with the task of assisting practitioners on the site to identify, formulate and find answers to questions, or solutions to problems. However, there were several steps to be taken and functions to be realized before we came to that role. One of our initial tasks was, as mentioned above, to act as negotiators regarding the resources (material-economic arrangements such as time and space) for being able to come together. This was done both in relation to the participants and their organizations. Notably, the function of the researchers as negotiators was implemented throughout the projects. Another task was to be facilitators of dialogue. Practitioners on educational sites seem to have a great (suppressed) need to express and vent their everyday professional experiences (to reflect on and process the cultural-discursive arrangements). When coming together, the roles and tasks of the researcher could be described as that of a chairman and a secretary, in the sense of providing time and space for the spontaneous inventory of experiences. At times, our role was to be an empathetic listener. In trying to make sense of the practitioners' experiences, these roles sometimes seemed to turn into those of assistant meaning makers or consultants.

Even if we find Finnish teachers to be fully-fledged professionals, able to act autonomously and professionally within classrooms, we could also note how teachers developed a strong dependency on the researcher when it came to professional practices outside classrooms. Ambitions of providing ownership or developing agency are not always easy to reach. This is particularly the case for PD undertakings initiated from the outside, when they are done without giving sufficient consideration to social-political arrangements like power relations and individual points of view, and which thus fail to fully engage participants. The fact that teachers asked "What else do you want us to do?" or "What should the final strategies look like?" instead of proactively opting for solutions that they wished for on their own sites, can be interpreted in terms of trust and reliance. But it can also be interpreted as a reflection of uncertainty and dependence, or even as a lack of engagement resulting from outside initiatives, e.g. without sufficient provision of material-economic arrangements. On several occasions, practitioners perceived researchers as being like figureheads or totems, whose presence was important even at times when the researcher had no specific task (e.g. when a outside expert was responsible for the program at hand). How come? Possibly because teaching is mainly autonomous and lonely work in the classroom. An outsider with an authentic but professional interest in teachers' tasks seemed to be always welcomed and highly needed – as an engaged listener, assistant meaning maker or an empathetic mirror.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Our four projects exemplify a transition in PD practices, simply described as a move from transmission to participation. The practice architectures of traditional in-service training, with focus on individual teachers' mastering of effective classroom management (teaching) practices, are replaced by the practice architectures of site-based collaborative development work, aimed at transforming the professional community. And, at least at times, we researchers were lost in the practice and practice architectures of the educational sites we were involved in, but we have tackled this challenge within a professional community of researchers, acting as each other's critical and supportive colleagues. The challenge we have been confronted with is three-fold, and is related to the three arrangements of practice architectures. *Firstly,* the material-economic arrangements for educational development on site cannot be taken as a given, they have to be negotiated and maintained. *Secondly,* site-based education development opens up a space for collegial professional meaning making and identity expression. This space (the cultural-discursive arrangements) has to be safeguarded. *Thirdly*, the transition from transmission to participation is anchored and dynamically dependent on the social-political arrangements, to be continuously reinterpreted and yet understood.

In terms of the cultural-discursive (sayings) and social-political (relatings) arrangements of the sites, which would affect the actual doings of the participants, one of our main challenges has been how to turn the spontaneous inventories of everyday experiences into sustainable arenas for communication. In such arenas, experiences can be articulated in a thoughtful manner, in the form of professional dialogue and sharing ideas, and taking both individual and collegial responsibility for collaborative consciousness-raising of the professional practices in schools as sites. However, this has to be done with an awareness of and sensitivity regarding the premises and constraints of everyday practices in schools, and also of the social-political arrangements.

Despite ambitions of conducting action research collaboratively we note the significance of researchers' efforts (doings) regarding the material-economic arrangements, initially in raising the consciousness of and negotiating on the forms, arenas and resources for enabling PD beyond the existing orders (cultures) within the educational sites. This includes negotiations on the allocation of time for the extraordinary activities the projects imply. Another aspect, which we have not been able to elucidate here, is the matter of convincing practitioners that research-like activities (observations, documentations) are decisive means for PD. The support from school leadership (encouragement and engagement) is vital. Still, it seems as if this has to be explicated (in sayings) by the researchers. This also applies for allocating time for PD discussions during regular staff meetings, and for integration of extra resources available within the practices of, for instance, staff meetings.

Teacher knowledge is expressed by "storied life compositions", which are both personal and social (Connelly & Clandinin 1999, p. 2). These stories are intertwined with the social context, mirroring the constraints and dilemmas teachers are facing. Teachers and school leaders have an immediate need, and are eager to use the space provided for them, to point out and explicate the state of affairs and express problems as existing outside their own control. They are eager to discuss matters that to the researcher might at first seem external to their professional practice. For example, classroom problems may be conceptualized as a matter of pupils' motivation and deficient knowledge levels, or the attitudes amongst parents. This is not necessarily due to a lack of professional insights or professional language – an impression that first strikes the outsider – but is more often a question of a discussion on different levels or in different domains (Zeichner 1994), all equally important to the process. However, to be able to continue the process into other domains, using alternative ways of addressing and analysing the issues at hand, there might be a need to raise teachers' consciousness, for instance of the impact of the prevailing negative discourses (on student behaviour, parents etc.) on the PD efforts, in order to be able to move forward to finding new understandings and modes of action in the form of constructive solutions. Although the articulation of dilemmas often happens in a spontaneous way, the teacher-researcher collaboration can contribute to raising the awareness of which discourses or cultures dominate in a particular context, and help the professionals to analyse their practice.

In our experience, collaborative professional development and site-based education development do need facilitators. The facilitator role can be managed by the teachers themselves, if they have the necessary tools. The identification and provision of these tools is an important task for collaborative development and research (Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2013). Collegial networking and researcher-practitioner collaboration are important means for enhancing PD and learning, with the aim of promoting the learning of the pupils. In the long term this is a key issue for ensuring that teachers and students in different educational sites are handled in equal manner. It is self-evident that changing the various professional cultures in schools requires a considerable amount of time and professional interaction, especially when top-down and bottom-up dynamics are combined with intermediary ambitions and practices in some form (Ostinelli 2009, pp. 305–306).

Teachers and school leaders need tools to identify the possibilities and constraints of their working environments in order to find the "free space" (Berg 1981, p. 116) or professional freedom of action. In this process, there is a need for safe professional arenas, where a researcher as facilitator can act as a necessary catalyst in providing an outsider's perspective. These arenas ought to be oriented towards finding out where the process is for the moment, where one wants to go, and through what means. Meta-awareness, of the way the material-economic (doings), cultural-discursive (sayings) and social-political (relatings) arrangements affect our understanding and our actions in schools and classrooms, would be one such important tool.

At a certain point the facilitator – be it a researcher or a practitioner – might have to blow the whistle, take responsibility for initiating structure and start transferring responsibility. In our experience, this is about taking determined steps towards empowerment and sharing of responsibilities, based on a respectful challenging of the professional understandings of participants. Still, providing teachers with agency is a challenge – agency and power should rather be taken and thus the conditions need to be created in which this can happen. As outsiders we also have to consider the differences between the time horizons of the projects and the sustainable development of schools as sites. Long-term, sustainable professional development requires time.

Thus, sustainable collaborative development is not about a straightforward transition from spontaneity to systemic development. In the long run one has to find a balance between different forms of meetings and spaces. Informal and spontaneous comings together can be mixed with well-planned, structured and goal-oriented professional development, in the same manner that practices relate to and depend on one other. Our insights into collaborative PD so far are quite well in line with the experiences of Platteel, Huksof, Ponte, van Driel and Verlopp (2010) in conducting action research with teachers. They identify two complementary basic conditions: contextual (a supportive context) and communicative conditions (the inclination to engage oneself in a free and open dialogue), which our cases seem to have met. They also note the need of time and opportunity (social space) to develop mutual perspectives and understanding based on professional trust and consensus. Our experiences of enhancing PD are also quite well in line with the prerequisites for promoting professional learning opportunities within schools in New Zealand (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung 2007). Our projects were also characterized by loose couplings and constant uncertainties, particularly when it comes to time perspectives, the importance of external support, participants' own engagement and the need to challenge the prevailing discourses.

Our participants have been inclined to contribute with their experiences as equals. Yet we never reached the stage in which they challenged each other in a constructive and productive manner. Our roles shifted between that of supporters and guide-consultants, but were less that of critical friends. Through our experiences of facilitating collaborative professional development and site-based education development, we can conclude that creating sustainable arenas for communication in schools as social sites is a complex challenge. The attempts to open up professional issues and challenges for discussion, and to turn them into a subject of reflective and reciprocal scrutiny of individual experiences and perceptions, are constrained by the practice architectures of professional action in schools. In this process both researchers and practitioners are learners – simultaneously stimulating each other to grasp the meanings of our work and roles.

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ANN-CHRISTINE WENNERGREN

8. THE POWER OF RISK-TAKING IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The author of this chapter is engaged as a teacher and researcher at the University of Halmstad in Sweden, and has a special interest in professional learning based on action research. The chapter draws on experiences from a professional learning project conducted as a partnership between two municipalities and the University. The local authorities decided that two schools would participate in the project. The schools in question had, from national evaluations, identified obvious needs for improving student learning and achievement. The situation for the teachers and the author can be described as frustrating, but with a little spark of curiosity when thinking of the next step. The author, in the role of the researcher, did not know where to start; there was compass and a direction, but no local map. The situation can be described as being lost in a new and shared practice, where there was an urgent need to draw a map based on observations of practice. From this point of departure, all the participants set out on a collaborative journey, with the compass directed towards researched-based teaching and increased achievement among the students.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a professional learning project, applied on a whole school level, in two schools with poor results in student achievement. The concept of professional learning was influenced by an action research approach and built on the idea of collaborative learning between all colleagues, in order to improve teaching and student achievement. The process within the schools required teachers to be seriously engaged in their learning, with systematic inquiries closely related to student learning. As an essential part of the concept, every teacher had to choose a colleague as a critical friend for documentation and feedback on teaching, starting with shadowing[1] as a tool for learning and improvement. However, critically reviewing teaching revealed a situation that was surrounded by uncomfortable emotions. Learning to improve teaching was applied by some teachers, while learning to learn together with a critical friend was applied by all. The different degrees of *risk-taking* in teaching, as well as in feedback, were obvious. It could be asked whether this was due to a lack of *courage*, *trust* or both, among some teachers. If courage allows trust to grow (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009),

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there is a need to support courage in changing procedures. The lesson learnt is that "change will lead to insight far more often than insight will lead to change"[2]. In my previous work as a researcher and facilitator in action research projects, the main focus has been on actions as well as on changes in the classroom. During facilitation we sometimes discussed problems in the specific school, revealing valuable insights for improvements that never occurred in practice. This was one reason for me to use observation as a starting point for changing processes in the current project.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the impact of critical friendship during a professional learning project. This will be done through an analysis of documentation of teaching made in shadowing sessions by participating teachers. The chapter begins with a literature review of professional learning, followed by an introduction to some central concepts: critical friendship, courage, trust and risk-taking. Those concepts will further be used to understand different aspects of professional learning. Documentation from the project is presented as a case study and is analysed with practice theory as an analytical tool (Handal & Lauvås, 2000). Finally, I discuss the findings and some conclusions.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The concept of teacher professional learning as used in this chapter is based on collaborative learning as an active process, in combination with systematic inquiry in the classroom. In such a definition, student learning is at the centre of the process and involves a direct connection between improving teaching *and* student success (Timperley, 2011). Promoting teacher agency in students' learning has many similarities to promoting student learning directly, and these two factors may occur as parallel processes in learning to learn (McLaughlin, 2000). The main difference, according to Timperley (2011), is that teachers must apply their learning to themselves as well as to their students. Parallel learning processes in school-based action research projects do not occur separately; instead they interact, affecting and supporting each other (Wennergren, 2012).

Professional learning programs for teachers have, according to Timperley (2011), overlooked the agency between participants. In a review over the last 15 years, teachers describe their professional learning sessions as demeaning and mind-numbing occasions, in which they took a passive role. A collective responsibility is crucial to improving teaching but is also a central part of action research. A professional learning program can be constructed as a professional learning community (Stoll et al. 2006), and even though not every learning community can be described as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), similarities according to learning and participation are to be found. A community of practice cannot be imposed by outsiders but is created by those who share concerns, problems and needs. It is also characterized by mutual engagement in procedures, tools, concepts, language and different ways of acting, i.e. a common repertoire or culture. A dialogue for improvement allows different stories, reflections and perspectives to meet, which indicates the legitimacy of colleagues acting as each other's critical friends. When facilitators (internal or external) support teacher inquiry, various forms of learning can take place (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009).

An inquiry-based model for improvements seems to make a difference in teachers' professional learning (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Timperley, 2011), but it requires teachers to take responsibility for interacting with colleagues. In professional learning, teachers are intellectually engaged in learning processes and in such situations teachers can also move towards seeing themselves as learners. Arguments that the teaching profession must become a learning profession are neither new nor revolutionary, but it can, according to Fullan (2007), be better still:

> Teachers of today and tomorrow need to do much more learning on their job, or in parallel with it – where they constantly can test out, refine, and get feedback on the improvement they make. They need access to other colleagues in order to learn from them. Schools are poorly designed for integrating learning and teaching on the job. The teaching profession must become a better learning profession (Fullan, 2007, p. 297).

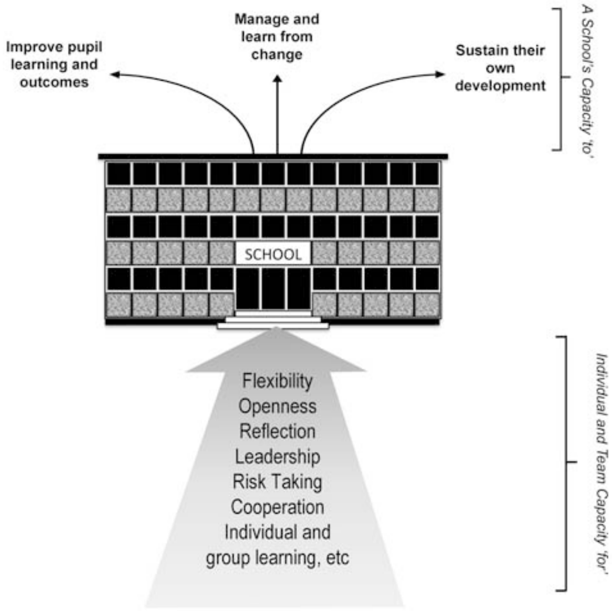
To generate local knowledge and integrate others' theories and research, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) have developed the notion of 'inquiry as stance'. They argue that both teachers and student teachers ought to take an inquiry stance within their learning communities. Such knowledge production requires a willingness to navigate the unsettling, uncomfortable and messy negotiation of directives in policy documents. The capacity for teachers to integrate power and agency is often limited by the ways in which processes are reviewed or evaluated.

Characteristics of successful teacher learning programmes have not changed over the past 20 years (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009). In a culture of inquiry within schools, collaboration, peer learning and risk-taking are defined as important and powerful factors for professional learning (Loughran, 2010). In the figure below important skills and attitudes in changing procedures are mentioned as an individual capacity, as well as having an impact on the organization itself. Changes are not to be seen as isolated activities but as linked to sustainable development for the whole school. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) claim that without feedback and support teachers will be short of professional capital.

During his long and valuable experience of professional learning, based on action research, Elliot has constantly argued for cooperation and peer learning:

> Individual teachers cannot significantly improve their practice in isolation without opportunities for discussion with professional peers and others operating in a significant role relationship to them (Elliot, 1993, p. 176).

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), teachers have consistently rated feedback on their teaching as a powerful influence in their professional learning. It is a truly successful approach, but it takes time to challenge teaching, and feelings might occur of being pushed outside the comfort zone during the procedure.


Improve pupil learning and outcomes
Manage and learn from change
Sustain their own development
A School's Capacity 'to'
SCHOOL
Flexibility
Openness
Reflection
Leadership
Risk Taking
Cooperation
Individual and group learning, etc
Individual and Team Capacity 'for'

F1: School, team and individual capacity (Jackson & Street 2005, p. 34).

Learning can be applied in a comfort zone where few challenges are to be found, or in a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), where risk-taking and challenges are central components. The tension between comfort and risk-taking is often mirrored in collaborative learning (McLaughlin, 2000). Two alternative forms of collaborative learning presented in this volume are, research circles (see chapter 6 Rönnerman & Olin, 2014) and peer group mentoring (see chapter 5 Langelotz & Rönnerman, 2014).

Courage, Trust and Risk-Taking

In professional learning programs it is essential that teachers at the local level have an understanding of "what is at stake and what is at risk" (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009, p. 83). Previously established patterns in professional learning have, according to Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009), been essentially re-productive. Learning is an uncomfortable enterprise and that is why professional learning takes courage. Willingness to improve, and taking action together with colleagues, is also built on trust and a moral responsibility in the local context. There might be different opinions about what comes first in changing procedures: courage or trust? For learner agency, the ownership of change is central and the question of courage and trust must be explicit before acting in practice.

Learning about teaching, in order to see and understand it from different perspectives, is also a question of pushing the boundaries of practice. By taking the risk of doing something new, different or uncertain, the understanding of teaching and learning is enhanced (Loughran, 2006, 2010). In the procedure, Loughran (2006) emphasizes feelings of discomfort as an important attribute:

> When teachers implement teaching procedures with which they are unfamiliar, new ways of seeing and understanding become possible through experiencing the discomfort of being less certain about what is happening. I argue that discomfort is an important attribute for learning, especially so in respect for learning about teaching, as it leads to heightening of the senses. With the senses heightened, one is more sensitive to the myriad events within a pedagogical situation so that taken-for-granted perspectives of teaching and learning are more likely to be challenged (Loughran, 2006, p. 97).

If discomfort is an important attribute for learning and leads to a heightening of the senses, it is also a driving force to action and a step outside the comfort zone. Challenges and risk-taking always occur in situations involving relationships and emotions (Furu, 2008), and Hargreaves (2002) argues for *trust* as the emotional catalyst that makes risk and conflict part of professional learning.

There is a need for awareness of emotions in all processes of change, not only at the beginning but in all phases. Emotions affect us differently and if emotions do not have an outlet or are not channelled, they can be counterproductive and lead to resistance and frustration. But it is possible to influence the emotions in favour of change. Furu (2008) refers to several authors who show that emotions can motivate both actions and changes in actions. She also compares thoughts with emotions and emphasizes that thoughts can drive us to do something, but emotions must be released before anything can happen.

Critical Friends

Critical friends or critical friend groups (Bambino, 2003; Costa & Kallic, 1993; Cushman, 1998; Swaffield, 2007; Wennergren, 2012) have been introduced in many schools and sometimes used in terms of a professional learning community (Du Four, 2004; Stoll et al., 2006) or a community of practise (Wenger, 1998). The concept of ‘critical friends’ rests on the assumption that schools cannot be intellectually engaging places for students unless their teachers are actively engaged in their own learning community (Curry, 2008). Teachers in a critical friend group seek, on the one hand, to increase student learning and achievement through collegial conversations about teaching and learning. On the other hand, merely talking about practice does not always lead to the kind of change that makes a difference to student outcomes (Key, 2006). This argument also demonstrates why it is interesting to study critical friends acting in a classroom setting.

A characteristic of a critical friend is the unexpected combination of friendship built on trust, support and affirmation on the one hand, and, on the other, criticism based on analysis, assessment, evaluation and quality (Handal, 1999a, 1999b, 2006). In my experience, few schools systematically use internal critical friends to improve praxis. Statements from teachers who have tested the role of a critical friend, in combination with shadowing, reveal that not only is the colleague being shadowed challenged, but the person making the observations also gains new ideas for teaching (Wennergren, 2012; Wennergren & Rönnerman, 2006). The results demonstrate that shadowing contributes to a collective responsibility for development. At the same time, tacit knowledge is made visible by taking a step back and making the taken-for-granted elements explicit. What is possible to formulate in documentation can also constitute a subject for development.

The meaning of being a critical friend in a development context is to support teaching by contributing to a different or a deeper understanding. A critical friend responds to her colleague and tries to find a balance between confirmation and challenge when providing feedback. Too uncritical response after shadowing does not support learning, while feedback that is too challenging is not helpful because it is beyond what is possible to accept. In other words, the purpose of the cooperation is to meet the colleague in her/his Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Since trust is a key feature in the context of critical friends, McAllister (1995) illuminates two types of trust in a changing procedure, emotional-based and cognition-based. Cognition-based trust is built on a confidence that the critical friend has relevant experiences and competence, while emotional-based trust is based on a shared understanding of the role, but also on trust in the colleague to be honest, with a positive agenda in her/his mind. Emotional trust is fundamental because it handles moral issues such as willingness for critical friends to do their task. A crucial question is whether the critical friend is seen as acting for the good of an individual and/or for the community.

Different arguments in favour of using critical friendship as an integrated part of professional learning have been illuminated and in the following I will present a case of critical friendship in action.

A CASE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

This section draws on experiences of a professional learning project planned for a five-year period. It also includes a presentation about documentation and the analytical tool being used.

The two schools included in the project (preschool-year 9) had identified obvious needs to improve student learning and achievement. Teacher participation in the project was mandatory and was decided by the local authority. Every teacher in the schools was supposed to take an active role in the work, in order to improve the schools' results. The concept of professional learning was built on teachers' engagement in processes of collaborative learning and the central part of the action was based on systematic inquiries in the classroom. The 66 participating teachers asked their colleagues to participate in a common inquiry, which resulted in 33 critical friends' partnerships. As an action researcher, I initiated processes of change and provided structures. During the first two years, shadowing was introduced as an observation method, and was used between researcher/teacher as well as teacher/teacher. The following procedures were used:

- Researchers shadowed teachers (year 1).
- Teachers shadowed colleagues (year 2).
- Teachers analysed and drew conclusions (year 2).
- During the first year, many of the teachers were frustrated about the implementation of the project. They were positive to the content and the learning outcome, but the inquiring procedures were time consuming and they had to reduce other (non-project related) meetings and individual courses. However, after two years it was possible to observe an improvement in school results and after three years students' achievement had changed remarkably.

