Chapter 6
To reflect on practice in school development

Kristin Støren[1] & Anne Liv Kaarstad Lie[2]

Abstract

In Norway, there has been a revision of the national curriculum, and reflection has been included in the definition of being competent. This competence is relevant for teachers and students to develop a growth mindset. Reflective practice describes this self-forming dialogue as a driving force for recognizing, describing, and communicating one´s actions to be able to learn in a continuous way. Reflection is a mental process related to both cognition and metacognition with the purpose of achieving an understanding of a specific situation or phenomenon and acting upon that understanding. With attention to 21st-century society`s needs for competence and creative and innovative solutions, reflection is a key asset. The development of schools as learning organizations requires both the establishment of a learning culture and methods to frame reflective processes.

In this chapter, we will describe and linger upon how school leaders at a conference reflected on self-experienced narratives to gain new understanding, and we will reflect on the use of reflection as a pathway to explore the association between the use of rich data sources and the deep learning process. Two narratives from participants at the conference are used as data. In the discussions, interpersonal relations will be linked to epistemic assumptions in the national core curriculum. The article will discuss what's at stake for school leaders in professional learning communities.

Keywords

School development, professional learning, reflective practice, appreciative inquiry, triangulation of data

---

[1]   Kristin Støren is a public sector PhD candidate at the University of South-Eastern Norway and principal in Porsgrunn municipality. Her research interests are professional learning, school development and local curriculum work.

[2]   Anne Liv Kaarstad Lie is an associate professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway. Lie is supervising both teacher students, school leaders and teachers. Her research interests are professional learning and school development.

Introduction

In Norway, a new national curriculum was introduced in 2020. The curriculum states that the values and principles of school practices shall contribute to the development of the competences of citizens in the 21st century. Reflective practice is a key concept and a value in the core curriculum, both for students' learning and for teachers' professional development. It is described as a principle among values and principles for and in education. One chapter in the curriculum is delegated to principles for practice, and in this chapter, reflective practice plays a key part in school development:

> Professional school development finds place when teachers have the opportunity to ask questions and look for solutions in a professional learning community that focuses on students' learning and development. All employees must play an active part in the professional learning community for the development of the school. This includes reflection upon value-based choices and areas of development and the use of research and ethical considerations to set aims and make measures. Well-established structures for cooperation, support, and coaching among colleges in and between schools will promote a culture of sharing and learning. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017, author's translation)

Professional reflection about practice differs from everyday reflection when it comes to self-formation. While most of us reflect upon our actions as a part of our navigation in and around everyday life, reflection about practice and reflective practice have a stronger connection to theory, a more defined structure, and a more deliberate purpose. Still, it can be hard to grasp and define the exact meaning of professional reflection. Walsh and Mann (2015, p. 351) state that *"the many differing (and even conflicting) perspectives on what reflection actually means make it difficult for researchers and practitioners to operationalize it in any meaningful way"*.

In this chapter, we will share two narratives from school leaders and get to know what is at stake for their formation in the face of the regulations in the new curriculum. We will use these narratives, together with descriptions of reflective practice in the core curriculum, to analyze, discuss, and reflect upon reflective practices. The data is randomized and obtained from a school leaders' conference. The aim of the conference was to get to know the stages of dialogue for professional teachers learning. The participants used a reflective model for dialogue called the Triangulated Analysis Model (TAM). The focus area in this model is to triangulate reflections over rich data (narratives and understandings) together with existing big data (results from national tests, exams and surveys) to understand and develop practice. We will start by introducing the narratives.

Narratives shared with us at the conference

To get an understanding of the TAM model in use, we decided to collect and investigate reflections from users of the model. The participants at the school leader conference were asked to write down a story that contributed to forming the participant as a leader. The school leaders were then asked to retell the story to a co-participant at the conference. After writing down their stories and retelling them to a co-participant, the participants reflected on their stories in pairs. On the basis of these reflections, the participants were asked to describe a challenge in their organization that they would really like to do something about. They wrote down their challenges. Based on the challenge, the participants were asked to describe a desired solution, but a solution that did not involve more money, more people or more time. The challenges were transformed into solutions. Based on these solutions, the participants were asked to transform their solution into a research question. The question should preferably include both a learning outcome and a learning environment for the students. The participants came up with numerous interesting research questions, such as *"How can we involve the pupils in the analysis of the results of national tests to engage them in developing literary skills and numeracy skills?"*, *"How can the students get more involved in the planning of learning activities?",* and *"How can we develop a learning culture that embraces seeking new knowledge about teaching strategies?"* After this process, the participants were offered the opportunity to share their stories and reflections. The leaders were invited to share their narratives with each other orally and with the researchers in writing. The aim of the sharing was explained, and a digital platform for sharing anonymously was created to make the sharing safe and easy for the participants. The included task description shows the challenge:

TASK:

    a)   **Telling the narrative/story (INDIVIDUAL)**

Reflect on a story you have experienced as a school leader that has contributed to form you as a leader and draw/write the story in a way that will help you share it with others.

    b)   **Critical reflection (PAIRS)**

Retell your story and explain WHY this story is important to you and what it says/means. How can you explain this story?

