

## English summaries

**Ann-Christine Wennergren, 2007: Web-based dialogues for school improvement /Nätbaserade utvecklingsdialoger/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 11, No 4, pp 241–265. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788**

Pupils with hearing impairment from five regions in Sweden have been gathered in schools where one municipality hosts pupils from several municipalities. In order to pursue school development in collaboration among these schools, a national school development project was started and designed to have an action research approach. Different attempts at change were implemented and communicated among the schools in physical and net-based meetings. The aim of this paper is to illustrate the communication that developed via the Internet when a school development group exchanged experiences in writing of their classroom-based attempts at change.

In previous studies of the learning environment for hard of hearing pupils, a specific communication pattern developed based on traditional technological solutions. When a pupil wanted to speak, s/he was supposed to activate her/his desk microphone by at the same time pressing a button. By not pressing the button, the classmates were excluded from listening. Video analyses showed that pupils who did not want to risk misunderstanding in listening situations preferred to address the teacher rather than their classmates, which resulted in the conversations being largely conducted between the teacher and one pupil. This pattern supported a kind of non-communicative mediation pedagogy and was permeated by teacher-controlled turn-taking, a form of recitation where the individual pupil was expected to know short facts that could be presented when the teacher asked questions.

In the three-year national action research project that has been the basis of the study, the idea was to conduct the change efforts in collaboration among schools in spite of their geographical spread. In practice this meant that the collaboration took place in mixed development groups for the teachers who volunteered to participate. The groups met once per semester, and in between, the teachers' exchanged experiences based on written communication. For this purpose a net-based community of practice was available in which six female teachers and their supervisor were included.

The study's theoretical perspective is based on Bakhtin (1981) and Vygotsky (1999) and shows a connection with practical applications implemented by Dysthe (1996) and Hoel (2001). In sociocultural perspectives, interaction and cooperation are regarded as totally decisive for participation and learning in

social practices. Bakhtin emphasises three aspects of dialogue: that all understanding is active and social, that I meet myself through others, and that the difference between different voices constitutes a learning potential. Language is a central tool of a view in which meaning, knowledge and understanding are created through interaction. In the paper there are also some points in common with Wenger's theory of learning (1998) as social participation in a community of practice. Action rather than linguistic interaction is central in this theory, which is well in accord with learning that is made visible during an action research process.

In a net-based learning dialogue it is important to support one another with both confirmation and challenge, which means different forms of scaffolding. To be a part of scaffolding means to guide, or be guided, by a colleague in a special context for the purpose of assuming a critical role. The importance of having mutual confidence in each other is crucial for being conceived as a »critical friend«. The concept of the zone of proximal development (zpd) makes visible the difference between what people can already do and what they can achieve with the help and guidance of others (Vygotsky 1999). When scaffolding is practised in the zpd, colleagues can be each other's critical friends in a collective context. Giving response between colleagues is not self-evidently about the response required in the zpd. Teachers who have no experience of giving response to a colleague can easily end up on a level that only confirms and does not give any challenges. That type of response may be described in terms of being outside the zpd.

The project was implemented through an action research process in which the development groups searched for knowledge about and in their own practice. In this way the »taken-for-grantednesses« could be problemised, accustomed patterns be challenged and actions be reconsidered. Two types of text were included as data: the participants' 178 written contributions via the Internet during approximately two years and their reflections on their learning processes, which were presented on four occasions. The analysis was guided by two questions: How did the net-based communication start and develop and what characterizes the communication that was expressed in the participants' contributions?

The results were presented in three types of contributions: social, experiential and response-based contributions. Exchanging classroom experiences in writing with feedback in the form of responses was an exploratory activity. The cyclic processes of action research in the form of planning and actions proved to be an appropriate method. The participants were engaged in three development processes: one concerning technology, one interpersonal relations, and one knowledge development. All the participants were active in the web community but in different ways. The relational and the professional exchanges were mutually dependent on each other. The social commitment was often the driving force for visiting the Internet in order to read and sometimes to write some form of contribution. The enhanced understanding of the participants' own practices is based on group relations and opportunities to reflect practices. The importance of being gradually able to develop from peripheral to full members of a community of practice is made clear. All

the contributions showed different reactions influenced by the teacher herself, by other participants or by literature. Since reactions were interspersed in the participants' own writings, their internal dialogues were also made visible. Initially the participants had a low degree of recipient awareness and hence did not utilize the full potential of emphasising the difference among different voices and giving response by building further on or contradict opinion. Hence the response was not always of the nature required for development in the zpd.