Shadowing – An Interactive Observation Method

For the interactive observation method used in the current project, the concept of *shadowing* was applied (Czarniawaska, 2007; McDonald, 2005; Wennergren & Rönnerman, 2006). Shadowing was used as a method for observation in which documentation of teaching was combined with critical reflections (see figure 3). The shadowing log was a shared document within the partnership but also a point of departure for dialogue among colleagues.

For the first year of the project there were several researchers who offered shadowing on a voluntary basis in order to support changes. We were invited by teachers to document and provide feedback of teaching as critical friends.

In the second year, teachers cooperated with a colleague as a critical friend and used shadowing as a tool for documentation of teaching. They started with a plan and then moved forward in the process, as according to the figure below. Even though the different aspects in the figure are separated into five phases, the process of change is integrated into the process as a whole.

In the second year, activities over the five phases included the following:

1. Pairs decided on a focus to study and improve on, and then planned for actions and documentation.
2. Teachers planned for the teaching approach being observed and put the plan into action.
3. Shadowing sessions were documented in the form of descriptions of teaching and critical reflections, and were structured in two columns (Figure 3).
4. Documentation was analysed and conclusions were drawn. Finally, teachers wrote meta-reflections on the whole inquiry procedure.
5. Teachers communicated findings as well as suggestions for further improvement (feed-forward) internally, in case descriptions and posters.

The shadowing log (Figure 3 below) was documentation and critical reflection on teaching. It was used as a basis for discussion between shadowing sessions, as well

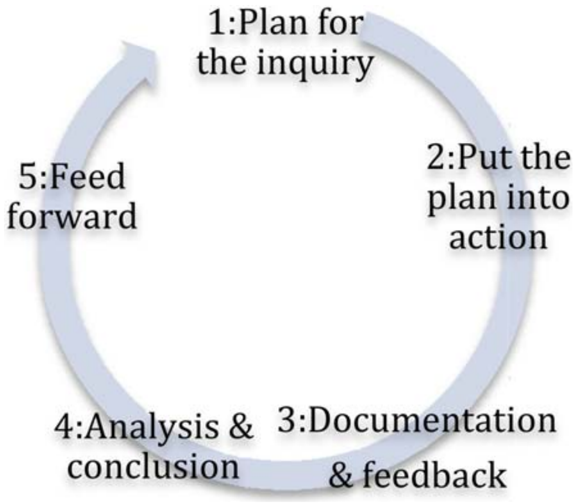


Figure 2: Cycle of inquiry for critical friend partnership.

as a basis for an overall analysis. It took time for teachers to become familiar with the documentation structure. They chose different means of documentation: by literally writing down what took place, or by retelling it with varying degrees of interpretation (cf. narrative documentation, Hansen, 2011). Although documentation should be value-free, some form of interpretation must be included and there were difficulties in distinguishing interpretation, evaluation and understanding. Teachers were also encouraged to maintain a dialogue about their documentation.

Column 1: Description of teaching	Column 2: Critical reflections

Figure 3: Shadowing log.

Practice Theory Used as an Analytical Tool

The concept of practice theory started with a model (the triangle of practice) by Løvlie (1974) and was later developed by Handal and Lauvås (2000). They argued for the need of different reflections on teaching practices during facilitation or peer group mentoring (cf. Langelotz & Rönnerman, chapter 5, this volume). The point of departure is the three levels at which teachers operate (Figure 4). Level P1 is about actions in teaching practices, where teachers give instruction, formulate questions, motivate or assess student work. At level P2, teachers give arguments in support of their teaching; the arguments can be based on experiences from practice, theory or both. Level P3 is about ethical justifications of actions in the classroom. Reflections on actions in the classroom, as well as on planning for such actions, may be discussed at all levels of the triangle of practice. Teachers' practice theory has an obvious influence on teaching. To be able to really change, teachers have to formulate and develop their practice theory as well as their actions in the classroom. Practice theory is seen as an individual construct but with a strong emphasis on the interplay between the individual and the collective (Handal & Lauvås, 2000). The concept is further presented by Eilertsen and Jakhelln (2014, chapter 2).

In the forthcoming case study I have used the concept of practice theory as a tool for analyses *after* a cycle of teacher inquiry based on shadowing documentation in a context of informal conversations within a critical friendship. The analysis may lead to an understanding of different levels of reflections at stake in a professional learning project.

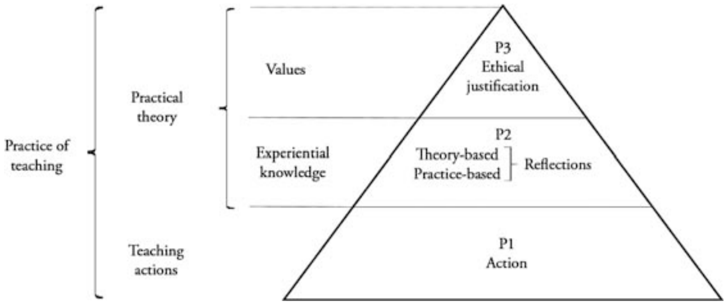


Figure 4: The triangle of practice (my translation from Handal & Lauvås, 2000, p. 44).

The documentation for each level in Figure 4 is combined with the cycle of inquiry (Figure 2) and the shadowing log (Figure 3):

- *P1 Actions in practice*: The analysis at this level is based on the teacher's own description of teaching and on the written documentation made by the critical friend in the shadowing log.
- *P2 Theoretically and experientially related arguments about actions*: The analysis at this level is based on documentation made by the teachers in the partnership, both individually and together.
- *P3 Ethical considerations of actions and changes*: The analysis at this level is based on teachers' ethical and political values as documented in written reflections, both individually and together in the partnership.

In the following section I will describe a case of a critical friend partnership in which trust and courage leading to risk-taking during the shadowing sessions occurred.

Since a critical friend partnership is surrounded by uncomfortable feelings that can be hard to internalise, I can see the potential for learning from a successful example. In the analysis of the case, connections to levels P1-3, according to practice theory, are parenthesised.

THE IMPACT OF A CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP

Before the shadowing period, several teachers described and evaluated their teaching with a low degree of confronting changes. During the planning phase of shadowing, teachers gave signals of strong emotions with regard to the forthcoming situation of having a critical friend in the classroom. The purpose, the structures, and the choice of colleague were frequently discussed, but also frustrations and feelings about critical feedback. The distress about taking the feedback personally was obvious. On the one hand it was an unexpected reaction, because teachers give feedback to students every day and are, in this context, genuinely aware of the importance of focusing on performance rather than personalities. On the other hand it was an expected reaction, because teachers in many schools have, according to Hargreaves (1994), established an invisible contract neither to confirm nor to challenge each other in teaching.

In general, teachers initially described the shadowing sessions as a mandatory part of professional learning. At that point they did not think of it in terms of 'What is in it for me?' Being involved in a critical friendship was initially associated with something unpleasant. However, for the teacher in the quotation below, it was subsequently found to be enriching:

> When shadowing as a method was presented to us some feelings of discomfort about being examined occurred. After all these years in school I felt rather confident in my role as a teacher. But I have never received the spotlight on myself in my profession by another teacher so consciously before. Along the way, my deep concerns turned into a realization that this is my own learning, an opportunity to change, improve and develop my professional capacity. Shadowing is most suitable for visualizing what is happening in the classroom. By being shadowed I received documentation about what really was happening, not what was planned or what I perceived myself. It was an important and useful insight. To shadow a colleague was also a learning situation about myself. I reflected on my own teaching through the lens of my colleague (teacher, meta-reflection).

It obviously came as a surprise that the critical friend could explore incidents outside teacher control during the lesson. This was seen as a valuable contribution to learning, but for another colleague it could also be seen as a threat. In the forthcoming text, the case of Lisa and Lars is an example of how a successful critical friendship has contributed to a mutual impact on their teaching.

Lisa and Lars in a Critical Friendship

Lisa and Lars worked in the same school but belonged to different teacher teams. They did not teach the same subject or the same ages but they found it enriching to discuss teaching or research literature together. When it was time to choose a partner for a critical friendship they did not hesitate to initiate a partnership together.

In order to find a focus for their inquiry, they analysed student evaluation for the previous year and concluded that students experienced limited possibilities of participation with joy and meaningfulness in their learning. They also studied research literature about peer assessment and found several arguments for its positive effects on student learning and on mutual engagement between students. To increase student participation, supported by arguments from the literature, they decided to implement peer assessment among students in their teaching during the period of shadowing (P1 & P2).

Lisa planned to introduce the work in three different classes (P1). Since her critical friend would make a systematic documentation during the day, she felt confident of receiving professional feedback for learning from the new situation. However, she was also nervous and felt it was exciting and crazy but rather heavy to test peer assessment as well as a critical friendship at the same time.

In the first class, students had been working with literature in small study groups. With Lisa's new ideas about peer assessment, groups with the same literature were to study each other in action during the interaction and provide feedback on participation. The groups handled the situation quite differently: some gave summative assessment as well as formative, but most of the students did not give any formative suggestions (P1). Lisa and her critical friend Lars reflected on the outcome, compared the results with the research literature and discussed two explanations. They conclude that the students were not mentally prepared for the task and did not have the courage to suggest improvements or they did not know how to do it (P2). Lisa and Lars decided that Lisa has to introduce and model different types of assessment more carefully (P1).

In the second class, students performed a task of writing about a fantasy figure. Lisa used the lesson to divide the class in pairs and asked them to exchange texts with their partner. Several students did not like the new direction of the task and tried to resist, but Lisa insisted on her first instruction (P1). At the end of the lesson Lisa was rather disappointed with her contribution in the classroom and discussed further improvements with her critical friend. They both agreed on the moral problems of adding a new instruction in the middle of a task, and of not planning for assessment together with the students (P3). They decided to perform the task quite differently in the parallel class (P1).

In the third class, Lisa had planned for a task in Maths to be solved by the students individually; then, together with a peer, students would discuss the solutions and cooperate to reach a final conclusion. They were to do this twice with different partners (P1). In documentation it was obvious that several pairs did not discussed different solutions; instead they compared in silence and pointed to the best solution. In the next session, when they changed partners, the students performed differently. A student who worked in silence in the first task started a lively conversation and vice versa (P1). In a final discussion with her critical friend, Lisa realised that she had to consider several aspects when dividing students into working pairs (P2). Next time she would plan carefully for student partnership, in relation to content knowledge as well as to creativity and communicative skills (P1).

The period of collaborative learning within the partnership continued throughout the semester with the same focus, and with both teachers acting as critical friends to each other. Finally, Lisa and Lars concluded that peer assessment had been an important tool for students' participation in their learning but that the outcome was dependent on the their discussion and planning together with students (P2).

Lisa and Lars' roles as observers with intensive documentation was a learning process and they tested different forms of writing: word-by-word and a narrative form. In their final reflection on the inquiry as a whole, Lisa and Lars drew conclusions relating to changes in teaching, changes in the team and parallel processes for student and teacher learning:

> According to our findings we have to improve students' participation in planning for learning and peer assessment. Then it will be more clear to us how to differentiate instructions and tasks. We also have to offer more situations for using different tools for formative assessment and we need to state more clearly, and together with the students, what is to be assessed (P1). We find it interesting that we require our students to be able to review their own work when we [teachers] are not entirely comfortable with it ourselves. It is essential for students to be able to support themselves and others in their learning by the use of formative feedback in both directions. If we are to help our students in their work, we must be able to handle the same situation between colleagues (P3). Finally, we emphasize that it has been an enormous privilege to work with a colleague to critically review and jointly develop teaching. The shadowing period with a critical friend has been a mirroring of peer assessment – from classroom work to presentation of findings among colleagues. In the light of our own inquiry we have also learned how to learn with a critical friend. Based on what we have learned in our roles as teachers, we have become even more convinced that this is the way to go with improvements of teaching and student learning (Lisa & Lars, meta-reflection)

Lisa and Lars' critical reflections were an important part of their professional learning.

TEACHER INQUIRY IN THE LIGHT OF PRACTICE THEORY

In the following I use practice theory and the concept of risk-taking to reflect and comment upon the case of Lisa and Lars in their process of change. The presentation of the analysis follows the different phases in Figure 2, which are related to teacher inquiry.

Planning

Lisa and Lars started the process with different reflections and arguments (P2) during their planning for teaching and changes. When they searched for and formulated practice- and theory-based arguments for their forthcoming actions, they also reflected upon and challenged their existing experiential knowledge.

In the newly formed partnership, Lisa and Lars also planned for risk-taking with respect to their inquiry. They seemed prepared for changes of attitudes and for changes in their teaching practices. Furthermore, they put words to their feelings, both comfortable and uncomfortable. This indicates that the participants' level of courage has a major influence on risk-taking in planning and performing teaching.

Actions

Lisa and Lars performed their teaching as was planned. Even though they set the frames for the content knowledge together, the teaching approach was up to the individual teacher and her/his students. It may have been enriching that they did not teach the same subject or the same students.

Teaching is always based on relationships and is, to some extent, unpredictable. However, there is always room for the teacher to control the level of predictability. On the basis of Lisa's case it was not possible to predict the teaching outcome. Lisa and Lars decided to change and improve their teaching towards student participation (P1), which required a trusting relationship with each other and their students.

Documentation and Feedback

In the initial stage, documentation of actions in practice required training in formulating actions in the classroom. It was a learning process to become familiar with the role of observer. For Lisa and Lars there were difficulties in grasping the whole teaching situation and they tried different forms of documentation. The critical friend explored situations outside the control of the teacher during the lesson and they used the documentation as a contribution to the analysis. Thus, there is a critical issue when documentation made by another person indicates a different understanding than of the teacher in action. The intention to formulate and develop *their own* teaching as well as their practical theory could in some situations be hidden behind a collegial understanding of practice.

In their feedback, Lisa and Lars formulated positive confirmations, but they also presented challenges directed to specific and local concerns.

Analysis and Conclusion

In their analysis Lisa and Lars focused on dilemmas in the use of peer assessment in three categories: dilemmas related to the task, to the group constellations and to the response between students. Their conclusion concerned the need for planning with students in order to increase students' participation in peer assessment (P2). This indicates that their first idea about implementing peer assessment was adapted to a situation where students should be invited to participate in planning for assessment and learning.

In this phase of the inquiry, the formulation of their practice theory is not only towards the individual teacher. The dialogue in the partnership has been used to contribute to a collegial conclusion. However, the shared conclusions might be a starting point for teachers' own practice theories to be further formulated in the next cycle of inquiry.

Feedforward

Lars and Lisa operated at all levels of the practice theory and did an explicit reconnection to the initial problem, the low degree of student participation. They also challenged their own beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions about how to form working pairs in peer assessment work, and how to really invite students to engage in planning (P2). Even though they did not always succeed with their intended changes, they made critical reflections and drew conclusions for further improvements. This means that they actually used their documentation to formulate and improve teaching during their inquiry and they did formulate a collegial practical theory. Feedforward, formulated as suggestions for further improvement, can be used as a plan for new teaching actions.

Lisa and Lars also made some considerations about learning among colleagues. They questioned the professional standard in their teams by asking whether it was reasonable to have lower demands on teachers' critical examination than on the students'. It was obvious that they examined their own ability to provide feedback and feedforward to a colleague. This was a new situation for learning, not used before at this school.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter emphasises the need for critical friends to invest in professional trust (cognitive- and emotional-based), and an urgent need for teachers to have the courage to take risks in professional learning processes. I argue that there is a feeling of empowerment to be found in risk-taking as related to change and improvement. The conclusion can be seen as embedded in a paradox: encouragement to take risks (e.g. creative and innovative) in teaching *with* an observer in the classroom. But that is exactly the main point. New ideas in teaching are at stake *while* an observer is collecting documentation for critical feedback and collaborative analyses. The critical friend can, in such a situation be described as a metaphorical safety net for practising how to walk on a tightrope. Whether teaching was successful or not, is not the main question, instead there is a potential for learning. The same issue can be considered from another point of view: teaching and innovation. If teaching is regarded as an art, teachers must practise how to *develop* their art, not how to master it. When claiming to have mastered it, ambition is given up (Stenhouse, in Handal & Lauvås, 2000, p. 79). The idea of regarding teaching as an art is to stress the complexity involved in each task.

Lars and Lisa acted as full participants in their community of practice, but there were several colleagues acting as peripheral but legitimated participants with regard to critical friendship. When the present professional learning project is compared with a community of practice (cf. Wenger, 1998) teachers have participated in mutual engagement with colleagues, in negotiations of the role as a critical friend, and in the use of tools for learning. Fullan (2007) and Ellliot (1993) have similar prerequisites for turning the teaching profession into a professional learning community.

In the literature of professional learning based on action research, the role of the researcher is sometimes described as that of the friendly outsider (Greenwood & Levin, 1998). According to my experiences with teachers and researchers taking the roles of critical friends in a shared community of learning, I will argue for the same prerequisites for my participation: critical friendship in which *trust* and *courage* to confront *risk-taking* are a necessity. Since professional trust requires an investigation into relations and legitimacy it takes time to build – but sometimes less time for an outsider than an insider, such as the colleague in the next classroom. Parallel processes in an action research project usually take place in three integrated contexts: the learning of students, teachers and researchers (McLaughlin, 2000).

The Analytical Tool

I will complete this chapter by highlighting some insights into using the concept of practice theory to analyse developmental work during a professional learning project.

1. The equality of practice- and theory-based arguments.
2. The willingness to move between levels.
3. The importance of concretising ethical considerations (P3).

1. One aspect of practice theory is the combination of practice- *and* theory-based arguments. There is a balance between theory and practice, and the need for *different* arguments is emphasised. It is not possible to escape into theories or experiences, both are needed. Løvlies' (1974) main proposal is that teaching and learning should be problem-based and address crucial issues that teachers are faced with in their daily work. Balance and combination are essential, otherwise

there is a risk of making categorical mistakes by degrading practical reasons or by substituting practical reflections for theoretical ones (cf. Eilertsen & Jakhelln, chapter 2).

2. Sustainable changes will never turn into a quick-fix concept when documentation and analysis are built on the three levels of practice theory. For Lisa and Lars there was an obvious need to implement unfamiliar teaching procedures in order to find new ways of seeing and understanding practice (cf. Loughran, 2006). It seemed easy to give experience-based reflections, whereas theory-based reflections demanded an insight into the research literature. Vague arguments at the second level of the triangle often led to vague conclusions or vague ethical justifications. On the other hand, in teachers' reflections, and having taken a step back from practice, it was possible to formulate theory-based arguments as well. An invitation to a critical friend is based on a desire to change something for the better. But if the willingness to change is not there, it is easy to transform constructive criticism into a "why-don't-we-yes-but" argumentation (Handal, 2006, p. 248). Furthermore, the criticism can be rejected with the excuse of having already been tested, that this does not work in my classroom or that the teaching in focus is very specialist and not possible for the observer to understand. Such dialogues will not lead to any movement between levels.
3. In the current phase of the project, there were few and vague ethics-based reflections relating to teaching actions. The same issue is illuminated and problematised by Handal and Lauvås (2000). When level P3 is discussed at a general level, ethical justifications are made more implicit than explicit. In such situations, local concerns and dilemmas tend to be hidden behind normative suggestions of best practice in general. Altogether, findings indicate that reflection at level P3 is crucial not only for formulation of teachers' practical theory but also for a professional learning project to succeed.

In the current case, the concept of practice theory was only used in analysis after a cycle of teacher inquiry. Thus, when practice theory is made explicit during an inquiry, it will be a support for communication between teachers about the levels at stake in professional learning.

A Journey From Top-Down To Bottom-Up

In all changing processes there are contradictions and tension. In the current project, which involved two schools, the most powerful tension was the starting point, with a top-down decision that every teacher in the schools would participate. On that basis it was not unexpected to find only a few successful critical friend partnerships (cf. Swaffield, 2007) in the initial phase of the project. And of course there were less successful partnerships that directed most of their work towards resistance. However, positive emotions were not only available in successful partnerships but also in student learning and achievement. In a rather short time, the two schools' performance has changed remarkably. My final conclusion is that a top-down-based project can be transformed into a bottom-up-based implementation, but not for all, and not all at once. Teacher are at different stages in their learning, and some experienced teachers asked for more advanced challenges which were not yet doable for less experienced teachers. To manage differences between colleagues, teacher professional learning has to be built on the concept of inclusion. I will stress the necessity of using analytical tools, such as, for example, the concept of practice theory, *during* such processes, thus contributing to a shared and inclusive language in the communication of teaching and learning.

NOTES

[1] The concept of shadowing is in this context used as an interactive observation method (Czarniawaska 2007; McDonald, 2005; Wennergren & Rönnerman, 2006) and is further explained later in the text.

[2] Quote Milton Erickson: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton_H._Erickson

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9. DEVELOPMENT TEAMS AS TRANSLATORS OF SCHOOL REFORM IDEAS

The authors of this chapter are researchers in the area of teacher training and school development, and have participated in several school development projects with teachers and principals in both primary and secondary schools. This chapter focuses on a local "Assessment For Learning" project with 19 schools over a period of two and a half years, where action research was used to develop new practices related to assessment for learning. The schools were organised in a network, using dialogue conferences as an arena for learning and development. In this chapter the translation processes between the dialogue conferences and the schools are in focus. The study shows that the Development Teams in the 19 schools had roles as translators of new assessment for learning strategies, and that they developed different competencies by working as translators.

INTRODUCTION

This article draws on Nordic action research theories (Kalleberg, 1992; Gustavsen, 2001; Lund, 2008; Rönnerman, Furu & Salo, 2008) and translation theory (Røvik, 2009; see also Lund & Furu, 2014, chapter 3). The aim is to provide a conceptual repertoire to use when studying change processes in schools. The case study to be presented is a regional reform programme, "Assessment For Learning" (AFL)[1], in which action research was used to develop new practices related to assessment for learning in classrooms. The local project was organized as a network, bringing 19 schools together in a learning network meeting at several dialogue conferences over a period of two and a half years.

Translation theory focuses on the knowledge transfer processes between different arenas and emphasizes the role of the translator. In the "Assessment For Learning" project we focus on the transfer of ideas from dialogue conferences to schools, and specifically on the members of the Development Teams and their roles as translators. Action research theories provide insights into how members of Development Teams that operate within schools can participate in the process of change by using spaces for collective reflection and learning (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Klemsland, 2009). We wish to see the two quite different theory traditions brought closer to each other and we hope to present a contribution to both researchers and practitioners.