After the conference, we sorted the shared narratives and chose two different narratives for analysis. These two reflections are the subjects of our analysis. We decided to analyze the narratives as a comparative discourse analysis, comparing the narratives to the principles related to professional learning communities in the national curriculum "Kunnskapsløftet".
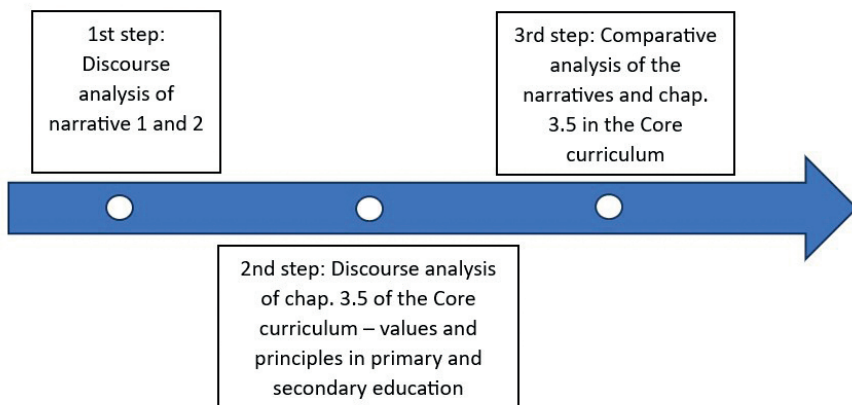
Figure 1: The three steps of the comparative discourse analysis

The first step was to present their stories and get familiar with the participants' own reality through the way they expressed themselves (cf. Czarniawska, 2006). We paid attention to the way they faced cultural conditions and their positioning in the face of work-related topics. We were able to familiarize ourselves with the individual's perceptions of the tasks and become familiar with what was at stake and how they create meaning from their experiences.

In the second step, we started the process by doing a discourse analysis of the two shared narratives and chapter 3 in the national curriculum. We then looked for patterns and described five areas of focus. These areas of focus were used to compare the discourse in the curriculum document to the discourse in each of the narratives and to compare the two narratives with each other.

Narrative 1 (translated from Norwegian to English by the author)

A few years ago, all the principals in the public schools in a town in the southern part of Norway decided they wanted to make a common local curriculum plan to make education less dependent on the school you attended. The union was supportive. Still, there was some resistance from several teachers. We decided to involve teachers from all the schools in the curriculum work. We spent three days at the ski resort "Gautefall" – working hard, sharing and bonding. This made the process successful. It

resulted in a common curriculum plan – as intended, but it also resulted in a better understanding of curriculum work, a better understanding of the Norwegian national curriculum, and it resulted in us being better prepared for the revised national curriculum plan being implemented a few years later. "To dare is to do!"

Narrative 2 (translated from Norwegian to English by the author)

A teacher at a school close to my school presented how they work with test results, such as national tests and national mappings of students' achievements. That day, "I saw the light" and realized the purpose of national tests and the potential benefits for both individual students and the learning community.

Critical reflection 1 (translated from Norwegian to English by the author)

This narrative made me realize that (1) it is both difficult and necessary to continue the work when you meet resistance. Critical questions give us a broader perspective and can be helpful in the development process; (2) a rooted understanding of the national curriculum is important for the development of the school as a learning organization; and (3) the process of developing a common language and common understanding is a continuous process.

Critical reflection 2 (translated from Norwegian to English by the author)

Initially, I was negative to the tests. I regarded them as a ranking of students. But this experience made me see the potential value behind the test results – behind the numbers.

The narratives show cognitive, emotional, ethical, and practical dilemmas that have been life changing for the school leaders. Participating in the process, you could see, feel, and hear engagement. We will now reflect on these narratives and what they hold to try to understand the process the school leaders participated in and how reflection played a role.

Reflection upon the narratives

To interpret and make meaning of the two narratives and chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017), individually and in relation to each other, we have used both a social-semiotic frame and a social-philosophical frame.

Michael Halliday (1978) introduced a social-semiotic framework to understand and make meaning of the world. He used three perspectives: an ideational perspective to make logic and experimental sense of reality; an interpersonal perspective to interpret and create an understanding of power and roles in communication; and a textual perspective to systematize and make sense of textual interactivity, cohesion and lexical aspects and chains.

Foucault (1966) introduced a contextual perspective to make meaning of the order of things, the truth, different perspectives and acceptable discourses. Different underlying epistemic assumptions determine the ways of thinking and understanding a phenomenon. For Foucault, discourses are related to how people organize the ways they speak to achieve specific goals. In that vision, we speak and think of accustomed and regular ways in which we wrap in an ideological sense. To create meaning and understanding, you must therefore interpret the epistemic assumptions.

Fairclough (1989) describes the relationship between language and institutionalized practices and power. He is regarded as one of the founders of critical discourse analysis. Fairclough distinguishes between power relations **behind** language, such as (1) the speakers' position at a micro level and (2) community power at a macro level, and power relations **of** language, such as (3) language to maintain power, (4) language to enhance impact, and (5) language to create influence on action.

In the analysis of the narratives and chapter 3 of the core curriculum, we have used Halliday's framework in combination with epistemic assumptions and Fairclough's five dynamic language-power relationships. **The ideational meta-function** can help us understand how the texts communicate the idea behind a phenomenon or a theme – both in the narrative and the contextual representation. When we link representation to epistemic assumptions, we can interpret the ideational perspective based on these assumptions. When we relate the representation of ideas to the speaker's position and community power, we can interpret the power relations behind the representation of ideas. Finally, when we relate the representation of ideas to language to maintain power, enhance impact, and influence action, we can interpret power relations within the representation of ideas. **The interpersonal meta-function** can help us understand how the text can function as an exchange of views. Halliday (1998) defines two types of actions in language: to give and to demand, and two types of contents: information and service. This results in four different categories of semiotic actions: (1) to offer (give service), (2) to constant (give information), (3) to order (demand service) and (4) to question (demand information). When we link interpersonal relations to epistemic assumptions, we can interpret the actions

from different views on learning in professional learning communities. Helskog & Weiss use the metaphor kaleidoscope about these different interpretations that form new patterns (chapter 1). When we link interpersonal relations to the speakers position and community power, we can interpret power relations between the writer and the receiver of the text. Finally, when we regard interpersonal relations to the power relations of language, we can interpret power relations within the semiotic actions in the text. **The textual meta-function** can help us understand how the text is constructed, how the discourse is visible throughout the text, and the coherence between the sections of the text. When we link textual perspectives to epistemic assumptions, we can interpret different epistemic assumptions and how they are linked in the composition of the text. When we link the textual relations to the speaker's position and community power, we can interpret the power relations behind the text. Finally, when we regard the textual relations to the power relations of language, we can interpret the power relations between the ideas represented in the text and the participants in the communication. We can interpret how different types of information are valued and enlightened and how they are framed and constructed.

