Johan Lövgren, Lasse Sonne,
Michael Noah Weiss (Eds.)

New Challenges New Learning New Possibilities

Proceedings from the 9th Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning

Folk High School Research

LIT

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Edited by

Johan Lövgren
(University of South-Eastern Norway)

Volume 2

LIT

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning

By Johan Lövgren, Lasse Sonne and
Anne Cathrine Hogsnes Asplin

Introduction

The 9th Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning (NAEL) was conducted on 18-20 May 2022 in Vestfold, Norway, at the University of South-Eastern Norway, Campus Vestfold, and Quality Hotel Tønsberg. The theme of the conference was "New Challenges, New Learning, New Possibilities".

The conference theme was seen as a reflection of the new challenges that have characterized the three years since the last NAEL conference. The pandemic-initiated escalation of unemployment and its parallel economic recession had brought about an urgent demand for new learning. The continual transformation of informational structures and online media was challenging the framework for democratic dialogue that had long been a prominent feature of Nordic adult education. At the same time, the increasing climate changes were calling for a green transition with entrepreneurial initiatives promoting a sustainable labor market.

These developments were examples of an accentuated need for essential aspects of adult education and learning, such as the continued development of skills and competences, empowerment, and democratic involvement.

The 9th NAEL conference was organized to constitute a meeting place for researchers where they could engage in dialogue with policy makers, organizational leaders and practitioners on how adult education can turn these challenges into new opportunities. The program had a focus on the ways in which adult education could stimulate new learning to solve the dilemmas facing society, organizations, and individuals. Speakers, plenary debates, and paper sessions discussed the transformation, reinvention, and reframing needed for adult education to promote societies where new possibilities are generated. The conference program incorporated a wide variety of local as well as national and international educational projects on

adult learning. Group sessions, symposia and plenary debates were interspersed with internationally renowned key speakers representing the variety of learning connected to adult education.

This introductory chapter presents a selection of the presentations and dialogues that were a part of NAEL 2022. The following short introduction gives an overview of keynotes, plenum sessions, symposia and roundtables held at the conference. The text in this chapter is based on the presenters introductions to the sessions and will therefore vary in language forms and textual style.

1. Keynotes

In the initial section the main speakers at the conference are presented with a short introduction to the topics the addressed:

Michael Osborne

"Research Lifelong Learning: then and now"

Osborne is Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning and Director of Research, School of Education at the University of Glasgow. In his presentation, Osborne reflected on 25 years as a director of two research centres in the field of adult and lifelong learning: the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning and the Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning. He connected this experience to key research questions with regard to social inclusion, economic development, and the role of information and communications technology. His keynote showed how these resonate with the major imperatives of contemporary society.

Walter Omar Kohan

"Educating, between the impossible and the possible"

Kohan is Professor at the State University of Rio de Janeiro and a senior researcher of the National Council of Scientific and Technological Development and of the Foundation of support of research of the State of Rio de Janeiro. His research is mainly concerned with the theme of childhood and curiosity, combined with an interest in critical education perspectives and the tradition of Paulo Freire. Kohan opened the conference with an untraditional lecture challenging participants through a thought-provoking philosophical keynote on the theme of beginnings. Differentiating between aspects of beginnings, going back and forth in time, Kohan illustrated, both in words and action how learning means new beginnings.

Audrey Osler

"Local and global challenges to human rights and democracy: an agenda for adult education"

Ausler is Professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway and Editor-in-Chief for Human Rights Education Review. In her keynote "Local and global challenges to human rights and democracy: an agenda for adult education" she referred to her own research and publications, addressing education, migration, children's rights, citizenship, and the role of life histories in research, as well as her expertise in working for reconciliation in post-conflict settings. She connected her research on socio-political aspects of education and human rights and citizenship to the conference theme of Nordic adult education.

Mie Buhl

"Future possibilities for adult education"

Buhl is Professor at Aalborg University connected to the Department of Communication and Psychology, the Faculty of Humanities, Kommunikation - IT and Læringsdesign, ILD-LAB – Research lab for IT and Learning. In her presentation, Buhl asked how the Nordic countries may meet future opportunities for adult education considering recent developments of digitalization of society. The increasing digitization in the Nordic countries changes everyday life for the citizens, such as doing one's own bank affairs, contacting the health system and communicating with public services. It also changes the communication practices that are actors in democratic participation and increasingly unfolds on social media which give the access to engage in political debate. The presentation draws on insights from Buhl's research in IT and learning from the past five years and from a recently finished project*: The role of lifelong learning in the digital transformation*, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Sveinung Skule

"Norway's policy on lifelong learning and work life participation for adults"

Skule serves as Director of the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. He held an introduction to the second day's NAEL dialogue where he reflected on how Norway and Nordic countries can build a sustainable skills policy for adult education and learning - prolonging education and educational training for societal transformation and sustainability. Skule

showed examples from Norwegian educational sector and labor market and connected the analysis to international cooperation and participation.

2. NAEL dialogue – plenum session

In addition to the keynotes, the conference programme included plenum sessions entitled NAEL dialogues. These dialogues were hosted by a member of the local committee who for each session invited a pannel of key actors in adult education and learning. This introductory chapter presents an overview of the first NAEL dialogue that addressed the question: "What does adult education intend to achieve and for whom?"

Moderators for the first NAEL dialogue were Shalini Singh and Lasse Sonne. The panel consisted of Michael Osborne, Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning, University of Glasgow; Sveinung Skule, Director, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills; Arvid Ellingsen, Special Advisor, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO); Tord Hauge, Advisor of Competencies and Education, Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO); and Trond Haga, Senior Manager, Aker Solution Stord.

Here are some examples of the questions discussed by the panel:

1. What does adult education intend to achieve and for whom?
2. For whom should adult education be offered?
3. A society's stability is dependent on different areas such as economic development, political development with democratic development and citizenship, and social development with development of values and attitudes. Which should be most important area to focus on when we develop goals for lifelong learning, and with that, adult education, and learning?
4. A division in education often goes between forming an individual for democratic citizenship, on one hand, and develop the individual's usefulness or competencies relevant for the labor market on the other. What should be most important in the formulation of a strategy for lifelong learning and education? Citizenship or usefulness for the industry/economic development?
5. Who should finance adult education and learning? The labor market with its organizations or the society/government? Why?
6. Continuing the theme: how should adult education and learning be organized? Who should be in charge/responsible for the development?
7. Transnational organizations such as the OECD, the EU and the Nordic Council of Ministers have strategies for lifelong learning. The competence areas are divided into knowledge and understanding,

skills and attitudes and values. Which of these 3 areas do you find most important to develop our societies? Why?

8. If we talk about a balance between the 3 areas above. How should the balance in adult education and learning be? What is most important? Why?
9. Should the labor market be charged with the responsibility to develop democracy, or should the responsibility be placed in another part of society, for example the government?
10. The OECD and the EU, together with other transnational organizations, already have strategies for lifelong learning. What do you think about these strategies? Are they well-developed or should they become further developed? Why?
11. How do these strategies suit a Scandinavian country like Norway and a country like Scotland, etc.? What are the most challenging aspects regarding implementation of the strategies?
12. What have we learnt from the war in Ukraine regarding the need for competencies? How are this reflected if we divide competence development into knowledge and understanding, skills, and attitudes and values? Should we acknowledge that, for example, values and attitudes are more important for our society than we thought?
    a. Who should finance the development of values, for example?
13. Do we have a Nordic model of adult education and learning? Are there differences between a Nordic approach compared to a UK-approach and European/Western approach?
    a. You are welcome to use examples from your own country.
14. In conclusion, what do you think should be the purpose of adult education and learning? Who should education and learning be for? Why?

Members of the panel in this first NAEL dialogue represented central economic or industrial interests in the Norwegian economy as well as leaders from workers' unions. Though these spoke on behalf of opposing interest groups in the labor market they agreed that adult education and learning must be seen as an important component in the development of economic growth. The participants in the panel connected this focus on adult education to a Nordic model of adult education and learning.

According to the panel, all actors in society had a responsibility for the development of democracy and good life for its citizen. The plenum session concluded that industrial development must be followed up by adult education with a stronger focus on "soft skills".

3. Symposia

Of the 54 papers that were presented at NAEL 2022, 24 were organized in the framework of a symposium or a roundtable. The following two sections will start by presenting the four symposia of the conference, followed by an introduction to the five roundtables. Each symposium session was proposed to the planning committee by an organizer and the presented papers focused on a common theme. Three of the four symposia at NAEL 2022 were organized around 2-5 papers presented at one single session. The exception was symposium 1 that held 9 paper presentations spread over 3 sessions, one in each of the three days of the conference.

Symposium 1

Challenges, Possibilities and New Learning of Adults: Insights from Science, Profession, Policy, and Practice

The symposium, organized by Lasse Sonne, University of South-Eastern Norway, was chaired by Shalini Singh, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya (USTM), India; Søren Ehlers, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya (USTM), India; and Tine Fristrup, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark.

The purpose of the symposium was to discuss societal challenges regarding economic development, green development, diversity, and democratic dialogue that entailed a continual transformation of society's institutions, organizations, and individuals. Furthermore, it was to discuss the increasing demand for sustainability that calls for an economic, social, and environment-friendly transition with innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives that promote a sustainable labor market. In addition, it was to discuss the societal challenges that also generate new possibilities for societal development and thus for new adult education and learning.

The symposium analyzed, discussed, and answered the following research questions:

> What are the relevant societal challenges?
>
> What possibilities are generated from these changes?
>
> How might (or should) new adult education and learning develop because of the challenges and possibilities?

In the symposium, adult education and learning departed from a model focusing on interactions between science, profession, policy, and practice embedded in adult education and learning (Ehlers, 2019). The approach was life-wide, meaning the symposia had a focus on formal, non-formal

and informal learning and the interactions between all three learning dimensions (Sonne & Banik, 2021). Through the analyses and discussions at the symposium, the need for essential aspects of adult education and learning was accentuated, such as the continued development of skills, values, attitudes, knowledge, competencies, empowerment, and democratic involvement. At the symposium, researchers from different countries were involved, along with practitioners and students engaged in adult education and learning. Accordingly, the symposium discussed new models for the transformation, reinvention, and reframing needed for adult education and learning to promote societies where new opportunities are generated through adult education and learning.

The goals of the symposium included development of new understandings about 1) societal challenges, their effect on adult education and learning today in the areas of science, profession, policy, and practice; and in the interactions between the four; 2) new possibilities generated by these challenges for adult education and learning; 3) predictions about how new learning is most likely to develop because of the challenges and possibilities in the area.

The contributors to the symposium were the following, with titles of their research papers:

> Tine Fristrup. "Challenges, Possibilities and New Learning of Adults: Insights from Science, Profession, Policy, and Practice. Addressing normativity and ableism in adult education".
>
> Shalini Singh & Søren Ehlers. "Challenging The Matthew Effect through Individual Learning Accounts. A Comparative Study from Denmark and France".
>
> Shalini Singh. "Resource Mobilization for Lifelong Learning under the Sustainability Framework: Policy Recommendations from the OECD, the World Bank, the ILO, and the UNESCO".
>
> Lasse Sonne, Anna Hansen, Vibeke Kieding Banik, Gustav Wollentz & Martin Brandt Djupdræt. "Development, Test, and Evaluation of New Continuing Education for Museum Staff in Scandinavia.
>
> Results from the Nordplus Adult project 'Increased Learning through Social Spaces'."
>
> Marit Bøe & Elsa Kristiansen. "Early childhood education (ECE) leaders new work demands and use of case method in adult learning".

Anita Wiklund Norli & Lene Kristin Liabø. "How to prepare young people for further studies and lifelong learning? Challenges and opportunities in new curricula for upper secondary school".

Peter Grepperud. "Escape games as a didactic tool in adult education and learning".

Andreas Grinde. "Experiences from practice in adult learning: extra challenges and different opportunities as a teacher under education".

Eirik Josephsen. "Do we need more specific teaching plans for adult education? An insight in today's challenges and possibilities in education for foreign adults".

Lasse Sonne. "Why teach history for adults? Trends in history teacher education from a national discipline to diversity, cross-cutting themes and learning outcomes".

Symposium 2

The Nordic folk high school teacher

A research anthology from

Network for Research on the Nordic Folk high school teacher

Chair: Johan Lövgren

Contributors:

Hedda Berntsen and Arve Amsrud presented Chapter 7 from the anthology: "The need supportive folk high school teacher: Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness" by Lövgren, Berntsen and Amsrud.

Filippa Millenberg presented Chapter 11 from the anthology: "Freedom with reservations: The work of the Swedish folk high school teacher" by Andersson, Millenberg and Österborg Wiklund.

Michael Weiss presented Chapter 12 from the anthology: "How can research foster folk high school pedagogy?" by Weiss.

The symposium presented the results from a project initiated by Network for Research on the Nordic Folk High Schools. The anthology "The Nordic folk high school teacher" (Lövgren et.al. 2023). The anthology presents the Nordic folk high school teacher through thirteen research articles combined under three themes: identity, work, and education, each

part capped by overarching summary chapters. The chapters in the anthology are written by a team of 21 authors presenting research from each of the five countries in the Nordic region.

The folk high school teachers represent the schools' identity, and in their work a 175-year old tradition is confronted with new realities and forced to adapt to new challenges.

The folk high schools are given a central role in the democratic development of the Nordic region and are described as a significant influence on adult education globally, but there have been few regional research projects describing the schools. The inclusion of research covering five Nordic countries in a peer reviewed anthology makes this publication a unique portrayal, both of the schools' common identity and their national variations.

> The book is divided into three main sections, representing the three themes of the identity, work, and education of the Nordic folk high school teacher. In each section, the national chapters are followed by two chapters presenting an analysis of the material presented in the chapters:
>
> Theme 1. The identity of the folk high school teacher
> Develops who the folk high school teachers are, their background, and self-understanding. The first theme also addresses the teachers' view of the folk high school movement, its aim and identity. We ask if there are values that are shared by the Nordic folk high school teachers. Iceland contributes one chapter on this theme.
>
> Theme 2. The work of the folk high school teacher
> Analyses the pedagogical practice of the folk high school teacher, what characteristics can be seen in the work of the folk high school teachers and how their self-understanding is implemented in their teaching.
>
> Theme 3. The education of the folk high school teacher
> The third theme focuses on the initial and continuing education and training that are offered the folk high school teachers in the different countries. How do these programmes mirror the identity of the national folk high school movement?

The material for the publication of "The Nordic folk high school teacher" were further revised and analysed. After a process of peer review the anthology was published in 2023 and the book is available in open access online (see the references at the end of this chapter

Symposium 3

Sosial innovation in practice: Adult learners and sustainable meeting places

The aim of the symposium was to reflect upon challenges and possibilities that Covid 19 presented and to ask what lessons were learned from the pandemic.

Chair: Marianne Sempler, innovative pedagogue Ped Data AS

Outline of the theme:

The Nordic welfare model is challenged – Societies, institutions and organizations face complex welfare problems - The challenges call for creative solutions.

New solutions demand Co-creation, involving a diversity of stakeholders across silos and sectors:

Service providers and users - Researchers and practioners – Adult learners and adult educators.

The session followed the journey and experiences gained and theories and research used to explore: Arranging and facilitating small and big arenas for co-creation and innovation.

Training facilitators of Co-creation through courses and Facilitation practice – both in real life and online.

“Transformative Learning Circles” as drivers and support for development work.

Different tools and methods to empower adult learners to effectively collaborate with all actors in the system.

Finally, the platform “Sustainable meeting places” was presented as a strategy for meeting new challenges and discover new possibilities within the field of adult learning.

Contributors:

Marianne Sempler, innovative pedagogue and founder of Ped Data. Worked with adult learning for 30 years, have a Master’s degree in adult education and have contributed in several development projects for NVL.

Svein Are Tjeldnes, facilitator and design thinker at UiT The Arctic University of Norway. Co-founder of Anspor AS.

Ped Data and Anspor have an ongoing collaboration through developing the platform “Sustainable Meeting Places”.

Symposium 4

Tripart cooperation for competence and development in social, and working life

Chair: Anne Solsvik

Industry program – the parties' role in the development of continuing and continuing education that meets the needs of working life. Tord Hauge, adviser on skills and education at NHO, presented the industry program as a skills policy initiative (background, challenges, goals and examples of results), and gave an overview of the entire portfolio of three-party industry programs in Norway.

With the Stord model as a starting point for the Industrial Vocational School, by senior manager Trond Haga, Akers Solutions Stord. Haga presented the Stord model and talked about his experiences with the Industrial Vocational School. Four local core companies have collaborated with the Vocational School in Hordaland on the development and testing of several vocational school modules that strengthen the skills of skilled workers. Over 150 employees have completed the training. Haga told about the process. What has been done and why - and what are the results so far?

Youth and familiarity with working life and the Nordic model. It takes a long time to build up an institution like the Nordic model, but it can collapse in a short time. Results of a survey carried out by LO indicate that young people in Norwegian society have developed a distance to what the Norwegians would call "working life". Arvid Ellingsen, special adviser at the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, presented the results of this survey and reflected on what is needed to take care of the Nordic model.

4. Roundtables

While a symposium is composed mainly of presentations of research either on-going or concluded, roundtables are a forum for the presentation and discussion of developmental work and research plans. Roundtable sessions are intended for focused discussions of research in progress, practitioner experiences, educational development initiatives, and issues concerning institutional effectiveness and improvement.

Roundtable 1

A renaissance of research on popular education?

Moderator: Petri Salo, Professor in adult education, Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

> This roundtable engaged both Nordic researchers in the field of popular education as well as representatives from Nordic popular education organizations to address the following questions:
>
> How can the contemporary status of research on Nordic popular education be characterized?
>
> Which areas are being researched and what themes are addressed?
>
> How is research on popular education coordinated and organized in the various Nordic countries?
>
> How could the research respond to the growing international interest regarding Nordic Bildung and the Nordic tradition of popular education?
>
> What are the challenges and opportunities for the development of research on Nordic popular education?

The aim was to discuss the contemporary and future development of research concerning Nordic popular education. The term refers to the broad and versatile tradition of non-formal adult education manifested in institutions such as folk high schools, in study associations with established forms of collaborative learning, such as study circles, and in various forms of non-formal and spontaneous learning in associations and cultural activities. The organizers referred to a growing international interest in this tradition. This has led to a discussion where ideals of Bildung and popular education are seen as an appealing alternative to the neoliberal instrumental economic perspective on knowledge and education. The organizer would ask if this this growing international interest points towards a renaissance for research on Nordic popular education.

Contributors

Annika Pastuhov, Postdoctoral researcher, Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

Henrik Nordvall, Professor in adult education research, director of Mimer, Linköping University, Sweden.

Johan Lövgren, Associate Professor, University of South-Eastern Norway, Norway.

Kukka-Maaria Vuorikoski Educational Specialist at Opintokeskukset- the National Association of Study Centres, Finland.

Henriette Sønderskov Bjerrum, Director of The Danish Institute for Non-Formal Education (Vifo), Denmark.

Roundtable 2

Development of educational models for sustainable development lifestyles

Moderator: Tove Holm

According to the strategy for the Nordic countries by the Nordic Council of Ministers:

”education, innovation and research are the foundation for the future.”

The focus of this roundtable was to share and discuss piloted methodologies and praxis done in different educational institutions, which support the development towards the normalization of a more sustainable lifestyle. These will be developed in a project that the network for sustainable development at the Nordic Network for Adult Learning is launching. The purpose is to grasp the lifestyles, influence organizations, cultures, and attitudes – from the individual to the systemic level.

The goal of the project is to contribute to creating a holistic and sustainable organization that involves all stakeholders: leaders, teachers, and students/participants. The project includes three educational institutions and two researchers that can apply for participating through an open call between March 21st and April 24th. The participating educational institutions and researchers will be chosen within April. The participants in this roundtable will be engaged through an invitation to share successful methodologies/praxis for/as/in sustainable lifestyles. Discussions will focus on how individual contribution vs. systemic change is addressed in the methods.

The roundtable was facilitated by members of the network for sustainable development at the Nordic Network for Adult learning.

Dr. Tove Holm from Finland, transdisciplinary facilitator for sustainable development at Tove Holm Consulting.

Henrika Nordin from Finland, executive manager at Bildningsalliansen - non-formal adult education in Swedish in Finland.

Miriam Sannum from Sweden, business developer at Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan.

Roundtable 3

Development and learning in a Nordic co-created process between education, research and workplaces

Moderator Maria Marquard

Is there a specific Nordic dimension in this way of organizing learning and competence development and if so, what possible impact might it have on the process? These questions were discussed in both projects and will be an underlying part of the presentations. The presentations have three main perspectives:

> An organizational level. Prerequisites, opportunities and challenges framing and organizing a cocreated cross-national, cross-functional process. How to bridge between partners' and participants' different understandings and needs - required to maintain the common overall project goal, and an open experimenting attitude as a basis for mutual inspiration and learning between research, learning and workplace.
>
> The learning process. A co-created, flexible and practice-close learning requires learning on several levels simultaneously, e.g. "to learn on and with", "to be in a present in and reflect on" the ongoing process. Perspectives and characteristics in the learning process are presented and discussed.
>
> The digital transformation required extra flexibility, new working platforms, methods etc. The impact of this transformation will be presented.

Contributors

Ulrik Brandi, Research program leader at Aarhus University

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Lars Bengtsson, Professor at Innovation Engineering. Lund University

Maria M. Jönsson, Learning and Development Manager at *Husqvarna*

Daniella T. Hansen & Søren L. Jørgensen, National Knowledge Center for E-learning.

Roundtable 4

Development and learning process in a Nordic co-created model depending on participant responsibility

Moderator: Hans Mikkelsen, Organisational Learning Facilitator

Is there a specific Nordic dimension in this way of planning and implementing learning and competence development and if so, what possible impact might it have on the process and outcome? These questions were discussed and were an underlying part of the presentations. The presentations had three main perspectives:

> Facilitation and the facilitator role. Prerequisites opportunities and challenges facilitating an innovative Nordic experimenting and multilevel learning process, which rely genuinely on the participants' responsibility for the content. A process, which can be challenging even to a level where outcomes of such practices are reduced. How to support needed facilitator/developer competences such as courage to remain in an unpredictable and open learning room, not give advice and answers, make yourself less important, less steering and at the same time take responsibility for framing the process.
>
> Implementation in own practice. In the projects, the outcome related to observable changes in behavior, actions, and new ways of thinking, working and creating problem solutions. Results in the form of new innovative approaches to daily work and prerequisites for a successful implementation.
>
> Implementation of new ideas in own practice, in order to promote sustainable solutions and practices. The Nordic approach will be an explicit part of the pedagogical as well as the facilitation considerations.
>
> The digital transformation required extra flexibility, new working platforms, new methods etc. Specific pedagogical and didactical considerations and working methods are necessary for the success of cocreated digital learning.

Contributors

Stine Hjortshøj Lajer, Lecturer, and Fredrik Seistrup, Senior Lecturer, International Business Academy, IBA Erhvervsakademi Kolding.

Christer Ferm, consultant, PLU Partners AB.

Ingegerd Green, CEO at Skärteknikcentrum Sverige.

Jenny Lennhammar, Democracy strategist, Region Gotland.

Marie Kirstejn Aakjær, PhD, Associate Professor, Center for Research and Development, University college Absalon **and/or** Charlotte Wegener**,** Associate Professor at Aalborg University.

Daniella Tasic Hansen, special consultant **and/or** Søren L. Jørgensen, educational consultant, National Knowledge Center for E-learning.

Ulrik Brandi, Research program leader at Aarhus University.

Roundtable 5

Developing new practices that leads to digital empowerment of adult learners as competent, creative and critical co-creative participants in a sustainable societal change

Moderator: Mie Buhl

Contributors:

Maria Hvid Bech Dille, Aalborg University

Asbjørn Kårstein, Handelshøgskolen Innlandet

The Nordic Council of Ministers decided to support a project "Lifelong learning's role in the digital transformation and digital inclusion 2020-2021", that reached out to the citizens who are difficult to reach and who are at the same time participants in a civil society that is increasingly being digitized. The project was conducted in close collaboration between the NVL digital network and researchers from Aalborg University and Handelshøgskolen Innlandet. The overall goal of the project is to facilitate higher digital competencies among the population and increased digital participation in the Nordic region, as well as providing policy recommendations for Nordic co-operation and the Nordic countries to achieve this goal.

The aim of this roundtable is to:

- Identify current Nordic challenges and contribute to common Nordic solutions to support learning for everyone and development of adults' digital competences in working life and in citizenship.
- Recommendations for increasing digital competences and digital participation.

We posed the following research question:

1. How can adult learning projects and initiatives contribute to digital inclusion through developing new practices that lead to digital empowerment of adult citizens as competent, creative and critical co-creative participants in a sustainable societal change?
   1.A. How can excluded groups and hard to reach learners be reached and motivated for learning in a digital society?
   1.B. How can new adult learning practices promote and improve digital competences among adults for comprehension and critical use of digital services and tools?

The research design draws on a design-based research (DBR) approach, which involves stakeholder collaboration (citizens, institutions) about problem setting, problem solving, testing of designs for solution.

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Chapter 2

Research Lifelong Learning: then and now

By Professor Michael Osborne

Keynote at NAEL 2022

Thank you for honouring me with this invitation to address your conference. We are very close neighbours in Scotland, and once there was talk of an arc of prosperity that ran from Finland to Ireland across the north of Europe.

Then there was the great financial crisis and meltdown of the economy in Iceland and Ireland, and then we began to hear less of our Nordic future. And then there was Brexit that Scotland voted overwhelmingly against. No surprise then that there is still regular talk of Scotland joining the Nordic Council and who knows there may be another independence referendum that will move the nation closer even to you. Scotland would certainly be a friendlier neighbour than one of those you have to the east.

So Russia and Brexit, and this is only the first few minutes of my speech. What else could go wrong in the world? I've just remembered – almost two and a half years of one of the **worst pandemics** we have experienced. I'll say something more about that a little later.

But just for now, if there has been one thing that was positive about COVID-19, it was that it allowed us a bit of time to reflect.

One of my reflections was to consider the work of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, of which I was a co-director. I reflected also on its work because its founding co-director was Jim Gallacher, who died in October 2020. Some of you may have seen a tribute to him that I wrote shortly afterwards – he was a leading figure in developing a research agenda for lifelong learning.

So with time on my hands, I thought that I should reflect our work together. In particular, I thought to myself that I'd take a look at the proceedings of our five international conferences, our Scottish Forums on Lifelong, our Briefing Papers on Lifelong Learning, and the many books and academic papers we had produced. There is a wealth of material, but a few problems arose:

- Lockdown meant that I couldn't get into my office
- The laptop where I had kept a lot of historic material was stolen from my office many years before – needless to say I hadn't backed up properly
- Surely our excellent administrator of CRLL had safely created an archive in a shared drive before she moved on? Yes, but no-one could locate it at our former partner university.
- Surely Richard Edwards who was a key figure In CRLL would have the material – Richard many of you know I'm sure. A very tidy mind – he's retired and enjoying the wonders of Vancouver Island, but with no excess baggage. His laptop wasn't stolen – he just deleted everything and went trekking and skiing.

And so it went on – absolutely no-one associated with the centre had kept electronic copies.

I found a few things on a legacy website, but mainly had to wait until I could get access to my office again, and retrieve hard copies.

Well, that's the end of the shaggy elk story – that's the correct expression here isn't it? (a Raggete elg)

My purpose in looking for this material was principally to think about the research agenda for lifelong learning. So with the miracles of modern technology, (which in this case was to take photos, convert jpgs to pdf to word) here is the research agenda of CRLL.[1] In our very first Briefing Paper (Osborne, Gallacher and Cloonan 1998), we set an agenda in three parts:

- Social Inclusion
- Economic Issues
- ICT

And we posed a series of questions in each of these areas.

Social inclusion

The questions relating to social inclusion were as follows:

[1] The genesis of CRLL and its relevance for today is dealt with in more detail in Osborne, M., Edwards, R. and Mayes, T. (2023) Relations in learning and research: the case of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning. In: Parry, G., Osborne, M. and Scott, P. (eds.) *Access, Lifelong Learning and Education for All*. Series: Palgrave studies in adult education and lifelong learning. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, pp. 325-348., a chapter in a book honour of that late Professor Jim Gallacher

- How do the major influences on participation (national financial policy, regional and local economic factors, institutional policies and individual factors) interact?
- To what extent have the various initiatives of Government and its agencies affected participation in Lifelong Learning?
- Who participates in Lifelong Learning, who does not, and why?
- What outreach initiatives are the most successful?
- What sorts of "learning careers" are adults negotiating through the post-compulsory system, and to what extent are these a function of circumstance and opportunity?
- How would a multi-agency approach make a difference to participation?
- What are the benefits of participation?
- What is known of local and national labour market needs?
- Is there a knowledge of local community education needs?

It is not a surprise that the topic of social inclusion was a high priority. We have just in the UK had the results of the quality exercise for research, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and I suspect there is hardly a School of Education in the UK that does not say that it is committed to social inclusion.

Much of that commitment relates to equitable participation in formal education, particularly higher education. This has been a longstanding issue in the UK which can be traced back to the 1970s, and started as an issue that related to offering second chances to adults from black and ethnic minority groups to join professions such as teaching and social work. But it is by no means an exclusive issue to the UK or indeed only to adults (Osborne 2022).

However, I think that it is important to note that widening access started as an issue in the field of adult education and then became mainstreamed. I think that this is important for three reasons:

1. Issues of concern to adult educators are often viewed as on the margins by policy-makers and other academics is the field of education, where most attention is given to schooling. Areas that transcend age have more leverage.
2. Secondly linking such topics to grander challenges is vital. So, for example the widening of access could be situated alongside other aspects of the regional engagement role of universities, sitting alongside economic, cultural and environment challenges. This gives greater internal leverage to researchers in our field – it becomes part of the core narrative.
3. The other aspect of mainstreaming is viewing many challenges as ones that can only be solved by inter-disciplinary working. So

if we think about a field such as widening of access, factors that might impinge an individual participation might include:

- The availability and affordability of transport from the home to the place of study – we know that in some cities in the global south travel can be very slow and very expensive taking up to 25% of income
- Health and well-being – we know that there is a strong association between health and educational participation
- Neighbourhood conditions – the quality of housing, feelings of security and belongingness. In other words, the sorts of conditions that create good places, which in turn effect various forms of engagement, including in education.

I could list other factors, but it is obvious that these sorts of challenges require co-operation with specialists in urban planning, health sciences, data scientists and many more.

Participation you will see is mentioned five times in our research questions, and of course not only were we concerned with participation in higher education, but more widely in other aspects of formal education, including technical and vocational education, but also non-formal and information participation and learning.

Economic Issues

If we consider the questions posed around economic issues, the focus was **workers** and **workforce learning**. We were concerned with knowing more about how the workforce was changing, and the implications for learning needs, given the diversity to be found in that workforce.

- To what extent have we moved to a post-Fordist economy?
- To what extent is there a growing differentiation between core and peripheral workers?
- How do we establish the differing learning needs of the various groups which exist within the workforce?
- Are existing strategies designed to ensure that the workforce will have the appropriate level of skills?
- Do workers have the opportunities to acquire the types of knowledge and skills required in a "flexible workforce?"
- To what extent have "learning organisations" been created?
- To what extent do workers have differential access to learning opportunities?
- To what extent are national initiatives such as Modern Apprenticeships and the helping to address the issues above?

The idea of **precarity** is signalled through emerging distinctions between a core and peripheral workforce, and the opportunities afforded to them.

A core idea posited is that workers would have to be 'flexible' and that learning opportunity would have to be flexible in turn. And there is also the implication that employers play their part by creating learning organisations. Similarly, we looked to research the effectiveness of various schemes such as Modern Apprenticeships. There were many more, including Independent Learning Accounts and schemes to accredit prior and experiential learning, and as you know there have been equivalent schemes in your countries.

Once again such an agenda implies inter-disciplinary collaboration with labour market economists, human resources specialists and psychologists as well as the normal suspects in sociology.

Lifelong Learning and ICT

Before I move onto the final area of lifelong learning and ICT, I need to tell you something that I missed out previously – the year that the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning was established. I should at this point be using a bit of clever technology.

Have any of you used Slido to engage your audience in live polls? It's great. Am I going to use it now? You must be joking. I embrace technology, but would be more confident in the success of herding a pack of ginger tom cats. So my interactively will be more basic. A show of hands for 1988, for 1998, for 2008

Of course, it was 1998 and that is no accident. There had been an EC White Paper on Lifelong Learning (EC 1995), which influenced subsequently policies in many EU states. In the UK there were national White and Green Papers on lifelong learning, and Tony Blair's famous speech that included his remark "Education, education, education" at the 1996 Labour Party conference referring to his three top priorities on coming to office. It was a period of great optimism with the learning society firmly at the fore. It was augmented through the pronouncement of the 2000 Lisbon European Council, the EC's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (EC 2001), and a succession of further policy drivers at the beginning of the noughties.

So, what did we say about ICT and learning?

- How should technology be used to support learning?
- What is the relationship between the human element and the technology?
- How is the relationship between home, family and work being changed?

- What are the dangers of social exclusion associated with access to technology? How can these be overcome?
- Will the controllers of technology control the curriculum?

Well, I think that these were pretty good questions for 1998. The World Wide Web had only invented in 1989, and whilst emails can be dated back to 1971, most of us probably didn't start using email until the mid 1990s. My first was received on 2 February 1994. Facebook didn't start until 2004.

Our interests clearly were anticipatory of ICT both offering solutions and potentially raising new issues of concern.

Would technology create new forms of exclusion? Of course not – it would lead to a paperless office, much less work and a fully employed workforce (working two days a week for a full salary).

Would there be a global curriculum controlled by the private sector? – impossible.

Fast-forward

Of course, there continue to be challenges, many of which we identified in our research plans three decades ago. I list some of these here. They are familiar to you all I am sure, and I won't elaborate on all of them today.

Let's consider the issues linked to social inclusion as it pertains to higher education.

Specifically, in relation to access to education by adults, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning's first Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) report in 2009 painted a pessimistic picture of policies to widen participation as they pertain to many countries, with 'wide gaps between legislation, policy and implementation, with weak relationships between formal policy-making and practice.'

In most of the 160 countries monitored, integrated and comprehensive policy environments that give equal status to initial and continuing education for young people and adults were absent, with the Sweden highlighted as a notable exception. Obviously I had to find a good example from a Nordic country.

Despite what the GRALE report says there definitely has been some progress internationally as measured by the sheer quantity of students getting access to higher education, but there are for me three key issues that remain:

1/ Does *increasing* access equates to *widening* access?

2/ As access is widened, are adults channelled differentially into certain types of less prestigious institutions, resulting in poorer longer-term labour-market prospects?

3/ Are they are also channelled away from prestigious disciplines such as medicine and law?

Such channelling would have considerable impact on individuals' longer-term earning opportunity and their societal status and preserves the elitism of these professions. We can then ask questions about interventions that could be taken to widen participation and I could provide for you a range of possibilities. Here are just a few.

Second Chance

- Specialist Programmes
- Cross-Sectoral Institutional Collaborations (TVET and Universities)

Contextualised and Alternative Admissions Criteria

- Tariff Reductions
- APL/APEL
- Assessment on Demand
- Transfer with credit (Short-cycle)

The key word is 'flexibility' in terms of **access to** and **retention within** HE (Osborne and Young 2006). Flexibility in Access may occur through the creation of customised programmes, and through inter-sectoral collaboration, for example with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector.

Other forms of flexibility in Access have been created. This has included schemes for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), and has included credit being given for short-cycle Higher Education qualifications offered in TVET colleges and schemes for the assessment of workplace learning.

Actually, I am a little sceptical about the practicality of APEL. I have been involved in many APEL projects, work-based learning programmes and various other alternative forms of validation. They are something of a mantra in our field, and of course we must value learning wherever it occurs, but I do wonder about the effectiveness and efficiency of some of the systems that have been created. I also wonder why so many development projects in this area have been funded, but there seems to me little focus of evaluation of impact.

It would be interesting to compare the outcomes for example of the system of *Validation d'Aquis* in France and the Spanish *La Prueba de acceso para mayores de 25 años (or para mayores de 45 años*). The Validation d' Aquis is of course radical and unusually within Europe a right that is legislated for and extremely supportive. The entry test in Spain is effectively, 'Assessment on Demand', and less resource intensive for institutions, but arguably less flexible.

APL of course is simpler in principal. It is standard in many jurisdictions around the world, partly through the use of qualifications frameworks and involves transfer with credit into year 2 or 3 occurs. However, there are caveats, the main ones being:

- curriculum mismatch between vocationally-oriented short cycle provision, and more theoretically oriented university higher education
- differences in assessment methods
- this in turn tends to lead to differential transition to research intensive and teaching intensive institutions

These are structural issues, and are not insuperable problems, and it is quite possible to set up systems of cross-institutional structural flexibility where there is geographical proximity between institutions.

Moreover, there are more radical structural approaches that may work, including the creation of dual sector institutions combining TVET and universities, rare in Europe, but common in Australia. And these are very apposite since the COVID-19 academic. The Australian model of dual-mode universities that offers programmes in face-to-face and virtual mode has become commonplace. This could create many advantages for adult learners, though as you will know there are dangers of new forms of digital exclusion because of a lack of digital literacy especially amongst socially disadvantaged communities, affordability and availability of broadband especially in remote areas.

For researchers then I see several outstanding questions.

Which, if any of the various arrangements that have been put in place are really major contributors to expanding access to high quality learning for adults?

Are they, in the main, schemes to fill spaces in the least prestigious universities and the lowest demand subjects in differentiated higher education systems, and in universities where supply outstrips demand?

Are these schemes just tinkering at the edges, and we still in need of radical transformation of structures in terms of flexibility in mode, timing and place of study?

Have the transformations made during the pandemic made higher education more open to adults because of the move to online and hybrid working?

I pose these questions because Access to Higher Education is inequitable almost anywhere you look in the world. I have written a chapter in the latest edition of the Routledge Handbook of the Sociology of Education on access and amongst other thing report:

- Across Latin America, those from ethnic minorities are 15 percent less likely to access higher education than the population as a whole.
- In a recent overview of Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, significant gaps in access for the least wealthy, exacerbated by gender inequality are found.
- In the UK those with a Black Caribbean background, are not faring well in participation, and this is accentuated in elite institutions that demand high scores from national end-of-high-school examinations to secure entry (see Osborne 2022a)

Let's go back to the persistent issues and another area of international concern – **literacy** and in particular **data and information literacy**.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) reminds us that despite some improvements that there are huge challenges as they relate to literacy, especially for women, and especially in the global south[2].

Achieving SDG 4.6 that relates to **literacy** is not on target, but then that is the case with many of the SDG targets according to the Global Education Monitoring Report of 2019 (UIS 2019). It is predicted that 30% of adults in low-income countries will still be unable to read by the deadline for achieving targets of 2030.

We might imagine that the COVID-19 pandemic has added a few more years to the time. Or has it? Has the increased use of technology created some winners?

Clearly educational opportunity more generally has changed because of the advent of modern information and communication technologies. As a result, there are vastly more potential ways for individuals to manage their own learning in a variety of contexts throughout their lifetimes The World Economic Forum in 2016 summarises that potential well:

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[2] See http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy

> 'Technology holds enormous promise to help foster 21st century skills, including social and emotional skills. It can personalize learning, engage the disengaged, complement what happens in the classroom, extend education outside the classroom and provide access to learning to students who otherwise might not have sufficient educational opportunities'. World Economic Forum (WEF, 2016, p. 11)

However, it is also the case that new forms of literacy related to these technological and communication changes – along with the challenges of artificial intelligence, smart city development and the automisation of processes – represent an enormous challenge to education policymakers across the globe.

The risks and difficulties for labour markets and to social inclusion as a result has created new imperatives with lifelong learning seen potentially as among the tools to tackle the inequalities that have emerged from these changes.

Governments at local, regional and national levels around the globe have been adjusting and renewing education systems to keep up with technological developments. Previous generations have appealed to education as well to be able to face economic exigencies and challenges provoked by technological development, but the current challenges and opportunities are greater than ever.

Amartya Sen has argued in this regard, that the capability to be educated provides citizens with the possibility of freedom to achieve what they reflectively consider to be valuable.

The development of ICT skills has become fundamental since it can potentially empower all citizens, including those in the 'third age', and can reduce their risks of exclusion from social, economic and cultural life. These skills can be acquired in the context of traditional learning initiatives, namely onsite activities, but also through more targeted learning courses based on social networking.

The opportunity to develop technological and communication skills for vulnerable groups potentially represents an opportunity for a better life, but there is a downside.

There are risks of **new digital divides** that are emerging in terms of access to technology and training to be suitably literate. We speak of digital natives and digital immigrants – some born with an iPhone in their hand and some who have accommodated to the challenges of technologies. Well there are also those without any digital opportunities at all.

Historically, the digital divide has been posited in terms of class and race, with particular concerns also for those living in remote and rural locations. There are also geographical dividing lines between 'developed countries and developing countries' and 'urban areas and rural areas'.

These persist, but now it is also the old who are mostly likely to be excluded along with low-income and marginalised groups, with studies in many countries illustrating age-based disparities.

Furthermore, technologically driven **smart city** developments that neglect the social dimension and the involvement of citizens in planning processes are likely to exacerbate exclusion.

I’ve presented a lot of issues here, and from these I think we can see a range of strands of research that may be worth pursuing in the future. They can be wrapped up in one overarching question?

What are the dangers of social exclusion associated with access to technology? How can these be overcome?

For those of you who have not inwardly absorbed my earlier comments, this was one of our questions in 1998. The technologies may be different, the forms of exclusion different, but the essential core question remains.

Persistent Issues

I’ve spoken about some of the persistent issues, which we highlighted in 1998 as research challenges that relate to inclusion and to information and communications technologies. These still exist, and in many ways have become more entangled.

That entanglement also applies to economic issues, and of course in reality the distinction between the social and the economic, representing these as dichotomies, has been a gross simplification. For example, the majority of surveys related to motivation for participation in adult learning, reveal improvement of economic conditions as the principle reason for doing so.

We are now in the midst of the fourth industrial revolution, which according to Klaus Schwab is ‘characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human’.

This is reflected in precarity in work with little security for many in the gig economy, and increasing risk with automation for low-skilled jobs.

Add to this Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and the linked devices of the Internet of Things, and the Smart Solutions we find in, for example smart city developments, and it becomes obvious that many of us are living in a quite different world from three decades ago with quite different economic and social challenges, and related challenges for adult learning.

We might have thought that there were major economic challenges in 1998 and there were, but clearly changes in technology have brought new ones.

Then let us add in the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, and maybe another similar crisis coming up. This has not only increased precarity because of casualisation within the workforce, but also because of the elongation of working life for those in work and the reduced benefits of pensions.

New foci

Some of these issues in the last decade have come into sharper focus. There is even greater focus now on longstanding concerns about inequitable access for many minority groups because of the Black Lives Matters movement, and the plight of migrants, internally displaced and forced. You will be only too aware of this issue with the influx of Ukrainian refugees in your countries – many will bring excellent skills with them that will contribute to Nordic societies, but they will also bring with them demands for various forms of lifelong learning as they seek to enter the workforce and manage everyday life.

And now the Trump moment - the pervasiveness of social media and the difficulty in recognising truth. We have encountered this in many ways, for example in climate change denial and it has been highlighted through the COVID-19 pandemic, and makes information literacy vital.

Issues of ageing populations and health have become increasingly important for adult education given the strong association between learning and health that I mentioned before.

No doubt I could find other issues, but let me as I near the end of this presentation say something more about COVID and something about the importance of place.

COVID

I've written with colleague papers for the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning on learning for global health in cities (Osborne, Nesterova and Bhandari 2021) and for United Cities and Local Government on how local and regional government and its partners have contributed to delivering SDG4 (Osborne 2022b) before and during the pandemic.

We have provided case studies for all parts of the world that illustrate the powerful potential of adult education in its many guises. Here are just a few examples.

- Corona Podcasts for Refugees in Berlin
- Videos Help Hearing Impaired People in Brasília

- Community-based learning for citizens and health professionals in Bogotá
- Organisational Learning in the Construction Services in Helsinki
- Community Connector Hubs, Community Learning and a Learning Festival in Melton
- Talakalayaan – a platform for conversations at neighbourhood level in Manila
- Online capacity building of adult educators in Armenia

I could give you many more examples, but what can we learn in general terms?

Issues for Consideration

First, it is clear that the educational challenges of the pandemic required involvement from all stakeholders within the local learning ecosystem.

Second, it is important to have a structure that brings together all providers and citizen groups is vital, and in that structure to facilitate both adequate supply of learning provision, but also the capacity to respond to citizen demands.

Third, adult education and lifelong learning in particular can support intergenerational learning by equipping adults with required skills, especially in relation to digital literacy. Increasing and improving adult education and lifelong learning opportunities can help families in coping and understanding how to support their children's and their own well-being during and after the crisis.

Fourth, it is important to adequately resource the adult education sector, and recognise its vital community and resilience building role as it is often along with youth services the closest agency to citizens

Cities and Regions as Drivers

What is very evident is the important of place. Proximity to communities and local stakeholders place local and regional governments in a privileged role to contribute to education objectives, including those of adult education.

Cities and regions, and even neighbourhoods can create improved learning environments, building on the synergies between different SDGs. In many countries, the provision of adequate education requires responses to a number of fundamental needs that include water and sanitation (SDG6), health (SDG3), food (SDG2) and infrastructure in areas such as transport and housing, and this is especially the case in cities (SDG11).

Actions related to these matters as they pertain to adults are much more likely to be taken at a local and regional level than they are by national governments. As we know In many countries national government invests little in adult and lifelong learning with few spending even the 4% of the total education budget as recommended by UNESCO. I am not sure we will see that change very soon, and I really think it is at local level where it is going to be easier to promote an adult education focus.

I'm therefore an advocate of the idea of the learning city[3] or educating city[4] that potentially brings all stakeholders together to create cradle to grave opportunities.

However, there needs to be some sharpening of the learning city concept, but is something of a catch-all term for a range of activity. Nonetheless, it has become a strong rhetorical device, and as you will all know a major strand of UNESCO's adult and lifelong learning agenda.

However, rhetoric only gets us so far. My view is that as with many issues we are concerned about is that we need **improved data**. We know from successive GRALE reports, including the most recent GRALE V that there is an inadequacy in national data on adult education in the majority of countries in the word.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019) has recommended that 'governments should finance labour force surveys and direct assessments to understand how skills are distributed across populations and to inform the design of education and training programmes'. Furthermore, it has proposed that 'international partners should coordinate improvements in labour force survey questions on youth and adult education and training'.

But it's not just more data that we needed, but **more sophisticated ways of gathering data,** in part because traditional methods are very expensive.

Open Data

Let me give you one example of work that we have done in the city of Glasgow as part of the Integrated Multimedia City Data project within our Urban Big Data Centre (see Lido, Reid and Osborne 2019; Thakuriah *et al.* 2020).

We conducted a traditional household survey, but we also tracked individuals using GPS trackers and we equipped them with life-loggers

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[3] See the work of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities) and the PASCAL Observatory's Learning City Network (http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org)

[4] See the Educating Cities Network (https://www.edcities.org)

that took photos of where they travelled every minute over several days. We got details of where they were and what they were seeing. We also captured Twitter data to get a sense of sentiments about education. So we used a combination of traditional approaches and other approaches that used technology. Together we got a rich picture of engagement, and could link that to a range of other data sources. We were able to combine self-reported data with data that related to actual behaviour. From the household survey we got self-reported data on older adult engagement and could link it to other variables such as health. From the GPS tracking we could make links between use of transport, travel more generally and engagement in learning. So we can begin to answer fundamental questions such as ***'What is the effect of transport infra-structure on participation in learning?'***

We also incidentally have gathered huge administrative datasets on educational participation and attainment down to individual level, and then enhanced them with geographical information such as data that relates to access to greenspace. So we are able to ask questions such as ***'To what extent does access to greenspace or the visibility of greenspace affect educational participation and attainment?'***

Conclusions

Having just spoken about travel, I can certainly conclude that I have moved around a little bit in this speech. So let me gather a few final thoughts.

1/ Having spent half a lifetime in the field of adult education, I can say with certainty that many of the issues that were prevalent at the beginning of my career are still vital today. Other new issues have emerged, and there are many global challenges.

2/ These are likely only to be solved through inter-disciplinary working that crosses the social sciences and extends to other disciplines such as computing science and engineering. Adult educators and educators generated has worked in ways that traditionally have been siloed.

3/ I was in a discussion that involved various key international organisations in the field of adult education recently in preparation for a response to the then forthcoming CONFINTEA VII conference in Morocco[5]. There was much rhetoric about what should happen, about in particular that governments should commit more

[5] See https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/seventh-international-conference-adult-education?hub=39

funding to adult education. But there not enough discussion about evidencing the benefit of adult education through robust research. Of course, governments are not always rational in the ways they act, and often ignore the evidence or choose to give more weight to a counter-claim. I am sure however that without really rigorous research, we won't see action.

4/ In the UK as I previously mentioned we have just had the results of the quality exercise on research in universities.

What scores badly?

- Small scale non-replicable studies

Conversely what scores well?

- Larger scale inter-disciplinary research that tackles the big problems of society
- Strong theorisation

Put the two together and you have a winning recipe.

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Chapter 3
How to Begin? A philosophical investigation on the educational time and its political implications

By Walter Omar Kohan, Johan Lövgren and Michael Noah Weiss

Introduction

The theme of the following chapter was introduced by Walter Omar Kohan as he held the opening lecture of NAEL 2022. As he initiated (or began) the conference Kohan not only talked about the theme of beginnings. His opening lecture was actually not a lecture in the classical academical sense, rather it should be seen as a reflective dialogue. To me as an observer and participant it was experienced as a philosophical provocation on the theme of learning and beginnings. An example of this was when Kohan spent the first 15 minutes of his lecture walking back and forth on the floor before the podium in a dialogue with himself and the participants wondering whether he had begun, if he should begin and asking the conference participants if they had begun.

In this reflective dialogue at the conference, Kohan connected his initial provocation to the theme of beginnings, developing some connections to Paulo Freire's pedagogy and a child's way of learning. It was clear to those of us in charge of the conference that Kohan's thought-provoking way of opening the conference had a decisive impact on the participants. This could be seen in the way that his dialogical reflections were referred to both by the speakers of the conference and in the participant's conversations.

As we were planning the NAEL 2022 conference proceedings, we wished to include a chapter where we could follow up some of the thoughts presented by Walter Omar Kohan in his opening lecture. We asked Kohan to meet us online to a dialogue on the theme of learning and beginnings. The dialogue then took place in the fall of 2022 and in terms of methodology it represents a philosophical investigation; the conversation has been recorded, transcribed and lightly revised into the text that is presented in the present chapter.

By employing the writing style and format of dialogue, the present text follows a long if sometimes marginalized genre of academic philosophy. With its roots in the Socratic *Dialogues* of Plato, the format can be found in the publications of renown representatives from both philosophy of science as well as from philosophy of education (see e.g., Gadamer, 2001, 2003; Horton & Freire, 1990; Hattie & Larsen, 2020; Pietschmann & Wallner, 1995). As a philosophical investigation, the following dialogue is characterized by a movement between the concrete and the general, that is, between concrete experiences and rather abstract ideas, which is assumed to be a key-feature of philosophizing (see e.g., Hadot 2010: 211f; Weiss, 2015: 215f). In more general terms, a philosophical investigation can also be understood as an examination of general aspects of the human condition (see e.g. Teichmann & Evans, 1999: 1; Lahav, 2016: 20; Helskog, 2019; Weiss, 2017). In the case of the following conversation, the general aspect of the human condition that is examined is *beginning*. For, every human being has experienced many and various beginnings in life, not least when it comes to formation and education.

Dialogue

"The how is who you are"

Michael Noah Weiss: Well, the question for this dialogue is: How to begin? How to begin this dialogue? How to begin a dialogue? How to begin, in general? Do you have an idea, Walter?

Walter Omar Kohan: Maybe we have already begun? No, seriously, the question of beginnings is a significant issue: When do we begin and how do we know that something begins? If we plan to begin, we never begin. A beginning is something that comes to our awareness after it began. And maybe we don't begin anything, maybe it is just that we are following a conversation.

Michael W.: When you put it like that, then in addition to the question of how to begin this dialogue, can we also ask what are we beginning with? What I am trying to point at here is this dynamic, this dialectic between the *how* and the *what*. For the *how* is about the form, while the *what* is more about content. Do these two 'play' together, to put it like that?