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The knowledge transfer process can be analytically described as two processes: *decontextualization*, when translating from practice in one context to abstract ideas; and *contextualization*, when translating from abstract ideas to practice in a new context. When studying the knowledge transfer process in the AFL project as a translation process, it is important to ask what kind of translation competence the translators must have to make good translations. *Translation competence* has often been neglected by both practitioners and researchers. Furthermore, there are few examples of either the systematic development or the teaching of translation competence for those who are involved in a knowledge transfer process between organizations (Røvik, 2009, p. 323- 324).

Knowledge transfer processes include both decontextualization and contextualization of organizational ideas. We will, however, focus mainly on the contextualization process; the transfer of ideas from the dialogue conference to practice in the school. Another key concept in translation theory is the *arena* where translation processes take place. It is important to ask what the characteristics of these arenas are. Our focus in this chapter is to show how the Development Teams in the schools transform ideas from national reforms, from a starting point within network activities on the local level, to actual practice in schools (contextualizing), and furthermore, in what arenas the translation takes place and how translation competencies are developed over the course of the programme through a shift between the two contexts. When studying knowledge transfer processes we focus on translators, translation competencies, the processes of contextualizing and the arenas in which the processes take place.

The article starts with a brief introduction to translation competencies and dialogue conferences as arenas for decontextualization. Thereafter we present the Norwegian context for school reforms in general and the Assessment For Learning programme in particular. We go on to discuss how these kinds of projects are constructed as action research programmes on the local level, and how dialogue conferences are used both as a strategy and as an arena for development. Building on concepts from translation theory, we present a case analyzing the local process of translating the reform ideas (contextualizing). The article ends by discussing what kind of translation competence the members of the Development Teams may develop through the translation process.

TRANSLATION COMPETENCIES IN TRANSLATION THEORY

When we study school reform as a hierarchical process, new ideas come from the top, being implemented downward through the organization, and translated into more and more concrete practice, with the school leader as a central translator (Møller, 2013). Another way to understand translation of ideas would be to regard it as a long process, characterized as a “translation spiral” (Viken, 2000, p. 117). It has been observed that ideas can circulate in an organization like an osmotic interaction between abstract and more materialized forms, rather than following a direct line as a chain from abstract ideas to materialized practice. New ideas are often mixed with experiences and ideas that the organization has worked with before, and new variants of ideas can thus come into being. Instead of the school leader being the main translator, in the AFL project, a Development Team including the principal and 3-8 teachers were responsible for the knowledge transfer process.

As translator competence is regarded as an important resource for success with translation, it seems appropriate to elaborate on this concept. Translators need many types of competences: knowledge, skills and legitimacy (Røvik, 2009, p. 281). It is necessary to have knowledge about the content of what is going to be translated, as well as the contexts the ideas will translate from and to. Translators also need knowledge about the translation processes, i.e. how to introduce the new ideas in another context. When translators introduce new ideas about assessment, it is important to know that their schools already have some assessment practices and a "school culture", or, more often, different school cultures. They have to be prepared to meet resistance from colleagues who have found their own ways of doing things. To challenge the school culture, cooperation with the principal will strengthen the role of the translators. When planning the work in their schools they need the competence to sort out which ideas they want to implement. The new ideas need to be adjusted and incorporated into the ideas that have already materialized in the practice. The translators therefore need to have configuration[2] competence (Røvik, 2009, p. 329). The translation of ideas to specific schools takes place in many different situations and is a very complex processe. It is interesting to ask what kind of freedom the Development Team has. When is the right time to copy the new ideas, when do they prefer to modify and when do they decide to make radical changes?

To translate organizational ideas and practices we need a more accurate terminology. When returning to their organization (the school), the translators (the members of the Development Team) need specific terms to present their ideas, both more general ideas and examples from practice. Looking at the translation as a long process, the translators need to be patient. Røvik (2009, p. 333) uses the virus metaphor to describe how an idea behaves within an organization. This suggests that when the idea first spreads in the organization, we can regard it as a "language infection", where the idea will first and foremost be visible through speech. The virus metaphor also expresses the idea of a long "incubation period" before ideas are materialized into practice. In the meantime, the translators need to make arrangements for a planned discussion on how to concretize the ideas. Therefore the translators need multiple competences (Røvik, 2009), and we want to discuss how these competences develop in the Development Team in the two arenas, namely the dialogue conference and the school.

Dialogue Conferences as Arenas for Translation

Dialogue conferences are a collaborative strategy that has been developed and used in action research for almost 30 years in Norwegian and Swedish workplaces

(Gustavsen, 2001). The conferences are constructed to create good conditions for constructive, experience-based dialogues about the development of work (Holmer and Starrin, 1993:102). The concept of the dialogue conference comprises the two words ‘dialogue’ and ‘conference’. The word ‘dialogue’ comes from Greek *dia*, which means ‘through’, and *logos*, which means ‘word’ or ‘meaning’. Isaacs (1999) claims that dialogues are a way of thinking and reflecting together. The word ‘conference’ comes from Latin and it means ‘to bring together, to meet or counsel’ (Lund, 2008). The idea of bringing participants together in dialogues over time is grounded in thinking about how ideas travel among participants. This is also a characteristic of translation theory (Røvik, 2009). Bringing new ideas to the surface also implies that spaces or arenas are needed for this. Figure 1 show how different spaces are constructed with the aim of letting ideas from different participants and different practices travel within the conference.

Dialogues between groups from different schools about practice Purpose: Allow ideas from different practices in assessment for learning to be passed around the network	**Theory presentation in plenary session** Purpose: Bring in relevant theory considering assessment for learning and school development strategies
Development teams from each school Purpose: Allow those who work in each school to reflect on their ongoing actions and take advantage of new ideas and theory from the conference in the planning of new actions.	**Development teams in plenary session** Purpose: Present ongoing practice from classrooms followed by critical and constructive discussions in plenum

Figure 1. Dialogue conferences. Figure adapted from Lund (2008).

Gustavsen (2001) underlines the importance that the participants in the dialogue conference should “speak to the future”. This means that the study itself must be designed in order to create possibilities for new actions. Therefore, activities in the conference must bring new ideas and concepts that can stimulate understanding in terms of facilitating innovation.

When analyzing dialogue conferences in the light of a social-cultural perspective of learning, Lund (2008) concludes that dialogue conferences may be seen as creating “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998), “learning architectures” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and in Kemmis & Grootenboer’s (2008) terms, as “practice architectures”. When adding translation theory, dialogue conferences can also be seen as “a development arena” (Røvik, 2009), where important ideas about practice are presented and discussed by the members of the Development Teams and then further translated to their own schools and brought back again to the dialogue conferences.

SCHOOL REFORMS IN THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT

School reforms in Norway are often thought of as national initiatives to introduce and promote changes in schools. Since the curriculum reform in Norway in 2006, other national initiatives have been taken to push and strengthen the basic ideas in the reform. Some of these initiatives have their background in international and national research that shows that learning outcomes for students are unsatisfactory compared to other countries. One of these initiatives is the Assessment For Learning programme initiated in 2009. This programme focuses on how to improve students' learning by developing teachers' skills in formative assessment practices. The basic ideas in the programme are to make learning objectives clearer to the students, to improve good and relevant feedback to students and to involve students in the assessment of their learning. The AFL programme should be organized in local networks with schools working together for a period of 16 months, sponsored by national funding.

The introduction and implementation of reform ideas in schools is rather overlooked in research and in school practice. Few local or national authorities seem to be interested in studies that look at ongoing implementation processes, trying to understand how ideas turn into new practices as a result of long-term implementation work. More often we find evaluation programs following reform programs. As a result of this, Røvik (2009) claims that we miss concepts when it comes to understanding what happens when reform ideas are confronted with practice – as when they arrive in schools. We need more knowledge about this, in research as well as in practice, where we have to be more accurate when implementing reforms. This 'white spot', says Røvik (2009), invites us to look at translation theory as a lens to help us find concepts and theory that open up the study of the translation process.

During the last two or three decades there has been a growing interest in networks when it comes to the organization of learning and social interactions in modern society (Stalder, 2006). In Norway we find this trend when it comes to organizing school development at the national level. More and more reform initiatives in the last ten years have recommended the creation of networks as local strategies for school development (Karstad, Møller & Aasen, 2013). One argument that favours the network strategy is that teachers develop their professional knowledge when discussing plans and ideas with other teachers in a professional network (O`Hair et al., 2005). Lieberman and Wood (2001) argue that local networks are teachers' reactions to top down initiatives and that network contribute to the development of a stronger professional attitude among teachers. Network strategies aim to combine a top down national strategy with a bottom up local involvement. In reform initiatives coming from above, the ideas and the programme and some funding for a certain period are provided. The bottom up perspective is realized through each region's decision to organize the network and through each school's development of their own projects that fit within the basic ideas of the network.

In action research projects such as AFL, researchers establish meetings such as dialogue conferences to collaborate with participants who represent different practices from different schools, and who are enabled to articulate and communicate their practice to each other. Practitioners give examples from their practice in the public sphere (see Figure 1), where everyone can comment upon their stories taken from their work in the classroom. Figure 1 shows four core elements in the conference meetings. By drawing four different 'windows', these elements are visualized. By using smaller units (windows), one can separate different communicative spaces from each other, giving each of them its own characteristic. At the same time, the spaces are linked together in interactivity about knowledge building. This interactivity includes theory-practice discussions and group discussions, as well as plenary sessions and reflection backwards and forwards. The place for theory is limited, as it is not the intention to overdo theory at the expense of practice. Researchers in these spheres assume a somewhat unusual role. They join the relational landscape of development opportunities and become interested partners in the processes of development (Shotter & Gustavsen, 1999, p. 4). Being action researchers in this sense means taking part in conversations as participants and partners, not as observers outside of the field. Conversations are not closed systems, but are open to interpretations and combinations of interpretations, and thus they present possibilities for the generation of new meanings. Conversations and the meanings created in them are mainly practice-related, deriving from situations in everyday life and taking place within the language of everyday life.

STUDYING SCHOOLS IN NETWORKS

The AFL programme was introduced to local school authorities in December 2009. Over a period of a couple of months there were meetings between local authorities, principals and staff from the University. The meetings intended to establish a common understanding of how the network should be organized, how long it should last and how to build an understanding of the school development strategy in the programme. These meetings also ended up defining the network as a Learning Network where action research and dialogue conferences were important strategies for innovation and learning. Based on this, researchers developed a collaborative action research project over two and a half years, using dialogue conferences as the arena for knowledge construction.

Nineteen schools, all from same region, and from five different municipalities, joined the AFL network in this period. Each school was represented by one principal and 3-6 teachers, dependent on the size of the school. Some of the teachers were in positions of middle leadership in their schools; others were classroom teachers. Ten two-day dialogue conferences were set up and the programme ended in autumn 2012 by inviting all the teachers from all the schools in this region to two meetings. The final conferences summed up the findings and the new practices that had evolved during the project period and also reflected on the chosen strategy for school development.

To study the effects of the action research strategy we held two focus interviews (Wibeck, 2000) with the Development Teams in 10 schools about the activities at their school. From the first interviews we understood that “translation work” happened in many different arenas in the school, at both formal and informal meetings. After introducing them to translation theory (Røvik, 2009), we decided to ask the groups in the second interviews about the concrete ideas they had brought from the dialogue conferences to the schools, and in which school arenas these ideas “travelled around”.

TRANSLATIONS IN DIALOGUE CONFERENCES

Development arenas such as dialogue conferences have been neglected in the translation process, when looking at translation as a hierarchic chain, as mentioned earlier. At the dialogue conferences the teachers and the principals from different schools met in a network. Such development arenas are important arenas for new ideas and concepts for modern organizations (Røvik, 2009, p. 296). In the AFL project dialogue conferences were an arena for *decontextualization* and for the translation of ideas in assessment for learning. To understand how the Development Teams translated the new ideas it is important to have a look at the tasks of the Development Team. Tasks can be divided into two categories: the translation of ideas in assessment for learning to the school, and the change of practice in the classroom. When organizing development in the school, the teachers and principals worked together, although it was only the principal who had the legal and legislative responsibility for the school (Møller, 1996) and the authority to introduce new reform ideas. According to Røvik (2009), an authority is needed to implement new reforms. The change of practice, however, is first and foremost a task for the teachers. The teachers in the group had a “double role” in the project. As part of the Development Team, the teachers led the translation process from idea to practice at their own schools, and at the same time they were the ones who had to translate the idea into practice in the classroom. Therefore, when participating in the dialogue conferences, the teachers listened to the ideas from practice, as well as more general ideas, and tried to connect them first and foremost to their own classrooms but also more generally to the school as a whole. The principals, who were responsible for organizational development at the school, would listen mainly from that perspective. But they might also have the chance to learn about classroom practices from the presentations in plenary sessions and from group discussions (see Figure 1).

The dialogue conference is the arena where decontextualization takes place. In plenary sessions, the schools translate from practice to idea by presenting practice stories via power points or films from the schools. Sometimes even students and parents were involved in changes in “Assessment for learning” practices. More general ideas, such as theories about development, as well as the new national regulations about assessment, were also presented at the dialogue conferences. Both the teachers and the leaders received the same information. In the Dialogue

Groups with other schools, both principals and teachers had the chance to discuss the more general ideas, as well as ideas translated from good practices. As there were different arenas within the conference, translations took place in every arena. The teachers and the leaders worked together in that translation process and participated in several Dialogue Groups with teachers from other schools. During the dialogue meetings between groups from different schools (see Figure 1), the participants were decontextualizing by translating their practice into abstract ideas. Members of Dialogue Groups could ask about and discuss these ideas in order to understand the concrete practices; see also Lund & Furu (this volume, chapter 3).

The members of the Development Teams developed different competences at the dialogue conference. The content was the new national assessment regulation, as well as general theories about assessment and ideas from practices at other schools. When planning for translation work at school, participation in the conferences meant that the teachers in the Development Teams were more knowledgeable about assessment than other teachers in their schools.

> It is important to have more competence than our colleagues. (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview).

Because the AFL project had an action research profile, the participants were also given lessons in how to lead action research processes to change classroom practices, as well as an introduction to different methods for collecting data on the new practices in the classroom. In that way they gained competence in theories of organizational development. In the various Dialogue Groups they had the possibility to discuss the new "assessment for learning" concepts as well as the practices that were being presented. During the project period all the Development Teams had to make one presentation in the plenary. In that way each Development Teams had to develop a more explicit way of talking about assessment. As the members of the group participated in different collective arenas, constructed with the aim of making dialogues, they became experienced in making organizational arrangements for the discussion of the new ideas. At the dialogue conferences, the Development Teams developed competences concerning: content of assessment for learning, organizational development, oral presentation of the new practices and different arrangements for organizational talking.

At the last part of every dialogue conference, the Development Teams planned the translation work in their schools. The schools started with a plan at the first dialogue conference and at every conference the teachers adjusted or changed the plan before going home to their own schools to contextualize these ideas.

Faust's (1997) differentiation between formal institutionalized arenas, such as seminars and courses outside of the organization, is similar to Røvik' s (2009) definition of development arenas, and of personal transorganizational networks. Both arenas are important for the validation of new knowledge. Personal networks are neglected as sources for communicative validation since they are less visible than institutionalized arenas. The main thing about personal networks is not the possibility of being the first person to get to know the new ideas, but rather of individuals being able to listen to people they trust, talking about ideas worth taking a closer look at. Personal networks are built on trust and are also closer to the practice field. In the dialogue conferences, the teachers and principals participated in many different groups and that situation opened up the possibility of establishing new personal networks. Both the formal arenas and the personal networks contributed to the validation of the ideas that the Development Teams translated to their own schools.

> We feel the atmosphere (at the dialogue conference) when we are meeting both in informal and formal groups. (…) The dialogue conferences play an important role as a backing factor (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview).

TRANSLATIONS AT SCHOOLS

In this section we want to explore how the Development Teams introduced the new ideas in the school context, in order to understand how they obtained knowledge about translation processes as an important aspect of their translation competence. We also want to look at the arenas where translation took place and what kinds of ideas were translated. How did the teachers and the principal in Development Teams handle their roles in the knowledge transfer process?

It seems that not only do some ideas travel into the school, but they also travel around the school in different arenas. When returning from the dialogue conference, the members of the Development Team appeared in six different arenas in their schools: 1) Development Team meeting, 2) classroom, 3) staff meeting, 4) team meeting[3], 5) office and 6) staff room (Figure 2). The principal participated in arenas 1) and 3), while the teachers were involved in all six arenas. By studying the arenas and how the ideas moved between them, we can divide the "travelling route" into three parts: 1) from the Development Team meeting to the classroom, 2) from the staff meeting to the classrooms, and 3) from the staff meeting to the team meeting, staff room and office. Even though the ideas did not travel only in such a structured way, it is possible analytically to divide them into these three types of travelling routes. These routes will be presented and discussed in the text below.

1. Translations from the Development Team Meeting to Classroom

When coming back to school, the Development Team had a meeting where they discussed how to continue with the plans made at the dialogue conference. In the first year, all the schools in the network started to work with "student dialogue" and "parents' dialogue". In addition, schools developed self-assessment/peer-assessment criteria and objectives for assessment. One way to go forward with the plans was to discuss with other staff how to concretize the new ideas. That did not happen. All the teachers in the groups decided to transform the new ideas into practice in their own classes. As they worked in different classes, they had varied experiences to present at

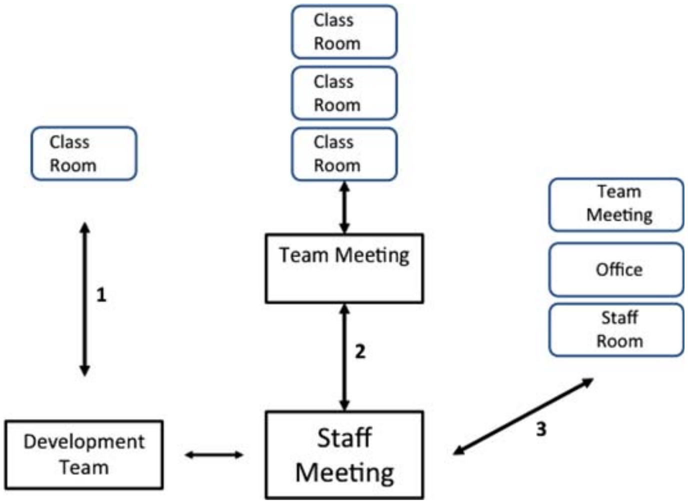

Figure 2. The "travelling routes" within the schools.

staff meetings. Afterwards they were able to say what was working with the students and what was not.

> We can't trust the others' experiences. (Teacher, High Hill, 1st interview).

They could use their content knowledge about assessment, the regulations, and the theories and ideas about the other schools' practices that they had encountered at the dialogue conference. But they needed to transform the ideas to their own practice by making local references (Røvik, 2009), in order to make the ideas more familiar for their colleagues.

At the beginning, the teachers in the Development Team considered themselves first and foremost as teachers and did not know what role they should have in the group, as these teachers express:

> It is exciting to develop assessment for learning in my classroom. I am first and foremost a teacher. (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview).
>
> I was asked to join the group because the principal told me that I had a lot to contribute. She was not clear about what she expected from me. (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview).

The principals were very clear about the advantages of the teachers who were "experts" in practice trying out new ideas in their classrooms before presenting them at the staff meeting. Many of the principals expressed the feeling that it was a drawback that their daily work was so far removed from the classrooms.

> Those who are working in the field are the most important members. Their testing and experiences are worth gold because the other teachers can recognize the practice. (Principal, South Hill, 1st interview).

The teachers in the Development Team had an advantage over the principals, as they could present examples from the new Assessment For Learning practices to convince their colleagues that new ideas were possible to manage. Being practitioners, they had the chance to get legitimacy from the staff.

2. Translations from Staff Meetings to Classrooms

In the following section we will present the transfer processes that took place from the staff meeting to the classrooms. A staff meeting may be a half day meeting or a one or two day seminar outside the school, where all the teachers and the principals meet together. As mentioned above, many school leaders were very conscientious about letting the teachers in the Development Team chair the staff meeting about the new assessment practices.

The Development Team planned the contents of the meetings. They shared their experiences from the dialogue conference and they also talked about their own experiences with new practices in the classroom. The Development Team also decided what tasks the teachers should work on at the meetings. Sometimes the staff was divided into groups to work on Assessment For Learning, in which the members of the Development Team participated. Because they knew more about why and how Assessment For Learning was meant to be, they had a strong voice in the group discussion. They could also present examples from their experience, e.g. from student dialogues. Members of the group also joined other teacher teams to help them with their plans. When working on written assessments for learning, the teachers were very uncertain, and therefore wanted the Development Team members to evaluate what they had formulated. One of the members in the Development Team underlined the fact that even if the teacher groups had set up cues for the student dialogue, they were not sure whether the procedure was followed. It was necessary for the members of the Development Team to follow up the new Assessment For Learning practice which their colleagues carried out.

At the start of the project, the Development Team met various kinds of resistance. As they had little experience in their new role, they felt that they stood in "stormy weather." The school leaders observed that the teachers were confronted by their colleagues.

> I have a bad conscience for letting them do much of the work alone. (Principal, High Hill, 1st interview).

At one of the schools, when the teachers presented the proposal about writing comments for a student dialogue, parent/student dialogue and half-year assessment on the same sheet, the staff said:

> Do we have to do it? Where is that written? Do we have time for this? My existing practice is very good. (Teacher, Sea Hill, 1st interview).

The way the Development Team handled this challenge was to start with what the teachers were already doing in the field of assessment, and present it at a staff meeting. The staff also discussed how they could use the same template for a student dialogue, parent/student dialogue and the mid-year assessment to save time. Afterwards the Development Team worked out a common way of doing it. But they realized that there were still some teachers following the old plans for assessment.

At the staff meetings, teacher teams were challenged to bring in their experiences from the new assessment practice. This was important as a way of creating a positive school culture and putting a little pressure on the staff to try out Assessment For Learning.

> We have been discussing our "sharing culture" at the school. How can we share our practice with each other? (Principal, South Hill, 2nd interview)

At the dialogue conferences the teachers were experienced in sharing their practice with other teachers. Not only the content but also the form of staff meetings was transferred from the dialogue conferences to the schools. The staff meetings could be seen as an arena in which to create space for collective reflections (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Klemsland, 2009).