Perspectives / Meta-functions	Epistemic assumptions	Power relations behind language		Power relations of language		
		Speaker's position	Community power	Language to maintain power	Language to immense impact	Language to create influence on action
Ideational perspective						
Interpersonal perspective						
Textual perspective						

The perspectives have been combined in a rubric.

What is at stake and how can we create meaning from the local curriculum narrative?

In the narrative about local curriculum work, we get to know what is at stake by being introduced to the leader's desire to succeed in the development process of a local curriculum plan. The process depended on the engagement of several participating teachers and school leaders. First, there was some resistance from the teachers involved, but after going through with the process, the resistance turned into engagement and success. The school leader telling this narrative is reflecting on why this happened and concludes that gaining success is dependent on the ability to really try

what you believe in – even when you meet skepticism and resistance. We can see this clearly in his/her closing statement in the narrative: "To dare is to do!"

The narrative explains how you must give your co-workers time to understand and grasp the concept before you give up on leading a process. Teachers, like people in general, tend to be skeptical of change before they get the whole picture and the idea behind the initiative for the process of change. The school leader in this narrative has learned to give the participants some time – to let the information and the aim of the project sink in. In some ways, it seems like the leader has found the power within his/her position to believe in herself/himself and stand strong in the first phase of a development process, the phase where you give information and ask for cooperation and co-engagement.

When we link the ideational perspective of the narrative to epistemic assumptions, we can see signs of constructive and social-constructive views on how we gain new knowledge. The speaker reflects on how the project resulted in both a better understanding of curriculum work and of the national curriculum plan among the involved participants. Knowledge was gained through the cooperation between teachers and by developing the plan. The work process resulted in new knowledge. This suggests that new knowledge is gained through cognitive effort and interaction with peers and is constructed in this process. You can also link the narrative to a pragmatic and situated epistemic perspective. The participants developed the curriculum in a process where support and leadership were provided and working with experts affected their new knowledge.

The speaker's position as a school leader reflects the power relations behind the narrative. The fact that the united principal group initiated a common local curriculum plan can be related to community power that influenced the process and the narrative. Both the speaker's position and the community's power must have influenced the process in an enforcing way. Still, there is something vulnerable and fragile in the story. In the narrative, the informant reflects on having the courage to seize power, position, and opportunity. In the end, it is about believing in yourself as a leader –believing in your thoughts and ideas enough to fight for them.

When we regard the representation of ideas in the narrative to power relations within the language, we can see signs of language to influence action and enhance impact. The main intention behind the local curriculum project was to establish a more equal practice between and among the schools in the municipality. The narrative is about how the informer convinced the project's participants that a common local curriculum plan was a necessity in a more equal education setting. And it turned out

to be a success. Not only did the municipality get the common and local curriculum plan, but they also gained a better understanding of curriculum work and the national curriculum plan. The leader/advisor aimed for one gain and got three.

The interpersonal perspective shows how the informant addresses the other participants at the conference to share his/her knowledge gained from this narrative. The speaker communicates by giving information to the co-participants. This can also be regarded as offering service or help since the narrative provides reflections on how to lead in a successful way. There are no demanding language actions in the narrative (such as orders or questions), only the offering of information and the indirect offering of service/help.

When we link interpersonal relations to epistemic assumptions, we can interpret how new knowledge is gained. In the communication of the narrative, knowledge is shared. This is adding a dimension to the social-constructing perspective from within the narrative. A narrative can be used for reflection and the reconstruction of knowledge. The sharing of the narrative reflects an understanding of the construction of knowledge, where established knowledge can be challenged through shared reflections.

The speaker chose to share his/her story with the rest of the participants at the school leader conference. The speaker is addressing the other participants as colleagues. This can be related to community power behind the language as well as to the speaker's position. The informant wrote down his/her story at the conference because the story meant something to him/her. This narrative made him/her look at leadership in a new way. Yet the story is staged by the task given at the conference. But it was optional to share the narrative with the group. The fact that the speaker chose to share the narrative can be related to the speaker's position. The speaker found the narrative worth sharing. The sharing of the narrative also reflects qualities in the interpersonal relationships among the participants at the conference. The interpersonal perspective can be understood as action in language to encourage and inspire the other participants. These actions can be regarded as power relations in the presentation of the narrative.

The text is constructed in chronological order, beginning with a challenge and ending with a successful solution. The narrative is constructed and told as an inspiration and an encouragement to the other participants. When we link textual perspectives to epistemic assumption, we can see a combination of a social-constructive and pragmatically situated epistemic perspectives. New knowledge is constructed through cooperation and co-production in the narrative. The narrative is shared as an encouragement to other leaders. This reflects an epistemic perspective where knowledge

is constructed in cooperation and can develop through reflection and other perspectives. The sharing of reflections can challenge other's understanding and enhance new and enriched understandings of a phenomenon.

