

English summary

Henrik Nordvall & Pelle Åberg: The folk high school as a myth: Global dissemination and utilization of Nordic popular education ideas/ Folkögskolan som myt: Om global spridning och användning av nordiska folkbildningsidéer/? *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 1–17. Stockholm: ISSN 1401-6788

Educational institutions referring to Nordic folk high schools as role models exist across the world. In this article, the dissemination of ideas and institutions connected to the folk high school is discussed with the aid of neo-institutional organizational theory. The article builds on a survey of existing literature in which three ideal-typical dissemination patterns concerning folk high school ideas are discerned: (1) *migration* (Nordic emigrants who have founded schools), (2) *inspiration* (non-Nordic actors who have »discovered» the folk high school and founded domestic equivalents), and (3) *export* (the active dissemination of folk high school ideas by Nordic actors).

These three patterns are developed and illustrated in the article by focusing on concrete examples. The dissemination pattern of migration is illustrated by the early folk high schools, established by Nordic emigrants, in North and South America. The Japanese private university Tokai and the stronghold of the American civil rights movement, Highlander folk school, are presented as examples of how folk high school ideas have spread by inspiration. Lastly, export is illustrated using the Gonobidyalaya schools in Bangladesh and the Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania where Danish and Swedish actors and donor agencies, respectively, attempted to assist the establishment of institutions similar to Nordic folk high schools.

The study of these dissemination processes using analytical tools from neo-institutional theory is discussed in the article. Especially the concept of myths occupies a central position. Myths from this perspective are understood as collective notions and socially constructed norms in the institutional context concerning how organizations should be organized and act. It is important for actors and organizations to relate to such myths to gain legitimacy.

The folk high school tradition can be understood as such a myth concerning how educational arrangements can and should be organized. However, this does not concern an unambiguous or easily discernible notion, but rather a multifaceted tradition incorporating both concrete and diffuse elements. Thus, the point of departure for the analysis is not the »real» praxis of Nordic folk high schools but how notions and ideals operate, are used, translated and

connected to diverse activities, which are legitimated by referring to the myth of the folk high school.

In neo-institutional theory, the concept of *translation* is also used to describe and analyze a process of dissemination. It emphasizes the importance of local actors and their role in editing and translating the ideas and models disseminated to fit it into a new context. In several of the examples addressed in this article it appears that this kind of process has taken place. Local actors have adjusted and adapted ideas of folk high schools to build institutions that work in an organizational context different to the Nordic context.

For instance, the development of Tokai University in Japan demonstrates how folk high school ideas have been used while the institution has been built up more closely related to the formal educational system than would traditionally be viewed as natural in the Nordic countries. Thus, dissemination may not always have led to any greater impact on actual activities. Instead, it may concern a process of decoupling between rhetoric and practice where the connection to Nordic folk high schools is primarily of importance as a way for organizations to gain legitimacy.

The establishment of Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania resembles the conventional pattern of dissemination noted in research on »educational transfer«, i.e. the kind of policy process where actors in a nation-state implement an educational model that exists in another country. The other cases mentioned above exhibit connections to both social movements and individual entrepreneurs. The development of both Tokai University and the Highlander folk school were initiated by individuals who »discovered« and subsequently implemented ideas of folk high schools, even though they developed differently. Tokai was constructed as a private university, integrated with the formal educational system. Highlander, on the other hand, was integrated in a movement context, connected with political activism, and was for a time branded subversive by the local authorities and was forced to close.

The unpredictability of the outcome of the dissemination of the folk high school myth appears to be significant. That is in itself an argument for further studies of the dissemination of folk high school ideas not using a notion of an inherent core of stable meanings taking on different guises in different contexts as their point of departure. Rather, it is possible to observe how the folk high school, as a myth, attracts actors around the world. This myth is used and reinterpreted to legitimate various activities; activities that have attracted international interest whereas Swedish pedagogical research has hardly paid them any attention at all.

Silwa Claesson, Henrik Hallström, Wilhelm Kardemark, Signild Risénfors: Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics in relation to empirical studies/ Ricoeurs kritiska hermeneutik vid empiriska studier/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 18–35. Stockholm: ISSN 1401-6788

Paul Ricoeur, who was a philosopher rooted in phenomenology as well as in structuralism, is used here for illuminating and understanding the empirical data. This article will focus on three different examples of empirical data in order to elaborate different aspects of interpretation. For each example, some aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy is explored for the purpose of finding the most fruitful base for each of the analyses.