When the project started, many members were very sceptical about calling themselves "leaders" of the reform work of their school. They preferred names such as supervisor, resource person, good colleague or simply a member of the Development Team. But after a while they changed their views about their own roles and recognized that, as members of the Development Team, they were leading the reform work in their schools.

> I would never have accepted the invitation to be a member of the group if the school leader had asked me to be a kind of leader. I have been growing into it. If you are a leader you need to know more than the other teachers. (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview).

At the staff meetings, members of the Development Team could use their translation competence about the content of assessment for learning, organizational development, talking explicitly about the new practices and different arrangements for organizational talking. In addition they could present their own practice experiences by translating the new reform ideas into the classroom. Compared to the principals, the teachers in the Development Team had a salient position, as the principals were often absent from staff meetings.

3. Translations from the Staff Meeting to Team Meeting, Office and Staff Room

All the teachers in the Development Team were also part of a teacher team. These teachers discussed the assessment practices in many informal places, such as team meetings, staff rooms and offices. One of the members spoke about how she and her experienced colleague together developed new ideas about assessment practices, as an example of intertwining their ideas (Røvik, 2012):

> We were working with peer assessment in reading. (…) I didn't think I should teach her something because she has more experience in the school than I have. (…). I showed her my plan and she was inspired by it and got some more ideas, which we then developed, together, in the new plan. (Teacher, High Hill, 2nd interview)

This example shows us that the members of the Development Team played an important role in informal planning as good colleagues, when they worked with their fellow colleagues on plans for their own classes. Another example of the informal meeting is how one of the members of a Development Team offered help when he was in the office and heard a colleague ask another teacher how to conduct a student dialogue.

> I asked him what he though was difficult, and told him about my good and bad experiences. The teacher asked: Did you also have these kinds of experiences? (Teacher, South Hill, 1st interview)

The principals recognized the importance of these informal conversations and underlined the fact that the advice did not coming from high up in the organization, but from the same level as teachers themselves. That gave the teachers' advice a stronger legitimacy.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section we will discuss what kind of translation competences the members of the Development Team developed through the process. If we had been looking at the transfer process only from the perspective of action research, it would have been natural to look at the transformation process only from staff meeting to classroom and back again. To look at the staff meeting as a space to create collective reflections about the teachers' practices would have been a central focus. But by using translation theory to look at the translators, as well as the arenas where the translations happen, we discovered three different routes for transferring ideas about practices, and also different roles for the teachers and the principal in the Development Team. These findings show that the transfer process is very complex, and that during the Assessment For Learning project the teachers and the principal in the Development Team developed varied translation competences.

The translation competence they had developed at the dialogue conferences was further developed in the six arenas in the school. By trying out the new practices in their classroom and gathering information about how they were carried out, the teachers in the Development Team gained experience with a more systematic way of developing their classroom practices, which is a central aspect of the definition of action research (Furu, 2008). From a translation theory perspective, the teachers adapted to local circumstances (Røvik, 2009) by using the ideas from the dialogue conference to contextualize the ideas in their school. Experiences from their classrooms seemed to play an important role when moving to the staff meetings. In the staff meetings the teachers gained organizational experience by leading those meetings. The principals recognized the teachers as competent enough to lead the staff meetings and realized that, as principals, they did not know as much about what was going on in the classroom. The principal had a rather weak position "front stage", but had a strong supporting role for the teachers "back stage". When the teachers in the Development Team led the staff meetings, they felt they had support from the principal and also from their experiences within the Development Team. This may be the reason why they did not withdraw when they met resistance at the staff meetings. But at the informal meetings in the schools, the teachers in the Development Team did not represent the principal and they met each other on an equal footing as colleagues. They were not a threat for their colleagues' autonomy (Hargreaves, 2003).

Looking at the three patterns of translation routes, the teachers in the Development Team played different roles as translators. The first was to make local adaptations to the ideas of new practices in their classrooms, the second was to lead formal staff meetings with support from the principal, where they created a collective space for reflection, and third was their participation in informal arenas where they got a chance to intertwine their practices with the practices of their colleagues. All of these contributed to their translation competence.

The focus in the Assessment For Learning project was to change assessment practices, and that was a challenge for many school leaders, who did not often visit the classrooms. In schools there has been a long tradition of setting up of an invisible contract (Berg, 1999) between school leaders' work and the teachers' work in the classroom. If the school leader focusses on administrative tasks, the teachers will focus on the practice in the classroom. Even though we have many national regulations concerning the school leaders' responsibility for teaching and student outcomes (Møller, 2004; Møller & Ottesen, 2012), we still find aspects of this invisible contract in many Norwegian school cultures. To become more familiar with practices in the classroom, many of the principals started "management by walking around" (Skrøvset, 2008). But they were still dependent on inside knowledge from the teachers' assessment practice presented at staff meetings.

The main arena where the Development Team presented ideas about new forms of Assessment For Learning was at the staff meeting. The teachers in the Development Team were not prepared to meet and defend themselves against the resistance from their colleagues. But after some time they became more comfortable characterizing themselves as leaders. They organized the meeting with great inspiration from the dialogue conferences. Theories, practice stories and group planning were elements at the meetings, presented through power-points, films or notes from the dialogue conferences.

In the beginning, members of the Development Team presented ideas from their classroom practice as a sort of "practice story". As one of the main purposes of a dialogue conference is to create space for collective dialogues, the Development Team organized the staff in groups to discuss both theories and ideas of practices. Every team had to try out some kind of Assessment For Learning in their classrooms and present it at a staff meeting as an example of a "practice story". It seems that many schools have developed a new form of sharing culture with a focus on "practice stories". When translating practice into representations, the language used played an important role in making the idea of practice explicit. When talking about the ideas, the staff kept the energy for the transfer process (Røvik, 2009; Viken, 2000).

To become leaders to their colleagues, these teachers gained their authority from the principal. But the teachers also needed legitimacy from their fellow teachers. Many of the members realized that their colleagues contacted them in other arenas, such as the office and the coffee room, asking for advice about Assessment For Learning. This activity is seen as a good example of trust in the knowledge of the Development Team.

We can therefore conclude by saying that the teachers on the Development Team had a great impact on the practice of their colleagues, even if there was a small group who wanted to work as they had always done. On the other hand, the principal had to follow up those who neglected the new regulations. When every team had to present something at a staff meeting, the teachers felt obliged to prepare something to show the others, the way they did during dialogue conferences.

Even though we have focused on the contextualizing process in this chapter, there has been a continuous transfer process between the school and the dialogue conference. In a research report on implementation of the educational reform (K-06), it is emphasized that network and dialogue relations on and between different levels of authority have had a great influence on changes at the school level (Møller, Prøitz, Rye & Aasen, 2013). One aspect that seemed to be important both for translation competence and for the outcome was that the Assessmen For Learning project went on for two and a half years. It allowed the teachers in the Development Team to involve themselves in Assessment For Learning over time and in different arenas (Coburn, 2004; Edward Groves & Rönnerman, 2012): trying it out in classroom, presenting at staff meetings, and discussing with their colleagues both at school and at dialogue conferences.

To bring to a conclusion the outcomes of this case study, we ask ourselves: how have action research and translation theory contributed to exploring the Development Teams' translation competence? The Assessment For Learning project was conducted as an action research project where the dialogue conference was an arena for collective reflection. At the conference, time was set aside for teachers to make plans about how to translate the new Assessment For Learning practice into their classrooms and into the school. When the Development Team was moving back and forth between the dialogue conferences and the schools, we realized that in translation theory terms the members could be described as translators. By using the concept of the arena, we discovered how many arenas there were in the schools where the ideas could be translated, and that the teachers in the Development Team had a salient role as translators. This study has shown the complexity of reform work at the school level, where translation competence is an important skill for the translators. The project underlines the importance of constructing *collective development arena*s in schools for discussions of ideas about Assessment For Learning, and as a place to share experiences of new practices with colleagues. During the two and a half year process, the teachers and principals in the Development Teams developed different competences, but by working together as translators, they were able to lead the translation process in the schools.

NOTES

[1] In this text we use the concept of the AFL programme for the national Assessment For Learning reform and AFL project for the local work with this reform

[2] Competence to know how to adjust ideas in a new context

[3] A team meeting can be seen as both a formal and informal arena. Sometimes the principal may give teachers specific tasks to do (formal meeting), but most of the time the teachers decide what task they want to work on (informal meeting)

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SVEIN-ERIK ANDREASSEN

10. RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP IN LOCAL TEACHING PROGRAMME WORK

Translations of competence aims

This chapter focuses on teachers' local translations of learning aims in the Norwegian curriculum reform LK06, which is part of the education reform Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training of 2006. *Competence aims* is the term for the learning aims in LK06. These competence aims constitute the *source*. The local work in schools with LK06 constitutes the *translations*. Studies indicate inconsistency between the intentions of LK06 and its translation into local teaching programmes. This chapter analyses this theme in a constructive perspective and asks how schools can and ought to translate the competence aims. In order to conduct research into this field a specific school was selected as a case study, and as a researcher I established a research partnership with this school. Translation theory is used as an analysis tool.

INTRODUCTION

Following the implementation in Norway of the education reform Knowledge Promotion, 2006, evaluation research reveals inconsistency between the national curriculum and the local teaching programmes. Engelsen (2008, pp. 190-193) finds that school owners tend not to feel comfortable with increased responsibility for implementing reforms, and professional pedagogical and educational competence is lacking at this level. The local strategy documents frequently appear to be written for the sake of satisfying central education authorities, rather than providing for innovation and creativity in local schools. Dale & Øzerk (2009, pp. 143-144) find that the competence aims in LK06 are not articulated adequately in accordance with the intentions of the Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006. They argue, consequently, in favour of adjusting LK06 in some subjects. They demonstrate how further local work on LK06 can result in content orientation, who is not the intention. Local programmes, thus, run the risk of aligning themselves with the previous reform of national curriculum, the Education Reform of 1997, and risk losing the focus on competence aims and outcomes that LK06 advances. In this respect, research into the relationships between national source and local translations becomes imperative, and is also important in view of translation theories.

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The main inquiry of this chapter is: *How can and how ought teachers to translate the national curriculum LK06?* This is a constructive inquiry – and thus maintains a normative perspective – which takes its point of departure from action research (Kalleberg, 2009, p. 265). However, the main inquiry contains a couple of preliminary questions. The first relates to the source: *what are the characteristics of the competence aims in the national curriculum of LK06?* The second relates to the translation in a descriptive perspective: *how do teachers translate the national curriculum of LK06?* Both preliminary questions are of the constative kind.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Theoretical terms such as the Tyler Rationale (Tyler, 1949), Bernstein's Code Theory (Bernstein, 1975), Mager's instructional objectives (Mager, 1962) and Eisner's expressive objectives (Eisner, 1967, 1972) are applied to analyse the competence aims and their local translations. Translation theory (Røvik, 1998, 2007, 2013) is used to put the local translations into a wider perspective.

Curriculum Theory

Tyler (1949, pp. 46-47) claims that 'the most useful form for stating objectives is to express them in terms which identify both the kind of behaviour to be developed in the student and the content or area of life in which this behaviour is to operate'. He offers the following example of this aim: 'to write clear and well-organised reports (behaviour) of Social Studies projects (content)'. It seems useful to expand Tyler's categories as follows in order to apply his analytical tool to the competence aims in LK06: 'to write clear and well-organised (behaviour) reports (general content) of Social Studies projects (specific content)'. In this way the behavioural dimension is expressed through the verbs and their coordinate adverbs, while the content dimension is divided into general and specific content (Andreassen, 2012).

Tyler's categories are combined with Bernstein's twin terms: *strong* framing and *weak* framing. Strong framing implies that the teacher and, even more specifically, the pupil, have relatively few options to consider, and that the curriculum and schedule are articulate and firm. Weak framing, naturally, implies the opposite. Strong framing reduces the pupil's power over what, when and how he acquires knowledge and increases the teacher's control in the pedagogic relationship. Weak framing empowers the pupil (Bernstein 1975, pp. 88-93). A distinction is made between internal and external framing.

Internal framing refers to relationships between the teacher and the learner in the classroom. *External* framing refers to relationships between the teacher and agents/agencies outside of the classroom: other teachers, the school management, parents, curriculum and policy documents (Bernstein, 1971, in Hoadley, 2003, p. 266). I use the terms in this chapter as follows: 'internal framing' concerns the power relationships between the school/teacher and the individual pupil in the local curriculum. ‘External framing’ concerns the power relationships between the national education authorities and the individual school/teacher, as they manifest themselves in LK06, and concomitant mandatory regulations and documents from the Ministry and Directorate of Education.

A combination of Tyler’s categories and Bernstein’s twin terms offers the following figure, which distinguishes between four different learning objectives:

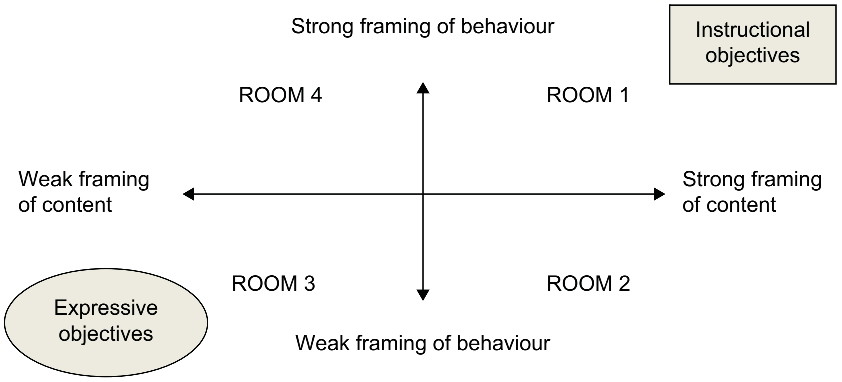

Figure 1. Strong/weak framing of two dimensions in learning objectives.

Mager (1962) asserts that objectives should be expressed so clearly that everybody who reads them should understand them the same way as the authors. He emphasizes the importance of an objective pointing towards a specified outcome, and that this outcome can be evaluated. Furthermore, he maintains that the best expression of an objective is the one that delimits its possible translations the most. Expressions on behaviour, such as ‘to write’, ‘to differentiate’ and ‘to identify’, are given priority over formulations such as ‘to know’, ‘to understand’ and ‘to appreciate’ (ibid., pp. 3-13). Instructional objectives require specific content (ibid., p. 41). One example of an instructional objective is: ‘The student must be able to solve correctly at least seven simple linear equations within a period of thirty minutes’ (ibid., p. 45). I consider these kinds of objectives to have strong framing in both dimensions.

Eisner’s *expressive objectives* oppose Mager’s narrow *instructional objectives*. Eisner (1972, pp. 580-582) defines his opposition to Mager’s view of education as a distinction between prescriptive goals and forms of behaviour, which stipulate exactly what the pupil is required to know and how to behave at the end of the teaching period, versus a diversity of evocative, creative and outcome-focused activity initiated by a teacher-pupil partnership. The teacher can provide for expressive objectives too, but the frames of teaching are then less rigorous. In Eisner’s ideas of expressive objects, the parameters and specifications of teaching are less predefined, and the individual pupil is granted more potential to develop his or her individual cognition, affection and action (ibid.). One example of an expressive is: ‘To develop a three-dimensional form through the use of wire and wood’ (Eisner, 1967, p. 18). I consider these kinds of objectives to have weak framing in both dimensions.

Translational Theory

Røvik (2007, p. 301) presents a theory of the translation and contextualization of general ideas into specific organizations. He establishes three different transformation modes: the *reproductive*, the *modifying* and the *radical*. The three modes have their specific characteristics of translation: copying characterizes the reproductive mode, addition and subtraction the modifying mode, and transformation the radical mode. *Copying*, in this respect, means to transplant ideas and a specific practice from one organizational context to another in such a way that the practice is re-established, i.e. initiated into a new context, with few or hardly any changes (ibid., p. 308). *Addition* implies that new elements are added to the reconceptualization and transportation of a practice from one organizational context to another. *Subtraction* implies the opposite, that some elements are removed during the process of reconceptualization and transportation. *Transformation* defines a fundamental change of idea and practice, frequently also in form and content. In this case the development of the new variant appears more like a local innovation than a re-establishment of an external concept and model (ibid., pp. 311-318).

However, Røvik’s three modes appear inadequate for the material and research at hand. Consequently, I take my cue from Røvik’s theories (2007, 1998) and suggest a fourth supplementary mode: the *symbolic*. Røvik (1998, pp. 31-40) propose two distinct perspectives of analysing management implementation: the tool perspective and the symbolic perspective. The tool perspective emphasizes the adoption of an organization’s recipes and ideas that increase efficiency, improve internal cooperation, etc. This perspective stems from the rational-instrumental tradition. The symbolic perspective, however, gives priority to the fact that organizations do not only choose their ideas and structures for the sake of internal efficiency. Choices are also made with a view to public relations, in order to distinguish the profile, legitimacy and identity of their own organization from other actors in the same field. Such considerations also affect the organization’s self-perception (ibid). Røvik’s three translation modes can be regarded as fundamental to the implementation approach – the new organization may copy, add, subtract or transform itself for the sake of improvement. But what happens if an organization copies an idea, not for the sake of improvement, but in order to look better? In this case the copying belongs to a symbolic mode, rather than a reproductive mode.

The fourth mode that I suggest here is inspired by Røvik’s (2013) idea of the artistic scenario. Røvik differentiates three scenarios that may occur when an organization imports and implements ideas and reforms. The *optimistic* scenario is based upon a notion that ideas and initiatives can be smoothly distributed and converted into daily practice. The *pessimistic* scenario is based upon a notion that new ideas and reforms frequently tend to be incompatible with the existing values and complex practices that make up the daily routines of staff, and will consequently be rejected. The *artistic* scenario suggests that the organization will allow for new ideas and reforms, without forcing their implementation. In this way ideas and reforms enter into daily conversation, independently of daily practice (ibid, pp. 83-86). I suggest a way of thinking in which the artistic scenario facilitates a translation of ideas and reforms in a symbolic mode.

The translational theory is reviewed more thoroughly in chapter 3 (Lund & Furu, 2014)

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND METHODS

A case study and action research constitute the research strategies for this article. From Anderson's (2013) categories of case studies, I have chosen the explorative case study. Such case studies are analytical, and the actual case is offered as an example. Its purpose is to generalize by proposing new hypotheses or theories (ibid.). The case I have chosen is not the focus, but is used as an example of the populations of schools in general.

The case study is combined with the research partnership principle of action research. Action research takes its point of departure from constructive inquiry, which distinguishes itself from the constative and critical inquiry (Kalleberg, 1992, pp. 29-38; 2009, pp., 262-266). In *constative* inquiry, questions are asked about how and why things are as they are, or, eventually, how they will turn out. In *critical* inquiry questions are asked about the values of social realities. *Constructive* inquiry concerns itself with what certain actors can and ought to do in order to transform a given social reality into a better social reality. Constructive inquiry can be further divided into three approaches: interventional, variational and imaginative.

In the *interventional* approach the researcher intervenes in his field of research with a view to improving it; consequently, action research requires a two-folded definition. The researcher generates new knowledge, but he also contributes actively to change in his field of research. The *variational* approach intends from the very start not to change the existing social reality, but seeks to learn from the variations that constitute the existing reality. This approach includes studies of interesting and successful transformations that have taken place or are taking place independently of the researcher. The best examples offer strategies for improvement. The *imaginative* approach assumes priority when there is no possibility of intervention, and when no proper example exists – neither past nor present. The researcher then imagines an improved social reality, and how practice can be directed towards this condition. (Kalleberg, ibid.). This research project makes use of, respectively, the interventional and the imaginative approach in two different phases, in its endeavour to respond to the constructive inquiry.

The interventional approach appears synonymous with the principle of research partnership in Tiller (2006) and practical action research in Carr and Kemmis (1986).

In research partnerships the researcher conducts his research through intervention together with professional practitioners. In this partnership the researcher conducts action research and the practitioners conduct action learning (Tiller, 2006, pp. 11-12). In practical action research, the teamwork between researcher and practitioner is closer than in emancipatory action research, where the practitioners initiate the ideas, and technical action research, where the researcher initiates the ideas (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, pp. 200-207). The case study from Sweden in chapter Six (Rönnerman & Olin, 2014) can be characterized as practical research action as the idea of research circles was initiated mutually by practitioners and researchers. The case study from Finland in chapter Seven (Forsman et al., 2014) can be regarded as lopsided towards technical action research as the idea of site-based education development is initiated from the outside, by the Finnish education authorities. This top-down initiation also characterizes the idea of Assessment for Learning in the case study from Norway in chapter Nine (Moksnes Furu & Lund, 2014). Network strategies try here to combine a top down national strategy with a bottom up local involvement. Consequently, this case study can be characterized as practical action.

A case study contains a variety of empirical material, such as documents, artefacts, interviews and observations (Yin, 2009, p. 10). I make use of qualitative text analysis, dialogue and participation as the governing methods for my collection of empirical material. The qualitative text analysis aims to understand the semantics of the text, not to conduct corpus linguistics (Grimen, 2004, p. 208). The purpose of the qualitative text analysis is to understand the intentions and the typical characteristics of the competence aims in LK06. I have chosen sources from both the political institution, Kunnskapsdepartementet [The Ministry of Education and Research], and from the bureaucratic administration, Kunnskapsdirektoratet [The Directorate of Education].

Gustavsen (2004) distinguishes between three types of 'face-to-face' methods: interview, conversation and dialogue. In dialogue the researcher seeks to establish a forum for a mutual construction of social reality, inclined towards the interests of the researcher (ibid, p. 241). In this partnership the researcher concentrates on new ideas and knowledge, not on collecting or systematizing existent knowledge. The researcher and the actors act as sparring partners on the same arena. Their sparring results in extended knowledge. This term indicates that both partners attempt to extend their input by adding their own knowledge and experience. In this way, new knowledge, which neither of the partners can produce separately, is created. This new knowledge ensues from co-creativity (Wadel, 2008, pp. 43-44). D. Andersen (2010, p. 1) sheds further light on the concept:

> The negative mode of verbal exchange, let us for simplicity's sake call it debate, is a verbal contest in which each contender tries to defeat the other. It is a game of winning and losing. The positive mode, let us call it dialogue, consists of team work in which everyone tries to contribute to a mutual solution; a suggestion, a conclusion, an insight or whatever it might be. This is

> a win-win situation. … In a dialogic process two or several persons contribute, verbally and/or in writing, with their own ideas, suggestions, insights, opinions etc. to the team. Participants support each other in a mutual process to reach something new that would be difficult or impossible to attain individually.

