

Picture 1:

Presentation:

Presentation: Thank you for the invitation. My name is Daniel Östlund and I am a doctoral student in Education at Malmö University. I have a background in the field of special education and have worked as a teacher of classes (compulsory school for students with intellectual disabilities) for students with learning disabilities. For the last 10 years I've been teaching on the teacher education and special teachers education courses at Malmö University and Kristianstad University College. Malmö and Kristianstad are situated in the southern part of Sweden. When I am teaching at the university, I have primarily been responsible for courses in the field of inclusive education in combination with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Picture 2:

In the Swedish educational system for pupils in the age from 6-16 there are four school program forms: Compulsory school, compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities, special schools (for deaf, blind and pupils with speech disorders) and same school. The Compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities was integrated into the compulsory school (Mainstream school) in the 1970's and is in the same organization as the (mainstream) compulsory school. 1968, new legislation was introduced within the Swedish school system that gave all pupils, including pupils with PMLD, access to and the right to go to school.

About 12 % of all pupils in the compulsory school for pupils with ID (Skolverket, 2010) get all of their education in mainstream compulsory school classes – the other 88% of the pupils in compulsory school for pupils with ID receive their education together with compulsory school pupils in varying degrees.

Children that are 1-6 years old attend preschool and in the final year of preschool students attend a more preparatory form called a preschool class. Previously, in Sweden, there were special preschools for pupils with PMLD, but these were closed down in the 1980s and now are the children with PMLD are always in ordinary preschools along with other children. When pupils are attending preschool classes, it is most common that the pupils move from preschool to the compulsory school and get their education in the preschool class together with pupils from the compulsory school.

When pupils are 7 years old, they are offered a customized curriculum for students who have Intellectual disabilities. There are two different orientations in the compulsory school for pupils with intellectual disabilities – one form that has a curriculum that is very similar to the compulsory school and the pupils read the same subjects but on a easier level – then there is a training school which is for the pupils that don't have the abilities to follow the curriculum and the same subjects as in the compulsory school. This form is called training school and it is the training school that is receiving learners with PMLD. In the case of pupils with PMLD, they are referred to the activity training in secondary school. The education in secondary school for pupils with ID lasts for four years (3600 hours).

After secondary school, it is possible for the pupils to obtain additional training in Adult Education, Supplementary Education and Public High School. In the last years some universities in Sweden have created courses for students with intellectual disabilities.

In Sweden there are some theatres (fx. MOOMS-teatern; Glada Hudik) that have actors with ID, and some of the actors with ID have taken courses in the Music University in Malmö.

Picture 3: The education act (2010:800)

Quote from the National Agency for Education (2006) folder about the compulsory school for students with intellectual disabilities:

“The exact content of the assessment depends largely on what is already known about the child. What is important is to carry out an overall evaluation. In accordance with the general guidelines set down by the National Agency for Education on assessments and admissions to compulsory school for students with intellectual disabilities, the overall evaluation should be based on previous knowledge of the child, observations of the child from the home, pre-school and school, appraisals of the remedial support which has been provided and the necessary assessments which an overall evaluation requires. As a rule, these assessments should take in four areas: educational, psychological, medical and social”.

The educational assessment evaluates the child's chances of achieving the standard secondary school learning goals. This assessment should also reveal what the pre-school, pre-school class or school have done to adapt their teaching to the needs of the child and what results have been achieved.

The psychological assessment provides insight into the child's intellectual capacity.

The medical assessment documents possible medical reasons for the child's difficulties and their implications for the child's further development.

The social assessment is intended as a supplement to the other three. Sometimes there may be reasons outside school, such as the home environment, which might affect the child's ability to learn and cope with school.”

These demands from the Swedish board of education have been much harder for the municipalities and for the last year both in research and in national evaluations, the National board of education has been aware of that many municipalities do not follow the advice. For the last twenty years we have got an indication that many pupils are getting their education in the compulsory school for pupils without an ID and the new educational act is stricter about the responsibility to assess all four perspectives (medical, psychological, social and pedagogical).