In an interview study among young people who were asked about their expectations about the future, all of them began to talk about their own history. Their identities, formed by history, also shaped their way to talk about their future. The interviews are illuminated and understood by Ricoeur's writings on time. We interpret the way they talk by using two terms inspired by Ricoeur; *yet* and *not yet*.

The differences between what it means »to understand» and »to explain» within research has long been associated with two different research traditions, science and human science; traditions seen as incompatible with each other. Instead Ricoeur uses »to understand» and »to explain» as two components in a field of tension. He argues that to explain, as well as to understand, are equally needed in all research. In this article this field of tension is used to interpret a hundred year old text about the meaning of health.

The third example focuses on transcription of a recorded dialogue between young people in upper secondary school and their teacher, during a lab in Physics. The issue we bring up in this example regards the kind of transcription necessary for interpretation. Ricoeur's discussion about the relation between a text and the reader helps us to understand how to handle the dialogue. In this case the recorded speech is brought to foreground, which means that listening; to return to the original recording, appears to be essential.

All research involves interpretation, and in this article the interpretation has been focused and discussed in relation to different kinds of empirical data. Ricoeur used both phenomenological, modern as well as postmodern, philosophy to understand different phenomena. To use Ricoeur in the process of interpretation means, therefore, to open up for many possibilities in dealing with complex empirical data. This means that to use Ricoeur is not to use ready-made concepts. Instead there are multiple possibilities if one firstly reads Ricoeur, and secondly adapts an aspect of his philosophy, which is able to develop the idea of a unique empirical study.

Catarina Schmidt & Bernt Gustavsson: Literacy as praxis of meaning making/ Läsande och skrivande som tolkning och förståelse: Skriftspråk som menings-skapande literacypraxis/? *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 36–51. Stockholm: ISSN 1401-6788

This article is an attempt to seek possible ways to link local ethnographies in literacy with relationships of power and institutional processes in an ever changing global world. Now, in the second decade of the 21st Century it is clear that advanced levels of literacy are in demand globally within the multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-modal sphere of education. Starting from cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives the current notion of literacy is described as pluralistic, heterogeneous and complex phenomena. Because of this NLS has challenged the dominating discourse on what literacy actually is and how one should approach it.

Children's social and cultural backgrounds along with personal experiences concerning literacy have been brought to the fore-ground and seen as having importance and value. Through the observations of ways with words and language Heath demonstrates how the linguistic, social and cultural capital of children differs. Together with Brian Street's (1993) ideological model this has challenged a de-contextualized and autonomous view of literacy.

Collectively NLS has contributed to the expansion of understanding children's literacy as well as highlighting the importance of their various linguistic resources and experiences. Shirley Heath's (1983) study not only shows different lingual and cultural differences between groups in relation to class and ethnicity, it also captures a society in transformation regarding both regional and local levels.

According to Hilary Janks (2010) the next step is to describe the relation between vernacular and dominant literacies. What literacy is doing with children in different contexts is, we claim, as important as understanding what children are doing with literacy in and out of school. Our aim is therefore to widen local ethnographies of literacy further to social, cultural, institutional, regional and global settings in relation to power.

Our ambition here is to present possible theoretical perspectives which allow for the understanding and research of literacy from a wider macro-perspective in relation to local levels and the conditions for meaning-making and learning. Our point of departure is that ways with words and texts are meaning making processes. The process of reading and writing is always linked to meaning making in terms of interpretation, understanding, exploring and configuration.

From a hermeneutic perspective meaning-making through literacy can be described, discussed and analyzed. Gadamer (1975) sees reading as participation of shared meaning. The interpretation in its turn opens up for a widening of horizons. Reading is, as Kress puts it, the making of new signs – which represent the world. To read the world means to participate in it. In this process meaning and understanding is created in an ongoing negotiation. In hermeneutics the relation between the acquainted and the unacquainted is

crucial. Meaning making hence requires a co-existence, an interspace, between the acquainted and the unacquainted.

The core of this transformation can be expressed in terms of mimesis; a process from a prefiguration, to a refiguration through a figuration, in terms of narratives (Ricoeur 1984). According to Gadamer the »space between« is a pre-condition for making new interpretations, which relates to Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of a *third space*. From a post-colonial perspective possibilities for meaning-making are made visible and analyzed in matters of openness, limitation or prevention. These theoretical perspectives make it possible to analyze complex contexts and narratives of literacy with more levels than the ethnographical local.