English summaries

One important trait within early childhood education in Sweden is an ambition to integrate care and education. Guiding documents for curricula maintain this ambition of forming a whole between caring and more educational elements of preschool. Learning is supposed to be promoted from a synthesis of care and education. This article offers a different view, in which caring is recognised as an aspect of education, and as such is influencing the focus, the content and the strategies for learning that teachers may approach.

Our basis, for the conception that care is a dimension of education, is grounded on the theory of the life-world. According to Merleau-Ponty the life-world is related to a perceiving subject, a subject that experiences, lives, and acts upon the world. The subject is inseparable from, as well as, in interaction with the world. Merleau-Ponty also means that our body is lived and as such central for all our being in the world. To talk about the body as lived is to emphasise the intertwined relationship of subject and body. The body forms a whole, a system, in which the physical and psychological cannot be separated.

Merleau-Ponty understands man as inter-subjective by nature. As human beings we are born into a common world. Spontaneously we are related and directed towards other people. We communicate with each other by participating in each other's worlds, by confirming or questioning each other's being. This is a dialectic communication in which subjects follow each other as two parts of one whole. It is through this interaction with others that we become able to understand each other. Thus, it is not only through words that we understand another individual, but also through her or his reactions; the other's whole being express meaning.

Our conclusion from this theory is that the meeting between life-worlds is an important foundation for education. Within an educational context the responsibility to create this meeting with the child's life-world rests upon the teacher. In this meeting the wholeness of the child, such as emotions, thoughts, senses, experiences and ways of approaching the world is understood as a unit. The meeting includes mental and emotional involvement, a concern for – a presence directed towards the child and the wholeness of the situation – in which the teacher also becomes a part. Thus, caring is also (or ought to be) an integral and ethical dimension in this educational meeting.

Caring is about involving oneself with the other, which means that the other person's experiences and needs concern me. Caring is also a mutual process that includes both the one who is caring and the one cared for. Furthermore, caring involves learning since the competence of the one cared for is supposed to broaden, to reach beyond the actual situation. In terms of learning you can say that the responsibility rests upon the teacher, being the one who carefully

points out the ways to learning, however, the response from the child is essential for the continuing interaction.

In the empirical part of the study two observations of the mealtime in two different preschools have been analysed. The aim was to study the relation between caring and education, expressed in the teachers' attitudes towards the children. The observations have been carried out in two toddler groups here called the Orange-tree respectively the Banana-grove. The research questions in focus were: How and to what extent does caring influence the teachers' attitudes and strategies? What caring situations do come about? Do teachers' and children's life-worlds meet? If so, what is expressed in this meeting? If not, what is happening?

The analyses indicate that caring is not evidently an integrated dimension in early childhood education, even if aspects of care may be part of the teachers' pedagogy. This points to the significance of studying the nature of care that teachers emphasise and towards whom this care is directed.

On the one hand the teacher from the Banana-grove seemed to act with the perspective of the child as a point of departure. She meets, engages in and supports children emotionally, mentally and bodily. The teacher is involved in a mutual interaction based on the children's preconditions. The teacher affirms and validates the children's competence, their ability to experience meaning, to have their own conceptions, senses and beliefs. Intersubjectivity and shared life-worlds seem important. Education and care becomes integrated in the teacher's pedagogy.

On the other hand the teachers from the Orange-tree appeared to be more focussed on their own life-worlds rather than the children's. Initially they seem to strive for a meeting with the children in their life-worlds, but gradually the teachers shift over to a collegial interaction. The children seem to be more or less left to their own interaction. A concern for and an engagement in the children's life-worlds are not evident in the teachers' interaction. Instead their attention is drawn towards their colleagues and the working situation. Perhaps the teachers care for and value the children's shared life-worlds in this situation, but the interaction with the children that occurs is characterised by requests and threats. In order to make the children eat, ambiguous expressions which diminish the children's competence and ability to experience meaning are directed towards the children. Caring, the way we understand it, does not seem to be a part of the teachers' pedagogy.