Walter. O. K: Yes, and we also have the *why,* and the *for what, w*hich are always connected with the *what* and the *how.* I think in education we are first and foremost concerned with the *how;* after that with the *what.* And then, much less, with the *why* and *for what.*

Usually, the educational institutions are eager to evaluate what we do. And that, as a matter of course, creates pressure. It puts pressure on us – the teachers and pedagogues – which in return creates anguish and doubts about how to do what we are told to do. Consequentially – and that I think is sad – the questions that arise are related to the *how*. It appears that they are the most urgent questions. Often, teachers and educators pose questions like "How can I do this? How can I solve this problem? How can I manage that in such a short time?" It is always "How? How? How?" However, I think that *how* and *what* depend on *why* and *for what*. I would very much appreciate, if educators would be more worried about the *why* and the *for what* and not so worried about the *what* and the *how.*

The *how*, I think, is something very idiosyncratic, very singular, very contextualized. It is related to the method, to the way, to the path. And I think in that sense each educator is a *how*.

Johan Lövgren: You mean in the sense of Paulo Freire: The *how* is who you *are* (see Kohan, in progress)?

Walter O. K.: Yes. I think that each educator needs to be his or her own method, so to speak. If not, he or she just reproduces others' *how*. Hence, I think it is important to help educators to problematize their relationship with the *how*. The more comfortable, complacent and unconcerned we are with the *how*, the more suspicious it becomes to me. The more an educator says "Oh, I found this and that method that I can apply; now I know how to do this and that," the more problematic it gets. For she is just reproducing another's *how*.

Michael W.: Walter, what you are describing here about the *how* in education, strongly reminds me of the knowledge form what Aristotle defined as *techné*, that means technical knowledge or *know-how* knowledge in terms of utilitarian applicability. I am wondering why so many educators do ask for technical knowledge? Probably because they are striving for effectiveness, like "What is the most effective method?" You asserted that only few or even too few educators, are posing the *for what*- and the *why*-questions, which actually are questions about *meaning*. Based on what you just said, Walter, my impression is that too many educators are not asking for the *meaning* behind certain techniques or curricula. The other issue you raised is that the *for what,* or the question about meaning, is not asked because obviously we assume we already know – but do we really know?

Walter O. K.: Yes, Michael, I agree with both ideas. I think that we do not ask *for what* and *why* mainly because the system – let's call it the system – applies pressure on our *how*. As educators, we have so many *how's* to solve

that we are exhausted; we don't have time, we don't have energy for extra questioning. We are exhausted due to technical issues, as you said. More and more of our tasks as educators are bureaucratized. More and more, we become administrators instead of educators. We have to apply methods and run certain tests; we have to write reports and evaluations. In other words, we have to hurry from one task to another and respond to all the technical issues we are facing. Hence, we do neither have the time, the energy, nor the conditions to discuss the *why* and the *for what*.

"Ion is a child playing"

Johan L.: I remember, when you started your presentation at the NAEL conference, you said "Why did you invite me here? I work with childhood, so why did you ask me to come to a conference on adult education?" But your opening lecture was referred to again and again throughout the conference and I saw you partake in informal conversations with participants every day. What was your impression, did you see a connection between adult education and child education, or with the philosophy of education you are working with?

Walter O. K.: I think that education is education. In terms of the *for what* and *why*, age as such does not matter so much. However, what changes a lot from children to adults is the *how*. The *how* should be very different between these two groups. You cannot teach a child that cannot read in the same way as you teach an adult that can read, even a teenager or a youngster. The *how* will be very different from age group to age group, and maybe the *what* too. However, the *why* and the *for what* remain very close. Maybe that was why you, as the organizer of the conference, invited me. And for me it was meaningful to be there because we were discussing issues that have to do with the *why* and the *for what,* not with the *how.* And that was good, because I could say very little about the *how*.

Furthermore, in my experience, the approach of *philosophy with children* also works with adults. The more I have been involved in this kind of philosophizing, the more I have realized that childhood is not an age, but it is a time. Hence, working with adults in that way is like working with children of different ages. Maybe that is an answer to your question?

Johan L.: I was thinking about your article while I spent time with my two-year-old grandson last weekend. And while he stayed over at our house, I could see what we talk about in practice – how present he was in the *now*. If he was squeezing the little plastic cow or giving a hug or singing a song, he was always just in the present.

Michael W.: Johan, the way you just described how present your grandchild was in the now, is the kind of being present that always fascinated me. As a concrete example, when children start to play or when they start to paint, they do not ask "When do I start?" or "When do I finish?" Instead, they are consumed with the activity as such, they are so into this specific practice, often even without a specific purpose. They are just doing and that consumes all the attention of the child. You can feel and see that with children who are in such a mode. Now, compare that mode of being present with children in school classes: They get certain tasks, they get certain assignments, they know what they are expected to do. There is a certain beginning, a certain activity that serves a certain purpose and then a finish and then it's over. Then you have to deliver the exam; then you are assessed according to certain standards.

These two activities or these two different modes lead me to the question, whether education shouldn't be mainly about the first mode? Deliberately, I am asking now, *how* can we do that? On purpose, I'm posing a *how*-question here, because maybe that's the paradox and the challenge of educators and teachers. They want the kids to come into this mode and at the same time, by asking *how* they can help them, *how* can they support them, they are regressing to *techné*, to this technical knowledge, to this rather *effective-method* approach to teaching and they get completely lost in that.

I don't know whether I'm wrong with what I am saying with regards to these different modes of time?

Walter O. K.: Well, I think that the time mode you try to put your finger on here – the childlike time – is what is called *Aion*, as opposed to *Chronos*. With Heraclitus, in his fragment 52, we can say *Aion* is a child playing (see Heraclitus: 2003). *Aion* is absolute presence. *Aion* has no past, no future because it does not move; no movement in a sense. It is as if time was just presence. Later, in Ancient Greek history, for example in his dialogue *Timaeus* 37c Plato defines *Chronos* as the moving image of *Aion* (see Plato, 2008). There, *Aion* is translated as eternity. Usually, it is said that time is the moving image of eternity but the Greek words are *Chronos* and *Aion*. To explain it more figuratively, *Aion* is like a circle, while *Chronos* is like a line.

Now, what happens in school, I think, is that we take children out of *Aion* and into *Chronos*. For me, children are in *Aion*; just as you have experienced with your grandchild, Johan. For him it is just the *now* and no other time than *now*. All the time is *now*. In school, this changes because when the kids want to do something and they listen to the teacher then what they get to hear is "No, it's not time to do this now. We are going to do this

later." And with that the present is postponed. The children begin to learn that there is something like a sequency; first you need to do this and then you can do that. You have to learn to wait and sit out certain activities. In other words, their time is being organized in terms of *Chronos*, that is, in chronological time-tables. They receive time-tables and this represents a huge change since this introduces them to lots of ideas like sequencing, consequentiality and – very important – irreversibility. For, in *Chronos* you cannot go back. You cannot do the same thing again. Of course, you can repeat something, but you cannot cancel what has started and begin all over again, to put it like that. In the sense of Heraclitus saying *In the same river flow different and different waters* (Heraclitus, 2003: fragment 12), you are required to relate to it differently. All this comes with *Chronos* and for me that is the huge difference compared to the time of the present, *Aion*, where you even can lose this idea of yourself. In *Aion* you are like taken by playing, by love, by creating, and so on. That is why I think it is ageless because you can experience *Aion* at different ages. It is a *kind* of intense and present experience of time. For us adults it is more difficult to get into this kind of experience of time because we have been so extensively trained in *Chronos* that we need to deconstruct or unlearn our chronological experience of time in order to go back to *Aion*. We have learned too much *Chronos*. We turned ourselves into chronological beings.

Michael W.: If I may come with a follow-up question here: You said that *Aion* time is *being in the present moment* and that should be the mode children should be in. In contrast to that, we see the pedagogues, educators and teachers trying to approach the child from a more *Chronos*-oriented perspective, to put it like that. You, Walter, criticized that in a very good way and I agree with what you said. However, when we take a look at these two concepts of time (*Chronos* and *Aion*), isn't it also understandable that the educators are coming with this *Chronos*-oriented perspective because otherwise, what should they do? The question of children's development seen from an *Aion*-perspective is an open question; you cannot really answer it. Whereas, to see children's development from a *Chronos*-oriented perspective is something that you can plan, or at least plan for. So, when it is about raising children, what else should educators do if not taking in such a perspective? Of course, I intentionally exaggerated in my formulations now, but I hope you understand what I mean.

Walter O. K.: I understand but I think the idea of development is not an *Aion*ic idea. I think, in *Aion* there is no development. Development comes with *Chronos*. And I am not accusing the educators; I am not saying that they should not do that since this is the way we have organized our society.

Rather, what I am trying to point out is that it makes a huge difference in the experience of time. If you are a pre-school child, for example, you don't consider that there is a time to play. If you want to play, you play. However, when you enter school, you learn that there is a time to play, that there is a time to eat, that there is a time to sleep, and so on. And this time is *Chrono*s. Of course, there are many positive things attached to this kind of time, because how would society be, if we did not organize it according to *Chronos*? For example, we would not be able to plan our trips; we would not be able to plan lots of things.

In other words, *Chronos* has for sure certain wonderful implications in terms of what it allows us to do. For example, this very conversation now, we planned to have at 14:00 o'clock according to local time in Rio, while it is already 19:00 o'clock in Norway, where both of you are at the moment. How would we have managed to have this conversation without *Chronos*? Probably, it would have been impossible.

"What you could call a beyond-method method"

Johan L.: One aspect that was quite central in your presentation at the NAEL conference was the methodological aspect of *Aion*. This aspect is also central in the article you sent us (Kohan, 2023b). In this article you write about where the question starts, where it begins and the creativity of being in *Aion*. That really fascinated me. Could you say more about this methodological aspect since it also seems to relate to research, like the joy and creativity that I feel when I am writing my research articles, for example?

Walter O. K.: Yes, of course. I would assume that the process of researching and writing brings you back to your childhood – or better: to your child-time – to put it like that, and that is part of the reason for the joy you experience when you engage in such activities. In my presentation at the conference, I was trying to make people feel *Aion*, a childlike time. I am not sure whether you could call it a kind of methodology or strategy that I was using. More than the *how*, was I concerned about was the *why* and the *for what*. The point is that I did not know *how* to do that – I did not know before I actually began. However, all the time during the presentation I was trying to be attentive, in the way I spoke, in the way I listened, in the relationships I established. If all those things were making it possible for the people there to experience this *Aionic* time, then this also meant that they were not worried about the clock at that moment; they were not worried about how much time we had left. Instead, with the questions I posed and with the experience we were having there, we tried to relate to the experience of the present, to be present, to be there. When you are

experiencing the present, you are experiencing *Aion*. Hence, for me the strongest methodological key, to call it like that, is to try to feel and to do what you want and expect the others to feel and do. For example, I try to live an experience of *Aion* if I want people to experience *Aion*. I do not try to explain *Aion*, for example by means of a PowerPoint. If I would use a PowerPoint, what would the audience learn? They would learn that you are very concerned about *Chronos*, that you are concerned about time, about organizing, about content – you see? Therefore, with the way I did my presentation, I wanted to show that I was not at all concerned with those things and that the *how* did not matter to me. To put it in other words, I could not be very technical, very efficient by showing one bullet point after another because it were precisely those things I wanted to put into question.

Johan L.: And I think that really worked out. It was fascinating to make a child-like experience in a research conference. And that experience was what I was trying to connect with the article you sent us (ibid.) prior to our dialogue. For in that article, you actually connected the child-like presence in *Aion* with research methodology. Could you explicate a bit how being in this time-mode can be a research methodology?

Walter O. K.: For example, when I received this invitation to write an entry to a research encyclopedia (Kohan, 2023a) and handbook (Kohan, 2023b), I questioned whether I really should accept. Not only because it is difficult to write such a text but because it is one thing to talk and to be present, while writing in the format of an academic text is another thing. Such a text has a predetermined form. It was not possible to choose whatever form. However, then I decided to give it a try. And though I am not sure if it worked out, I have tried in the sense that "O.k., if I want to be sensitive to *Aion*, how could I do this writing? How can I be coherent with what I think is the most important thing of a researcher?" As I said, I don't know if it worked out. But I would be very happy if the readers say "Oh, you really made me have an *Aionic* experience of time while reading." Why is that important for a researcher? Because, for me, educators are researchers and researchers are educators. If they are not, then this is a sign that something very wrong is happening in the educational system. For example, yesterday I came from a conference in Japan. In many ways it is a wonderful country. Tradition and cultural values are upheld in an extraordinary way. However, educators are working from 7 to 17 o'clock, with children, with students and they don't have time because it is a society very fond of the idea of efficiency and productivity. It is a very productive and efficient society, but the educators are exhausted. Imagine being 9 hours per day in front of pupils, you cannot think of anything else anymore.

Johan L.: You get stuck in *Chronos*.

Walter O. K.: Right, right.

Michael W.: You probably get stuck in *Chronos*; that is the one thing. The other thing probably is this constant need for the right or most efficient method. And when I say method, I would like to quote Paulo Freire. In an interview with Freire, that you include in your paper, the scholar Nilcéa Lemos Pelandré asked him about the cardinal principles of his method. And Freire replied,

"I would prefer to say that I have no method. What I had, when I was very young, 30 or 40 years ago, it doesn't matter the time, was curiosity on one side and political commitment on the other [...] What I tried to do, and continue doing today, was to have an understanding that I would call critical or dialectical of educational practice, within which, necessarily, there is a certain methodology, a certain method." (Pelandré, 2014: 14)

The way he puts it, is very similar to how other key-figures, not only from the field of education but from the field of philosophical practice, approach the term *method*. For example, Gerd Achenbach deliberately said that he does not have a method; he only has what you could call a *beyond-method method* (see Achenbach, 1995; Schuster, 1999: 39). Similarly, when you take a look at the field of existential therapy, then also Irvin Yalom, as a well-known representative of this field, claimed that there is no method in existential therapy (see Yalom, 1980). He was criticized for that, probably for the same reason why Japanese teachers so eagerly want to have a method. They obviously want a plan, a structured plan where they can see what is step one, step two, step three, whereas these representatives from these mentioned fields would probably say that what they are after you cannot get by a step-by-step process. And what they are after in a certain sense, again, is *meaning*, I would say. The reason why all these representatives avoid the question about method is because they want to avoid an answer on the *how-to-do*.

Walter O. K.: I agree completely, and I think Socrates is also one of those. As far as I know, there is also something called the Socratic method. For me, this is killing the Socratic approach because it is like trying to find a recipe, and if you read Plato's Socratic dialogues, Socrates did very different things. He changed all the time. I mean, there are quite abstract and general aspects represented by Socrates, but they have more to do with curiosity and with his commitment to examine the question 'What is philosophy?' That commitment is also political because it is what he was condemned, judged and sentenced for. So, yes, I agree with you that many great philosophers and educators insist on the idea of no-method.

Johan L.: What does that add to educational research? What does that aspect of no-method contribute to? How is that 'productive' or how is that initiating something good?

Walter O. K.: Well, it could initiate many things if researchers realize that they not only do not need a method in order to do research but that they must not have a method. For if they have a method, they are not open enough to what the research field might make them learn or think. Hence, with regards to research and education, having a method rather limits than anything else.

Michael W.: What is it limiting in particular? When you say researchers should have no method because with a method they are limited, then do you mean the development of new knowledge which they are limited in, by just following a strict method? If so, then we arrive at a certain paradox about knowledge development here. For if we assume that research is about knowledge development, then there are for sure methods to develop new knowledge. However, in the way you put it – if I understood you right – you say that there is also a certain form of knowledge that you cannot develop by means of a method. So, my question is, what is that kind of knowledge about? In fact, I already have an idea what it could be and that is phronesis in terms of practical knowledge or wisdom. What do you think about that, Walter?

Walter O. K.: Well, I am not very concerned about knowledge. When I speak of limiting researchers, it is not mainly about what they eventually will know or not know. Rather, what I said relates to the way of being a researcher. It is in a way the habitus of a researcher, the kind of relationships you can establish, the kind of influence you might have on people with whom you work – all these kinds of things. When you are concerned about applying a method, you lose opportunities. It is about the kind of human experience, educational experience, philosophical experience that you will be able to have, and mainly that you will be able to foster or to invite others to share with you. If you want to know something or acquire a certain knowledge, maybe some method might be useful because it might be a more practical, direct and an effective way of gaining that knowledge. However, I was thinking more in terms of an educational experience that a researcher is making and is also sharing. Not only to speak of the opportunities that you get when you have a more open mind towards the field and the environment instead of 'knowing *how*' right from the start.

Johan L.: I was wondering about the values that lie behind what you are saying. And maybe I am putting my own values into it. What you are

saying, for me, is very deeply based on the humanistic value of the uniqueness of each individual, of each child, and in the respect for each unique meeting. For example, when I meet my grandchild, I don't have a recipe for how we play. I do this out of respect where he is at, for his development. This is how I understand both Freire and you. I could see that such a deep respect for the uniqueness of each individual and each meeting makes the use of a preset method inhuman.

Walter O. K.: I have somewhat of a little problem with the term *humanistic* and I would extend the concept to *every being* because *humanistic* might be understood to be related to human beings only. But the expression *every being* could include a human being, an animal, a plant, etc. In that sense, it could be more than human. However, I like this idea about respecting the uniqueness of what every being can express, can show, can leave. So, when trying to do education in that sense, then a method is limiting. A method might constrain and put force onto others in the sense of not being able to be the beings they are. Metaphorically speaking, you are pressing them into a method like you press a cookie dough into a mold. This might sound very abstract but in fact it is very concrete. Concrete in the way many researchers deal with people or beings they research. And then they publish a report, and they never go back to those who have been the main part of their research. They go into the field, they apply a method, they come to conclusions, they publish their work, but they think that this has nothing to do with the researched, to put it like that. Probably this is because they think they come up with everything by themselves; hence, they think they have nothing to thank the others for who have been involved in the research. Do you see? I think this phenomenon is also quite related to values and it is very political. We think the researchers are the ones who are the owners of the knowledge they produce. However, this is very capitalistic and individualistic, as if the others don't play a role because the researchers know the method, they have the capacity, the formation, the intellectual tools. This is very complicated and a very hierarchical thing with the researchers on top of it. And those who have been researched on? They can thank for being considered, to put it sarcastically. As I said, this is very complicated.

Johan L.: It is very complicated, and also very dangerous. It is a dangerous way of doing research because there are some educational ideals that have developed in a similar way which actually have destroyed education, I think.

Walter O. K.: Exactly! And the researcher sticks to his or her method because they think they have the competence, they are the academics, they have prepared, they have read, and so on. There seems to be many

justifications for this approach, and also for this basic assumption that the researched cannot teach the researchers anything because they don't know, because they have not read, and so on. So, you see, there are many implications.

Michael W.: Walter, to put it bluntly, what you just said about research and the researcher sounds a bit as if – in your opinion – there is only one true research approach, and that is *participatory action research* (see e.g. Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). And that brings us back to Paulo Freire. When taking a closer look at that, is it also that, what you meant when you earlier said that whether researcher or teacher, at a certain point they are the same for you? To formulate it a bit provocative, do I understand you right that the research approach you are addressing here is participatory action research and is this the proper research in education, which funnily appears to be very close to the question of the right method?

Walter O. K.: No, I would never say that there is one right way or that people should all do it in this one way. What I tried to say comes from my curiosity and my political commitments. I would not do research if I would have to apply a method, where I don't listen to the people with whom I do research with. For me, the political value of a research approach which does not listen to the people, is very different from the research that I want to do. I cannot put this in terms of *true* or *false*. Nevertheless, in the field of education and looking at how the world is in general and what kind of institutions we are building and inhabiting, I think that the world might be very different if we would conceive and perceive research and education in a different way than we do today. But of course, I am aware that the powerful institutions that we have, don't work like this.

Michael W.: There is a certain trend within the research world – especially when it is about funding – a trend towards facts and figures, a trend towards quantitative research. I am not in a position to criticize quantitative research but the way it was practiced over the last decades makes qualitative research look weak. Especially with regards to what you, Johan, said earlier about the humanities and the humanistic approach. And maybe it is the same in research as it is in education when it comes to the concept of Bildung, which is highly discussed and highly relevant also in the field of adult education. There is this book from John Hattie and Steen Nepper Larson which is written in dialogue form (see Hattie & Larsen, 2020). In one of the chapters, Larson is putting forward a concept of Bildung which, according to him, consists of three central aspects: Critical thinking, citizenship and character building (see ibid: 176). Again, formulated with a *how,* my question here – with regards to these three aspects of Bildung – is

not only how do we want to educate people, including adults, but also how should we do research? For if we try to foster Bildung by asking 'How can we most effectively teach people in critical thinking? How can we most effectively support them in becoming active citizens? How can we support them in their character building in an effective way?' the whole concept falls apart. For Bildung does not work that way, it is not a mere competence that you can acquire. The concept of Bildung is quite interesting in that respect because it shows us that all this striving and searching for effectiveness becomes completely useless and out of place at a certain point – effectiveness is irrelevant when it comes to Bildung.

Walter O. K.: Yes, I was going to answer with the question 'Why do we need to be effective?' I mean, I don't want to be effective. I'm not worried about being effective. You also mentioned the term *being weak*. What is the problem with being weak? We are very weak. I am happy being weak. I don't want to be strong. I don't think that effectiveness or strongness is something we need to foster or to be concerned about in education because I think they belong to the language of power. To be effective, to be strong, you know, they should not belong to our language as pedagogues, if you understand what I mean. When we begin to be worried about those kinds of aspects, we lose the battle, to put it metaphorically. Because we enter the field of the enemy. I am of course exaggerating but what I am trying to say is that this is what they want us to be worried about – being more efficient. That is also the reason why the teachers are asking *how*-questions all the time – because they have learned to want to be more efficient.

"Exercises of not answering the question"

Johan L.: I would have loved to be a fly on the wall in your meeting with people during your 100-days trip through Brazil. Could you tell a bit what happened when you came to a place in the Brazilian countryside? How did you arrange your meeting with the local people? How do you practice the no-method method? What do you do?

Walter O. K.: It was great, it was lovely. I hope I can repeat this soon again. On this trip that you are mentioning, in some cases I knew the people whom I was visiting; I had been in touch with them before. In some other cases I did not know them. That I was expected on some occasions and that on others the people did not know who was coming, was a wonderful combination. I had this letter that I wrote and that I sent to the people in advance. In this letter, I informed about this idea that I was travelling through Brazil for 100 days in order to commemorate 100 years of Paulo Freire's practice of a child-like pedagogy of questioning. What I asked

for in this letter was to agree or share the interest in question together the things that matter to us. This is the letter I sent:

Traveling on questions

Some consider the very popular expression "philosophy is a journey" to be a disrespect to philosophy. On the contrary, I consider it a compliment to philosophy, especially if we think of a special form of traveling: wandering/erring. To wander/err is to travel without anticipating the arriving point of the journey, because the journey itself will offer meanings and directions. In the Nucleus for the Study of Philosophies and Childhoods (Nefi), at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), we are traveling, among philosophies and childhoods, affirming a childlike pedagogy of the question, inside and outside the university.

In the current context, we repudiate the politics of death, the disregard for life, and the anti-democratic government that have become the official way of doing politics in Brazil. We think, on the contrary, that education is a way to live another politics: curious, restless, hopeful of a more beautiful, loving, and fair world. This is how we practice education, inside and outside the university. Thus, at a moment when our academic activities at the public university continue online, due to the lack of a serious policy of vaccination and care for the population, I will go out on a journey, with our pedagogy of the question, in search of philosophical encounters that help us problematize the world and the way we inhabit it. To educate and to educate oneself require leaving one's place. It will be a journey of formation, of others, and also of self-formation, of teaching and learning. A journey that is childlikely and errantly inventive, in the sense of creating paths, but also a journey of hospitalities, smells, and hugs. I will leave by car from Rio de Janeiro, passing through Espírito Santo, to enter Bahia, Sergipe, Alagoas, Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará, Piauí, Maranhão... traveling with questions looking forward to meetings, conversations... doing exercises in philosophy and childhood, in transit... with our feet on the road, our hands in the questions and our hearts in the world... talking with children and adults, people of all ages willing to experience childhood while thinking... in schools, settlements, parks, squares, beaches, courtyards, backyards... for the pleasure of thinking together about the world we live in and the one we could live in. Do you want to be part of the journey?

When I was there then on the respective settings, the *beginning*-theme that we discussed here earlier, has been center stage many times. I did not know how to begin because very often I did not know the people. So, many times, after I have been introduced as Walter who is professor at Rio de Janeiro University, I asked "O.k., how can we begin? What do you think?

What would you like to think about? Who proposes something to begin with? Or have we already begun? When?..." And it was interesting because people looked at me, wondering "Who is this subject? Why is this person coming here? He's a professor. It is he who should know and then begin talking." And in many places people got interested in thinking about beginning, what does it mean to begin, when something begins, who begins, etc. All the experiences that I had on the trip were lovely though they were also quite different. In some cases, we just remained with the *beginning*-theme. Because people were fascinated, and we just didn't talk about anything but the beginning. They were like a 'non-content' conversations; very difficult to answer the question "what did we talk about?"… but the form was fascinating because time passed very quickly. We begun and in a sense we didn't move too much from the beginning and in another way we were very 'quickly' ending… So, in this case, the content was not important at all. For me it could be about anything, it doesn't matter. What was important however, were the kind of relationships that evolved and the experience of time. And that was great. On other occasions, this was more difficult because many organizations, even quite popular ones, are very hierarchical structured. For example, one thing I always try at such events is not to answer any questions, that is, to put me in the position of not answering. So, when I received a question, usually I gave back the question or analyzed the question or listened to the question or questioned the question. I did various exercises of not answering the question. And some people became kind of confused, saying "You are a professor at university. You must answer." But in the end, it was always nice because the more resistance, the deeper the impact when you realize that it changes a lot when you break this idea of the one who knows answers and the one who does not know questions. Very recently a book was published from the journey with over two hundred pages of testimonies by the hosts of the experiences, my own learnings of the journey, maps, images, etc… Fatime Freire wrote the introduction and up to now it is only in Portuguese (Kohan, 2022)

Johan L.: Was it that you were trying to make an experience of *Aion* by means of this approach to questions? So, just being present here and now together – that was kind of the goal, right?

Walter O. K.: Yes, exactly.

Johan L.: I worked as a teacher in a folk high school for 20 years. One of the great things with the Nordic folk high school is that you don't have to have a specific goal (Lövgren, 2019). Rather, the goal is to be in the present. In my Philosophy class there were times when we would get so caught up in our dialogue, in the present, that we lost track of time. It happened

that the cook would knock on the door and say: "Johan, the others have been eating lunch for 20 minutes now." Because we had no specific curriculum or plan, we could lose count of time. While trying to understand each other and wondering together about how to apply thoughts from philosophy to our own lives we entered into a child-like mode, into *Aion*.

Walter O. K.: I would have loved to be in one of your philosophy classes in the Nordic folk high school! I think we also were in that kind of mode along this 100-days journey. All my university commitments, my classes with my students, all that was also happening but online. So, in that sense, while I was travelling, I had all the time, so to speak. And it was lovely to be in a time so very different from the time of our institutions. I woke up every day at 5 o'clock at the latest and I didn't go to sleep before midnight every day. Nevertheless, I was completely energized as if I had slept 12 hours. On many days of this journey, I had to drive hundreds of kilometers. So sometimes I woke up in the morning and got myself into the car and just typed into the GPS where to go. I didn't know the roads but they were very, very simple roads, not highways, and with not much traffic. And that is also quite interesting – the time on the road. It was very nice to be lost in this time on the road. And then you arrive at a place where there are people waiting and you come and say "Where can we begin?"

Johan L.: When you tell us about your 100-day journey, I thought I saw a connection between *Aion* and political commitment. Could one say that *Aion* is in a sense political? If you experience *Aion* as an adult, is it in a sense a political experience?

Walter O. K.: Yes, of course, because it is the present. It is not the future. I think it's very political because in your experience – in just experiencing the present – you change the logic of the institutions, of the dominant social relationships. You take on a child-like perspective and you are in the present and not in the future, as we normally use to be. You have this feeling of losing time, of doing something that has no other meaning than itself, like questioning, loving, dreaming, and so on.

Michael W.: I think that's quite interesting, what both of you just described. Walter with his trip out into the field where he did 'not begin' and where you, as you said, were not giving any answers to questions. And also you, Johan, with how you described the life at the folk high school and almost missing lunch because you were so into *Aion*-time. These experiences of yours remind me of what Paulo Freire and Myles Horton were describing in their book "We make the road by walking" (see Horten & Freire: 1990) in the chapter on educational practice. There, Horton describes his

pedagogical approach and notes that what he was trying to do when working together with workers and people from the working class was to pose questions and to never give the answers (see ibid: 146f). He did not do that because if he would have given all the answers to the questions of the workers that he met – something that he tried in the very beginning of his career as educator – he would have only contributed to the political hierarchy, the power hierarchy under which the working class suffered at that time. And then he would have failed as educator, as he describes it. In this respect I also have to mention that a common belief of that time was that there are the workers and here are the experts, and the experts have to know and tell the workers what to do. However, the workers were already so fed up with that. So, what Horton actually did was to take a step back and instead of answering questions he was posing questions back. And that helped a lot in his educational practice. Interestingly the subchapter where he describes this, is called “The more that people become themselves, the better democracy” (ibid: 145). Hence, in short, the educator asking back questions, obviously helps in order to build a good democracy.

Walter O. K.: Yes, I agree, and I think that you have pointed out a very clear example of the political implications of our practices. I also remember from that book that there is a chapter, or a section titled “I am always at the beginning, as you are” (ibid: 55) This is something that Paulo Freire says to Myles Horton in this same book (I’ve worked with this idea in the chapter “Childhood” of my philosophical biography on Paulo Freire (see Kohan, 2021)). It’s very intriguing and inspiring. Maybe our ‘political task’ as educators is staying at the beginning, or considering that education has to do with fostering and sharing beginnings.

Michael W.: Maybe at this point we can ask in an ironic way, when are we beginning our dialogue? Or have we already begun?

Walter O. K.: Well, in a sense we are the beginning because we have a question and questions are beginnings, aren’t they? And if we continue having questions from the beginning maybe we are staying at the beginning? That’s also connected to what you were saying before, namely that by not answering you leave a question open, you leave a beginning open. Hence, a question invites us to begin to think. When you give an answer, you close that beginning. This is how I understand what Myles Horton says in that chapter. Metaphorically, when you answer, you say that a road has come to an end. It doesn’t matter how ‘good’ your answer is, it is the kind of relationship to questions (and thinking) you affirm for you and the others, while answering questions. However, when you offer another question, it is like re-beginning or offering to rebegin. It is like accepting

the beginning and saying “OK, and what if we begin here?” and so on. So, I think we have begun, but we are still beginning.

Johan L.: In your article for the qualitative research handbook (Kohan, 2023b), you said that questions are always in *Aion*, did I understand that right?

Walter O. K..: I think that *Aion* is a time of questioning. Of course, you can pose a question in *Chronos*, or ask for a chronological response to a question, for example you can ask, what is the quickest way to go from here to the other neighborhood. The one you are asking will answer in *Chronos*, saying “Oh, you have to take bus 22 and then walk three blocks, so it will take you, let’s say, twenty minutes.” That’s all *Chronos* but for the kind of questioning we are talking about here – we could say philosophical questioning, educational questioning – we need to be in the present. That is why it is also important to experience *Aion*; to create the conditions so that people can question, pose philosophical questions or establish philosophical relations to questions. If I would say, for example, “In my presentation now I will speak for about 15 minutes and then there are 10 minutes for questions” then these 10 minutes are not the time for this kind of questioning. People would pose questions, of course, but if someone comes with a question, another one would say “Oh, I have to hurry up because if not, I will not have time to pose my question.” You see, when you enter that logic, you escape – you are not in the time of questioning anymore, because for that you need to be entirely present and not worried about the future.

Johan L.: In several periods of my life I have had different types of positions in Psychiatric Wards. The people I have met there don’t fit into the expected framework of ‘being normal’, and I would say that many of them are not functioning well in *Chronos*, and because of this, they are set aside by society.

But then I wonder if not many of the respected poets and philosophers could also be said to be in a place like that, that is, to not be established in *Chronos*? As I read their works and try to understand the way they reason, I would say that some of them describe an experience of not functioning very well in *Chronos*, of not fitting into the *Chronos* reality. Nevertheless, they are respected as philosophers, poets and artists.

Walter O. K.: Yes, I agree because the time of philosophy, poetry and art is *Aion*, not *Chronos*. You need to experience the present to think, write, create… And what you describe is also in a sense politically dangerous for a society which is mainly worried about the efficiency and productivity of

the how and disqualifies the *why* or the *for what*. The demeanor of poets, children, of the mad; it's disruptive, it goes against progress, it makes as 'lose' time; it goes against the social order. Just imagine how you get disturbed when you get the feeling of wasting time on something, of not being effective, of not being in accordance with what is expected.

Johan L.: It is provoking.

Walter O. K.: Exactly. And sometimes it is even unacceptable and supposed to be forbidden. It's like when a child does something 'bad' and it should be punished for it, like "You should learn the lesson! You cannot do that! You cannot waste time with that!"

"What does it mean to have a good life?"

Michael W.: What just came to my mind when you were talking again about this *chronological* and *aionic* time is a newspaper article that I was reading a couple of days ago. It was written by the former Foreign Minister of Germany, Joschka Fischer and in the article he had this thought-provoking statement where he said that he can't remember any time during the last 75 years where there were 4 or 5 global crises at the same time as we have now (see Fischer: 2022). So, these are the times that we are living in right now, where we have a climate crisis, a pandemic, an energy crisis, a crisis of delivering goods, a high inflation rate and on top of it a war in Europe. All that, we have at the same time globally and I was wondering how to approach times like these? With that, I am not only asking how we should face the crises that we have, but more generally, the time that we are living in, because obviously the first thought that we have when we are in a crisis is to react. That is, we respond to the situation in order to fix it. This is what we are doing with the climate crisis at the moment – we respond and try to fix; this is also what we are trying to do with the inflation rate, and so on. And this all has to do with *Chronos*, we are planning the right steps so that the future becomes better again. On the one hand, that seems to be wise and the right thing to do. On the other hand, it seems to be nothing but a smoke screening of what is really at stake here – in terms of *aionic* time. For me, we still haven't figured out what it really is about. The only question that comes to my mind in that respect is inspired by a quote of Viktor Frankl when he describes his experiences from the concentration camp. He said "It did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us." (Frankl, 1992: 85) Maybe that is the right question for us too – what is it that life expects from us in these times? And that is a question for meaning.

Johan L.: And with that question we realize that it is not only about humanism in the very narrow sense, but the crises have to do with the planet as a whole; it has to do with life as such.

Walter O. K.: I agree. It's unbelievable how the world has arrived at this point. We don't need to get pessimistic but it's a very troubling time. Of course, the world still has a lot of wonderful dimensions, but it really looks as if we are coming to a point where we are destroying our world, so quickly, so rapidly. It is a challenging moment.

Michael W.: Maybe that is where we have to rethink whether we want to begin to make life better or whether we want to begin to make life good? For me, there is a difference between these two. The good life, according to Aristotle, is the highest goal of all human beings. And, at least to me, this is not meant in the sense of looking for best practices. The good life seems to be about something else. So, maybe we should begin to make life good instead of trying to make life better? Because this is what we did all these years, like in the times of industrialization, of digitalization, and so on. All these times appear to be about this way up, this curve of development. Maybe we have to rethink the whole concept of *making it better*, of *becoming better* and replace it with the concept of *make it good?*

Johan L.: Also, the stress that comes from becoming better originates from *Chronos*. It represents a movement and a goal, and the stress of trying to achieve, I think, limits our ability to find a new beginning and to find a new perspective. The questions that we need to ask cannot be posed in a development-oriented society that always needs to achieve more and more. In that sense, developing an *aionic* perspective may be more important than ever, because the answer has to be found in the *aionic* perspective of the now?

Michael W.: Yes, and when we start to wonder about that question, so many answers and possibilities are opening up. And I would like to keep your questions open, they are wonderful questions… and with them open, we are again at the beginning. Maybe that is a good way to end our conversation?

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Chapter 4

Citizenship, 'Corona Dugnad' and Free Spaces

By Jorun M. Stenøien and Christin Tønseth

1. Introduction

From 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic created a state of ubiquitous worldwide emergency. Norwegian authorities introduced the strictest and most invasive regulations on citizenship freedoms and rights ever imposed in peacetime (Graver, 2020). To encourage the population to joint efforts, the authorities chose to name the fight against the pandemic a national dugnad, which is a well-known concept, a practice of egalitarian community-building efforts deeply rooted in Norwegian culture (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011; Tjora, 2018).

The pandemic and restrictions created an unpredictable situation challenging routines of everyday and social life, norms, values and practices. Everyday activities such as shopping at the food store, visiting grandma and going to work and school acquired new meanings and practices. Everyday life became a challenging balance between self-determination and choice and the community's expectations and demands, which required adjustments and reorientation. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a fundamental change in societies that can be understood as a disjuncture (Bjursell, 2020). Disjuncture happens when individuals are confronted with experiences that conflict with their understanding of the world (Jarvis, 2008). It is a state when people can no longer act upon the world in their accustomed, almost unthinking way. The experience of disjuncture might provide a situation for learning and meaning-making, which, according to Frankl (1992), is what life is all about. According to him, 'forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation' (Frankl, 1992). The theme in this chapter is how the freedom to respond as a citizen to the disjunctive situation caused by Covid-19 is expressed.

From an everyday life perspective (Jacobsen, 2008; Goffman, 1974), we discuss how ways of living with and participating in the corona dugnad might resolve disjuncture and make meaning and learning in ways that can be understood as an expression of everyday life citizenship freedom. Corona dugnad was a term created by the authorities, framing their call for action to fight the pandemic. From a citizenship perspective, participation

in the corona dugnad actualises how regulations and measures are integrated and negotiated, and creates limitations and free spaces for expressing citizenship. This is where the potential for learning lies, in constant choices, assessments and actions related to a context and a situation that also imply a pre-pandemic experience and hope for post-pandemic existence (Biesta & Tedder, 2011). In what way the concept of corona dugnad might serve as a frame of reference for understanding the citizens ways of thinking and their actions in the pandemic period? How can these expressions be understood as alternative citizenship?

What follows is a presentation of the study's method and material before the essential concepts of dugnad and citizenship are explained, and the study's theoretical perspective are presented. The results are presented and discussed in a combined section, followed by concluding remarks.

2. Material and methods

This chapter is based on the pilot project 'Everyday life and learning in the time of the corona',[1] where we used a qualitative design with semi-structured focus group interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The project is NSD[2]-approved, and the four focus group interviews were performed in the late spring and summer of 2020. They provided insights into 12 young adult students' experiences living with the Covid-19 pandemic (Stenøien & Tønseth, 2022). The interview guide was thematically divided into four parts: guidelines for how to act and move in *public* and *private spaces*; *mobility* issues such as travel, local as well as longer journeys; perceptions of the concept and practice of corona dugnad; and the *future*, concerning the costs of the pandemic and what has been learned so far. Analytical credibility (Thagaard, 2018) was ensured by maintaining an open discussion throughout the research process between the four researchers involved in the project. In this study's material is used to analyze how everyday life during the pandemic is experienced as corona dugnad, and how dugnad contributes to shaping citizenship and everyday life's spaces for action. Citizenship is expressed through the informants' perceptions and experiences of dugnad as they knew this practice before and in the context of the corona dugnad. Regulations created challenges and dilemmas in everyday life that shaped and reshaped citizenship space of action and limited and created new opportunities. Many people got caught in dilemmas of what should/must be done and what they wanted/desired to do, and there was an expressed tension between those who participated and those who did not participate in the dugnad. This chapter builds on these findings and looks closer at what corona dugnad meant, framing and solving the disjunctive situation and determining how the freedom to respond is expressed as alternative citizenship.

3. Concepts, theory, and research approach

Concepts - citizenship and dugnad

Dugnad refers to a form of egalitarian community-building deeply rooted in Norwegian culture (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). It is an expression of a civil commitment that includes the individual's ability to engage in something outside themselves (Tjora, 2018). The Norwegian dugnad concept and practice are part of our intangible cultural heritage (Stenøien, 2021), with historical forerunners dating to the 13th century. The concept has proven flexible and adaptable to different times and contexts. In 2004, dugnad was named Norway's national word (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). Lorentzen (2011) claims that dugnad is part of the normative understanding of 'the Norwegian' and an expression of belonging in Norwegian communities. As a local tradition, the dugnad has set standards and rules that are difficult both to change or oppose (Penner, 2021).

Core elements of the dugnad are unpaid work, concurrency (face-to-face meetings), joint work tasks, time limits (beginning and end) and social elements (meetings or other activities). The concept expresses cohesion in the form of social communities and identity in practical and everyday terms and is also symbolic of local civil communities. At the same time, the everyday is combined with the fact that dugnad represents a commitment to the extraordinary, with a promise of something to come (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011).

Lorentzen & Dugstad (2011) emphasized the contribution of dugnad to realize values as volunteering, without this being volunteering in the British philanthropic sense, which is primarily about humanitarian efforts to share and help others (e.g., the work of Sanitetskvinnene). Dugnad involves reciprocity and commitment and is a tool for joint efforts to realize something together. This combination of voluntariness, reciprocity and commitment provides a duality can become a basis for tensions (Lorentzen & Dugstad, 2011). An example of this is seen in different forms of participation and 'dugnad' efforts creating moral winners and losers (Sørhaug, 1989). The authorities' use of the concept of 'dugnad' in the fight against Covid-19 was a call for a joint effort.

Our focus on citizenship during the pandemic concerns what Ruth Lister (2007) named 'lived citizenship of everyday life' – that is, how people understand and negotiate rights and responsibilities and belonging and the meaning that citizenship has in people's lives. Context is important in studies of everyday life lived citizenship and includes the public and private as places where exclusion and inclusion are constituted. Such studies take a bottom-up perspective and have four civic values in common

(Lister, 2007, p.51); justice, recognition, self-determination (human ability to exercise some form of control over their lives) and solidarity (the capacity to identify with others and act in accordance with their demands for justice and recognition). The capacity to identify solidarity reflects a horizontal view of citizenship, which is often present in the Nordic view and plays on the relationship between citizens. This notion concerns how citizens participate in society and create and shape identity, belonging and cohesion in communities, on which a functioning democracy depends. This horizontal dimension coexists and interacts with the vertical relationship between state and individuals that embraces citizens' rights (civil, political, and social) and their guarantees of acceptance and full and equal inclusion (Marshall, 1973).

The social and cultural aspects of citizenship are changeable and are achieved and maintained through actions or practices involving moral decision-making (Pastuhov, 2018, p.27; Korsgaard, 2004; Stenøien, 2003). Citizenship and civic participation are shaped in interaction with the environment and involves a simultaneous ability and willingness to self-govern and to necessary alignment in the collective and community (Stenøien, 2003). Citizenship is about how 'to be' and how 'to act' as a citizen, and 'is understood in social interaction where one meets the different and transcends one's private perspectives to focus on common issues' (Pastuhov, 2018, p.7). Citizenship freedom is then formed by paying attention to the individual and private and the collective and common.

Everyday life perspective

Everyday life perspective on citizenship and dugnad during the pandemic is based on sociological approaches that question and problematise everyday life. Using theoretical perspectives, attempts are made to understand what is taken for granted and 'common-sense' perceptions in new ways (Jacobsen, 2008, p.18). This is a defamiliarisation which makes the well-known unknown. At the same time, one wants to refamiliarise or make the unknown well known to help make everyday life bearable, understandable, and livable for people so that they can live safe, meaningful, and non-alienated everyday lives. The approach is about noticing and studying what is overlooked (Jacobsen, 2008). The sociologies of everyday life have contributors from several disciplines, such as pragmatism, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology (Jacobsen, 2008, p.26), with a common thread of studying everyday life. Everyday life cannot be erased. It is everywhere and impossible to escape (Jacobsen, 2008, p.15). However, we will always have the freedom to choose how to respond to the situation, thus creating meaning in life (Frankl, 1992).

From a critical perspective, the authorities' request to participate in a dugnad together with associated measures for regulating social interaction. This can be regarded as a form of discipline with associated rules of action and norms (Foucault, 1977; Stenøien, 1993). According to Foucault (1982), the population follows disciplinary measures of their 'own free will', even though this entails a narrowing of the desired and normal.

Inspired by Ervin Goffman (1974, 1992), it is relevant to draw on concepts of framing, routines, and analytical distance. The corona dugnad is a form of framing, and the pandemic affects most of the routines and roles of everyday life. Different forms of behavior give rise to different moral characters. Disjunctions are expressed as dilemmas of how to behave and act in everyday contexts, which are handled through various ways of creating distance (Jarvis, 2008), which involves different forms of agentic behavior (Biesta & Tedders, 2011).

Research approach

From an everyday life perspective and sociocultural approach, volunteering in a dugnad can be understood as an act of making meaning (Frank, 1992). Participation in the corona dugnad might be a part of finding ways of living and resolving disjuncture (Jarvis, 2008), which also becomes a practice for learning (Ellsworth, 2005; Lave & Wenger, 2004). The concept of corona dugnad plays on a well-known practice and expression of civic commitment to the community. In the early days of Covid-19, this culturally anchored concept and practice were used to frame corona-related civic regulations that interfere with everyday life and restrict citizenship freedom and self-determination. In the situation of corona disjuncture, we associate the corona dugnad with its cultural anchoring and meaning as a place of learning. To understand what participating in the corona dugnad means, we use findings from studies on study circle participation showing that citizenship can be expressed through participation. According to Laginder & Stenøien (2009) participation can provide a free space in relation to the other demands of everyday life. Annika Pastuhov (2018) found that study circle participation provides a counterweight to everyday life in two ways. Participation can provide a space for acting and being a citizen in alternative ways in relation to everyday life in general, or it can provide a new chance in a future life. Alternative free spaces in everyday life were created by study circle participation, providing opportunities for various forms of distancing from everyday life. Participation in study circles also had a civic potential involving an effort to influence everyday life beyond the study circles. The matters participants distanced themselves from in

everyday life were in various ways present in the study circle practices. However, through distance, problematic aspects of everyday life beyond the study circle could be treated. In this way, everyday alternatives were created in study circles where identified problems could be solved, at least there and then (Pastuhov, 2018). Three forms of freedom were expressed. First, participation in the study circle gave positive freedom to shape life and act in a meaningful, albeit temporary, context. This freedom endures to a certain extent beyond the given context. Second, participation gave negative freedom from limitations in everyday life. Here, participation and learning are created in the given context, contrasting to everyday life. Third, freedom as potential means that participation and learning in the study circle enable freedom in the future.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic was a situation that affected everyone's lifeworld, participation in the corona dugnad was voluntary and an expression of self-determination. In the following section we discuss how participation in the corona dugnad can shape and create free spaces for alternative everyday life, civic self-determination and solidarity during the pandemic.

4. Results and discussion - corona dugnad and citizenship

Concept and consequences

In this first part of the analysis, we will discuss how the informants perceive the framing of the pandemic as corona dugnad. According to Goffman's (1974) 'frame analysis', people interpret social situations automatically within meaningful frameworks. This notion helps us to understand and define what is happening and identify the participants (Jacobsen, 2007). The informants are well acquainted with the nature of a dugnad. Those who define what they understand by the term says it means that everyone 'is in the same boat' and must contribute. Two informants give examples of their own dugnad experiences from their school days. Most informants talk about corona dugnad in ways that indicate that this is a term they use and relate to, to involve themselves and others in dealing with the pandemic. Relating to the regulations, this is referred to as an everyday thing and a matter of habit, with established routines carried out on 'autopilot'.

The informants' emphasis on different aspects of the corona dugnad corresponds with the characteristics of dugnad (Dugstad & Lorentzen, 2011). The term thus seems to be a recognisable and interpretive framework for action that contributes to a refamiliarisation and meaning making of this extraordinary disjunctive situation, which initially created disorder and defamiliarised everyday life for most people (Jacobsen, 2007). Follow

authorities' regulations on autopilot can also be described as a willingness to be governed (Foucault, 1982). In other words, there is a willingness to give up personal freedom in line with authorities' guidelines, but there is also an act of solidarity in favor of fellow citizens and the well-being of the community.

The dugnad concept seems to help resolve the disjuncture and give meaning to the situation. However, the corona experience does not quite correspond to the dugnad. A dugnad is usually an egalitarian and voluntary form of joint effort to achieve something (Dugstad & Lorentzen, 2011). Some informants are doubtful whether dugnad is a good move to manage an entire population. The corona dugnad differs from core elements of the dugnad in several ways. It lacks a time limit and a 'prize' at the end of the effort, and there are no voluntary aspects. Two informants portray participation in this dugnad as akin to being in prison or solitary confinement. One informant points out the unusual fact that this dugnad 'costs' so much in the form of illness, death, loneliness, mental illness, inequality and unemployment. Several factors involved in the corona dugnad are inconsistent with the common concept of dugnad. Existing dugnad experiences and understanding do not correspond to these new experiences. Framing the fight against Covid-19 as a dugnad partly provide meaning to a disjunctive situation. However, the mismatch between the corona-dugnad experience and the dugnad as a well-known concept and practice limits its force as a common motivator for joint effort.

Dugnad spirit – insiders and outsiders

Informants refer to official and community corona dugnad obligations as something in which everyone has agreed to participate. This situation has a moral aspect that plays on cohesion and community. However, not everyone participates in the dugnad – some try to create spaces and positions outside this frame of reference and even outside the pandemic. Åse finds it:

> *provocative that… many… have sacrificed things during the corona, such as funerals or not being able to meet the grandchild or ... yes everything like that and there are some who have these thoughts that it is just hysteria.*

Åse exemplifies this through her father, who was 'skeptical of this corona hysteria'. He lives in a sparsely populated place that has not yet experienced Covid-19, and initially he struggled to understand how seriously ill one can become when 'it's just a flu'. In other words, he doubts the existence of the entire pandemic and accordingly finds it meaningless to participate in the corona dugnad. However, when he visited his daughter, he became the 'most strict to use a face mask'. His skeptical position

towards both pandemic and dugnad reversed. Other examples of behavior that cause irritation among the informants, are those who break and stretch rules for travel and quarantine, such as cabin owners exceeding restrictions on travel and use of cabins, or 'the pensioners at Granca who would rather be in prison than in a quarantine hotel. It's nonsense' (Stine). Stine claims:

> *There are two types of people, you have the type of people who participate in the dugnad, go out and help. Then you have the other part that turns off the light, pull down the blinds, locks the door and pretend they are not home [...] There are those who party – have a party and enjoy themselves and don't care about the restrictions and then there are those who lock the door, then there are those who are involved, help and they go out and sweep and paint and what they supposed to do.*

Several study participants outline these two conflicting characteristics of dugnad behavior as a measure of civic behavior and designation for those who are inside and do what they are supposed to versus those who choose to stand outside and party and do not care about the restrictions.

The respondents find it irritating to encounter views that undermine the content of the dugnad and are not loyal to the guidelines of the corona dugnad or deny the existence of a pandemic. Historically, the connection between dugnad and virtues is practically justified and rooted in moral norms. Morality is expressed in the act of dugnad (Dugstad & Lorentzen, 2011) so that a person's behavior shows their moral position according to fellow citizens. Attempts to position oneself as an outsider (Goffman, 1992) in the face of pandemics and corona dugnad by deliberately breaking or bending guidelines, are characteristics of the type who do not participate and can be understood as moral losers. However, those most eager to condemn others' behavior in harsh statements on social media are not applauded as moral winners. It thus seems that conscious attempts to act as an outsider and shows a judgmental attitude to others' behavior, create irritation and outsider positions (Cohen, 1985; Tjora, 2018).

All the informants mention the Norwegian Prime Minister's 60th birthday celebrations as bad behavior and an example of the type who party and enjoy themselves, break guidelines and take a position as an outsider. There is no place behind the scenes, no protected or private sphere (Goffman, 1992). Nevertheless, some informants are willing to interpret the error step as liberating – 'even significant people are not error-free' (Siri). We all strive to find ways to act. Instead of categorising the Prime Minister as a moral loser, the country's leader is included in the middle layers striving for a moral balance (Sørgård, 1989), because that is probably where most people are. Many talks about how a collective memory failure appears in some contexts and express a certain forbearance about forgetfulness in the

moment. If one is to correct others, with a few exceptions, it happens indirectly in the form of glances, steps back, detours and suchlike. In other words, it is in line with norms of moral decency (Goffman, 1992). Only in certain contexts, preferably in a work context, can one act instrumentally on behalf of the employer's norms and speak directly to correct others' behavior.

