

English summaries

Bengt Abrahamsson, Gunnar Berg & Erik Wallin, 1999: Perspectives on organisations and curricula: toward a theory of the school as an institution / Organisations- och läroplansperspektiv: På väg mot en institutionsteori om skolan/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 4, No 2, pp 145–161. Stockholm ISSN 1401-6788.

During the last three decades we have been engaged in research focusing the school as an organisation. This focus has gradually moved towards a combined organisational and institutional prospective. In this article we elucidate some characteristics of this perspective and argue for the presence of an affinity between it and curriculum theory as it is grounded by Dahllöf in frame factor theory. The primary aim of the article is to contribute to the educational discourse by relating two perspectives to each other.

Generally an institution may be characterised as a sanctioned establishment. Many perspectives on institutions have their base in functionalistic theories. We see an advantage in a structuralistic perspective as it opens for an organisational theory that pays attention to those interests that motivate and surround the organisation and its existence. An institution can be said to be built on interest group related value bases in this perspective. These have societal sanction and are thus given general acceptance as systems of aims and rules for the operative level.

In its Greek origin, organisation means tool or instrument for performing a certain task. The basic perspectives of institutional theory, functionalistic and structuralistic, have their organisation compatible with a neo-rational perspective of organisations. This is as follows: An institution is a systematically established body of persons with the aim to achieve certain aims.

When the school is studied empirically as an institution an attempt is made to find the values that in a general sense define its base. When the school is studied as an organisation the primary focus is on (i) how a school fulfils its mission according to the mandators' intentions and (ii) the local values establishing a local school culture. This allows us to discuss possible interfaces between the institutional perspective of the school and a curriculum theory perspective.

Frame factor theory is the base of the curriculum theory perspective that we consider as having features relating to a neo-rational perspective of the school. In Sweden, curriculum has mostly been considered as synonymous with State documents for the governing of the school. In this context, curriculum is studied with different foci. One is with a focus on the principles behind the

selection of knowledge to be transmitted and the values that determine the curriculum text. Another is with focus on the process of developing a curriculum document and yet another is the focus on the curriculum text as an instrument for governing the school. These foci, by themselves, do not open up for an analysis of the school as an institution from the perspectives of curriculum theory and organisational theory. The concept of curriculum code used by Lundgren and Englund does. This expresses principles behind Swedish curriculum texts that might also be worked in terms of the institutional concept of value bases.

An important common denominator for curriculum theory and school institutional studies is a knowledge interest directed at scrutinising and finding principles (both historical and present day) that contribute to the further growth of and insights into curricula as social constructs. This defines a most interesting affinity between, on the one hand, the neo-rational institutional and organisational perspective referred to above and, on the other hand, the curriculum theory perspective based on frame factor theory. The affinity and similarity between these perspectives are evident both as regards choice of research object and knowledge interest and regarding conceptual frames to be used in the research. As to the first mentioned aspects of research, the societal and state-induced governing of the schools are of the same high priority irrespective of which of the two perspectives are the point of departure for research. The interest of the researcher with roots in the institutional and organisational perspective is focused on the interests and interest groups that determine what is actually going on in schools. The interest of the curriculum theory researcher could be to find out what the principles are behind the development and change over time. This interest has given Swedish curriculum theory research an orientation towards educational history.

Ingrid Heyman, 1999: A self-reflexive dimension in scientific work /En självreflexiv dimension i vetenskapligt arbete/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 4, No 2, pp 162–180. Stockholm ISSN 1401-6788.

Pierre Bourdieu began to claim the significance of epistemological reflection already in the end of the 1960's. In his inaugural lecture, delivered at the Collège de France in 1982, Bourdieu made his standpoint very clear concerning epistemological vigilance and reflective thinking. Among other things, he stressed that reflection must contain a systematic scrutiny of »the unthought categories of thought which limit the thinkable and pre-determine what is actually thought» (1989 p. 178).

In this article I have reconsidered and revisited the historical conditions which influenced three pieces of scientific work which I published in 1987,

1995 and 1998. However, the main focus of the article is a presentation of a part of Bourdieu's epistemological programme.