Our conclusion from the analyses is that the teachers have different educational aims and that their focus and emotional presence in the children's life-worlds differ. This makes caring different in form and direction. Maybe a crucial point for this lies in the teachers' approach to become part of the children's life-worlds.

Our suggestion is that the theory of the life-world, the definition of caring and the analyses of the actual interaction, as introduced here, may help to enlighten the dimension of caring in education. If care is to become an integral part of education, then teachers have to study the character of caring and how care is (or may be) rooted in education.

Local school development projects seem to be interesting alternatives to top-down initiated efforts regarding pedagogic development in school. Research results and practical experiences indicate that a close link to practice and everyday work in this kind of local projects is an important condition for the learning and competence of teachers enhancement. On the other hand there are still some frequent problems restraining the positive effects of local development projects.

Despite good intentions and ambitions, many projects and experiences tend to be isolated to one teacher or a smaller group, and after the project period nothing seems to be changed. Teachers are to a high degree pressured by conditions of limited opportunities, for example many of them experience a lack of time for discussion and joint reflection, and a lack of support from school principals. Therefore, development projects often tend to be individual activities and the local organizational structure and cultural aspects appear as constraining factors with regard to collective learning.

With a starting point in these well-known experiences, this article deals with the issue of how we can understand the problems related to collective attempts to improve collective activities. The aim is to contribute to our understanding of what local development projects mean for teachers and enhancement of everyday competence in practice. Theoretical points of departure were social action theory and contextual constructivistic theory of learning. According to such theories learning is an ongoing individual and collective construction process involving the continual transformation of action, experience, reflection and sensemaking.

This theoretical perspective includes social interaction and communicative actions in the frame of reference, thereby addressing social and contextual aspects of learning which in some respects have been neglected in earlier constructivistic theories. Accordingly, the concept of collective learning is defined as an ongoing process whereby individuals build up mutual understanding of a tentative kind, concerning tasks and events in everyday work through interaction and communicative actions. Within such a conceptual frame of reference it is appropriate to label the development project as a pedagogic intervention in the specific context of teacher work. Theoretically this perspective provides opportunities to attend to issues on how teachers organize, encounter and utilize the intervention as conditions for learning.

Data from two case studies of collective oriented development projects are reported and analyzed. The case studies were part of a large development program carried out in a Swedish municipality during 1996–99, including nearly one hundred local projects. Research methods used in the two case studies were interviews and observations of teacher team meetings. One of the two projects (Project 1) followed in the case studies was oriented towards a thematic course where teachers in different subject matters worked integrated in a teacher team. The other was a project (Project 2) where the aim was to organize all the teachers at school to work as mentors for a group of pupils. The project includes the organization of teacher teams aimed at supporting individual teachers in their daily work as mentors. In both cases the ambitions of the project leaders were to develop collective intentions and strategies where teachers in teams were supposed to support learning through collaboration.

Results show that, although teachers were committed to the main idea and intentions of the projects, the two development projects encountered resistance in practice against collaboration and formation of collective tasks. The resistance was expressed explicitly in open protests and implicitly as non reflected resistance embedded in practice. Project 2 also encountered protests from some teachers regarding the practical organization and some of the teachers avoided participating in discussions and collaboration. They described a complex work situation, where they were involved in a web of tacit, unarticulated, collective responsibility and engagement. Some of the teachers didn't see any possibilities to go beyond their own, individual task in order to participate in a collective project. As a consequence they saw the project as »an order from the boss» or as a burdensome extra task. In this project teachers worked together rather occasionally and within selective sub-groups.

In both projects the complexity of everyday work was also manifested in teachers difficulties to collectively handle what they saw as the »here-and-now» character of practice. Teachers expressed notions on competence as an ability dependent on the specific situation and personal ways of handling problems and pupils. The resistance was related to teachers ongoing constructions of their work and competence, as individual tasks and abilities. These social constructions of competence as an individual phenomenon constrain the attempts to establish team work and to build up collective tasks and strategies. Some results from Project 1, show that the involved teachers worked together in a continually joint reflection on their collaboration. In these respects they organized their work in a way which helped them to handle the resistance that was embedded in practice.