Corona in everyday life

Dilemma and choice

The informants point to various dilemmas that arise because of different perceptions of guidelines and injunctions and how they are handled, as well as their own uncertainty when different expectations of how to act do not completely overlap. There are also different interpretations of the regulations, ambiguities as to whether it is an injunction or a recommendation, or a perception of particular rules as strange and illogical. Hence, there can be great uncertainty about how to behave or greet others, when to wear a face mask and whether physical meetings are allowed, or a lack of understanding when someone refuses to be visited or to visit others. Some informants claim that they experience contradictory roles, having certain expectations and rules in some contexts and different ones in other contexts. Informants say that such dilemmas create insecurity and uncertainty. Mari points out that everyday routines become an ethical dilemma – 'is it okay to go visit grandpa now?' Edwin knows people who work at schools who find the ever-changing rules very tiring. There is a lot of back and forth about 'what is the law today? How should one assess? Can the teacher change classes?' Silje shows how 'keeping distance … especially for small children are completely impossible. Adults can tolerate abstinence from intimacy, but a sad or hurt child cannot. Children need to be seen and heard', which is difficult when standing at a distance. All three informants point to practical dilemmas during the pandemic that become moral dilemmas, because it involves possible consequences for vulnerable people. The choices made can in many cases be decisive for the spread of infection and the health of others. Simple everyday behaviors and actions where one shows compassion to others are vital in the pandemic. Siri gives a workplace example, where the question is asked:

> *– but are we inside - are we not? […] We are so many here with me now that we must have a four-part lunch and then we have measured up like that, so it is symbolic, then we sit at a distance while we eat and make a rolling plan for the whole summer and then we are up in the same bed as the patient … there has been a lot of frustration and irritation and then*

> *I have said 'ok, we can just live with it', we can only do what they ask... And then we try to do the best for the patients and ourselves. We must not forget ourselves, in all this..*

Many informants said they solve such dilemmas through negotiations about which rules should apply in specific contexts and where different points of view can be presented and discussed, and a joint decision is made on how to behave. Negotiations occur within the family, circle of friends or workplace, in various leisure activities and in general wherever people meet. Overall, there seems to be a lot of what we have chosen to call 'corona talk', which involves conversations about the pandemic, relevant guidelines and people's perceptions and attitudes in different contexts.

'Corona talk' occurs through discussions and negotiations where solutions to dilemmas are developed. This communication anchors ways of understanding and acting in the community. These negotiations are about mapping the possible consequences of decisions and choices, and they are also about making the best of the situation. It becomes a kind of counterweight to or freedom from instrumentally following constantly changing guidelines and plans, with solutions created to take control of life in the pandemic situation. The negotiation room represents a community for distancing through discussions and interpretations.

Responses and actions

Even those who participate in the corona dugnad do it with a certain reluctance. Siri is annoyed by the lack of endpoints:

> *I feel that I get a little annoyed, and that's because I do not see anything like that 'end state' on this here. We talk a lot about this here at work that 'only when this is over', but then I say, 'we do not know', and going and waiting all the time for the end of something you do not know, I think we just get tired ... A dugnad bears the mark of having a start and an end.*

Siri's concern is that the lack of an endpoint creates a 'wait-and-see' attitude that has a demotivating and tiring effect on the effort. Her alternative is: 'I hope it will be different, …, but we do not know exactly how it will be, so we can do everything that we think is fun now.' From an agency perspective (Biesta & Tedder, 2011), this is a way of taking control of one's life now. Siri does not allow herself to be put on hold by the situation, based on the understanding that the dugnad will end at some future point. She looks for opportunities in the present.

All informants point to limitations in spaces for meeting and acting during the corona pandemic. Everyday routines and behaviors need constant re-evaluation. In periods when society was shut down, the options

and space for normal action were limited, and when society opened a little more, the space for free action and choice increased. Some informants state that they 'try to find loopholes here and there', just to be social and meet people (Stine). Stine is tired of herself and her own company. She wants to meet people and bring in something new, a little variety in everyday life. While some informants indicate that the situation has made them a bit 'paralysed' and passive, others say that they have become a little more creative in finding solutions and new opportunities in the limited circumstances. So, while some take a wait-and-see attitude, others increase their control over the present situation by figuring out how to find enjoyment in their current circumstances. Several informants concretise ways to utilise the space of action and say they find new solutions, try out activities, and sample new forms of togetherness and new ways of doing things. Camilla thinks it sounds clichéd, but says she appreciates going out into nature. She is concerned with how to become adaptable.

> *For example, now I'm going to start knitting, painting like that. We are forced to think about where it is I can actually get a bit of that positivity out in a slightly difficult time, and some of it I will probably take with me further in life. I have thought a lot about what the corona has done with me– we have found other ways to be social with distance. We still have courses digitally and we must adapt in many areas as well, not just in the labor market but in every ways.*

Adapting to the situation is not necessarily passive adjustment. Camilla's statement is an example of another way of creating free space as a counterweight to pandemics and corona dugnad, one that is much more in line with being free, adaptable, and orienting oneself towards new forms. Creativity includes everything from ways of meeting, using digital meeting places, creating new hobbies, or appreciating new things in life. Such creativity is something other than pure readjustment. Achieving it creates free space from restrictions where one chooses to be free to do what makes personal sense and thus express self-determination as an alternative citizenship during the pandemic – created within the framework of the corona dugnad.

5. Concluding remarks – alternative citizenship and everyday life

The dugnad metaphor served as an interpretive framework for fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, creating a basis for effort among individuals, in the community and across society. Citizens willingly internalised various regulations and voluntarily relinquished important aspects of their civic and

individual freedom. The gaps between multiple realities of the corona dugnad and the characteristics of a dugnad made the metaphor lose its power as a frame of interpretation. Perhaps there were several dugnads.

Different contexts –at work or in groups of friends, for example – create free space for corona talk where discussion and interpretation of the possibility of action and solutions to dilemmas occur. This situation creates common understandings that influence everyday actions. 'Corona talks' help make sense of the disjunctive situation and show the importance of communication. Communication creates security and possible ways of relating to a difficult situation where one tries to adhere to official guidelines and at the same time provides a form of self-determination.

Counterweight and freedom from the all-consuming Covid-19 crisis and the limitations it entails involves such activities as creating free space for individual or joint activity, socialising, learning new activities, visiting forests and painting. These loopholes can be filled with different activities, which also stimulate doing new things. One takes control and decides for oneself as a counterweight to external coercion and limitations. This approach frees people from those limitations and lets them engage in meaningful individual or social activities independent of the outside world.

Thought and action patterns in a time of crisis can be useful in other disjunctive situations. Various forms of meaning-making and expressions of alternative citizenship and freedom that create a counterweight or forms of arrangement that are free spaces are important for maintaining civic freedom and self-determination while sharing compassion and solidarity with others.

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Chapter 5

Why Teach History for Adults? Trends in history teacher education from a national discipline to diversity, cross-cutting themes and learning outcomes with an emphasis on Europe and Norway

By Lasse Sonne

Abstract

In this chapter I argue that history is not static, and that it does not finish; when society changes, history changes with it. As a result, teaching history needs ongoing revision. By exploring research and policy-documents from the Norwegian government, the OECD, and the Council of Europe, I suggest that the subject of history experiences a shift from nationalism to diversity and cross-cutting themes. I furthermore argue that there has been a development from input-oriented knowledge of history to learning outcomes relevant for society in general and the labour market. History as a topic is expected to produce competencies for a democratic culture, at least in the Western world, through the development of relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding (Council of Europe, 2018). At the same time, history and history teaching are challenged to contribute to the transformation of labour markets in a world characterised by ever-changing economic and industrial structures. History has, however, always been about change and transformation, and history is an important dimension to include when developing transformative competencies for the labour market as formulated in the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 (OECD, 2019). In conclusion, I strongly recommend new history education and learning for adults, simply because much of the history adults were taught in primary and secondary school is irrelevant for today's society and labour markets.

Keywords

history teacher education, adult learning, diversity, cross-cutting themes, learning outcomes, transformative competencies, labour market

Introduction

Most people were taught history in primary and secondary school, often for several years. One might ask: what more is there to learn? Don't we know all we need to know about history after finishing school? The answer is no; history is not static, and thus never finishes, and new history teaching for adults is highly needed in an ever-changing society. History as a topic is dynamic and always in development. In other words, what we learnt about history yesterday might not be relevant today because, as society changes, history changes too. History departs from the present and from expectations regarding future developments in society and in people's lives. It is a misunderstanding to think that history is about history itself and thus only departs from the past. In this chapter I outline the focus areas of history teaching and describe why these are important for adults.

Material and methods

By analysing research literature combined with policy-documents from the Norwegian government, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe, I develop the argument that there has been a shift in society from nationalism to diversity and cross-cutting themes, which are reflected in, for example, the national curriculum. I also analyse the development from input-oriented knowledge of history to learning outcomes relevant for both society in general and the labour market.

Theory

A tight theoretical frame has not been developed for this chapter. The chapter is foremost a study of new trends in history teacher education as reflected in the literature about the historiography of the discipline (Floto, 1985). As a part of this, understanding history as interactions between the present, the past, and the future is used as an approach (Aronsson, 2004, p. 70; Bøe & Knutsen, 2013; Lund, 2011; Stugu, 2010). Research on employability is introduced to understand general trends in competence developments and education with an increasing focus on industry or business life development (Boffo, Federighi & Torlone, 2015; Sweitzer &

King, 2019; Singh & Ehlers, 2020; Xiaomin & Auld, 2020; Sonne 2020). Finally, a point of departure has been the transition of education from input-oriented education and teaching to output-oriented learning and the effects this transition might have on history education and history teaching (Pépin, 2007).

The history of history: From a national discipline to internationalisation and diversity

A characteristic of traditional history was the role of history in nation-building projects with the development of the nation-state from the 19th century onwards. History was linked to the development of the educational subject of history at schools, which was largely about influencing students in the direction of becoming good, well-integrated citizens in the nation state. The nationalist character and tradition of the subject of history was well established by Jarle Simensen (1989), who found that only 12% of all theses in history submitted in the period 1972-1987 focused on international themes. The figure was down to 8% if tasks that addressed Norwegian attitudes to the world outside Norway were kept out. When it came to research projects among Norwegian permanent historians, the number was even smaller. There was thus a rather extreme nationalization of Norwegian history research among Norwegian researchers employed at Norwegian universities and colleges (Knutsen, 2002, pp. 59-60).

In this chapter, *why* the subject of history was mainly developed as a national discipline is not the main focus. It should just be noted that even though reference is made here to a Norwegian study, the trend was the same in other western countries. For example, most new professional journals in history had a national focus (Floto, 1985, p. 33-35). In addition, the subject of history was developed in the subject's childhood as an educational subject with a close connection to national identity development. The subject thus became both academically and nationally introspective in many ways. This is even though the subject of history gradually took inspiration from the natural sciences, positivism and moved in the direction of becoming an international science (Floto, 1985, pp. 27-31, pp. 59-61). But it went slow. And the original humanistic-philosophical and national starting point remains deep in the subject. The subject of history is thus greatly influenced by the subject's own history.

It was only much later that areas such as history didactics and public history were developed. Public history is about what history can be used for in different contexts such as scientific, existential, moral, ideological, political, and commercial just to name some areas (Aronsson, 2004; Stugu, 2010; Bøe & Knutsen, 2013). History didactic research

was introduced at universities in the United States and England in the late 1970s as well as at universities and colleges in Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden during the same period. The Scandinavian history didactics was influenced by the concept of historical consciousness, which was developed in Germany. History awareness contrasted with Anglo-American research, which focused on students' thinking about the past linked to the key concepts of the subject of history (Lund, 2011, p. 23). An expansion, or development, started regarding the subject of history, which had not changed since the professionalization of the subject in the 19th century.

Based on the Council of Europe's own recommendations and recommendations from the European Commission and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Council of Europe has proposed what the future of history education should look like 2030 (Council of Europe, 2018). The document on the history education of the future was produced by a group of officials and practitioners of history education from all Council of Europe countries. The group was based on the United Nation's (UN) sustainability goal Number 4. The so-called Incheon Declaration from 2015 deals with the sustainability goal on education and emphasizes that good education is inclusive and equality-creating, creating opportunities to participate in lifelong learning (Education 2030, 2015, p. 29).

The Council of Europe Group focussed on the role of history education in the implementation of UN's sustainability goal Number 4. According to the Council of Europe Group, the role of history is primarily to ensure democracy and prevent attacks on democratic values. The group believed that the goal of history teaching is to secure and develop democracy in contemporary Europe in the context of diversity, building diverse, inclusive, and democratic societies. An important challenge for history teaching, according to the group, was also to ensure the development of critical historical thinking in a digital age (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 5).

The group set up under the auspices of the Council of Europe developed proposals for several competencies that the group considered important in developing the history education of the future in Europe. The competencies were divided in the same way as the EU's key competencies - i.e., in values, attitudes, and skills. The last points in the EU's key competences are knowledge and understanding. However, the group of the Council of Europe call this point knowledge and ***critical*** understanding, which goes back to the development of the subject of history in the 19th century, where source criticism was central (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 4).

The group's recommendations to the Council of Europe regarding history education in Europe included a break with its deep and old tradition to be nationally oriented. According to the group, democracy in diverse societies should be at the core. According to the Council of Europe Group, the subject of history has an important role to play in education in a multicultural and democratic society. This applies in relation to developing future values, attitudes, and skills that support such a development, but it also applies in relation to strengthening students' ability to be critical. History education of the future should not be about uncritical enumeration of historical facts (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 5).

The Council of Europe Group predicted that a new direction in history education would have several consequences. Firstly, the group foresaw that new curricula must be developed in the member states of the Council of Europe. According to the group, these curricula should be based on so-called flexible principles and supported by interactive pedagogies that recognize cultural differences. In this regard, the group believed that historical and contradictory narratives are a natural part of teaching history. This not only requires good historians, but it also requires educators with solid pedagogical competencies to deal with contradictions (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 10).

It was unsurprising that the Council of Europe group placed a special light on the education and continued education of history teachers. According to the group, a new history education presupposes that history teachers are given the opportunity to develop their values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding in the same way that students are expected to develop these. Asking history teachers to focus on democratic development and diversity requires capacity building of both history teachers and those who train history teachers at universities and colleges. It will require financial investments in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as significant investments in the development of history teachers intellectually, didactically, and pedagogically (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 8).

From Enlightenment to employabilit

The history of history can be traced back to antiquity, while the professionalization of history as a subject can be traced back to the Enlightenment in the 18th century and the founding of Humboldt Universität (originally Universität zu Berlin) in what was then Prussia. Source criticism was central to the establishment of history as a subject. A pioneer was German historian Leopold von Ranke, who defined history as centred on human beings and the creative activity of human beings with a focus on his intentions,

thoughts, and feelings. Thus, the professionalization of history as a scholarly tradition became associated with the humanities with a focus on political history and motive analysis. The focus on the individual human being also meant that the subject of history basically broke with tendencies to generalize. Instead, historical material and historical events were perceived as unique or historically specific. Thus, one can also say that the professionalization of history implied that history was a special field that stood in contrast to other natural and social sciences (Floto, 1985, p. 22-23).

The literature on education for historians and the relationship to competence development and the development of employability is extremely sparse, or rather non-existent regarding the very focus of the area's history. In other words, it is a field that is undeveloped. A lot has been written about internships, but most of what is available are books and other material that deal with general matters related to internships and competence development of relevance to the working life. In addition, research exists on, among other things, the socialization that is considered important in terms of being able to contest a job (Daily, 2014; Boffo, Federighi & Torlone, 2015; Sweitzer & King, 2019).

It is not new that governments and transnational organizations such as the OECD and the EU are pushing for a clearer focus on developing employability through elementary, secondary, higher education, as well as adult education. A British report written on behalf of the British Ministry of Education, for example, suggested in 2011 that closer co-operation should be developed between granting authorities, schools, universities, colleges, and employers. In addition, the report called for the development of new forms of assessments and credits, which value skills that are developed in working life (Wolf, 2011, pp. 143-144).

A report on enhancing employability developed by the OECD, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Bank emphasizes employability as central to globalization with its technological change, innovation, changes in the way work is organized, environmental change, and demographic developments (OECD, 2016). According to the report, the development of employability is central in terms of being able to handle structural change and stimulate innovation. It is about being able to move labour from less productive activities to more productive ones to improve the productivity and well-being of employees (OECD, 2016, p. 3).

The history education at universities and colleges was not initially developed to be cross-cutting. Instead, the education focused on theoretical and philosophical issues as well as source-critical technique, which is a core of the history subject's method. History didactics and the use of

history are today integral parts of history education, but there is still a long way to go before most history educations can be described as cross-cutting. New demands from society however demand development of history teaching. This is not least the case when analysing the Norwegian curriculum that has been implemented in the Norwegian primary and secondary education from 2020 on.

From a specialised discipline to cross-cutting themes: the Norwegian curriculum

Regarding cross-cutting themes, the Norwegian curriculum states that the school should facilitate learning within the three interdisciplinary themes of public health and life skills, democracy and citizenship, and sustainable development. These three interdisciplinary cross-cutting themes are based on current societal challenges that require commitment and effort from individuals and the community in the local, national, and global community. The students should, according to the curriculum, develop competencies related to interdisciplinary topics through work with issues from different subjects. Students are to gain insight into challenges and dilemmas within the topics. They should understand how we, through knowledge and collaboration, can find solutions, and they should learn about the connections between actions and consequences. The knowledge base for finding solutions to problems within the topics is found in many subjects, and the topic of history is to contribute to the students gaining understanding and seeing connections across subjects. Educational goals for students are expressed in terms of competencies (Norwegian curriculum 1, 2020).

The cross-cutting theme of public health and life skills is an interdisciplinary theme in school that should provide students with competencies promoting good mental and physical health and provide opportunities to make responsible life choices (Norwegian curriculum 2, 2020). In the case of democracy and citizenship, this cross-cutting theme is seen in the Norwegian curriculum as an interdisciplinary theme that should provide students with knowledge of the preconditions, values, and rules of democracy, and enable them to participate in democratic processes. The training should provide students with an understanding of the connection between democracy and key human rights such as freedom of expression, the right to vote, and freedom of association (Norwegian curriculum 3, 2020). The cross-cutting theme sustainable development emphasises that the school should facilitate an understanding of basic dilemmas and developmental features in society, and how they can be handled. Sustainable development is about protecting life on earth and taking care of the needs of people

living today, without destroying the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Norwegian curriculum 4, 2020).

The cross-cutting themes in the Norwegian curriculum are to be integrated into all subjects in the curriculum, thus also history. In the subject of history, the cross-cutting theme of public health and life skills helps, or at least this is the expectation, students understand that they are history-created and history-creating. This will, according to the curriculum, help students to understand, influence, and master their lives. Students should, according to the curriculum, understand that the past and how the past is presented shapes how people and society perceive themselves and others. This is important for the development of a desirable identity. Insight into how people have been involved in creating history should give students an understanding that they too can be involved in shaping their present and future realities. Such an understanding should help to give meaning to life and motivate good choices. The subject of history is therefore in Norwegian curriculum about how people in the past handled their living conditions, so that students develop historical empathy. This should give students a basis for developing respect for others and for making responsible life choices, according to the curriculum (Norwegian curriculum 5, 2020).

The cross-cutting theme of democracy and citizenship is in relation to history giving students an understanding of the origin and development of democracy. It also gives students an understanding of what makes democracies viable. Students should, according to the curriculum, understand that democracy has not been and is not a matter of course, but a consequence of choices people have made, make, and will make in the future. Through the subject of history, students should be trained to see a diversity of perspectives and understand that people have different priorities, attitudes, and values in different contexts. The subject of history thus should help make students aware of opportunities for being active citizens (Norwegian curriculum 6, 2020).

The cross-cutting theme of sustainable development combined with the subject of history is about giving students opportunity to understand the interaction between man and nature and how man has related to nature, managed, and used resources. The subject of history should also shed light on how human activity has changed living conditions on earth, while at the same time solving problems that arose. History awareness should, according to the curriculum, foster an understanding that the consequences of one's choices become part of the story of others. Thus, the students should, according to the curriculum, also be aware of opportunities to contribute to a more sustainable society (Norwegian curriculum 7, 2020).

From input-oriented leaning to learning outcomes

History has traditionally been characterised by input-oriented teaching; students needed to know and be able to recollect facts, names, and historical figures. This has changed. History has moved from input-oriented teaching to output oriented learning with a focus on learning outcomes.

This development was influenced by the development of the EU Framework for Lifelong Learning (2000), when the Lisbon European Council (the so-called Lisbon Strategy or Lisbon Process) agreed that if Europe were to compete in a globalized economy, Europe's future economy must be based on knowledge. To meet this challenge, it was considered necessary that citizens of Europe have the skills needed to live and work in the new knowledge society. Skills development should be available to everyone, adults and people with special needs included. The aim was to promote both education and employment capacity (European Council, 2000). In connection with the development of a framework for basic skills, the European Council set up a working group in 2001 with the task of developing a framework for what became known as key competencies; competencies that are necessary for success in a knowledge-based society. The term competence must be understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes and the term key competence refers to a competency that everyone needs. These were not exclusively basic skills. The result was the EU's investment in key competences and lifelong learning from 2006 on (Pepin, 2007, p. 127-30; Recommendation, 2006).

When there was a need for a broader frame of reference, it was because the development of the knowledge-based society was sharpening the requirement for personal, public, and professional key competencies. Citizens' access to information and services changed as did the structure and composition of society. It brought about a comprehensive change in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that everyone needed to cope, especially in working life. For example, working life was affected by rapid and frequent changes, new technology, and by new approaches to business organization. Working people had to be able to quickly update specific work-related skills and be able to acquire general skills that enabled them to adapt to change. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the workforce were therefore an important part of innovation, productivity, and competitiveness and were seen as a contribution, also to employee motivation, well-being, and quality of work (European Council, 2000).

In 2018, the EU adjusted its key competences in relation to the original ones from 2006 with reference to a further development in the need to be able to compete in the global economy and develop social inclusion

and justice (Recommendation, 2018). The EU key competencies obviously had a direct influence on the Norwegian curriculum, which is now also focussed on preparing the students for active citizenship and work life.

According to the Norwegian curriculum, history is a central subject for cultural and social understanding, formation, and identity development. It is seen as contributing to students' understanding of themselves and society, and an understanding that contemporary structures, values, and attitudes have roots in the past. Through the subject of history, students should develop insight into key historical events and contexts and people's room to manoeuvre in the past. The subject should further contribute to students becoming active citizens who can take a stand and see current challenges in the context of collective history. Recognition that the world has been different, and that the present and the future can be different, are important prerequisites for active participation in society according to the curriculum. Through the subject of history, students should, furthermore, develop the ability to think critically and develop scholarly ways of thinking that enable them to acquire knowledge and understand that knowledge is created, and that representations of the past can be used and abused. This should give students competencies for participation in society and working life (Norwegian curriculum 8, 2020).

History, democracy, and transformative competencies in Europe

While it may seem that transnational organisations with a focus on economic development such as the OECD, the ILO and the World Bank focus on manufacturing industries and other types of companies in their policy documents, new orientations are developing within these organisations. One orientation is, for example, the OECD's humane turn. By this is meant that for a period from about 1950 to today, the OECD has moved from agendas marked by the Cold War and neoliberal globalization to sustainable development goals. From focusing exclusively on the economic interests of Western societies and the possibilities of industry in terms of mass production and export, the focus has shifted towards non-cognitive skills with a special focus on so-called transformative competencies and transformative pedagogies (Xiaomin & Auld, 2020, p. 4). This trend is reflected in the learning compass developed by OECD with a view to set the course towards 2030 for education and skills development. The OECD's compass document is interesting because it departs from the UN's sustainability goals. The compass sees the industrial revolution, where machinery and the processing industry were central, as belonging to the past (OECD,

2019, p. 7). Now, competencies are not just about developing skills that the industry can benefit from. A tendency is to see education as part of a larger ecosystem, where decisions and responsibilities are shared between stakeholders. For example, by including parents, employers, local communities, and students into a more general or generic competence development (OECD, 2019, p. 14).

With the new compass of learning, the OECD is also shifting its focus from being output or effect-oriented to have a focus on processes of learning and competence development. In the OECD's learning compass, not only students' performance but also their holistic well-being is highlighted as important (OECD, 2019, p. 14). This is a change in terms of human vision and in terms of the resources that humans represent. It is a new way for the OECD to look at people in a context of economic development.

The development encouraged by the OECD indicates that it is not only history as a subject that is changing. Society is changing, and so is the OECD. And perhaps these changes will make it easier to reconcile two sides that have often been seen as opposites - a humanities-philosophical education subject like history and an economic engine of development represented, for example, by the OECD. The development can probably also be linked to the inclusive growth strategies developed by both the EU and the OECD (European Commission, 2020; OECD, 2021). What we see, in other words, is that a global norm for employability is being merged with a norm for sustainable development. This merger has contributed to the area of employability, which the OECD, together with the ILO, the World Bank, and the UN, among others, has promoted for many years, and which has become something completely different than it was just some few years ago (Singh & Ehlers, 2020). What is happening at the EU and the OECD level regarding employability may at first glance seem insignificant for the education of historians and history teachers, but this is not the case. The EU is stimulating both the development of the EU's competitiveness and, on the other hand, Europe as a sustainable entity. Therefore, new winds are blowing when it comes to developing the history education of the future. Consequently, demands on what to teach and how to teach in history are changing as well.

Concluding remarks

The questions raised in this chapter was why teach history to adults? What more is there to learn? Do we not already know history by now? In other words, why repeat what we have already been taught at school? In this

chapter, the answer and argument developed was that history is a dynamic and changing subject. What we learned yesterday no longer represents today and tomorrow. Not only are teaching methods changing from input-oriented teaching to output-oriented learning, the content of history teaching is also changing. As a reflection of societal developments, history moves from a national focus towards diversity and the transnational. In addition, a more complex understanding of the world calls for interdisciplinary learning. The Norwegian cross-cutting themes in the new national curriculum with a focus on health and life skills; democracy and citizenship; and sustainable development are examples of this adaption to new demands – also for history as a subject in school.

The biggest challenge for history is probably to formulate the subject into an agenda with emphasis on what might be described as useful. In other words, what is history good for? How can it justify itself? In this chapter, I argued that history as a subject in school justifies itself in at least two ways. One way is related to questions of critical thinking, democracy, sustainable development and with that citizenship development. Another way is to formulate the subject of history in relation to employability and with that competence developments for improvement of economic development and competitiveness. The OECD learning compass with a focus on transformative competence development opens new horizons for a subject like history. New trends, both inside and outside the subject of history, requires us to study history over again and again. This is also the case for adults.

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Chapter 6

To Know and be Known – Cross-sectoral learning initiatives aimed at older adults

By Magdalena Popławska

Abstract:

The article examines cultural education activities which involved older adults as participants. The analysis is based on the qualitative evaluation research of the project "Open Castle with Home Delivery", conducted by the author. It was implemented in 2020 by a cultural institution, the Zamek Culture Center in Poznań, in cooperation with health and social work centres. The project was aimed at older people who receive regular support from formal and informal caregivers. Conclusions from the evaluation research lead to analyses of other participatory cultural, health and social work projects in Poland. The interpretive framework used for the analysis draws on the emancipatory premises of critical pedagogy and cultural education. Particular attention is paid to activities related to music and singing which are presented in the context of music therapy and reminiscence therapy, and as activities referring to the empowering potential of playfulness. The analysed practices are used to reflect on the cultural participation of people who experience difficulties in accessing institutional offerings. The final conclusions concern the need for collaborative and learning-oriented ways of working, connecting educators and health professionals.

Keywords:

cultural education, older adult learning, intersectoral partnerships, qualitative evaluation research

1. Introduction

How does the cultural education that includes older people look like? And what could it look like? How to organise events that include older adults, respond to their real needs and take into account not only their diverse abilities and preferences, but also difficulties they experience? How to include social groups with limited access to the cultural offer and stimulate their

participation in culture? The aim of this article is to address these questions from the perspective of evaluation research of the project "Open Castle with Home Delivery" run by the Zamek Culture Center (CK Zamek), a cultural institution from Poznań, Poland. The project was implemented in 2020[6] and included such activities as educational workshops, guided walk, film screening and lectures. It was based on the idea of a "wandering institution" that reaches new places and gets to know new sections of its potential audience. It was organised in cooperation with partner organisations from Poznań, the Ugory residential care home, "PETRA Senior" Foundation, and Little Brothers of the Poor Association, and received financial support from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland. This intersectoral cooperation is based on inclusive definitions of cultural education and different perspectives and work methods that interface between the areas of culture, health and social work. The project was aimed at older adults who, for various reasons, including health issues, experienced barriers to accessing the cultural offer. They were supported in their daily lives by formal or informal caregivers. Some of the participants had previously used services offered by partner organisations, while others had attended events organised by CK Zamek. Workshops were consistently held either at the premises of partner organisations or in a cultural institution. A few meetings also took place in the private flats of the older people who were less likely to leave their homes. In line with the titular "home delivery" promise, educators strived to reach places that provide older adults with the sense of comfort and security, i.e. domestic spaces and places where they could feel at home.

The evaluation research of the "Open Castle with Home Delivery" (hereinafter: Open Castle project) aimed to answer the following questions:

> […] by what means were the goals of the project realised and how did the project respond to the current needs of the recipients? What kind of knowledge, experience, social relations and forms of interaction arose from the organised events? What difficulties emerged along the way, and what could be described as successes and good practices that should be maintained? (Popławska, 2020, p. 3)

The findings of the evaluation research, which were included in a report published by CK Zamek, will serve in this article as a starting point for a broader critical analysis that covers also other cultural and social work

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6 Two earlier editions of the project were organised in 2018 and 2019. The evaluation research carried out by Bogumiła Mateja-Jaworska in 2018 provided an important reference point for the subsequent evaluations (see: Mateja-Jaworska, 2018).

initiatives in Poland. My intention is to look at practices that result in an inspiring upheaval and transform the image of education aimed at older adults. At the same time, I would like to discuss here selected methods and techniques used in educational work – in terms of their potential and limitations in the context of the needs and capabilities of older people. The Open Castle project explored many different types of activities, but, in this paper, I will focus on those related to music and singing. As revealed by the evaluation research, they were "among the most common and particularly positively received elements" (Popławska, 2020, p. 12). Increasingly, music-based activities are also becoming popular in the context of music therapy, and the number of studies indicating that music and singing have a therapeutic effect on older people has been growing steadily.

The article is written from the perspective of a researcher who has been working with CK Zamek for several years, and, before that, cooperated with other cultural institutions in Poland, also in the role of an educator and coordinator. As part of the evaluation research of the Open Castle project, I participated in most of the organised events, supported older adults in their workshop work, contributed to joint discussions, helped with organisational issues, and took part in activities, together with other participants. I could communicate my preliminary conclusions about the project's work methods early enough that it was still possible to modify the assumptions adopted. My activities partly addressed the objectives of action research. I studied "how" to educate, but also "what" to teach and for what purpose (Morley, 2020, p. 11; Formosa, 2005, p. 399; Chevalier & Buckle, 2019). The interpretations presented in this article are elements of a broader picture, set in a social context, and in relation to other social actors.

2. Material and methods

In this article, I will refer to the qualitative evaluation research I designed and implemented in cooperation with CK Zamek. The research was conducted during the course of the Open Castle project, in the second half of 2020. Within the project's scope, there were seventeen events attended by older adults, including workshops focused on ornament making, plant compositions and upcycling techniques, a guided walk through the dendrological garden, home cello concerts, a concert and dance show, a "white voice" singing workshop, a literature-oriented meeting, a laboratory workshop with chemical experiments, a singing and music-making meeting, a cooking workshop, a lecture and workshop on breathing methods, and a film screening followed by a discussion. The project's participants were predominantly women. Apart from individuals who spontaneously joined some of the workshops (e.g. while touring the building of CK Zamek),

the events were attended by older people, aged 60 or more. There were, in total, about 60 different participants. This number is an approximation, as some of the workshops and events were held at day or residential care centres and attracted people who participated only in some part of the event (e.g. concert) or did it from their rooms and balconies.

The evaluation research included the following methods and techniques:

- - participant observation carried out during thirteen events organised under the project. The observations included research notes and short conversations with older people who attended the events;
- - in-depth interviews conducted with the project's originator and coordinator, and two individuals representing one of the partner organisations. The interviews were conducted directly or online;
- - short interviews, unstructured, with eight people who either led the workshops or helped to organise them. Interviews were conducted directly or by phone (Popławska, 2020, pp. 4-5).

The results of the analysis of the research data were used by me to create an evaluation report. It was published on the CK Zamek website and presented to the project's funding institution. In this article, I will refer to the research results included in the report, the literature review and documentation on other cultural activities which include older people. The choice of the analysed projects is motivated by their function in the current discourse on inclusive and critical cultural education in Poland. The organisers of these educational activities collaborate with each other and participate in public debates on cultural participation of people who need social support.

3. Critical cultural education

The article adopts the transformative and emancipatory assumptions of critical pedagogy. In the field of adult education, critical pedagogy's perspective on the learning practices emphasises the importance of dialogue, horizontal relationships, critical reflection and self-reflection, as well as knowledge, experience and agency of all those involved in the learning process. In the context of the analysed projects aimed at older people, it was very important to relate them to real social and political issues – overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, addressing social inequalities. The critical approach to the learning practices of older adults opposes the medicalisation of old age, ageism, belittling older people and treating them, in an oversimplified manner, as a homogeneous group (Biesta, 2016; Formosa, 2005; Freire, 2017). Recognition of differences between individual older

participants – related to their age, gender, race, socioeconomic or health status – becomes the basis for diagnosing their actual needs. The analyses are presented in the context of broad and inclusive definitions of cultural education, also based on the critical pedagogy. In this article, cultural education is understood as activities that do not include the division into high or low culture or into active or passive participation in culture. Such notion of education refers to the culture present in the framework of everyday, often grassroots practices, in every sphere of life, including those related to health and social work. At the same time, there is an assumption that every-day cultural practices depend on political, economic and social factors. Cultural education aims to improve people's competences in the sphere of interpretation of cultural works and messages, while, at the same time, facilitating and enhancing their conscious and critical participation in culture understood a whole way of life (Kosińska, 2014, 2019; Williams, 2002). It is an egalitarian, democratising approach to education. Furthermore, as pointed out by Marta Kosińska, and true in the context of my own work, "the horizons of the educator and the cultural researcher often start overlapping in the context of cultural education with academic activity, merging into a joint, socially engaged practice" (Kosińska 2014, p. 177).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Playfulness

As indicated by numerous studies, music can be used for therapeutic purposes and has positive impact on, e.g., social skills, emotional well-being, and mitigation of stress, anxiety and pain (Bayliss, 2016, pp. 120-121; Pavlicevic, 2015). The Nordoff-Robins Foundation, which collaborated with CK Zamek in the Open Castle project, is one of the organisations which use creative music therapy in practice. Musicians and therapists from the foundation regularly organise open music sessions, inviting various groups of people, including people with disabilities, older adults, and children, to play together. Some sessions take place in public spaces, and are open to random passers-by, while others target specific audiences and are based on previously established collaborations. Session leaders define their work through the prism of inclusive educational practices and an open approach towards "inner musicality." According to the organisation's description:

> The Nordoff Robbins music therapist's role is to hear the other person's movement, voice and playing as part of a piece of music [...]. The therapist's role is to create the conditions in which each participant can be

> heard and join others in playing or singing [...] The therapist's role is to accompany participants on their journey of discovery of their potential for autonomy, imagination, flexibility and social activity. (Nordoff Robbins Poland, n.d.)

The Open Castle project did not involve any systematic therapeutic process, but an educational activity whose reference points were both the role and tasks of the educator and the organisers' desire to "suspend [...] the state of dependence" of older people by facilitating their participation in culture (Popławska, 2020, p. 18). Simultaneously, the work methods adopted by CK Zamek were combined with therapeutic exploration of the participants' "inner musicality" and attempts to influence their emotional well-being. The close cooperation between representatives of the cultural, health and social work sectors made it possible for older adults to join a spontaneously created choir or joyful dance performance, and practice their skills through play.

Listening to music, creating it, joining group dancing and singing can be seen as playful activities that fulfil the social need to build relationships with others and feel the sense of belonging to a particular group. Playfulness allows people to express their personalities, for example, by whistling and stomping their feet to the music. It also evokes good mood, provoked by, for example, humorous passages of song lyrics; and stimulates creativity and cognitive abilities, encouraging the audience to join the dance or suggest what songs should be performed next (Tonkin & Whitaker, 2016, p. 21; Popławska, 2020, pp. 12-13). All of these examples refer to real-life situations which occurred within the framework of the Open Castle project. However, as Alison Tonkin and Julia Whitaker suppose, "our wealth-driven, achievement-driven, civilization denies a space to activities that lack the seriousness of clearly recognizable outcomes – with discernible consequences for the health of both individuals and of society in general" (Tonkin & Whitaker, 2016, p. 23). It is worthwhile to draw motivation for cultural activities from play therapy when proposing alternative, playful approaches to learning and healing processes, as this form of therapy stimulates the senses, drives experimentation, makes people more open to taking on new roles, as well as to spontaneity, humour and imagination (Ward-Wimmer, 2003). Playfulness was also one of the responses to the coronavirus pandemic – it helped build new creative opportunities for maintaining social relationships, such as socially distanced communal dance sessions, and provided a way to reach the most vulnerable social groups (Tonkin & Whitaker, 2021, pp. 2-3). It is worth noting that pandemic-related constraints formed the backdrop for all the events that took place during the Open Castle project. The organisers had to adjust

to the situation in which opportunities to visit older people at their homes or in residential care centres were exceedingly rare. Sometimes, the limitations resulted in rather small-scale events, with only three or four people in attendance. On the other hand, the older adults themselves eagerly awaited subsequent meetings, including ones held in public, in a wider circle. As the evaluation report states:

> The music performances at the Ugory residential care centre could count on the audience composed not only of the every-day residents who showed up in the greenery-covered, spacious courtyard, but also on the observers standing on the balconies and listeners who decided (or were obliged) to stay in their rooms (open windows transformed into an alternative way of contact). (Popławska, 2020, p. 5)

Musicians that participated in a concert organised under the Open Castle project came up to the windows and balconies of the residential care home to play traditional songs. This unusual setting was potentially familiar to the older generations who could recall wartime and post-war times when music bands used to appear spontaneously on city streets: in the markets, squares, and backyards.

Playfulness associated with playing has the power to transform experiences linked to the cases involving heightened stress, making them communal. In the case of older adults, it can make them feel more peaceful and content with their lives (Kruse & Prazak, 2006, p. 189). Playfulness can also be a strategy for coping with and reinterpreting difficult situations. It can be a source of pleasure, but it is also associated with uncertainty and risk-taking (Tonkin & Whitaker, 2021, p. 2). In the context of the Open Castle project, it was presumably both excitement and courage that motivated one pair of older participants to dance in front of a large audience at the residential care home concert (Popławska, 2020, p. 13). In turn, a "role-swap" of sorts occurred during an event held in at private home. After listening to the cellist's playing, the host herself sat down at the piano and played for the guest-organisers (Bednorz, 2020).

4.2. Working with memory

Work involving memory is another significant area where the use of music shows its potential. In the Open Castle project, a facilitator played traditional songs that used to accompany, e.g., wedding ceremonies, to evoke memories. Some older adults remembered the words of the whole songs, while others quickly recalled the refrains. The participants had the opportunity to look back on the memories of singing in a school choir or attending traditional wedding receptions (Popławska, 2020, pp. 12-13). The acts

of recalling and remembering are particularly important in the context of older adults that might have or be at risk of dementia-related disorders. As the *World Alzheimer Report 2021* states:

> The term ‘dementia’, otherwise known as ‘major neuro-cognitive disorder’, is not one specific disease but rather a group of symptoms that happen because of a disease. It impacts memory, but also behaviour, thinking and social abilities severely enough to interfere with one’s activities of daily living and social autonomy. (Webster, 2021, p. 26)

The symptoms in question affect foremost older people (as age is a risk factor). As of 2021, there were more than 55 million people in the world diagnosed with dementia. According to the 2015 data, there were more than one million people diagnosed with dementia in Central Europe alone (where the total population of people over the age of 60 numbered nearly 27 million people) (Prince et al., 2015, p. 24). Furthermore, it is common for people with dementia to not receive the correct diagnosis, which, according to the people with dementia and their caregivers, is related to the lack of knowledge about dementia, as well as difficulties in accessing specialised testing and health care in general (Webster, 2021, p. 30). Considering the above, activities that draw upon the potential of the reminiscence therapy, which is often used as a psychosocial intervention in dementia care, are of particular importance in the context of working with older people. However, there is no single concept of reminiscence in health care settings. One of the more common definitions indicates that it is a process by which a person or a group of people discuss events from their past, using materials that evoke and record their experiences. When this process is conducted in groups or in interaction with another person, it is systematic, intentionally triggered and divided into stages. Recalling good memories can be connected with the desire to escape from a difficult present and future, and seek comfort in the face of daily problems. Such a “life review” can also be relevant for “resolving past conflicts and unfolding the meaning of life before death” (Dempsey et al, 2014, pp. 181-183). On the other hand,

> [f]amiliar tastes, smells, textures, sounds and visual images can stimulate activities or memories associated with childhood, schooldays, work life or relationships. Linking the past into the present in this way creates a sense of continuity and restores a sense of personal identity, mastery, self-esteem and integrity that may be otherwise lost to the person with dementia. (Dempsey et al, 2014, p. 181)

Music is particularly important in the context of reminiscence, because it can affect the parts of the brain that have not yet been impacted by

dementia, and which are linked to "music memory" (Evans, 2019, p. 1182; Camerlynck et al., 2021, pp. 1162-1163; Dempsey et al, 2014, p. 181). Its use allows to focus on capabilities of older people instead of the limitations they experience.

The "Seniors in Action" programme, carried out by the Association of the Creative Initiatives "ę" and founded by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, has implemented numerous educational projects since 2008, with more than fifty of them classified into the "history" category. Many of such projects are organised in smaller towns, and draw upon the still vibrant memory of older adults. These initiatives include the creation of community museums where knowledge about local area is archived. These museums collect mementos, photographs and written-down stories, publish alternative guides to the town/region, create scrapbooks, and produce podcasts focused on people's personal memories of their former workplaces (Towarzystwo Inicjatyw Twórczych "ę", n.d.). In projects that engage older adults, music can activate memories and evoke positive associations, but also allow for reworking and reinterpreting more complex stories, the memory of which remained ambiguous, associated with the passage of time and the sense of loss.

As the evaluation report of the Open Castle project clarifies: "the memories can be neutral or positive, and involve, for example, planting plants or mending pantyhose [...], but they can also be stories filled with grief and sadness, requiring special sensitivity from the organisers" (Popławska, 2020, p. 14). In this context, work with older adults, with their different needs and abilities, is always an empathetic process that requires cultural practitioners' commitment, as well as good communication and facilitation skills. Thus, it is worth using the person-centred approach, promoted in health care (also dementia care), also in the context of cultural initiatives (Dempsey et al., 2019). To quote the project's evaluation report: "more in-depth knowledge of the group's requirements could, according to one instructor, change the scenario of the activities. One could, for example, shorten the lengthy theoretical introduction to introduce more practical exercises [...]" (Popławska, 2020, p. 10). One of the solutions used by CK Zamek to address the individual needs of older people was to work with their formal caregivers and the volunteers that knew them in the context of healthcare provision and social work. Individuals from partner organisations often had "detailed knowledge of the interests and preferences of the project participants. They would suggest what to focus on and what to avoid" (Popławska, 2020, p. 9). They were involved in the workshops, provided help in responding to difficult

situations, and gave feedback on the working methods and techniques (Popławska, 2020).

4.3 Participation

It is worth noting that during the vocal workshops organised under the Open Castle project, some older people exhibited evident signs of fatigue and sometimes even seemed discouraged, which could have been caused by the lively nature of the meetings and the fact that it required a lot of concentration (reading texts proved to be difficult for some of the participants; it turned out that the chosen font was too small) (Popławska, 2020, p. 9). Not everyone had the opportunity to participate in the scope they desired or rather – there was no way for people to all participate equally. In this context, it is certainly worth emphasising the role of voluntary and diverse participation. The recommendations section of the evaluation report puts it as follows:

> The freedom to join the group's activities at various stages, but also to abandon a task when it proved unsuitable for a person's current needs or abilities was an important factor in maintaining a relaxed atmosphere. In future initiatives, it is worth emphasising that all participation is voluntary and the organisers are open to change. (Popławska, 2020, p. 18)

Voluntariness is not only important for maintaining openness and flexibility, but also, on a general level, for various definitions of participating in culture. These definitions emphasise that participation goes against top-down assumptions. It can mean expressing one's opinion, also in disagreement, withdrawing from certain practices, defining the rules of one's involvement and exercising one's rights as a co-creator. Participation cannot be fully anticipated or planned for. An ever-present question remains: how should we construct cultural projects engaging older people that trigger critical reflections, contribute to creation of social circuits of knowledge and enrich discourses about art? (see also: Bishop, 2012; Miessen, 2010). Broad definitions of cultural participation can include production of inclusive, horizontal circuits of knowledge that do not exclude any of the groups involved. In such circuits, knowledge is not technocratic, it is not comprised only of technical guidelines and formal compilations that allow for standardisation of practices. Analogously, education is not reducible to the acquisition of competencies. "For critical pedagogy, learning always entails vital social, aesthetic and affective dimensions that are perhaps more amenable to artistic and creative performance-based pedagogies than logocentric, cognitive transfer models" (Morley et al., 2020, p. 10). In this context, I would like to return to the recommendations developed in the evaluation research:

> Activities involving dependent older people would require better preparation of facilitators for working with specific groups, e.g., by consulting the partner organisations on possible scenarios for more extensive workshops. It could be useful for people who have already implemented or helped organise a workshop to provide feedback (non-judgmental, focused on constructive solutions) directly to the trainers preparing for the up-coming workshops. Such practices were only partially implemented in the project, and it is worth considering their further development. These recommendations concerning circuits of knowledge apply also to communication with older adults who should be provided with clear information regarding the stages of work, employed methods, final outcomes and time schedule. (Popławska, 2020, p. 17)

The notion of inclusive circuits of knowledge is based on ideas that overlap with the concept of horizontal learning, which is one of the premises of critical pedagogy. In this context, horizontal practices and relationships are achieved primarily through trust-based dialogue which function as a space for articulating different experiences and types of knowledge. In such a dialogue, unequal power relations arising e.g., from differences between positions occupied in the structure of an institution, do not disappear, but can be subjected to later reflection (Freire, 2017; Torres, 2004, p. 126). However, cultural activities involving older adults do not have to be limited to the issue of the knowledge transfer. They can invite older people to co-create educational offerings, co-lead meetings, address current social issues faced by older individuals – Including ones related to health, well-being or material living conditions (see also: Lis, 2019, pp. 26-27, 32-33).

Broad definitions of participation refer also to creating accessible material conditions and introducing arrangements that enable participation of people with different needs. In the case of the Open Castle project, such aspects involved opting for the multi-stage structure of activities, combining different working techniques, planning rest breaks, and making sure that workshop topics were explained thoroughly and unhurriedly (Popławska, 2020, p. 14). An earlier study of the cultural needs of older people (carried out by CK Zamek in 2019) recommend further accessibility practices: setting fixed days and times for meetings, making sure that participation in events is also possible for free or financially affordable, providing transportation to the events' locations, or adapting the premises for the long-term (potentially assisted) use of people with disabilities (Lis, 2019).

Finally, inclusive participation is linked to providing conditions that take into account the psychological comfort of participants and build a supportive space for expressing difficult emotions and criticism, as well as

listening to and sharing personal stories. To me, as a researcher, but also as a participant in the events of the Open Castle project, the singing workshops proved to be a particularly meaningful experience that was, nevertheless, both difficult and out of my comfort zone. The workshop was held in a group of only several people, so each participant had the opportunity to be seen and heard. The person leading the workshop "[e]ncouraged the participants to use their loud voice, improvise, and release their emotions through singing without inhibitions" (Popławska, 2020, p. 12). In a sense, I was practicing bringing out my strength and firmness to the surface. I also had the opportunity to fill the entire hall of the historic castle with my voice. This had a symbolic meaning for me as a person that has been socialised as a woman. Referring, in turn, to the feminist gerontologists, for older women, participation in cultural projects can provide opportunities to discover new social roles or capabilities, strengthen agency and control over their lives, and use their knowledge in an environment that is empathetic and aware of the inequalities experienced by women (Farmosa, 2005, pp. 398-399). Issues related to cultural determinants of gender were not addressed directly in the Open Castle project, but can be noticed in a deeper analysis, as women were the majority of people who attended the events. Women were also prevalent among formal caregivers. It can be concluded that women's social roles to some extent determined the topics of workshops, e.g., jewellery making. At the same time, the nature of the events not infrequently allowed for the construction of empowering social situations which showcased the participants' initiative, individual preferences, knowledge and diverse experiences. Older adults entered into discussions with each other and with the trainers, and asked detailed questions (Popławska, 2020, pp. 7, 13-14, 16-17). The group included people of different ages, needs, and disabilities who used varying levels of support. At times, participants explained instructions to other individuals and reminded them of the workshop's objectives. From time to time, participants would also explain the needs of their fellow group members to the trainers. There was also a workshop in which some people did not accept its proposed purpose – they expected the final product to have more utility, while the workshop focused on its ornamental function (Popławska, 2020, p. 14). Their critical feedback can be considered in a broader framework – older adults expressed the need for learning adapted to their specific needs and experiences; learning that has the potential to change the quality of their lives, for instance, through new services and acquisition of new skills.

In the case of the Open Castle project, organisation of events and meetings in places familiar to older adults, e.g., private and residential care homes, was important for building inclusive, supportive and empowering

education. The day-to-day activities of older people are often concentrated at home. Care services are also increasingly being delivered to private dwellings. A home is a physical space, but its psychological and social dimensions should also be explored. In a world of rapid change, home can provide older people with the sense of control over reality, as well as autonomy and freedom to decide on their activities and time (Hatcher et al., 2019, p. 1-2). As a source of physical and emotional comfort, home is associated with personal possessions (useful, properly arranged items), with memories and familiar environment, and relaxation or restoration (Hatcher et al., 2019, p. 6). On the other hand, encouraging older people to leave the home comfort zone and participate in the life of the local community was the crux of the project organised by CK Zamek. In some cases, this was related to single events held in public places, after which older people would return to their homes. In other cases, a friendly and stable environment had to be produced in institutional settings, such as day care centres for adults. Appropriate institutional policies and practices that support processes of adaptation to different conditions are required to ensure that older people perceive institutional spaces as home. The goal of such measures could be to strengthen in older people "the ability to retain some of the comforts of home and personal possessions and the capacity to make new social connections, despite having to make some concessions to change" (Hatcher et al., 2019, p. 8).

5. Conclusions

An educator practicing critical cultural education works with the knowledge and experience of those who participate in the learning process, while at the same time, opening themselves to new ways of working, interacting and relationship building. It could be said that in order to bring out the potential of playing, one has to join the play. Working with memory also requires an active, empathetic attitude towards recalling and processing memories, as well as the ability to integrate past experiences of older adults into the broader circuit of knowledge. The above-analyse examples draw attention to the role (and responsibility) of cultural institutions. Representatives of any public institution that leave its premises to meet the people where they are have to face the task of breaking down the rigid divisions separating educators from learners, and reinforcing real, unforced participation in culture (see also: Skórzyńska, 2012). Thus, what is needed, is not only a "wandering institution", but a learning one. An institution which is both sensitive and critical.

Working with older people with different needs and abilities involves addressing the issue of social isolation, not only in its pandemic-related

scope, but also understood more broadly and related to the marginalisation of older adults in public life. Collaboration with health and social work centres proved particularly important within the framework of the Open Castle project. The intersectoral nature of the project is yet another example of the participatory approach to cultural activities. However, it is worth to consider such cooperations in a critical manner to ensure recognition of both the needs of older participants and those of therapists, educators, medical and social workers. In this context, it is also important to build horizontal, networking relationships between different actors who often turn out to experience the same systemic limitations. As stated in the project evaluation report, "intersectoral partnerships should be planned in such a way as to strengthen each other and recognise common opportunities, while driving supportive systemic changes" (Popławska, 2020, p. 19).

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Chapter 7

The Folk High School and the Digital: Forever Foes or Saving Grace?

By Julie Shackleford

Abstract

With the rise of the digital and new information and communication technologies (ICTs) over the past few decades, in combination with the rapid spread and virulent effects of the Covid-19 global pandemic, new forms of distance, hybrid, and blended learning methods have abounded within adult education in recent years. While some pedagogical practitioners, particularly in more traditional learning environments, have embraced new ICTs as a "means to an end" or even an asset to dialogical learning (Wegerif 2019a, 2007), others, including many within the folk high school tradition, have instead viewed such technologies with apprehension and thinly disguised contempt. As a colleague at a folk high school in Denmark recently remarked: that kind of learning "just isn't what the folk high school is about."