Dialogue, thus, can be separated as a research method from the two other types of 'face-to-face' methods – interview and conversation. Similarly, dialogue can be separated as a 'positive verbal method' from the 'negative verbal method' of debate. It can be argued that the dialogue research method functions as a premise for the research strategies of interventional approach, research partnership and practical action research.

I made use of focus groups as a method in the early stages of this project. This early phase yielded very little material for the actual research question. The empirical results from this phase were characterized by the objective reality presented by the practitioners during interviews and their subjective reality of emotions, experiences and opinions, presented in conversation. The practitioners' statements during this phase were characterized by their role as informants, instead of their role as participants. Because of that the relationships between the practitioners and the researcher became somewhat artificial with regard to the constructive perspective of the research project.

The use of dialogue in this project incorporates Wadel's (1991, p. 46) emphasis on co-productivity in the methods of *practice participation* and *conversation participation*. Dialogue seems to have a lot in common with field work, where the researcher explains as much as he or she inquires. Dialogue, however, seems to emphasize the constructive dimension of any interventional research action and partnership.

Practice participation is defined, in this project, as involvement in local work with teaching programmes, whereas conversation participation is defined as the reasoning over competence aims. These two terms have to a large extent overlapped in field work. The most significant difference is the more withdrawn position of the researcher in practice participation. In this process the researcher assumes a role more like that of the other practitioners. In conversation participation, the roles of the practitioners and the researcher become more distinct. In this process both partners raise topics and challenges of interest in turn. Another difference between the two forms of participation, in this project, is that practice participation often takes the more formal form of meetings at fixed times, whereas conversation participation often takes place with less formality and often occurs coincidentally and unexpectedly. A third difference between the two consists in the use of forms and schedules in practice participation, whereas conversation participation is less structured and goal-oriented.

By intervening and acting in a specific field, the researcher is likely to cause reactions that stimulate important knowledge about the social reality under study (Solberg, 1996, p. 33). In this research project, the competence aims of LK06 are in focus, and are not a given social reality. Still, the researcher's involvement in local teaching programme work is imperative in order to understand, analyse and problematize the competence aims. Consequently, the researcher's observation of practitioners is less important. The main importance lies in the deeper understanding and the new knowledge the co-productive research partnership offers both partners.

Norges Toppidrettsgymnas, Tromsø (NTG) [The Norwegian College of Elite Sport] has been selected as a case study. NTG in Tromsø is a private upper secondary school which was established in 2008. The school has grown, in terms of enrolment, and now offers modules for three parallel classes in the last three years of school. After the increase over the first few years, student numbers have now stabilized at approximately 80 pupils. During the first year the staff consisted of part-time teachers who also worked in other schools. Today most teachers work full time, and staff consists of a principal, approximately 10 teachers and 7 sport coaches. The sport coaches teach physical education and elite sports in addition to coaching the students in their sports. These two subjects are also governed by competence aims, as are the other general school subjects.

THE SOURCE – WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMPETENCE AIMS IN LK06?

The most recent three reforms for Norwegian lower secondary school are Mønsterplanen of 1987 (M87) [The National Curriculum Reform of 1987], Læreplanverket av 1997 (L97) [The Education Reform of 1997] and Kunnskapsløftet [The Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006]. The last reform includes curriculum for both primary and secondary school. The learning aims in both L97 and LK06 focus on the pupil as the imperative subject. This focus represents a break in the tradition of national curriculum in Norway. Monsen (1996, p. 265) accentuates the novelty of Reform 94 (R94) – a previous reform for upper secondary education: in R94, the pupil became the central subject of the aims in the national curriculum, rather than the teaching and syllabus. In the aims of M87, teaching was the central subject.

The aims in R94/L97 are content-oriented with a focus on knowledge, whereas the aims in LK06 are formulated as competence aims, with a focus on skills combined with knowledge. LK06 and R94/L97 differ in both the behavioural dimension and the content dimension of their aims. Imsen (2009, p. 225) corroborates this observation and elaborates that LK06 expresses the behavioural dimension more precisely than L97, but expresses the content dimension more vaguely and openly. The following example illustrates the point. One of the aims in social science for year 9 in L97 states:

> In their education the pupils shall work with the forces, conflicts and decisions that lead to the two World Wars and the relationships between them. They will familiarize themselves with the course of the wars and assess their

> consequences' (Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet [Ministry of Church, Education and Research], 1996, p. 185).

One of the competence aims in social science after year 10 in LK06 states:

> The pupil is able to prepare questions on central international conflicts in the 1900s and in the present century, to formulate causal explanations and to discuss consequences of the conflicts (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006; Utdanningsdirektoratet, undated, a).

The two examples can be analysed as follows (Andreassen, 2012):

Table 1. A content-oriented aim in L97 compared to a competence aim in LK06

Aim	*Behavioural dimension*	*Framing*	*Content dimension – weak framing*	*Content dimension – strong framing*
L97 – Main moment for year 9: In their education the pupils shall	work with	weak	the forces, conflicts and decisions that lead to	the two world wars, and the relations between them.
	familiarize themselves with the course of	weak		the two world wars
	assess the consequences of	strong		the two world wars
LK06 – Competence aims after Year 10: The pupil is able to	prepare questions on	strong	central international conflicts in the 1900s and in the present century	(for example)
	formulate causal explanations of	strong	(same)	(for example)
	discuss consequences of	strong	(same)	(for example)

The L97 example in this figure shows that two of the verbs in the behavioural dimension have weak framing: 'work with' and 'familiarize themselves with'. These are general and open. This example also shows that one of the verbs in the behavioural dimension has strong framing: 'assess'. In the LK06 example all verbs in the behavioural dimension are specific and have strong framing: 'prepare questions on', 'formulate' and 'discuss'. The content dimension moves in the opposite direction. Content with weak framing in LK06 replaces content with strong framing in L97.

LK06 opens up the possibility of studying other central international conflicts, whereas L97 specifies the two World Wars as content. The content dimension of L97 has strong framing. The content dimension of the competence aims of LK06, in contrast, has weak framing only.

The aims in LK06 do not specify content and thus content is opened up for local decision. Nevertheless, questions remain on which actors are to be involved in and granted power in making local decisions. Weak external framing of content results in transposition of power from governmental authorities to local schools and teachers. Does this aspect of the LK06 reform also entail weak internal framing? The table above includes an empty grey area. Who controls this space and with what will they fill it? In many cases this space tends to be filled with text books, in others it is overloaded with the opinions and decisions of individual teachers. In such cases the weak framing and openness of LK06 allow little space and initiative to the individual pupil (Andreassen, 2012). The divergences between L97 and LK06 can, by these examples and the application of the above theories, be illustrated as follows:

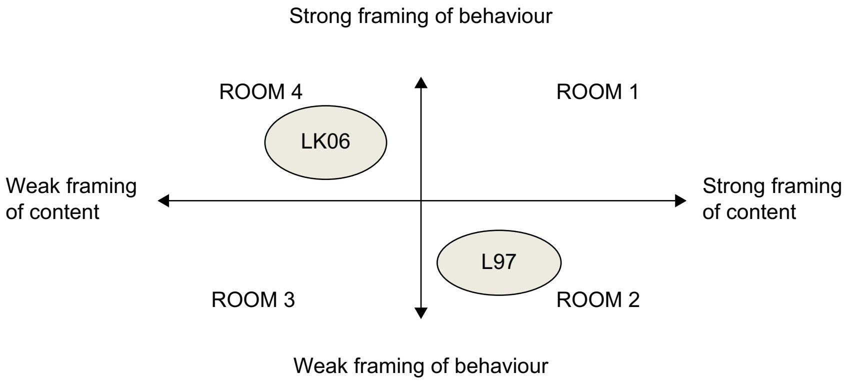
Strong framing of behaviour
ROOM 4
ROOM 1
LK06
Weak framing of content
Strong framing of content
L97
ROOM 3
ROOM 2
Weak framing of behaviour

Figure 1. The difference of aims in L97 and LK06.

The transformations from L97 to LK06 represent a transition from a content-oriented to a competence-based National Curriculum (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2010, p. 3). The Minister of Education for R94/L97, Gudmund Hernes, based his politics, among other concerns, upon mobility in society – pupils who moved could expect the same content in their old and new schools. Prior to LK06 he expressed his concerns about the discontinuation of a content-oriented national curriculum; he thought this would weaken 'national identity' and the school's role as a custodian of culture and tradition. The Minister of Education for LK06, Kristin Clement, justified her competence-based National Curriculum on the conviction that the teachers know their pupils and the local community best. National authorities, therefore, do not need to control content in detail; – teachers are granted more responsibility to choose (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2004, p. 25; Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008, p. 69). Changes in the content dimension were further justified as follows (my emphasis):

> The competence aims present clear, national stipulations on the most important content of school subjects, and demonstrates central areas of knowledge and basic skills. It is important that the content of subjects is stated in such a way that it can be adapted to the different conditions of the pupil and trainee. Content needs to be stated in a way that allows space for local adaptation of curriculum in comprehension and complexity to individual needs and interests, to be of meaning and relevance to the individual (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2004, p. 11).

This paragraph underlines the importance of adapting content to the pupil's capabilities and interests, and the importance of meaning for the individual. Does this accord with the teachers' translation of external weak framing of content to internal strong framing in local schools? Utdanningsdirektoratet (2004, s. 10) justified further changes in the framing of the content dimension as follows:

> Aims are to be expressed clearly to set the competence standard the pupil/trainee has to achieve at the different levels. Aims are no longer to contain phrases such as 'know of', 'gain insight into' etc.; rather, they have to articulate precisely what the pupil/trainee can do and master based upon the knowledge and skills he or she has achieved in their work in the subject.

These lines state that both knowledge and skills are essential to competence. It is also to be noted that the exposition of aims here connects articulation and precision with the behavioural dimension ('do'/'master'), not the content dimension. Teachers may have related the term 'clear aims' predominantly to the content dimension, which was not the intention. The aims are directed towards the behavioural dimension.

Dale (2010, pp. 124-126) claims that the decisive factor in the teaching of the different curricula in the LK06 education reform is not content, and he argues against the existence of a tendency among teachers to remain content-oriented without paying attention to the competence aims of the new reform. Dale, Engelsen & Karseth (2011, p. 123) discuss the competence aims:

> … competence depends upon the content of the subject in order to be developed, but it is not dependent upon particular and specified content. … Pupils can acquire different types of enabling competencies that are not necessarily restricted by specified or local content, but which cannot be developed without particular content.

The understanding of the term *competence* varies from country to country, and many countries offer their own definition (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2011, p. 21). It could be argued that LK06 does not define competence aims properly. One approach to this dilemma can be suggested in light of the equation of Blooms. (1956, p. 38): *arts or skills + knowledge = abilities*. Furthermore, arts and skills can be aligned with the behavioural dimension, and knowledge with the content dimension. Reciprocity between these two dimensions creates abilities and competence.

Finally, it can be argued that the source the teachers have to translate – the competence aims of LK06 – are characterized by promoting the pupil as subject, and by strong framing of the behavioural dimension and weak framing of the content dimension.

THE TRANSLATION OF LK06 INTO LOCAL TEACHING PROGRAMMES

The section above concentrates on external framing – the power relations between the national authorities and the local school/teacher. This section focuses on discussions and examples of internal framing – the power relations between the local school/ teachers and the individual pupil. The following paragraphs, in other words, centre on how the LK06 competence aims are translated in the local schools.

Hodgsen, Rønning, Skogvold and Tomlinson (2010) have researched such translations. They find that the process of translating the competence aims into local teaching programmes is characterized by considerable variation. The variations can be sorted into three main categories: I) copying of competence aims; II) specification of competence aims; III) textbook preferences (ibid. p. 6, 53-58). Their survey appears to examine the content dimension in the local programmes, although this is not made explicit.

A precision of their terminology seems helpful. They employ the term *learning aims* for the local translations of the LK06 competence aims, i.e. learning aims are of a different type and secondary quality to competence aims. This can cause confusion, as competence aims are also a type of learning aims. In further discussion, I use the term *intermediate aims* to distinguish the local translation of aims from the competence aims in LK06.

Translation of the Content Dimension

When teachers *copy* the competence aims, they apply them verbatim to the relevant school years. Teachers state inadequate competence and lack of time to work with the translation of the LK06 competence aims as the main reasons for their copying, or they claim to find the competence aims clear enough in the first place (ibid.).

Hodgson et al. (ibid.) divide the *specification* of aims into two main categories: details and learning aims – intermediate aims in my terminology. Specific content appears to characterize both categories in their examples. In their examples of details the behavioural dimension has been excluded. The intermediate aims category appears to retain a behavioural dimension that refers to the competence aims. In this category the strong framing of the behavioural dimension remains intact.

When teachers translate competence aims into *text book preferences*, this can be seen as reinforcing the strong framing of the content dimension, and consequently, the behavioural dimension is diminished or excluded.

From the above it can be concluded that teachers either copy the competency goals because they do not understand them, or they make local curriculum that is content oriented. This practice does not appear to be in line with Dale (2009) and Dale et al. (2011).

Translation of the Behavioural Dimension

The research of Hodgsen et al. (2010) tends to concentrate on the content dimension. Their report shows indirectly that the behavioural dimension is either excluded or retained. The research of Throndsen, Hopfenbeck, Lie & Dale (2009, pp. 82-89) shows that Bloom's taxonomy is frequently applied in local work with focus on aims achievement. This implies that different verbs represent a gradation of achievement; for example, 'summarize' indicates a low grade of achievement, 'interpret' middle grade and 'analyse' a high grade. This leads to a gradation of the behavioural dimension. This is problematic, and I will return to this problem in the section below.

Conclusion of the Translations

The two research reports indicate that teachers translate the competence aims in the following ways:

- Content with weak framing is translated into content with strong framing;
- Behaviour with strong framing is translated in three ways: behaviour is excluded, retained or graded.

This research provides a point of departure for establishing a research partnership between the researcher and an upper secondary school. The teachers participated as part of a national project, Vurdering for læring [Assessment for Learning].

HOW CAN AND HOW OUGHT TEACHERS TO TRANSLATE LK06 INTO LOCAL TEACHING PROGRAMMES?

In the two previous sections shows how the intentions of LK06 can be understood, and describes research on local translation of LK06. These sections reveal inconsistency between national intentions and local translation. These insights provide reasons for further research into the local work with translations and teaching programmes. This research has been conducted in a research partnership with a local school.

In my work with partners on local teaching programmes I have experienced long periods of conversation without detecting any didactic tension in the LK06 competence aims. Tape recordings reveal that eureka moments of dialogue and relevant empirical value normally occur after periods of conversation. These eureka moments are good signs of the empirical process in research partnerships. The partnership dialogue has led to the discovery of didactic dilemmas and paradoxes that none of us was aware of beforehand, and that none of us could have detected individually. Such eureka moment took place in a dialogue on the behavioural dimension of the competence aims. Practitioners 'Paul' and 'Linda' and the researcher took as their point of departure the fact that schools frequently make use of Bloom's taxonomy in their work with aims achievement and gradation (Throndsen et al., ibid). The following is an excerpt from their dialogue:

Paul: But let us say that you could 'discuss' equations with two unknowns.

Linda: For example 'can discuss the advantages and disadvantages of substitution, addition and graphics in solving equations with two unknowns'.

Paul: This could be an competence aim, but in this case you can only reach a high grade of achievement by applying Bloom's taxonomy, because if you cannot 'discuss', you have not achieved the aim at all.

Researcher: Precisely, is that to say that if you have an competence aim, such as 'state the formula for the volume of a sphere', that is only to say that … [Bloom's taxonomy defines this as] that this intermediate aim can only achieve a low grade because we are only talking about stating facts?

Paul: Yes, that's correct.

Researcher: So that is to say that according to this competence aim the student can only achieve the grade 2 [second lowest grade on a scale from 1-6], independent of his presentation?

Paul: That's right; you cannot achieve a better grade in this variant of combining competence aim and gradation. …When the verbs in the competence aims are clearly articulated, they also determine competence. But in L97, which has verbs such as 'know of', there you could have applied Bloom's taxonomy [to grade and articulate better the behaviour]. By applying this taxonomy to LK06, one generates new competence aims that are not stated there.

Linda: National tests are evaluated in another way. The verbs in LK06 are cited in all grade instructions.

In our dialogue we discovered a didactic paradox. Paul argued that an articulation of an aim such as 'apply the equation' did not allow for more than a middle grade of aim achievement, independent of the quality of the pupil's presentation, because 'apply' stipulates a middle grade of achievement in Bloom's taxonomy. Here we see that the partnership between the two practitioners and the researcher yields new insights into the relationship between aims achievement and gradation, and into the implications of this strong internal framing of the behavioural dimension for the individual pupil.

The LK06 emphasizes, as discussed in previous sections, that the competence aims of the reform already articulate precisely what the pupils are to do and master:

> The competence aims make use of one or several nouns to designate content, and of verbs to designate how competence should be realized – in test situations and generally in the pupil's life (Utdanningsdirektoratet, undated, b).

The verbs in the competence aims designate the expected level of competence, and the nouns designate to what content and how this competence should be related. Thus, the verbs are significant, but Bloom's taxonomy presumes a hierarchy of verbs that change in sync with the achievement of aims. Consequently, the use of Bloom's taxonomy in local work with aims achievement and gradation causes inconsistency between the national competence aims and their local translation. The verbs and the behavioural dimension are already very articulated and strongly framed in LK06. The fact that the Directorate of Education also applies Bloom's taxonomy in their guidelines and in ready-made examples for some school subjects (Throndsen et al., ibid.) does not clarify the matter. This inconsistency between national and local aims can occur in the exams process. When school owners make use of Bloom in their grade instructions, this may introduce exam aims that deviate from the competence aims and curricula in LK06.

The national education authorities' specification and strong framing of the behavioural dimension is a prominent aspect of LK06. This seems to indicate that Bloom's taxonomy, which grades behaviour, does not provide an appropriate template for aims achievement and gradation in LK06. However, taxonomy would have been a suitable tool for specifying and grading the weakly framed behaviour dimension in L97. Perhaps Bloom's fifty-year-old taxonomy came into fashion in local teaching programme work in Norway ten years too late (Andreassen, 2013).

The researcher did not initiate the dialogue on the behavioural dimension of the competence aims in LK06, yet nevertheless came up in the research partnership. One of my initiatives as action researcher was to consider possible alternatives to the internal strong framing of content. Could the weak framing of this dimension in the LK06 be retained in local teaching programmes? Could the pupils be granted more influence? I presented to the practitioners some arguments that indicate that the pupils possess relevant competence for the LK06, but not for local teaching programmes. The practitioners at NTG nevertheless found strong internal framing more appropriate. The practitioners 'Paul' and 'John' stated the following arguments in dialogue:

- local specification of intermediate aims offers both teachers and pupils better control of the syllabus
- the totality of intermediate aims defines the expected competence
- it is too early for local practitioners to focus on the distinction between specified content and exemplified content in intermediate aims; staff members are at present fully occupied with the translation of the national competence aims into local intermediate aims, and with explaining their use to the pupils
- the intermediate aims are frequently based upon the text book – time allows for little else
- the intermediate aims are sometimes governed by the exam regime

- the pupils are not able to take advantage of the self-empowerment that the competence aims promote – enabling of this dimension risks interference that disturbs teaching

This reasoning tends to run parallel to the research results of Hodgson et al. (2010). Strong framing of content is explained by inadequate competence and lack of time to work with the translation of the LK06 competence aims during hectic school days. But the dialogue also points out the pupils' lack of ability, according to the practitioners, to make the most of the possibilities opened up by internal weak framing. The dialogue also shows signs of the content-oriented tradition in the use of intermediate aims, and the way competence aims are translated to *knowledge* aims. The teachers realize that the external framing has been weakened but choose to make limited use of this new possibility in their work with the local teaching programmes.

Practitioner 'Richard', the principal, adds new arguments to the previous dialogue by stating that the school's external framing is not regulated by the LK06 competence aims alone. Other factors also determine the framing:

- the school owners' signals that exam results are more important than continuous assessment
- the parents' expectations of traditional schooling and good results
- national testing, pupil surveys and programmes for international school evaluation

Richard felt that a specified content that takes these points into consideration is in many cases preferable to the possibilities provided by internal weak framing. He had translated a different source: he had not translated the competence aims alone, as had the researcher, but he had conducted a comprehensive translation that includes the competence aims, the school owner's ambitions, the parents' expectations and the external evaluation parameters. The researcher responded with reference to the Education Act, which stipulates that the competence aims are the only criteria for the evaluation of a pupil's aims achievement. The two partners in the research partnership are therefore translating from partly different sources.

The practitioners continued their work with local teaching programmes by giving their content strong framing. As a researcher I wished to initiate an alternative. The research partnership was therefore dissolved. The practitioners continued their work on strong framed intermediate aims in local teaching programmes, as an action learning project. I continued an imaginative approach to the didactic dilemmas and paradoxes of aims translation in my ivory tower, in accordance with my initial research interests.

The school and I have retained some contact despite the fact that we chose to continue our work separately. I have not acted as researcher nor councillor in this new relationship. Our relationships have been more characterized by collegial exchange of experience. The practitioners have shown me examples of their work, and have presented their findings and reflections at various conferences associated with the national project Assessment for Learning. These papers present their results in line with Jarvis' (2002) practice research and Tiller's (2006) action learning. In my imaginative approach I developed a model for four types of content. This is a four-fold model in which the first axis shows the *specified content* vs. *exemplified content*. The second axis shows *alienating content* vs. *content with didactic meeting* (Andreassen, 2012).

REASONS FOR DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF LK06

The previous sections demonstrate different local translations of LK06 into intermediate aims and teaching programmes. Røvik's (2007) translation theories give some reasons for the variety of local translations. The sections discuss first the translations of the content, and afterwards translations of the behavioural dimension of the LK06 competence aims.

How is the Behavioural Dimension Translated?