Picture 4: The Swedish educational system

Education in the compulsory school for students with Intellectual Disabilities is conducted almost always in schools where there is also a regular compulsory school and the schools have common areas, common teaching and common lessons to varying degrees. In Sweden there are municipalities where all teaching is common regardless of whether students study the compulsory school for students with Intellectual disabilities curricula, in training school or on the basis of the mainstream compulsory school curriculum.

Picture 5: Training school (program in the compulsory school)

Training school as a program in the compulsory school started in 1968 with about 1000 pupils, the number of pupils increased to 3000 pupils in 1990 and kept increasing to about 4000 pupils in year 2000 and about 4500 pupils today (2011). In the early seventies a new special teachers education started to meet the needs of the pupils in the training school program.

1980, 7% of the training schools were still in nursing homes and 8% were in schools which not were in the same locality as a compulsory school premises. Nowadays, almost all training schools are integrated in primary schools, both local and organizational. Training School pupils are a very heterogeneous group and the training school accepts learners who are at very different levels. The syllabuses are flexible and allow you as a teacher to adapt the content in the syllabi in relation to each student.

As an example I can mention a class that I taught in the training school program in which there were pupils with Down's syndrome. Several of them read simple texts, handled the computer independently and could use a web camera to communicate with each other and send email with short texts and images to one another. Many of these students who today are aged 25, I am now friends with on Facebook and they are (as I see it) the first generation of people with intellectual disabilities that has been online and joined social networks such as Facebook.

This class can then be compared with the classes included in the study that I have conducted which contained students that had PMLD where the teachers needed to work on completely different things.

Picture 6: The pedagogical praxis in training school – interaction, participation and learning.

This thesis should be regarded as a contribution to the development of knowledge about the training school teaching practice and the contextual and interactional conditions that characterize operations within this context. The study's overall purpose is to analyze the participation and interaction in the training schools on the basis of the education's contextual conditions. Participation in this study refers to how the teams and students jointly create interaction in classrooms, the patterns produced by the interaction and how participants interact with each other to help achieve coordinated and joint actions and joint inter-subjectivity. A special focus is placed on patterns of interaction and organization in the classroom and interaction in the students' participation.

The study included five classes with a total of 20 students from pre-school class to secondary school for pupils with ID (activity training). The youngest pupil at the time of the study was six years old and the oldest was 19 years old. In the group of pupils were eleven boys and nine girls. Among the professionals were 27 persons in the study, where a clear majority were those who were employed as student assistants (15), followed by seven class teachers. Further, there were two teachers in the arts (music) and a teacher of motor skills, a personal assistant and a trainee. The staff groups in the classes that participated were all women except the trainee but he played a very marginal role in the study. Therefore in principle all the personnel are women. Currently, there are no nationwide statistics on those who are employed in compulsory schools for pupils with ID. Statistics are collected on those who serve as teachers, but there is not any data collected on the group of teacher assistants or personal assistants.

According to the training school teachers that have been interviewed as a part of the work for my thesis, caring and creating as little stress for the pupils as possible is an important part of the staff's work and the daily routine in the training school. The work is, according to the teachers, organised so there is very little pressure on the pupils during the school day and the learning situations must be organised so that the interaction between the staff and the pupils makes the pupils feel that they are understood and that they have an influence on what is going on in the classroom (see also Kirkebæk, 1994). The tempo is slow in the classes and the communication between the members of the staff and the pupils' can be time consuming since it sometimes takes a lot of time for the staff to interpret both the pupils' verbal and non verbal actions.

Picture 7: The empirical study

40 hours of video recordings have been taken from everyday life in the five classes

Analysis has been undertaken of the pupils' possibilities of participation in different cultures within their everyday life in school (cultures such as learning or teaching culture, care/nursing culture, peer culture and activity on their own)

Analysis of the interaction between the participants in their everyday life has also been carried out.