This chapter seeks to challenge common assumptions about digital technology and its role in a folk high school context. Guided by a material culture perspective in which all relationships – both human and nonhuman – are considered as potentially meaningful and constitutive of selfhood and belonging, the chapter offers an ethnographic analysis of a variety of digital practices adopted in two seemingly-disparate contexts – Syria during the popular uprising that erupted in 2011 and a Danish folk high school in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. What we find is that, by putting the Syrian case in conversation with the Nordic one, valuable new perspectives for what a folk high school can be in the twenty-first century suddenly emerge, offering novel possibilities for the social role of the digital within a folk high school context and "opening up dialogic spaces in which different perspectives can clash or play together and new learning can occur" (Wegerif 2019b, p.26). Thus, rather than being antithetical to the folk high school experience – as many a folk high school practitioner has proclaimed – the digital could perhaps, instead, be its saving grace.

Introduction

The digital is ruining everything. People are less authentic than they used to be. Relationships have lost their moorings. Life has become increasingly ephemeral. And the digital is to blame.

Or so it is said.

Despite the familiar rhetoric, however, the truth of the matter is that "humanity is not one iota more mediated by the rise of the digital" (Miller and Horst, 2012). Before the digital, there was the telephone and the telegram, and before that, the letter. Before that, there were smoke signals, rock art, and other ways to communicate across vast spans of distance and time. We're human; we find a way. And those ways *mediate* us. Always have. Always will. The digital, the internet, new information and communication technologies (ICTs): these are merely tools; what we do with them is up to us.

In true folk high school fashion, in order to engage in meaningful dialogue about the relationship between the folk high school and the digital, we must first begin with a story.

So, let us begin…

***

In the autumn of 2010, I was living in Palmyra, an historic oasis town located in the heart of the Syrian Desert, where I was conducting doctoral research on the relationship between the designation of objects and sites as "heritage" and the commodification of antiquities. As an anthropologist specializing in material culture studies, I was in the middle of a "bottom-up" ethnography, trying to gain a better understanding of the social role of heritage objects and sites in the lives of the local inhabitants near the "UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra," an officially-designated heritage site located just next to the modern town of the same name.

The first rumblings of the so-called "Arab Spring" began in Tunisia on 17 December of that year, when a street vender named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest against political and social injustice, becoming a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution and other uprisings throughout the region. By January 2011, protests had erupted in Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Morocco, and even Syria, when one man, Hasan Ali Akleh, reportedly drenched himself with gasoline and set himself on fire in the northern city of Hasakah on the 28th of that month (free-syria 2011). Despite this last event, mass protests did not erupt in Syria, and throughout this time most political commentators were writing extensively on why they did not expect the events of the "Arab Spring" to have much impact there (cf.

Wikstrom 2011; Haddad 2011; Blanford 2011). Clearly, the commentators were mistaken.

In mid-February of that year, around the time that protesters in Egypt were cheering the ouster of Hosni Mubarak and others were taking to the streets in Libya, in Syria, a group of young boys, aged ten to fifteen, were arrested in the southern city of Dera'a, for writing on the walls of their city a popular slogan from the uprisings happening elsewhere: *"Ash-shaab yoreed asqaat an-nizam!"* ("The people want to overthrow the regime!"). From almost every large family of Dera'a, an area with strong tribal ties, the boys were arrested and taken to one of the cells of the local Political Security branch. There they were reportedly beaten, burned, and had their fingernails pulled out (Macleod 2011). When they finally were released two weeks later with signs of torture on their bodies, their families – and soon the nation – were outraged.

Happening to be in the capital city of Damascus at the time the popular uprising began, it became increasingly evident that I would not be able to return to Palmyra. As thousands of everyday Syrians revolted against the regime, and road closures made leaving Damascus increasingly unlikely, I was inevitably forced to rethink my project. During the midst of such uncertainty, most avenues of research became difficult, if not impossible, to pursue.

All save one: the digital.

Although not initially part of my research plan, focussing on the ways in which social media and other new ICTs enabled activists to organize collectively, pursue democratic reform, and "keep the conversation going" (Rorty 1979) soon became central to my rapidly reformulated research. While space constraints prevent me from going through all my findings (for more on this, see Shackelford 2022, 2015), ultimately, what I found for purposes here was that many of the same core values that were so immensely significant to opposition activists in Syria are also *precisely* the same core values that are of immense significance within the Nordic folk high school tradition: values such as dialogue, democracy, *fællesskab* (fellowship),[7] and free agency.

Until the uprising in Syria, heavy media censorship had stunted the ability of most Syrians to develop any sort of expertise with digital technology or new ICTs. However, by the summer of 2011, opposition activists had begun to increasingly employ social media for a wide range of purposes (cf. Khamis et al. 2012; Preston 2011), with "online" and "offline"

[7] For more on this, see Pallesen, Shackelford & Skamris, "A dialogue about 'fællesskab'" (2022).

activities becoming intimately connected. In this way, the use of ICTs became an increasingly potent mode of leaderless resistance (Carne 2012) inextricably woven into an ever-expanding web of opposition tactics designed to interrupt, extend (Wagner 1981), and play (Derrida 1981) with the dominant hierarchies of power. Thus, new ICTs offered activists unprecedented opportunities to subvert the repressive strategies of the regime, open space for contestation, and keep "the conversation of Syria" going (Shackelford 2022) in ways that had once been unthinkable.[8] While, admittedly, the role of digital technology in the Syrian Uprising is, in many ways, a far cry from its application within the Nordic folk high school tradition, by putting the Syrian experience in dialogue with the Nordic one, we nevertheless gain insight into the liberating potential of the digital that would perhaps be difficult to otherwise ascertain.

During my time in Syria, I experienced, firsthand, how the rapidly-evolving, cutting-edge digital technologies of the twenty-first century could be successfully adapted to promote and, indeed, *facilitate* civic values such as dialogue, democracy, *fællesskab*, and free agency – all qualities considered crucial to the Nordic folk high school experience. Thus, by putting the Syrian case in conversation with the Nordic one, valuable new perspectives for what a folk high school can be in the twenty-first century suddenly emerge, offering novel possibilities for the social role of the digital within a folk high school context and "opening up dialogic spaces in which different perspectives can clash or play together and new learning can occur" (Wegerif 2019a, p.26). Using a material culture perspective and the Syrian example as our guides, then, we find that, rather than being *antithetical* to the folk high school experience – as many a folk high school practitioner has proclaimed – the digital could perhaps, instead, be its saving grace.

But what exactly do we mean by the "digital"? And what might the study of it from a material culture perspective have to offer within a folk high school context?

From a material culture perspective, humans are understood to both *create* material culture and simultaneously be shaped *by* it. The relationship is co-constitutive. In other words, the perspective takes a *holistic* approach to studying human culture to include the relationship between people and things, thereby coming to understand ourselves and the world

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[8] The notion of "keeping the conversation of Syria going" builds off the conversational philosophy of Richard Rorty, most eloquently elucidated in his seminal volume *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), which, in turn, builds off the work of Michael Oakenshott (1962), among many others.

better. According to Daniel Miller and Heather Horst, in their introduction to the seminal volume *Digital Anthropology* (2012), the term *digital* refers to "all that which can be ultimately reduced to binary code, but which produces a further proliferation of particularly and differences." As a subfield of Material Culture Studies and one of the newest branches of Social Anthropology as a whole, digital anthropology focusses on the moments of social life that pertain to the transformation of binary code and the social-cultural implications of those moments (ibid.). At its most basic, then, digital anthropology forms an engaged form of scientific enquiry interested in the role of the digital in our daily lives. Thus, rather than seeing the digital as something superficial, meaningless, or somehow "less than" other aspects of human engagement, the study of the digital from this perspective centers on the sociality of the human–digital nexus to overturn common assumptions and reveal the profound impact of digital culture on everyday life.

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In January 2012, I left Syria and, after a few months living in Jordan, moved with my then-boyfriend-now-husband to Denmark. I commuted back and forth to London to finish my PhD, he got a job, we got married and settled in Elsinore, "Home of Hamlet" – and also the International People's College (IPC), where I soon got a job as a teacher.

Life was rather calm then, and I settled into my new life with gusto. We started a family, I continued to conduct a bit of research here and there, and I positively *loved* my job as a folk high school teacher. Then, just after our second child was born, in the Spring of 2020, Covid hit. Like many parts of the world, Denmark shut down, and "the age of the mask" was born. For our part, the lockdown in early spring of that year was in many ways a gift – I was already on maternity leave with the new baby, and with my husband and eldest child suddenly at home, as well, we experienced a level of closeness that would not otherwise have been possible. Others were not so fortunate. Around the world, the death toll soared, disinformation and fake news spread like wildfire, and simple household items like toilet paper suddenly became impossible to source. Across the globe, panic and fear ran rampant.

Although I was not teaching at IPC at the time, I was still in contact with many of my colleagues, and they shared with me the difficulties they encountered there, much of which was also recounted in an article by teacher and former student, Rod Lee (2022), entitled "When corona closed the world." On 7 March, as twenty-seven IPC students along with the principal departed on a two-week-long study trip in Colombia, there were six known cases of Covid-19 in all of Denmark. Three days later, on 10 March,

as a second group was preparing to depart on another study trip – this time to eastern Europe – the number of new Covid-19 cases had jumped to 172 (Nielsen 2020). Just thirty minutes prior to departure for the airport, the teachers leading the second study trip made a last-minute call to cancel the trip amidst "increasing safety concerns" (Lee 2022, p.104).

By that Friday, 13 March, Denmark had 801 known cases of Covid infection, of which 23 were hospitalized and four were in intensive care (Ritzau 2020; Avisen 2020). Responding quickly and attempting to stem the spread of the pandemic, that evening, Danish Prime Minister, Mette Fredriksen, announced that from midday the following day (Saturday, 14 March) until 13 April, only returning Danish citizens and documented residents of Denmark would be allowed into the country. Any travelers outside of Denmark had less than 24 hours' notice to return. As the only truly international folk high school in Denmark, most of IPC's students were non-Danes. Those on the study trip to Colombia were thus forced to immediately cut the trip short in order to make it back to Denmark before all flights were cancelled and entry to the country forbidden.

Upon their return to IPC, the returning travelers were immediately put into quarantine until it could be confirmed that they were virus free. "For two weeks, the returning travelers and the rest of the students and staff were kept separated, essentially in two different self-quarantining bubbles. Two different areas to have meals, two different areas to socialize, two different areas to sleep. All classes and official school activities were cancelled" (Lee 2022, p.105). After two weeks of this chaotic schedule, on 27 March, the college made the decision to close its doors. All students able to return home did so; those who could not return due to border restrictions or safety concerns surrounding their personal living conditions at home were permitted to remain on campus with modified living arrangements. Of the ninety students that started the term, in the end, only twenty-six remained. As Lee recounts:

> "At first, although classes had been officially cancelled, teachers helped organize some activities for the students. But eventually it fell more to students to organize their daily routines, because teachers and other staff were encouraged to stay home for health and safety reasons, and to comply with the rules for receiving financial government support" (Lee 2022, p.107).

Eight weeks after Denmark's official shut down due to Covid, on 7 May 2020, the country began to slowly lift its restrictions. According to an announcement made by Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, folk high schools could expect to begin re-opening as of May 27, 2022, as long as

strict Covid-19 regulations were enforced. After some discussion by IPC management and the Board of the college, it was agreed that more time was needed to work out the logistics of reopening IPC to foreign students, and the date of 4 June was chosen for its official reopening. Of the sixty-four students who had left IPC two months earlier, thirty-five now returned to the college to partake in the final three weeks of term. Despite the joy at their return, IPC was nevertheless obliged to adhere to the regulations set forth by the Danish government, and a long list of safety measures were strictly enforced.

When responding to the end of term evaluations about how the Covid crisis was handled, on the whole the feedback was positive, with students commenting how they had “a lot of respect for the way [the school] handled this situation,” and that “All things considered, it was handled the best way it could’ve been.” However, the handling of such a chaotic time period was not without criticism. As one student commented:

> “No one was ready for the corona situation. And everyone dealt with it in the way they thought was best, but I think it could’ve gone a lot better if there was a lot more communication. IPC kind of lost its freedom and at times […] it felt like high school: the teachers imposing rules and students following them with no questioning and no conversation. We are all adults and I think more communication would have been better. But I’m still very thankful for all the work the teachers and staff members put in, it must not have been easy!”

Likewise, another noted:

> “I appreciate that the situation was completely unprecedented and so no one could have prepared for something like this. However, I feel like IPC could have been more decisive about the whole situation. […] The lack of communication between the school and students during the lockdown was poor. I know that not a lot was happening, but regular emails to convey even that would have been appreciated. Sometimes it felt like we had been abandoned. I also think that when we did get communication from the school it should have been sent to us more formally, like through email, instead of messages or screenshots in the WhatsApp group chat and Facebook.”

Although Facebook had been the primary ICT used for internal communication at the college for a number of years by that time, during the Covid pandemic and the closing of the college in the spring of 2020, a newer social media platform, WhatsApp, began to replace Facebook as the main platform for internal communication. A top-down decision born of crisis,

made with little in the way of debate, the main reason given for the switch was simply that "that's what our students use."

From the start, two WhatsApp groups were made: the first, "official" group designed for "announcements only" in which only staff members could post, and a second, "students only" group which staff members could not join, but all students who did so were free to post whatever they liked. While the former quickly became a static monologue of top-down information exchange, the second, became a dialogical "carnival of multivocality" (Bakhtin 1984).

Over the course of the next few terms, life at the college continued to follow the pattern set during the spring of 2020 when the Covid pandemic began. The new modes of sociality engendered through the use of the two segregated WhatsApp groups for internal communication – one top-down-monological and the other exclusive-but-dialogical – were mirrored materially in the daily life at the college through the physical separation between teachers and students in the classrooms, dining hall, hallways, etc. Perhaps not surprisingly, the implementation of heavy restrictions regarding where one could go, with whom one could socialize, and how close one could get led to mental and emotional distancing, as well.

Although the virulent effects of Covid-19 had gradually begun to wane, many of the new modes of sociality initiated during the 2020 spring term lingered on, and, by the autumn of 2021 their negative effects upon the community were laid bare, as many of the comments in that term's student evaluations demonstrate:

> "My relationship with the students has been great. […] However, I feel like the relationship between students and teachers could have been better."
> "I built very close relationships with many students, but unfortunately it took rather long to get close to the teachers."
> "The friends that I have made are amazing, but I feel that regarding the staff and some of the teachers are more apart from the community."
> "Good with fellow students and other staff, but not so good with teachers."
> "There is not really a sense of community."

The students were not the only ones feeling the disconnect. Many teachers with whom I spoke were also affected (Cf. Pallesen et al. 2022, p.176). Since the foundation of the first Danish folk high school in Rødding in 1844, one of the defining features of the tradition has been, with very few exceptions, a place where students and teachers live and learn *together*. Equality and mutual learning form the bedrock of the folk high school idea, with classes characterized by dialogue and reciprocal learning between teachers and students. For N.F.S. Grundtvig, the founder of the

movement in the nineteenth century, either the teachings live in the life of the teacher and are actively responded to by the student, or they do not live at all and are "dead words." In a "proper" folk high school environment, then, the "living word" (*det levende ord*) must not be confined to simply the classroom but, rather, should permeate all aspects of social life and be acquired through "living interaction" (*levende Vexel-virkning*) with others: "All letters are dead even if written by fingers of angels and ribs of stars," Grundtvig famously writes, "all book knowledge is dead that is not unified with a corresponding life in the reader" (Grundtvig 1838). These concepts – "the living word" and "living interaction" – thus comprise the heart and soul of Grundtvig's philosophy and are considered foundational to the folk high school experience today. But how could teachers share in the living word and living interaction with students during the midst of a pandemic, if they were literally *forbidden* from interacting? Throughout the community, there was a sense that "there had to be another way."

And then, Spring Term 2022 arrived.

I was excited to be back working full time at IPC again and, even before the students arrived, there was a feeling in the air amongst staff members that things were going to be different this term. This would be the term that "things would go back to 'normal'," and we would "get that folk high school feeling back again." After a two-week delay due to lingering Covid restrictions from the holidays, on 17 January 2022, the term began.

Adventures in Hybrid Learning

Almost immediately, our plans went awry. One of the first students to arrive – a young man from Japan – tested positive for Covid and was sent directly into isolation. A week later, by Monday, 24 Jan, (the day regular classes were set to begin), over half the school was in isolation for either testing positive for Covid or being a close contact of someone who had. This information was shared with staff and students by the principal via Zoom, as he had also tested positive and was self-isolating.

Anticipating the possibility that an outbreak might occur, I had held the introductory classes for both my courses that day via Microsoft Teams so that those who were in isolation could also join and those who were healthy could hopefully stay that way. The content was simple, yet meaningful: we did an online icebreaker activity followed by a discussion about what students wanted to cover in the class. Students later shared how much they appreciated that first class, particularly those who were in isolation at the time. While they may not be able to meet and socialize in person,

they could still get to know one another in small ways and prepare for the time when face-to-face contact would be possible again. While most other classes at that time either had very low levels of attendance or were cancelled completely, the introductory courses I offered via Teams had nearly 100% attendance, with everyone who was not very ill or off getting a PCR test participating.

Two days later, on Wednesday, 26 January 2022, with numbers continuing to rise, all classes were cancelled, and an emergency teachers' meeting called via Microsoft Teams. Together, those who had not yet fallen ill with Covid put together a "Hybrid Community Days Programme" to replace regular classes effective immediately. Designed to be as inclusive as possible to all students – including those in isolation – the Hybrid Community Days Programme offered a mix of online and offline activities at various times throughout the day, as well as daily presentations offered live in the Big Hall and via Microsoft Teams for those in isolation. In addition, special spaces were set up for the "positives" and others in isolation who were "close contacts" to eat, socialize, and "self-isolate" together, as well as pathways around the school for them to get there. Extra emphasis was placed on cleaning the school, particularly door handles, light switches and communal areas, and everyone who was well pitched in to bring food and other supplies to those who were not. Going into effect on Thursday, 27 January, the Programme ran until the following Monday (31 January), at which point it was felt by a majority of teachers that the outbreak had reached a turning point, and the regular timetable could thus resume.

When speaking with staff and students about the Hybrid Community Days Programme, the reactions were largely positive. While it was acknowledged that it was a rather "chaotic" time, for the most part, the programme that was arranged received high reviews. The fact that those in isolation were included in the activities – even if most were online – was highly appreciated, as well as the fact that a special space was created for them to be together and socialize. Joining in the Morning Fellowships and daily lectures via Teams was also appreciated by those in isolation for making them feel included in the daily life of the school and reducing the "fear of missing out" (FOMO). When speaking specifically with the Japanese student who went directly into isolation upon arrival such contact, he emphasized that such activities were not simply appreciated as a welcome distraction to the boredom of self-isolation; they were essential to his feelings of safety and wellbeing in such a new and unfamiliar environment.

The Programme's focus on community-building and wellness was also noted by the students: the acts of kindness that were performed by

those who were well towards those who were not and the numerous ways available to move the body – regardless of where one was. Teachers also recounted with fondness the empathy, compassion, and teamwork extant during this period and "the willingness of everyone to pitch in." One student even later remarked that this period was one of their "most cherished memories at IPC."

On the whole, both staff and students alike were pleased with the handling of the Covid outbreak and the use of new ICTs to create as inclusive a programme as possible during what was clearly a difficult time period. Despite this, however, for some staff members, the use of such technologies just simply was not "what the folk high school is about," regardless of the new forms inclusivity it engendered during the midst of the crisis that would not otherwise have been possible.[9]

This assertion is one that I have frequently heard within folk high school circles since my employment began at IPC nearly a decade ago. From the start to the present day, heated debates have continued to rage amongst staff and students alike over issues such as: whether we should ban mobile phones in the classroom and/or in common areas (e.g. Common Room, Dining Hall) because they "erode community-building and *fællesskab*" (fellowship); or whether Facebook – and, more recently, WhatsApp – are acceptable platforms for internal communication at the college. Questions such as these regarding the relationship between the folk high school and the digital continue to be hotly debated. But why *wasn't* a hybrid Morning Fellowship part of "what a folk high school was about" if, ultimately, it allowed more members of the community to be included in the event than would have otherwise been possible? In the end, this question is what inspired me to write this chapter.

While some pedagogical practitioners, particularly in more traditional learning environments, have embraced new ICTs as a "means to an end" or even an *asset* to dialogical learning (Cf. Wegerif 2007, 2019), others, including many within the folk high school tradition, instead view such technologies with apprehension and thinly disguised contempt. At one end

[9] This off-hand comment was made by a colleague to the entire student body during a Morning Fellowship announcement just prior to a presentation I was about to give entitled "What is a Folk High School?" – one in which I, following Clay Warren (a Grundtvigian scholar and former teacher at IPC), was planning to discuss, in part, the positive role that new ICTs have, in fact, played in spreading the Grundtvigian model across the globe (cf. Gillespie 2013).

of the spectrum are the so-called "luddites"[10] who denounce all forms of digital technology as antithetical to the "folk high school spirit." On the other, the tech-savvy "moderns" who ceaselessly tout the benefits of using such technologies in the classroom for research and translation – a not-insignificant concern at the only truly "international" of the Danish folk high schools. In the end, despite the debates, little in the way of decision is made. The luddites continue to voice their concern, while the moderns continue to leap perpetually onward – from email to Facebook to WhatsApp and beyond, dragging the luddites behind them.

When speaking a few weeks later to the colleague who uttered the assertion above, he admitted that, like it or not, the digital did have to be part of the folk high school world moving forward. The main question, in his view, was *how*. Many of his meetings, he confessed, had become much easier nowadays due in large part to the use of online meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. In his view, switching to the new platforms made many meetings "faster," "smoother," and "easier to stay on track," saving time to be spent elsewhere. When reflecting over whether it was a good idea to use social media sites such as Facebook or WhatsApp to communicate internally, he replied simply: "It's what our students are using." In other words, if we want to engage with our students in a meaningful way, we have to meet them *where they are*. If that happens to be on social media, then, in his view, we as teachers should be there, too.

Thus, while on the one hand, the use of WhatsApp or other ICTs can be seen as "anti-Grundtvigian" for the ways in which it can interrupt face-to-face living interaction at the college, on the other hand, the use of WhatsApp for internal communication – or SnapChat or Instagram or whatever new ICT students are most into at the moment – can also be seen as "truly Grundtvigian" for its ability to embrace all aspects of the students' lived world (online/offline connected). Indeed, during a focus group session held later in the term to discuss internal communication at the school, students overwhelmingly pointed to WhatsApp as the form of internal communication currently in use at IPC that was the most effective at sharing information amongst community members and enhancing feelings of community, fellowship, and belonging at the college. While students did acknowledge the drawbacks of focusing too much online and

[10] While originally used to refer to early 19th-century British weavers and textile workers who objected to the increased use of mechanized looms and knitting frames, today the term "luddite" commonly refers to anyone "who is opposed to new technology or working methods." (Oxford English Dictionary).

how that could also detract from the communal feeling, the majority also recognized that it was neither one nor the other medium that was "best" but, rather, a balanced combination between the two. Such attitudes support ethnographic evidence gathered from a four-year longitudinal study on the evolution of the digital life of sixty households (including 140 people) conducted by Stefana Broadbent and her team at the Observatory of Usage within Swisscom (Cf. Broadbent 2012; also Gershon 2010, Madianou and Miller 2011). Summarizing her team's main findings, Broadbent writes that

> "Most observations concur that the main consequences of the proliferation of new media channels for people's everyday lives is not necessarily the extension of new social connections on a global scale or the cultivation of social capital, but rather the intensification of a small group of highly intimate relationships that have now managed to match the richness of their social connectedness with a richness of multiple communication channels." (Broadbent 2012: 131)

In other words, "instead of thinking about any individual communicative medium, we have to consider each medium not only in terms of its specific affordances […], but also in terms of the wider media ecology […], where it is defined relative to all the others that might have been chosen instead" (Broadbent 2012: 136; see also Baym 2010, Horst et al. 2010). Within the context of the folk high school, then, we must stop focusing solely on the impact of one medium, such as WhatsApp, as a mode of internal communication and, instead, start looking at how various community members at the college weave together a whole tapestry of digital and non-digital media (Broadbent 2012: 136-7; see also Haddon 2004, 2006) including WhatsApp, Facebook, the IPC Portal, the IPC website, email, the information screen located in the Common Room, daily Fellowship announcements, occasional meal-time announcements, paper announcements posted to the bulletin boards in the Common

Room, hand-written or posted announcements on the chalkboards (also in Common Room), as well as basic face-to-face interaction to name just a few. To Broadbent, a sense of community and intimacy is built at the *nexus* of these various forms of communication, not simply via this or that one.

Global Dialogues

The final auto-ethnographic experience at IPC to be discussed here was originally the brainchild of an International Folk High School Summit held at Grundtvigs Højskole back in 2019. There, a few international practitioners and I had discussed our desire to create a network for students and

practitioners of non-formal adult education to come together, trouble shoot common problems, innovate solutions, and help each other as guides and advisors. In Spring 2022, during a 12-week long *Folk High School Studies* class, we put our idea into practice.

While the class was rather small, with only six students participating, it provided an ideal incubator to grow the idea and, altogether, we conducted four virtual dialogue sessions via Microsoft Teams with practitioners from around the world (Canada, USA, Mexico, UK, DK, Japan, S. Korea, the Philippines, India). Reactions from students and practitioners alike was, again, overwhelmingly positive. All practitioners said they would like to participate again if given the chance and felt it to be an exciting opportunity that opened up new spaces of dialogue and possibilities for collaboration, working through the pandemic (and beyond). During class evaluations at the end of the term, all students said the dialogues were their favorite part of the course, while also recommending suggestions for improvement.

One young woman from the United States, while generally positive in her opinion about the dialogues, nevertheless raised a concern over the "post-traumatic stress" (PTSD) that she felt such a teaching format could potentially engender. When asking her to explain more about what she meant, she shared how having the class online sometimes "made me feel like I have PTSD" because of the last year and a half that she had spent learning that way in high school back in the US.

Later, while sitting on a sofa in the IPC Archive and discussing the experience further, she said it was "really, really good" and "it built community" but, again, she reiterated that she felt like she was having PTSD. I asked her to tell me more about her experience with new ICTs and distance learning in high school back home: "Most of the time all of the cameras were switched off – even the teacher's camera!" she replied, describing how, often, her classes were comprised of just visual information on the screen accompanied by a disembodied voice. "And you just sat by yourself and learned and had to digest information 'banking style'," she continued, invoking an earlier discussion we had had a few weeks prior about the teachings of critical pedagogist, Paulo Freire (1968).[11]

[11] In his short yet influential volume, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire criticizes what he refers to as the "banking model of education" in which "Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (1968, p.58). To him, "This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits" (ibid.).

She then mentioned the words that a practitioner from Canada had used during our virtual dialogue session together earlier that day in class (FHS Global Dialogues Sessions, Pilot Ep.1, 1 March 2022). In the dialogue, the practitioner had been answering a question posed by another student in the class regarding each practitioner's "primary focus" in starting a folk school in their community. Building upon the statement made by another respondent from the United States that the primary focus of folk schools in North America was to "bring communities together," the practitioner from Canada noted how broad that aim was and, therefore, how difficult to achieve. She then shared how her folk school had attempted to overcome that difficulty by striving to define *very precisely* what aims they sought to achieve with their school's activities. For them, the primary goal of their folk school was, very explicitly, "to decrease feelings of social isolation and loneliness" (ibid.; see also Life.School.House.)

For the student describing her feelings of PTSD, in the midst of our online global dialogue, the mention of those two words – *isolation* and *loneliness* – suddenly triggered for her a traumatic flashback, and she thought she was going to have to leave the conversation. But then, she went on, continuing her story, it was *the way* that the dialogue was conducted that enabled her to re-engage with conversation participants and *overcome* her flashback. *This* online learning experience was not the same as *those* from her past, she realized, and, as the conversation continued, her feelings of isolation and loneliness began to subside. In the end, even this particular student – who had arguable the most "negative" reaction to the global dialogues experiment – still rated it as her favorite part of the class and one of her best experiences during her term at the college.

Conclusion: Turning challenges into opportunities

With the rise of digital technology over the past few decades in combination with the rapid spread and virulent effects of Covid-19, new forms of distance, hybrid, and blended learning methods have abounded within adult education in recent years, offering new challenges and possibilities for fellowship, community, and self-development. However, rather than embracing the blind conversion the digital within the folk high school context or advocating its complete rejection, this chapter has, instead, attempted to take a more nuanced approach. It has argued that, when used thoughtfully, in combination with a wide array of other digital and non-digital media, and with folk high school principles to guide their application, the incorporation of new ICTs and other digital technology may very well help keep the folk high school spirit alive, flexibly adapting it to the everchanging

contexts in which we live. This is particularly true in times of crisis – whether political, military, or medical – when face-to-face contact (living interaction), while desirable, may prove difficult, dangerous, or downright impossible to accomodate.

As folk high school teachers (and educators more broadly), we must continually evaluate the new technologies of the day - whatever they may be - and assess their role in the lives of our students, our school, and society at large. How do they fit into the folk high school framework? How do they measure up to Grundtvigian philosophy and ideas? How much do they push the folk high school movement forward, changing and adapting it to the times yet still remaining tethered to its roots and founding principles?

Perhaps more importantly, we must ask ourselves *why*?

Why are we employing this or that technology? *Why* do we refrain from others? Why do we use it *this* way and not *that*? As noted by the practitioner from Canada during the Folk High School Studies Global Dialogues Sessions of Spring 2022, "if we are not clear about *why* we are doing something, we can run really fast down the wrong path." Likewise, if we do not truly, and explicitly, think about these things and have a true and open dialogue about them amongst ourselves as reflective practitioners, how can we ever expect our students to do so?

While I may be a "luddite" at heart, I nevertheless recognize the potential of digital technology to positively promote key folk high school values such as fellowship, free agency, democracy, and dialogue. And I am happy to report that, as of Autumn 2022, while WhatsApp may still be the primary form of internal communication employed at IPC, there is now only one "community group chat" for all staff and students. With the "announcements only" group now officially discontinued, all community members – staff and students alike – can all, once again, be a part of the "carnival."

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Chapter 8

Why Learn History, Religion and Ethics in order to Prepare Young People for Further Studies and Lifelong Learning? Opportunities and challenges in new curricula for upper secondary school

By Anita Wiklund Norli and Lene Kristin Liabø

On Friday 26 March 2021 the former government presented *Fullføringsreformen*, an educational reform with focus on lifelong learning that gives adults the right to complete upper secondary education in Norwegian schools. Guri Melby, who was then Minister of Education, proposed a cut in compulsory subjects. The purpose, as explained, was to increase in-depth learning and make students more prepared for further studies and vocational training. Traditionally compulsory subjects such as *history* and *religion and ethics*, were proposed removed in favor of a new subject more directly addressing the themes of democracy, gender equality and critical thinking, intending to give students historical and cultural insight. To cite Melby: - There is no doubt about students learning a lot in history and religion lessons, but we must ask ourselves what role upper secondary education should have and what the students need for their further education (Utdanningsnytt, 2021).

Teachers, lecturers, and trade unions were critical, claiming the opposite: that such a reorganization would rather prevent in-depth learning and reduce general education, quite the contrary to what is emphasized in Kunnskapsløftet. The objection was that the students would be less prepared for studies. Melby abruptly changed her mind, and the present government and Minister of Education, Tonje Brenna, has shown no intention of removing these subjects. However, this discussion points to the challenges in Norwegian education politics concerning the structure and contents of the curricula for upper secondary school.

In this article, we will argue that the subjects in question, maybe more than any, prepare students for further studies and lifelong learning. First, we will present the political and academic arguments for making lifelong learning an important issue in relation to the educational system in general, followed by an investigation into the core elements of these two subjects *History* and *Religion and ethics*, presented in the newly

introduced curriculum LK20 (Udir.2020). Both subjects are compulsory for all students on the Education program *Specialization in general studies* in Norwegian upper secondary school. In order to detect opportunities and challenges regarding preparation for lifelong learning we will examine the defined interdisciplinary focus areas combined with the core elements in these two subjects during the last year in upper secondary school.

A Norwegian Official Report claims that the school system neither prepares young people well enough for further studies nor for working life (NOU 2019:25). Thus, in order to enable them to face today's challenges and even more in the future, Norwegian authorities have renewed the curricula for all subjects at all school levels. This is in line with European policy; we all face the same challenges, seeming inextricable to most of us. The challenges are related to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals for social, economic and environmental sustainability. According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong learning, education is the key to solving these challenges (UNESCO, 2022). The European Commission claims the same, and the Norwegian government therefore looks to EU's and UNESCO's understanding of skills needed to meet these challenges in the future. In this way, Norwegian school policy is in line with the European conception of challenges and lifelong learning.

In 2019 this resulted in a totally new curricula for Norwegian schools, Kunnskapsløftet2020, short LK20 (Udir 2020) to meet the growing challenges. It covers all primary education (primary school, upper secondary and adult education) and gradually introduced from 2020. All current subjects will be retained, but the content is renewed in order to strengthen and develop students' in-depth learning and understanding. LK20 opens many opportunities for choosing teaching methods and is more student-centered than previous curricula. This is supported by researchers (Andreassen and Tiller 2021, p. 16). The curricula aim to emphasize human values and critical thinking. In addition, there is particular focus on practical and aesthetic subjects and a desire for more creativity in school and new learning strategies (Karseth, Kvamme and Ottesen 2020).

This is by no means new. Society has always influenced the education system as it develops in line with society's needs. Researchers are most certainly aware of this mutual influence, and the discussion on what talents to focus on and cultivate in making students learn for life started as early as the 1990s. (Fan and Popkewitz 2020, Delors 1996). Jacues Delors pinpointed four pillars of 21st century education, namely learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together (Delors 1996).

Lifelong learning

The school is obliged to base all practice on the values in the purpose section of the Norwegian Education Act. The purpose of education is emphasized and reads as follows: "Education and apprenticeship shall, in collaboration and understanding with the student's home, open doors to the world and the future and give students and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchoring." (The Norwegian Education Act § 1-1). The Education Act also states that education shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanistic heritage and tradition, such as respect for human dignity and nature, intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality, and solidarity- values that are also expressed in various religions and worldviews and rooted in human rights.

Lifelong learning means all kinds of organized learning throughout life. The term includes formal education as well as other organized learning through work and other activities. When deciding to participate in adult education, Ellen Boeren, in her comprehensive lifelong learning participation model, states that "participation can be theorized as an interplay between an individual's social and behavioral characteristics, the availability and structures of education and training providers, and the role of supporting governments." (Boeren 2019) The government introduced the concept of "Learning for life" in a competence reform in 2019 (Meld.st.14, 2019-2020). The reform seeks to ensure that no person will be outdated for working life, but rather continues to learn new things and be educated throughout life. The aim is to enable people to prolong their working life.

However, we must look further back to be able to outline the background for these thoughts and strategies: In 2011, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research proclaimed the National qualifications framework for lifelong learning (NKR), which is adapted to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The framework describes formal qualification requirements and requirements for learning outcomes at various levels of the education system. It defines competence as "being able to apply knowledge and skills to different situations by showing cooperation, responsibility, ability to reflect and critical thinking in studies and profession" (NKR, 2014, page 17). Each level is described through the learning outcome of knowledge, skills, and competence in general. Knowledge is defined as the understanding of theories, facts, concepts, principles, and procedures in a discipline. Skills encompass the ability to apply knowledge to problem-solving. There are different types of skills – cognitive, practical, creative, and communicative. General competence signifies the ability to use knowledge and skills in an independent manner related to

different situations by demonstrating responsibility, ability to cooperate, and a capacity for reflection and critical thinking in educational and work contexts (NKR, 2014).

The work on renewing the curricula in Norwegian schools started in June 2013 with the appointment of a committee commissioned to assess the subjects in basic education in relation to the requirements for competence in future social and working life. The committee led by Professor Sten Ludvigsen completed its work in 2015. The first partial report was published in 2014 (NOU, 2014: 7), and the main report in 2015 (NOU, 2015: 8). These reports laid the foundation for a proposal to the Norwegian Parliament (Meld.St.28, 2016), of a renewal of the Kunnskapsløftet from 2006. These documents thus came to be guidelines for the Norwegian school policy in the years ahead.

In this context, lifelong learning is an important aspect, as spelled out in the proposal: "A knowledge-intensive and specialized working life, new technology and the importance of the individuals' general education, means that all students need to develop solid professional knowledge and skills in school. Areas of knowledge are constantly evolving; restructuring and changes characterize working life. This requires that the subjects in school are built upon updated knowledge, and that students are prepared for lifelong learning, begin to think along new lines, and to apply what they learn to new and unknown contexts. Norwegian business and public enterprises require high competence and great innovation ability to preserve and further develop the Norwegian welfare model." (Meld.St.28, 2016, p. 13.)

There are currently several international projects assessing the competence crucial for social and working life in the future, and several of these ask whether today's educational policy prepares students adequately for life after school. These projects are often referred to in connection with 21st Century Skills and Key Competences, and they focus on the connection between changes in society and working life and actualizes the question: With what competences should the school equip the students?

The UNESCO institute for Lifelong Learning (ILL) states that preparing students for lifelong learning is the main key to overcoming global challenges and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN (SDG 2015). UNESCO give special attention to goal no. 4: Quality Education. They aim to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO 2016). The focus areas *Building quality learning systems*, *Fostering skills for life, work and learning*, and *Ensuring that no one is left behind* will strengthen the capacities of Member States to build effective and inclusive lifelong learning policies and systems (UNESCO 2022).

The Council of the European Union provided a recommendation of key competences for lifelong learning in May 2018, identifying eight key competences essential to citizens for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship, and social inclusion. The framework sets up an understanding of competences needed in the future and presents ways to promote competence development; giving support to educational staff concerning innovative learning approaches and assessment methods will further initiate and develop vocational education and training and modernize higher education.

The revised Key Competences are (European Commission 2019):

Literacy competence

Multilingual competence

Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering

Digital competence

Personal, social and learning to learn competence

Citizenship competence

Entrepreneurship competence

Cultural awareness and expression competence

The local county of Vestfold and Telemark has adopted this strategy, and the county's strategic plan for upper secondary training in 2021–2025 has the striking title: *Health promoting education*. Quote from the preface: "Basic education is an important part of a lifelong process of formation that has the freedom of the individual, independence, responsibility and humanity as goals." And further "To train students to reflect on their own learning, including how to master the skills contributes to achieving competence goals in the different subjects and to lifelong learning" (Vestfold og Telemark fylkeskommune 2021-2025).

Kunnskapsløftet 2020

The new curricula in Kunnskapsløftet 2020 are designed to meet all these requirements. The work began in the autumn of 2017, and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research determined the core elements in June 2018. The core elements constitute the essence in each subject, for instance areas of knowledge, methods, concepts, ways of thinking and forms of expression. The total curricula were approved by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and launched in November 2019. This was a consequence of the conclusions from the Ludvigsen committee (NOU

2014, 2015) and the later Lied Committee (NOU 2019). The content of all subjects in primary and lower secondary school and the general subjects in upper secondary education were replaced with content meant to be more relevant and with a clearer connection between the subjects (NOU 2014:7). The actualized need for a new, broader concept of competence was emphasized – recognizing social, emotional, cognitive, and practical aspects of students' learning, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration as important competences that will become even more important in the future (NOU 2019: 25).

Learning to learn is an essential skill in the new curriculum (Udir 2020). It lists several criteria: The students must take active part in their own learning. Learning strategies and reflection on one's own learning are therefore included in the assessment texts in all the new curricula. Students who formulate questions, seek answers, and express understanding in different ways will gradually be able to take an active role in their own learning and development. Critical thinking, source criticism and digital judgment have been given more space.

Let us take a closer look at the details in the curricula. The interdisciplinarity in the overall part is meant to interact with the specific curriculum for the subjects. Our focus is, as stated above, on the subjects *History* and *Religion and ethics*. As we have pointed out, an overriding principle in the overall part is to teach the students how to learn (Udir 2020a). The school shall contribute to the students reflecting on their own learning processes in an independent manner. When students understand their own learning processes and their professional development, it will contribute to their independence and give them a sense of mastery. Education is meant to promote the students' motivation, attitudes and learning strategies, and lay the foundation for learning throughout life. Students who learn to formulate questions, seek answers, and express their understanding in different ways will gradually be able to take an active role in their own learning and development. Despite the students' own efforts, some will meet challenges in learning. The reasons are often numerous and complex. There will always be tensions between different interests and views. The ambition to develop the ability of lifelong learning for all students therefore requires a broad approach from the school system.

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity in the new curricula is linked to three focus areas: *Democracy and citizenship, Public health and life skills* and *Sustainable development*. These interdisciplinary topics are meant to enable students

to understand the connection between their actions and choices, and make them responsible, exploratory, and innovative. These three interdisciplinary topics are based on current societal challenges that require commitment and effort from individuals and the community, locally, nationally, and globally (Udir. 2020a).

In childhood and adolescence, the development of a positive self-image and a secure identity is particularly crucial for lifelong learning. Relevant areas within the topic *Public health and life skills* are physical and mental health, living habits, sexuality and gender, drugs, media use, and consumption and personal finances (Udir 2020a). All these topics can be incorporated in the subject *Religion and ethics* and will provide students with competences that promotes good mental and physical health and prepare for making responsible life choices.

Competence related to *Democracy and citizenship* shall provide students with knowledge of the preconditions, values, and rules of democracy, and enable them to participate in democratic processes. The training aim is to give students an understanding of the connection between democracy and key human rights such as freedom of expression, the right to vote and freedom of association (Udir 2020a). This relates to main topics in the *History* subject. Students will understand the connection between the individual's rights and duties. They will practice the ability to think critically and learn why democracy cannot be taken for granted, and that it must be developed and maintained. This is learning for life.

Sustainable development is based on an understanding of the connection between social, economic, and environmental conditions. The topic covers issues related to environment and climate, poverty and the distribution of resources, conflicts, health, gender equality, demography, and education. Sustainable development as an interdisciplinary topic in school should facilitate students' understanding of basic dilemmas and developmental features in society, and how they can be handled (Udir 2020a). These challenges are addressed in teaching of both *History* and in *Religion an ethics*.

In addition to the three focus areas, defined core elements provide clear directions as to what is most important in the different subjects. To look even further into the details for learning outcomes in the curricula one can ask: How does education in the compulsory subjects *History* and *Religion and ethics* in upper secondary school relate even closer to these three focus areas, thus preparing for lifelong learning?

The interdisciplinary topic of *public health and life skills* is about giving students the understanding that they are history-created and history-creating. This will help students to understand, influence and master

their own lives, which is important for the development of a secure identity. Insight into how people have been involved in creating history, gives students the understanding that they, too, can be involved in shaping their present and future. Such an understanding can help to give meaning to life and motivate good choices of values. This should give students a basis for developing respect for others and for making responsible life choices.

The interdisciplinary topic of *democracy and citizenship* is about giving students an understanding of the origin and development of democracy. The subject of history gives them an understanding of what makes democracies viable. The subject thus helps to make students aware of their opportunities to be active citizens. Students will further develop the ability to take the perspective of others through knowledge of religions and worldviews. By inviting students to discuss challenges related to freedom of expression and communication in a diverse society, the subjects contribute to democracy and citizenship. Participation in ethical reflection enables students to problematize power and exclusion and to ask questions about common norms. In *Religion and ethics* students will reflect on questions about the relationship to one's own identity and what is considered a good life. They will also learn to reflect on the value of mutual understanding and the importance of setting one's own boundaries. Working with such ethical and existential issues provides the ability to deal with challenging issues in life, such as equality, gender, and sexuality.

The interdisciplinary topic of *sustainable development* is about giving students an understanding of the interaction between man and nature. The subject shows how man has related to nature, managed, and used resources. The subject of *History* also sheds light on how human activity has changed the living conditions on earth. History awareness gives students an understanding that the consequences of their own choices become the story of others. All actions affect others - also across geographical and generational boundaries. Thus, they can also become aware of their own opportunities to contribute to a more sustainable society. In *Religion and ethics*, the interdisciplinary topic of *sustainable development* is about students exploring existential issues and participating in ethical reflection on nature and man's place in it. This includes topics such as humanity's future and use of resources and the perspectives that religions and worldviews have on this.

The specific curricula for History and Religion and ethics

We are often met by the misconception that these subjects first and foremost are focused on knowledge about a series of facts, events, names, and dates. The new curricula, on the other hand, express a completely different

understanding. Both subjects relate to the interdisciplinary topics presented above. We find that in the curricula for both *History* and *Religion and ethic*s core elements, interdisciplinary topics and basic skills which implement the intentions of lifelong learning and key competencies are clearly expressed. Fredrik W. Thue puts it this way: "A student-centered emphasis on historical method and consciousness has partly superseded a traditional definition of history as a chronological sequence of momentous events and processes in the past." (Thue 2019, p. 168) The core elements express this in the most evident way, by emphasizing historical awareness, source criticism and empathy. Just as important as having knowledge of facts, such as historical events, is the understanding of learning as both a way of acquiring knowledge and a way of understanding oneself and others. Exploratory work and critical reading of sources will strengthen students' reading skills and prepare them for further studies (Udir. 2020b and Udir. 2020c).

As stated in the curriculum, history is central for cultural and social understanding, formation, and identity development. Structures, values, and attitudes in the present have roots in the past. The subject will contribute to making the students active citizens who can take a stand and see current challenges in a historical context. A recognition of the world as having once been a different society, and the understanding that both the past and the future therefore can be different from the present, are important prerequisites. Through the subject, students will develop the ability to think critically and understand how knowledge is created, and how the past might be used and misused. This prepares students for lifelong participation in society and working life.

Karsten Korbøl has pinpointed 10 short arguments to show that history prepares students for further studies (Korbøl 2021). These 10 claims also explain why history prepares students for lifelong learning:

- History curbs false news and manipulation.
- History helps understand different perspectives.
- History helps us understand that others see the world differently than we do.
- History helps us understand that people are complete persons with good and bad sides.
- History can counteract polarization.
- History helps us understand that democracy is not natural, but a system that has been fought for gradually over generations.
- History helps us understand that democracy is vulnerable when we are not willing to understand each other.

- History helps us understand that we do not necessarily live in "the best of all times".
- History helps us understand that the world can be different.
- History makes us recognize that people before us made choices that became our present and the past of the future.

History is thus a subject about the past, but for the future. History in school constitutes our common memory, but our horizon in time includes both the past, the present and notions of the future. It helps us understand that the lives and choices of people in the past designed what was to become our reality. In this way, the subject of History contributes to an understanding of our own place in time. This applies not only to those who are young history students but constructs a basis for lifelong learning. Students will become aware of the incompleteness and limitations of knowledge. This prepares them not only for further studies, but also for lifelong learning.

History is meant to give the students insight into Norwegian and Sami history and cultural heritage and give an understanding of diversity. The subject also awakens students' understanding of how humans have influenced nature and climate, organized societies and created and resolved conflicts. Through the *History* subject, students will hopefully reach an understanding of democratic values and human rights, such as equality, gender equality and ethical awareness. Exploratory work with history will help the students develop source-critical competence.

Education is meant to prepare the students so that they shall once become active citizens who can orient themselves, take a stand and see current challenges in a historical context. It is vital that the contemporary problems in the world become part of the curriculum. The Norwegian Media Authority had a survey in 2018, which shows that 48 percent of young people read news via social media daily. 15 per cent watch daily news on television, 14 per cent read news in online newspapers, while only five per cent read newspapers daily (Campo, 2018). Taking this into account, combined with the fact that contexts in history are not always obvious for young people, it is of great importance to bring these questions into the history classrooms, and let questions arise about what function the past might have, and how relevant it is for their lives. An example of this is the use of existential history. It embraces the universal human need to remember in order to experience anchoring or orientation in a larger context. Students want to be perceived as subjects, not objects. This supports the idea that we want to acquire information that seems meaningful and relevant to us personally, and that we see the relevance to our own lives (Lingås 2019, p. 86, Bøe 2006, p. 20, Skaftun and Michelsen 2017, p.

204). In postmodern society, the power to make choices is transferred to the individual citizen. Therefore, it is important that the school participates in initiating the formation and empowerment of the students. In this context formation can be understood as the development of one's identity and personality. Empowerment, on the other hand, means transferring responsibility and autonomy to the individual himself, from being told what to do to making his own independent choices (Danielsen, 2017, p. 66).

In this way, as proposed in the curriculum, students will also develop an understanding for being history-created and history-creating and be able to see the relevance of the past for the present and the future. The curriculum also proposes that students should see events in the past from different perspectives and develop an understanding of people's challenges and actions in the past. Furthermore, the curriculum proposes that students should have an exploratory and curious approach to history, while at the same time developing source-critical awareness. Students should be able to wonder, reflect on and assess knowledge about how the past was created. Source-critical awareness is about being able to determine how historical material can be used and misused, and to what extent it can shed light on historical events.

Historical empathy, contexts and perspectives will be important for lifelong learning to assess connections between actions, events and phenomena in the past and understand that different points of view affect how the past is interpreted and presented. Students must be able to assess possible cause and effect conditions in the past and understand why systems and phenomena change over time or remind stable.

Looking into the curriculum for *Religion and ethics*, we find a strengthened emphasis on exploration, ethical reflection and being able to take other people's perspectives. This is implicit in the core elements:

- knowledge of religions
- exploration of religions and worldviews with different methods
- exploration of existential questions and answers
- be able to take the perspective of others
- ethical reflection

We can observe that an respectful attitude, and skills such as handling of diversity and taking the perspective of others, are focus areas of the core elements. Further, ethical reflections are highlighted in the interdisciplinary topics. In the curriculum (Udir 2020c) *Religion and ethics* is a key subject for understanding ourselves, others, and the world around us. Through their work with a wide range of religions and beliefs, the students will develop knowledge, skills and attitudes enabling them to manage diversity

in everyday social and working life. The subject shall invite wonder and motivate them to explore philosophical questions. Through ethical reflection, the subject provides frameworks for investigating and clarifying what is good and right for the individual and society today and in the future. In this way, the subject contributes to enabling students to master life, be responsible citizens and contribute to a sustainable society.

All subjects shall contribute to establishment of a base of values for the education and training. *Religion and ethics* shall give the students knowledge of religions, beliefs and ethics and thus contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity and identity. This is important for identifying and addressing dilemmas that arise when the students are dealing with day-to-day challenges. The elements of the subject provide a basis for the students to reflect on how we live together with our different values, attitudes, and beliefs. The subject shall help the students develop an understanding of human rights by reflecting on fundamental values such as human dignity and respect for nature. The course also contributes to deepening the students' understanding of democracy by giving them knowledge about religion and beliefs in a majority, minority, and indigenous perspective. The course gives the students practice in ethical reflection and helps to develop their judgment.

In the competence objectives of the subject, we can see a change from factual knowledge about the major world religions and history of philosophy to broader and more open competence goals. Teachers and students can reflect on the main features of the religions to a greater extent. It becomes more important to reflect on ethical and existential issues, on the connection between religion, beliefs, and politics, and on the role of the media and the diverse and multicultural society in which we live. Philosophical conversations about what it means to be human involve exploring our role in the world, our relationship with nature and technology and how to interact with each other. As we can see, attitude formation is an important aspect of the curriculum, but also of lifelong learning. This applies to attitude respect and to handling skills of diversity and being able to take the perspective of others. The challenge for teachers will be to implement attitude formation in the work with the subject's core elements, interdisciplinary topics, basic skills, and competence objectives.

Being made ready for lifelong learning, the students must necessarily master defined basic skills: being able to read and write and having oral and digital skills. This relates to learning history and religion and ethics in obvious ways. Oral skills in the subject of *History* are defined as being able to present a professional subject precisely and independently and to use professional concepts in one's own argumentation. It also involves

listening to, assessing, and responding to the input of others in professional conversations. It means being able to reflect on the meaning content of texts, images, and films, to take different perspectives and to be able to account for and compare views in historical material and literature. Through basic skills such as oral skills, being able to read, to write, to calculate and to display digital skills, the students will learn the subject and what is included in lifelong learning. Oral skills involve dialogue about fundamental values and existential issues. Furthermore, it involves dealing with disagreements about religious, philosophical and value issues in a way that safeguards the individual's integrity.

Writing skills in all subjects are about being able to account for and discuss academic topics adapted to different tasks within history, religion, philosophy, and ethics. Furthermore, it means being able to problematize professional concepts and topics, and to be able to build up a holistic ethical argument. Being able to write also constitutes being able to use sources in a critical and verifiable way. Reading skills in the subjects are about being able to reflect on selected historical and religious texts and try to understand for example how different ways of interpreting such texts are related to the inner diversity of religions. It also means being able to assess sources in terms of relevance, purpose, and sender and recipient perspective. Furthermore, it means showing perseverance in reading longer subject texts, and understanding the use of subject concepts in these. This means being able to orient oneself in a text diversity. Digital skills are important to find and reflect on how digital arenas are used for information and influence in the fields of history, religion, and philosophy. It also involves finding, interpreting, and evaluating various sources in the work with subject matter on history, religion, philosophy, and ethics. Furthermore, it means having knowledge of and understanding of ethical aspects of digital communication. Finally, the skill involves being able to handle issues related to the digital identity of oneself and others. All this is crucial for lifelong learning.