Resistance against the attempts to design and carry out collective projects can be understood in terms of two parallel ongoing organizing activities. On one hand a discursive organizing of teachers work as a collective matter, expressed through attempts to build up teacher teams and collaboration, and on the other hand a practical and implicit organizing of teachers work as an individual matter. The former includes attempts to design organizational frames and forms of collective work tasks and activities, expressed discursively as »a new way of working». The latter is a process where practical

demands and the apprehended need of personal qualities to handle specific here-and-now-situations in daily work bring forward implicit and tacit organizing activities which in some respects are taken for granted. Implicitly teachers (and leaders) thereby organize an ongoing avoidance of joint and critical reflection, based on a social construction of teachers work and competence as individual affairs. As a consequence of the parallel processes a practical resistance occurs against the discursively formed intentions.

The potential of development projects to enable collective learning and collaboration, and to handle and overcome resistance, lies in an integration of the organizing activities. When teachers, as in Project 1, continually form joint tasks and reflection, participate in argumentative conversations and joint concrete actions, they actually construct a collective action structure that enables a discursive conquest of practice. To organize so as to enable the construction of a collective action structure can be described as an important step in the effort to intervene pedagogically in teacher's practice.

Simon Wolming, 2001: To evaluate selection instruments: Some reflexions over restrictions and possibilities /Att värdera urvalsinstrument: Några reflektioner över begränsningar och möjligheter/. **Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 6, No 2, pp 122–130. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.**

Instruments used for selection to higher education have traditionally been evaluated solely on the basis of their predictive validity. The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the problems related to this approach. The article also suggests several alternatives to the traditional predictive approach.

Many validity studies have been carried out over the years, mainly focusing on the predictive validity of selection instruments. However, there are several methodological and theoretical problems related to this type of approach. One of them regards the criteria of study success or, more precisely, the variation in achievement between students. A methodological requirement is that there must be some variation within the variable used as the criterion of study success. If no variation exists, the result of a correlation will be zero.

It is well known that the variation in study results could be restricted in range by several different mechanisms. This implies that the traditional way of estimating predictive validity leads to a severe underestimation of the predictive validity of the selection instrument. For example, if a group of students all show top results, and these results are used as evaluation criteria for a predictive validity study, the result of the study could be interpreted as if the instrument does not have any predictive validity at all. On the basis of the same top results the instrument may, however, be regarded as perfect – not in terms of its predictive power, but in terms of the students' actual achievement. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that the predictive validity of a selection

instrument is often evaluated on the basis of graduation rate or the rate of the students' throughput. This situation could be called the paradox of study success.

There are several mechanisms that may influence student achievement. For example, the National Board of Student Aid requires students to complete 75 per cent of the courses during a year in order to receive further financial support. Another aspect is the grading system. Often study programmes divide the students and their achievements between the categories »pass» and »fail» only. Yet another aspect is the fact that students quite often interrupt their studies. These interruptions could have different reasons, e.g. change of study direction, employment, parenthood, studies abroad, etc. It is important to notice that such reasons do not have anything to do with poor achievement. Nevertheless, they are often interpreted in that way. All of the mechanisms mentioned contribute to the problem of range restriction within the criteria. The lack of variation makes it difficult to make valid interpretations of the predictive validity of a selection instrument.

It should also be mentioned that there are different statistical solutions to the problem of range restriction. However, even if the problem of range restriction could be solved, a »true» relation could not be shown anyway, because the predictions made will always be afflicted with errors. As already mentioned, students' results are affected by mechanisms that cannot be related to the things that the instrument is supposed to measure.

Selection to higher education is not only a matter of prediction. It could also be related to questions of fairness and relevance. Validity investigations must therefore be based upon a much broader perspective. For example, selection instruments must not be biased in any direction so that their use has a negative impact on the grounds of gender or ethnicity. Instruments must also be evaluated in terms of content. In this context, the views among students and within study programmes are crucial.

To sum up, the evaluation of a selection instrument must be based on a variety of approaches. As shown in this article, several mechanisms affect the possibilities to make a valid interpretation of the relation between the instrument and students' subsequent success. Thus, evidence of predictive validity is not alone sufficient as evidence of the value of a selection instrument.