

English summaries

Anna Öhman: Upper secondary students' experiences of special needs support: Narratives of alienation and belonging

What does the provision of special educational needs actually mean to those concerned and how can their narratives be understood within perspectives of power and identity? This article reports an interview-study with upper secondary school students who have special needs. The empirical material is analyzed with a narrative approach and discussed within perspectives related to power and identity. The meanings and conceptualizations of special educational needs are complex and multifaceted. Grasping it from the participants themselves, with their unique experiences of special educational support, is thus a necessary condition. The results show that support demands much more than placement or special educational training. Teaching and learning must be provided with regards to relational aspects such as trust and security, and accessible to everyone in a variety of local contexts. By exploring students' accounts of special needs support, this study develops knowledge about special needs and support as intertwined in systems of power. Their experiences of inclusion and exclusion build identities of winners and losers. All in all, the results give insights to the importance of an understanding of treating each student with special needs as an individual subject/person (someone) and not as categorizing him/her as an object/disability (something). A framework of relational, as well as existential pedagogy that creates spaces for senses of belonging, becoming and being, is central with regards to students' special educational needs.

Nina Bergdahl: Teachers' understanding of engagement in hybrid, distance, and distance learning

Engagement and motivation are distinct phenomena, but the terms are often used overlappingly. Although teachers' perceptions of students' engagement influence both how teachers interact with students and students' grades, little is known of how teachers understand and view students' engagement,

especially when learning takes place online. Through Mixed Method Grounded Theory this study examines teachers' understanding of students' engagement and disengagement in digital learning environments. 12 teachers who regularly offer hybrid, remote or distance education in primary, secondary and adult education were interviewed twice. The results show that teachers initially favoured using the term motivation, but as they focused talked about engagement, their use of the term engagement gradually increased and their use of the term motivation decreased. Results indicate that teachers seem to seek to influence students' engagement indirectly, through motivation. The results also indicate that a focus on increasing students' motivation does not seem to support teachers to see how they design for engagement in learning. A professional language is a prerequisite for collegial dialogue, which is needed to reach an increased understanding of students' actual engagement in, or disengagement from, learning, and how insights can inform the development of their own practice and lesson design.

Jonas Aspelin: Teachers' relational competence in the interplay between 'Me' and 'I'. A conceptual discussion supported by G.H. Mead's theory

In Scandinavian educational research, teachers' ability to initiate and maintain positive, supportive relationships is often discussed in terms of 'relational competence'. For example, research has shown that- and how pre-service teachers' relational competence can be developed. However, the field is mostly characterized by empirical research, and there is a need for conceptual discussions. This article aims to contribute to the research field by discussing how teachers' relational competence can be understood and enhanced. More specifically, this article has two purposes: the first is to discuss the concept of relational competence, based on George H. Mead's social psychology and, more specifically, his concepts of 'Me' and 'I'. The discussion suggests that relational competence can be understood in terms of four perspectives: (i) concrete role-taking; (ii) abstract role-taking; (iii) a direct response to the other person's address; and (iv) the interplay between 'Me' and 'I'. The fourth perspective is then formulated as a synthesis, implying that teachers' relational competence is primarily manifested in quick or hyper-quick oscillation between 'Me' and 'I', the two aspects of interaction and the social self. Based on this conceptual discussion, the second purpose of this article is to discuss the results from three empirical studies on pre-service teachers' perceptions of relational competence. These studies reveal that the pre-service teachers' perceptions changed and developed significantly through a short intervention using video-based reflection. This article suggests that the pre-service teachers developed their perceptions by shifting from the first three perspectives on

relational competence to the fourth perspective. That is, the participants started to take on the role of the teachers in interaction depicted in the videos.

This article is structured as follows: the ‘Literature’ section presents a selection of relevant research, while the ‘Background’ section describes how the three empirical studies were designed and their results. The latter section also raises the question of how the pre-service teachers’ development could be understood. The section titled ‘Mead’s conception of the social self’ then introduces Mead’s social psychological theory, with a focus on his concepts of ‘Me’ and ‘I’. Next, under “Concept discussion”, the four perspectives are outlined. The section titled “Application of the synthesis” applies the fourth perspective to discuss the findings from the three empirical studies. Finally, theoretical and practical pedagogical implications are discussed.