We may ask what is different from earlier curricula, and to what extent students are made ready for lifelong learning. Well, with respect to this the subjects have become more relevant. There is a clearer connection between the social studies subjects in school. Students will also gain a greater understanding of the subjects through increased emphasis on methodology. History has always been important for seeing the individual's place in time. The new curriculum maintains many of these aspects, and it emphasizes even stronger than before that students should be encouraged to develop history awareness and see connections in the past and also build an historical awareness by working exploratory with history, gaining a source-critical competence and being able to see different perspectives

and contexts in the subject. In addition, students must be able to develop historical empathy, and at the same time acquire an historical overview.

In the curriculum for *Religion and ethics,* completely new from August 2022, we see how the future competencies and the interdisciplinary topics are concretized in basic skills and competence goals. This is to prepare students for further education and lifelong learning. In the old curriculum, there was more focus on subject content and factual knowledge based on the major world religions. There was also a focus on the history of philosophy. The competence goals were more detailed, which also made the teaching more uniform, which ensured that everyone learned the same thing. But the world is changing, including religions and worldviews, and perceptions of what is right and wrong. Norms must also be discussed and debated, and the experience of what are the actual facts varies. In the discussion about subject renewal, many students might experience their religion as foreign in the face of what is presented as correct facts in the classroom. This has now been toned down in favor of more general and open competence goals.

In the new curriculum we see a greater significance of reflection on "Who am I?", "How should we live together?", and "What kind of relationship do we have with nature?" In this way, in-depth learning is made possible where one reflects on the big questions in life. The new curriculum involves attitude formation where the students must become aware of the challenges we face and learn how we can jointly solve them, both nationally and globally. When the competence goals are so open, a trust is required that the teacher knows what the central focus areas in the subject should be. This trust is more clearly present in the new curriculum than in the previous one, and important as preparation for lifelong learning.

Conclusions

The competences of the future, as specified in LK-20, are the same as we encounter in public documents in the EU and UNESCO. By learning to learn, explore, communicate, and collaborate, think critically and ethically and be creative, students shall be made able to master further education and working life.

We have shown that the opportunities to prepare students for further studies and, as far as possible, also enable them to continue learning and developing throughout life, are explicitly included in the new Norwegian curricula for upper secondary school. The curricula have a very strong focus on creating self-awareness, awareness of one's own identity and values. *History* and *Religion and ethics* can greatly contribute to forming this

foundation for lifelong learning by helping students to develop their critical abilities, taking different perspectives and taking a stand on right and wrong, and thus getting the understanding that others might have a different view of the world than themselves.

The challenges lie with the teacher and the choice of methodology and didactics. Through the new curricula, high demands are placed on teachers' competence in the discipline subjects. The difference from previous curricula and guidelines lies in the fact that the future teacher will have greater freedom of choice regarding how to build a specific curriculum and choose the focus on different historical topics. It is expected and required that the teacher will have solid knowledge and competence in focusing on the subjects' core elements and the desired competences that the students are supposed to acquire.

In order to educate the students, who are to become the problem solvers of the future, the competence objectives in the subjects have changed. The subjects *History* and *Religion and ethics* have become less detailed about what students should learn. There is a shift away from the focus on factual knowledge to more open and general competence objectives. It will therefore be more up to teachers and students to identify key features of for example religions.

We live in a world where conflicts and economic difficulties affect society on a local, national, and global level. This highlights the importance of emphasizing history teaching; it is through this subject that students will gain knowledge about the many challenges that the world has faced both earlier and in the present. Emphasis must be on history as a key subject. Students must be able to understand themselves and the society of which they are a part. Studies in social sciences and ethics can help to promote this awareness.

The goal is more in-depth learning, exploration, and ethical reflection. In Religion and ethics, focus is on what it means to be human and our different search for answers – both religious and non-religious. It is about our place in the world and our relationship with nature and each other. The students shall develop good attitudes through philosophical and ethical reflection as well as an awareness of their own identity. By taking the perspective of others, both from the point of view of the majority, minorities, and indigenous peoples, they will gain an understanding of the rich diversity which characterizes society today. In this way, one will no longer be concerned only with answers to factual questions, but rather different answers to what is good and right in a sustainable world in which we all have the same right to live good lives.

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Chapter 9

Development, Test, and Evaluation of New Continuing Education for Museum Staff in Scandinavia

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Abstract

In the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning Through Social Spaces (2018-2022) we collected examples of social interactions at cultural heritage organisations in Scandinavia which contributed to interactivity and learning. In addition, we analysed how cultural heritage organisations actively create social spaces with the intention of promoting learning opportunities and how they evaluate these learning opportunities. Based on the examples, we developed a hypothesis on how various elements can create social interactivity and learning. By departing from research literature such as museum studies (Falk & Dierking, 2013) and lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2017), combined with the British planning and evaluation tool Generic Learning Outcomes (Graham, 2013) and a methodological approach departing from action research (Torbert, 2004; Ulvik et al., 2022), we developed a foundation for a new continuing education programme for museum staff on learning through social spaces. This programme was developed during the project period and tested and evaluated in September 2021 in Östersund, Sweden, on Scandinavian museum staff.

In this chapter, we analyse the development of the continuing education for museum staff in Scandinavia and present the test and evaluation results. The evaluation programme consisted of an electronic survey distributed to the course participants before and after the course, as well as observations during the course, discussions with the participants during the course and a concluding evaluation based on the Generic Learning Outcomes evaluation tool. By departing from educational practice, the Scandinavian research group will implicitly seek to answer the symposia question related to what the societal challenges are and how these looks like from the perspective of heritage institutions. The research group will seek to answer the question related to what possibilities that are generated for heritage institutions. Finally, the group answers the question of how adult education and learning related to heritage institutions might develop

because of these challenges and possibilities by, for example, engaging in new professional development or through the development of new professions related to cultural heritage organisations.

Keywords

Adult education, museum institutions, museum staff, Scandinavia, Generic Learning Outcomes, social spaces, action research

Introduction

The museum institution is changing. The idea that museums are something naturally good has been replaced by result-oriented demands. As a gradual shift during the last four decades, the demands on museums are no longer only to manage, research, preserve and disseminate. Now they also need to know their audience by being a new type of resource in society. Museums need to be relevant, accessible, and contribute to social inclusion and learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004, p. 152), among other things, by contributing as a counterweight to the fragmentation of public discourse. Thus, it is expected that museums facilitate exchanges of opinion, allow for a diversity of meanings, and work for demographic diversity among visitors and staff (Brenna, 2016, p. 36). Museums are also seen as flexible learning environments, where visitors must play an active role themselves. An expressed goal is to reach out to groups who make only limited use of the museum offerings. Following this, cultural life is now defined as important for bringing people together as a common public, whether it is physical or digital. Thus, a change has taken place in terms of how museums and museum activities should be understood.

Museums are, in principle, related to all areas of lifelong learning. In the Scandinavian countries, the most developed area in relation to learning activities is the area of collaboration with schools (Sonne, 2020, p. 22-23; Risan, 2020, p. 31; Olesen, 2020, p. 45). The museums' opportunities in terms of adult education and lifelong learning are far less developed. Additionally, there is a great potential for development at the intersection of formal, informal, and non-formal learning, such as courses for new citizens with a focus on language learning or as an introduction to unfamiliar cultures and ways of being. In the latest European agenda for culture from 2018, culture has been given a completely different purpose in European cultural policy. Now, it is explicitly mentioned that culture must be an engine in economic development. This will be realized, among other things, by promoting culture and creativity in formal, informal, and non-formal education and learning at all levels of society. There is also a focus on

promoting skills that the cultural and creative sector needs, including a particular focus on digital and entrepreneurial skills. One goal is to develop new so-called ecosystems for cultural and creative industries with a focus on innovation capacity and cross-sectoral cooperation – i.e., cooperation between the cultural area and other areas in society (European Commission, 2018, p. 4).

Today, many museum employees lack the skills to adapt museum institutions to these new demands (Sonne, 2022, p. 105-106). With this in consideration, there is a great need for the development of new adult and continuing education to handle the new paradigm that museums are now included in. Thus, our project goal was to develop a new continuing education programme for museum staff in Scandinavia. We wanted to train the staff in understanding and being capable of dealing with the museum as a space for social interactions and a place for learning.

We decided to depart from a methodological approach based on action research and the literature about action research such as Reason & Bradbury (2001), Torbert (2004), Ulvik et al. (2022), Tiller (2016) and Duus et al. (2012). Action research is systematic research on our own practise (Ulvik et al. 2022, p. 40), and was originally developed by Kurt Levin as a research method that could be used to resolve social conflicts (Levin, 1946). Today it is a method often used in educational science, but also in leadership research, where a goal might be to transform an organisation to, for example, achieve long-term sustainability (Tobert, 2004). In our case, the organisations are museums.

In their handbook on action research, Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury define that action research "bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people" (Reason & Bradbury, 2001: p. 1).In a more practice-oriented description by Benedicte Madsen, action research is defined by these four elements: (1) When the researchers participate, intervene and/or take the initiative in incidents in the practice of the researched party, (2) when the researchers contribute to the practitioners' extended insight, understanding and learning, (3) when the researchers contribute constructively to the development of the investigated practice and/or the investigated organization, and (4) when the researchers produce general knowledge or knowledge on the basis of the experiences from the participation (Madsen, 2012: 6).

As will be demonstrated below, we have taken an initiative for intervening incidents in collaboration with the participants to expand their insight and produce knowledge based on their experiences.

As a part of the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces (Wollentz et al., 2021, 2022), a new course for museum staff was developed, tested, and evaluated. One goal was to develop new learning in museums that are seen as a social space. A second goal was to teach staff how different elements in museums can stimulate social interactions. Thirdly, we wanted to teach staff how social learning spaces can be evaluated and why that is important. The final goal was to teach the evaluation methods of social learning spaces in practice. In this chapter, we present the results of our work with developing continuing education for museum staff.

The course was tested on 28–29 September 2021 at the museum Jamtli in Östersund, Sweden. The course curriculum, with its intended learning outcomes, was developed both vertically by the project participants and horizontally by involving the test course participants as co-creators of the course, not least when it came to formulating the learning outcomes in the course curriculum. The learning outcomes were developed and evaluated through the planning and evaluation tool Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO) which will be introduced later in this article. In addition, a pre-course electronic questionnaire was sent to the course participants. 16 of the participants answered (Kurs om sociala rum, 2021). The answers were used to further formulate the anticipated learning outcomes. Furthermore, a questionnaire was sent to the participants after the course, to follow up the actual learning outcomes. This meant that two different tools were used to plan and evaluate the test course.

24 participants signed up for the course. The largest group was from Sweden, but participants also signed up from Denmark and Norway. Most had a professional background from museums, mainly as responsible for exhibitions. Two participants were from universities. The teachers and organisers of the test course were the University of South-Eastern Norway, the Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity in Sweden, Den Gamle By in Denmark and the Scania Regional Museum in Sweden.

Development: pedagogical approach and learning outcomes

There is a comprehensive amount of literature about methodological approaches to learning and evaluation of learning that the project group used as background material to develop the test course (e.g., Ehlers, 2019; Hattie, 2015; Biggs, 2011; Prøitz, 2016; Andersen, Wahlgren & Wandall, 2017; Hylland, 2017). Participant-centred and self-directed learning were seen as important approaches to learning, partly because the target group

was adults, and partly, because according to the literature above, it is seen as the most effective pedagogical approach to learning.

To develop the test course, the project development group discussed different possibilities in formulating the learning objectives. Several tools have been developed to measure the effects of learning, teaching, and education, but they have primarily been developed for formal learning institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities (Andersen, Wahlgren and Wandall, 2017). Thus, they are less useful in more informal learning environments, such as museums, where an immediate measuring of learning and social effects can be challenging. Furthermore, the effects in a museum context can be significantly different from the effects of teaching in a school. While in a formal education course one can measure learning over time via local and national tests set up against predefined criteria expressed in curricula, cultural institutions do not have the same possibilities. At the same time, there is still a need to be able to say something systematic about the audience's learning after visits.

One of the most ambitious planning and evaluation tools specialized for the cultural heritage area were developed in England by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council project Inspiring Learning for All (Sonne & Banik 2021, p. 35–39; Thorhauge, 2014, p. 75ff). As part of this, a tool was developed for planning and evaluating learning at archives, libraries, and museums – The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO).

GLO is a holistic evaluation and planning tool. It is based on a constructivist approach to learning, meaning that learning at cultural heritage institutions according to GLO should depart from participation and dialogue. It emphasises the fact that visitors can also learn from each other in the process. In conversations they can, as the model also allows for, apply previous knowledge, and combine it with new observations and through conversation come to a new common understanding. GLO thus represents a break with traditional cultural heritage dissemination.

Furthermore, GLO is a tool that can be used to structure learning activities in museums by following questionnaires or qualitative interviews with its five main points, and it can also be used to create structure in already existing material. One of its strengths, according to its spokespersons, is that it helps museum staff to ask specific questions for both planning and evaluation, and thus contributes to a more fruitful dialogue with visitors (Jönsson and Peterson, 2011, p. 52; Thorhauge, 2014 p. 76–79; Knudsen, 2017, p. 40–41).

GLO was developed within five areas (see Figure 1 below). The first, ***knowledge and understanding***, focuses on the ability to create meaning or achieve deeper understanding, to create connections and relationships

between different things and apply existing knowledge in new ways. ***Skills***, the second point, is understood as knowing how to do something concrete. It can be intellectual skills, such as being able to read, think critically and analytically and assess connections, the ability to understand numbers, to be able to write, or to handle large amounts of information, for example via information technology. Furthermore, it includes social, emotional, communicative, and physical skills. The next point, ***attitudes, and values*** deals with feelings and perceptions in relation to us and other people. It also includes the ability to justify one's actions and attitudes, and how they are connected. The fourth, ***fun, inspiration, and creativity*** is about the ability to make others and oneself happy. Inspiration is considered a prerequisite for learning and for being able to think and act innovatively and experimentally. It also contributes positively to motivation. The fifth is ***activity, behaviour, and progression***. Living in a post-industrial society requires that people be able to change the way they have arranged their lives. This applies not only to work, but also in relation to family, studies, and being part of a larger social context in general. It is thus concerned with the need to exhibit proactive behaviour. To be able to master this, it is important to also be proactive when it comes to learning new things and developing new skills. In other words, it is about being able to implement change on a subjective and general level (Sonne, 2009, p. 14–19).

GLO has been subject to some criticism. Among other things, it has been said that GLO only measures what the visitors themselves say about their own learning. (Brown, 2007, p. 22–30; Thorhauge, 2014, p. 83). Another criticism is that GLO is not suitable for measuring learning effects over time. A substantial amount of learning happens after a visit to a museum, when there has been time for reflection. GLO has also been criticized as a tool being so broad that it can be difficult to define what learning is and is not.

Despite these criticisms, GLO is seen as an important learning tool for the cultural area, as it is well suited to measuring other areas than purely economic values. Furthermore, GLO's social constructivist starting point for planning and evaluating learning is in line with overall prevailing perceptions of how learning best takes place.

To formulate our learning outcomes, we therefore used GLO as a starting point in the way that our course was supposed to stimulate the course participants' developments in the following areas:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Skills
3. Attitudes and values

4. Enjoyment, inspiration, and creativity
5. Activity, behaviour, and progression.

We asked the following questions in the digital questionnaire that was sent to the test course participants before the course:

1. How much previous experience do you have with producing exhibitions?
2. Have you previously worked on the development of socially stimulating museum environments?
3. What would you like to learn and improve by participating in the course?
4. What type of content do you assume is provided during the course? Please select alternatives and comment on them in the comment field
5. Which of these alternatives do you think are most important? Please explain why.

The formulation of the learning outcomes as a co-creative process based on pre-evaluation for the test course was a comprehensive process. Here we only give some examples of the learning outcomes that we developed.

The answer of the first question gave some indication of the level of experience among the test course participants. 81 percent answered they had only little experience. 13 percent had great experience. 6 percent had no experience.

1. A representative answer on question 2: *Have you previously worked on the development of socially stimulating museum environments?* Was:

"I have worked with social stimulation between people, but not between exhibition and visitor".

The answer is an example of how to construct a learning outcome. By having this kind of information beforehand, it was possible to develop a learning outcome in the following way:

1. The participant should have a greater knowledge of how to work with exhibitions to stimulate social stimulation between the visitors after the course.

Some representative answers on question 3 *What would you like to learn and improve by participating in the course?* were, for example:

Tools to develop socially stimulating environments and situations

The social interaction for learning and how to collect the experiences of the visitors

Methods and practical examples on social interaction

I would like to hear examples about social interaction at exhibitions

As in question 2, it was now possible to formulate learning outcomes based on the participants answers. In this case, we formulated the learning outcome in the following way:

2. After the course, the participant should have knowledge and practical experiences in socially stimulating the museum visitor through the development of exhibitions.

Question 4, *What type of content do you assume is provided during the course? Please select alternatives and comment on them in the comment field* was answered with three different answers from the participants:

About how social interactive environments are developed (32 percent)

About the links between social interaction and learning at museums (30 percent)

About the different elements that can stimulate social interaction at museums (24 percent)

Based on the participants' answer on question 4, the following learning outcomes were formulated:

3. After the course, the participant should have knowledge, understanding and practical insight into how socially interactive environments are created.
4. After the course, the participant should be able to understand links between social interaction and learning.
5. After the course, the participant should have an insight into the different elements that stimulate learning at museums.
6. In question 5, *Which of these alternatives do you think are most important? Please explain why* the participants were given the opportunity to point out the most important alternative for them. Most participants agreed in their answers, and provided answers like these ones:

The links between social interaction and learning

Learning is something I am especially interested in

The answers to question 5 meant that the course organisers in a learning outcome formulation emphasised the connections between social interaction and learning as a core area of the course. The learning outcome was formulated in the following way:

7. After the course, the participant should have a well-developed knowledge and practical experiences of the links between social interaction and learning at museums.

In our project, a starting point was the general theory of social learning that we put into practise. For example, the British education scientist Peter Jarvis argues that learning does not take place in isolation from a social context and that the combination of the concepts of social and learning is important (Jarvis, 2007, p. 1–2). Further, he argues that learning is a transforming process of all our experiences through thoughts, actions, emotions that transform ourselves as we build perceptions of an external world in our own biography. It is therefore not possible to detach oneself completely from a social context when learning something new. According to Jarvis, learning is a social thing and is also socially constructed (Jarvis, 2007, p. 5–7).

The Importance of the social aspect of learning is also emphasized by, for example, the European Union (EU) through the key competences for lifelong learning. A social competence is defined as the ability to work with others in a constructive way and handle conflicts in an inclusive and supportive context. Social competence is also about understanding the widely accepted patterns of behaviour and rules for communication in different societies and environments. These skills include the ability to learn and work with others and seek support, when relevant, and manage working life and social interaction effectively. The individual should be able to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and be able to negotiate. This means that it is important to show tolerance, express and understand different points of view, create trust, and feel empathy (Henstillinger, 2018, p. 10).

This social competence is based on a positive attitude towards one's personal, social, and physical well-being and towards lifelong learning. It is attitudinally based on cooperation, impact, and integrity. This implies a respect for the diversity of others and their needs and a preparedness to overcome prejudice and be able to compromise (ibid.). Placing the museum as a social meeting place for lifelong learning is thus very relevant. Not

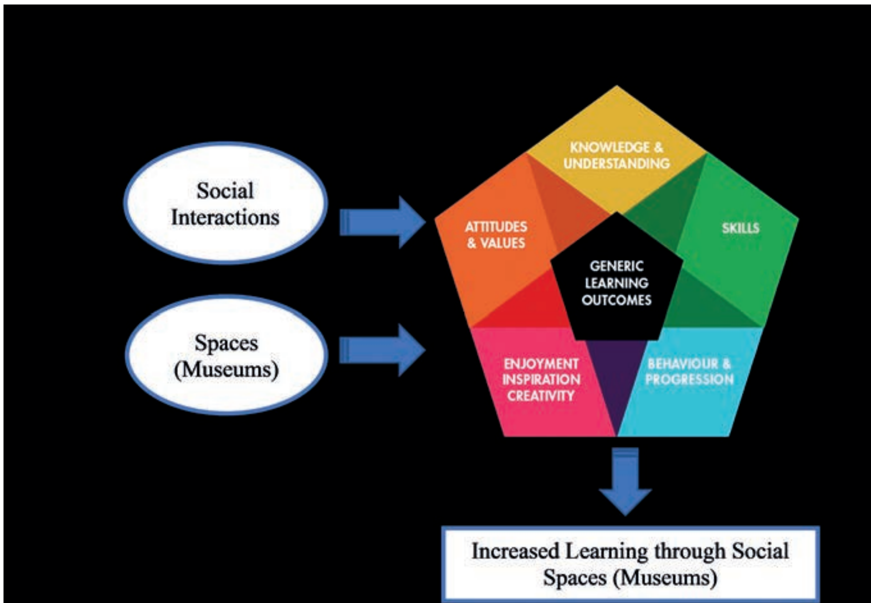
only can it be related to scientific learning theory, but it is also linked to political objectives for lifelong learning with a focus on social competence development, which is part of a broader societal development strategy to create economic, social, and sustainable development.

In addition to social learning, we also included the learning spaces, in this case the museums as an arena for social learning. By doing so, we developed the model illustrated in figure 1 where we applied the GLO planning tool to the aims for the museums' social interactions and the learning spaces, which resulted in our main goal: increased learning through the social spaces that museums constitute.

Thus, an important learning outcome developed for the course was:

8. After the course, the participant should have developed skills and attitudes in interacting socially with other people (visitors) at a museum as a space for learning.

Figure 1: Increased learning through social spaces.



Sources: A further development of GLO developed by the Arts Council in England based on the Nordplus development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. The GLO-model is developed by Arts Council England. Other parts of the figure are developed by the Nordplus project group in Increased Learning through Social Spaces.

Testing the course

In the beginning of the course the participants were presented with general theory of social learning and the museum's role as a social space (Djupdræt, Sonne & Banik, 2021). Thereafter, the participants were introduced to elements that inspire interaction (Hansen & Djupdræt, 2021). The seven elements found to prompt social interaction are divided into three main categories: reflection, physical impact, and activities. Often more than one of the elements is present in the social space at the museum.

Table 1. The categories and elements that inspire social interaction in museums.

Reflection		Physical impact		Activities		
Surprise	Reminiscence	Objects	Staff interaction	Solo activities	Collaborative activities	Games & competition

We will first describe the seven elements and then reflect on aspects mentioned in the discussion with the participants of the course.

Surprise. This element applies to the visitor experiencing something unexpected and varies from person to person depending on previous knowledge and experience. However, it is possible to construct elements in the exhibitions that intend to surprise. When visitors are surprised, they often turn to others and wonder what they are experiencing. Thus, surprises turn into positive social elements. Responses from visitors also suggests that doing so is a factor that makes the visit more entertaining and strengthens the learning process (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 51–53).

Reminiscence. This element focuses on people connecting something in the exhibition to events or experiences in their own lives present or past. Through recognizable objects and situations, people might feel like sharing their own personal memories and experiences with others, which make these elements spark social interaction. In this way, learning is advanced not only through the objects on display in the museum, but in connection to events, objects, memories, and stories important to the members of the group (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 48–51).

Objects. Objects are to be understood as physical elements such as museum items, reconstructions, scenography, or graphic elements and covers the museum's classic features in an exhibition. The objects can create social interaction when they capture the visitors' attention or curiosity, and

following that, initiate conversations, interaction and learning between the visitors (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 57–61).

Staff interaction. This element is about the interaction between the museum staff and the visitors. It can be a member of the staff who acts as a guide, who is part of a learning programme, who is available to answer questions, or who plays a role as a historical person. No matter what role the staff takes, the most important aspect is that the person is present in the museum and can make the museum experience more interactive (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 54–57).

Solo activities. This element is about activities designed for one person to try out alone, but the activity is also designed to be interesting, fun, or exciting for those who do not take part in it themselves but watch someone else who do. This creates a social relation between the people who perform the activity and those who watch (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 67–68).

Collaborative activities. This element is an activity where you must collaborate in order for the activity/assignment to be solved (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 61–63).

Games and competitions. Games and competitions are engaging and can contribute to social interaction, either when individuals compete against each other or when trying to help each other (Djupdræt & Hansen, 2021, p. 63–66).

Reflection from the participants. In the discussion of the elements during the course, the participants were free to choose what they wanted to focus on and which elements they liked to share their experiences about. The most common chosen elements were the two reflective elements *surprise* and *reminiscence*. The participants were primarily museum staff, and one explanation could be that the elements connected to *Physical impact* and *Activities* were already well-known tools used by exhibition planners, but the *Reflection* elements gave them a new insight, by explaining why the elements they already knew could have a successful social impact. The participants reflected on what the elements meant to the visitors and their use of the museum. An element frequently mentioned in the discussion was how visitors strived to find meaning that connected their museum experience to their own life, and here the social connection with other people had an important function and significance. Our own sense-making and sense of identity are both based on our own experiences (such as through reminiscence) but also closely linked to the dialogue and the reflection of the ongoing attitudes and actions of others. Meaning making is thus both individ-

ual and collective (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005), just as identity (Mead, 2005, p. 191; Castells, 2009, p. 6ff; Jenkins, 2016, p. 44ff, 98ff; Frello, 2012).

During the course we presented the elements and had a session where participants discussed them and if they have come across or used some of the elements in their own work.

Creating social spaces in practice

The first day of the course ended with a workshop where participants had the opportunity to create and shape concepts for designing social spaces in dialogue with others. Prior to the course, each participant was asked to reflect upon and write down some words about an exhibition/museum production where social interaction is significant – either a current production or one that they wished to realize in a potential future. We asked the following questions: What does the exhibition consist of? What is the focus and purpose? Is there any social interaction among the visitors and what does it consist of?

14 participants answered the survey with different examples, ranging from an exhibition detailing the 1900s in the region of Scania, an exhibition on the experience of sleep and its health values, and an exhibition on traditions in Mexico. The connecting element was that each example included meaningful social aspects that the participant wanted to develop. Based on the examples provided beforehand, we divided the participants into four groups with four to five people in each group. The goal was to actively use the elements that stimulate social interaction presented earlier during the course (see above), to make the case more social. Furthermore, we wanted to participants to relate it to GLO in terms of what kind of learning could be stimulated through planned social interaction. We had the following time plan:

- 20 minutes - individual reflection and development of their case in relation to the elements and GLO.
- 20 minutes in a group - each person briefly presents their case to the others in the group. A case is selected to focus on.
- 45 minutes - the group works together with their selected case based on GLO and the elements.
- 20 minutes – everyone is gathered, and each group presents its case.

Based on the feedback received and the evaluations many participants appreciated working on a specific case in dialogue with others and found the elements and GLO useful to work with.

Evaluating social learning spaces

The second day started with a presentation on how to evaluate social spaces and why (Wollentz, 2021a&b). Our focus were our observations that socially interactive environments were seldom evaluated in Scandinavian museums. Hence, we argued that the museum sector needs to improve its systematic evaluation and understanding of when, why, and how spaces in museums become social, and what kind of learning social interaction stimulates. Furthermore, we argued that it is an advantage to be clearer with how to evaluate different learning outcomes, since the learning paradigm has been criticized for being unclear in distinguishing between different forms of learning (Biesta, 2013).

Additionally, we presented three different methods that were used in the project: 1) a survey with seven questions. Five related to the different GLOs, and two related to the value of the social dimensions. 2) Observations noting social interaction in groups based on a scheme. 3) Semi-structured interviews following the GLO scheme but adding a social dimension. Emphasis was put on the value in combining several different methods to reach as nuanced a picture as possible, where also social interaction without reflection is acknowledged, and which allows for many different forms of social interaction, including the ones not intended by those producing the exhibition or designing the activity. We showed how observations could recognize forms of social interaction that surveys would not, which often seemed to be based on preconceived ideas of what social interaction means, what a museum experience should consist of, or who is a learner. We also demonstrated the value of semi-structured interviews when the subject at hand is emotional or sensitive, since it is possible to note emotions through the way a person speaks or gesticulates. The format of semi-structured interviews is also beneficial in the context of difficult subjects, as it allows for follow-up questions in a way that surveys do not. Surveys, however, remain useful since these can be quantified more easily and are not as time-consuming as observations or semi-structured interviews. In sum, all three methods are useful depending on the context and time at hand – especially when combined with each other.

Evaluating social learning spaces in practice

The presentation of the different forms of evaluations was followed by a practical exercise where participants could try the three different forms of evaluations (surveys, observations, and semi-structured interviews) in four

different exhibition spaces of the museum Jamtli. One was the permanent exhibition detailing the cultural history of Jämtland, another was a photo exhibition of different kind of Nordic food and landscapes, a third was an art exhibition focusing on Nordic myths, and lastly an exhibition on how food connects to values and identities in the past and in the present. In other words: we encouraged participants to apply in practice these evaluation methods in very different forms of museum spaces, where the social interaction expresses itself in different ways. The participants were divided into three groups to test the methods in combination with each other. Since there were few visitors at the museum at that time, the participants also evaluated each other. In such a way, it was both a practical exercise of testing different forms of evaluations and a role-playing activity of pretending to be a visitor to the museum and engaging in conversations. Interestingly, our own evaluation of the course noted that some participants found it useful to take the role of a museum visitor themselves, since it forced them to shift perspectives. However, others found it challenging and would have preferred to test evaluation methods on “real” visitors instead.

The exercise was followed by a session where the participants engaged in a critical discussion of the different methods and how they relate to different kind of museum spaces. We also wanted participants to reflect upon how the methods can be combined to receive a layered and informative understanding. Many of the participants also provided input on how evaluations can be applied as well as how these three methods can be complemented with other aspects. It was stimulating to note how engaged the participants were, revealing that the subject of how to evaluate socially interactive spaces is important and relevant.

Course evaluation result

The evaluation was conducted in relation to the planned learning outcomes formulated through GLO and an electronic questionnaire developed in the digital platform Crowdsignal after the course. The GLO-evaluation was conducted in the final session of the course (GLO-evaluation, 2021; Museet som ett social rum – efter kursen, 2021).

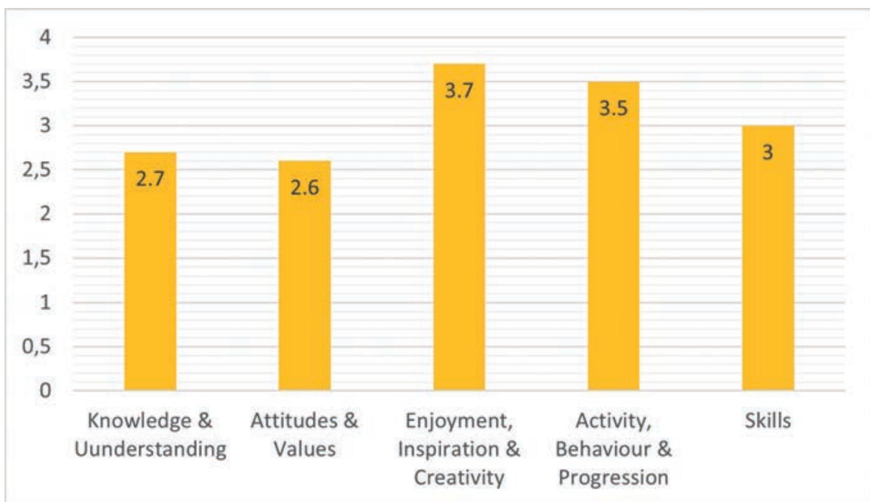
GLO evaluation

The GLO evaluation was conducted as a so-called café evaluation method (GLO-evaluation, 2013). Most of the participants in the course participated in the evaluation. The method organises the evaluation as

group discussions at "café tables" between four course participants. Each table has one leader who is also the referent for the table. The other participants circulate from table to table until all participants have taken part in the evaluation at all tables. In our evaluation of the course, we had five tables. Each table had one question related to an area in the GLO planning and evaluation tool. By doing so, we were able to evaluate the learning outcomes that were developed before the test course.

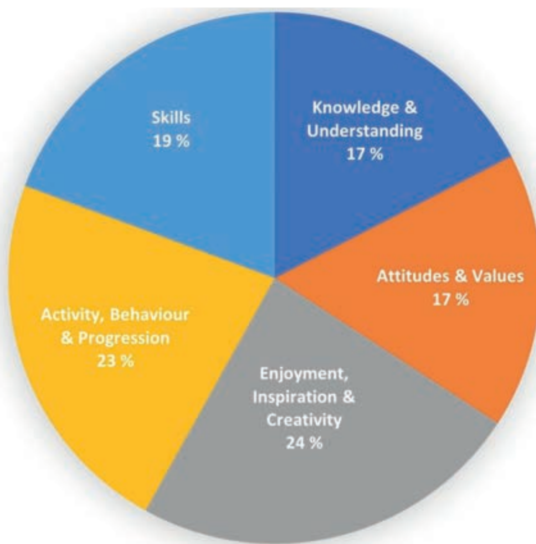
In figure 3 and 4, we present the result of the GLO evaluation. A first impression is that the different areas of GLO are rather equally represented. Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity gets the highest score with 3.7 or 24 percent followed by Activity, Behaviour and Progression with 3.5 or 23 percent. An interpretation of this could be that the participants had fun during the test course and that they were active learners during the learning process. The result shows that the intention of having a learner-centred approach and that the participants should be socially engaged most likely worked during the course.

Figure 2. Result of GLO evaluation (average). Test course in Östersund, Sweden, 29 September 2021 (1=low, 5=very high).



Source: GLO evaluation material developed by the project participants in the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. 29 September 2021.

Figure 3. Result of GLO evaluation (division). Test course in Östersund, Sweden, 29 September 2021.



Source: GLO evaluation material developed by the project participants in the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. 29 September 2021.

In addition, the areas of Skills, Knowledge and Understanding and Attitudes and Values scored almost equally with 3.0 or 19 percent, 2.7 or 17 percent, and 2.6 or 17 percent respectively. This meant that the participants developed new theoretical knowledge and practical skills during the course, and at the same time felt that their attitudes and values were challenged. One area the participants emphasised was that preconceived notions were challenged. In the case of Knowledge & Understanding, they emphasised an understanding of how to evaluate social spaces, for example, by using GLO. Regarding Skills, the participants emphasised that they had learned concrete practical methods to evaluate. Regarding Attitudes & Values, the participants, for example, emphasised new perspectives and insights as something that changed or challenged their attitudes and values together with the exchange of new ideas with other participants in the course.

Enjoyment, Inspiration & Creativity had the highest score. In particular, the participants thought it was inspirational and fun to meet colleagues from other museums to talk and socialise. The area of Activity, Behaviour & Progression was almost as high. The participants felt it was stimulating to work with evaluation methods in practice. They also felt it stimulating

for their behaviour that the learning activities have a high focus on the participants. For example, participants were given the opportunity to test themselves in the role of a museum visitor and acquire new insights into how it is like to be a visitor and not only an employee at a museum.

Evaluation of co-created learning outcomes

The result of the co-created learning outcomes was measured in a post course digital evaluation. 10 participants answered the evaluation questions formulated in accordance with the pre-course evaluation. Despite the answers not being a full representation of the course in general, the answers nevertheless gave us some indications of trends. For example, the answers gave us insight into whether the learning outcomes had been reached as intended or if adjustments or improvements ought to be considered before a next course. In this article, eight learning outcomes were formulated based on the pre-evaluation.

In response to learning outcome 1, the participants should after the course have a greater knowledge on how to work with exhibitions to stimulate social stimulation between the visitors The impression from the answers was that the participants had in fact developed a better understanding of which elements that stimulate social interactions in exhibitions.

Concerning learning outcome 2, the participant should after the course have knowledge and practical experiences in socially stimulating the museum visitor through the development of exhibitions. The response of the participants was that they had developed practical insights into how to create an exhibition.

In learning outcome 3, the participant should after the course have knowledge, understanding and practical insight into how socially interactive environments are created. Our impressions from the feedback were that there had been a good mix between theory and practice during the course.

Regarding social interaction at a museum with learning objectives (learning outcome 4), our goal was that the participants after the course should be able to understand links between social interaction and learning.

With regards to learning outcome 4, the evaluation indicates that it is doubtful if this learning outcome was reached. In a weighted average of four questions, the participants' answers indicate that the connection between social interaction and learning is the area they had understood the least, out of the four areas the questions concerned (2.10 of 4.00). Second lowest was learning outcome 5, "The participant should after the course have an insight into the different elements that stimulate

learning at museums" (2.50 of 4.00). Highest was learning outcome 2 (2.70 of 4.00).

This indicates that regarding learning outcomes 4 and 5, the course organisers need to make improvements, to explore the links between social interaction and learning on one hand, and the connection between elements that stimulate learning and social interaction on the other. This might not be a surprise since we are exploring a new transdisciplinary approach to museum and exhibition studies combined with social studies and education science.

Further information might be found in the answers on learning outcome 6, "After the course, the participant should have a well-developed knowledge and practical experiences of the links between social interaction and learning at museums". In relation to this, one course participant commented that there should have been more links between learning and social interaction.

Other comments from the course participants also addressed the lack of pre-knowledge before the course that might have made the links between social interaction and learning clearer. One participant wanted *"relevant theory and research literature connected to the practical exercises"*. Another participant commented that there should have been "*more clarity in the prior knowledge and the target group the course is aiming towards.*"

Thus, the evaluation of learning outcome 6 also address the important question about who the test course participants were. A clear majority was museum staff, working with exhibitions at their own museums. Most of the participants did not have a pedagogical education such as a schoolteacher education. Therefore, it might not be a surprise that the concept of learning was a new concept to many of the participants.

Learning outcome 7 was in the evaluation question formulated as "The participant should after the course have developed skills and attitudes in interacting socially with other people (visitors) at a museum as a space for learning". This outcome was about developing skills and attitudes in social interaction. The participants responded that it is important with social interaction. It is however unclear to what extent the participants developed this skill. Even if the answers were shallow in relation to learning outcome 7, they at least reflect that the participants had been made aware of the intention of the course to raise understanding of the importance of social interaction for learning, in this case at museums.

Concluding remarks

In the Nordplus development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces, we developed, tested, and evaluated a new course as a part of adult

and continuing education for museum staff in Scandinavia. Our ambition was to increase understanding and capability of dealing with the museum as a space for social interaction and a place for informal and adult learning. As a part of the course, the participants learned how elements in museums can stimulate social interaction. Another ambition was to teach staff the importance of why and how social learning spaces can be evaluated. Finally, the goal with the course was to teach evaluation of social learning spaces in practice.

We departed from a theory and methodological approach of action research as we wanted to study and stimulate change while carrying out our research project. The long-term aim of such a course would be to change museum professionals' way of thinking about learning and social interaction and inspire them to work in a different way in future exhibitions. This change would be part of the learner's identity and way of thinking, which in turn would affect the museum organisations' way of approaching these issues.

The results of the evaluation showed some interesting results. The GLO-evaluation showed that the participants enjoyed the test course, and that the test course affected their behaviour and progression. An area scoring lower, was the GLO-area knowledge and understanding, leading us to conclude that this part of the course could be developed further when the course is adjusted. The course developers also need to pay attention to the GLO-areas of attitudes and values; and the GLO-area skills when the course is adjusted.

The post-course evaluation also gave useful results. The test course participants gave, in general, positive feedback. The most important area for improvement, however, seems to be in the coupling of learning and social interaction/social spaces. This area is important to improve in the adjusted course because it was at the very centre of the development project and the test course. The result probably shows that a two-day course is too limited amount of time to learn, process, and internalize the concept of combining thoughts on social interaction and learning, which was new to many participants. Making the connection between the concepts and seeing them as intertwined also implies a change of the museum staff's competencies and the museum institution into a learning organisation. These fundamental changes or reforms, however, take more than two days. On the other hand, the result of the evaluation showed that there is an interest among museums to take part in the new paradigm of, for example, adult and lifelong learning. Nevertheless, it is important to be realistic about how fast this change might come. The test course showed that staff at

the museums want to be part of the change, but that it will take strong effort to change both the competencies of the staff, and with that, the orientation of the museum institution towards a more professional approach to adult learning.

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Chapter 10

Addressing Ableist Normativity in Adult Education – Conceptualising Educational Ableism

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Abstract

How do we address normativity and ableism in adult education? Moreover, how do we embrace *diversity* in adult education regarding the learning efforts of young disabled adults?

"Adulthood" in adult education refers to an understanding of "the adult" as a perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human, casting the young disabled adults as a diminished state of being human. In adult education, young disabled adults become cast as "dis/adults" through the lenses of critical dis/ability studies and the workings of the dis/ability complex. It becomes clear that any enquiry into an ableist belief system in adult education requires some form of articulation on the underpinnings of such a system. This begs the question: what undergirds notions of ableism in adult education, which constitute *educational ableism* through practices of exclusion in Danish Adult Education Centres?

Keywords

Ableism, adult education, dis/adult, dis/human, neoliberal-ableism, educational ableism.

Introduction

I embark on Fiona Kumari Campbell's (2009) theoretical concept of *ableist normativity* to understand what undergirds notions of *ableism* in a Danish

adult educational context. I offer a new theoretical approach to understanding practices of exclusion in Danish adult education, following Dan Goodley's (2014) dis/ability studies, as a way of thinking with the forward slash "/" in dis/ability (Fristrup et al., 2019; Fristrup & Odgaard, 2021a, 2021b; Fristrup & Odgaard, 2022). The critical point is that *ability* (normality) cannot be understood without *disability* (abnormality) and vice versa. The two sides of the forward slash rub against each other, establishing what Deleuze (1986) calls each other's constitutive outside, where the two sides of the forward slash depend on one another. I examine the relationship between the two sides of the forward slash "/" in Danish adult educational settings, following Foucault's (1995, 2006) demonstration of how disciplinary power constantly reconstructs the relation between normality and deviancy in schools and institutions. These theoretical efforts correspond with the educational stories told by young disabled adults who identify as having an invisible disability, i.e. a physical, mental or neurological condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities, which are invisible to the onlooker.

The argument I will put forward in this article embraces the notion of becoming *dis/adult* when being *dis/abled* through the *educational dis/advantages* offered in Danish Adult Education Centres (VUC). The argument is elaborated through the educational stories told by young disabled adults during online group meetings for a period of two years (2020-2022). The empirical evidence demonstrated that disabled students felt lost in education (Fristrup, 2022). In this article, I will revisit the educational stories and provide a new argument regarding the notion of becoming dis/adult through participating in the Danish Adult Education Centres (VUC).

Methodology

In researching *educational stories*, I have been inspired by Goodley et al. (2004) and their approach to researching life stories, but the main inspiration and adaptation in this article's methodology is embedded in Critical Race Theory's (CRT) approach to storytelling as a way to provide empirical evidence in educational studies (Youdell, 2011; Blaisdell, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

According to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998):

> Stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting. The ahistorical and acontextual nature of much law and other "science" renders the voices of dispossessed and marginalized group members mute. In response, much of the scholarship of CRT focuses on the role of "voice" in bringing additional power to the legal discourses of

> racial justice. Indeed, Delgado (1990) argues that people of color speak with experiential knowledge about the fact that our society is deeply structured by racism. That structure gives their stories a common framework warranting the term "voice". Consequently, critical race theorists are attempting to interject minority cultural viewpoints, derived from a common history of oppression, into their efforts to reconstruct a society crumbling under the burden of racial hegemony (Barnes, 1990). The use of voice or "naming your reality" is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship. CRT scholars use parables, chronicles, stories, counterstories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories to illustrate the false necessity and irony of much of current civil rights doctrine. (p. 13)

I employ storytelling as a methodological tool to capture the voices of young disabled adults concerning their experiences in the Danish Adult Education Centres (VUC). The educational stories are told by four young disabled adults in their early twenties with *invisible disabilities*, participating in upper secondary education (high school) in Danish Adult Education Centres (in Danish, VUC). One of the participants had not yet passed the exam for continuing education when the online group meetings took place. The other three participants had passed their exams and were all admitted to university when the online meetings took place. During the online meetings, the participants could look back on their "disabled" educational pathways and talk about their experiences as a way of "voicing" how ableist normativity works in adult education through the performance of affective educational ableism.

I am also inspired by Margaret Price (2011) and her work on being "mad at school", which has a double connotation concerning both the affective part of feeling mad in school and the institutional part of being constructed as mad due to mental disabilities in schools. Price (2011) explores the contested boundaries between disability and ability in examining the rhetoric of mental disability by asking how our education practices might change if we understood disability to incorporate the disabled mind.

Empirical findings

The collected educational stories all talk about the problems regarding the support system. If they got any support, it just reinforced their social exclusion, and mostly, the support was insufficient due to a lack of competencies in the support system (Fristrup, 2022). In this article, I will not focus on the support system but on the affective recollections of how it was to be in an educational setting with teachers using irony as their control instrument. I will elaborate on the frustrations it caused in the four young disabled adults being on "the spectrum" and identifying as having an Autism Spectrum

Disorder (ASD), where irony, in general, and concerning the teachers in particular, results in severe meltdowns due to their lack of understanding the teachers' behaviours. They collapse in their strenuous efforts to interpret the social aspects of the educational settings, resulting in withdrawal from courses due to the teachers' lack of knowledge about the ableist normativity they perform, resulting in practices of exclusion.

After elementary school, most young people in Denmark take either upper secondary (high school) education or vocational education. In Denmark, there are four different types of secondary education. Familiar to them all is that they are preparatory for further study, i.e. a secondary school diploma allows the student to apply for admission to a higher education programme.

In this case, the young adults studying in the Danish Adult Education Centres tried to pass a two-year Higher Preparatory Examination Programme (in Danish, HF), which took more than two years. HF is a general secondary school-level programme that is vocationally and practically oriented. The programme aims at providing admission to vocational colleges and professional Bachelor's study programmes. An HF examination with an extended subject package provides access to the university's Bachelor's programmes. The requirement for admission is a passed 9th-grade examination. The programme lasts two years and includes several compulsory subjects and special subject packages on specific themes such as health, environment, pedagogy or economics.

When disabled students struggle to pass the required exams in the Higher Preparatory Examination Programme, they find themselves stuck in a system that prevents them from getting the necessary admission to vocational colleges and professional Bachelor's study programmes or being able to apply for the university's Bachelor's programmes. It is not because they lack intelligence but because they are embedded in a whole range of incidents that can be elaborated as *exclusionary practices*, which troubles their passing, turning them into pieces due to their meltdowns. Passing becomes a problem, but it arises as an individual problem when referenced in their diagnoses if they disclose their invisible disabilities to the onlookers in the educational environment. In this case, the disclosure of disability can be approached as the *dis/closure* of disability regarding understandings of disability as *dis/ability*, and with an emphasis on exploring how *ability* constitutes *dis/ability* as segregation of what differs from understandings of normalcy.

When young disabled students enter the Danish Adult Education Centres, they step into the understanding of normalcy, which, according to Campbell (2009), unfolds an *ableist normativity* that outlines the dividing

elements with a particular emphasis on the ableist relations concerning the notion of ableist normativity and the constitutional divide.

In 2019, Campbell elaborated on this divide as a system with two elements:

> Namely the notion of the normative (and normal individual, e.g. the prized body/mind/aesthetic) and the enforcement of a divide between a so-called perfected or developed humanity (how humans are supposedly meant to be) and the aberrant, the unthinkable, underdeveloped and therefore not really human. (Campbell, 2019, p. 11)

I have taken Campbell's (2019) notion of the constitutional divide embedded in ableist normativity and practised through ableist relations as a theoretical point of departure in this article's unfolding of what constitutes the *ableist practices of exclusion* in the Danish Adult Education Centres. Ableist practices of exclusion constitute *dis/adults* as *dis/humans* in the Danish Adult Education Centres, trespassing the young adults' ability to pass the Higher Preparatory Examination Programme and get admission to the vocational colleges and the professional Bachelor's study programmes or being able to apply for the university's Bachelor's programmes. The point taken in this article is that young disabled adults are stuck in *educational ableism*.

Theoretical framework: Studies in Ableism (SiA)

I elaborate on an understanding of ableism, favouring Fiona Kumari Campbell's work (2001, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2019), particularly her latest attempt to develop *Studies in Ableism* (SiA) as a research methodology. When accentuating ableism, I cease confining my enquiry into disablism and its practices and production while losing sight of the constitutive other of disablism: *ableism*.

Studies in Ableism explicitly insist upon the exploration of epistemologies and ontologies that constitute contemporary ableism as "a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard)" (Campbell, 2001, p. 44). Recognising the subtle nature of ableism, which makes it "hard to pin systems of ableism down because these systems are a series of permeable practices" (Campbell, 2019, p. 11), I draw on Campbell's (2019) presuppositional construction of the "foundations of systems of ableism" (p. 1), in order to grasp the densely complex and slippery notions of ableism.

In her 2019 article "Precision ableism: a *studies* in ableism approach to developing histories of disability and abledment", Campbell puts forward both a definition of ableism and a methodological approach aimed

at researching ableist formations. At this juncture, it is crucial to note that Campbell's (2019) thinking on ableism draws strongly on the work of Foucault (1982) and his original formulations on subjectivity and power concerning *dividing practices* 'between' and 'within'. This is most evident when Campbell (2019) refers to ableism as both "dividing elements and dividing practices" (p. 11). In this way, ableism always consists of relations 'between' and 'within' as relations of ableism or ableist relations (Campbell, 2019, p. 15). Campbell (2019) further refers to ableism as something which is practised in the West concerning demands for "an unbridled form of individualism that is preoccupied with continuous self-improvement and corporeal enhancement (fit, benchmarked and upgradeable bodies) that struggles with the reality of illness, disability and contingency" (p. 11).

Preoccupied with the order(ing) of sentient life, the ableist divide splinters life into demarcated and fixed bodily states of being, which in turn strengthen a fantasy of corporality, "where the uncertainties and leakiness of the body dis-appear within a teleological narrative of 'progress', improvement and empire building towards a pristine model of ablement" (Campbell, 2019, p. 11).

Campbell (2019) continues arguing:

> With the development of enhancement technologies (cosmetic neurology and surgery for instance) the notion of the norm is constantly sliding, maybe creating a larger pool of 'abnormal' persons who because of 'choice' or limited resources cannot 'improve' themselves and hence lapse into deficiency. (p. 12)

It becomes clear that any enquiry into an ableist belief system indeed requires some form of articulation on the underpinnings of such a system. However, this begs another question concerning what undergirds contemporary ableism because of what compounds such an ableist belief system in terms of structures and trajectories (economically, ideologically and culturally).

Contemporary ableism as neoliberal-ableism

Searching for answers to these questions requires, as Goodley (2014) writes, an "unpacking [of] the ableist context" (p. 26) in demonstrating that "ableism clings to economic and ideological conditions" (p. 26), which reveals ableism in its current adherence to neoliberalism. This ongoing affiliation, ableism vis-á-vis neoliberalism, leads Goodley (2014) to define our current ableism as "neoliberal-ableism" (p. 26). I correspond with Goodley et al.'s (2014) understanding of neoliberalism as "providing the ecosystem

for the nourishment of ableism" (p. 981). It is crucial to underscore that any robust attempt to analyse the contemporary formations of ableism involves scrutinising the rise of neoliberalism and neoliberal subject formations. However, accepting this entanglement between the two (neoliberalism and ableism), as Campbell (2019) cautions us, does not liberate us from taking into account the fact that "ableism is everywhere, but its manifestations as a practice are not the same everywhere and in every moment" (p. 17).

Hence, examining ableist formations entails uncovering distinct circumstances that give rise to particular historically situated ableist formations. When examining contemporary ableism concerning neoliberal-ableism, I frame ableism following Foucault's (1978) genealogy of advanced liberal government as the birth of biopolitics in the eighteenth century, when "the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (p. 140) underlined the disciplinary approach to the ordering of society and the abbreviation of power over life as the performances of the body became an investment in life itself, in contrast to the sovereign power as a power of death.

Within the era of biopolitics, the population became the centre of political attention and "an indispensable element in the development of capitalism" (Foucault, 1978, p. 141), with its standard reference to growth concerning both the phenomena of population and the economic processes in favour of availability and docility.

Educational ableism and notions of carelessness

When neoliberal-ableism operates through academic ableism, a successful academic is unencumbered by caring (Lynch, 2010). In this article, I will depart from an argument on academic ableism as embedded in carelessness and broaden the scope of academic ableism into a conceptualisation of *educational ableism* to articulate the practices of exclusion in Danish Adult Education Centres as embedded in carelessness. This points towards addressing ableist normativity in adult education through understanding contemporary ableism as neoliberal-ableism. I argue that educational ableism can only be understood by framing contemporary ableism as neoliberal-ableism.