The construction of the narrative and the sharing of the narrative suggest the speakers' position and community power. This is related to the speaker's position in the narrative and in the telling of the narrative, and the two are reinforcing each other. To dare to tell a story about daring to lead other school leaders combines the ideational and interpersonal dimensions in a trustworthy way. The speaker uses his/her position and community position, both from the experience told in the narrative and in the telling of the narrative, to inspire and influence other school leaders to try to lead what they believe in.

What is at stake and how can we create meaning from the narrative about data from national tests?

In the narrative about data from national standardized tests, we get to know the leader's experience of what is at stake when it comes to the use of data on student achievement. The leader brings us along in his/her realization of the potential use of data from national standardized tests. He/she tells us about his/her inner confrontation with an established understanding of the phenomenon. The leader's learning experience is expressed as an "aha" experience: "*A teacher at a school close to my school presented how they work with test results such as national tests and national mappings of students achievements. That day 'I saw the light'.*" The learning takes place by virtue of collaboration with a teacher at a nearby school, and it is in the sharing of the teachers' reflections that our informant realizes that there is more to national tests than ranking students and schools. The results can be used to help the students and to develop the school as a learning organization.

When we look at the ideational perspective behind the narrative and link it to epistemic assumptions, we can see signs of a social-constructive view of how we gain new knowledge. The speaker reflects on how the narrative from the neighboring schoolteacher made him/her gain a new perspective on the potential use of the results from national tests. This suggests that new knowledge is gained through both others´ and your own reflections, and that you can widen your cognitive horizons by reflecting on other´s reflections that differ from your own. You learn by cognitive conflicts and by investing in cognitive effort and interaction with peers. Knowledge is constructed in this process. We can also see signs of positivistic epistemic assumptions. In the statement *"I saw the light,"* there are signs of a view on knowledge that can be gained or captured. Knowledge is out there in an objective sense.

The speaker's position is influenced by the formal position the informant has as a school leader. This is again reflected in the power relations behind the narrative. In this case, the power position might make it more challenging to gain new perspectives. Many leaders feel they should know better than their employees. There has been a debate about standardized tests in Norway since they were introduced almost 20 years ago. The arguments about the ranking of students and schools have been raised quite high, and this has caused a gap between teachers and school leaders (cf. Dale et al., 2011; Hodgson et al., 2012; Aasen et al., 2012). School leaders feel loyalty to the data-driven directives they are given from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and their leaders in the municipality, but they also feel loyalty towards the teachers at the school they are leading and their points of view. In this loyalty dilemma, many school leaders have felt they have to pick a side in the conflict. The narrative reflects the initial position the school leader held in this debate and explains how the school leader changed his/her view. To get arguments from a teacher about the potential use of data from national tests and to get a new perspective and a new understanding from this, affect the speaker's power position.

When we regard the representation of ideas in the narrative to power relations within the language, we can see signs of language influencing action and enhancing impact. The narrative is about the informant's realization of the value of the potential use of test results. The narrative is told to share this experience with the other school leaders at the conference. The power within this narrative can be linked to language, enhances impact and influences action. The school leader is sharing a narrative about changing his/her view. The purpose of sharing the story is to inspire others. The knowledge that is shared by the school leader can, if picked up by other school leaders, benefit the students and the process of developing the learning environment. By regarding data as a source of information, data from national tests can be used to find effective improvement measures.

The interpersonal perspective shows how the informant addresses the other participants at the conference by sharing his/her enlightenment. The speaker communicates by sharing his/her understanding of a phenomenon with the co-participants. There are no demanding language actions in the narrative (such as orders or questions), only the offering of information and the indirect offering of service/help.

When we link the interpersonal relations to epistemic assumptions, we can interpret the informant's view of how new knowledge is gained. In the communication of the narrative, the speaker shares her enlightenment to help others widen their perspectives. This reflect epistemic assumptions

that can be linked to a social-constructive learning perspective. A sharing of a reflection upon an enlightenment can be used for reflection and reconstruction of knowledge for others. The sharing of the narrative reflects an understanding of the construction of knowledge, where established knowledge can be challenged through shared reflections.

The speaker chose to share his/her story with the rest of the participants at the school leader conference. The speaker addresses the other participants as colleagues. This can be related to community power behind the language as well as to the speaker's position. The informant wrote down his/her story at the conference because the story meant something to him/her. This narrative made him/her look at data on student achievement in a new way. The story is staged by the task given at the conference, but the speaker chose to share the narrative, and this can be linked to the speaker's position in relation to the co-participants. The speaker was confident enough to share the narrative, even though the theme of the narrative is controversial. This reflects qualities in the interpersonal relationships among the participants at the conference. The speaker felt confident enough to share a personal reflection about a controversial theme with the others.

The power relations within the interpersonal perspective in this narrative can be understood as action to enhance and influence new understanding of the phenomenon among the co-participants. The narrative is told to inspire and challenge the other participants.

The text is constructed *in medias res* – starting with the description of the enlightenment and then explaining the process of gaining this new understanding. The narrative is told as an inspiration and an encouragement to the other participants. When we link textual perspectives to epistemic assumptions, we can see signs of a social-constructive perspective on learning. The narrative is shared as an inspiration for other leaders. New knowledge is constructed through cooperation and co-production, both in the narrative and in the interpersonal sharing of the narratives at the conference. This reflects an epistemic perspective on how knowledge is achieved. In the narrative, knowledge is constructed through cognitive challenges of what we think we know. In this case, the challenge is given through the sharing of a narrative. A new understanding can be built through reflection on new perspectives. The sharing of reflections can challenge the established understanding and enhance new and enriched understandings of a phenomenon.