I distinguish between three different sources and four different groups of translators. The sources are: 1) content-orientated curriculum tradition, 2) the competence aims in LK06, 3) Bloom's taxonomy. Two groups of translators are taken from the research of Hodgson et al. (2010). These are: (I) teachers who *retain* the behavioural dimension after translation, and (II) teachers who *exclude* the behavioural dimension. The third group is taken from Throndsen et al. (2009). These are (III) teachers who *grade* the behavioural dimension after translation. The research partnership makes up group IV – teachers who *retain* the behavioural dimension, but not for the same reasons as group I.

When teachers in group I retain the behavioural dimension by copying the competence aims of LK06 into their local teaching programmes, they explain this act by lack of competence, supervision and time. This copying does not amount to translation, and tends to be carried out in order to observe mandatory regulations. In this respect the copying is not done to create a tool, but rather a symbol. Consequently, no copying takes place in practice, only on paper. In light of this, I choose to classify this mode of translation as symbolic rather than reproductive.

When teachers in group II exclude the behavioural dimension, this indicates that the tradition of content-oriented learning aims still remains strong in Norwegian schools, despite the fact that LK06 represents a break with this tradition. The teachers in group II thus, despite the new reform, tend to translate the old one, in a reproductive mode. This also suggests that the source of competence aims in LK06 is translated in a modifying mode, to be adapted to tradition.

When teachers in group III grade the behavioural dimension, this indicates a translation of Bloom's taxonomy in a reproductive mode. Furthermore, this indicates that the competence aims of LK06 are translated in a modifying mode to fit into Bloom's taxonomy.

Group IV, the research partnership (RP), in contrast, does not find Bloom's taxonomy to be a relevant source for local translations of LK06. The researcher and the practitioners attempt to translate the competence aims of LK06 and the concomitant curriculum documents. This is done in a reproductive mode, in an attempt to copy the intentions of LK06.

The sources, translation groups and translation modes can, according to the discussion above, be presented in a table:

Table 2. Translation of the behavioural dimension of the competence aims in LK06

	Content-oriented tradition	LK06's competence aims	Bloom's taxonomy
Teachers Group I (retain)		Symbolic mode	
Teachers Group II (exclude)	Reproductive	Modifying	
Teachers Group III (grade)		Modifying	Reproductive
The RP Group IV (retain)		Reproductive	

The two research reports (Hodgson et al., 2010; Throndsen et al. 2009) and the research partnership demonstrate four different translations of the behavioural dimension. This can be explained by the fact that different actors translate from different sources in different modes.

How is the Content Dimension Translated?

In order to answer this question I also distinguish here between three different sources and four different groups of translators, but not all the same as in last section. The sources in this section are: 1) the content-oriented curriculum tradition, 2) the competence aims of LK06 and 3) the competence aims of LK06 in combination with three other sources (the school owner's signals, the parents' expectations and national evaluation parameters). The first two groups of translators are taken from the research of Hodgson et al. (2010): the teachers in group I, and the teachers in group II and III together. The other two groups are the two partners in the research partnership: the practitioners and the researcher. The partners have been split because of the dissolution of the partnership following the disagreement over the translation of the content dimension of the competence aims in LK06.

Teachers in group I copied the competence aims from LK06 into their local teaching programmes without any changes. This copying tends not to be done in a reproductive mode in order to translate and contextualize LK06. The purpose seems to be a documentation of local teaching programmes according to mandatory regulations. This practice supports the findings of Engelsen (2009, p. 94) which show that the local school owners' strategy documents are to a large extent characterized by paraphrases and parroting of the central documents – and show few signs of their local administrative idiom. This tendency can be explained by translations in the symbolic mode – in the same way as teachers in group I translate the behavioural dimension for the sake of regulations.

Teachers in group II/III specify and strengthen the local framing of the weak framing in LK06. This ensues from the content-oriented curriculum tradition. In this situation, tradition constitutes the primary source, and is subjected to translation in the reproductive mode. The competence aims in LK06 then become a secondary source which is translated in a modifying mode and adapted to tradition.

The practitioners in the research partnership (RP) also tend to translate the traditional content-oriented curriculum in a reproductive mode: they give 'better control of syllabus' as their reason for specified content and internal strong framing of the content dimension. Yet the practitioners seem to agree with the researcher that a didactic paradox occurs when weak external framing is translated into strong internal framing. Some of the practitioners nevertheless claim that the LK06 competence aims need to be supplemented with other sources: the local school owner's ambitions, the parents' expectations and external evaluation parameters. Consequently, the practitioners do not attend only to LK06; they coordinate this source with other sources. This multiple source translation tends to be carried out in a modifying mode, by adjusting the different sources into a wholesome translation.

The researcher translates exclusively the competence aims of LK06 and their intentions as they are expressed in concomitant curriculum documents. The researcher tries to copy the intentions in a reproductive mode, and translate them in a radical mode, resulting in the aforementioned model (Andreassen, 2012).

The sources, translation groups and translation modes can, according to the discussion above, be presented in a table:

Table 3. Translations of the content dimension of the competence aims in LK06

	Content-oriented tradition	Competence aims in LK06	Competence aims in LK06 and three supplementary sources
Teachers Group I		Symbolic	
Teachers Group II/III	Reproductive	Modifying	
Teachers in the RP	Reproductive		Modifying
Researcher in the RP		Reproductive/Radical	

The two research reports and the research partnership demonstrate four different approaches to the content dimension. In this respect, this can also be explained by the fact that different actors translate from sources in different modes.

CONCLUSIONS

The two preliminary inquiries can be concluded as follows: the LK06 competence aims are characterized by installing the pupil as the central subject, by strong framing of the behavioural dimension and by weak framing of the content dimension. Nevertheless, in their local teaching programmes, schools frequently translate the competence aims of LK06 into strong framing of the content dimension and a range of variations in the behavioural dimension. This can be explained by inadequate supervision and lack of time to work with the competence aims. A content-orientated tradition and culture is another plausible reason.

The practitioners in the research partnership might be moulded by a type of school culture that stems from the content-oriented curriculum tradition in Norwegian education. Yet the teachers and the principal justify their choices of internal strong framing of the content dimension by pointing to external evaluation parameters, and by arguing that such external factors need to be regarded as integral to teaching programmes and competence aims. Furthermore, this school has integrated the local school owner's ambitions and the parents' expectations as sources for their translation of the LK06 competence aims. The researcher disagrees with this practice, and makes reference to the Education Act.

The main inquiry can be concluded as follow: By using dialogue as method, the research partnership discovered that the use of Bloom's taxonomy in local work with aims achievement and gradation is not in line with the actual competence aims in LK06. However, this is common practice in Norwegian schools. The researcher's imaginative approach demonstrates that strong internal framing of the content dimension, accompanied by weak external framing, is not in harmony with LK06. However, this is also common practice in Norwegian schools.

The research partnership contributed to discovering paradoxes and dilemmas in local teaching programme work with competence aims. The research in this partnership shows, however, that some forms of constructive inquiry do not find results by intervention, but only by imagination.

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PART 3
REFLECTIONS

GUNNAR HANDAL

11. REFLECTION ON PRACTICE-THEORY, CRITICAL FRIENDSHIP AND TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is a reflection two chapters: Eilertsen & Jakhelln, 2014 (chapter 2): The practical knowledge regime, teachers' professionalism and professional development in Scandinavia and Wennergren, 2014 (chapter 8): The power of risk-taking in professional learning.

My reading of these two chapters indicates that the ideas that I have been concerned with for most of my career have inspired other people to think, write and work wisely in this interesting field. It also tells me that the ideas may still need to be refined and may profit from further elaboration. It is inspiring to follow the line of argument that chapters two and eight present, and is a privilege to add my reflections to their ideas. I strongly commend these two chapters to readers.

To keep my comments within the scope of this book, I will, however, limit my thoughts to a few main themes that the two chapters awoke in me. These themes have also been a constant concern and challenge in my own texts and practice over time.

THE ORIGIN OF THE 'PRACTICE-THEORY'

As indicated by Eilertsen & Jakhelln (2014) in chapter 2 and illustrated by Wennergren (2014) in chapter 8, the context for introducing the concept of 'practice-theory' was the field of supervision in teacher education. The book that we[1] published (in Swedish!) in 1982 – *On own terms* – aimed at qualifying the practice of supervision in Norwegian teacher education. This practice – which both of us had experienced on our way to becoming teachers – was characterized by a model where groups of student teachers (3-5), during their training program, were allocated as 'candidates' to the class of an appointed supervising teacher. Here they took turns as teachers in assigned lessons in different subjects while the supervisor and the rest of the group of students watched the 'performance' from the back of the classroom. 'Supervision' in this context consisted of comments from the supervisor at the end of the day. Each student's teaching received positive and negative assessment, combined with suggestions for improvement and a new assignment for the next lesson (most often in another subject). This went on for a week or two. In the next period of practice in the program, the same group was allocated to a new teacher, preferably at a different class level.

K. Rönnerman & P. Salo (Eds.), Lost in Practice: Transforming Nordic Educational Action Research, 197–203.

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At the start of a period of practice the supervisor might often inform the students about the class and do some 'demonstration teaching' to show the student his/her usual style of working in the class. The students quite often tried to model central aspects of this demonstration, sometimes so skillfully that we (in our 1982 book) referred to it as 'the chameleon strategy'.

These supervisors were experienced teachers whose jobs included time set apart for their work with student teachers. They were often respected colleagues who had a high reputation as teachers. The supervisors were gradually offered the opportunity (and later required) to go through a supervision training program, which indicates that their role was taken seriously by the teacher education institutions as well as by the supervisors themselves.

This is the landscape in which practice-theory was introduced, in an effort to change this part of teacher training from the copying of models to reflection on practice. This happened in the period of 'the reflective turn', which was an element of inspiration for us. It is interesting to note that Donald Schön's book *The reflective practitioner* was published in 1983, a year after our first book. As we were ignorant of each other's work at that time, it illustrates that our joint focus on reflection was probably rooted in common ideas in an emerging international discourse. Another inspiration was our participation in the 'Social-Pedagogical Study Program' at the University of Oslo, with its strong connection to critical educational theory, developed by scholars such as Habermas, Carr and Kemmis, and philosophical contributions by Norwegian scholars such as Lars Løvlie and Jon Hellesnes.

In the years following our first publication (1982), the application of the idea of practice-theory has expanded significantly. It has been taken up in other professional fields than teaching and teacher training (pre-school work, nursing, medicine, social work etc.), fields that either are recognized as professional or that aspire to become so (see more about this below). A similar expansion has also taken place in our writing. The publication of *Supervision and practice-theory* in 1990, and the two revised versions of this book (2000 and 2014) has contributed to this expansion, as has the publication of translated versions in Sweden and Denmark.

THE IDEAS BEHIND THE TERM 'PRACTICE-THEORY'

In hindsight it becomes reasonably clear to me that we had three central points in mind when we chose the term 'practice-theory' and started using it in the early 1980s:

- We wanted to focus on a mental construct that integrated teachers' (or other professionals') own *experiences* (in a broad sense), relevant *concepts, research findings and theory*, as well as the *values* that they hold as central for their professional lives, and we wanted to see this practice-theory as a 'bundle' that influences their actions.
- We wanted to focus on the professionals' work, activities, or 'practice' in ordinary everyday situations and probe – *together with* the professional – into their

underlying practice-theory in order to make it available for analysis, reflection and development.

– We had reasons to believe, from our own practice – and were confirmed by reports from other professionals – that we base our daily practice on this type of mental construct, and that it is possible to extend, revise and refine the practice-theory by our own efforts, but even more so with the help of someone else as a co-reflective friend.

Our starting point was not an antagonistic criticism of all forms of scientifically based theory developed in an 'ivory tower' (which, formally speaking, we were part of ourselves as university teachers), as possibly suggested in chapter 2. We rather started in the optimistic view that practical experience was valuable for further practice and might be even more valuable when confronted with, supplemented by and inspired by concepts and ideas from 'theory', and reflected against values that are central in the actual type of professional work.

Our idea of introducing the concept of practice-theory was consequently not primarily to enter into a scholarly debate on epistemology and the nature of theory and practice, but to pursue a line of reasoning about an existing practice (supervision) by introducing perspectives that might develop the format and the quality of this practice.

The kind of practitioner we ourselves wanted to be, and that we wanted to assist others to become, is a reflective professional who considers practice as an opportunity for gathering experience and 'turning it into learning' (Boud et al., 1985) by means of active reflection in the light of varied forms of knowledge and values.

To contribute to this, practitioners need to articulate their *experiences* for themselves (and their colleagues), 'retrieve' relevant *knowledge* that they already are familiar with, look for and be inspired by *values* they consider important, and consider how these three elements of their practice-theory might inform the practice they are about to start or have just finished. But in doing so, they also need to expose themselves to knowledge, experiences, values and practices from others (in person or in mediated form). They need to let themselves be confronted, influenced, sometimes even challenged by these, but not unconditionally. These new ideas must be filtered, digested, conditioned and appropriated into the practice-theory that the practitioner can think about and act on in person.

THE PLACE OF THEORY IN 'PRACTICE-THEORY'

As noticed in the two chapters that this comment relates to (chapter 2 and chapter 8), 'the triangle of practice' is a central model. Like the concept of practice-theory it has almost become part of public language, thereby possibly also making the content of the model less precise. In its original form (Løvlie, 1972), the triangle of practice was introduced in order to differentiate the concept of 'practice' by analytically separating the aspect of *action* (P1) from the aspect of *giving reasons for action* (P2) and the aspect of *justifying action* (P3). In other words it had an analytical purpose. 'Outside' the triangle itself are the *experiences*, the *theory* and the *values* that we refer to when we give *reasons for action* or *justify* it. The missing distinction between what is 'inside' and 'outside' the triangle is illustrated in chapter 2 of the present book (figure 1, p. 7), where the *activities* (giving reasons for and justification of) are combined with *what we refer to* when doing this (experiences, theory and ethics/ values), thus somewhat blurring this distinction. In chapter 8, however, (figure 4, p. 9) the distinction is made clearer (although the element of 'theory' unfortunately has been left out at the P2 level, leaving 'experiential knowledge' alone to be drawn on at this level). Here we also see that it is the experiential knowledge, theory and values that make up the practice-theory, not the P1 – P3 'activity levels' of the triangle.

THE CONCEPT OF 'THE CRITICAL FRIEND'

Another concept that has often been related to the idea of the practice-theory is the concept of 'the critical friend'. My efforts to identify the scholar who originally coined the term have so far failed, but the term turns up increasingly over time in the literature. Anyway, it has proven stimulating for thought for many people in different contexts. In my own use (Handal 1999), it is treated as a way of characterizing the 'supervisor' (mentor, coach, consultant), who is working according to the ideas of the practice-theory. The 'critical friend' combines the 'friend', who offers support, and believes in the person and practice concerned, and the 'critic', who contributes non-judgmental, critical comments and questions and encourages reflection. As I see it, this is the ideal 'assistant' to the professional who goes about analyzing his/her practice in order to develop his/her practice-theory.

Casting the 'supervisor' in the role of the 'critical friend' is to me a critical turn. On the one hand it puts the 'supervisor' in the position of a co-reflecting peer, rather than a judge of the professional's practice. On the other hand, however, it also creates room for the supervisor as an analytical and critical person who may contribute to the kind of reflection that Carr and Kemmis (1986) advocate. In my experience, this function has a tendency to be underdeveloped in practice. There is a tendency – as in the case study in chapter 8 – for the two colleagues who act as critical friends to each other, to perhaps lean too much to the 'friendly' side of the concept and not make the most of the 'critical' side of it. It is not difficult to find more extreme examples than this, and I think it has to do with our limited experience of the joy of joint critical analysis and reflection with someone who is not there to identify our mistakes and grade our practice.

Considering the increasing tendency (particularly in the UK) to leave major parts of teacher training to often weakly supervised practice in schools, the urgency for having *qualified critical friends* in the role of supervisors is imperative, but often seems to be neglected in practice.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN DIRECTING AND ASSISTING CHANGE

The challenges of change and development (of their practice and of their practice-theories) is important to consider in the training of student teachers, just as it is in consultation with practicing professional teachers. Should I – in the role of supervisor – decide what the person I supervise should change or develop? Or is the script for my role just to assist the other person in developing what he/she wants to develop him/herself? This is the dilemma of choosing between acting as a *director* or as a *midwife* .

The director knows where we should go and how to get there. The midwife assists the woman in giving birth to her own child. The midwife metaphor appears most in line with the thinking behind the practice-theory. It allows for the developing person to be master of his/her own development ('on own terms'). However it requires a 'midwife' who acts as a critical friend to contribute guidance and challenge, in addition to giving support and care. The choice between these roles is particularly difficult for the supervisor when working with student teachers. Traditionally, the role of the director has been the most common choice, and is possibly the best one in some instances. But if the student is to be prepared for the position of a reflecting professional who may take responsibility for his/her own choices of practice, the midwife model is probably to be recommended

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE.

In our texts on practice-theory there are clear statements about the practice-theory as 'an individual construct'. This has to do with our initial use of the concept related to supervision of individual professionals. In other contexts it is possible to look at the practice-theory as a collective, cultural phenomenon. In the same way that an individual professional may 'construct' and reconstruct his/her practice-theory during a professional career, a group of professionals working together, for instance as a team of teachers or in a whole school, will develop a joint 'culture' that includes shared knowledge, collective experiences, and values that inform their practices. Others (Schein 1985) have referred to 'basic assumptions' as tacit parts of the culture that nevertheless are manifested in daily practice. Arfwedsson (1983) writes about how 'school codes', containing similar elements, are 'constructed' under the influence of the surrounding context (in a wide sense) and influence teachers' 'interpretations and actions'. In many ways the practice-theory can be regarded as an individual version of the professional culture that exists in a group of professionals acting together in a community of practice or in a professional organization.

This brings me finally to a brief discussion of the concept of *profession*. As we are dealing primarily with teachers here, the question is raised as to whether teaching is really a profession. I am not going to deal with the many aspects of this issue, but notice that there is a growing awareness among teachers, at least in Norway, of the professional status of their vocational group. As mentioned in chapter 2, the Norwegian Union of Education has recently approved a 'platform for professional ethics' as part of an effort to support the professional character of the occupation. As such a 'code of ethics' is normally considered a defining element of a profession, it will be interesting to see how this will be received among the members of the organization – as well as outside it. So far it is by no means uncontroversial among teachers. Teachers are used to considering themselves as ethically responsible practitioners seen in relation to *individual* ethical norms. Many (or possibly just a few?) feel that they consequently do not need any *collective* ethical platform for their work. The idea of collective norms for practice based on experiential and 'scientific' knowledge – and values – is not *yet* taken for granted within this occupational group. Another issue that will gradually need to be clarified is how to strike the balance between such collective norms and responsible individual practices.

This development of professionalism is, however, contrary to the policy of New Public Management, with its focus on effective practice according to standards set outside the profession, combined with extensive control, which is increasingly influencing public domains. Perhaps the result of this struggle, between a *profession* inhabited by 'teachers as researchers' who are *responsible* to professional standards (and politically expressed societal aims for schooling), and teachers as employees who are *accountable* to a local administration, is the most interesting thing to watch in this field over the years to come.

I see the idea of the teacher who is acting as a reflective practitioner, based on a developed and developing individual practice-theory, and working as part of a team of professional colleagues who develop their collective culture according to the same ideas, as an ideal for a future profession of teachers.

NOTES

[1] We – in this context – refers to me and my very good friend and colleague, Professor Per Lauvås. We have had the joint pleasure of developing together the concept of 'practice-theory' and its use in supervision since the early 1980s.

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STEPHEN KEMMIS

12. REFLECTIONS ON HOW THE THEORY OF PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES IS BEING USED IN THE NORDIC CONTEXT

In these reflections, I make some brief comments about how the theory of practice architectures has been used in this volume, and then take up two specific issues. The first concerns the European notion of *Bildung* and its relationship to the English notion of education; the second concerns the nature of the relationship between ‘teachers’ and ‘researchers’ in Nordic action research, study circles, and research circles described in Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six.

PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES OF ACTION RESEARCH, STUDY CIRCLES AND RESEARCH CIRCLES

In Chapter Four, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) deploy the theory of practice architectures to show how particular Nordic practices of study circles and research circles, and of educational action research, have been prefigured by particular histories and particular Nordic traditions. Study and research circles and action research initiatives are widespread in the Nordic countries. They have roots in practices developed for the civic formation of citizens (and nations) in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, educational practices found in the workers’ movement at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, from adult and popular education programs organised in support of policy and civic formation in the welfare state in the mid-twentieth century, and from industrial renewal programs in the mid-twentieth century. Through the specific but interconnected histories of the Nordic countries, these practices were informed by a broadly shared complex philosophical and educational tradition: the tradition of *Bildung*. The complex notion of *Bildung* concerns the simultaneous formation of each person as an active participant in the social life of a community and wider society, each citizen as an active participant in the political life of local government and the nation-state, and, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, each worker as a contributor to enhanced forms of industrial, professional and economic life and organisation through which the different Nordic people, communities and societies could prosper.

In Chapter Four, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) use the theory of practice architectures to describe how the Nordic discourse of action research and study and research circles provides cultural-discursive arrangements that prefigure but do not

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determine the way participants think and talk about action research and study and research circles in contemporary times; ideas about processes of democratic will-formation that draw on the experiences of individual citizens, for example. They show how activity-structures familiar from the Nordic tradition of action research provide material-economic arrangements that prefigure but do not determine the activities of contemporary action research and research and study circles; for example, the patterns of meeting in small groups, perhaps weekly, over some months (or longer). And they show how these Nordic traditions create social-political arrangements intended to model democratic social relationships that have prefigured (but do not determine) the relationships to be found in contemporary cases of action research, study circles and research circles (like the relationships between teachers in schools and preschools, on the one hand, and researchers from universities, on the other).