This leaves us with the possibility to transfer the argument about carelessness from an academic neoliberal-ableist setting to an adult educational neoliberal-ableist setting as "neoliberalism exacerbated the demand for care-free workers, but the origins of carelessness in education lie deeper within the Cartesian thinking that underpins the very organization and scholarship of education itself (Lynch et al., 2007)" (Lynch, 2010, p. 58).

The idealisation of care-free workers in education is about developing the autonomous rational actor encapsulated in the Cartesian dictum cogito ergo sum (Lynch, 2010). According to Campbell (2008a, 2008b, 2009) and Gregor Wolbring (2008, 2009, 2012), ableism maintains the autonomous, rational, reasonable and healthy citizen. Disabled citizens become *dis/citizens,* and in adult education, this translates into *dis/adults*.

Following Jay Timothy Dolmage (2017), ableism is reinforced at universities because they are set up hierarchically, organisationally and architecturally in ways that reflect society. This reflection of society in educational settings constitutes the division between abled-bodied and disabled-bodied, i.e. dis/ability, which resonates with the practices of exclusion in adult education embedded in the collected educational stories of young disabled adults in the adult education system.

Neoliberal inclusionism

When approaching questions surrounding *disability in adult education*, we are confronted with conceptions and logics of subjectivity regarding agency and representation obtained through neoliberal discourses of recognition, integration and inclusive education, all of which concern the tandem entanglement of the subject formation of *disability* concerning *education*.

Such discourses and integration practice of neoliberal recognition and inclusion have by prominent disability studies scholars David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (2015) been described as *neoliberal inclusionism*: "Newly visible public identities such as those labelled handicapped, cognitively impaired, intersexed, deaf/blind, or queer based on a formerly stigmatized group's ability to approximate historically specific expectations of normalcy" (p. 2).

Corresponding with *neoliberal inclusionism*, as it ushers in recognition of the disabled subject in proximity to normalcy through the institutional gateways of education (i.e. the subject of education), I found the Danish newspaper *Dagbladet Information* on 30 August 2021, reporting:

> More than a billion will be gained by educating more people with mental and cognitive disabilities. COWI assesses this in a report made for the Central Disability Council. According to the report, raising the level of education a single step among one per cent of people with mental and cognitive disabilities such as anxiety, ADHD and autism, the socio-economic gain is just under 1.3 billion Danish kroner throughout working life. (Richter, 2021, p. 13)

The report's argument departs from *neoliberal inclusionism* based on neoliberal-ableism and the emphasis on developing *employability competencies* through education. However, at the same time, the report omits the workings of educational ableism. Disabled students must deal with an educational system grounded on *professionalised caring* (Lynch, 2010). Nevertheless, the professionalised caring is performed by the *temporarily* able-bodied and "must be provoked into wonder about the very forms of embodiment to which "able-bodiedness" is indexed and against which normality and acceptability and employability and nearly all *abilities* are measured" (Reynolds in Scuro, 2018, p. xiii).

In light of such stakes, the possibilities and contours of thinking that resist ableism with as much force, consistency and complexity as other forms of oppression, we must address the ableist normativity in adult education. How come the educational system constantly fails to configure *fitting* disabled students in all their uniqueness and diversity, which makes demands in unexpected ways? Why does the educational world not easily suit them instead of judging and rejecting them by proxy?

When the *politics of ableism* operate in adult educational settings, it becomes impossible to address the ableism that performs practices of exclusion without "feeling disability" (Goodley et al., 2018) through the contours of educational ableist performances as they unfold in the stories told by the young disabled adults.

Performing ableist normativity in adult education

When the teacher controls the classroom in a chemistry lesson through ableist power relations, he demonstrates a division between what he is allowed to do and what the students are not allowed to do, such as eating the crisps in the laboratory. The teacher sat on his chair with his legs on the table, holding a bag of crisps in his hand while eating with the other. This demonstration of ableist power in the laboratory, where signs on the doors demonstrated that eating in the laboratory was strictly forbidden, became a massive frustration for one of the younger adults diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). He could not understand the teacher's behaviour or interpret the situation as the other students were laughing. He got lost in education through the framing of the educational settings embedded in demonstrations of the previously mentioned mirroring of hierarchical structures in society with the teacher on top of the hierarchy and the students at the bottom – but the teacher's use of irony divided the *neurotypical* and the *neurodivergent* students.

Someone who is neurodivergent behaves, thinks and learns differently compared to neurotypical people. This term can be used to describe an individual whose brain functions differently from what we consider "normal" in correspondence with ableist normativity. This includes people with autism, ADHD, Tourette's, dyslexia, and other neurodiverse conditions. *Neurodiversity* is the diversity or variation of cognitive functioning in people, as everyone has a unique brain and, therefore, different skills, abilities, and needs. If the teacher had known about neurodiversity, he might not have made this kind of demonstration because he would then have known that not all the students in his class would be able to understand the situation and avoid overload due to the high level of frustration among neurodivergent students.

Another teacher proclaimed during a Danish lesson that she only connected with the students through irony. Unfortunately, this class had only ASD students, and the teacher would not change her ableist practices even though she was in an ASD setting. With her understanding of "connection" through irony with ASD students, the outcome can only be articulated as "disconnections", but due to her performance of ableist normativity, it became a practice of exclusion through a dividing practice, which can be articulated as *dis/connection.* Her understanding of "connection" was embedded in ableist normativity and excluded those who did not connect through irony – in this case, the whole ASD class that dis/connected, but she did not care. When one of the ASD students confronted her about her use of irony after the lecture, she stated that she was only kidding when using irony. She made it sound so innocent when downplaying her use of irony, which ignored the questioning made by the ASD student. A questioning that aligns with addressing the ableist normativity performed by the teacher.

The downplaying was often articulated through the words: "Just kidding!" when the young disabled adults addressed the teachers' ableist normativity. So often, in the young disabled adults' stories, these events are followed by ignorant behaviours and carelessness and, at times, by aggressive and violent communication towards the young disabled adults.

One teacher was so provoked by the questioning of his teaching addressed by an ASD student in class that he returned the questioning with the following sentence: "Hey you! (followed by an aggressive pointing towards the ASD student) Ask your autistic friends what the name of the river is!" The ASD student heard the words, but mostly, he heard the tone of the teacher's voice as very aggressive and looked at the teacher as if he had become a monster. The ASD student just got up from his chair and

hurried out of the classroom door, never to return to this teacher's lessons. The ASD student had to call in sick the following day because of massive meltdowns caused by the teacher's behaviour in the classroom.

When leaning into ableist normativity in the classroom, the "dis-ing" of students becomes an ongoing practice, which obtains the constitutional divide as an institutional divide. The dividing practices in adult education are institutionalised through the performance of affective ableist normativity as practices of exclusion.

Figurational divisions

The above division practices can be seen as a separation or a social division between two groups, i.e. the teachers and the ASD students. However, it is also possible to find a division between neurotypical and neurodivergent students in mixed classes. According to the young disabled adults, the neurotypical students at the Danish Adult Education Centres seldom cause conflicts embedded in ableist normativity. In most of the stories, the students are in the same boat, but at the same time, none of the neurotypical students defend their classmates when confronted by ableist performances by the teachers. Whether or not the neurotypical students know that this is a challenge for the neurodivergent students is left unsaid in the educational stories told by the four young disabled adults.

However, when approaching these kinds of divisions through the lenses of Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson (1994), the two groupings are not separated but work separately through figurations. The interdependencies between people change in time, place and situation as the power balances (i.e. power ratios) change between the groups. When approaching adult education as figurations, which are not static but unfold in continuously dynamic processes, we can engender adult education through Elias and Scotson's (1994) work on the established and the outsiders in the microcosm of Winston Parva.

The microcosm of adult education unfolds in specific settings in the classroom, the laboratory or other educational settings. We can then speak about adult education practices concerning the actual processes where teachers and students engage in adult education. Adult education becomes a social process that unfolds in specific settings or arenas where people are more or less involved or detached.

The social structures are not present a priori in the figurations but emerge as dynamic social orderings of the relationships between people, i.e. the figurational interdependencies between people. According to Elias (1987):

> One is referring to human beings, including their movements, their gestures and their actions, no less than their thoughts, their feelings, their drives and their drive control. One is referring, in short, to their self-regulation, including that which is regulated. The two concepts refer to different ways in which human beings regulate themselves. In their self-regulation, people can be more detached or more involved. Social standards of individual self-regulation can represent a higher detachment or a higher involvement. So can their knowledge or, for that matter, their art. All statements about involvement and detachment are comparative. (p. xxxii)

In following Elias (1987), adult education can be approached as settings formed by peoples' ways of engaging and disengaging through processes of involvement and detachment. *Dis/engagements* in adult education lead us toward the problems of social bonds, whether that be the affective bonds or the political and economic bonds. According to Elias (1978, p. 134):

> The concept of figuration puts the problem of human interdependencies into the very heart of sociological theory. What makes people bonded to and dependent on each other? [ ] People's dependencies on each other are obviously not always the same in all societies at different stages of development. We can, however, try to focus on one or two universal forms of dependence, and show briefly how people's interdependencies change as societies become increasingly differentiated and stratified.

Elias (1978) does not separate the human personality structure from the social structure, like Talcott Parsons, who thinks of society as a system divided from the individual, which constructs the human being as a lone individual or, as Elias (1978) calls it; "Homo clausus", as "the concept of open valencies which are directed towards other people helps towards replacing the image of man as 'Homo clausus' with that of 'open people'" (p. 135).

We can then talk about attached and unattached valencies concerning the 'I-and-we' images as we form our understandings of ourselves through our relationships with others and the attached and unattached valencies. "So it would be true to say that when a much-loved person dies, the total figuration of the survivor's valencies and the whole balance of his web of relationships will be changed" (Elias, 1978, p. 136).

Everyone is fundamentally directed to other people, and what binds people to each other forms the foundation of their interdependence, which shapes the figurations in society as all affective bonds between people knit society together. According to Elias (1987), people are bound together in groups, but as the groups grow more extensive and more stratified, new forms of emotional bonds will be found:

> As well as interpersonal bonds there will be bonds connecting people to the symbols of larger units, to coats of arms, to flags and to emotionally-charged concepts. In this way, people are emotionally bound together through the medium of symbols. This kind of bond is no less significant for human interdependence than the bonds created, as mentioned above, by growing specialization. The emotional valancies which bind people together, whether directly by face-to-face relationships or indirectly by their attachment to common symbols, form a separate level of bonds. Blended with other more impersonal types of bond, they underlie the extended 'I-and-we' consciousness, which hitherto has always seemed indispensable in binding together not only small tribes but large social units like nation-states encompassing many millions of people. People's attachment to such large social units is often as intense as their attachment to a person they love. The individual who has formed such a bond will be as deeply affected when the social unit to which he is devoted is conquered or destroyed, debased or humiliated, as when a beloved person dies. (Elias, 1978, p. 137)

When the teachers perform ableist normativity in adult education, the 'I-and-we' consciousness is troubled and imbalanced in the adult education figuration. Disabled students will be deeply affected when the social unit, i.e. the class in which the disabled students are engaged, is humiliated by the teachers' performances.

The teachers' carelessness in adult education affects the bonds connecting people to their educational dis/engagement. When destabilising the 'I-and-we' consciousness in adult education through addressing ableist normativity, the teachers escape the possibility of learning to listen through *disabled consciousness* (Ramlackhan, 2021; Brown & Ramlackhan, 2022; Brown & Leigh, 2018) as a way to challenge the processes of exclusion in adult education.

Dishuman times in adult education?

Since 2013, Goodley (2020) has been working with several colleagues at the University of Sheffield in the UK to pull together an interdisciplinary research centre (iHuman) to study new ways of understanding humanism in the interconnections of culture, economy, human movement and technology. They follow the work of Rosi Braidotti (2006, 2013, 2018), and Dan Goodley, Rebecca Lawthom, Kirsty Liddiard and Katherine Runswick-Cole on their intellectual and political project named *DisHuman* (Goodley, 2020; Goodley et al., 2019; Goodley et al., 2020). In this project, they embrace "the ambivalence that Braidotti, Wynter, Fanon,

and Haraway have towards the human (not least in terms of the dominant ways in which this category has been shaped and morphed in modernity)" (Goodley, 2020, p. 44).

The DisHuman project is oriented towards a time when dis/human becomes dishuman, and thinking about the human involves thinking about disability (Goodley & Runswick Cole, 2016). The dishuman approach without the forward slash in dis/human is "dis-ing" the dividing practices that establish the division between people as a critical intervention into the unsettling of humanism's universalism and the primacy of rationality and the unitary subject (Braidotti, 2013). When adult education works on the confinement of dis/ability, I have to opt for future work on "dis-ing" adult education to address and trouble the ableist normativity in adult education.

The question of the "human" has always been central to the politics of disability. It will be central to debunking ableist normativity in adult education, pointing towards *dishuman* times and efforts in society in general and in adult education in particular.

Learning to become dishuman through adult education awakens a new normativity in adult education, which I call *dishumanity*. It might be an idealist normativity, but any normativity is based on ideals. The problem with ableist normativity in adult education is that it is only a problem for those young disabled adults becoming cast as dis/abled, dis/adults and dis/humans – all in all, those being exposed to practices of "dis-ing" performing dis/humanity and not dishumanity in adult education.

The article is an invitation to "dis" dis/humanity through the ongoing processes of addressing ableist normativity in adult education. In closing this article, I will quote Elif Shafak (2020) in her efforts to write about how to stay sane in an age of division by being able to tell our stories:

> We are made of stories – those that have happened, those that are still happening at this moment in time and those that are shaped purely in our imagination through words, images, dreams and an endless sense of wonder about the world around us and how it works. Unvarnished truths, innermost reflections, fragments of memory, wounds unhealed. Not to be able to tell your story, to be silenced and shut out, therefore, is to be dehumanised. It strikes at your very existence; it makes you question your sanity, the validity of your version of events. It creates a profound, and existential anxiety in us. In losing our voice something in us dies. (p. 9)

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Chapter 11
Adult Learning in a Master's Program in Accounting and Auditing – key challenges and employer-university cooperation to enhance learning

By Ellen M. Kulset, Eivind Ludvigsen and Kjell Magne Baksaaas

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to conduct an analysis of the newly started Master's program in accounting and auditing (NMRR) at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN) to identify challenges to students' learning, discuss these and then present possible solutions to the challenges. Data is collected in interviews with USN partner firms. We build on experiential learning theory (Jarvis, 2002; Kolb, 1984; Muller, 2015), as well as adult learning theory (Knowles, 1984; Knowles et al., 2015). We identify several challenges to adult learning related to the learning/professional context, the partner firms, and the students. Addressing these challenges, we suggest changes in learning activities emphasizing more focus on confidentiality issues and reflective practice. The paper contributes to a better understanding of challenges related to experiential learning and reflective practice and demonstrates how partner firms and the university together can contribute to the students' experiential learning in the setting of adult learning in accounting and auditing in the Nordic countries.

Keywords

Master's program; Accounting; Auditing; Experiential learning; Reflective practice; Confidentiality issues

1. Introduction

USN recently started a Master's program in accounting and auditing: "Master i regnskap og revisjon" (NMRR) in close cooperation with the accounting and auditing profession. The set-up of the NMRR program builds on the industry Master's program (IM) developed at USN that has been described by Muller (2015). All students work part-time at a USN partner firm, and their

coursework takes place over three years instead of the standard two-year period. The NMRR differs from the IM in that students who already work in the accounting and auditing profession can be enrolled in the program.

About the study program

To enter the NMRR program, the students must work in one of the partner firms, convince their current employer to sign a partner firm agreement or get hired by one of the partner firms. The NMRR program is set up as three-party agreement between the student, the university, and the respective partner firm. Approximately 30 students are admitted to the program every year, and 28 partner agreements have been signed. Some of the partners are large and have several students employed, while others are small and do not have students every year.

The goal of the NMRR program as an IM program is for the program to be professionally oriented and based on experiential learning as well as on reflective practice. The program provides an advanced specialized insight into financial accounting, auditing, valuation, tax law and corporate law. The aim of the program is for students to experience that the interplay between theoretical education and practice in the profession accelerates the process of becoming a skilled independent professional. To achieve this goal, a close collaboration with the partner companies was established in the design of the study model. Current learning activities in use in the program include cases, group work, student presentations, submission of papers, guest lectures and presentations by faculty staff.

Norwegian businesses are constantly evolving with more complicated business models; accordingly, and combined with the ongoing digital transformation, there is a need for increased competence among accountants and auditors (NOU 2017: 15; NOU 2018: 9). The professions in accounting and auditing (Gulbrandsen, 2014; Slagstad, 2008) have special features with which they must cope: a) extensive regulation and b) frequent changes to these guidelines and standards. Much of the practice of the profession takes place as a combination of compliance with laws and regulations and the use of business economics competencies, in this context, expert knowledge in both these areas is required.

The NMRR program with the students' part-time employment in a partner company draws attention to the important interplay between theory and experience from practice to enhance learning and contributes to ensure that what the students learn is relevant for the working life within the profession (Meld. St. 16, 2020-2021). In addition, the students learn to navigate their professional lives as one of constant change and, hopefully, to appreciate the need for lifelong learning (Bersin & Zao-Sanders, 2019; Meld. St. 14, 2019-2020).

Research questions

To this point, USN and the partner firms have cooperated on issues such as developing the study program, course content, course schedules and recruitment. Anecdotal evidence from other Master's programs in accounting and auditing suggests that some students, despite having working experience, still struggle to pass their professional examinations, even as other less experienced students struggle due to their lack of professional experience. An even closer cooperation between the university and the employers in the NMRR program can be a means to further facilitate the students' learning during the Master's program. As a part of the university's continuous effort to improve its programs, the purpose of this paper is to investigate challenges that may have an impact on students' learning in the NMRR program and provide a venue to discuss solutions that can be implemented in the program to address these challenges. In this context, our methodological approach can be described partly as an exploratory exercise and partly as a project that is inspired by teaching and shaped as a design science with its focus on continuous improvement (Laurillard, 2013). The IM includes a compulsory course called "reflective practice" to enhance student learning by connecting theory and practice and improving personal skills (Muller, 2015). The NMRR program does not employ this specialized course but rather brings the concept into the ordinary courses of its curriculum. Our aim is to investigate how reflective practice can and should be a part of the NMRR program.

Libby (1995) claims that acquiring audit knowledge is difficult for those who have no audit experience. With this in mind, the facilitation of experiential learning in undergraduate and Master's programs in accounting and auditing is a topic that has been extensively explored in prior research. The limited extent to which real-world experiences is reflected in the teaching has also been heavily criticized (Chiang et al., 2021). Audit education is criticized for not focusing enough on the "students' practical decision-making and problem solving skills" (Chiang et al., 2021, p. 1). Prior research on experiential learning in accounting and auditing education primarily focuses on the use of different learning activities and the need to bring professional experiences into the classroom—using, for instance, cases, video simulations, roleplaying, and internships (e.g. Elijido-Ten & Kloot, 2015; Libby, 1991; O'Callaghan et al., 2012; Siegel et al., 1997). In our review of this literature, we are aware of only a couple of studies that explicitly investigate learning activities that are particularly relevant to encourage reflection (Chiang et al., 2021; Mintz,

2006). The NMRR program attempts to address this shortfall in contemporary study. The NMRR program is in itself a means to incorporate experiential learning in the teaching of accounting and auditing with its compulsory part-time work requirement at an accounting or audit firm for all students.

The challenges that exist for experiential learning in the context of accounting and auditing education in a program where all students are working part-time and how these challenges can be overcome is to our knowledge previously unexplored. Further study and systematic research are likely to generate important knowledge that can be used to improve contemporary Master's programs. We are not aware of any prior studies related to experiential learning in the accounting and auditing profession in Norway, nor in the other Nordic countries. This study attempts to fill in this gap of research and contribute to the practical tasks of teaching and learning within extant programs.

We pose the following research questions:

1. What are key challenges to adult learning[12] in the NMRR program?
2. How can the partner firms and the university work together to solve these challenges and contribute to the students' experiential learning process?
3. How can reflective practice (and disciplined critical thinking) be implemented in a Master's program?

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In section two we present our methodology. In section three we present our theoretical framework as well as sketch a review of some prior literature that is particularly important to our study. In section four we present our findings. Section five concludes our paper.

2. Material and methods

To collect empirical data to answer our research questions, we conducted interviews with seven leaders from five of USN partner firms; see overview in Table 1 below. These respondents are aware of what knowledge the students need, and they can bring interesting perspectives on students' learning.

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[12] The term *adult's learning* is used with different meaning in prior research. We use the term, building on Knowles (1984), mainly to emphasize that we study adult's learning which differs from children's learning but also as the term is often used in the context of "lifelong and lifewide education of adults" (Knowles et al., 2015, p.312).

Table 1 Overview of respondents

R1	Leader	Small audit firm
R2	Leader	Medium-sized audit firm
R3	Local leader and HR manager	Large audit firm
R4	Local leader	Large audit firm
R5	Local leader and HR manager	Large audit firm

Each of the respondents knows the Master's program well, and all of them have previously been involved in the program; for instance, as participants in the implementation phase or as guest lecturers. We chose to interview respondents from audit firms where students working in these firms need to pass the examinations with a grade C or above so they are eligible to apply for the Norwegian equivalent of the CPA examination and are therefore likely to be highly motivated. As small firms and large audit firms may have different perspectives on the topics in question, our respondents were selected to work in audit firms of different sizes (two smaller and three large audit firms). To be able to answer our research questions, an interview guide was developed and used as guidance for the researchers during the interviews. Given the exploratory purpose of the study, the interviews were planned and conducted to let the respondents express themselves freely. To obtain interesting perspectives as well as depth and precision in our data from respondents who work within a highly competitive industry with numerous business secrets, interviews were not taped but interview notes were taken. All researchers were present in all interviews. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour. The interviews were conducted, and notes taken, in Norwegian. One of the researchers translated the quotes into English.

Given the exploratory purpose of our study and the limited number of respondents, data analysis using statistical methods was not suitable, and we conducted our analysis with the purpose of understanding the respondents' answers and explanations in mind. Using the qualitative method of thematic analysis enabled us to categorize our findings on challenges into more refined categories.

To elicit additional perspectives on key challenges, the respondents were invited to give their initial views on a new possible approach to facilitate closer cooperation and to operationalize ways in which the university should assign tasks to the students that they might carry out as a part of their work for their employers and on assignments with the latter's clients. The type and scope of such tasks could be chosen from a wide range of alternatives that we had intentionally not defined in advance, and these tasks could be either mandatory or non-mandatory.

3. Theory

Theoretical background

Educational research distinguishes between deep learning and surface learning (Biggs, 2011). In deep learning, the student will to a greater extent try to understand the big picture and the internal logic in a subject. This type of learning is considered to be of a more lasting nature than mere surface learning and can to a greater extent be described as the acquisition of professional competence (Biggs, 2011; Hall et al., 2004). A professional with an appropriate in-depth understanding in a discipline (expert knowledge) will see issues at a principled level (Hattie & Yates, 2014), exhibit judgment performance superior to non-experts (Bonner & Walker, 1994) and will almost intuitively be able to come up with good solutions in many different situations (Jarvis, 2002).

The underlying idea behind the IM in professional education is that the combination of work and study will contribute to accelerating the process of enabling students to become experts. According to the learning model of Knowles (1984), adults are—in contrast to children—likely to be self-directed with a problem-centered approach to learning; as a consequence learning should be experiential. Our approach to experiential learning can be seen from Figure 1 as being first about bringing experience into the classroom but also about bringing the classroom into the workplace.

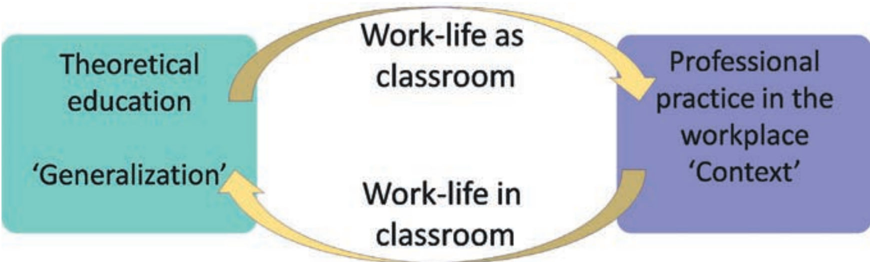

Figure 1: Mutual meetings Theoretical education and professional practice (Inspired by (Muller, 2015)).

Muller (2015) uses the learning circle of Kolb (1984) to outline the prerequisites for learning, and distinguishes between the four phases experiencing – reflecting – generalizing – applying. Kolb´s learning circle is used in various settings. Butler et al. (2019) use slightly different labels to the stages of the model in the context of experiential learning in accounting: do – reflect – think – apply. Knowles et al. (2015) use it in the context of

the adult learner and these scholars use the following labels: concrete experience – observations and reflections – formation of abstract concepts and generalizations – testing implications of concepts in new situations.

Jarvis (1999/2002) emphasizes that reflection must take place at all stages of the learning cycle. Reflection means that the student must stop and think, that is, use a deliberate thorough thought process to gain clarity and understanding from an experience or something that has been read. Reflection means that we use our experiences to learn (Hagelia, 2017). Wagenheim (2014), referring to Dewey (1938), describes prerequisites for lifelong learning based on reflection. The person must have a desire to learn with a humble and conscious attitude: a) be observant (be mentally present), b) be aware of their own role and c) be able to see the whole and the context of the situation. Jarvis (2002) distinguishes between reflective planning - reflection in action - retrospective reflection. For adults and especially in an IM with experiential learning, reflection is consequently an important learning parameter.

To emphasize the importance of reflection, the steps in the learning cycle could consequently be relabeled as follows, see Figure 2: a) experiencing could be relabeled as 'reflecting in action' to point out that when an experience is taking place; it is useful that the experience is expressed and described in words to enhance awareness of and the observation of what happens, b) reflecting or 'critical reflection' to point out the importance of retrospectively analyzing what happened and stepping back to reconsider (or critically review) the experience, c) generalizing can be relabeled as 'theoretical reflection.' This means generalizing and conceptualizing the experience into concepts and theory and d) applying can be relabeled as 'reflective planning' to point out that the experience led to a potential change in behavior.

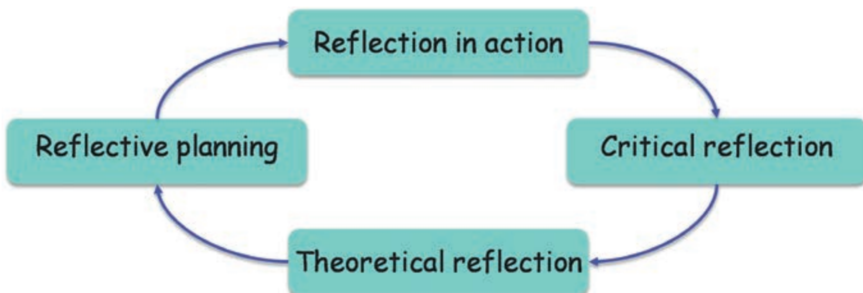

Figure 2: Reflective practice

Prior research on experiential learning in the disciplines of accounting and auditing

According to Austin and Rust (2015, p. 143), experiential learning can be defined as "hands-on learning," and different activities can be used to enhance it such as "service learning, applied learning in the discipline, co-operative education, internships, study abroad and experimental activities". Other words can also be used to describe this approach including "active learning, interactive learning or "learning by doing" (McCarthy, 2010, p. 131). Figure 1 describes our approach to different aspects of experiential learning. In the following we will present some prior research papers in the area of experiential learning and reflective practice in accounting and auditing that are of particular importance to our paper. For a more thorough overview, we refer to the literature reviews of Ahmed (2019) and Gittings et al. (2020).

Libby (1991) builds on the learning cycle of Kolb (1984) and suggests the use of cases in audit teaching classroom as illustrations of the real world. Siegel et al. (1997) suggest the use of video-simulation, claiming that concrete experiences are often missing in audit teaching.

Helliar et al. (2009) investigate the skills that future auditors need to possess using interviews and surveys with UK academics, students, and audit professionals, and present several recommendations for the university sector. Universities should, for instance, focus on developing students' analytical skills, helping them to gain a critical perspective (the questions of "why") on that which they study, because such a complex skill is difficult to learn at a workplace packed with deadlines. (In the workplace, "how-to-knowledge" is easier to gain than are the tools of critical thinking.) Following from this: the importance of transferable skills is said to pave the way for use of university learning activities such as presentations, interviews, and discussions.

According to Dombrowski et al. (2013), Mid-Atlantic Institutions (US) use a number of learning activities to enhance students learning in their undergraduate audit classes. At a small number of institutions, the students take part in different types of consulting work related to real firms. Salisbury University offers an audit internship program in which the students participate in real work at not-for profit clients. The course instructor serves as audit partner.

Elijido-Ten and Kloot (2015) study work-integrated learning (internships) in Australia. The employers find these internships an excellent way for recruitment whereas students do not necessary find the work assignments as relevant as they had hoped. In general, the internships are found

to enhance students' learning as the internships make it easier for the students to engage all phases in Kolb's learning cycle.

Mintz (2006) focuses on reflective learning in the context of learning and teaching accounting ethics; the study discusses the use of different learning activities to facilitate reflective learning, even though some of these activities are not often used in an auditing or accounting context (such as minute papers and reflection logs), this approach emphasizes the importance of forcing students to think and reflect on a more regular basis instead of doing following-up work when most learning may have already been forgotten.

Chiang et al. (2021) investigate the impact of using team-based mini-audit assessments and reflective journals in an undergraduate audit class by analyzing the students' reflective journals. The study found that this learning activity did help the students to get involved in all four phases of Kolb's learning cycle.

4. Results and discussion

In this section we present and discuss our findings.

Research question 1 – Key challenges to adult learning

Several challenges connected to adult learning in the NMRR program that triggered clear interest and engagement with nearly all the respondents were identified during our interviews. Below we categorize these as challenges related to the professional context, the different partner firms, and student related issues.

The thought of a closer cooperation between university and partner firms prompted interest and spurred engagement from all respondents, and all the respondents had a positive attitude towards the idea of closer ties between university and firm. At the same time, they pointed out obvious challenges that would have to be carefully handled in such collaborative settings. These were mainly connected to different kinds of confidentiality issues and to the integration and coordination of work and workloads.

Context related challenges

Confidentiality issues are rooted partly in the employer's legal obligations, laid down in the Auditors Act, Accountants Act, Competition Act and GDPR, and partly in the employer's legal rights to shield their own business secrets. The respondents did not have any conclusive thoughts

on the exact limits for, or between, the different obligations; this was to be expected because they had not been asked in advance to prepare for this line of questioning. Confidentiality requirements are a challenge to experiential learning as students—given these constraints—are not able or might be unwilling to share examples from practice in class: In addition, partner firms may oppose group work if the groups are not carefully constituted. Such concerns complicate the cooperation between the partner firms and the university. The first two phases in Kolb's learning model are particularly affected as students do not hear about the other students' experiences and the reflecting phase is at least somewhat hindered.

Two of the respondents, R5 and R1 (one large firm and one small firm), addressed the confidentiality issue explicitly. The others were unclear, in the sense that they seemed to imply it (for example, by mentioning types of tasks that could probably easily be anonymized), but they did not actively point it out as a challenge. One of the two respondents who actively addressed the challenge (the small firm R1) did not go into detail. The other of the two, R5 (the large firm), went into detail but was (as expected) unclear as to the different categories of confidentiality issues. R5 states it as follows: "I am very much in favor of making theory as practical as possible, and I believe in the importance of solving exercises. (…) But may we end up leaking confidential information or business secrets?" It was obvious, that this respondent was concerned with the obligations of the Auditors Act/Accountant Act and that he/she was also concerned with protecting the business secrets of the firm. This respondent may also have been concerned with avoiding breaches of the Competition Act, as he/she pointed out that a university-partner cooperation must not enable market comparisons. The respondent stated explicitly that, even though he/she was in favor of the envisaged cooperation conducted as individual tasks or group tasks for groups of students from the same employer, the audit firm would be against it if it took the form of groups consisting of students working in different firms.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that confidentiality and market competition issues (fear of revealing business secrets) have a clear impact on student involvement and class discussions even in teaching settings where there is no close cooperation between the profession and the university but where students are employed in one audit firm or another. Given these concerns, this challenge is an impediment for experimental learning and reflective practice as the students experience restrictions to sharing thoughts and ideas.

Partner firm related challenges

It is well known that the workload of an accountant or auditor is not evenly distributed over the calendar year. The NMRR was, already at the outset, adapted to this challenge by distributing its course-workload with distinctly more work in the autumn semester than in the spring semester. The respondents agreed that this is important. They were not clear on whether a closer integration of study tasks with employer tasks, if implemented, might demand a more complex alignment to assign compatible tasks at the actual times of the year when they are on the employers' working plan. All respondents were concerned, but in various ways, with the question of finding types of tasks that will fit across the total range of different employers each of whom have different portfolios with various clients. In addition, the types of student tasks that are compatible with (possible to integrate into) the work for the employers differ considerably. Compatible tasks can be different for accounting firms and audit firms, and they may differ between large and small firms. The respondents seemed to emphasize how they might come up with examples of tasks that they expected to be compatible with most employers. Strategic analysis, system-mapping, vulnerability analysis, data analysis and materiality assessments were pointed out as a first reaction from different respondents, but none of these approaches had more than one supportive respondent. However, a suggestion put forward by three of the respondents (two large firms and one small) suggested assignments connected to mapping and management of tax and VAT.

From an experiential learning point-of-view, bridging the gap between the university and the partner firms by a closer cooperation on learning activities can enhance students' learning because students are getting experience as required by the learning cycle. In the context of the NMRR program, an important challenge is related to the fact that several of the partner firms are accounting firms—not audit firms; that is, their employees do not conduct any audit tasks, and consequently these students do not get any first-hand audit experience in their normal practice. Experience at work may also differ considerably for those working in an audit firm depending upon the size of the audit firm (Marriott et al., 2011).

Student related challenges

Students enrolled in the NMRR program differ when it comes to prior experience (some students have no relevant working experience before being accepted into the program whereas others may have worked in the profession for many years) and educational background (some students have bachelor's degrees whereas other have already completed a Master's

degree in a related discipline). All the respondents suggested or implied in different ways that they have a positive attitude towards combining study and work, that recruiting enough candidates is a general ongoing challenge in the business, and that they normally no longer want to recruit candidates with "only" a bachelor's degree. One respondent, R5 (representing a large firm), pointed out the following: "The optimal model for us is to employ persons that have completed their education already. We need to employ a lot of students with Master's degrees, but there are not enough candidates with a Master's degree in accounting and auditing in the market." This pressures them to hire candidates with other relevant Master's degrees. This respondent also pointed out that an employee can never be promoted to the manager level without first completing a Master's degree in accounting and auditing. Two respondents, R4 and R3 (both from large firms), expressed the view that about one year of work practice before starting an NMRR is probably best. Two respondents, R1 and R3 (one from a small firm and one from a large firm), suggested that candidates with some working experience had an easier start on the study program and could more easily understand contexts and relate to the theory. According to R1: "I think getting started [studying] is harder for those students that do not have any working experience. They lack an overall understanding (…) Those who have working experience find it easier to absorb theoretical perspectives." All the respondents confirm that IM should include experiential learning. Naturally enough, students with less experience have a longer way to go to becoming experts than more experienced students. Attention should thus be paid to Kolb's learning cycle and the importance of reflection in each of the steps, regardless of students´ experience, to accelerate this process.

One of the respondents, R4, pointed out that the profession, possibly in cooperation with the university sector, now needs to focus on other "softer skills" related to psychosocial competencies. Soft skills are personal qualities that a university cannot easily teach, but some learning activities can help speed up a process to improve such skills, through incorporating elements of reflective practice.

Research question 2 - Solving the challenges

The challenge related to the professional context presented above (i.e., challenges related to confidentiality and business secrets) is the one that seems to have the clearest implications for the students' experiential learning process, both for students who work in an audit firm but perhaps even more so for students who work in an accounting firm. We therefore focus on this challenge in the following. When discussing a closer cooperation

in relation to learning activities, we suggested to the respondents that some assignments could include tasks that the students should solve at the workplace as part of their ordinary work-life and possibly in close co-operation with their mentors. As described above, the respondents found this interesting but challenging because this could potentially violate the auditor's and the accountant's duties of confidentiality concerning customer information. R5 also saw challenges related to the disclosure of internal company information that could be unfortunate in terms of competition.

These reflections are of paramount importance when it comes to experiential learning and students presenting and discussing their individual experiences among their peers and mentors. Consequently, the university should, in collaboration with the partner companies, teach and train the students in anonymizing experiences and describing situations without revealing secret information. One method we want to try is that a) each student writes a paper about the content of the duty of confidentiality and how to anonymize a situation, b) the partner firm can let the student's mentor review the paper and c) the student submits the paper as part of a compulsory assignment. Using this procedure, the partner companies will hopefully feel more secure that secret information will not be shared, and the students will be more eager to share their own experiences as they have learnt how to do it without violating confidential material or betraying information germane to firm competition.

In the first semester students are divided into fixed study groups with members from different firms and they stay within the same groups throughout the program to facilitate the sharing of experiences in a less formal setting than the classroom. Given our findings above, we may occasionally replace group work with individual work or ensure that only students from the same firm work together.

The Norwegian culture for sharing across educational institutions and working life seems to differ from the cultures in the other Nordic countries (Meld. St 16 (2020-2021, p.27). Such sharing probably requires maturation and development of a culture for experiential learning. R3 and R5 suggest that more information to the partner companies each semester will improve the collaboration, especially when it comes to case assignments. They agree that information should be shared both about content, scope, and timeframe of such assignments. In response to the respondents' reactions, partner companies should be able to instruct their employees not to share some of their practical experience related to case assignments. Use of standardized cases solved as group work and then discussed in plenary sessions is an alternative learning activity to increase experiential learning that is already in use in the NMRR program. Longer cases could also be

introduced; see for instance (Chiang et al., 2021) on team-based mini-audit assessments.

Research question 3 – Implementing reflective practice in a Master's program

To encourage student reflection, the IM program has developed a course on reflective practice which is discussed in depth in Muller (2015). The underlying idea behind the course is to connect theory and practice. The course consists of nine half-day workshops over three years and covers topics including reflection in relation to learning, "my role and my style", critical thinking, communication, and academic writing skills. In the NMRR program, the three latter topics are already implemented in the program in different compulsory topics. To further improve the student learning, learning activities that enhance students' reflection, for instance, the use of reflection logs (Mintz, 2006) and more reflection and/or discussion in class in some of the courses could be implemented. More focus on even softer skills, as suggested by one of the respondents, as a part of the program should also be discussed.

5. Conclusion and implications

In this paper we present and discuss challenges to adult learning in the NMRR program at USN to answer our first research question. Challenges are identified related to the learning context, the partner firms and the students. To answer our second research question, we treat changes that could be implemented to enhance learning. Several changes are in focus: first the university needs to help students to be more aware of the confidentiality regulation and learn how to anonymize personal experiences for use in the classroom. Second, not all students at the NMRR program work in an audit firm, and the need to make sure that sufficient audit experiential learning is also taking place *in* the classroom is an important next step that we will have to address, building on prior research as presented in this paper. These findings are highly relevant also for other Master's programs in auditing and accounting in the Nordic context because many programs enroll both students without working experience and students who are employed in an audit firm. In the answer to our third research question, we suggest that reflective practice could more explicitly be implemented in the program using different learnings activities not currently in use in the program. Finally, the request by one of the respondents to include more focus on soft skills in the program is an interesting topic for prior research and future work with the curriculum and learning activities at the NMRR program.

In many occupational settings, adult practitioners will be asked to anonymize experiences when they participate in different learning programs to enhance experiential learning. We therefore believe that our findings in this regard are of general interest.

In adult learning, reflective practice is a central part, and we suggest that future research should identify connections, for instance, with motivation and learning outcomes. As our goal during the interviews was neither to identify or discuss all challenges that exist, nor to rate the importance of the challenges, but to focus on challenges with which we previously were insufficiently aware, we leave these issues to future research.

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Chapter 12
The Transition from Sectors of Adult Education to Systems of Lifelong Learning. Role of the OECD and the World Bank in facilitating policy change

By Shalini Singh

Keywords

Adult education sector, Lifelong Learning systems, vocational and non-vocational education, formal and non-formal education, resource mobilisation, co-financing, policy analysis.

Abstract

The provisions for the education of adults are shaped by the policy choices made at the national and sub-national levels. Despite their limited prerogatives to intervene directly in the policy matters of sovereign *states*, policies of international organisations might have linkages with national and sub-national policy choices through various means. This paper provides a global perspective on the patterns of change in the education of adults and their policy linkages with two key international organisations: the OECD and the World Bank.

The research question of the paper is: *How have international organisations facilitated the change in the education of adults all over the globe?*

The paper argues that aimed at economic growth and development (later sustainable development), the mobilisation of resources for the education of adults has

1. facilitated the development of a sector of adult education with a clear demarcation between vocational and non-vocational, formal and non-formal education;
2. steered the integration (and thereby weakening) of teaching-oriented, supply-based sectors of education into learning-oriented, demand-based provisions within the framework of broader systems of lifelong learning. These lifelong learning systems are extending beyond clearly demarcated education systems to other

policy areas; diminishing the demarcation across disciplines, vocational and non-vocational, and formal and non-formal education to value learning whenever and wherever it is occurring;

3. withdrawal of the *state* from a decision-making role to a regulatory role because of limited resources to fund lifelong learning for all and engaging in cost-sharing models with other stakeholders.

The paper maps when, how, and why the transitions took place and identifies some trends relevant for understanding the future for education in general and the education of adults in particular. Further, the paper highlights the use of policy analysis as a research method. It argues that for understanding policies, policy documents cannot be ignored as sources for research lest the results can be completely misleading.

Introduction

The provisions for the education of adults are shaped in countries by the policy choices made at the national and sub-national levels. Despite their limited prerogatives to intervene directly in the policy matters of sovereign *states*, policies of international organisations might have linkages with national and sub-national policy choices through various means. This paper provides a global perspective on the patterns of change in the education of adults and their policy linkages with two key international organisations: the OECD and the World Bank.

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The paper maps when, how and why the transition took place and identifies some trends relevant for understanding the future for education in general and the education of adults in particular.

The paper uses comparison over time and policy analysis using policy documents from two key international organisations: the OECD and the World Bank, since their inception (post-WW II) to highlight their role in facilitating change in the education of adults all over the world by shaping the content as well as the context of policies. Since several research publications in the field quote each other within closed groups embedded in preconceived paradigms for analysing policies without referring to the original documents,[13] this paper highlights the relevance of policy analysis as a research method in understanding policies. The method has the potential for increasing objectivity in policy research by presenting a balanced picture about policy stakeholders and their rationale in a more objective manner as compared to several other research methods which do not use policy documents and their contextual analysis as a method for analysing policies but rather rely on what is written about them elsewhere.

It is notable that since the policy process is usually complex and slow, changes in the formulation may resonate decades later in the implementation. In the paper, only formulation changes are captured because of limitations of space and greater relevance of formulation while discussing international organisations. For an understanding regarding a complete policy change, implementation, evaluation, and evidence-informed changes also need to be taken into account as sources for research.

The conceptual framework for the paper includes the OECD's model regarding periods of *social pain* when educational outcomes are not changing according to the contextual changes, Schuetze's three models about the financing Lifelong Learning, and Ehlers' Box Model regarding working with sources in research.

Conceptual Framework

Contextual changes influence policies in different ways and some changes are more influential than others. Structural changes in the economy are contextual changes which may make education irrelevant if it does not change accordingly. The relationship between the two can be understood through the following OECD illustration.

The figure shows that changes in the economy, often steered by socio-economic and technical changes lead to a demand-supply gap between the labour

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[13] For details, please see the references of reviewed research.

market needs and the competencies developed among individuals through the education system (OECD 2019a). Therefore, if education does not change accordingly, prosperity cannot be achieved and society faces problems (OECD 2019a). A mismatch between the changes in the needs of the society and what is delivered by the education systems leads to *social pain* (OECD 2019a).

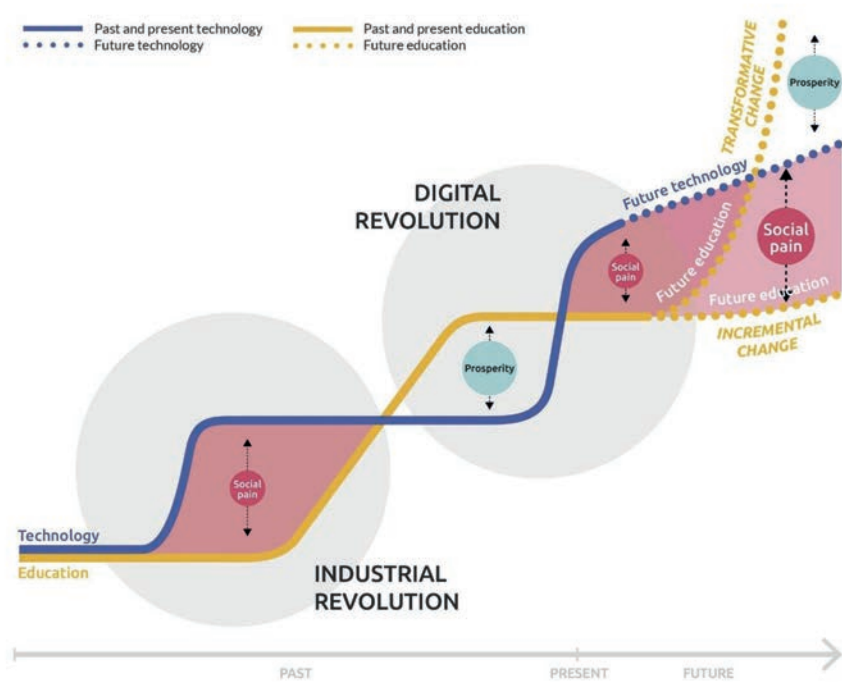

Figure 1: Mismatch between societal needs and educational outcomes leads to social pain

source: Inspired by ''The race between techonology and education ",Goldin and Katz (2010[3])

Apart from the societal needs, resources are a major determinant for changes in education. Schuetze (2009) offers a comprehensive framework to analyse resource mobilisation for Lifelong Learning along two parameters: 1. *financing what?* and 2. *financing how?*

According to Schuetze (2009), societies answer the *financing what?* question with one of the following three models:

1. *Emancipatory or Social Justice Model* aiming at *Lifelong Learning for all:* The priorities of education include equal opportunities for everyone; and the state is responsible for providing resources;

2. *Mixed State-Market Model* aiming at *Lifelong Learning for those who want and can participate*: Education might have diverse objectives; providers are responsible for lowering the barriers to access; *market* is primarily responsible for providing opportunities; and individuals are responsible for exploring and availing those opportunities;
3. *Human Capital Model* using *Lifelong Learning as an instrument to promote development*: Education aims at developing a workforce (human capital) with optimum productivity; individuals are responsible for enhancing their own employability and upgrading their skills.

This brings up the second question: *financing how?* Whether the costs be borne by *those who benefit* from Lifelong Learning; or by *those who are able to* bear them (Schuetze 2009)? In terms of how financing is done, there is a move from the *state* (that can pay) bearing all the costs to cost-sharing among the beneficiaries (those who benefit) who are able to pay (Schuetze 2009). These beneficiaries may include individuals (learners) and their families; single organisations or private companies; collective groups; and the *state* (Schuetze 2009). Usually, the models for resource mobilisation are mixed hybrids. The beneficiaries (or stakeholders) who are able to pay share the costs with the *state* (which pays for the beneficiaries who may not be able to pay) (Schuetze 2009). For most societies, decisions regarding *how to spend the resources* comprise a major question. When the resources are scarce, decisions become *resource-based* rather than *choice-based* (Howlett 1991; Vedung 1998).

To understand these choices, it is necessary to use policy documents as the main sources for research because they are different from other types of sources: namely fact and evidence-based theories, value-laden ideas, and action-based practices because the rationality behind their formulation is based on compromise among stakeholders who tend to secure their stakes through policy choices they try to influence (Ehlers, 2019). The results in this paper show that using policy documents as sources of research portrays a completely different picture of reality as compared to what is reflected in existing research where these documents are not used as the main sources for research. The method of policy analysis is quite useful in understanding policy research and the stand of the stakeholders who are involved in shaping these policy choices.

Review of literature

A vast body of research shows that international organisations not only play a role in shaping education all over the world, but have rather formed a *global governing complex* to govern education systematically (Leim-

gruber & Schmelzer 2017; Ydesen 2019). They use various governance models for persuading governments to follow their recommendations in the drive for their own survival and growth (Eilstrop-Sangiovanni 2020; Singh 2020b; Dakowska 2022; Robertson 2022).

They develop policy frameworks and establish global norms (Singh 2020; Singh & Ehlers 2020), assist policy implementation through recommendations, get involved through projects, and evaluate and monitor (Littoz-Monnet 2017). In the process, they also tend to engage with *non-state* entities and try to include them in their policies (Harmsen & Braband 2021; Dakowska 2022). In any case, resources play a crucial role in determining their policies (Goetz & Patz 2017; Ehlers 2019; Dakowska 2022). Further, factors like bureaucracy, leadership, ideological shifts and policy frameworks might engineer changes in their approach as well (Heyneman 2012; Mundy & Verger 2015; Littoz-Monnet 2017; Ehlers 2019; Ridge & Kippels 2019; Singh 2020b; Dakowska 2022). They collaborate (engage in the decision-making process), compete (try to influence each other and other actors in the international arena, especially *states*), control (through monitoring and evaluation) and select priority themes among similar ones to maintain their distinct identity (Rusitoru, Kallioniemi & Taysum 2020).

The impact of both direct and indirect engagement of international organisations in shaping education of adults is well documented in research (Ioannidou 2014; Field 2018; Broome, Holomar & Kranke 2018; Ehlers 2019; Kelley & Simmons 2019). The OECD and the World Bank particularly represent the new cognitive authority in education through their research and evidence-based publications which adds to their legitimacy ((Zapp and Dahmen 2017; Zürn 2018; Robertson 2022). They have been criticised for imposing their measurement standards in the name of developing quality standards for education, using the quality education narrative (Auld, Rappleye & Morris 2018); outcome-oriented approach (Ioannaidu 2014); and *pro-market* policies (Verger, Steiner-Khamsi & Lubienski 2017; Ward 2019).

Research thus casts them as necessary evils. However, most research is based on other research publications and lacks references to policy documents.

What is the logic behind the actions of international organisations and especially, behind the policies of the two most notoriously discussed organisations: the OECD and the World Bank? Can the use of policy documents as sources for research change the picture of reality created by research based on other sources? The following policy analysis provides an answer to these questions and while doing so, highlights the relevance of policy analysis as a research method.

The OECD's Role

In the 1960s, the shift from reconstruction to economic growth in the OECD countries demanded structural changes in the economy, and thereby in education too. For many decades, expanding the years of formal education had worked as a solution but this time, education reforms were needed for at least two reasons: 1. different type of education was needed to make people development-minded, who could think and act differently (Coombs 1968); and 2. an increase in the number of years in education could make individuals too academic and less practical, delay their entry in the labour market, and involve extreme real and opportunity costs (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976). On the other hand, those who needed or would choose to move to the labour market early, spending fewer years in education, could end up in a trap of low-paid jobs with limited career opportunities and fewer opportunities for moving up the social ladder in the society (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976). Inequality posed the threat of communism too (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976). However, since most countries lacked strategies and relevant expertise, they introduced ad-hoc programs which led to wastage of resources and did not serve the purpose completely (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976).

The OECD thus proposed *Recurrent Education* (which later became Lifelong Learning (Schuetze 2009)) in 1969 where adults could move freely between education and the labour market (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976). In 1973, the OECD came up with a more elaborate policy proposal for its implementation through *Lifelong Learning* (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973; OECD 1976).

The proposed education strategy was more costly than all types of previous education because working adults needed compensation for the income forgone while receiving an education; and specific tailor-made offers which suited their working and other (for eg. family responsibilities) needs (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973). The OECD recommended that the *state* should provide a certain sum of money for adults (prioritizing the marginalised) which they could access for education anytime during work-life (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973). Employers needed to provide *Paid Education Leave* based on the needs of the employees irrespective of their interests along with a post-education reemployment guarantee to employees (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973). Further, all stakeholders needed to decide together about the needed offers and their costs (Kallen & Bengtsson 1973). This first set of micro-level strategies aimed at motivating individuals to participate in learning. However, this meant huge costs for the state and resistance from the stakeholders other than individuals. Following the economic crises of

the 1970s and 80s, the policy was only implemented in a few OECD countries and vocational offers were favoured (Schutze & Istance 1987).