The construction of the narrative and the sharing of the narrative suggest the speaker's position and community power. This is related to the speaker's position in the narrative and in the telling of the narrative, and the two are reinforcing each other. Telling a story about how another narrative

enlightened you and changed your perspective on student achievement data, can be regarded as an action to inspire and challenge the other school leaders. The speaker uses his/her position and community position to inspire and influence other school leaders to see the potential in using data on students' achievement to set measures and help students progress in their learning.

What is at stake and how can we create meaning from the chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum?

Chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum describes how professional environment and school development should be realized: *"Schools should be a professional environment where teachers, leaders and other members of staff reflect on common values and assess and develop their practice."* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017). The chapter functions as a description of how the school should develop as a learning organization and describes the school as a societal institution, the teacher as a role model, value-based school development, knowledge-based school development, reflective school development and practice-based school development. A professional learning environment is described through these key assets. The teachers should be role models, and the school should be a professional environment based on reflection upon values, knowledge, research and practice.

The ideational meta-function can help us understand how chapter 3.5 communicates the idea behind the development of professional learning communities (PLCs). When we link the chapter to epistemic assumptions, we see signs of social-constructive assumptions but also signs of pre-fixed knowledge assumptions related to evidence-based school development.

School development is described as an ongoing process based on interaction between the members of the school's staff. The staff should be aware of their function as role models for the students; they should base their practice on the values in the core curriculum; and they should reflect upon, develop and update their teaching practice. The teachers should develop their practice as a group. *"Teachers who reflect together on and assess planning and implementation of their teaching develop a richer understanding of good educational practice. This must be done while bearing in mind the profession's knowledge base and the core values for primary and secondary education and training."* All of this agrees with social-constructive epistemic assumptions. School development is also linked to setting target measures and realizing the school's purpose. These are examples of fixed knowledge assumptions and can be related to evidence-based and behavioristic epistemic assumptions.

The speaker in the core curriculum is the governing authorities. The core curriculum has status as regulation of law. This means it sets legal standards and regulates the practice in the schools. The descriptions in the core curriculum are legally binding for the schools. The sender has the power to give directives. This represents power relations behind the language, both from the speaker's position and from the government (community power). When we regard the representation of ideas in language to maintain power, enhance impact and influence action, we can find power relations within the representation of ideas. The chapter gives directives to the schools and the teachers about how to develop the schools' practices and how to establish a professional learning environment among the teachers. The chapter has immense impact and influences action on how to establish the school's PLC.

Chapter 3.5 functions as a description of the characteristics of well-functioning PLCs and directives to the schools in Norway about how to develop these professional environments. When we explore the exchange of views in the text, we can see that the dominant semiotic actions are orders and the stating of facts. The speaker combines these two semiotic actions in the directives to the receiver. We can see this in the opening statement: *"Schools should be professional environments…"*, and we can see it in the following paragraph: "*School as a societal institution is obliged to base itself on and practice the values and principles that have been established for primary and secondary education and training."* We can see examples of explicit orders: *"Teachers must consider carefully what, how and why pupils learn, and how they can lead and support the pupils' education and all-round development optimally."* And we can see examples of the explicit stating of facts (giving information), such as *"Teachers who reflect together on and assess planning and implementation of their teaching develop a richer understanding of good educational practice."* If we relate this to epistemic assumptions, we find signs of knowledge being transferable (from the authorities to the teacher). The stating of facts and the directives are related to behavioristic epistemic assumptions where knowledge can be shared and transferred from an authority. We don't find semiotic actions in the form of offers and questions in the text. If we use this to explore the power relations behind the interpersonal perspective of the text, we can see asymmetrical relations between the speaker and the receiver of the text. This is related to the formal position the sender holds as a law-enforcing authority.

The power relations of the language in the text clearly show action to maintain power, enhance impact and influence action. This is not hidden but clearly stated in the interpersonal semiotic actions.

When we look at the ideational perspectives in the text and compare the to the interpersonal perspective, we can see that the epistemic assumptions differ between the perspectives. While the textual ideation has strong connections to a social-constructive view of learning, the interpersonal perspective reflects a more fixed and behavioristic view. The chapter explains how teachers should use reflection, values, and sharing of perspectives to gain new knowledge and develop practice. This ambivalence is linked to the power relations behind the text and the asymmetric relations between the authorities and the receiver of the directives. It is also linked to the power relations of language; we can see power relations between the ideas represented in the text (how the schools should establish well-functioning professional environments) and the participants in the communication (authorities and teachers). The lack of coherence between the ideational representations in the text and the interpersonal communication can be linked to a well-known parenting strategy: *"Do as I tell you and not as I do!"*

Two narratives and a core curriculum

When we compare the two narratives, we can see expressions of values and principles. Stories are important sources of information about the person and the social and cultural context they are part of. In the discussion, we will see the stories as narratives that convey a point with a moral incision, like Coffey & Atkinson (1996, p. 63) use. We draw attention to messages about what leads to success or defeat in the face of the person's professional duties.

Both narratives tell stories about life-changing experiences as school leaders and are related to possibilities for action. The first narrative explains how the school leader experienced changing how a group of teachers viewed local curriculum work by involving the teachers in a process. In the second narrative, a teacher changed the way the speaker viewed the use of data from standardized tests. Both narratives are about building new knowledge through challenging each other's understanding and through shared reflection, but while the school leader in the first narrative is the inspiration and source for building new understanding, both for the teachers and for himself/herself, the school leader in the second narrative gets challenged and inspired by another person's narrative. Both speakers explain their narratives as life-changing for them as school leaders, but there is a difference between the first and the second narrative when it comes to initiating action. While the speaker in the first narrative initiated action herself/him and learned from the process, the speaker in the second narrative was a reflective participant in a reflection initiated by somebody else. The first speaker acted upon a challenge. The second speaker was

acted upon. Still, both speakers gained new knowledge and understanding from these experiences.