Mattias Gradén and Sara Irisdotter Aldenmyr: Teachers’ Professional Practice Development with a Foundation in the Educational Sciences

According to the Swedish Education Act (Skollagen), the education system must have a solid scientific foundation, with teachers expected to base their work on current research from the field of educational sciences. One way to promote this type of system is both to make research available to teachers and to highlight the importance of research for teachers’ professional practice. In this study, we are interested in how teachers read and interpret existing research. At one school, a group was formed that comprised three teachers and two representatives from school management who worked to promote development at the school. As researchers, we selected five scholarly texts on the theme of school development and observed the group as they discussed these texts in relation to their own practice and its development.

The main aim of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of the meeting point between teachers’ practice and the different types of content in research articles. To achieve this aim, we developed a method that identifies the intertextual meeting points between research texts and experiences from teachers’ practice – that is to say, occasions in the discussions when components from the research texts meet practice-based references. In particular, we are interested in the potential that exists to develop teaching practice that has a basis in scientific research. Our method of analysis aimed to identify the central components of the research texts that the group members chose to highlight in relation to their own professional practice. In the same way, we also identified different types of discussion activities that had strong ties to the group’s current practice. When text components are activated in relation to various practice-oriented social activities, an *intertextual*

meeting point occurs. This part of the work is based on an initial open analysis of what the group said in their discussions of the five texts.

The components of the texts that appear to be central are as follows:

- *Results/Conclusions* (i.e., the presentation in the text of the results and conclusions of existing studies)
- *Context* (i.e., the conditions and circumstances within which the text was produced/what the text is dealing with at a broader level)
- *Theoretical Approach* (i.e., the scientific, theoretical or epistemological points of departure and frameworks of the text)
- *Key Concepts* (i.e., central and distinctive concepts that are used in the text)

The practice-based discussion activities that appear to be central are as follows:

- *Action Orientation* (i.e., the articulation of something that describes an action – what teachers do or should do)
- *Professional Language Development* (i.e., the articulation of something that shows a more informed way of understanding and that talks about a phenomenon or process that is already known. This language has a basis in research; deeper understanding)
- *Re-evaluation* (i.e., the articulation of an *a-ha* moment or moment of realisation; a changed understanding)
- *Common Assumptions* (i.e., the articulation of a collective opinion is reinforced – alternatively, the collective opinion is placed in juxtaposition to aspects in the text)

In a further analysis, we identified the strongest intertextual meeting points. Those that dominated the group's discussions are as follows:

- *Results/Conclusions meet Action Orientation, A1-B1*. Here, participants refer to the text component "results or conclusions" in relation to a discussion or reasoning about their own practice as teachers and to how they should act.
- *Results/Conclusions meet Professional Language Development, A1-B2*. Here, participants refer to the text component "results or conclusions" and in so doing develop their professional language by demonstrating an enriched way of understanding and talking about something that is already known to them.
- *Results/conclusions meet Common Assumptions, A1-B4*. Here, participants refer to the text component "results or conclusions" in connection with their articulation of common assumptions that are well established in their shared teaching practice.
- *Context meets Common Assumptions, A2-B4*. Here, participants refer to the "context" component of the text – that is, the timeframe,

location, and central circumstances of the study in question or the research area that the text is part of, while also articulating common assumptions.

By far the most dominant intertextual meeting point during these discussions is that the participants use the results presented in the texts to enrich their own professional language. With regard to the results that the texts present, this means that the participants learn about new concepts or gain a deeper understanding of what they already have experience with.

The results further show that texts with clearly written results and conclusions stimulate action-oriented discussions. Texts with strong, ideologically-framed theories provide a basis for reflection, a developed professional language and, in some cases, a re-evaluation of existing practice. The discussions also reveal a relatively strong practice-based discussion activity, which is mainly about consolidating common assumptions. Texts that have extensive descriptive analyses run the risk that readers will “get stuck” and simply use them to express what they recognise.