In the late-1980s, the decline of the cold war and the shaping of a new era characterised by economic competition and knowledge economy induced structural changes in the economy once again (Schutze & Istance 1987). The OECD proposed a second set of strategies, for *macro-level* resource mobilisation. It proposed *cost-sharing* among stakeholders and balance between vocational and general offers (Schutze & Istance 1987). The strategies included post-compulsory education entitlements; general income transfers to individuals and insurance; collective funds by stakeholders; and guaranteed public and private loans (Schutze & Istance 1987). Further, the OECD proposed to borrow and *invest* in Lifelong Learning as and when needed as it would pay off in the long run (Schutze & Istance 1987).

However, these strategies were still costly for the *state* as well as individuals; and promoted vocational offers (especially formal) while cutting down the general ones (Schutze & Istance 1987). Taking loans for offers that could not increase the income in the long run made sense neither to individuals (especially those in low-paid jobs), nor to banks (who were afraid about repayments), or to other stakeholders who should share the costs for individual leisure (Schutze & Istance 1987). For employers too, Paid Education Leaves and other costs for non-profit generating offers made limited sense (Schutze & Istance 1987). Individuals who were interested in general offers and the *state* which also wanted to promote general offers in many cases for achieving non-economic objectives (for instance social cohesion and democratic values) were thus, left with limited options (Schutze & Instance 1987). Individuals had to bear other costs for instance additional travel, expenses and time; and had the possibility to use the entitled money as retirement benefits (Schutze & Istance 1987). Motivation and access for the low-paid, low-skilled thereby, remained a problem (Schutze & Istance 1987). In certain cases where individuals could delay entering the labour market and continue to study in the traditional way or save the entitlement to be adjusted in their retirement benefits because of extra funds, the whole purpose was defeated (Schutze & Istance 1987).

Another challenge was to ensure the balance between vocational and general offers as the private providers of the free *market* were interested in providing highly demanded vocational offers for target groups who could pay more, thus further accentuating inequality and pushing low demand, low profit but necessary offers totally out of the *market* (Schutze & Istance 1987). Thus, the state needed to regulate the *free market* and encourage other stakeholders (Schutze & Istance 1987).

The *state* was accountable to the taxpayers and had to deal with political lobbyism (Schutze & Istance 1987). Further, the strategies were quite complicated, for instance how to decide whether someone was eligible for a grant or should take a loan, how should the loan repayment be done and how should equity be ensured (Schutze & Istance 1987).

Even by 2000, no country came up with dedicated policies on Lifelong Learning, as proposed by the OECD since it was still too costly and demanding (due to stakeholders' resistance) (OECD 2001).

The OECD thus proposed a concrete strategy for *co-financing* (strategy of cost-sharing among stakeholders) and better mapping of costs and benefits to ensure that it worked (OECD 2000). This was supposed to keep the diversity of offers, increase participation, improve access, and enhance the quality of offers (OECD 2000). The *state* was supposed to regulate the *market* (private actors), coordinate (stakeholders and *social partners*), and cut down on paying for everything (OECD 2000, 2001). The OECD was keen on far-reaching structural changes by integrating ministries (for instance education and employment) and different levels of administration (national to local); engaging *social partners* for negotiating the costs-sharing, and engaging diverse stakeholders in policy implementation (OECD 2001). Those who benefitted and were capable of paying were supposed to pay while those who could not pay could be supported through collaborative efforts of stakeholders and the *state* (OECD 2001).

Despite this, Lifelong Learning strategies were resulting in more inequality, the knowledge gap was increasing, and Lifelong Learning appeared more like a problem than a solution (OECD 2001). The courses which could not be rationalized in terms of their economic value were either opted out by individuals and providers on purpose or were closing down due to a shortage of funds and few consumers who wished to take them (OECD 2001). The shift towards vocational education was highly criticized for making education materialistic and economy-oriented (OECD 2001). The OECD realized that problems lay in implementation, and it needed to develop implementation strategies from now on.

It began with insisting upon rationalisation of provisions (encouraging only those provisions that were relevant for the labour market and were able to mobilise *cost-sharing*); improving assessment and recognition (like assessing credit earning in non-formal settings); and moving from teacher-centric to learner-centric systems for developing self-directed learners (OECD 2001). The OECD presumed that increase in participation would attract *market* investment and the *state* could then *regulate* to avoid negative consequences of the *free market* (OECD 2001).

Lifelong Learning required harmonized educational frameworks focused on learning outcomes, and consolidated systems and policies (OECD 2004). The OECD further proposed the integration of ministries (for instance education and employment) and levels of administration (national to local) and alignment of their work wherever integration was not possible; and negotiations with *social partners* for costs-sharing and cooperation in policy implementation (rather than just being told to follow *state* decisions) (OECD 2001). However, stakeholders from education sectors (who worked independently of each other as silos till now) resisted integration into uniform education systems and losing autonomy (OECD 2004). The OECD collected data, carried out intensive research and sensitized policy players in different OECD countries during 2001-03 and in 2004, came up with the policy on *co-financing* (OECD 2004).

Its policies managed to mobilise bigger firms and high-income, high-skilled individuals with already higher education and skills but small firms, low-skilled low-income individuals, and disadvantaged groups did not engage (OECD 2004). The OECD insisted on addressing inequality through affirmative action, privatization for diversity in offers and increasing access, alignment of social benefits and policies like childcare with Lifelong Learning, further creation of conducive conditions (like recognition of prior learning), and influencing stakeholder behaviour (through tax etc.) (OECD 2004). It argued for more evidence and research to highlight the contribution of Lifelong Learning for each stakeholder, elaborate mapping of the *rate of returns on investments* on Lifelong Learning, and reducing the deadweight (for instance the burden of subsidies to those who would anyhow learn) (OECD 2003a, 2003b, 2004). The baseline for judging the impact of the offers was the value addition in the learning of the least qualified (OECD 2004).

However, the implementation costs, especially the earnings forgone, were still too high and general offers were not popular among stakeholders who shared costs (OECD 2004). Time management, the nature of offers available, and personal factors like health and lack of employer support further acted as barriers against participation (OECD 2004). Moreover, the low-paid or unemployed had limited options for resource support (OECD 2004). The *providers* (supply-side stakeholders for instance teachers and profit-making enterprises) resisted changes (OECD 2004). As a result, participation remained low; and general offers, low-paid, low-skilled and unemployed suffered (OECD 2004). The financial crisis of 2008 made the relevance of Lifelong Learning more evident a large number of OECD (mostly EU) countries came up with Lifelong Learning strategies through EU support (OECD 2022).

The OECD claims that while co-financing is the most successful model for ensuring *Lifelong Learning for All*, implementation challenges

remain (OECD 2021a). To map how well the implementation is carried out and identify further challenges, it launched the *Priorities for Adult Learning Dashboard* in 2019, thus pushing its policy forward through *evidence* (OECD 2019). The OECD noted that contributions from all beneficiaries are not in proportion to their benefits (OECD 2019a) and *data* is missing about who contributes what, for what purpose and in return for what (OECD 2019a). Therefore motivation (incentives for stakeholders), stronger active labour market policies, and better cost estimation are required for making Lifelong Learning a reality (OECD 2019b).

The World Bank's Role

The World Bank has played a prominent role in channeling the resources of low and middle-income countries towards certain policy objectives through specific means. It started working with education in 1962 with an aim to reduce poverty and promote development through economic growth (World Bank 1971; 1980). In the beginning, it invested in infrastructural projects with education as one of the areas for investment (World Bank 1971; 1980). With Robert McNamara as the new President in 1968, education started becoming a priority (World Bank 1980). Post-colonial policies led to soaring populations and development needs strived for structural changes in the economy but the educational infrastructure was not able to address the rising quantitative as well as qualitative needs (World Bank 1971). The legacy of colonial curricula was largely elitist and irrelevant (World Bank 1971). Expanding the years of education would not help (World Bank 1971). Reforms were needed (World Bank 1971).

General (non-vocational) education led to public sector jobs but the public sector itself was ineffective and costly (World Bank 1971). On the other hand, vocational education relevant for industrial jobs was expensive, and thereby, left to industries (World Bank 1971). The industries, however, were unable to meet the entire demand and provided limited offers (relevant for themselves), while most enrollments went to general education (World Bank 1971). Consequently, the investment in vocational education appeared not only logical but also a sustainable solution for boosting development (World Bank 1971).

While education did not offer clear returns on investments calculations, it demanded very high investments because of which the *state* refrained from investing, especially in vocational education (World Bank 1971). Especially in rural economies with limited infrastructure and large populations, low-cost flexible solutions for vocational education were required for working adults (World Bank 1971). *Non-formal education* was thereby, the most viable option (World Bank 1971). In the following years,

the World Bank left formal general primary and secondary education to the *state* and invested in high-cost formal vocational education in *urban* areas (where some infrastructure was available) and non-formal vocational education in *rural* areas (where infrastructure was a challenge) (World Bank 1971). The UNESCO and other aid agencies provided technical expertise, information, and assistance (World Bank 1971).

As the international investments in development projects increased, the World Bank aimed to prepare human resources to manage them through education and hence, demanded clear linkages between its own policies and the education policies of the recipient states (World Bank 1971). For this, it produced data through research and evaluation on its own and other international entities (World Bank 1971).

This *functional* (where learning was the core) and *systemic* (educational outcomes needed to be relevant for socio-economic development) approach towards education under McNamara was different from the Bank's previous *structural-institutionalist* approach (focussing on education planning and infrastructure) (Coombs & Ahmed 1974). The Bank claimed that *sectors* in education were costly and acted as barriers to change (Coombs & Ahmed 1974). Further, since most learning happened informally, formal and non-formal education should be used only when informal learning was inadequate (Coombs & Ahmed 1974).

In the 1970s, owing to the financial crises and increasing *per-pupil costs*, the Bank started providing technical expertise, facilitation for resource sharing among recipient countries, and evaluations too so that increasing education costs could be managed (Coombs & Ahmed 1974).

The Bank discovered that the *state* was using resources ineffectively and on the education of the privileged from primary to higher education, especially in urban areas, while access remained an issue for most, especially in the rural areas inhabited by large populations (World Bank 1980). The Bank thus insisted on efficiency (for economic growth); equal opportunities (for social equity) and withdrawal of the *state* from all education except for what was relevant for fulfilling the critical manpower needs (World Bank 1980).

The Bank thus streamlined education policies for its borrowers with a focus on basic formal, and non-formal education; work-relevant education for overall development; equal opportunities for all; building-up institutional capacities for designing, managing and evaluating education; and efficient systems in terms of both quantity and quality in basic education (World Bank 1980). The World Bank diversified its approach to focus on *access* and/or *quality* (where access was available) in basic education, and *skills* in secondary and higher education (World Bank 1980). It proposed

cost-sharing to mobilise resources from employers, local communities (in terms of financial/non-financial contributions, individuals (fees and loans along with scholarships), and external assistance for capital investments where other options were unavailable (World Bank 1980). Since research from the Bank's staff showed that the returns on investments were highest in primary education and private provisions were more effective than public provisions the Bank insisted the same in its policies (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall 1985). The Bank's insistence was a part of its Structural Adjustment Programmes which followed a similar pattern of *state*-withdrawal in other policy areas and were criticized vehemently.

In answer to the criticism against its policies, the World Bank blamed the knowledge divide among the rich and the poor as the primary cause for increasing inequalities in societies and argued in favour of further educational reforms (Haddad et al. 1990). The Bank proposed to prepare skilled workers with flexibility towards learning new skills to address changing economic needs and resulting social problems (World Bank 1991). In other words, the World Bank tried to promote Lifelong Learning. To mobilise resources, it insisted that the *state* loosened control on *market, and* promote liberalization since resource gaps were still existing (World Bank 1991).

Since the Bank found the *market* more effective than the *state* in terms of quality, costs and duration, it pushed the *state* to focus on general primary and secondary education; leave vocational education to private provisions; and adopt *market-friendly* policies to make their education *market-responsive* (World Bank 1991). The *state* was required to facilitate, not engage, wherever possible; provide *compensatory provisions wherever necessary* but not provided by the private sector; and generate more data (World Bank 1991). Inclusion and equity were to be achieved through the distribution of outcomes of development and not through ineffective policies in the name of affirmative action (World Bank 1991). To further cover the gaps in access to basic education, vocational education was centralized, aid for the same was cut down, and moved to primary education (World Bank 1991). In 1999, the World Bank released its new strategy, reiterating its commitment to promote basic education for all with a special focus on gender parity, and leaving the rest to other stakeholders (World Bank 1999).

The *Education for All (EFA)* policy and the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* resulted in high assistance of the World Bank to basic education (and gender parity within that) assuming that it would contribute to an overall increase in the level of education (World Bank 2011). Since 2002, all international aid for education was channeled through the *Education For All Fast Track Initiative* (*Global Partnership for Education*

since 2005) led by the World Bank (World Bank 2011). Consequently, the international assistance and public spending on secondary, vocational and tertiary education decreased and private provisions increased, while affirmative options for the marginalised remained in place (World Bank 2011).

The learning quality of *state*-funded basic education initiatives, however, was poor and the marginalised suffered the most (World Bank 2011). In 2005, the Bank already updated its policy drastically and started pushing for the integration of education sectors, keeping learning outcomes at the core and advised *to invest in the whole education system* rather than basic education only (World Bank 2011). This led to a shift from *basic education toward post-basic education* and from *vocational to general* education in education policies of the low and middle-income countries (World Bank 2011). The change became more obvious in 2011 when the World Bank came up with its strategy arguing for early investments in education (early childhood education), effectively and equitably; horizontal integration of education with other policy areas and collaboration among international actors to provide aid within a common policy framework based on evidence (detailed measurements) (World Bank 2011). In 2011, it initiated SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results), to materialize the same (World Bank 2011: 5).

The *Human Capital Project* of the World Bank since 2017 not only raises awareness about investing in education but also warns different stakeholders about the consequences of not doing so (The World Bank 2019b). Since 2018, the Bank has been highlighting the *learning crisis* and *learning poverty* (10-year-olds cannot read and comprehend despite access to primary education) (World Bank 2018a; 2018b; World Bank 2019). They pose a challenge against implementing *Lifelong Learning for All* as learning poor individuals lack the ability to become lifelong learners (World Bank 2018a; 2018b; World Bank 2019).

The World Bank's analysis shows that public spending does not necessarily lead to better learning outcomes, is rather inefficient, costly, involves huge opportunity costs, and is often misappropriated by the privileged (World Bank 2018b). Thus, the *state* should provide the same primary and secondary education to everyone to solve the quality problem assuming that the enrolment of privileged children in public schools would raise the quality automatically (World Bank 2018b). Without this, the basic condition of implementing *Lifelong Learning for All* (self-directed learners capable of becoming lifelong learners) cannot be met (World Bank 2018b). To mobilise resources huge resource gaps can only be covered when stakeholders are adequately engaged (World Bank 2018b). In most low and middle-income countries, stakeholders have diversified objectives, which sometimes even clash with the achievement

of learning outcomes (World Bank 2018a; 2018b; 2019). The Bank thus encourages innovation and context-based, *market-friendly, market-responsive* policies for individuals who have *standardized* quality basic education and are capable of self-directed learning to become lifelong learners (World Bank 2018b). Such policies can be formulated on the basis of robust data but despite all efforts by the UNESCO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, low and middle-income countries abstain from providing adequate data (World Bank 2021a). This makes systems like SABER even more relevant.

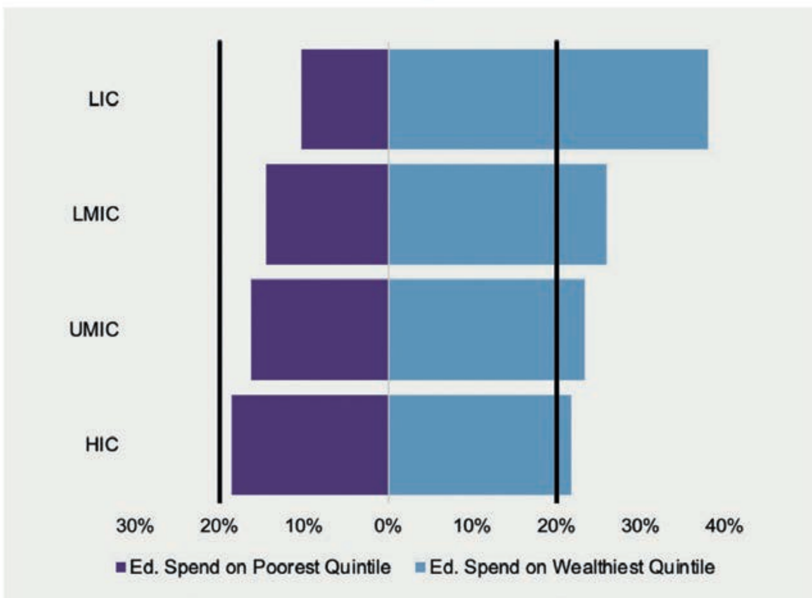

Figure 2: Public spending benefit the wealthiest, especially in poor countries

Source: World Bank (2021:14)

During the COVID crisis, the World Bank further highlighted the extent and negative consequences of inequality in education, launched the *Global Platform for Education Finance* and the *Education Finance Watch* annual report to map the resource situation and its linkage with policy implementation, and highlighted barriers against *Lifelong Learning for All* (UNESCO, UNICEF, & World Bank Group 2021a; 2021b World Bank Group & UNESCO GEM 2021).

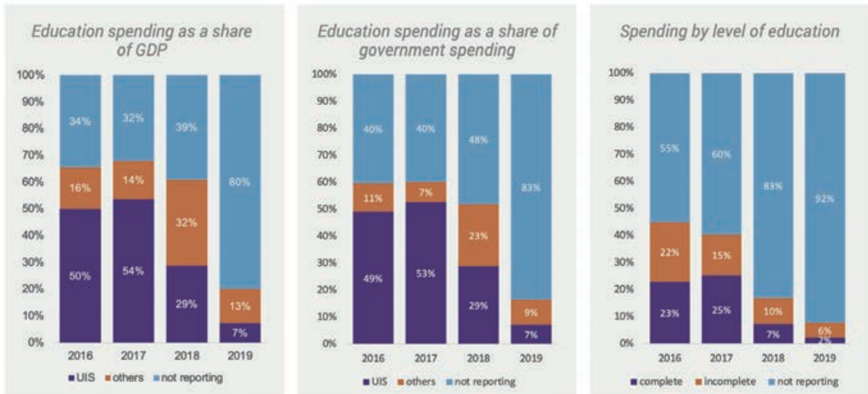

Figure 3: Lack of data is a major problem in non-OECD countries
Source: World Bank (2021: 16)

Discussion

The policies of the OECD and the World Bank are economically oriented and have a *functionalist approach* toward education. They aim at solving socio-economic problems, contributing to growth and development, and reducing *social pain* through education. Their position is understandable if an attempt is made to understand: what type of stakeholders they are.

In the 1960s, both organisations started with policies addressing structural changes in economies which required education reforms for ensuring skilled-based learning outcomes relevant for the labour market. While OECD countries already had ensured access to secondary education for most, low and middle-income countries struggled to provide even basic education to everyone. Between the late 1960s to early 1990s, the OECD facilitated the growth of the adult education sector in its member countries to implement *Recurrent Education* through *Lifelong Learning*. The World Bank recommended formal vocational education at the secondary and post-secondary levels in the urban areas and non-formal vocational education in rural areas. This increased the access (outcome) leading to the development of an adult education sector which was highly dependent on non-state actors (since the state was incapable) and therefore, less structured.

In both cases, patterns of resource mobilisation have driven the policies of the OECD and the World Bank remarkably, but they did not necessarily serve the *market*.

Since the costs for implementing Lifelong Learning were quite high, the OECD proposed to share costs among stakeholders. Most stakeholders were interested in vocational offers and therefore, they grew due to high demand and rising resources. On the contrary, general offers suffered due to low demand and resource scarcity. Resource mobilisation patterns had thereby led to a clear demarcation between vocational and general offers in OECD countries., where a *Mixed Market-State model* predominated.

To further lower the costs in the mid-1990s, the OECD proposed *vertical integration* among education sectors and *horizontal integration* (or alignment) among policy areas to achieve common learning outcomes which could fulfil the functionalist objective of education. Consequently, the focus of education shifted from teaching to learning. The demarcation between formal and non-formal settings; and vocational and general education was not relevant anymore. Only qualification frameworks were required to ensure the standardized quality of learning outcomes. As the *state* withdrew from its role of the *primary resource-provider* to merely a *regulator*, the *market* (the strongest and most adaptive, risk-taking player among non-state stakeholders) took over and the move towards a predominantly *Human Capital model* was evident.

The OECD realized that even though policy solutions were available, implementation remained a problem. Since 2004, it has been mapping policy implementation in OECD countries. In 2019, the OECD showed that even though resource mobilisation was no more a problem, not all adults participated in learning. Thus, achieving *Lifelong Learning for All* could be achieved by further motivating the stakeholders. Accordingly, the objectives of the *Social Emancipatory model* could become a reality only through cost-sharing among stakeholders if it has to be *sustainable*.

As most low and middle-income countries lacked resources for even basic education, the World Bank pushed the state to focus on primary education (and later gender parity) while leaving the rest to other stakeholders and intervening only when necessary for the marginalised or to meet critical manpower needs. Since *social partners* were (and are) not strong and organized, *civil society* supported the initiatives, but the *market* was held back due to strict state control till the 1990s; the *state* provided most resources and the *Social Emancipatory model* with huge resource gaps was predominant.

While the resource gaps were difficult to fill, education costs rose, and skills-based education was needed. Thus, the World Bank pushed for opening up the education sector for the *market,* thereby promoting the *Human Capital model*. Despite ensuring access to primary education in adequate numbers, *Lifelong Learning for All* cannot be implemented in low and middle-income countries due to poor quality of education. Thus, World

Bank is recommending *vertical and horizontal integration* of education policies, standardization through qualification frameworks, similar education to all, and cost-sharing among stakeholders to achieve learning outcomes like the OECD countries at least since 2005. However, the manner in which Lifelong Learning is understood and implemented in the OECD countries is far from reality in low and middle-income countries. Since the social partners are either weak or absent in most low and middle-income countries, a *Mixed State-Market model* often predominates.

For engaging the stakeholders and convincing them to share costs, the OECD relied on data collection while the World Bank included its policy recommendations as conditions for assistance apart from evaluation and monitoring.

Conclusion

The impact of international organisations on the development of adult education as a sector and later, its integration into Lifelong Learning systems, is significant. Both organisations have facilitated the development of different types of adult education sectors in two different parts of the world and later integrated the education sectors to form systems of lifelong learning, extending beyond education. In their quest, they have been guided by a functionalist approach towards education and considerations about resource mobilisation. A *Social Emancipatory model* for achieving *Lifelong Learning for All* is the most *sustainable* approach for education, even from the economic perspective and both organisations promote the same through their policies. They do not necessarily serve the *market* as depicted in some of the research.

The difference between the OECD and the World Bank strategies is relevant for understanding the importance of resources which may allow *states* to make *choice-based* decisions or *resource-based* compromises. Both the organisations have devised constructive ways of combining their own needs with solutions for society. For a very long time, they have offered alternatives and hope to abstain from the other alternative (the Soviet Model) which seemed quite attractive to many policy stakeholders, especially during the Cold War but finally ended up in a disaster.

They offer *long-term* solutions based on much broader considerations and data unlike those of the *states*. Irrespective of similar policies and cooperation, both the OECD and the World Bank have their own '*market*.' Cooperation and datafication make them more efficient, specialised, and stronger than individual *states* while enhancing their competitiveness to survive and excel.

Despite this, the negative consequences of an excessive focus on the economy cannot be ignored. Leaving most education to other stakeholders and pushing the *state* to a regulatory role sometimes provide excuses for further exclusion and exploitation by the *market* at the behest of the *state* and curtails opportunities for upward social mobility in societies. Similarly, too much focus on skills may give way to various forms of extremism, against which, the two organisations have always stood up.

Schuetze's formulations effectively capture the reality of education policies. While the *Social Emancipatory Model* appears to be an *ideal* one and the rest two more *realistic*, it is obvious that the *Social Emancipatory Model* is also the most *sustainable* one in the long run even from an economic perspective, given the resources are mobilised through *cost-sharing among stakeholders* and the state does not pay it all.

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Chapter 13

Escape Games in Adult Education – A literature review

By Peter Grepperud

Abstract

This literature review examines studies of educational escape games in adult education. The paper contributes to current research with analysis of central characteristics of educational escape games in adult education and discussion on whether the identified characteristics of the teaching strategy may facilitate development of learning and innovation competencies for the 21st century among adult learners. Analysis and discussion are informed by research on playful learning for adults and game-based learning. The author highlights that more research is needed on learning outcomes for adult learners to draw solid conclusions about the potential of using escape games as a teaching strategy.

Keywords

Adult Education, Escape Games, Escape Room.

1. Introduction

This literature review explores academic publications on the use of an innovative type of teaching strategy called educational escape games (EEGs) in adult education. Adult education is understood as various formal and informal learning activities that adults engage in after having completed their regular education or training (European Commission, 2022). The goals of these learning processes often include the increment of adults' prospects of employment through the development of personal and professional transferable skills (e.g., critical thinking skills). Adult education is for the period 2021-2030 highlighted as a focus topic for the European Education Area because accelerating changes in how people live, learn, and work due to digital and green transitions require continuous update of knowledge, skills, and competences. EEGs are interesting because they may facilitate the development of central learning and innovation competences for the 21st century such as communication, collaboration and critical thinking (Taraldsen et al., 2020; A. Veldkamp, L. van de Grint, et al., 2020). Still,

the use of EEGs in adult education is an understudied topic. This literature review contributes with analysis of and discussion on the use of EEGs in adult education considering current research on playful learning for adults and game-based learning (GBL).

Educators worldwide have over the last years increasingly started using escape rooms (ERs) in education. ERs are primarily analogue games where groups of players through cooperation solve several mental and physical challenges to accomplish specific goals within a certain time frame (Nicholson, 2015). EEGs are various models based on an ER used in education to facilitate learning (Nicholson & Cable, 2021). Originating in Japan in 2007, the phenomenon of recreational ERs spread rapidly from about 2012 onwards, and today it is a popular recreational activity worldwide (Nicholson, 2015). The goals of ERs today have expanded beyond escaping a room to include a diversity of storylines, for example stopping a virus outbreak or disarming a bomb, and the typical game environment has become increasingly immersive with high quality mechanisms and effects (Wiemker et al., 2015). EEGs have been used with a goal of increasing student engagement and motivation and encouraging development of hard skills, such as content knowledge, and soft skills, such as teamwork and problem solving. The research questions of this paper are:

a. What characterises the use of EEGs in adult education?
b. How may the identified characteristics impede or facilitate development of learning and innovation competences for the 21st century?

2. Literature Review

The existing literature on the use of EEGs indicates that this type of activity is seldom used in adult education. Systematic reviews demonstrate that participants in most empirical research studies on the use of EEGs are teenagers and young adults (Taraldsen et al., 2020; A. Veldkamp, L. van de Grint, et al., 2020). More specifically, there is a dominant focus on tertiary education, followed by secondary and then primary education. Only a small number of studies include adult participants outside the regular student body of higher education, and most of these are connected to nurse residency programs. A broader search of examples looking at the use of EEGs in adult education indicates that this topic remains largely unexplored but for a small number of unaligned advances, (e.g., Mijal et al., 2021; A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2017). Analysing the characteristics of the use of EEGs in adult education against the

backdrop of a more established body of literature discussing the use of playful learning in adult education and GBL may provide fresh perspectives on the potential of EEGs.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach of this paper is inspired by studies on playful learning among adults and by discussions on how research on GBL may provide a framework for the use of EEGs. Relevant methodological perspectives inform the processes of data extraction, analysis, and discussion.

First, it is prudent to consider the context of adult education. The concept of andragogy (Knowles, 1984) refers to the adaptation of educational processes to better address the specific needs of adult learners. Central requirements for adult learning include the recognition of the enhanced value that previous experiences may play in new learning processes, such as the activation of formerly acquired professional and personal competences, and participation in discussions connected to relevance of content, effectiveness of teaching methods and levels of satisfaction. What this means in practice varies depending on other characteristics of the educational context, for example whether the initiative is public or private, or whether training is organised as formal courses or focused on professional development (Filatro & dos Santos Garcia, 2021). The role of play in adult education is thus influenced by a range of contextual factors, relating to variation in both the backgrounds of learners and in educational contexts.

To play is a crucial part of human life that can be found in all cultures and societies, both as impulsive acts of playing for the sake of playing, and as more organised activities in the shape of games. Games may here broadly be defined as volitional processes taking place within boundaries of time and space and guided by compulsory rules (Huizinga, 1955). There is a history of research on play and games in childhood and learning that includes psychologists and educational researchers such as Piaget, Montessori, and Vygotsky (Lathwesen & Belova, 2021). However, as pointed out by Nicola Whitton (2018) in a discussion of playful learning for adults, play in adulthood seems to be insufficiently acknowledged as a separate field of study. She states that although many forms and mechanisms of play remain similar irrespective of age, there are fundamental differences between play for children and play for adults in the mature assumptions and values adults draw upon, the potential questions about the acceptability of playing, and the judgement adults potentially make of other players (Whitton, 2018). She argues that the pedagogic rationale for

using playful approaches to learning in higher education is connected to how playful processes can underpin positive aspects of failure, facilitate immersion into the spirit of play, and help participants to develop intrinsic motivation. Her assertion that play in adulthood is stigmatised and little understood is echoed by other research in the field, for example by Andrew Walsh (2019) in his analysis of how adults need to be given and are given permission to play, for example by removing embarrassment in different contexts by signaling shifts to more playful behaviours and providing alibis for breaking the inherently non-playful norms of a situation (Walsh, 2019). This need exists because while adult play in some settings is seen as appropriate, often for short periods of time or in strictly controlled circumstances, for a majority of adult settings play is perceived as improper due to social and cultural constraints (Walsh, 2019). Moreover, education for older learners with a clear perception of what they want to learn and limited time available may not find educational games motivating (Knowles et al., 2011).

Next, exploring the growing body of research on the concept GBL may in several respects inform academic progress in the study of EEG use in teaching contexts, including those within adult education. GBL can be defined as a type of game play with defined learning outcomes, usually but not necessarily in a digital context (Shaffer et al., 2005). GBL can facilitate learner engagement, social interaction, problem solving and creativity (Bober, 2010). A central focus in GBL has traditionally rested on mapping the potential for learning through analysis of how game design and learning objectives align or can be connected. Consequently, arguments have been developed supporting the use of GBL, for example by tracing how core characteristics of games designed for entertainment correlate with fundamental principles for learning and scaffolding when considering the players' rapid progression of skills during gameplay (Annetta, 2008; Cook & Schultz, 2007). To unlock this potential in practice one should acknowledge that the effectiveness of games created for education depends on a range of complex factors, such as learning objectives, implementation of game elements, and how the games are used in education (Ke, 2016). One of the most important goals in educational game design is to make sure to design the game in such a way that the players only can reach the game objectives by completing the learning objectives (Van der Linden et al., 2019). Systematic reviews of GBL indicate that most studies report improved acquisition of knowledge, mastery of content and increased motivation as effects of using games in education (Connolly et al., 2012; Subhash & Cudney, 2018), and researchers working on EEGs have pointed out that the focus in these studies on the

connection between educational and game design-related aspects in interaction with the participants' engagement and learning may provide a theoretical framework for the use of EEG in education (A. Veldkamp, L. van de Grint, et al., 2020).

As team-based activities, EEGs are best appreciated through a sociocultural understanding of the nature of learning, where learning happens when thinking, feelings and motivations are developed through interaction with one's surroundings (Dumont & Istance, 2010). These actions are influenced by a social setting, and should be understood in light of the activity one is focused on, including the use of artefacts and communication with others (Taraldsen et al., 2020). Considering some key characteristics of educational EEGs in more detail underlines the significance of social interaction in the activity. EEGs most frequently appear in the shape of either pop-up ERs or puzzle boxes (Fotaris & Mastoras, 2019; Taraldsen et al., 2020; Alice Veldkamp et al., 2020). The former typically involves rigging an available room with props and puzzles for a team to play in, while the latter usually entails production of sets of puzzle boxes that can be played at tables by several teams simultaneously. Before play starts there is a briefing that usually involves informing players about rules and presenting the storyline, a narrative that may shed light on who the players are, what they need to do, and why they need to do it. As the game starts, the players on a team must communicate, cooperate, divide tasks and delegate to successfully complete all the puzzles before time runs out. This activity, the interaction and communication between players, puzzles, and props, is often the focal point of the debrief session after gameplay is finished (A. Veldkamp, L. van de Grint, et al., 2020). The debrief is where systematic reflection happens, often through guided discussion, and researchers have argued it is crucial for learning to happen (Nicholson & Cable, 2021; Sanchez & Plumettaz-Sieber, 2019). Educational EEGs are thus activities that allow educators to invite cooperation, communication, critical thinking, and active learning.

2.1 Review Parameters

The search process was initiated through preliminary searches using terms such as "escape room", "escape box", and "breakout box" in google scholar and academic databases. Systematic reviews on EEGs indicate that the broader terms "escape games" and "escape room" encapsulate a sufficient variety of game shapes. The next move in the search process was to scan a selection of studies and systematic reviews to identify effective combinations of terms, both in relation to EEGs

and adult education. For the former the author decided to use the terms "escape game", "escape room" and "breakout box", and for the latter the terms "adult education" and "adult learning" were chosen. Searches were conducted in academic databases such as Scopus, ERIC, and Web of Science 25.02.2022. Google scholar was used to search more broadly for potentially relevant academic publications when the initial search in databases yielded a limited number of hits. The databases revealed 14 potentially fruitful contributions, while a more general Google Scholar search yielded 117 hits. Conference papers, proceedings, preprints, and articles in academic journals were then scanned. The inclusion criteria were that the publication should be in English, and that there should be a description of design of or use of EEGs in adult education. This study therefore excludes many articles and papers on EEGs focusing on the regular student body of different educational levels. It also excludes literature focusing on models for GBL and gamification in adult education that does not meet the definition of an EEG. After a rigorous screening process, five relevant academic publications remained. Chain referencing identified three additional reports. A total of eight academic publications were included for analysis, of which four were journal articles, two were conference papers, one was a book chapter, and one was a preprint paper.

2.2 Methods

This is an explorative study in that it focuses on a relatively understudied topic and includes grey literature. The modest number of academic publications identified facilitated detailed data extraction based on categories relevant to the research questions and connected to the theoretical framework. The author is alone responsible for data extraction and interpretation, and the resulting potential lack of consistency of interpretation (Neuendorf, 2002) has been addressed through transparency, attaching detailed records of data extraction. The main categories analysed are origin (type of report, location, year), learning objectives, target group, educational context, game context, game characteristics and andragogic design criteria / adaptation. To clarify the vaguer terms above, educational context is here understood as the reasons why the EEGs is created and the framework within which it is implemented. Game context is understood as how the game is framed, for example through a briefing and debriefing session. It also includes the quality of props and effects used in the game. Game characteristics include data on features of the game design such as game shape, puzzle path, group size, and play time.

Table 2: Characteristics of EEG in Adult Education. Selection of data from a more extensive mapping in Appendix 1.

Title and origin	Educational context	Target group and learning objectives	Game context and game characteristics	Andragogic design criteria
"A new educational escape-room-based model for the sustainable valorisation and management of cultural and natural heritage." Pala et. al., 2019. Article. Spain.	Tourism. The purpose of the EEG activity was to save the natural environment and the cultural assets found on a battle site.	Children, adults, or scholars. To raise awareness in participants about the battle site of Jarama.	Briefing. Props: the historical battle site of Jarama and its artefacts. Analogue puzzle hunt. Team: 6-10.	
"Can You Escape? Creating an Escape Room to Facilitate Active Learning." Adams et. al., 2018. Article. Kansas, USA.	Students wanted a more active learning approach.	167 Nurse residents and 46 experienced nurses. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the learning objectives of the nurse residency program.	Briefing. Props: locks, lockboxes, puzzles, flashlight, USB drive and decoy items. Analogue popup ER.	A central design objective was to create an active learning approach, which the authors argue is critical for adult learners.
"Educational Escape Rooms: Challenges in Aligning Game and Education." Veldkamp et. al., 2020. Preprint paper. The Netherlands.	The EEG was created due to low acceptance levels of digital educational tools among staff at the university.	Lecturers at a university. Professional development in the use and implementation of online educational tools in academic teaching.	Briefing. Debriefing (60). Props: highquality props and effects. Analogue popup ER. Team: 4-6. Game time: (60)	An enjoyable and immersive game world can help, motivate, and persuade adult users to behave in ways they experience as difficult in the real world.
"Educational Escape Room - Challenges and Obstacles" Michal et. al., 2021. Book chapter. Poland.	The EEG was to be used in education on healthy lifestyle and eating habits among the general population.	Primarily women. University students/staff. 250 Players. To improve knowledge on the healthy lifestyle and eating habits.	Briefing (10) Debriefing (10) Props; padlocks, keys, texts. Analogue popup ER. Team: 2-8. Game time: (60).	Using games in adult education fits into the principles of adult learning developed by Knowles. Andragogical knowledge influenced design choices.

3. Results

The collection and analysis of relevant data connect to research question one. First, the results show diversity in origin. The year of publication span from 2016 to 2021, indicating that there is a prevailing interest in the use of EEGs in adult education. Most reports are articles in journals, but book chapters, conference papers and a preprint are also represented. The modest number of relevant academic publications despite broad searches for different types of reports indicates that academic progress on the use of EEGs in adult education quantitatively speaking is emerging at a slow pace.

Some studies discuss adult education explicitly, while others do not. The former group frame discussions of design criteria, implementation and/or outcomes within relevant theory (Mijal et al., 2021; A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020) and/or within a thematically compatible research body (Zhang et al., 2017). To illustrate, Veldkamp et. al. (2020) highlight a knowledge gap in academic literature on the use of ERs in the context of professional development, and the authors argue that the enjoyable and immersive game world can help, motivate, and persuade adult users to behave in ways they experience as difficult in the real world (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). In a similar vein, Mijal et. al. (2021) argue that using games in adult education fits into the principles of adult learning developed by Knowles, and report that andragogical knowledge was a significant design factor (Mijal et al., 2021). Other academic publications either directly or in part target an adult audience for educational purposes but do not present a similar connection between adult members of the target audience and design considerations when creating the EEG. This is possibly a consequence of targeting a multifaceted audience, such as EEGs aiming to educate the general public on how to stop sea level rise in Netherlands (Ouariachi & Wim, 2020) or a proposal for an EEG raising awareness among tourists of the significance of the Jarama battle site during the Spanish Civil War (Palla et al., 2019).

All the reports describe a wider educational context, define a target group, and present one or more learning objectives. There is a notable variation in focus and scope. The educational context includes the reason behind and framework for implementation of each EEG, and the data reveal differences in justifications and structures ranging from those defined and organized at the level of one or more researchers (Clarke et al., 2016; Mijal et al., 2021; Sundsbo, 2019) to those defined more at the level of educational programmes or institutions (Adams et al., 2018; A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). To illustrate, the former category includes academic

publications where an EEG is designed by a group of international researchers to be used in education for adults in general (Mijal et al., 2021), or created by staff at a library as an educational event in connection to Open Access Week 21-27 October 2018 (Sundsbo, 2019). An example of the latter category is an EEG developed by professional game designers, educational researchers and educators against a backdrop of low acceptance levels of digital educational tools among staff at an institutional level, despite financial investment on behalf of the university (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). When considering target group, four EEGs target an academic audience, either staff or both staff and students (Clarke et al., 2016; Mijal et al., 2021; Sundsbo, 2019; A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). From the remaining EEGs two target what may be characterised as the general public (Ouariachi & Wim, 2020; Palla et al., 2019), one targets older adults above 65 years of age (Zhang et al., 2017), and one targets nurse residents and professional nurses (Adams et al., 2018).

The learning objectives of each EEG vary depending on educational context and target audience. The objectives include either content knowledge, soft skills, or a combination of the two. For example, one academic publication defines the learning objective of the EEG as acquiring knowledge about the healthy lifestyle and eating habits among the general population (Mijal et al., 2021), while a second focuses on acquiring knowledge of the basics of open access (Sundsbo, 2019). An example of learning objectives from an EEG primarily focused on skill development is for players to develop soft skills such as communication, leadership and teamwork throughout their experience (Clarke et al., 2016). The academic publications merging content knowledge and skill development describe more complex learning objectives, such as professional development in the use and implementation of online educational tools in academic teaching (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020), or as demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the learning objectives of the nurse residency program (Adams et al., 2018).

The game contexts show expected similarities between recreational ERs and EEGs at different levels of education. (Nicholson, 2015; A. Veldkamp, L. van de Grint, et al., 2020). A form of briefing and debriefing is mentioned or discussed in nearly all the academic papers, framing the game by presenting a storyline and giving participants information about the rules of the game as an introduction, and providing room for reflection on and discussion of the educational game experience as a conclusion. The format of the briefing is similar in that the organizers give players information about the rules of the game and present a storyline. One EEG asks the participants to stop a villain who has locked down all the research at the

university and make it open again (Sundsbo, 2019), while a second invites players to help Tim, a student entrepreneur who founded the tech company MasterMind, to escape from being trapped within his own virtual world (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). There is greater variety in how researchers approach and discuss the concept of reflection through a debrief session. Most notably, when specified, the time dedicated to guided team discussion of the game experience and connected learning objectives at the end of play range between 10 (Mijal et al., 2021) and 60 minutes (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). Some of the academic publications present a clear purpose with the debrief session. For example, the debrief lasting 60 minutes features a group discussion facilitated by a moderator where the participants reflect the connections between experiences while playing the EEG and relevant learning objectives. The authors report that reflection on the experiences and educational content was seen as conditional for learning with EEGs (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). The author of another publication reports that the conversation among participants after they had finished the EEG became the key to engagement with the learning objectives, and that this provided an opportunity to explain content knowledge in more detail by using things players had just interacted with as reference points (Sundsbo, 2019).

Most of the EEGs are arranged as analogue pop-up ERs with a selection of props such as locks, lockboxes, puzzles, and other elements. There are two notable exceptions. One EEG uses the historic battle site of Jarama from the Spanish Civil War as the scene for an analogue puzzle hunt, employing real-life trenches and bunkers as props (Palla et al., 2019), and a second focuses on designing a digital EEG (Zhang et al., 2017). Some researchers creating analogue pup-up escape experiences mention design constraints when discussing how to enhance immersion, for example connected to space, (Sundsbo, 2019) or logistic considerations (Mijal et al., 2021). Other researchers create EEGs with high quality and effects. The reasons for this vary. For example, one EEG is set up in a hospital targeting nurse residents and professional nurses, thus giving natural access to a variety of realistic high quality props and effects (Adams et al., 2018). Most identified EEGs have a defined time limit, ranging between 20 minutes (Clarke et al., 2016) and 60 minutes (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020), and the team sizes vary between 2-14 players.

4. Discussion

The results highlight central characteristics of EEGs in adult education and invite discussion on how these may impede or facilitate development of

learning and innovation competencies for the 21st century. This is an important question because the progressively growing need to update knowledge, skills, and competences throughout life will likely encourage the adult workforce to become increasingly engaged in professional and personal development (European Commission, 2022). The analysed academic publications demonstrate that educators can use this teaching strategy to facilitate professional and personal development focusing either on content knowledge, soft skills, or both. The variation in educational contexts and learning objectives illustrates that EEGs are versatile tools that can be applied in both public and private sectors and in both formal and informal educational settings.

The results indicate that EEGs can accommodate specific needs of adult learners discussed by Knowles, Whitton and Walsh. The teaching strategy is used to create playful arenas that invite participants to become immersed and engaged in active collaboration. The briefing and debriefing clearly signal shifts into and out of play, and game elements such as storyline, puzzles and props can motivate, persuade and stimulate participants. Still, it is likely that some adult learners may find EEGs challenging, confusing, or even unproductive.

Several of the academic publications do indeed point to design challenges when creating EEGs targeting adult audiences. For example, Veldkamp et. al. (2020) discuss design considerations connected to the challenge of the transition into the game, the alignment of game design aspects and educational aspects of the EEG, and the movement of experiences and knowledge while in game back into the real world. They emphasize that these design challenges are interconnected and suggest that focusing on alignment of goals is crucial when designing an EEG (A. Veldkamp, S. Merx, et al., 2020). In a similar vein Zhang et. al. (2017) shed light on central design challenges when creating EEGs for older adult by presenting questions for further research. The design process thus poses challenges when targeting adult learners, primarily connected to facilitating specific needs of the target group.

This highlights a core characteristic of EEGs, namely that educators and researchers themselves either fully or partially are responsible for game development and implementation. Illustrated by all the academic publications to varying degrees, this feature allows educators to adapt the game, for example to a particular educational context and a specific target audience. However, we still need a better understanding of how this room to manoeuvre should be exploited didactically to improve learning experiences with EEGs.

5. Limitations

This paper has some limitations. First, data extraction and analysis has been conducted by one person, and this weakens reliability. Second, using English as an inclusion criterion and only conducting searches in English leave potentially relevant academic publications in other languages unidentified.

6. Conclusion

This paper contributes to current research with analysis of central characteristics of the use of EEGs in adult education. Although not without challenges, the teaching strategy can be used to facilitate development of learning and innovation competencies for the 21st century. This paper has primarily focused on practice and not learning outcomes and thus does not seek to answer questions related to the impact of EEGs. More research is needed on learning outcomes for adult learners to draw solid conclusions about the usefulness of EEGs.

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Appendix 1: Data extraction, detailed notes.

The appendix can be found at https://www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/978-3-643-91658-7.

Chapter 14

Increased Work Demands for Early Childhood Education Leaders: A self-study on the use of case method in adult leadership education

By Marit Bøe and Elsa Kristiansen

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) centre leaders have become subject to new demands due to political governance, professional development, economic and commercial interests (OECD, 2019; The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2018) that have resulted in a need for them to undertake further leadership education in order to better cope with leadership-oriented tasks. ECEC centre leaders participating in a leadership programme at USN admitted to being both firefighters and oracles (Kristiansen et al., 2021): firefighters because they had to put out one fire after another with few resources while coping with many unforeseen daily challenges, and oracles because they felt obliged to provide a solution for every problem, issue or task. However, they lacked a "squadron" [i.e., support] to help them manage people, perform administrative tasks, and offer pedagogical leadership.

As educators on a further leadership education programme for ECEC leaders, we considered the above-mentioned leadership challenges and, in order to make our teaching more meaningful for participants, we decided to develop our programme by drawing on cases from participants' own practice. In order that we could learn from our case method work, we decided to investigate our teaching from the inside, as in self-study, with a special emphasis on learning from the participants' own experience (Hauge, 2021). Our aim was to further develop and improve the case method design for experienced ECEC leaders who are learning to better cope with a big workload and high leadership demands. To explore the impact this would have, we asked the following question: what can we as educators in higher ECEC leadership further education learn from participants' experiences with the case method?

Case Method Work

The case method as used in different professions is characterised by a variety of purposes, approaches, materials and theoretical frameworks (Florez,

2011; Jahreie, 2010), as it can facilitate transformation work whereby professionals deepen their knowledge of a shared issue or problem by way of collaboration (Damsa et al., 2015). It does, however, tend to have three common characteristics: a description of a problem and situation; students being given time to prepare for the case; and, finally, a group discussion that leads to attempting to solve the problem (Ito and Takeuchi (2021, p. 212). Jahreie (2010) distinguishes between a) case method approaches in which students receive cases presented by the teacher educator to read and analyse and b) those in which students generate cases based on experience from their practice. The advantage of using this methodology is that it facilitates and promotes active learning and problem-solving and it encourages the development of critical thinking skills and thus supports deeper learning (Forsgren et al., 2014; Kunselman & Johnson, 2004; Lima & Fabiani, 2014; Popil, 2011; Schaffalitzky de Muckadell & Hvithamar, 2013). Furthermore, case methodology can link theory-based ideas to practice, which is essential in order for students to reconstruct their knowledge and develop future practices (Gravett et al., 2017; Helleve et al., 2021; Jahreie, 2010; Ulvik et al., 2020).

Methodology

Self-study

Because we wanted to engage in research into our own teaching practice, we chose to engage in a collaborative self-study, which allowed us to work together as critical friends so as to understand the challenges of our practice (Dinkelman, 2001). Self-study is a methodology similar to forms of practitioner research and has to do with teacher educators investigating their own teaching for the purpose of professional development and improvement (Hauge, 2021; Smith, 2016; Ulvik et al., 2020). In order to generate new knowledge, self-studies should be integrated with research at the national and international levels (Ulvik et al., 2020). Listening to the participants during their work on cases in order to obtain information, feedback and advice related to the teaching process was of key importance to the further development of the leadership programme. Moreover, we wanted to learn from their experience.

The Context

The study was conducted with two higher education teachers with different professional backgrounds (ECEC pedagogical leadership and teaching/motivation/stress) who taught together on a leadership further education

programme at a university in Norway. This leadership further education programme, which was begun at USN in 2017, and began nationally in 2011 as a strategy to improve the effectiveness of ECEC leaders (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). It is a three-semester course (30 credits) at the master's level, for participants to undertake part-time while working, which is funded by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. We used the case method on the leadership programme as a way for us to improve our teaching. We considered the results of the national evaluations of the leadership programme, which indicated that participants wanted a stronger link between theory and practice, more use of practical tools, and case- based teaching (Jensen et al., 2020).

Participants and Procedures

Data on the experience of the case method in the leadership further education programme was collected during the autumns of 2020 and 2021 from three groups of participants. There were 96 participants in total. ECEC leaders came from both public and private ECEC centres and were trained ECEC teachers (bachelor's degree) between the ages of 30 and 60. Most of the leaders had more than five years of experience as a centre leader. The case themes related to a lecture on coping with work stress prior to the group work. The case method was introduced on the leadership programme when the ECEC centre leaders' work was challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent constant updating and translation of national guidelines for centre practices (Os et al., 2020).

The Case Method Process

In this study, a case is understood as a realistic narrative in which the underlying problem for analysis and discussion is leadership demands. Our case-based teaching started with the findings from our previous research (Bøe et al., 2020; Kristiansen et al., 2021), as we wanted to create a learning environment in which the participants could learn through exploration in collaborative communities that were relevant to their leadership practice (Damşa & Lange, 2019).

A total of 96 ECE centre leaders participated in the study. In 2020, two groups of centre leaders participated (n=57). Group 1 (n=32) received cases from the educators (authors) based on the findings of our previous research, and in group 2 (n=25), each participant wrote an individual case based on authentic self-perceived work experiences. The following year, in autumn 2021, the participants in group 3 (n=39) each wrote an individual case, as mentioned above, and also wrote one together as a group that

reflected on common work-related dilemmas and stressors. The purpose was for all of the groups to explore their leadership experience, expand their knowledge by way of collective and critical reflection, develop a better understanding of leadership dilemmas and develop coping strategies to deal with leadership demands.

The case method work consisted of two steps. In the first step, after a 30-minute lecture introducing theoretical perspectives on work-related stress, the participants were organised into groups, ‘in which they made a short presentation of their cases’ (i.e. the participants presented their cases to their group). In the second step, a 30-minute lecture on coping strategies was followed by a group analysis of the cases that highlighted the theory presented in step 1, after which the groups presented their analyses and possible strategies in plenary.

The case method programme was an online programme on Zoom, with group work taking place in breakout rooms. During the day, the two educators followed up questions from the participants and led plenary discussions, but they did not intervene in the group discussions.

Data Sources

Data consisted of participants’ questionnaire responses. The questionnaire was administered after the three groups lectures (see Table 1). After each lecture, we asked participants to individually complete a questionnaire addressing 1) their experience of the case method and what they learnt from each other, 2) their experience of online case method work, 3) the strategies they would suggest for coping with the challenges in their case and 4) how working with cases had influenced their thoughts on improving their leadership practice.

“Nettskjema”, a tool for designing and conducting online surveys, was used to collect the data and ensured a high level of security and privacy. The participants were told that submitting their views as research data was voluntary. First, we two researchers separately interpreted the participants’ answers in order to mark crucial themes before discussing the answers as a team. We met before, during and after the completed case programme and had discussions that allowed us to examine our practices, exchange ideas and compare our experiences with those of the participants. As colleagues in the classroom with different academic backgrounds, we supported each other and challenged each other so as to ensure that relevant perspectives were brought into the self-study (Schuck & Russell, 2005). In Table 1 below, we provide an overview of the work process with the case method and the collection of data, then present our findings.

Findings and Discussion

Participants' Experience with the Case Method Work

The findings of groups 1 and 2 indicated that sharing leadership challenges in groups provided a learning community for the participants in which they were able to compare their leadership experience and receive social support. As one of the participants said:

I learnt that we have many similar everyday leadership challenges. Through group reflection where we shared thoughts and experiences from our workplaces, I was able to illuminate several perspectives important to me while at the same time I got a confirmation in relation to my own thoughts and that others solve their problems as I do.