Both narratives can epistemically be related to a social-constructive perspective on learning. New knowledge and understanding are constructed through reflection, shared reflections, and cognitive dilemmas. Yet there is a difference between the epistemic assumptions in the two narratives. While the author of the first narrative describes the process of gaining a new understanding as a performative, practical, social, and constructive process, the author of the second narrative describes the process as a cognitive, constructive, social, and enlightening process. In the second narrative knowledge is out there to be found as well as constructed.

Both narratives describe processes that changed the way the school leaders viewed their assignment, their role, and their function as school leaders. The first narrative describes a dilemma, a choice, a solution, and an experience. The school leader experienced that boldness, effort, and engagement in what you believe in can be necessary to challenge the existing practice and the existing view of a phenomenon. The participants in the local curriculum project contributed and gained new understanding through the process in which they were involved. The school leader experienced that resistance and critical questions can function as reflections when they are framed and included in a developmental process. The leader's role seems to have changed through this process. In the beginning, there was a lack of trust and shared ambitions. At the end of the process, there was shared knowledge, new understanding, and shared ambitions. Both the speaker's position and the community power among the participants in the project became stronger. The speaker is sharing the narrative to enhance impact and influence action for the co-leaders at the conference. He/she is sharing a success story to inspire others to do the same.

The second narrative describes how the leader gained new knowledge and understanding by listening to a narrative about the use of student data. The narrative is about having fixed assumptions about national tests and then experiencing an eye-opening reflection. The school leader used to dislike standardized tests because he/she related them to the ranking of students and schools. The narrative about the way another school used the result data was an eye-opener for her/him. The sharing of this narrative with the other participants at the conference can be seen as an action to enhance impact and influence action on two levels: first, to inspire other leaders to look at the data from national standardized tests as a source to help students progress, and second, to relay to them the importance of reflection on your own assumptions to gain new and enriched understanding.

Both narratives offer information and perspective. They function interpersonally as offerings to the co-participants at the conference. The relations between the speakers and the co-participants are symmetric. There are statements of fact, but these statements are related to the speakers' understandings. The narratives offer information in a humble and reflective way to enhance impact and influence the other participants thinking about the phenomena. There is coherence between the ideational and the interpersonal perspectives in both the narratives.

When we compare the two narratives to chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum, we can see both differences and coherence in epistemic assumptions. We can see differences in semiotic actions, and we can see differences and coherence between the presentation of ideas and the exchange of views.

Within the ideational perspective, there is coherence in epistemic assumptions between the two narratives and chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum. They all emphasize a social-constructive approach to learning. The learning process is described as a process where we learn through shared reflections and the construction of new understandings. There are two exceptions to this dominating pattern: The second narrative also includes behavioristic assumptions and reflects ideas about the objective existence of knowledge. These assumptions are linked to the phrase, *"I saw the light"*. School development in chapter 3.5 is linked to setting target measures and realizing the school's purpose. These fixed knowledge assumptions can be related to evidence-based and behavioristic epistemic assumptions. Still, socio-constructive perspectives dominate all three texts.

When we compare the socio-constructive epistemic assumptions in the ideational perspective to the epistemic assumptions in the interpersonal perspective, the incoherence between the narratives and chapter 3.5 becomes clear. Within the interpersonal perspective of the core curriculum, semiotic actions are dominated by stating facts and giving orders. This indicates an asymmetric relation between the speaker and the receiver and suggests that knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon can be transferred from the speaker to the receiver. This differs from the epistemic assumptions communicated both in the representation in chapter 3.5 and also in the ideational and interpersonal perspectives within the two narratives. While we can see a clear dominance of the socio-constructive epistemic assumptions in both narratives and in the ideas communicated in chapter 3.5, the communication itself in chapter 3.5 differs and represents more fixed epistemic assumptions. The authorities are ordering the schools to develop professional learning environments where knowledge is gained through shared reflection on values, research, and empirical data:

> *"... everyone in the environment must reflect on the value choices and development needs, and use research, experience-based knowledge and ethical assessments as the grounds on which to base targeted measures. Well-developed structures for collaboration, support and guidance between colleagues and across schools promote a sharing and learning culture."*

This incoherence can be seen as a paradox and can be related to the schools' difficulties in establishing a democratic culture where not only the teachers have a mission to participate in professional learning communities but where the students have the same mission. Twenty-first century competencies emphasize an approach to learning where the aim is to create new knowledge and change the established hegemony. This is difficult to realize in processes where communication defines fixed understandings, facts are determined and there is little room for reflection. The relevant question to this paradox would be to what degree the interpersonal epistemic assumptions in chapter 3.5 influence the learning processes in the schools. The traditional approaches to teaching and learning in schools are fixed, authoritarian and behavioristic. The teacher shared his/her knowledge with the pupils. The pupils were enlightened by what they were taught. The present national curriculum in Norway communicates the ambition to change this way of learning, along with international trends and the need for the capacity to create new solutions in society. This is what is communicated through the ideas and representations in the core curriculum. The question is what effects interpersonal perspectives have on this attempted change. Will the orders and the stating of facts support the change process or function as a paradox and legitimize the authoritarian approach?

To try to get a clearer picture of the implications of framing professional reflective processes, we will discuss reflective practice as an approach to school development and use these theoretical perspectives in our reflections about the narratives and the core curriculum.