The tool of analysis emanates from Pierre Bourdieu's socio-analytical programme. Loic Wacquant (1992 p. 2 ff) has discussed this programme and consequently formulated three questions. In the present context, I restrict my attention to the third of these three questions.

- What forces drive a researcher to study the object she has chosen to study?
- What makes a researcher observe what she really observes? What about her social origin and co-ordinates (class, ethnicity, gender, etc.)? What about the position the analyst holds in the micro-cosms of the academic field, and beyond that – in the field of power?
- What consequences does the intellectual bias bring about? This bias entices us to construe the world as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically. According to Wacquant this kind of bias is more profound and more distorting than those rooted in social origin or position in the academic field, because we tend to totally miss the specific features of the practice.

Social scientists frequently claim that knowledge is construed in the space between the researcher and her object. She has a preunderstanding, an experience, a history, she has a kind of appreciation and view of the world, which influences her ability to perceive her own system of categorisation and her structure of thought. All these components have been incorporated during the life of the researcher. These components can be looked upon as her acquired dispositions, dispositions that force her to make exactly the choices she has actually made. If knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and dependent upon the dispositions of the researcher, this is a central area to focus and to reflect upon.

In *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988 p. 13) we can read that

[A]ny position adopted towards the social world orders and organises itself from a certain position in the world, that is to say from the viewpoint of the preservation and augmentation of the power associated with this position.

The position people take in a social field is connected with the resources and dispositions of the individuals. Every single person has a set of dispositions formed by the historical and social conditions at hand – something brought about by our ancestors – close kin, as well as the existing traditions in the social groups we belong to – these dispositions must be contemplated and discussed.

Bourdieu expressed this as follows:

In each one of us, in differing degrees, is contained the person we were yesterday, and indeed, in the nature of things it is even true that our past personae predominate in us, since the present is necessarily insignificant when compared with the long period of the past because

of which we have emerged in the form we have today. It is just that we don't directly feel the influence of these past selves precisely because they are so deeply rooted within us. They constitute the unconscious part of ourselves. (Bourdieu 1990 p. 56)

Of course, the scientific habitus of a researcher is formed in her practice – anything else is impossible. Theoretical perspectives and tools are chiselled in the concrete scientific work in collaboration with colleagues and in contrast to other scientific perspectives.

Whenever we meet a person for the first time, we get to know different things about her – place of birth, interests, working conditions, number of children, etc. When we classify her, her way of moving, gesticulation, modulation of voice, her choice of words, etc. give distinct information. This kind of classification belongs to everyday life, and is rich enough in cues to treat the person in the most appropriate way.

Researchers, working with large groups of individuals, sometimes need to classify them in a small amount of categories. Different social groups have been construed with the point of departure in people's work, salary, education, etcetera.

Different systems of categorisation have different conditions of origin and have also different fields of application. It is very important not to forget these differences. If one does, then complications arise. Practitioners and researchers have their residence in different locations. A researcher has to have free time for thinking. She picks up a certain competence during a long post-graduate education, based on free time – *skholè*. Whenever we fail to subject to systematic critique the »presuppositions inscribed in the fact of thinking the world, of retiring from the world and from action in the world in order to think that action« (Bourdieu 1990 p. 382), we risk collapsing practical logic into theoretical logic. Thoughts coming up, have their origin in a certain academic universe; they tend to consolidate in the *Denkkollektiv* (Fleck 1997) where they belong and they are seen as perfectly natural as time goes by.

In this article, I have claimed the necessity of close observation of the relation between an analyst and her objects. It is quite obvious that my positions, external as well as internal in the academic field, have had an impact on my perspective. As a teacher, a doctoral student or as a newly graduated doctor of philosophy, I have had different positions, which have had an impact on the choices I made in scientific questions. In every single position, it is possible to choose in different ways. The choices I have made have, of course, been influenced by the researchers I have collaborated with and their competencies, by my wish to be looked upon as a talented teacher, a doctoral student, ready to learn, or a researcher who contributes to the scientific production in a research group. Such desires have to do with power and influence – a desire not easy to concede officially.

