

Summaries

Michael Tengberg, 2009 – Negotiating gender in classroom literature discussions. An interaction analysis/ Förhandlingar om genus i skolans litteratursamtal. En interaktionsanalys/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 14, No 3, pp 169–190. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

This article examines aspects of verbal discourse in a teacher led literature discussion in eighth grade. It highlights the relation between the students' constructions of gender and their stances toward the literary text as such. By means of interaction analysis I demonstrate how the text's representations of masculinity and femininity are used by the students to position both themselves and each other as subjects defined by gender identities.

The empirical data used consists of a short stretch of video recording from a literature discussion in eighth grade. A group of five boys and three girls, guided by their teacher, are examining Mats Wahl's novel *Vinterviken*. The particular sequence of their discussion analyzed here reveals an interesting debate on the representations of gender in the book, and on the ways in which these might reflect authentic authorial beliefs and moral perspectives. Although stretching over no more than two minutes of conversation, the issues raised engage the students in a discussion of gender positions that continues even after the lesson is over. Hardly surprising, some of the boys and some of the girls in the group quickly arrive at opposed views which create antagonistic tension. The interactional strategies by which this involvement is generated in relation to the literary reception of the text is, I would suggest, an important object of analysis.

The focus of the analysis is therefore not only to understand the interactional strategies by which the speakers attempt to authenticate their respective positions in relation to the norms of both gender and literary reading, but also to clarify the interchange between the students' literary reception and the activation of gender borderwork.

The study demonstrates strategies and tensions in young people's interaction on gender issues related to their reading of literature. It also makes evident how the interaction sometimes takes place on several levels at the same time. Mikhail Bakhtin uses the term *addressivity* to designate a speaker's intended direction toward a particular recipient (or several particular recipients). Drawing on Bakhtin's term, I use *double addressivity* as a way of specifying the double intention or directedness of certain utterances. Some of the students' utterances were found to echo political discourse, to refer to perso-

nal experience, and to a particular stance toward the literary text at the same time. Conversely, one speaker could simultaneously address two separate groups of listeners with two separate messages.

The interaction relies to a large extent on the students' conception of what a literary text is, and what it means to read it as such. In this particular segment of the discussion, it is also accompanied by an explicit negotiation of gender identities. This polyphony of verbal discourse makes it a complex situation to master professionally for the teacher. It seems, however, that the students find it equally complex. Assumptions of masculinity and femininity and of possible gender identities are brought into the classroom. Moreover, new positions are produced during the classroom interaction, assimilating in part some of the representations suggested in the novel. It is also clear that while this negotiation assumes the character of conflict for some of the students, mainly girls, it seems to be more of a pleasurable game for some of the other students, mainly boys.

The stretch of conversation captured in the analysis reveals that there is a continual shift in the functions attributed to the literary text. It displays the way in which the students characteristically reposition back and forth between text perspective and narrator perspective as well as between the text as fiction and the text as representation of reality. The ease by which such borders are transgressed is also illustrated by the shift made during this short sequence from criticizing the text to criticizing each other. A traditional and stereotypical division between what boys and girls "are" is strongly advocated, and consequently a familiar polarization is established between some of the boys and some of the girls in the group.

The analysis demonstrates that the particular reading of the text plays a significant part in the shaping of this polarization. Thus, it is reasonable to think that different and more nuanced stances toward the text may also contribute to new ways of constructing gender within the frame of literature discussions.

Christer Fritzell, 2009 – Generalisation and validity in pedagogic theory and research/ Generaliserbarhet och giltighet i pedagogisk forskning och teoribildning/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 14, No 3, pp 191–210. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

Few aspects are more strongly connected with scientific work than that of generalisation. For a long time it has been widely presupposed that scientific results that are not general in character are not really worthy of serious consideration. Thus natural science has been able to build its paradigmatic success on the precondition that general structures of knowledge represent

reality by means of strict applications of a universal rationality. Such forms of understanding have also been very influential in social sciences and education research. Generalisation has been taken as a hallmark of strong explanations, successful predictions and possibilities of effective practical control.

Following the interpretive turn of the 1970s and the growing interest in »qualitative studies« in pedagogic research and education science, problems of generalisation lost much of their attraction among researchers as well as practitioners. The single case in society or history, in the arts or in the lifeworld of individual persons were considered interesting in their own rights, although it was certainly still somehow presupposed that such single cases could have a bearing upon wider or similar contexts.

With the present ascendancy of qualitative approaches in Swedish education research questions of generalisability are seldom asked in more systematic ways. Postmodernist perspectives have emphasised how growing differentiation in society underscores the need to rather take substantial differences among individuals and contexts into account. Nevertheless the quest for valid knowledge, whatever its scientific or paradigmatic basis, motivates a continued consideration of the theoretical and practical meanings of generalisation in pedagogic theory and research. And not least the relationships between these points of departure, the theoretical and the practical, still need to be scrutinised.