Reflective practice as school development

While reflective practice occupies a high level of acceptance and is generally well regarded, what it is and how it might be developed are more problematic. Åsvoll (2012) compares reflection as a cognitive-constructive process (ea. Piaget, 1953; Vygotsky, 1978) and reflection as an intuitive and social process (cf. Dreyfus et al., 1986, 2004) and argues that reflective intuition can be used to remedy shortcomings in teaching plans and help to create and resolve unpredictable issues. Weiss (2021) describes this self-forming dialogue as an unruly driving force that drives men's windows into individuation. The self-forming process *(paideia)* can lead to

practical wisdom *(fronesis)*. The discourse lies in the fact that it does not have to lead to practicing wisdom since the same force can also drift towards self-criticism and destructiveness. And it is at this moment that reflection is linked to actual professional practice as a positive force. Åsvoll (2012, p. 13) states that reflective intuition and cognitive reflection should be considered different aspects of reflection that can reinforce each other. Helskog (2019) has developed a methodical model with six dimensions for wisdom-oriented pedagogy. Dialogue is at the center of the six dimensions and connects the particular experience with the universal. The six dimensions are: (1) spiritual ideal, (2) existential emotional, (3) relational communicative, (4) cultural-historical, (5) practical-ethical, and (6) critical-analytical. Hansen links the model to wisdom development and argues that the model can inspire self-reflection but also function as an analytical framework in philosophical dialogues (Ibid., p. 46).

Lindseth (2017, 2020) uses the term *reflective practice research* to describe the learning process based on one's own thoughts and shared reflections as empirical resources. This can be linked to the discrepancy that occurs between professional practitioners and professional actions. In the discrepancy, teachers can research practical knowledge. Personal references and narratives are used as empirical sources to improve knowledge and gain new understanding. Practical knowledge differs from theoretical knowledge by being relevant and useful in real-life situations and enabling you to find ways through challenges and dilemmas.

Reflective practice, as a methodical approach to improving practice, is linked to the thoughts of John Dewey (1916, 1933) and further developed by Donald Schön (1987; 2017). While Dewey emphasized experience and reflection in the learning process, Schön extended "reflection in action" to "reflection in and on action" by arguing that tacit knowledge only becomes conscious knowledge when reflected upon. Kolb (1984), influenced by Dewey, developed a four-stage model for reflective practice: (1) find a concrete, real-world personal experience; (2) reflect on the experience by reviewing it and learning from it; (3) conceptualize the experience (concepts, elements, and themes); and (4) plan and try out new practices from what was learned. This leads to a new experience, which can again be reflected upon. The reflective cycle has been developed and renamed by numerous theorists, among them Baker et al.´s (2017) "active reflection in action learning cycles", Fergusson et al.´s (2018) "micro-reflecting circle" and Cooperrider et al.`s (1995) "Circle of appreciative inquiry". Appreciative Inquiry (ibid.) uses a systematic, proactive approach to reflective practice by focusing on desired change and the creation of visions. The proactive approach in appreciative inquiry can be linked to a

process of reflecting on one´s work and beliefs in the supportive/confrontational environment of one´s peers for the purpose of gaining new insight and self-formation in professional communities. Reflection on practice is linked to both the individual's insight and the peer community´s insight and learning. In the discussion resumed about military leaders` practices (in chapter 4), Bergh uses these words: "As leaders, we should rather strive to liberate the hearts and minds". Appreciating individual understanding, insight, and knowledge as part of the learning processes of the community is a mutual need relationship when reflecting on the profession's values in actions.

The participants at the school leaders conference used a model influenced by Cooperrider's "Circle of appreciative inquiry" adjusted to fit the regulations in the core curriculum in Norway. This model was developed by the authors in cooperation with school leaders in six municipalities two years earlier and named "Triangulated Analysis Model" (TAM). The focus area in this model is to triangulate reflections over rich data (narratives and understandings) together with existing big data (results from national tests, exams, and surveys) to understand and develop practice.

Even though the aim of the process is fixed through the regulations in the core curriculum, the content of the reflections and the outcome from the reflection processes are open-ended. The engagement and the reflections at the school leaders conference suggest that the regulation of reflective practice can frame and support reflective processes. The narratives and the participants' reflections on the narratives show that methods for reflective practice can lead to engagement, change, and new understanding. Even though the core curriculum states that reflection is a key part of being competent and should be a part of the learning culture for both students and the professional learning communities, the content of the reflections and the reflection methods are open. In this combination of state-regulated and locally developed solutions, understanding reflective processes and methods is crucial – not only to access reflective processes but also to understand the processes and integrate them into the learning processes.

Reflection on the use of reflections as school development

In this study, we have researched and reflected on how reflective practice can be realized through dialogs in phases. We called this a model or a method for including data collection and triangulation of data as research elements in the reflective process about what's at stake in schools. We have used two narratives and chapter 3.5 in the core curriculum to better understand how school leaders can triangulate data to create new

understandings of phenomena. A perceived mandate for teachers is to be able to reflect on experiences, assess them, and further develop practices based on reflexive judgment. The reflections show emphasis on socio-constructive epistemic assumptions both in the narratives and in the values for actions in professional learning communities. However, the reflections also show deviating aspects from these dominating features. These are related to the interpersonal epistemic assumptions, which again led to reflections on the consequences of these semantic actions within the core curriculum.

The narratives show that creating new knowledge through shared reflections is an important aspect of school leadership for the school leaders. Both narratives emphasize a social-constructive and democratic approach to developmental work, both within the ideational perspective and within the interpersonal perspective. When we link these reflections to the phase model, we see that the narratives are used to define proactive research questions and as data to describe the current situation. Reflection and analysis of data are used to develop specific aims, implement measures, and, when the time comes, evaluate change. The participants reflect on action throughout the process but focus on one phase at a time. Narratives and reflection on narratives in relation to other data are essential in these processes to establish understanding.