My conclusion is that it is not enough to account for the positions taken and their consequences. Epistemic reflexivity must be part of the practice of research. It is a necessity for analysts to contemplate why they think and act as

they do. The most important result of reflecting on your work is the changes in research practice which ensue.

If researchers replace the logic of practice with a logic, construed in an academic universe, they fail to take the practice earnestly, and, therefore, can never understand it. If, on the other hand, a reader or a layman, replaces the scientific construction by everyday knowledge, she can never reach scientific insights. The phenomenon under scrutiny exists in both worlds but is governed by different logics and rationalities. Thus, scientific knowledge and everyday knowledge are of different kinds and cannot easily be transferred, some sort of »translation» between them is necessary. Such an insight is basic and has profound consequences for the co-operation between practitioners and scientists. The fact that contamination often occurs, has to do with the social construction of knowledge. We are all, as individuals, imprisoned in the systems of categorisations where we live, are shaped and educated.

Birgitta Davidsson, 1999: Separate and joint worlds: Two teachers' perspective on integrated preschool-school activity /Skilda och gemensamma världar: Två lärares perspektiv på integrerad förskola-skolaverksamhet/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 4, No 2, pp 181–197. Stockholm ISSN 1401-6788.

The background for an ongoing study, of which parts are presented in this article, is the debate during the 1990s on problems related to efforts in integrating pre-school and compulsory school. One of the major issues in the debate has been the question of what constitutes an integrated practice. In the first common Swedish curriculum for pre-school and compulsory school (Lpo 94 1998) it is stated that in an integrated practice the two educational traditions should complement each other in order to develop a new pedagogical practice. This is assumed to come about through contributions from the teachers and their specific professional competence, but also through mutual influences from both traditions.

One of the aims in the present study, is to identify conditions, which support or restrain the construction of such a new integrated practice. A second aim is to identify how teachers' representations of the new practice change during a period of co-operation. It is assumed that a process of change takes place at an individual as well as at a group level.

In the study, one teacher-team (two teachers) was followed during a two month period on an effort to elaborate and develop methods and a theoretical perspective. Data was collected by participant field observations, by individual interviews and group-interviews, and by narratives. The narratives were written before the observations started. The data was analysed in order to discern the teachers' representation of integration.

The interpretations and analyses were based on a socio-cultural research approach, mainly following the theory of social representations. According to Serge Moscovici a social representation is defined as »a system of values, ideas and practices» which is shared by members in specific social groups and which is constructed, confirmed and developed through interaction among group members. Social representations establish a consensual order among phenomena and they enable communication between group-members by providing them with a code for social exchange. The function of social representations is to make unfamiliar objects, events or ideas familiar and useful in communication and in collective understanding of the world. For a social group, social representations constitute a network of concepts through which the group members make sense and elaborate meaning. A social representation is a socially developed and shared form of knowledge and it influences the image of the reality, which is socially constructed in a group. Furthermore a social representation concerns how persons think about certain social phenomena and how they act in relation to this. According to Farr social representations constitute a social reality, which can influence individual as well as collective behaviour.

The results of the study indicate that the social representations of integrated educational practice, shared by the two teachers, are constituted in a negotiated contract based on each teacher's professional knowledge about six- and seven-year-old children and their development. This unique knowledge, constitutes each teacher's professional identity and seems to be one major element in the process of integration of pre-school and compulsory school practice. These results can be interpreted as based on fortifications of the two involved educational traditions of pre-school and compulsory school.

According to the results of the analyses, some areas have been identified which indicate specific contents in the teachers' representations of integration. These domains are; notions about their competence; notions about the children; notions about instructional content and methods. The domains are constituted by negotiations and expressed in a pedagogic contract. Furthermore the results show that the teachers' notions about the integrated practice are somewhat contradictory, in that the social representations contain ideas of both integration and separation. The teachers' traditional knowledge about children's learning and development seems to recognise the two teachers' professions as well as it constitutes the united practice. The competence as revealed in the contract, seems to be situated and expressed through »children of the right age and with the right instructional content». This separation of unique knowledge is the fundament in the social representations and in the pedagogical contract and seems to be based upon the two earlier traditions, in pre-school and compulsory school. The educational mission is interpreted as creating a professional practice which gives space for common as well as separate worlds.