Issues of generalisation and practical validity may be considered from several points of view, including epistemological and discursive in relation to both internal standards of research and external functions in policy-making, professional work and society at large. Not least international trends towards evidence-based practice in schools and teacher education motivate a deeper look at these issues.

The purpose of the article is to contribute to a principled discussion of the problem of generalisation and validity from the standpoint of an integrated view of internal and external conditions of research. The late establishment of education science (»utbildningsvetenskap») in Sweden as a formal field of research and policy-making further speaks for the importance of this endeavour, in which not only methodological issues but also political and social philosophical come to the fore. A number of questions will have to be asked within this area, with its complex interrelationships with a number of other basic questions of theory and research. The present article aims to touch upon some of these, mainly focussed on a programmatic outline concerning the possibilities of critical hermeneutics after the communicative and discursive turn in education.

A point of departure is taken in a comparison between two traditional models; the nomothetic and the idiographic. The former was firmly established in US education a hundred years ago in order to pursue firm knowledge of practical problems in schools and teacher training, not least in relation to perceived difficulties in the educational assimilation of immigrants from other countries. Positivist and behaviourist approaches were adopted to find the »law-like« connections among variables that could promote the efficiency and legitimacy of needed reforms and policies. Statistics and the general applica-

tion of »the scientific method« were to guarantee that practical needs were met in the best way possible. In particular, the proper connections between teaching and learning were to be established in this manner.

Idiographic models were developed to cater for the perceived facts of important individual cases which could not reasonably be subsumed under covering laws or statistical measures. Problems of generalisability were played down in favour of models of validity that rather emphasised the unique character of human phenomena and the need to understand them by means of deeper interpretations in practical contexts.

In the article it is argued that these two models, the nomothetic and the idiographic, in particular ways correspond to technological and naturalistic forms of practical generalisation respectively. While the former involves the pursuit of effectiveness by means of firm explanations, standardisation and rationalism, the latter leans towards understanding, participation and qualitative judgements. Both models presuppose external relationships between theory and practice in so far as research proceeds on its own terms in view of later applications in practice.

However, contrary to how the situation is often understood explicitly or implicitly in the classical models, matters of generalisation may be taken to have their practical meaning and importance also in social and cultural contexts in society at large. Thus seemingly very technical features of research, like statistical expressions of validity or reliability, may point to specific interests in society and state policies. Correspondingly, qualitative interpretations may imply contextualist and relativist underpinnings that do not safeguard the critical potentials of education studies. It seems that neither technological nor naturalistic forms of practical generalisation sufficiently bring into the open these complications.

It is argued that the linguistic, communicative and discursive turns in philosophy and social theory provide new possibilities to handle a number of methodological difficulties as to the relationships between theory and practice in education, including problems of generalisation and validity. Traditional models may be criticised for neglecting the wider structural conditions of socio-historical forms of educational practice as well as promoting unrealistic notions of the power of individual reflection in such practices. In stead reconsiderations in terms of intersubjectivity and communicative pragmatics may point to frameworks which integrate situated accounts with critical discourses from a distance.

Taking different possibilities to stabilise action expectations over pedagogic contexts into account, it is suggested that Habermasian discourse ethics may serve as a point of entry to considerations of practical validity in pedagogic theory and research. Certain problems of traditional forms of generalisation may be turned into procedural moral issues of socio-cultural communication pointing to possibilities of normative action on such a basis. While technological generalisations may satisfy strategic preconditions of teaching in certain contexts, ethical adjustments in a certain environment may promote naturalistic reflections of validity. But the moral point of view would imply serious efforts to consistently integrate in professional discourse the interests

of everyone concerned and thus to seek a common ground of fair and just pedagogic action.

Although there may be room for various forms of practical validity, these may not always be open for smooth integration since they often contain vastly differentiated interests and preconditions at levels of principle. And the suggested model of reconstructive validity based on shared ambitions among researchers and practitioners certainly include definite problems, especially in connection to the practical need to cater for conflicting moral principles in many situations of professional life. However, it is concluded that in extensive programs of education, for instance research and teacher education, qualified dialogue on these matters could constitute proper arenas for the realisation of these ambitions. Demanding conversations on shared problems of theory and practice, and their interrelationships, may help to integrate principled arguments with contextual complexity in systematic ways that could hopefully bring important validity claims to the fore of professional conduct.

Sara Irisdotter Aldenmyr & Sven Hartman, 2009 – Teachers' professional ethics and different rationalities/ Yrkesetik för lärare och behovet av professionsförankring/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 14, No 3, pp 212–229. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

History shows that teachers' professional and trade-union work does not spring from one source, but from several parallel traditions and practices. It is therefore reasonable to assume that teachers in different types of school form follow different teacher rationalities and have different perceptions of their professional tasks. From a communicative-ethical perspective, values and norms are created collectively. We therefore argue that when speaking of teachers' professional ethics it is important to take account of the knowledge and values of specific practices followed in parallel teacher groups.