While reflective practice is associated with creating meaning about your own practice to develop and grow as a professional, research-based reflective practice can serve as a method to develop practice in professional learning communities. The phase for dialogs can support these processes. The interface between the reflective practice in the narratives and the collected and triangulated data in the principles for professional learning community work in the national curriculum in Norway shows that we can use reflective practice in these processes and gain new perspectives. Both reflective practice and research-based development are stated as important aspects of establishing a learning organization. These two aspects can be combined, and then the dialogs get steps or a design for the reflection and learning process and fulfill the principles for reflective development in the curriculum in a more authentic way. Our participants used narratives to share reflections about themselves as school leaders and used the reflections when they described desired solutions and set aims.

By enriching the evidence-based perspective on school development with a broader picture, a more practical picture, and a more flexible and relevant picture of what is at stake in the schools, the reflections, the measures, the aims, and the actions in the school development process can become more relevant and meaningful. Reflection can be a source of

cognitive and emotional growth as well as a source of practical knowledge about how to live and practice, and a source of wisdom.

References

Baker, Shayne, Cathcart, Malcom & Peach, Neil (2017). *Work based learning as a conduit to business creativity in Australia.* In Averta 2017 final program and abstract book (p. 36).

Czarniawska, Barbara (2006). *A Golden Braid: Allport, Goffman, Weick.* Organization studies Volume 27, Issue 11. Sage Journals. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606068344

Coffey, Amanda & Atkinson, Paul (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Cooperrider, David L., Barrett, Frank & Srivastva, Suresh (1995). *Social Construction and Appreciative Inquiry: A Journey in Organizational Theory.* In Dian Marie Hosking, Peter Dachler, & Kenneth Gergen (Eds.), *Management and Organization: Relational Alternatives to Individualism* (pp. 157-200). Aldershot, UK: Avebury Pres

Dale, Erling Lars, Engelsen, Britt Ulstrup & Karseth, Berit (2011). *Sluttrapport: Kunnskapsløftets intensjoner, forutsetninger og operasjonaliseringer: En analyse av en læreplanreform.* University in i Oslo, educational research institute

Dewey, John (1933). *How we think. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*. D.C. Heath.

Dewey, John (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.* Macmillan.

Dreyfus, Hubert & Dreyfus, Stuart E. (2004). *Mesterlære og eksperters læring (Apprenticeship and experts' learning).* In Klaus Nielsen & Steinar Kvale (Eds.), Mesterlære – Læring som sosial praksis (Apprenticeship-learning as social practice) (pp. 52–69). Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.

Dreyfus, Hubert & Dreyfus, Stuart E. (1986). *Mind over machine. The power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer.* The Free Press.

Fairclough, Norman (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

Fergusson, Lee, Allred, Tim, Dux, Troy & Muianga, Hugo (2018). *Work-based learning and research for midcareer professionals: Two project examples from Australia.* Interdisciplinary Journal of E-skills and Lifelong Learning, 14 (1), 19–40.

Foucault, Michel (1966). *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the human sciences (1st ed.).* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315660301

Halliday, Michael Alexander Kirkwood (1998). *Språkets funksjoner*. I Kjell Lars Berge, Patrick Coppock & Eva Maagerø (Red.), *Å skape mening med språk.* Landslaget for norskundervisning (LNU) Cappelen Akademisk forlag.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: the social interpretation of language and meaning.* Edward Arnold.

Helskog, Guro Hansen (2019). *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*. Routledge.

Hodgson, Janet, Rønning, Wenche & Skogvold, Anne Sofie & Tomlinson, Peter (2012). *Sammenhengen mellom undervisning og læring.* NF-rapport nr. 4/2012.

Kolb, David A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as a source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.

Kunnskapsdepartementet (2017). *Overordnet del – verdier og prinsipper for grunnopplæringen.* Fastsatt ved forskrift. Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet 2020.

Lindseth, Anders (2020). *Dosenten i et FoU-perspektiv. Refleksiv praksisforskning som en vei mot dosentkompetanse*. I Carl Christian Bachke & Mads Hermansen (Red.), *Å satse på dosenter. Et utviklingsarbeid* (Kap. 4, s. 75–101). Cappelen Damm Akademisk. https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.109.ch4

Lindseth, Anders (2017). *Refleksiv praksisforskning*. I Catrine Torbjørnsen Halås, Kari Steinsvik& Ingjerd Gåre Kymre (Red.), *Humanistiske forskningstilnærminger til profesjonspraksis* (s. 243–260). Gyldendal Akademisk.

Piaget, Jean (1953). *The origin of intelligence in the child*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Schön, Donald A. (2017). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Routledge.

Schön, Donald A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*. Jossey-Bass

Vygotsky, Lev S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* MA: Harvard University Press.

Walsh, Steve & Mann, Steve (2015). *Doing reflective practice: A data-led way forward*. ELT Journal, 69(4), 351–362.

Weiss, Michael Noah (2021). *Daimonic Dialogues. Philosophical Practice and Self-Formation. A Research Report on a Series of Philosophical Guided Imageries Carried out at a Norwegian Folk High School.* Vienna: LIT publishing.

Aasen, Petter, Møller, Jorunn, Rye, E., Ottesen, Eli, Prøitz, Tine S. og Hertzberg. Frøydis (2012). *Kunnskapsløftet som styringsreform – et løft eller et løfte?* Forvaltningsnivåenes og institusjonenes rolle i implementeringen av reformen. NIFU Rapport 20/2012. NIFU.

Åsvoll, Håvard (2012). *Perspectives on reflection and intuition in teacher practice: A comparison and possible integration of the cognitive constructivist and the Dreyfusian intuitive perspectives.* Reflective Practice, 13(6), 789–804.