Paula Berntsson, 1999: The curriculum of pre-school and the professionalisation of preschool teachers /Förskolans läroplan och förskollärares professionalisering/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 4, No 2, pp 198–211. Stockholm ISSN 1401-6788.

In 1998 the pre-school in Sweden obtained its first National Curriculum—Läroplan för förskolan, Lpf-98. (The designation preschool refers to what earlier were called day-care centers). The aim of this article is to discuss the preschool curriculum in relation to the professionalization of preschool teachers. In the article different theories of professions are presented. They describe professionalization and professions in partly different ways. However, they are agreed that there is an important relation between knowledge and professionalization. They also agree that a profession is an occupational group with specialist knowledge, often one that requires special formal education and examination.

In theories of professions a monopoly of knowledge, a monopoly of exercising an occupation, the enjoyment of autonomy in the exercise of an occupation, trust in an occupational group, and the value and usefulness of the work of the occupational group are mentioned as important aspects of professionalization. In the article, the preschool curriculum is discussed in relation to these dimensions of professionalization.

The preschool curriculum focuses on the pedagogical function of preschool. Preschool also has a caring function. Very often, attention is paid mostly to the caring dimension of preschool. If the function of preschool is looked upon as taking over the role of parents as care-providers, then preschool teachers can hardly claim to possess any more special skill and knowledge than parents usually have acquired. In other words, according to the theories of professions the caring function cannot be referred to when preschool teachers are laying claim to a professional status.

The pedagogical function of preschool, on the other hand, I argue, is of great importance in the professionalization of preschool teachers. As mentioned above, in theories of professions the knowledge of an occupational group is highly important in its struggle for a professional status. Different kinds of knowledge are valued differently. Scientific and technical knowledge is more highly valued than pedagogical knowledge. This is important, but the aim of the article is not to develop the latter discussion further but to point to the fact that the accomplishment of the pedagogical goals of preschool require certain theoretical, practical and personality-related qualifications. The article focuses on theoretical knowledge since in the theories of professionalization theoretical knowledge is most important. Abbott as well as Macdonald argue that abstract knowledge is a significant characteristic of a profession.

A monopoly of knowledge is important in the struggle for a professional status. My opinion is that preschool teachers have a monopoly of preschool-pedagogical knowledge. Not only a monopoly of knowledge but also a monopoly of occupational control is essential in the professionalization of an occupational group. Macdonald talks about the professional project and argues: »Social closure is one of the most important means by which the

professional project is pursued ... The occupation and its organization attempts to close access to the occupation ... only ›eligibles‹ will be admitted». The theories of professions pay attention to different occupational closure strategies. In the article exclusionary, inclusionary, demarcationary and dual closure strategies are described.

Preschool teachers work in teams together with nursery nurses. The education of preschool teachers and nursery nurses differ. Preschool teachers are university-trained and among other things their education includes pedagogy and methodology. Nursery nurses do not possess this training. However, Skolverket (the Swedish National Agency for Education) decided to order preschool teachers as well as nursery nurses to be responsible for the pedagogical work in preschool. Considering the theories of professions and the discussion about monopoly of knowledge and occupational closure strategies, I argue that the decision of Skolverket implies obstacles to the professionalization of preschool teachers.

The concept of autonomy is discussed in relation partly to the fact that the curriculum is a binding regulation, partly to the fact that the curriculum prescribes parents' rights to affect and control the pedagogical activities of preschool. My opinion is that it is very important that parents have rights to affect and control the activities of preschool, but according to the theories of professions, this is also problematic.

Another aspect of professionalization concerns the relation between an occupational exercise and its usefulness. In the article I argue and exemplify that the goals of the preschool curriculum are of great advantage to society as well as to families. Above all I focus on the purposes of the curriculum to develop communicational and social competence in children and to teach them how to learn. This is knowledge that is highly valued today and therefore these purposes of the curriculum should be a resource in the professionalization of preschool teachers.

According to the theories of professions my conclusion is that the preschool curriculum and its pedagogical focus are of great importance in the professionalization of preschool teachers, but that the fact that preschool teachers as well as nursery nurses are responsible for the pedagogical function interrupts the professionalization process.