In view of the supervisor's affiliation with the university, the communicative situation was not symmetrical but it was democratic, in the sense that all voices were heard. The study is judged to have democratic validity, which signifies a study where everybody affected by the issues were involved and where everybody's perspective was taken into consideration. Their commitment has evidently influenced the participants; from taking a rather passive attitude to changes in the beginning, they started to question traditions to do with furniture, technical equipment or accustomed communication patterns.

The study shows that trust in one another's writings successively creates a breeding ground for a reflecting attitude where obvious influential factors have been: time, motivation, recipient competence and scaffolding. The most important experience of participating in this net-based community of practice was the insight that writing among colleagues was a useful tool for developing classroom work in collaboration among schools. For small practices, connected to special needs education, this may be a valuable way for school improvement.

**Stefan Sellbjer : Changes in subject matter in pedagogy at the turn of the 20th century /Förändringar i pedagogikundervisningens innehåll under 1900-talets slut/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 11, No 4, pp 266–290. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788**

The interest for pedagogy as a discipline accentuates the need for research to create a better understanding of the discipline's development. The purpose of this article is to contribute to a better understanding of the changes within the discipline in the light of course literature. The article is part of a research project that endeavours to outline the discipline by the activities that constitute it. These activities comprise research, education and other constituents.

The study is unique in so far that extensive empirical material has been collected and analysed. A major part of what has hitherto been said about pedagogy's development in Sweden has been based on personal observations made by central figures in the discipline. The study is limited to the six »old» universities and to undergraduate courses in pedagogy (at present these courses are called *Pedagogik A–C*, but are subject to changes in the near future

due to the so-called Bologna process) for the years of 1975, 1980, 1990 and 2000. Undergraduate courses worth 1,164 credit points (academic credit points according to the pre-Bologna Swedish academic system, in the ECTS-system of today = 1,746) have been included in this study. About 890 articles and books stipulated in the course plans have been considered out of which 740 have been categorised. The remaining 150 texts containing less than 25 pages are included in other parts of the study.

The literature is specified by way of applying four different methods. The first two methods are quantitative and the other two methods are of a qualitative nature. The application of complementary methods has no doubt contributed to the reliability of this study.

The first method consists of sorting words by titles. This means that all the words in titles, including subtitles for 1975, 1980 etc, are registered and classified in alphabetical order on a list so that the most frequent title words for each year can be counted. The list is organised by means of alphabetical frequency with the words registered in abbreviated form. One example for this is the word »psyk» (»psyk» in this case would be »psych» in a similar study in English; all other Swedish abbreviations are translated accordingly) under which all words that begin with these letters are sorted, e.g. »psykologi» (psychology), »psykisk» (psychological) and »psykolog» (psychologist).

The analysis indicates that »psyk» declines successively and finally disappears entirely for the year 2000, »beteende» (behaviour) discontinues in 1980, while »människ/mänsk» (human/hum) increases in 1990. An interpretation of this is that psychology, especially the behaviouristic field, paves the way for other possible modes of argumentation on human nature. »Kvalit» (quali) appears as of 1990 on the list, at the same time as »perspektiv» (perspective) strongly advances in 2000. Yet, »statistik» (statistics) prevails in 2000 as well.

In all likelihood these changes illustrate, amongst other things, a successive transition from quantitative to qualitative, as far as research methods are concerned, with a variety of ways in which to examine the world becoming increasingly interesting. Moreover, the pedagogy of 1980 becomes more theoretically oriented with an enhanced awareness of perspective. Further tendencies are that the term »inlärning» is substituted by »lärande» («inlärning» has its focus on the learner's cognitive abilities whereas »lärande» is a far more general term including entire processes of learning and with no particular focus on the learner), both meaning learning, and the term »undervisning» (classroom education) vanishes as of 1990. Perhaps this indicates a transition from a more traditional perspective on learning towards a constructivist one.

A second method is to find out which of the books are most used in the respective year. A book on statistics by Byström, *Grundkurs i statistik*, tops the list between 1975 and 1990, to be replaced in 2000 by a book on qualitative methods by Kvale, *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun*. As is the case with the analysis in the method previously mentioned, this method indicates the decrease of psychology, the increase of qualitative research as well as the continuity of statistics.