In Chapter Five, Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014) describe the practice architectures of the practice of Peer Group Mentoring (PGM) adopted by a teacher team in a formerly rather monoculturally Swedish inner city school whose members wanted to become more responsive to the needs of students from non-Swedish speaking language backgrounds. They show how the practice architectures of the nine-step model of PGM adopted in the school bore traces of the Nordic practice tradition of study circles described by Salo and Rönnerman (2014) in Chapter Four. In terms of the cultural-discursive arrangements that enable and constrain the practice of PGM in the team, Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014) show, for example, how the discourse describing and justifying the nine-step model of PGM bears traces of the "democratic" ideal of study circles, and how the knowledge developed by participants in the PGM sessions is discursively constructed collectively from participants' own language and experience. They show how the material-economic arrangements of PGM adopted by the team included such things as "the round" in which all participants took successive turns to speak (or to "stand aside" when it was their turn to speak), also similar to the process adopted in study circles. And they showed how the generally democratic social-political social relations of the study circle also governed the social relationships of PGM in the team, with everyone having a turn to speak and be heard, and the role of moderator being shared by members of the group and not vested in a single leader (although the role of scribe or secretary to the group was always fulfilled by the university researcher attending the group) – although interviews with participants also revealed that this democratic ideal was not always attained in the day-to-day practice of the teaching team, which, as is the case in many human groups, was mildly distorted by tensions and conflicts that lay beneath the smooth surface of the team's everyday operations. Participants also reported that the democratic ideal of the group had been strained by the principal who had pushed the team to adopt the practice of PGM; it might have been more democratic, they thought, if they had been free to choose to participate entirely voluntarily.

Using the theory of practice architectures, Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014) also used the theory of practice architectures to describe the changed historical conditions in which this inner-city school found itself, and that led teachers to the view that their established ways of teaching needed to change to meet the needs of a changed student population: students from non-Swedish speaking backgrounds who were now coming to the school under a government policy of free school choice. The influx of these students had also caused some Swedish-speaking background students to leave the school, exercising their free choice to go to nearby independent schools. These were the conditions under which the teachers in the school came to the view that they needed to learn how to teach more responsively to students from diverse backgrounds. Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014) show that the global migration of refugees, together with the policy of free choice of schools for students and their families, had change the language and culture of the student population of the school so that, in terms of cultural-discursive formation of teachers' practices, they now had to respond to the more diverse language backgrounds of students. The influx of this new student population also, of course, changed the material-economic arrangements that had formerly characterised the school (for example, where the students came from), and the kinds of social-political arrangements that had formerly characterised relationships between students and teachers in the school (previously more monocultural). The influx of migrant students seems also to have precipitated a 'migration' to nearby independent schools of some of the Swedish-background students who had previously been the majority in the school. As Langelotz and Rönnerman show, this flight of Swedish students caused a decline in enrolments at the school, which in turn led to teacher redundancies – a stark reminder of the material-economic costs and consequences of the policy of school choice supported by vouchers ("school money"). The voucher system enabled migrant students from the suburbs to come to the inner-city school; and it also enabled some Swedish-background students to 'migrate' to nearby independent schools. One cultural-discursive consequence that followed from the changed material-economic circumstances of the school was that some teachers began to describe students with greater learning needs as "expensive students" – hoping that the principal would refuse to accept more of these students.

Langelotz and Rönnerman concluded:

> when material-economic arrangements became a reality in the form of declining numbers of students entering the school, and in teacher redundancies, the teachers began to discuss how to exclude these "expensive" students rather than how to include them by increasing their (the teachers') pedagogical knowledge. The tradition of folkbildning is built on an idea(l) of democracy and a pedagogy which highly values inclusiveness [...] when pushed by economic cutbacks, these values were questioned and challenged during the PGM sessions. In other words, democratic practice depends deeply on the existence of the kinds of material-economic arrangements that make democracy possible. (p. 91)
>
> … In particular, this study shows that regarding schools as competing in a market place, and thus viewing students as customers and costs, poses a threat to inclusive and democratic education. (p. 91)

In the next chapter, Chapter Six, Rönnerman and Olin (2014) analyse research circles in which university researchers facilitate sessions in which preschool teachers and leaders think about their own facilitation of their peers' learning (for example, in local action research projects in their preschools). They also analyse the kinds of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements that together formed the practice architectures that prefigured the work of this particular research circle, and the processes of facilitation that the teachers explored and developed through the research circle.

Rönnerman and Olin described the practice architectures of the research circles each facilitated. Among the cultural-discursive arrangements that enabled and constrained the practices of participants in the research circle was the imperative that teachers learn from their own and others' experiences, shared in the group as a basis for collaborative knowledge production. Among the material-economic arrangements was the provision of funding for time release for participants to attend the research circles: in some cases, participants dropped out because they could not get funding to be released from their work in the preschools. Among the social-political arrangements enabling and constraining the practices of the participants in these research circles was a legal requirement that the quality of each preschool and its work be monitored within each preschool. This prompted the formation of action research initiatives in the preschools as a way to assure quality.

In Chapter Seven, Forsman, Kahlberg-Granlund, Pörn, Salo and Aspfors (2014) describe a variety of forms of continuing professional development initiatives in Finland. They deftly use the theory of practice architectures to show how various different kinds of practices of professional development were enabled and constrained by arrangements present in or brought to the sites in which they occurred. They also show the emergence, over recent decades, of distinctive initiatives of site based education development from earlier initiatives of local school development, which themselves emerged from still earlier initiatives of (skills-oriented) in-service education aimed at the implementation of central government initiatives. In particular, they explore how

> the fundamental challenges of collaborative site based education development are realized and expressed in the interaction and collaboration, between the different institutional traditions and practice architectures of schools and universitiesinvolved. (p. 124)

In their concluding remarks, the authors of Chapter Seven (Forsman et.al., 2014) describe the principal challenge they confronted:

> The challenge we have confronted … is three-folded, and related to the three arrangements of practice architectures. *Firstly,* the material-economic arrangements for educational development on site cannot be taken as given, they have to be negotiated and maintained. *Secondly,* site based educational

> development opens up a space for collegial professional meaning making and identity expression. This space (the cultural-discursive arrangements) has to be safeguarded. *Thirdly*, the transition from transmission to participation is anchored and dynamically dependent on the social-political arrangements, to (p. 127). be continuously reinterpreted and yet understood.

To conclude: these chapters – Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven – have explored Nordic traditions in action research, study circles, research circles, and professional development using the theory of practice architectures. As one of the authors who developed the theory (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008; Kemmis, Wilkinson, Edwards-Groves, Hardy, Grootenboer and Bristol, 2014), I feel honoured and privileged by the attention the theory has been given in these pages. I also feel as a participant in the international *Pedagogy, Education and Praxis* research network (involving universities in Australia, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom) that this volume is an exemplary outcome of the *Action Research and Practice Theory* collaborative research program initiated in our research network-meeting year 2011. The present volume speaks clearly and firmly about how action research, research circles and study circles have taken a distinctive shape in the Nordic countries in the light of Nordic traditions that are among the historically given practice architectures that shaped and continue to shape the conduct of action research, study circles, research circles and professional development initiatives described in this volume. Not only is this volume a significant contribution to the international literature of action research, it is also a significant contribution to the growing literature of educational and social research using contemporary practice theory to explore educational and other social practices – including the theory of practice architectures.

BILDUNG AND EDUCATION

In this and the next section, I reflect on two issues that emerged in my reading of Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven of *Lost in Practice*: the issue of how the European notion of *Bildung* is understood in relation to the notion of 'education' in the English-speaking world, and some questions about the relationships between 'teachers' and 'researchers' in action research in the Nordic tradition of action research. First, then, is the issue of *Bildung* and education.

In Chapter Four, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) distinguish *Bildung* from *education*, calling the latter "an instrumental and institutionalized form of professional action" (p.2). In a footnote to this sentence, they say that, "from an Anglo-Saxon perspective", I (Kemmis, 2012) make the same distinction using the terms *education* and *schooling*. It might have been kinder to readers to have handled this distinction in another way – and, one might say, less Eurocentrically. The confusion over these terms, in which *Bildung* appears on the 'high side' of Nordic usage with 'education' on the 'low' side, while, in Anglophone usage, 'education' appears on the 'high' side with 'schooling' on the 'low' side, preserves the confusion which has led some people in the northern European and Anglophone intellectual traditions to misperceive and misunderstand one another for many years. On the Nordic usage that Salo and Rönnerman adopt, *Bildung* is the 'high' term, connected over the history of the European Pedagogical tradition to ideas of civilisation, cultivation and "growing as a human being" (Salo and Rönnerman, 2014 p. 54). Siljander, Kivelä and Sutinen (2012), in their comparative study of the Pedagogical tradition in Europe and the Anglophone Educational Philosophy and Theory tradition, make Dewey´s (1955) notion of growth the Anglophone parallel to Bildung. In his (1979) Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, American philosopher Richard Rorty renders *Bildung* (which he approaches through Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, 1975) as 'edification'. Rorty dismisses the word 'education' as "too flat" (p.360) to adequately render *Bildung* in English, and thus prefers 'edification'. This may be because Rorty has followed Gadamer's appropriation of *Bildung* (which follows Hegel and Heidegger), and is at odds with other critical views of *Bildung* from the latter part of the twentieth century (for example, Klafki, 1975, p.45, who describes *Bildung* in terms of the "reciprocal interrelationship of world and individual"). While I am far from a specialist in the history of *Bildung*, my reading suggests that the notion of *Bildung* always implies a self in a continuing process of forming and more deeply understanding itself in relation to a world (and history) that the self also more deeply understands. I think it is also correct to say that the 'high' meaning of 'education' in the Anglophone intellectual tradition of educational philosophy and theory similarly implies this nexus of a self-forming and more deeply understanding self in relation to the world.

An English speaker can forgive Salo and Rönnerman for preserving this regrettable confusion. We English speakers constantly abuse the word 'education' when we use it in the 'low' sense to mean nothing more than 'schooling', and we too infrequently elaborate or defend the 'high' meaning of education. Indeed, there may not be many educators who are willing to hazard a definition of education these days – in the same way that few Nordic or Germanic educators feel they can adequately encompass the history of the concept of *Bildung* in a single sentence. By contrast, Kemmis, et al. (2014, p.26) offer this definition of education in the 'high' sense:

> … education, properly speaking, is the process by which children, young people and adults are initiated into forms of understanding, modes of action, and ways of relating to one another and the world, that foster (respectively) individual and collective self-expression, individual and collective self-development, and individual and collective self-determination, and that are, in these senses, oriented towards the good for each person and the good for humankind.

It is clear that Kemmis *et al.* also mean that children, young people and adults can initiate themselves into these things, and do so in ways that aim at the good for each person and the good for humankind.

Perhaps I have laboured this point enough, but my wish is that, in their construction of the contrast between *Bildung* and the "instrumental and institutionalized form of professional action" (p. 54) that they abjure, Salo and Rönnerman had placed *Bildung* and *schooling* as the opposed terms rather than *Bildung* and *education*. In choosing the latter, they preserve the confusion that bedevils mutual understanding between European and Anglophone intellectual traditions in our field, and unnecessarily belittles the Anglophone tradition of educational philosophy and theory of which John Dewey is the paradigmatic representative.

TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS

In this section, I explore ambiguities about teachers and researchers that appear in some chapters of this volume. In Chapter Four (p. 57) for example, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) say:

> Study circles are used to construct an arena in which teachers and the researchers can come together, in order to develop an understanding of the practices they are a part of…

Later (p. 64) discussing action research, Salo and Rönnerman quote Lendahls Rosendahl & Rönnerman (2000), who refer to "the tensions and dilemmas between researchers' aims and participants' needs".

Similarly, in Chapter Six, discussing research circles, Rönnerman and Olin (2014) say "Two groups of preschool teachers met during a year in a research circle together with a researcher…" (p. 96) They also make a firm distinction between 'teachers' and 'researchers' from the university (p. 97):

> … Holmstrand and Härnsten (2003, p. 21) point out that in all research circles the participants' knowledge and experiences, the researchers' knowledge about the identified problem, the researchers' competence as researchers (systematic knowledge), and other researchers' knowledge that might throw light on the problem are [all] of importance. The overall aim of a research circle is to contribute to democratization through a model of co-operation between researchers and practitioners acting for a mutual transmission of knowledge.

Again, in Chapter Seven, Forsman et al. (2014) discuss the relationship between these parties in similar terms, as, for example, when they say in the introduction to the chapter (p. 113).

> …we discuss PD from the viewpoint of the cooperation and confrontation between ourselves as researchers with teachers as practitioners, and from the viewpoint of being in the complex role of the researcher as facilitator.

A little later in the chapter (p. 122) the authors describe the tasks of the university researcher in one of the four initiatives they examined (the tasks of the researchers seem similar in at least two of the other cases as well):

> The researcher's role in the network meetings was to act as initiator and facilitator; organizing the meetings, initiating discussions, listening and

> reflecting upon experiences and providing feedback on the ongoing work.

The authors of Chapter Seven "focus … on the challenges [they], acting in the professional role of the researcher, have been confronted with on site" (p. 119). In this formulation, the role of the university facilitator of action research in schools has crystallised out as a distinctive "professional" role. It is not clear from the chapter what makes this role 'professional', but the term suggests that the researchers have 'professionalised' relationships with the teachers and principals they work with in schools, characterised by behaving in a disinterested way with the teachers they encounter in the professional development initiatives, and by bringing scientific knowledge to the teacher groups – knowledge grounded in their professional authority as university researchers. Considering the way in which they worked in the four different professional development initiatives, the authors of Chapter Seven remark that

> … the collaborative manner of realizing professional development seems to give rise to very similar ways of "professional behaving and acting", due to the practice architectures of educational sites (p. 124).

In short, it seems that pedagogues who come to professional development initiatives as university 'researchers' behaved towards the teachers and principals they encountered in both teacher-ly and 'researcher-ly' ways. This suggests that the more symmetrical democratic relationships sought in the Nordic traditions of action research, research circles and study circles may not have been secured in the 'researcher'-'teacher' element of the social relationships of professional development in these cases.

In the cases described in Chapters Four, Six and Seven, this way of describing the relationship – between 'teachers' and 'researchers' – draws attention to an enduing issue in the literature of action research, namely, the relationship between *participants* in a setting (for example, various stakeholders in the work of a factory, an organisation or an industry, or teachers and others in a school) and a *researcher* who comes to the setting, often from a university, to facilitate action research initiatives. This way of describing the roles of the people present unmistakeably implies that 'teachers' (or 'participants' more generally) and 'researchers' are two different species of human beings. Coming from universities to participate with teachers in such meetings, perhaps the authors of these chapters here reveal something taken-for-granted about their own experience as participants in research circles and action research; I fear, however, that, in the Nordic literature of action research, the distinction has become embedded as a particular kind of social division of labour.

This presupposition appears in the work of Nordic action research theorists like the historically important researchers into working life Sandberg, Broms, Grip, Sundström, Steen, & Ullmark (1992) and Gustavsen (2001), as well as in such works as Flyvbjerg (2001). In an article 'Research for praxis' (2010), I critiqued this presupposition, aiming to undermine the distinction between, on the one hand, *researchers* who come from institutions *external* to the settings in which the action and the research are carried out, and, on the other, the *teachers* in schools (and other participants in other organisational and community settings) who are *internal* to – the ordinary inhabitants of – those settings. For many years (see, for example, Carr and Kemmis, 1986), I have argued, in company with many others (for example, Stephen Corey, 1953; Lawrence Stenhouse, 1975; John Elliott, 1976; Susan Noffke, 1992; Bridget Somekh, 2006; Wilfred Carr, 2006, 2007) that teachers can be, and very often are researchers into their own practice. On this view, teachers are not a different species from external educational researchers; rather, they form one subspecies of the species 'researcher', like participant researchers in many other occupations and settings.

I do not believe that the authors of Chapters Four, Six and Seven are deliberately making a point of separating teachers and researchers in the sentences I have quoted. They say that study circles and research circles are (or are intended to be) democratically organised and participatory and collaborative, and that people are engaged in collaborative knowledge building in such circles. If this is so, surely they *do not* mean that a researcher *only* sits at the centre of a study or research circles facilitating or orchestrating knowledge building by everyone else in the circle – though a reader is entitled to see this role distinction as almost indelible. In Chapter Five, by contrast, Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014) recognise that the relationship between teachers and a university researcher in research study circles, as distinct from study circles, can be asymmetrical rather than a symmetrical relationship between equals. They problematise the relationship in these terms (p. 81)

> According to Rönnerman *et al*. (2008, pp. 23–24) for example, the source of knowledge in study circles is the participants themselves, and the process of the study circle always employs methods for sharing participants' experiences. Furthermore, the concept of truth that underpins study circles is not mainly based on the authority of science, but on every human's experience. The development of the individual is not the main focus; the development and increased capacity of the group is seen as the most important (Rönnerman *et al.*, 2008). Sometimes study circles are organized in association with universities. A slight shift in the epistemological approach can be distinguished when the circle leader is a lecturer from the university; under these circumstances, the study leader may become an 'expert' rather than one of the participants. This modified form of study circle is described as a 'research circle'.

In Chapter Six, Rönnerman and Olin describe the researcher as being "in the role of leader of the research circle" (p. 98) It is clear from the case presented in Chapter Five that the researchers from the university were leaders and organisers as well as facilitators of group discussion in the research circles. Perhaps in this case they were located at the centre of the circle while the teachers (who were facilitators of teams elsewhere but not in this research circle) were arrayed around the circumference of the circle. The relationship appears very like a relationship between researcher-as-teacher in the group (bringing 'scientific' knowledge to the group in the form of academic articles, and facilitating the sessions) and the preschool teachers as adult learners sharing their experiences of facilitation in the other settings where they served as the facilitators.

Despite the words that mark the distinction between 'researchers' and 'teachers', the authors of Chapters Four, Six and Seven no doubt also mean that the 'researcher', like the teachers, is a beneficiary of the collective knowledge building in these settings, and also that other participants in study and research circles are or can be researchers of some kind. But, if their words elsewhere in those chapters imply that teachers also are or can be researchers, it seems a misstep to divide the world into 'teachers' and 'researchers' (from the university) in the ways they have, casting teachers and researchers as members of different species.

In two articles, 'Research for praxis' (2010) and 'Researching educational praxis' (2012), I systematically argue that many teachers (and many participants in other community and organisational settings) can be, are, and have for a long time actually been highly effective researchers into their own practices, their own understandings, and their own situations. Those articles also argue that teachers (and participants in other settings) have privileged access to, involvement in, and capacities for the formation and transformation of their own understandings, practices and situations – access, engagement and capacities that outsiders do not and cannot have because outsiders are not the ones whose understandings, actions and relationships actually constitute insider-practitioners' everyday practices (for example, their practices of teaching, or practices of professional learning). Not only do participants constitute their practices in the sense they are the ones whose activities unfold or happen at particular moments, but, more than this, they also constitute local practice traditions, and they participate in constituting more widespread practice traditions (for example, traditions of professional practice) that give a practice its meaning and significance, and its resilience and malleability over time. In fact, Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014, especially Chapter Four, 'A new view of research: Research within practice traditions') argue that practitioner research of this kind (research by teachers and other parties involved in educational practices) is essential to *educational* practice, to inform and transform it – particularly critical participatory action research (see also Kemmis et al. 2014, Chapter Eight).

Perhaps new ways to think about the teacher-researcher nexus are needed. On the one hand, this nexus expresses itself in the participatory research of an *individual* teacher who is also a researcher. This person might be a teacher in a school or preschool, or in a university. In this case, the teacher-researcher nexus refers to a relationship between different *roles* performed by an individual person.

On the other hand, the teacher-researcher nexus also expresses itself in the *social* relationship that exists between teachers (who may be teacher-researchers) and (other) researchers (who may be external researchers from a university, for example, or other teacher-researchers). In this latter case, the teacher-researcher nexus refers to a *social* nexus, not just to the relationship between different roles performed by a single person. Now various different kinds of relationships exist between teachers and researchers. Some, but not all, such social relationships are participatory and democratic and aim at collaborative construction of social life and social practice. Despite their misstep in describing the relationship between teachers and researchers as if they were different species, in Chapter Four, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) suggest that research and study circles, and action research initiatives, are of this kind – participatory and democratic collaborations between those involved, in which knowledge is *collectively* constructed from *individuals'* prior knowledge and experiences. There are other kinds of social relationships between teachers and researchers, however, that are of a very different kind: they are hierarchical and autocratic, and aim at control of teachers' practices by external authorities (whether external researchers, policy-makers, administrators or legislators).

Clearly, in Chapter Four, Salo and Rönnerman believe that the relationships between people in action research should be understood as a kind of partnership, even if their formulation of the relationship relentlessly separates the 'researchers' from the 'teachers'. They say (p. 64):

> Action research is conducted in joint partnerships between universities and schools, in collaboration with researchers and practitioners, co-generating knowledge in democratic dialogues. In action research, the relationship between researchers and practitioners is understood as equal and reciprocal, and the production of knowledge and action plans is furthered by mutual recognition.

If I correctly understand Salo and Rönnerman (2014) and their project of renewal and revitalisation of the Nordic tradition of *folkbildning*, however, they are firmly on the side of democracy and the collaborative construction of social life, not on the side of hierarchical control of educational practice by external authorities; they are on the side of collaborative participation in knowledge building rather than on the side of rule by experts; and they are for democracy rather than autocracy. If this is so, then a critical reconstruction of the discourse of 'teachers' and 'researchers' and 'teacher-researchers' is needed, to make it clear that teachers and researchers are not separate species but overlapping and interfertile subspecies who are in a symbiotic relationship with one another – whether in the different roles of teaching and researching performed by an *individual teacher-researcher* in a school or preschool, or in a university, or in *the social nexus* between teacher-researchers and other researchers who may also be teacher-researchers.

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BERNT GUSTAVSSON

13. REFLECTIONS ON HOW FOLK ENLIGHTENMENT IS USED IN A NORDIC CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the tradition of folk enlightenment and practice, or actions-based educational work and research, is an interesting and fruitful topic. There are traits in the Nordic tradition of folk enlightenment which can be used to develop tools for investigating practice and actions-based research. Here I will point out, firstly, that this tradition is diverse, with different forms in different Nordic countries and in different contexts, and secondly, that it is a tradition in a state of change and in need of transformation.

THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

The Nordic tradition consists mainly of two institutions, the study circle, organized in study associations, and folk high schools. The study circle is a specifically Swedish invention, while the folk-high school has Danish origins.