Table 1. Work processes and collection of data

Time/group	What	How	Data sources
Autumn 2020 Groups 1 and 2	Planning on how to organise our case-based teaching based on participants experiences and challenges of real work settings Implementing the case method Testing the case method online	Decision to work with the case method (online) to improve our teaching and meet the participants' interests and learning needs Engaging in dialogue with existing theoretical and conceptual work about the case method	Open-ended discussions to exchange theories and ideas from educators' different professional backgrounds Questionnaire for participants
Spring 2021 Group 3	Writing an article based on experiences from teaching autumn 2020. Engaging in dialogue with existing theoretical and conceptual work about the case method. Testing the case method online	Researchers interpreting and discussing participants' experiences using the case method	Draft of Article 1 on and use of the case method. Focus on participants experiences

Autumn 2021	Submitting article 1 Engaging with theoretical and conceptual work related to different purposes of case-based teaching (problem-solving-interruptions/reflection/understanding) Testing the case method online	Interpretively reconstructing the case method work based on the findings of article 1. Use of Padlet, writing cases as a group	Teachers sharing their experience Key words from discussions Questionnaire for participants
Spring 2022	Interpreting and collating our data Collaborative writing process Making our experience and interpretations available for dialogue with the research field Allowing the case process and outcomes of the study to a broader public discussion Submitting the article 2	Decision to include all experience to better understand our teaching and learn from it to improve the case method Presenting paper at the Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning Spring 2022 Discussing our self-study experience with critical friends	Draft of paper presentation Feedback from critical friends

Many of the ECEC centre leaders frequently find themselves alone in their everyday work, so being able to discuss shared experiences was an important element of their learning. However, there is more to learning than learning through social relations (Mercer et al., 2019); therefore we discussed how to facilitate cognitive capacity in case-based group discussions so that solutions related to the case and selected coping strategies could also develop from theory-based reflection and not solely from experience. The groups found it challenging to reflect on the cases critically and on the basis of theory (Nieto, 1999), even though this was something they desired:

I wish we, in the group, had managed to see the case more in the context of the theories. This is a general challenge for many of us. I wish that the teachers came by the breakout room more often to help us think more analytically. However, this form of work requires more of all the students.

We intended for the lecture on concepts and theory, delivered prior to the group work in breakout rooms, to guide and support the participants in their critical dialogue and abstract learning and to help them deal with leadership challenges (Greenhalgh, 2007). However, the participants seemed to find it challenging to apply the concepts to critical reflection without any support from the educators. The participants' critical reflection skills seemed to be limited to what Johannessen (2020) terms "pedagogical reflection", which can be explained as reflection that takes place on the basis of pedagogical understanding in which the focus is on how practice influences the situation and how it can be improved.

When the participants were asked if working with cases had influenced their thinking about further leadership improvement, the participants in group 3 found that analysing and discussing one another's cases had been valuable. As one participant observed:

> It was useful to hear from the other group what strategies they had come up with on "our" case. They were useful for guiding me further in my work. When you are stuck and unable to see solutions to problems that you have been in over time, it is useful to get input from others who look at the situation with "new glasses". They also have experience from the same leadership role and can relate to the various challenges in a supportive way.

It seemed that working with their co-participants' real-life cases helped them become more receptive to seeing other solutions to their challenges. In addition, they developed coping strategies that could help them in their work. They acquired new concepts that they felt "obliged" to use for further reflection on their leadership. They had found it useful to read new literature and they were inspired by the lecture, which motivated them to explore leadership practices. In particular, they had learnt to better cope with everyday demands. As one participant indicated:

> I have become aware of how to cope with stress in a better way. Instead of being overwhelmed, I can think more strategically. I am almost always available for my staff and must work on setting limits for myself. I have gained insight into different coping strategies, which I will use.

As educators, we discussed whether the use of Padlet, which we had created for the plenary, could contribute to better knowledge-sharing (Appendix 1). The groups were asked to write down the coping strategies they had agreed upon from working with the cases and, in the plenary, to justify

their choices on the basis of their collective critical dialogues. What was evident was that the use of Padlet had benefits similar to those found in the study by Beltrán- Martín (2019), such as promoting knowledge-sharing and knowledge development. However, we found that the use of Padlet was more practical than investigation-oriented, which is also true of our use of the case method in general. Although our desire to use the case method was driven by both practical and conceptual approaches (Greenhalgh, 2007, p. 190), the data shows that for the most part it was driven practically, by problem solving, rather than being driven by problem setting and critical reflection. Results from Padlet show that the participants were able to apply theory in their analyses by relating coping strategies to problems highlighted in the case (cf. intended learning outcomes), but they had difficulty investigating and expressing their experience of critical reflective dialogue.

The Educators' Learning Experience

On the basis of our discussions during the case method work, it would appear that lessons learnt related to our role as educators, in which we tried to improve our case methodology by following constructivist theories of learning and creating spaces for learning that provided participants with the opportunity to act upon their learning needs (Damşa & Lange, 2019, pp. 1-2) and by following the principles of "constructive alignment" (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The educators found that achieving alignment between case method activities, learning outcomes and content provided a design for improvement for future students. On the basis of our experience, we discussed how we, as educators, could promote students' critical skills by way of theoretical and concrete feedback (Ito & Takeuchi, 2021; Lima & Fabiani, 2014). At the same time, critical reflectionwill provide opportunities for participants to be active and to engage in and explore their practices. As Damşa and Lange (2019, p. 22) note, in student-centred learning environments, teaching become a process of guidance and scaffolding.

The collected data showed that the experienced group of leaders appreciated teacher- driven activities such as theory lectures. One of the participants appreciated "that we get new theories and are reminded to think analytically". However, we realised that perhaps we were giving the participants too much responsibility for practising theories, which we expected them to accomplish by managing their learning process as a group by building scaffolding on one another in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes. We also realised that we should have better clarified the concept of critical reflection and the desired learning outcomes in order to

develop the group's engagement (Biggs & Tang, 2011). As facilitators for adult learners, we have learnt that our expert knowledge is important when building scaffolding. In a recent discussion of our case method design, a critical friend, Dr Allan MacKinnon, introduced us to Schön's concept of the "hall of mirrors" (MacKinnon, 1989; Schön, 1987), which makes demands on the educator to demonstrate dialogical spaces (Ludvigsen et al., 2019) in which the participants act upon work connected to practice cases. This raises key issues related to the learning relationship between educator and adult learner, scaffolding methods, and the extent of training that ECEC leaders need as adult learners.

Concluding Comments and Implications

The study aimed to investigate what we as novice self-study researchers in higher ECEC leadership further education can learn from the experience of participants working with the case method. We would draw attention to two implications for further improvement of the case method design. The first implication concerns the combination of technology and learning. We carried out our case method work according to a "simple design" (Pareto & Willermark, 2018) using one or two digital resources (Padlet and breakout rooms). Covid-19 forced us to utilise online teaching; however, using a flipped classroom and Padlet in combination may provide adult learners with more space in which to building scaffolding for dialogical spaces for critical reflection and collaborative learning in groups, as previously suggested by researchers (Beltrán-Martín, 2019; Ludvigsen et al., 2019; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). This requires the development of our didactic design judgment with regard to technology, pedagogical strategies and content knowledge (TPACK) (Pareto & Willermark, 2018, p. 1194).

The second implication relates to our diverse academic knowledge, which can better be incorporated into our dialogue with each other through the use of this methodology. Arguably, an interdisciplinary approach would benefit the case method design, as the complexity of ECEC leadership, as illuminated in the participants' cases, requires coursework that draws on concepts from multiple disciplines. For example, further exploration of the combination of pedagogical leadership and transactional theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) could develop new awareness of the epistemology of an ECEC leadership case method approach. According to Jenkins and Dugan (2013), it is not sufficient only to use concepts from multiple disciplines in an interdisciplinary course; new integrative knowledge must be developed, which is an argument for future self-studies.

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Chapter 15

Caught between Study and Family: Mature female students' thesis writing during Covid

By Anne Larson, Pia Cort, and Helle Merete Nordentoft

Abstract

Based on an analysis of statements and snaplogs from four Danish female students writing their masters' thesis between December 2019 and April 2020, the paper aims to shed light on how mature female students cope with the dual roles as mother/spouse/partner and student while working on their masters' thesis. Their statements are part of a larger project, which also included students without children, on thesis writing in a time where the political pressure to finish education 'in time' was combined with the challenges caused by Covid-19. In the analysis presented in this paper, only snap-logs and statements in interviews from the four students with children are included. Theoretically, the paper takes it point of departure in their combined role identities as students and as mothers/spouses. The analysis focus on five themes of which three are related to having to balance between being a mother and spouse on the one hand and writing a Masters' thesis on the other, while the last two are related to Covid-19 as an extra hurdle. The themes are: finding undisturbed time to write on the thesis; thesis writing taking time from the family; women as the family's project managers; controlling the process of writing a thesis in unpredictable times; and writing a thesis alongside children who are sent home. Based on the analysis, it is concluded that the four interviewees tend to cope with their dual roles mainly by trying to physically separating their roles as mother and their roles as students, but that this strategy was challenged during Covid-19. In addition, the analysis points at a significant challenge being their internalised expectations to the roles as a mother and as a student, and that trying to live up to the two roles at the same time leaves them with a guilty conscience towards the family as well as towards their study.

Keywords

mature female students, identity theory, competing role identities

Introduction

Numerous studies on adult students in higher education have been carried out over the years. Among the challenges, adult students might face when entering higher education, is having to "straddling the worlds of family and education" (Edwards, 1993, p. 62), both according to Edwards being 'greedy' institutions. While Alsop, Gonzales-Arnal and Kilkey (2008) talk about the students having to negotiate "their responsibilities as students and carers" (p. 623), Merrill (1999) points out how for female students with partners and/or children, everyday life is "characterised by a constant juggling of roles" (p. 154) with the women having to cope with constant changing roles. This interaction, though, is not unequivocally negative. Female students might for instance find education offering them a space where they are more than just somebody's mother or wife/partner – though at the same time still being the main responsible for children and housework. Studying, compared to work, further offers another flexibility.

The possible downsides of having to cope with the role as a mother and spouse at the same time as the role of student on the other hand, is made clear by Lister (2003) in a study of female carers in a Diploma course in social work planned especially for adults with caring commitments. She thus refers one of the women interviewed in the study for previously always having the feeling that she needed to choose between looking after her children and studying. Prioritising time to oneself and one's study, thus, can lead to guilty conscience towards both (Edwards, 1993; Merrill, 1999). Edwards thus points at the balancing between the two roles not being an easy one. Female students with families have to prioritise between time organised around others (the responsibility for others and others' needs), and time organised around themselves (as time spent on studying):

"That education was perceived by them as individualistic, abstract and as something which made them different fed into this, and led several of the women to mention that they felt they were being 'indulgent' or 'selfish' in requiring and making space for so much time in which to study" (Edwards, 1993, p. 65)

Some of the students in a study carried out by Edwards in the late 1980s (Edwards, 1993), thus talked about how their families would suffer - or was suffering – by them "totally immersing themselves in study" (p.66). Spending time on study was thought of as not spending time on the family, while conversely, time spent on the family was thought of as time not spent on study. "Most of the women wanted to fulfil all the commitments generated by family and by education to the full because both were so important to them" (Edwards, 1993, p. 66). Alsop et al. (2008) likewise, in

their study of mature higher education students, found that among the costs of entering higher education mature female students considered before entering, was the changes for their identity as a mother as well as balancing their time between being a student and being a caretaker. The latter being the single biggest problem mentioned by the mature students in the study.

In the study presented in this paper, we are interested in how mature female students in higher education juggle between being a student and a carer during their thesis writing process. We are, thus, interested in the *female mature students and their coping with the dual roles as mother/spouse/partner and student while working on their final 'test piece', their masters' thesis*. A juggling of roles that was further accentuated by the Covid-pandemic closing down childcare centres and schools as well as the university. Though the focus in our study is on female mature students, it is important to remember, that having to take up caring responsibilities is not solely a woman thing and might as well apply to male mature students (as also mentioned by e.g. Alsop et al., 2008; Merrill, 1999).

Methodology

The study presented in this paper is part of a larger qualitative study on students' thesis writing in a times with a (political) pressure to finish 'in time', carried out from November 2020 into September 2021. The students was thus followed from the time they were to apply for a supervisor on their thesis and until they had handed the thesis in.

The study was designed as a combination of snag-logs and focus group interviews. Snaplogs were collected in November/December 2020 about the time they applied for a supervisor, February/March 2021, April 2021 and July/August 2021, the last at a time when they were expected to all have handed in their thesis. Simultaneously, we conducted focus group interviews in January 2021, March 2021 and May/June 2021. In addition, individual interviews were conducted in September 2021 with two students who were not able to take part in the last focus group interview.

Snaplog is a contraction of the two words 'snapshot' and 'log' (Bramming, Hansen, Bojesen, & Olesen, 2012), and combines photo taken by the participants and a log written by them related to the photo. In our study, for each snaplog we asked the students to take a picture representing their thoughts in relation to their thesis at that time, as well as a picture representing a theme set by us. As an example: for the first snaplog in November 2020, we asked the students to take a picture illustrating "What thoughts have you had in relation to your application for a thesis supervisor?", besides of a picture illustrating "what is present in your mind in relation to

the process with the thesis these days". The latter was a recurrent theme in all the following snaplogs. When sending the pictures, the students were asked also to provide a short description of the picture and why they had taken that picture in either written or oral form (a log). For the focus group interviews, the students were allocated into two groups. As the main part of the study was conducted during Covid-19 lockdown, the majority of the interviews were conducted via Zoom. The interviews were carried out in Danish, but have been translated into English in the following.

The students taking part in the study were chosen via self-selection based on a call to students about to write their thesis for a masters' course at a Danish university. The first contact to the students was taken in fall 2020. Fourteen students signed up for the project, but two for different reasons withdrew during the process. Because of the self-selection, as no men volunteered, all the students taking part in the study were women. Of the twelve students who took part in the whole study, four besides of their studies also had family responsibilities. The analysis presented in this paper is based only on those four students and their statements in the focus group interviews. All four had caring responsibilities for younger children (in nursery/basic school). The interviewees are aged from their mid-twenties to late thirties. All participants have signed a consent, and their names have been changed in the following. In the analysis below, they are referred to as Harriet, Ingrid, Ruth and Veronica.

Role identity

Burke and Stets (2009) inspired by structural symbolic interactionism defines identity, as "the set of meanings that defines who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society …" (p. 3). Burke and Stets uses the concept 'social identity' for identities based on the belonging to a specific group, and 'role identity' when referring to the positions individuals hold in different social structures, "such as spouse, worker, and parent" (p. 112). A role, according to Burke and Stets hold a set of expectations guiding the occupants' attitudes and behaviours. This set of expectations might be more or less tight requiring a specific behaviour, or they can be more flexible, leaving room to different ways to live up to the expectations. Further, the meanings attached to a role identity according to Burke and Stets stems partly from culture and partly from the individuals' specific interpretation of the role. Following that, we would claim that since societies differs, so must also the expectations tied to the different roles in different societies and in different segments of society. Due to the influence of the individual interpretation of the role, Burke and Stets also stresses

that "different individuals may have different meanings for the same role identity" (p. 115).

The internalised meaning of a role that we apply to ourselves, make up our role identity. For instance, we might see our role as a student as encompassing working hard and doing our best to get a high grade, while our role as a mother might involve being present and attentive to the needs of our child/children.

Since we occupy multiple positions in our life, and are members of multiple groups, we also possess multiple identities, e.g. identities as a university student, a mother and as spouse. Burke and Stets talks about 'the person as a container for multiple identities'. They distinguish between identities at the same level and identities ordered in a hierarchical way. For identities ordered in a hierarchical way, identities at a higher level are, according to Burke and Stets, more general than identities at a lower level. For identities at the same level, it applies that

> "… although there are possibly many identities, there is only one behavioural output stream because there is only one person to act. This implies that the behaviour of an individual must "satisfy" several individual identities simultaneously by altering the situation in ways that change all of the self-relevant meanings perceived by all of the different identities" (p. 134).

This is especially relevant to the master students in this study if their role identity as a student and their role identity as a mother and a spouse respectively are at the same level.

In this paper, we follow Burke and Stets (2009), and use the concept 'role identity' to refer to the different identities based on the positions the individual holds. We thus in line with Burke and Stets see identity as connected to the different positions the individual undertake in its life, linking the individual and society.

Analysis

Based on a first reading of the interviews and logs, five themes stood out of which three are related to having to balance between the role identity as a mother and spouse on the one hand and the role identity as a student writing a Masters' thesis on the other. The other two are specifically related to Covid-19 as an extra hurdle. The themes are: finding undisturbed time to work on the thesis; thesis writing taking time from the family; women as the family's project managers; controlling the process of writing a thesis in unpredictable times; and writing a thesis alongside children who are sent home. The following analysis is organised around those five themes.

Balancing Between Being a Mother/partner and Writing a Thesis

For the four students analysed, writing a masters' thesis simultaneously with having caring responsibilities for younger children involve extra challenges both practical and mental. At the practical level, finding undisturbed time to write on the thesis might be difficult, while at the mental level, trying to adhere to (own) expectations to the role as a student and to the role as a mother and a spouse at the same time is not always easy.

Finding Undisturbed Time to Work on the Thesis

All four students with children tell the same tale about finding it difficult to get time to focus on their thesis without interruption – to get into flow, as they say. As Harriet describes the changes of undisturbed time for the thesis: "When you have to collect the children [from kindergarten and school] – and you want to be with them – then it is easily five hours that is lost; or your husband comes home; or the phone rings" (Harriet, May 2021). Harriet thus describes how her own expectations to her role as a mother being to be with her children when they are at home, takes time from her work on the thesis that is expected in her role as a student.

For Veronica, the disturbances are not only restricted to the daytime as her little son suffers from ear pain, and therefore does not sleep well, which causes her to neither getting sufficient sleep. If she manages to get some time during the day where she is able to focus, she therefore tends to fall asleep: "I think that this fundamental degree of tiredness I have, it disturbs my ability to get into flow. It is like, when I get relaxed and focussed, I fall asleep" (Veronica, January 2021).

Confronted with the other interviewees who do not have children and their stories, they admit they can feel a bit of envy. Over the months, however, they all find different ways to cope with the competing roles and finding some peace and quiet to work on their thesis. An example of a very simple solution is a pair of very efficient ear plugs that one of the interviewees get from her husband. She then 'hides' in the cellar of the house, hoping her son will not realise that she is actually at home. Other solutions include spending the day in a library when easing of the Covid restrictions makes that possible, or taking a week/weekend off from family in a summerhouse or allotment garden, and thus physically separating the two roles. As will be further described in the next section, taking time off from the family, however, is not a decision that is easy for all.

Thesis Writing Taking Time from the Family

A recurrent theme for the interviewees is how they have guilty conscience when choosing to prioritize their thesis instead of being with the family. Not giving priority to the family, thus, goes against their idea of what it means to be a mother and a partner and thereby the expectations they ascribe to their identities as such. At the same time, they also express having guilty conscience towards their study when being with the family. Ruth describes this catch-22 very illustrative, saying: "If I do not feel guilty sending them off [to kindergarten], then I have guilty conscience about not working on my thesis. So for me, it is like, wow, I really do spend a lot of energy on having a guilty conscience" (Ruth, January 2021). While some of the interviewees without children also talk about having a guilty conscience when not working on the thesis, what distinguishes between the two groups is whom the guilty conscience is directed at. For the students without children, a guilty conscience is directed at 'society' that offers them a degree without having to pay a fee and gives them an education grant[15]. For the interviewees with children on the other hand, the guilty conscience is once again directed at the family that they feel have suffered due to them following a masters' study. Not working on the thesis and getting finished in time will mean prolonging the time the family have to suffer.

Another interesting point is, how they talk about 'being allowed' time to work on the thesis or taking away from the family to work on it. Asked further into what they mean with 'being allowed', they stress that they are sure their husbands do not see it that way – that they do not need to ask for permission – but they themselves feel they have to get it accepted not to let their partner down.

"It is evidently about being allowed to take time off, being allowed not to take responsibility. Absolutely. It is not… I think that if I asked my husband he would say, 'you don't need to ask for permission, you just do it'. Nevertheless, it feels like asking for permission. I am quite sure I could just do it, demand it, or decide it. But it is not the way it feels to do it" (Veronica, May 2021).

This leads to the third theme, the mature female students' informal role and own expectations of being the family's project manager.

Women as the Family's Project Managers

As part of their role identity as a 'mother', the interviewees seem to feel an overall responsibility for the practicalities around the family. This man-

[15] In Denmark, there is no fee for participation in higher education, and students attending higher education get an education grant.

ifests itself in the way they talk about how they feel they are letting their partner down when he has to take responsibility for example for picking up the children, do the shopping and make the dinner while they are working on their thesis. A expectation to their role as a mother as also being 'the family's project manager',

"…being the one who has the mental overview concerning the domestic chores in a relationship with children (…) being the brain behind the next size of clothes; which toys do no longer work: which books have been torn apart: what needs to be mended; remembering birthdays and taking care of the social networks" (Veronica, March 2021).

Being a mother and their expectations to that role, thus, not only cause them to have difficulties finding undisturbed time and space to work on the thesis, but also obstructs their mental focus on the work when they do have the time and space.

As pointed out by one of the interviewees, being a student at the same time as a mother, however, can also be an advantage compared to being a mother at job, as the role as student offers more flexibility in case of e.g. illness among the children. Though in the interview she stresses it as a positive side of having to combine the two roles, it can also be interpreted as another example of her expectations to her role identity as a mother being the one acting as the project leader of the family. Since there are only female students among our interviewees, we can however not conclude whether that is the case, as a male student might have taken on him the responsibility for ill children in the same way.

Covid-19 as an Extra Trip Up

As mentioned in the methodology section, the project was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, and for a significant part of the time the interviewees were working on their thesis, schools and kindergartens/ nurseries were closed for physical attendance. For all the interviewees with children, that meant having to care for the children at home and/ or home schooling at the same time as working on the thesis. When the institutions reopened, recurrent cases of Covid-infections temporarily closed them again, and the children as well as the adults had to be tested several times before the children were allowed back in kindergarten or school. This made everyday life difficult to predict. Besides the challenges related to the dual role identities as mother and thesis-writing student presented above, Covid-19 for this group of students, thus, also offered some extra challenges which will be addressed in the following.

Controlling the Process of Writing a Thesis in Unpredictable Times

For all four interviewees with children, the unpredictability caused by the Covid pandemic had a strong presence throughout the whole process. Never knowing when the nursery/kindergarten/school would close down and the children being sent home, as well as having to plan and spend time on Covid tests.

"In the fall, I think it was quite a challenge, particularly in October and November. Especially my oldest son was sent home from school many times, because either classmates or teachers were infected with Covid. Sent home, and then tested on the fourth and sixth day before being allowed back in school. I think it was three weeks in a row where my kids were sent home alternately (...) Then the stress factor was not so much having a child sitting beside me, but more that you never knew when you would get a call" (Ingrid, January 2021).

The unpredictability took such a toll on the thesis work that one of the interviewees expressed a kind of relief when the schools were closed down again for a longer period, and she knew what her conditions were.

In relation to the thesis, they reacted with a feeling of urgency as soon as there was time to work on the thesis, to get as much done as possible – just in case. As another of the four interviewees said, all the plans she made could be worth noting if someone got ill.

Writing a Thesis alongside Children who are sent Home

As also indicated in the section on the difficulties of finding undisturbed time and space to write a thesis when being a mother at the same time as a student are not only related to the Covid pandemic. The pandemic, however, did make it even more difficult when the children were around all day.

An example of the constant disturbances appears during one of the interviews, when one of the interviewees' son gets interested in the ongoing conversation on Zoom and she asks him please to leave. She later refers to the situation, commenting to the rest of the interviewees and the interviewer that having time and peace to become immersed in the work in her own speed is "kind of in short supply in this house" (Ingrid, January 2021). She at that time lives in a small flat with the two children. In her snaplog, she has taken a picture of the very modest distance between her workstation and that of her son's, who is at that time sent home from school due to Covid lockdown. Her problems of having to find undisturbed time to work on the thesis, thus, is extra affected by the Covid pandemic. Also Ruth, in one of her snaplogs, illustrates the simultaneous mixture of the role as a

mother and the role of a student, sitting with her son on the lap while he is watching Pegga Pig at the TV and she is working on her thesis on the computer.

Conclusion

The aim of the study presented in this paper was to investigate how mature female students cope with the dual role identities as mother/spouse/partner and student while working on their masters' thesis.

In light of some of the previous studies on mature female students mentioned in the beginning of this paper being approximately thirty years old, it is striking how our findings in the beginning of the 2020's to a high degree correspond to what they found. Among our four interviewees, combining their internalised expectation to their role identities as a mother and as a student is not easy, leading to a guilty conscience when it is not possible to 'play' both roles a hundred percent. Spending time on the study is experienced as taking time away from the family, while spending time on the family means not spending enough time on the study. That spending time on their thesis prompts guilty conscience towards the family, might be related to the four interviewees' background. They all have a previous degree that could easily get them a job. Taking a masters' degree, thus, is not strictly necessary for the economy of the family, and might therefore be seen as something extra they are doing for themselves only. In line with Edwards' (1993) findings, they thus seem to understand their study and thesis writing as an individualistic project leading their family to suffer, which goes against their role identity as a mother and as a spouse. At the same time, they also find their study important, as it gives them a chance to change their career.

What is especially interesting is that they are all four well aware that it is their own expectations to the role as mothers that make them feel that way, not necessarily those of their husbands. They know they do not need to ask for permission to spend time on the thesis, but at the same time feel that they ought to. The expectations contained in their role identity as mothers are thus so strongly internalised that even though they are mentally aware that raising a family is a common responsibility, and one of them even is an active feminist, they still deep inside feel that it is their obligation, and that their study should not take time and attention away from the family.

How, then, do they cope with the juggling of these dual roles? Getting away from the family for shorter or longer time seems to be a recurrent way to try to cope with the clash of role expectations – physically

separating the two roles. For the students in this study, however, this solution was challenged by Covid-19 and the following restrictions as Ingrid and Ruth's pictures distinctly demonstrate. Living in a house with a cellar, Victoria solved that challenge with a pair of efficient earphones and by 'hiding' from her son in the cellar. While in some cases they were, thus, able to physically separate the two roles, mentally coping with trying to live up to their own expectations to both role identities seems to have been more difficult, leaving them with a guilty conscience no matter what they chose to do.

For universities interested in attracting mature students, this study in line with previous studies points at the need to consider ways to ease the combination of the dual roles as mother/parent and student. However, since the challenge is also tied to the students' internalised expectations to the two roles, also at the interpersonal level in the relation between student and supervisor, the later needs to be aware of and address the specific challenges mature students are facing.

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Chapter 16

Adult Education in the Tension between Market and Bildung. Concluding reflection from the editorial committee

By Johan Lövgren, Lasse Sonne and Michael Noah Weiss

Introduction

The editorial team behind NAEL proceedings consists of Lasse Sonne, Michael Weiss and Johan Lövgren. Each of us holds the position of associate professor at the University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), Lasse in the School of Business, and Michael and Johan in the Department of Educational Science.

The local organizing committee at USN was formed in 2020 and met frequently to prepare the conference. The process involved developing a theme, asking key speakers to contribute, reading submitted papers and structuring a programme. The decisions we had to make occasioned many discussions about Nordic adult education. Looking back on the process of planning and performing NAEL 2022, we find that this on-going dialogue was maybe where we learned the most.

As we compile our experiences from NAEL 2022 in the proceedings of the conference, we would like to share the essence of this dialogue with you. To document what we learned, Lasse, Michael and Johan decided to meet one more time just to recap what our dialogue taught us. We recorded an hour-long conversation which we have transcribed and edited into this chapter.

Central to our conversation was a tension that became a central theme in NAEL 2022 and that we also see as central in the field of adult education. This tension is related to a double aim of adult education, one that has often been perceived as incorporating opposites. On the one hand, the task of adult education can be seen as the preparation of the student for the labour market. Or to put it more directly, to help the student get a job. On the other hand, we see that adult education can be connected to the Nordic tradition of *folkbildning* or Bildung. Here, the focus of adult education is to develop the whole person of the student towards active membership in a democratic society.

We invite you to share our dialogue on the identity and future of Nordic adult education. The authors of this article come from very different backgrounds; Lasse from policy research, Johan is a practitioner and researcher on the Nordic folk high schools and Michael has his background in philosophy and Socratic dialogue. We have also moved to Norway from three different nations. Lasse comes from Denmark, Johan from Sweden and Michael grew up in Austria. In our dialogue, we found that there was much to be learned from these differences.

The perspectives of work life and Bildung

MW: Johan and Lasse, you were two of the organizers of the Nordic Adult Education and Learning Conference 2002. There were two themes which turned out to be quite central throughout the conference: Work life and the labour market on the one hand, and a more Bildung-oriented perspective on the other. On several occasions, one could observe a kind of dynamic, not to say a tension between these two. What are your thoughts on these themes based on your experiences from the conference?

JL: The two perspectives were very much present throughout our work with NAEL 2022. Our dialogue during the conference planning was coloured by us coming from different fields of research. My field is the Nordic folk high schools and the Nordic tradition of *folkbildning* (Lövgren, 2022). In my Nordic research networks, “market-oriented” education is often given the role of an enemy. It is a polarization where the attitude is that the two different perspectives that can’t be combined.

I really learned something from you, Lasse. You made me see that the two perspectives can be combined, that adult education can, and must, have both democratic Bildung and the job market as goals. I think this is for us a kind of a summary of a dialogue that we’ve had throughout this period.

LS: What we were discussing in preparation of the conference the last one to two years was: what is the purpose will adult education? What is the purpose of developing competencies for adults? And for whom is this relevant? I think an important purpose is to create economic growth and, in that way, lay the foundation to further build the welfare society. This is a materialistic point of view where the labour market and the competences relevant to the labour market become important. On the other hand, you, Johan, representing the other side of the coin.

JL: Yes, and it is so interesting to see how the two can actually connect. As we look at the Nordic model, I think that one of the success factors

has been the dual focus on both the labour market and Bildung, that they have been allowed to connect and maybe even advance each other.

But there is another aspect that makes our dialogue even more interesting. As we discuss the Nordic tradition of adult education, we also do it from the viewpoint of three different nationalities. Lasse, you are a Dane living in Norway. I have moved here from Sweden and Michael, you come from Austria. We are all foreigners in Norway. From your perspective, Michael, what is the central issue in this tension that you described?

MW: I would say that there is a key term in this dialogue: *The purposes of adult education.* In this regard, an inspiring book by John Hattie and Steen Napper Larsen co+-mes to mind, with the title "The Purposes of Education" (2020). In this publication, Steen Nepper Larson introduces a concept of Bildung which consists of three key components: *Critical thinking*, *citizenship*, and *character building* (ibid: 175f). In reference to Hattie and Larsen, I could ask: What is the highest purpose of education? Is it that type of Bildung where you develop these three components in order to serve the labour market? Or does the labour market represent just another field where you can unleash your human potential? I intentionally formulate this question in this way due to the works of another Dane. His name is Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, who strongly criticized the development of adult education. In a publication from 2007, he asserted that the purpose of adult education should not be to acquire new skills and competencies in order to increase your value on the labour market, but the purpose should actually be to learn to stand 'in the open' (Hansen, 2007: 332). For life is always uncertain and as human beings we are always confronted with situations throughout our lifetime where we don't know how to handle them and where there are no answers. An example for that is our collective experience of the pandemic, where we were confronted with an unexpected situation in which there were no straight-forward answers. Rather, we were standing in the open. With this as background, I would like to come back to my initial question: What is the highest purpose of adult education? Is it the labour market or is the labour market a kind of capitalist opportunity in order to develop your potentials as a human being?

A holistic approach to adult education and learning

LS: I can start. Well, my answer will be that things are changing and the demands from the labour market are in change. An isolated skill has been seen as very important for the labour market, and it still is. Therefore, we also still have specialized courses for adults where you learn a certain skill

that you need in your workplace. However, I think the idea of producing isolated skills for work life is in change and we are getting more and more focus on the whole person, in the direction of a holistic approach to adult education and learning. I think, for example, that we can see this change reflected when we look at the OECD. The OECD has developed a learning compass for 2030, which talks about transformative competencies. The highest goal is about developing and creating new values. Values are important for creating change and improve society and for improving the life for ourselves, too. I think it is very interesting that we can see through the OECD how economics and economic goals are becoming integrated into more human or humanistic kind of goals. I think this is the direction we are moving in now.

JL: As I read the OECD learning compass, I can relate the content and the values described to those that I find in my studies of the Nordic *folkbildning*. The Bildung tradition in Nordic *folkbildning* is very much in coherence with those presented in the OECD learning compass. It is almost as if the OECD has been inspired by this Nordic development of adult education.

The EU has also called a central development programme in adult education "the Grundtvig programme". Here, the EU makes a clear connection to the Nordic tradition of adult education and the Bildung tradition.

In this sense I can see your point, Lasse. But at the same time one of our key speakers at NAEL 2022, Mike Osborne, described another development in government funding of adult education where European governments no longer will finance adult education. If so, then all adult education will in the near future have to be market-based. The whole sector of adult education will then be built on the premise that each company will have to finance programmes for their own employees.

Throughout the history of Nordic *folkbildning*, the Bildung perspective has been secured through state finance. As an example, the three main parts of Swedish *folkbildning*: folk high schools, study circles and the libraries, are all dependent on being financed by tax money.

I appreciate what you say on a policy level, but on an economic reality level maybe there is another movement. Maybe there is a risk that if the companies assume responsibility for all adult education, many of them will want their own the courses to be effective for their money-making and not for personal development.

LS: I understand your point, Johan. I also see the danger if government is not involved in the creation of competence development for adults. We need the state, we need the government in a partnership. We also need the trade unions and the businesses, the companies. We need all the crucial

interests involved. Nevertheless, I also think we are moving in a direction where governments have the opinion that adult education is expensive and they don't want to take the whole responsibility for the costs. For adult education, this is a dilemma because Bildung competencies are very important to our societies, especially when we look at the Nordic model. I cannot imagine the Nordic model without Bildung competencies, also for adults.

JL: There are a discussion about how much the Nordic democratic model has been dependent on the Nordic adult education model. In the 1950s, between 15 and 20% of the members of the parliaments, in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, had their main education from folk high schools (Hellden, 1968;). They would not have been able to enter into politics if it hadn't been for the education they got in the folk high schools.

MW: We have talked about a holistic approach, not only towards the individual person, but a holistic approach towards society, becomes more and more relevant and central to adult education, on the one hand. On the other hand, we mentioned that there is a tendency and discussion about whether it should be the market, in terms of companies, who finance adult education. We also asserted that the Nordic model is intrinsically based on and connected to the concept of Bildung. When I put these two perspectives together, my impression is that on the one hand we have culture, and on the other we have the labour market. Well, I have a suspicion that the labour market is not only influencing but almost dictating the development of the culture, whereas in former times, if I understand it right, it was the opposite way: Culture, like the Nordic culture and tradition influenced the labour market due to the values that were upheld, practiced and taught in that culture. What do you think of this dynamic between the labour market and culture and how they influence each other?

Nordic education and democracy

JL: This is so interesting. I have to refer it to the opening of the conference by Petter Aasen, the rector of USN. I quote him from memory, that the Nordic model in the 50s and 60s and 70s was built on a romanticized picture of fellowship. l agree that we can't go back and just reproduce the Bildung in the Nordic model in mid-1900, but at the same time I'm afraid that such statements may undermine the respect for the Nordic democratic model.

When I mentioned this critique of the Nordic model to Shalini Sing at the conference, she shared her view from the perspective of India. She felt that the Nordic Model is not only admired by nations around the globe, but also that it provides hope that it is actually possible to build such a society.

The fact that the Nordic model has a functional democracy, has given hope to people around the world working towards the same kind of society.

LS: I agree with you that we cannot go back in time. We must move forward and that is important. But I think what we can do is to *reinvent* the Nordic model, to put it like that. And this is where we probably are now, that we need some reinventing. A big strength in the Nordic model was the social movements that built the Nordic societies. And I'm thinking about the labour movement, the agricultural movement, the consumer movements, and many other social movements. They were very important in building our societies and building the Nordic model. I think we can interpret the Nordic model as a triangle between the market, the state, and the civil society. Falling most behind in the last decades has been the civil society. People do not participate so much in what is important for society, first and foremost, in the political life. However, lack of engagement is also the case in many other areas of the civil society. Civil society is important as the glue when creating cohesion in the Nordic model. Therefore, we need reinventing of the Nordic Model, civil society works best in the interaction with the labour market, the businesses and the government. Today we probably see the civil society unfolding in the social media, but I do not think social media is a good place for developing the civil society. Through the social media we might be connected more to each other, but we have also drifted further apart. Social media like Facebook is not the best places to interact with others. There is a lack of a civilized language, and a lack of taking responsibility for how with discuss with each other. Nevertheless, social media is the place where people meet the most nowadays.

JL: I agree that social media will be important in reinventing of the Nordic model, but you are right in that the function of the social media in civil society brings up new issues. In the first decade of the 21st century, when social media took off and became a major political influence there was a common belief that social media would serve as a strong democratic influence. In 2006, Time Magazine placed a mirror on the front cover to represent their choice of "Person of the year". The idea was that "You" are the person of the year, that through social media everyone can have influence. A later example of this was the Arab Spring, where social media was central in what seemed like a whole new democratic development.

I think there are few that now will defend this initial positive expectation that social media will serve as a protector of democracy. We now see examples of how social media has served non-democratic purposes. One such example would be the US presidential election where Russia favoured the election of Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton. This is just one

of many instances where social media is not building democracy, but rather undermining it.

MW: Lasse, you said that today you see the social movements, which were vital for the Nordic model, mainly in terms of social media. And the social media was often hailed as democratic media around the time of the Arab Spring. In the beginning, the social movements were if not movements of enlightenment, then at least movements that were informed. They got their information and their knowledge from literature, scholars, representatives and so on. Today it is much easier to access information. However, and that is my point, information is not automatically knowledge. To put it bluntly, we are all well informed, but do we also know that much? Even though we managed to realize something that was unthinkable only 60 years back, namely democratic media, we already see the adverse side of this project, where a massive amount of information is offered but knowledge appears to be scarce. This leads me to ask: Has adult education had a special responsibility regarding turning information into knowledge, or could that be a task of adult education in the future?

JL: What you say connects to the history of the social movements in Sweden. The groups that were active in both political and religious groups in 19th century Sweden were often called "readers". Reading circles were the basis for the people movements that were the backbone of the Nordic model. They were also active in publication, producing texts for their respective groups, and publishing was clearly seen as a threat to the conservative forces that sought to uphold the non-democratic society.

The printed word is important today, too. I just discussed this with a journalist friend who pointed out that a published text is subject to quality control, like a newspaper that has an editor who is responsible for what is published. My friend saw the opposite in social media where you can publish "fake news" without having to be responsible. The framework of printed publications is set up as a safeguard for democratic dialogue, whereas online publication is so much more vulnerable to anti-democratic developments.

Media and informal learning

LS: As a continuation of what Johan emphasized and your question, Michael, the conference was about adult education and adult learning but one thing we did not discuss, at least at the sessions I went to, was the concept of informal learning. Also, in relation to informal learning, I think something new needs to be reinvented. The area of informal learning relates

for example to reading newspapers and books. Also, watching television programs and radio programs that increase our knowledge and understanding. I hardly find these kinds of programs anymore on the radio, for example. They have disappeared. I think we have lost something very important here that is important for informal learning, adult education and thus the development of the Nordic model. The result is unfortunately that we lose cohesion in our societies. I think informal learning is the area where we are now lagging most behind if we compare with how things were only 30-40 years ago. Informal learning is where learning has changed the most. Formal education has not changed much in the last decades. The big difference and decline have been in informal learning. This is a big problem because the decline in informal learning threatens the Nordic model.

JL: I agree that the change in informal learning is threatening the Nordic model. I see two important factors that can counteract this development. One thing is to keep a state-owned, state-run media. I am afraid that we will lose the state-run media and end up with only a market-run media. Not that there are no serious television programs or radio programs or podcasts in the market -un media. But the part of the media that is owned by the state has an obligation to build on a more neutral perspective and newscasts will be controlled and criticized in another way.

Another such factor could be that the university establishes net sites with online courses. These can produce podcasts where you know that Bildung perspective is upheld, where you know that the discussion is open and there is a critical perspective.

Such a standpoint could be perceived as belonging to a very radical social democratic or politically left-wing position. But it is important to see that this has not been the case in Nordic political history. In the establishment of the Nordic model, there was a central position represented by all the main political parties supporting the establishment of state-owned media. An example of how this worked can be seen in the decade after World War 2 when both Norway and Sweden had governments built on a coalition between all the major parties. These governments were decisive in the establishment of the Nordic model.

There is a Swedish analysis of what the political parties say about "folkbildning" and about having a "dannelse" perspective in education and in society. It shows how all the major political parties were united behind a Bildung perspective. They were united in the idea that the Bildung perspective was a natural part of the Nordic society and Nordic education. I wish we could find some of that again.

Social movements and active citizenship

LS: Yes, I think there was a broad consensus in politics around that area. An important purpose with education has been to build our societies. I however also think that the social movements were important. When we lost the social movements, we also lost a lot of learning, a lot of education because much of the education and learning happened in the context of the social movements. The reason was that the social movements needed active citizens in a democracy to push the interests of the social movements forward. Education and learning were a part of a strategy with the purposes to maximise the interests of the social movements and the people who were members of these movements. It was a way to deal with the power struggles in a democracy. The social movements therefore developed strong democratic citizens. A danger for democracy is that we are losing this aspect in society today. Instead, new political forces are popping up in our society because democracy has become weaker than before. To be resistant to these forces we need active citizens and the social movements. An important part of the Nordic model is therefore that is produces active citizens who can be active in democracy. When we do not have the social movements, we need to find other ways to interact to make democracy work.

MW: In this respect, I remember one presenter at the conference. He showed the numbers of labour shortage in Norway and that really made an impression on me. For in Norway, these numbers are quite tremendous, especially in the health sector. Now, if the social movements are extinguished, as you indicated, then there is a certain danger that society changes – not for the better, of course. What do I mean in more concrete terms? If you experience that for example the health system is not working anymore or not working in the way you were used to, then this will cause changes in society due to the frustration that such a situation would provoke. I do not want to go into a political discussion about the parties and the political movement here. Rather, I want to point out that if we lack the social movements, then something like labour shortage can become a threat for society and has the potential to change its structure fundamentally.

As a concrete example: Today, if you want to visit your general practitioner, it takes two or three weeks before you get the appointment, whereas in former times you could have it in two days. Now, imagine that you have pain in your ear. You don't know what caused the pain and now you have to wait for two weeks for the appointment with your general practitioners. Waiting for two weeks in pain has an effect on the labour market in that sense that you will probably go on sick leave in these two weeks - for two weeks, not one day! In that way, a certain wheel starts to spin which at

a certain point you probably cannot stop anymore. And it is at this point where I see a connection between the labour market and the concept of Bildung. For the question is, is Bildung strong enough to offer and represent a security net when certain parts of the labour market are creating friction, to put it like that. In this respect the Global Happiness Index can be mentioned, which year after year shows that the Nordic countries very high when it comes to their citizens being happy. The question that this index provokes is whether the concept of Bildung, which is widespread and well implemented in the Nordics, fostered the high score of happiness? And if so, can it help us to deal with challenges like the labour shortage? I don't know. What do you think?

JL: It's important to see that the Bildung concept is not stagnant. It's not something that is resilient or not resilient. It's a way of meeting the open fields, it's a critical thinking. One thing that fascinates me is the common ground when it comes to the view of humans. It is humanistic in the best sense, a humanistic view that all these civil society movements and the Nordic model has embraced, a belief in the value of every individual and every individual right and the obligation to think critically and find their own answers in new situations.

What makes Bildung or the Nordic *folkbildung* concept resilient is that it can be renewed, it opens a door to reinvention. Reinventive thinking is a good way of defining Bildung. The resilience lies in in the reinventing possibility with a basis in in every person's value.

LS I think the Nordic model is social democratic in the way that we have two words involved here: the social and democratic. Social democracy. I think these are keywords in the Nordic model. The model is both social and democratic. I also think most political parties in Scandinavia, in the Nordic area, to a great extent could be defined as social democratic. Because it is not possible to have enough votes, and to gain political power in Scandinavia if a political party is not social democratic. Social democracy has become a broadly accepted culture in the Nordic countries. It is not possible to be in Nordic politics and society building if the social democratic culture is rejected.

JL: I still think your question is very central to the role of adult education in what we have called the reinvention of all the Nordic model. It seems to me that if we are to build a democratic society the whole educational field needs to be saturated by a Bildung perspective. One movement towards this can be seen in the new curriculum plan for the Norwegian schools (LK 20). Here, education is described with "dannelse" as a central concept. There is a hope in this, but at the same time I see a split in society where this perspective is opposed by anti-democratic

movements. This can be seen for example in the US or in in Sweden right now. I think we agree that Bildung should be connected to a specific political direction or political party. But when it comes to the Trump movement in the US or “Sverigedemokratenerna” in Sweden, we have to say that there are political groups not upholding the democratic ideals connected to Bildung.

Hopefully this split will serve to clarify the Nordic model. There is such a large group in society that still votes for a Social Democratic Society in the best sense of the word.

LS: I also think it is important when we talk about the Nordic model that we place it in a broader context. We have concepts like *Bildung* and *Erziehung*. These are German words that have had a big impact on developing education and learning in the Nordic countries. It is not a coincidence that these are German words. It is an area full of discussion, but I think it is important to emphasize that a Nordic model of education and learning has foremost been developed as a reflection of a German or European continental model where society and the social play an important role. On the other hand, we have an Anglo-American way of seeing education and learning with a more individualist approach, and where competence development is seen as something important for the individual development. I think the German collective way of thinking has had a bigger impact in the development of a Nordic model compared with the influence from England and the USA. The German model or European continental model is thus a kind of extension into the Nordic area. I think this connection is important to understand when we discuss a Nordic model. However, we also need to accept that there exists a discussion between researchers on the matter. Some researchers are in favour of the Anglo-American model while other researchers are most in favour of the German and European continental model.

MW: I understand what you mean, and I don’t want to take a stance in this discussion either. What is interesting in what you are saying is the difference between the English term adult education, which is more about gaining certain competencies and skills, and then the German word for adult education which is “Erwachsenenbildung” which in Swedish is “voksenbildning”. Both the German and the Swedish term for adult education include the word “Bildung”. With that we have two different perspectives on adult education: One which puts the focus on gaining and *acquiring something*, and whereas the other is more concerned with a *becoming*. It focuses more on the developmental process. With regards to the Nordic model, the question that comes to mind now is: Is it essential that adults are developing, in terms of Bildung, or is it important that they acquire

something? Seen philosophically, these two different perspectives are helpful to understand the current discussion on adult education.

It appears that the perspective which advocates that adult education is about acquiring skill, competences etc. has its purpose or goal beyond itself: You are acquiring certain skills in order to do something with them afterwards. In contrast to that stands the other perspective: Bildung can have the purpose in itself. In that respect I want to pick up a term used previously, namely informal learning. Quite often, informal learning does not take place with the purpose of acquiring certain skills, but informal learning is rather something that just happens to you. Nevertheless, it forms you as a person.

The risk of polarization

JL: The perspective of informal learning connects us to the question that started our discussion. It would be interesting to connect what you said to the initial tension that we discussed between the market and Bildung in adult education.

LS: I think that if we start from the beginning, we need both dimensions. We need economic growth and welfare to have a good society. It is no fun to be poor and not be able to go to the hospital when we need treatment. And for that we need money. On the other hand, to have a good society we also need democracy and citizenship. We need democratic training. Therefore, we need both side of the coin. It is no fun to live in a society where one of these two dimensions is missing.

JL: And maybe that both sides of the coin could be a part of the solution. We see that there will be a need for state subventions for an adult education that is more Bildung-oriented, but at the same time we can work towards other solutions. Could we, in cooperation with the big companies, develop adult education financed by the market to also carry these values? The NAEL dialogue that you headed on the second day of the conference, Lasse, shows that large Norwegian companies that are representatives for what we have called “the market” can take active part in developing critical thinking and democratic values. One thing that our discussion has shown is that there is a risk in building up a polarization between “the market” and adult education as Bildung.

The traditions that I came from – research on the Swedish *folkbildning* tradition - has a tendency towards such a polarization and I can see its dangers. If we come to the point where the labour market will be the main financer of adult education. Maybe it is true like the rector of USN said that it is not possible to go back to the Nordic model as it was in the 60s

and 70s and 80s, that today it represents a romantic or unrealistic picture of the fellowship.

Also, with the global perspective, there are new perspectives. We have not talked about immigration much, but of course that "blows the framework." Should we take care of for instance Syrian refugees in the same way as we have with those of Nordic descent? Should they have the same rights when they come to Sweden?

I think there will be a reinvention which will also have to be connected to the to the labour market and in cooperation with the labour market.

LS: It is important what you say, especially about the reinvention. However, I also think we should not throw away things that have already been developed and have proved to work well in history. We have the freedom to learn from what history have taught us. I think one of the important lessons from history is that we as individuals have been very closely connected in the Nordic model through the cooperative nature of the model. It has been a big strength that the trade unions, companies, government, and civil society were able to interact, discuss and find joint solutions for the Nordic society. It has made the Nordic societies peaceful and progressive. Therefore, I think we should continue to build a Nordic model based on what we have learnt from history. There is no reason to change a winning team. We should go back into history and take the good examples, the best practices, and further build on them when we develop our Nordic model in the future. What we have been taught from history is that education, learning, competence development and with that adult education and learning were important factors that made the Nordic model a success.

JL: Thank you, Lasse – I think you sum up our dialogue very well. Our reflections on adult education and the Nordic model bring to mind to an anecdote written by a Norwegian reporter stationed in Turkey. He writes about an expression that is used in Turkish everyday language. He has heard this expression used in the Parliament as well as in a street discussion, or even as a comment in a newspaper. If somebody argues for a political solution that is seen as overly romantic and unrealistic, you respond with the phrase "Where do you live, in Norway?"

At first the reporter saw the expression as an insult, inferring that Norwegians are easily fooled and naïve. But then he saw that maybe the phrase should be interpreted in another way. It can also refer to Norway and the Nordic model as an outpost where that which seems impossible even to dream about in Turkey is actually functioning. The article ended in a reflection that can be related to what Shalini Singh said about the hope that the Nordic democratic model represents. For people who can only dream about

the level of health insurance or social welfare that Norway represents, the fact that the Nordic model exists and functions is in itself a hope.

When we have a conference on Nordic adult education and learning, it is important to see that there are democratic movements around the world that take inspiration from the Nordic adult education tradition. This also adds importance to the development of Nordic adult education and to the research that was presented at NAEL 2022. Their comments imply that Nordic adult education and learning has an influence not just in our own region, but that it can be seen as a contributing factor on a global level.

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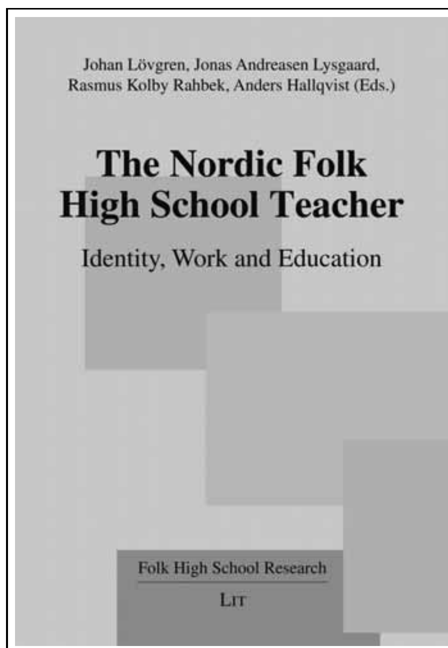
Folk High School Research

Edited by Johan Lövgren, University of South-Eastern Norway



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The title of this anthology mirrors the theme from the 9th Nordic Conference on Adult Education and Learning (NAEL), arranged by the University of South-Eastern Norway in May 2022. The NAEL conferences constitute biannual meeting places where researchers, policy makers, organisational leaders and practitioners converge to discuss how adult education can address the dilemmas facing society, organisations and individuals. The caption *New Challenges, New Learning, New Possibilities* reflects the notion that adult education plays an integral part in our societies by advancing new learning that generates possibilities to address contemporary challenges.

The 16 chapters included in the NAEL proceedings convey the wide variety of research connected to the field of adult education. The publication incorporates studies of market-oriented and citizenship-oriented learning, developed in formal and informal settings. Though stemming from disparate points of departure, the authors agree on the ideal of combining the development of work life competences with the promotion of democratic empowerment, as demonstrated in the tradition of Nordic adult education.

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