Theoretical framework from Goffman (1959), Goodwin (2003) and Janson (2005).

Theoretically, my starting point rests on the idea that knowledge is constituted and socialization - is created and recreated, and is constantly changing - through the interaction between people based on a historical and cultural context. This view on "the world" is usually linked to the sociocultural perspective together with the social constructionist perspective. The thesis has an interactional interest and assumes that knowledge is not created by an individual process but as a social process where knowledge is produced and reproduced between people in a mediated social practice. The children and young people together with the teams included in the study are constantly engaged in a variety of social practice in their daily lives.

Picture 8: Key concepts in the study – Participation in different cultures within the school setting:

Learning Culture :

In a caring culture, the relationship between teacher and pupil is vertical in nature, says Janson (2005), where the teacher has a higher position than the children with their knowledge and experience.

Care or nursing Culture:

In a caring culture social arena, adults and children come together in an emotional interaction. There is a reciprocity between them but the adults who are care providers, are fully responsible for the child's needs and rights are met in an emotionally and empathetic manner and the child – the care receiver - can receive this care. This means that the relationship is vertical, according to Janson (2004), and caring or nursing culture can be seen as an extension of parental care of their pupil. Caring/nursing culture idea is not about performance. When the children need or want anything they are showing it to the adult, who acknowledges and responds to them. The care given here and now and interaction in the care culture exist in the present. Communication between carers and children is in the form of a dialogue. It is characterized in a caring culture by the adults being spontaneously involved in their children's experiences, sharing children's experiences and following the children's the initiative.

Peer Culture (interaction with peers):

Peer culture character is horizontal in nature, according to Janson (2004). Equality is characterized by the fact that children are the same, have similar experiences and as they discover and conquer new knowledge and skills, they can thus inspire each other and rejoice together in a unique way. This makes it easier for kids to work together on equal terms and access the game if they follow the frameworks and standards that the peer culture requires. Children must learn to negotiate, discuss and resolve conflicts. They need to recognize each other, invite the game and give themselves up in joint activities without requiring attention for themselves.

Examples of overlaps between the three cultures:

The teacher uses nursing situations such as dressing and undressing, hygiene and measurement procedures for teaching children to master these activities and increase their independence. This learning takes place in the overlap area between teaching and nursing cultures.

In the overlapping area between teaching and peer cultures, adults teach children certain requirements that the play demands, directing the children's own deck so that the game may

be a progressive, have acceptable content, and emphasize the norm that everyone should get to play with. The teacher uses the game to teach morals and ethics through questioning games and to get the children to reflect on their actions against each other. This overlap area can also function as training by providing training a playful setting.

Activity on their own (how the pupils play or interact with artifacts in their environments)

Vertical relationships

Peer interactions and relationships between peers are referred to as horizontal relationships and relationships between children and adults carry the name vertical relationships.

The vertical relationships discussed here, usually refer to the child and parent relationship, where the adult is absolutely dominant in the child's relationship with the adult (Frönäs, p. 151). Vertical relationships are based on a society based, predetermined, inequality where the adult is highest on the scale.

Horizontal relations

Horizontal relationships are those that occur between peers and they are characterized by the fact that they must be earned and achieved (Frönes, p. 171). There is always equality between peers that is missing in the vertical relationship. This equality leads to a constant power struggle between the children.

Peer culture:

In the development of the child's standard play, both parents (through the vertical relationship) and peers (through the horizontal relationship) play important but different roles.

The communication between the peers and children are in many cases more complicated than communication in the vertical relationship. If the child in the horizontal relationship is trying to use the same methods that work to achieve the benefits of the family, **the child's friends will be easily counted** (Frönes, p. 175). Something that is important to mention is that in the horizontal relationship, the child acts in a completely different way to be with and define the relationship. The child may, in consultation with his peers decide how often they should meet, what to play and together determine the rules of the game, a relationship between equals.