The classical study circle –was, according to Oscar Olsson, the founder, sited in the library, where the participants encountered their own every day experiences in the general human experiences, found, in the first instance, in fiction and literature. There the individual tested his/her interpretations with the others in the circle. This form of study circle was created within the classical popular movements, including workers´-temperance - and the free church movements. This classical form existed during the first years of the 20th century. The folk high school, in contrast with the Danish folk high schools had then existed in Sweden a few decades, from 1868, and was just for the farmers´ children. The development of these schools can be described in terms of how first the workers, then women, and more recently, different ethnic groups fought for access to the folk high school. In both these forms, the study circle and the folk high school in the Danish, Grundtvigian these traditions were considered to be a free and voluntary space for young people to have their basic orientation in life. Anything which had to do with any sort of utility was not in line with the ideals. But what was useful had different interpretations in different contexts. The folk high schools, from the start provided courses and knowledge of highest utility for the farmers, and in the long run for the working class. So, the Nordic tradition is varies in space, and changes in time. To express it in sociological

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terms, the system colonized the lifeworld during the 20th century and changed the conditions for realizing people´s intentions in enlightenment and *bildung*.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF *BILDUNG*

An illustration and a crucial point with regard to the change of interpretation and practical use of the Nordic tradition is how we can understand the basic concept of *bildung*. In the Danish folk high school, the priest and educationalist Grundtvig had the basic influence, with ideas mainly brought from the German romantic movement, while the Swedish tradition is more inspired by Kant and the enlightenment, and thus more in line with the classical German tradition of *bildung*. *Bildung,* in its classical form, comes from elite German education, symbolized by Wilhelm von Humboldt. This tradition of *bildung* was transformed into a democratic tradition from 1890 and onwards. Here we find the origin of education as a free and voluntary activity in terms of *lehr*- and *lernfreiheit*, the teachers' and students' freedom from the state and the market to form their own studies, and free research. This classical form of *bildung* can be understood either as an endless free process or as reading a canon of literature, as readymade content or a picture, a result.

Today this classical concept is the basis for many different interpretations, as a techno cultural concept, or a postcolonial concept, where the interface is between the human and the machine, a cyborg, or where world literature is redefined as the particular different literatures around the world are mirrored in each other. Another trait is the hermeneutic interpretation of *bildung* as an excursion and return, developed as a concept for the education of world citizens. So, the classical tradition of *bildung* and the Nordic tradition are today transformed in different ways. This brings resources to the dialogue about how this rich tradition can be used in practice and in action - based activities.

There is a tendency to use the tradition in overly traditional way. It has to be transformed to suit the conditions of the modern society today. In my reflection this has to be done from a point of departure of *bildung* as excursion and return. Let me exemplify with the concept of a dialogue. The classical form of dialogue is Socratic, with only one right answer at the end. The dialogue formulated by Gadamer in *Truth and method* (1960) tell us that when we have a conversation about a common thing, the members of the circle or the group give their different interpretations. When listening to the interpretation of the other we have to open ourselves and abandon our own interpretations: even the leader or the teacher must do so. This is in contrast with the classical study circle, which had to be like "a Socratic symposium".

From there we could go on to Bachtin and distance dialogue and the need for many voices, each one speaking in its own right, and not necessarily leading to a consensus. This leads us to the next step out of the narrow Western tradition, to meet what is unknown and foreign to us.

THE QUESTION OF PRACTICE

The question of practice and action is, from the start in the Nordic and especially the Swedish tradition, motivated by “knowledge is power”, political power and the power to act from one´s insights. The notion of the ideals for *bildung*, as they were treated in the study associations, have been criticized for being foreign to the professional life, and connected to free time and space. The purpose of *bildung* was for the free development of the personal resources and for the education of democratic citizens. When I myself worked practically in the field as a study circle leader and folk high school teacher, I did not see a good motivation for practice and practical forms of knowledge. Creative activities were motivated by the social functions of the institutions, and not considered to be knowledge in their own right. Later, when I worked in a university, I found that practical forms of education did not have their own language and concepts relevant to just these activities. This fact, together with the treatment of knowledge in the political reforms in terms of education as an investment in human capital, and knowledge as a commodity in the market, and the human being as an economic creature, led me to write a book about knowledge. This included different forms of practical knowledge, *techne* and *phronesis. Techne* can be defined as knowledge we need for making, creating, or produce, instrumental knowledge. *Phronesis* is practical wisdom, how to know how to act in specific situations. This was for me a necessary step in taking questions of practice and action into the Nordic tradition of *bildung*. So, the Nordic tradition has to be transformed even in this way.

POLICY AS OBSTACLE

In relation to what I have briefly tried to describe here, and in the relation to the articles included in this volume, my intention is to say, that the Nordic enlightenment tradition has to be transformed in these different ways. There are values, there are concepts, which are built into a humanistic and democratic tradition. Today we have intellectual resources available to transform this tradition, and this has to be done in relation to our cultural and societal development. The basic concept in relation to action-based work and research is practice. There is still a need to make a distinction between praxis and *poi´esis*, action and making, *techne*, instrumental knowledge *phronesis*, and ethical and political-based knowledge. In a world where educational systems are developed into international competition, it is necessary to change them into the possibility of studying common problems of survival, of peace, of common human existence. The prerequisite for doing this is to take the language of education, of any kind, out of the hands of policy and policy makers. Policy concepts, such as evidence, lifelong learning, quality, sustainability and-, employability, have to be replaced by intellectual concepts, fruitful for the much needed humanization and democratization of the educational system. The first question to ask for any educational activity or action is what the aim is. What is it for? Why and for what are we doing this?

My conclusion is that the Nordic tradition consists of a rich knowledge, which could be used in practice-based research. The development of *bildung* in a hermeneutic tradition consists of action and the application of knowledge in itself. The democratic forms of studying and the equality between theory and practice make it fruitful to combine the two. But this can be developed further when the Aristotelian concepts of knowledge are included in the transformation of this tradition of *bildung*, and in practical and popular forms of education.

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14. REFLECTIONS ON THE POLITICS OF PRACTICE

From folk enlightenment to traditional knowledge

> "What kind of politics am I doing in the classroom? That is, in favor of whom am I being a teacher? The teacher works in favor of something and against something"
>
> Paulo Freire in Shor (1987) A Pedagogy for Liberation, 46.

INTRODUCTION

The authors of *Lost in Practice* offer a stimulating volume that explores the interface between educational action research and educational practices in the Nordic context. When asked to offer a reflection piece, I found myself drawn to the quotation included above from the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. Upon reading *Lost in Practice*, I found that Freire's statement seems even more prescient since it underscores, in a very straightforward way, the need for clarifying the political assumptions and contexts behind our practice as educators and educational researchers. What are we working in favour of and what are we working against? It is these two questions that are explored in this reflection with specific attention placed on the political and historical dimensions of Nordic education research and practice.

Taking Freire's question of what we are working against as a starting point, contemporary assumptions of what educators are working in opposition to can be viewed from the positions held by the authors of various chapters in this book. For example, Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014), in their chapter on the practice of peer group mentoring, outline the political circumstances that they are working against stating that "when educational practices become a marketing place where students are seen as customers and costs, it becomes a threat to an inclusive and democratic school". They go on to identify this threat as the "neo-liberal discourse and material-economic arrangement" as it pertains to education systems. In this way, it can be viewed that Langelotz and Rönnerman are working against the notion of educational practices as market place in favour of practices that privilege inclusive and democratic principles.

Similarly, Salo and Rönnerman (2014) in their chapter Four on the Nordic tradition of educational action research, mention "globalised neoliberal ideas" as the

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notion against which their efforts are made. Salo and Rönnerman go on to establish their opposition to the 'de-professionalization' of teachers and associated policy or practices that may "limit the scope of professional judgment and action" for teachers. In this example, it can be suggested that these authors are working against neo-liberal ideas in favour of the concept of bildung and the actions, which a study of this latter concept may engender.

While the political positions of the authors of these chapters may be self-evident from a reading of their texts, attention is drawn to these positions more so to highlight the basic assumptions that are being made about the practice of education and educational research that they describe. By doing so one can more clearly articulate their intentions for revisiting the concept of bildung in the contemporary discourse or for expanding the use of study circles in research practice. In this way, it can be suggested that the authors of *Lost in Practice* are using the concepts of bildung and study circles for a political means just as earlier proponents of bildung or study circles would have used them in their own historical contexts.

In order to illustrate this point, one can postulate about the political intentions of Oscar Olsson's use of study circles in Sweden at the turn of the century by applying Freire's question - what was Oscar Olsson in favour of? Larsson and Nordvall (2010, p. 9) offer us a hint by suggesting that Olsson "recommended literature and art as a suitable start, when persons from the working class engaged in a study-circle" and that "they must have sound knowledge in political and social issues and also in useful knowledge for the popular movements' struggles". Taking this into account, could we suggest that Olsson was driven by the need to cultivate his notion of bildung among 'the working-class' and to support what he considered as 'useful' for popular movements? While a more detailed exploration of Olsson's writings could provide a clearer picture of his underlying political intentions, the primary reason for describing this hypothetical scenario is to underscore the political agendas that gave rise to the concepts and processes discussed in this book – principally bildung and study/research circles. This historical standpoint is emphasized in the face of a perceived de-emphasis of the political contexts within which these concepts originated within the chapters of this book.

RE-POLITIZING BILDUNG

In the *Lost in Practice* chapter describing the Nordic tradition of educational action research, Salo and Rönnerman (2014, chapter Four) discuss the roots of bildung as based in the folk enlightenment movement in existence across Europe in the late 19th century. Since the concepts of bildung and folk enlightenment have their origins in such a historical setting, any contemporary use should take into account the "multidimensional and multigenerational" (Siljander & Sutinen, 2008, p. 2) nature of the terms with implications for how they can be further redefined in the field of educational action research today. Salo and Rönnerman (2014) define folk enlightenment as a “collaborative way of constructing and gaining knowledge, underlining the social, cultural and political aspects of bildung…aiming at heightening individual citizens’ awareness of and commitment to act for social change and justice.“ (Rönnerman, Salo & Moksnes Furu 2008, p. 21). Taking a critical view of this definition, the question can be raised of whose concept of social change and justice is precisely being taken into account and whose commitment is being sought.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Nordic context could be characterized as undergoing significant political upheaval and social change. In the example of Finland, the politics of the period would have focused on the civil conflicts leading up to independence in 1917 and the expansion of the Finnish language and culture in schools and work life. In the Swedish context, Salo and Rönnerman (2014, chapter Four) suggest that study circles were used to “enlighten the labor market in the 1930´s for being part of building a social democratic society and secondly to cultivate the Swedish people in the purpose of being able to vote on societal reforms”. With this historical context in mind, Olsson’s vision for study circles supporting ‘popular movements’ can be contextualized alongside the highly politicized realities of the time within which actors on either side of the political spectrum would have been politically motivated to engage with the ‘working-class’ or other populations.

The primary reason for briefly describing the political contexts within which study circles were historically initiated is to make the connection between those circumstances and the political contexts surrounding today’s uses of study circles, and to suggest that similar processes and power structures are in place today between those that are initiating a study or research circle and those that are being asked to participate. By making this connection, I would like to highlight a perceived lack of space given to the specific political contexts within which study circles are being used in the examples provided in the chapters of *Lost in Practice*. While there are numerous references, such as in Rönnerman and Olin’s (2014, chapter Six) and Salo and Rönnerman’s (2014, chapter Four) chapters, to the social-political arrangements, or the ‘relatings’, as part of a description of the practice architectures (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008) of the examples given, what seems to be lacking are detailed accounts of the ‘prefigured’ political artifacts that influence those ‘relatings’ within the action research contexts described.

For example, in the case of Rönnerman and Olin’s (2014, chapter Six) description of the uses of research circles, the authors mention ‘relatings’ between the national curriculum documents and the participants of the research circle and suggest that the preschool teachers participating in the research circles have “grown in their role as teacher leaders in preschool, which meets the demands from curricula.” Is this then what the participants of the research circle are in favour of – meeting the demands of the curriculum? More effectively meeting the demands of the curriculum is certainly a valid goal within the scope of teacher professional development or school assessment, however are there additional pieces of the action research approach that should be further defined to more clearly articulate the political intentions or 'relatings' of the participants with their specific political environments. By applying Freire's question to this example, one can further articulate the political agendas behind the use of a tool such as a research circle. This critique may point to methodological aspects with respect to how action research should be reported, but it also points to the need for highlighting the nature of the action proposed and the political artifacts that are used as justification for that action.

Similar to the critique by Ohlsson and Mattson (2008, p. 262) of the earlier volume *Nurturing Praxis* for not addressing a "radical conflict approach", so to can a critique be offered of the chapters in this volume. This can be done with respect to how study and research circles are being undertaken within the confines of the institutionalized practice of teachers since few examples are presented of a critical or radical approach that targets the political artifacts of practice. As a result, the action research described in the cases offered in this volume seem to point to action on institutional teaching practice, rather than action targeting systemic change relating to challenging social or political issues confronting the teachers, researchers or students involved.

Again, one can focus back to Freire's question, but this time question the underlying political artifacts impacting on the participants of study and research circles. In other words, what is the political domain that the study circle is attempting to act upon? Asking this question allows us to refocus on study circles, not as politically-neutral methodologies, but rather, as stated by Rönnerman and Olin (2014, chapter Six), tools that encourage the participants to act through traditions, structures and contemporary regulations and conditions that shape practice.

One comment by a teacher respondent described in the chapter written by Forsman, Karlberg-Grandlund, Pörn, Salo and Aspfors (2014, chapter Seven) offers an example of how this political domain may significantly impact on the relatings present within the practice architectures of the context in discussion. In that case, the teacher asked of the researcher: "What else do you want us to do?" The authors of this particular chapter demonstrate their awareness of the power structure inherent in this comment. They discuss the socio-political arrangements that influence the researcher/participant relationship even going as far to suggest that the outsider/ researcher was "always welcomed and highly needed – as an engaged listener, assistant meaning maker or an empathetic mirror". Understanding the central role of the facilitators, the authors further recognize that "providing agency is a challenge". However, their choice of words is instructive: can facilitators provide agency or do the participants themselves establish it? This notion of knowledge generation goes back to the fundamental understanding of bildung and the associated "paradigm of external pedagogical influence (Erziehung)" (Siljander & Sutinen, 2008). It is an exploration of knowledge and its construction within the field of action research that will form the remaining sections of this reflection.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FOLK ENLIGHTENMENT AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

By highlighting the politics of practice, a critique can also be constructed of how folk enlightenment as a concept is promoted within *Lost in Practice*. This critique focuses on how folk enlightenment is depicted and used as a rationalization for Nordic action research practices. As suggested in the chapter by Salo and Rönnerman (2014) folk enlightenment is seen to lay the groundwork for the contemporary Nordic action research approach. Langelotz and Rönnerman (2014, chapter Five) refer to Nordvall (2002) who stresses that the Swedish tradition of folk bildung is often described in a "romantic manner where the emancipation of the people is emphasized" through participation in programs such as folk high schools or study circles. In addition, Salo and Rönnerman (2014, chapter Four) make reference to the long-term political aim of such practices being to develop a sense of belonging to a collective and identifying oneself as a part of a larger unity – a folk (Korsgaard 2002). Through these descriptions and by making reference to the collective development of a 'folk' as it connects to folk enlightenment, the authors of *Lost in Practice* seem to invoke a link between folk enlightenment and the expanding nationalism that characterized Europe and the Nordic region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

If in fact the expansion of folk enlightenment in the Nordic context can be strongly paralleled with the growth of national identities (and citizenship education), then any contemporary use of this concept must be cognizant of the historical and political contexts within which folk enlightenment gained popularity in the Nordic context – *vis à vis* the rise of nationalism. It is argued in this reflection piece that greater attention should be given to a critical approach to bildung and folk enlightenment in order to avoid the essentializing tendencies (Said, 1988) of such socio-cultural concepts and maintain a critical awareness of the potential for creating contemporary counterparts to the nationalist inclinations that would have surrounded discussions of these concepts in the past. Furthermore, a critical view of bildung and folk enlightenment would also highlight epistemological aspects relating to the concept's use.

The chapter Six by Rönnerman and Olin (2014) focusing on research circles illustrates well the challenges with building a space for differing epistemologies grounded in folk bildung. In the case of the research circles discussed, they suggest both academic knowledge and practitioner knowledge were being combined. For example, they state that "meetings in the research circle were structured in a specific way emphasizing that education should be built on science and proven experiences". While at another point they indicate, that "theory or science isn´t looked upon as superior to experiences, but rather as a tool for reflecting over experiences to make them proven". And yet, Rönnerman, Salo and Moksnes Furu, (2008, p. 25) suggest that "folk enlightenment is conceived as regarding truth, not based on scientific knowledge, but on every human's experience". Based on these statements, it can be interpreted that irrespective of attempts to value them on the same level, scientific knowledge held a powerful position in this case in contrast to the ‘experiences’ of practitioners. Rönnerman and Olin (2014, chapter Six) go on to suggest that in research circles the “researchers strived to work in a balance of power”, but in the end whose knowledge was actually favoured?

In order to answer this question, a certain level of ‘epistemological awareness’ (Kincheloe, 2003) is necessary and any attempt to balance between academic and experiential knowledge suggests overcoming divergent cultural-discursive and social-political arrangements (using the terminology of practice architectures as in the case above). This scenario also echoes another line of research that similarly works to reconcile differing epistemologies – namely community-based and participatory approaches that attempt to integrate Indigenous traditional knowledge and ‘Western’ academic knowledge in common research settings. In these contexts, an attempt is made to put Indigenous traditional knowledge on an equal footing with ‘Western’ academic knowledge. Furthermore, it is argued here that strong similarities can be seen when comparing the work of Nordic action research and the efforts of participatory action research in Indigenous contexts, especially with respect to how both endeavor to build spaces within which dialogue can be cultivated.

Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000, p. 44) define Indigenous knowledge as “empirical, experimental and systematic” and differing from ‘Western’ scientific knowledge as a result of it being “highly localized and social”, while Semuli considers this form of knowledge as “unofficial” (Semuli, 1999, p. 309) since it has often in the past been discounted within academic communities. This way of describing Indigenous knowledge as ‘localized and social’ corresponds well with the way practitioner and participant knowledge is brought together in the Nordic contexts outlined in *Lost in Practice*. For example, when discussing study circles, Salo and Rönnerman (2014, chapter Four) describe a process of “deliberative dialogue” suggesting that study circles support “informal and open everyday conversation among equals on topics and interests anchored in their life worlds”. In the chapter by Rönnerman and Olin, (2014) research circles are similarly described as creating a “space for reflective dialogue”. The idea of developing a space for dialogue has also been discussed in Indigenous contexts with Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008, p. 154). They articulate a concept of ‘intercultural synergistic dialogue’ that “allows for conditions where both intra- and intercultural knowledge traditions can inform one another”.

The idea of creating spaces within which reflection and dialogue ‘as equals’ can take place have another similar correlate that has expanded in use within Indigenous research communities: the concept of third spaces. Gutierrez, Rymes and Larson (1995, p. 451) define third spaces as a “social space within which counter-hegemonic activity, or contestation of dominant discourses, can occur for both students and teachers”. In the Indigenous context, Dudgeon and Fielder (2006, p. 407) further suggest that these spaces are “often risky, unsettling spaces—where the security and familiarity of our own place of belonging has to be left behind. [In third spaces], we have to be prepared to shift, to be open, to listen, to change”. This notion of being open, listening and changing closely corresponds with the ‘circles’ described throughout *Lost in Practice*. While the Nordic contexts described in this volume are in many cases quite different than the Indigenous cultural contexts within which third spaces have been used, a brief comparison is offered in this reflection to highlight the potential opportunity to further explore how dialogue is being cultivated in both Nordic contexts (e.g. study and research circles) and Indigenous contexts (e.g. third spaces). By furthering such a comparison, the authors of *Lost in Practice* may find a number of similarities, which can support an increased understanding of the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of practice in the field of Nordic action research.

CONCLUSION

This reflection piece uses a question posed by Paulo Freire – What are we in favour of? - as a focal point to discuss the political aspects of practice. This has been done to highlight the political arrangements inherent in the scenarios discussed throughout *Lost in Practice*. In many instances, the authors of this volume have focused on the concept of practice architectures and the associated social-political arrangements to explore and articulate the political influences upon Nordic practice. However, as part of the various descriptions of practice architectures, a more detailed critical approach to the underlying politics inherent in these contexts seems to be required. In this way, greater consideration should be given to more clearly distinguish between Nordic research that undertakes to solely improve teaching practice within institutional settings and research that offers a counter- hegemonic critique of the underlying political, cultural and social arrangements that impact upon practice.

More specifically, this reflection explores the political aspects of Nordic educational action research by comparing two concepts (folk enlightenment and traditional knowledge) to suggest that similarities exist in the ways in which knowledge is negotiated and contested within the study circles and research circles described in *Lost in Practice* and the ways that research spaces (or third spaces) are constructed in Indigenous settings. A deeper articulation of the similarities between these settings represents a potentially fruitful outcome from further research on the subject.

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Rachel Jakhelln
Rachel Jakhelln is a lecturer in Education in the MA teacher education program for levels 5-10 at the University of Tromsø, Norway, and is the director of ProTed, Center of Excellence in Teacher Education. ProTed is developing MA-level teacher education and aims to provide a research based and comprehensive teacher education together with partner schools. Rachel Jakhelln's research interest is in the area of teacher education, professional development and the induction of newly qualified teachers. The latter was also the focus of her PhD thesis.

Gunilla Karlberg-Granlund
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Stephen Kemmis
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Eli Moksnes Furu is Associate Professor at the University of Tromsø, Norway, where she teaches pedagogy in the teacher education program. For several years she has been combining research with leading action research programmes for teachers in Sweden. One of her most recent research projects has been "The student teacher as researcher" with a focus on the partnership between university and lower secondary schools. Prior to her research career Furu worked for several years as a teacher and school administrator at the primary level.

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Petri Salo is a Professor in Adult Education in the Faculty of Education, Åbo Academy University, Finland. His research interests relate to adult and popular education in the Nordic countries, schools as organizations, micro-politics, action research and qualitative methods. He is currently researching school leadership, local leadership practices and the importance of trust in schools.

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Ann-Christine Wennergren is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Halmstad in Sweden. Her research interests include professional learning within teams and school organizations. Her main research focus is on tools used in collaborative learning as well as in the process of teacher inquiry. Her research is based on action research methods, often in collective projects where all the teachers in a school are involved.