The reason why different rationalities may obtain in different teacher groups may be found in the emergence and organization of the Swedish educational system. We distinguish three areas that have in fact long been separate from each other. One is the teaching of upper-secondary (high-school) and older compulsory-school pupils. Another is the teaching of the younger compulsory-school pupils and a third is work with pre-school children.

The teaching of grammar school pupils (now upper-secondary, or high-school) has historical roots in the Middle Ages, and was shaped by the state during the 1700s for the education of clergy and civil servants. The elementary school (now compulsory school) was designed in the mid-1900s and tasked to provide a good Christian education for the general public. Later, the objective

was to educate the young to become citizens in a modern society and participation in democratic life. Childcare is the newest teacher practice. The state became involved relatively late in this. Childcare was initially occupied with the supervision of children with special social needs. Later, this practice developed into work with educational activities for all children.

Teacher education has lately undergone two major reforms, one in 1988 and another in 2001. Both emphasize teachers' general competence as against their diverse, specific teacher skills. The formulation of teachers' ethical codes, presented by the teacher trade unions in 2001, can also be seen as part of this generalization tendency, since the principles are formulated for teachers as a whole, as if teachers formed a homogeneous group. We claim that specific areas of knowledge have been overshadowed in the process of generalization in trade-union and educational activities. These areas are particularly important in the debate on teachers' professional ethics.

Using examples from previous research on teachers, we seek to show how the different traditions have generated different teacher rationalities, which are still relevant. We summarize what the various teacher rationalities are likely to consist of, and bring out some of the ethical values we believe that they imply.

Within the tradition of child care, a *rationality of care* has developed. Mary Montessori was prominent in this tradition. This rationality emphasizes the responsibility to ensure the uniqueness of the child and provide for its needs. The ethical challenge this rationality generates has characterized pre-school teachers' professional consciousness. Thus, their ethical responsibilities and competence lie in being able to understand the child, apprehend current needs in each situation and follow the child's physical, mental and emotional development.

In compulsory school, especially referring to the younger pupils, we can talk of a *didactic rationality of education* with an ethical emphasis on teaching, and on facilitating and stimulating the child's learning. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was a great role model during the time when the elementary school was established. He pointed out that the teacher should have a loving relationship with the pupil, but also a good method. He recommended starting with the simple and then moving on to the more complex. This approach has been one inspiration for the rationality of education. Education can logically take many forms depending on the teacher's orientation and the pupils' needs. The teacher's responsibility is to organize teaching to fit both the group and the individual child, and to lead children so that they can develop further. This requires her or him to understand their pupils' needs and follows their progress and results.

We also consider the type of rationality found mainly in upper-secondary schools, a *subject-focused rationality of education*. The professional emphasis here is on mediating a specific kind of knowledge. As in the other rationalities, this may be considered in terms of ensuring pupils' needs first and foremost. A teacher who is convinced of the value of a certain subject will endeavor to give each pupil equally an opportunity to learn these skills. In the rationality of care, the child's needs are unique and unpredictable, while in subject-oriented

rationality they are specific and predetermined, as is the teacher's assignment. The teacher's ethical responsibility is to offer pupils a particular body of knowledge. This also requires the teacher to maintain his or her own subject knowledge by following the relevant latest developments or research.

Generally formulated ethical principles applicable to all teachers suggest that teachers constitute a homogeneous group. However, we believe that such a set of principles cannot serve all teacher groups in need of ethical guidance. The principles involved require further discussion. This must take account of real situations and real teaching practices. What does it mean, for example, within these three different rationalities, to have the child or pupil in the center? What does it mean to »support students' right to influence«, as the ethical code states? Has a small, angry preschool child the same right as a secondary-school pupil to take responsibility for his or her own behavior? And is it equally relevant in upper-secondary school as in compulsory school to put studies on hold to focus on pupils' relationships with each other, or their private lives?

We believe that the three parallel rationalities are worth bearing in mind in discussions of ethics among teachers. It is important to understand why different types of teacher give priority to different values and actions in their daily lives. Knowledge of the three rationalities can provide guidance in ethically difficult situations where one must choose one task before another, or one responsibility before another. Thus, it is important to consider who the teacher meets in his or her profession, and what primary task he or she has. The teacher's job and commitment are multifaceted, as are the problems and possibilities for action they encounter in their work.

We perhaps tend to forget about the specific skills and tasks of the different teacher groups. This is especially obvious in the ethical debate and especially important in teacher education, where the foundations for professional ethical thinking should be laid. The substantial variation that exists between different types of teacher in different types of learning practice and tradition has received little mention in the debate on teachers' professional ethics. The ethical debate would benefit from clarifying the different rationalities of the teacher groups and their proven experience.