In summary, the results show that teachers' reading of research texts is highly relevant when it comes to the potential for discussions that develop teaching practice. The most important text component in these discussions was the results or conclusions presented in the texts. However, this was only the case when the knowledge claims made in the research text aimed to contribute by way of a clear set of professional development actions. The dominant practice-development discussion activity was the development of professional language in particular in its meeting point with the component of results and conclusions as well as the component of context – that is to say, the actual conditions and circumstances that are typical for this study.

Josefina Eliaso Magnusson and Disa Bergnehr: To belong or not?
Changes in capital, positioning and belonging over time

This study explores how a woman talks about her sense of belonging and exclusion at school at different times in life. Her positioning as 'the Other', the 'immigrant', in relation to the majority group, 'the Swedish', is analyzed. More specifically, we explore how different capitals appear to change and gain different values over time and depending on the educational context. The study is based on longitudinal ethnographic data that were collected through fieldwork when the participant was 15 years old and 21 years old. Here, interviews, conversations and field notes were analyzed using the concepts of capital, hybridity, and positioning. The study illuminates how the sense of belonging and exclusion can be understood and given meaning in different ways during different periods of life and shows that the sense of belonging

and exclusion is linked to different social milieus. The study participant understands and justifies her choices and actions by positioning herself and others as the one or those who belong or do not belong, but in parts this positioning is characterized by hybridity and contradiction.

Anna Wallin: Matemat-ing. When matter matters

Based on a posthumanist perspective, this article examines how mathematics emerges in the practice of Swedish school-age Educare, *fritidsbem*. This educational offer has a focus on complementing and compensating school and on providing meaningful leisure before and after the regular school-day. As a change of policy in 2016 introduced explicit attention to some content areas such as mathematics, the question of how would practitioners interpret, translate and enact “mathematics” in their practice emerged as a concern for research. The question to be explored in this article is: how do mathematics emerge through engagements and relationships between human and non-human materiality, in the discursive practices of school-age Educare? The overall aim is to provide an alternative way to conceive of the mathematical in this context, to maintain the possibility of a practice that is distinct from school and that can resist the trend of schoolification of educational spaces and of children’s lives.

The mathematics that is discussed in this article challenges the notion of mathematics often associated with the organization of content and competence in compulsory school. Instead, it takes as a point of departure the idea of *mathematizing* which refers to children’s mathematical activity through playful engagement, where materiality, movements and mind are entangled. This notion is further refined by setting in operation some theoretical tools from posthumanism, enculturation and mathematics as event. In particular, the adoption of posthumanism allows a shift from a child-centered perspective to a perspective that privileges the intricate connections between human and non-human materials. Materiality refers to matter as books, chairs, students, adults, movements, gestures, bodies and many other “things”. All materials are equally valued and can become performative agents in intra-actions with power to act. The way materials come to intra-act also relates to the material-discursive practice that is culturally formed in the context of the school-age Educare. Discourse and materialities shape each other and become the grounds on which different types of intra-actions can emerge.

The empirical basis of the study is field work in two school-age Educare centres. Observations in the practice captured in video recordings and memos, notes from conversations between children and a teacher and two

interviews with children were organized as data that provided a foundation for the analysis. To make sense of the data, a diffractive reading made it possible to bring together the theoretical tools, the empirical data, research in the area and the researcher's own experience. Attention to situations that "glows" in mathematical events allowed the reading of the relationships where mathematics emerges.

As a result of the diffractive analysis the notion of *mathemat-ing* (in Swedish *matematik-a*) emerged. It refers to the emergence of events where designing, locating, counting, playing, measuring and explaining appear within the material-discursive practices of school-age Educare, as the result of the performative entanglement of materialities, human and non-human. This conceptualization directs attention to "being in" a mathematical event where creation and play provide opportunities of spending time in intra-actions. As a result, *mathemat-ing* moves the educational gaze away from a concern for the child's development and performance. For the practice of school-age educare, this approach highlights the importance of how materialities are presented to facilitate the generation of different possible mathematical events. By affirming *mathemat-ing*, children can feel more comfortable with sensing other relationships about what the mathematical may mean.