There is also an increase in the theory of science and a decline in teaching and learning, the latter in the sense of »inlärning» as was earlier explained here. Some novelties are the increase in the sociology of education and philosophy in 1980 and philosophy's return in 2000 after it had disappeared in 1990. Another novelty is that Marxist/critical theory decreases in 1990. Furthermore, an increasing number of books show a connectedness to method, theory of science and report writing.

In the methods described below, course literature is categorised by means of summaries of what pedagogy can be, namely Dahllöf's (1992) »Pedagogiska hus» (»House of Pedagogy») and a somewhat extended version of the model presented in an evaluation of pedagogical research in Sweden which was initiated by the HSFR (The Swedish Council of Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences; Rosengren & Öhngren 1997). From each and every one of these categorisations, the three categories that are most representative of the texts in relation to their subject matter are chosen.

A categorisation based on the House of Pedagogy is made without omitting or adding any categories. The results of the preceding analyses have to a large extent no relevant interconnection with the new landscape that unfolds as a result of this third method, owing to a broad definition of pedagogy. Even so, it can be related to what happens around 1980. The analysis clearly indicates the temporary increase of philosophy and the sociology of education.

Some other novelties are a temporary decline in »aktörsförutsättningar» (premises for agency) and »organisatoriska ramar» (organisational frameworks) 1980, with a subsequent, successive increase of these categories. The increase of »pedagogisk process» (pedagogical process) is discernible in 2000. »Elever» (pupils) as long as they are mentioned as a group are increasingly noticed in 1990 and 2000, whereas »samhällsinstitutioner» (societal institutions), diminishes between 1975 and 1990.

Since the intent of HSFR's evaluation was to give an overview of pedagogic research, the model is complemented on the basis of a test categorisation with yet nine additional categories. Apart from that, the categorisation is organised parallel to the immediate, preceding one and in the same fashion. The analyses that were earlier presented obviously point to a shift in focus from quantity to quality in the years between 1975 and 2000 in terms of method, outlook on people as well as theoretical points of departure. The analysis based on HSFR's model shows that the transition from an excess of quantity to an excess of quality takes places at around 1985.

Two more aspects of this change from quantity to quality can also be seen in the material, namely psychometry's and experimental method's drastic decline as well as a growing interest in the theory of science and philosophy. Another, more overarching tendency, is psychology's strong decline as well as sociology's increase. From a position of total dominance in 1975, psychology decreases by five sixths in 2000, while sociology increases by almost 100 per cent over the same period of time.

On the basis of the research material, it lies close at hand to interpret pedagogy as a discipline lacking in identity or, if one so wishes, as multifaceted and diverse, congruent with the discipline's expansion. Firstly, this can

be illustrated by looking at the development of a »pedagogic canon«, i.e. to what extent the same texts appear in several courses and at several universities. The analysis shows that the pedagogic canon, excluding method etc., has decreased by 74 per cent between 1975 and 2000. This means that it has become 74 per cent more difficult to guess which book emerges as the most frequent one.

Secondly, method, theory of science and report writing has over the same period of time increased from 1/4 to 1/3 of the subject matter. A third aspect concerns the Marxist influence on pedagogy where texts relating to Marxism and critical analysis in 1980 make up for entire 8,6 percent of all literature. Fourthly, texts relating to curriculum theory, frame factor theory, phenomenography, didactics and language had little impact on pedagogy. Their impact is far below the Marxist »frenzy« in 1980.

Those attempting to follow tendencies in 2000 could have claimed that post-modernist and gender-related issues were the most sought after ones within social science as a whole. Thus, a fifth argument for pedagogy's lack of identity, or diversification, can be formulated insofar that it is exactly these subject matters that gain most ground within pedagogy between 1990 and 2000. A sixth argument concerns the fact that texts relating to international circumstances, comparative studies and history have successively declined.

Lastly and with reserve, a brief outline is drawn of paradigm. Paradigm here relates to Kuhn's (1970) definition of the term, i.e. a number of overarching theories, conceptions of methods as well as values commonly shared by a group of researchers, determining practice. The categorisations in my study point towards four identifiable paradigms; a neo-behaviouristic paradigm that is losing ground, a hermeneutic paradigm that had been increasing up to 1990, a critical-theoretical paradigm that saw its best year in 1980 as well as a postmodernist paradigm that took off at some point between the years 1990 and 2000.