Vertical and horizontal interaction

Within the data in my study, a picture emerges of classrooms that are characterized by vertical and asymmetrical relationships. Instruction is individualized, which means that students are not given the opportunity to interact with each other and create more horizontal relations. From time to time, situations arise where staff approach students in more dialogical ways, which occur mainly in informal situations and the interaction between students and staff occurs in a more equitable manner.

In an earlier paper some preliminary findings (Östlund, 2009) that draw from a small piece of the data for my thesis has been presented. The data analysis was based on a 6 minute long sequence where three members of the staff were involved in playing catch with two pupils. This sequence was a representative part of the interaction in the everyday life in the training school. What occurred from the analysis of this sequence was that the interaction seemed to be routinized and the interaction was organized by a pattern that Mehan (1979) describes as I-R-E (Initiate-Response-Evaluation). The analysis has shown that, in this kind of activity where the pupils were supposed to participate in the game of playing catch, the staff were more active as participants than the pupils were. The staff were using a wide range of interactional resources such as raising the voice, doing gestures and signs, joking etc., to initiate and maintain interaction with the pupils. The staff's use of interactional resources was related to getting in contact with the pupils and getting the pupils attention so the teacher or an assistant could initiate an action that was part of the game of playing catch (for example giving one of the pupils the ball).

Picture 9: Some themes from a Swedish point of view

Overall: The use of diverse groups and group sizes as a pedagogical strategy

The peer culture offers the students with PMLD horizontal relationships (not only peer relations with the staff members)

The learning culture – from individual learners to members of a learning environment - use the group as a resource for learning and socialization.

The dilemma in educational settings with only pupils with PMLD is that there are no possibilities to participate in social actions with peers. A solution to this dilemma could be to organize the education based on a model where you could both work with heterogeneous groups and homogeneous groups.

Picture 10:

The model is based on a team that takes responsibility for a larger group of students (in this example 100 students) and that these students are continuously grouped into "diverse groups and group sizes." The diverse groups are in the model of both heterogeneous and homogeneous. The heterogeneous groups are fixed and represent a kind of residence for students. In the homogeneous groups, pupils work throughout the team with the same concepts but in different ways. These groups are formed for each teaching opportunity where students need different levels of support to manage the data, and groups should never be permanent. This means that a single student can be found in several different groups, where only the heterogeneous group of residents are permanent. The number of students in "student team" we have proposed as 100 but we take no position on the size because we believe that this must be adapted to local needs, aspirations and opportunities. The starting point for the model is to organize the teaching of diverse groups with varying group sizes. A central issue is not making any permanent groups within the 100 group, ie. the only permanent group is the large group of 100 students. In relation to the staffing ratio that exists in Sweden statistically speaking, it would be possible to connect a team of 5-6 teachers to the group of 100 students. In relation to those pupils who have PMLD, most of them today are in an educational context that offers one to one tuition and resources in the form of a teacher assistants - these would be incorporated into the group of 100 students. Pupils with PMLD would be organized along the lines that mean that the student would be more closely involved in a teaching culture with other peers and also participate in a peer culture to a greater extent than is possible in relation to the students who have their own classes.

Picture 11:

A new thinking of how to organize the education for all students ('a school for all') will, from a Swedish point of view, lead to a paradigm of special education characterized by inclusion, participation and solidarity.

But it will make great demands on schools and teachers' skills so as to ensure that all students get their needs met in school. (Teacher education and special teacher education)

From a Swedish point of view more studies have to be made in educational settings where students with PMLD interact with other students as a part of their everyday life. We have little knowledge about the pupils conditions in school.

In order to meet new approaches, e.g. "a school for all", and the way the school treats "students with dysfunctions" or "students with special needs", further studies seem necessary. A way to understand the difference of meaning is to scrutinise the practise and what one thinks should be changed by the changing of terms. The weakness of the practice described with the concept term "integration" is that it - in the best case - signifies an assimilation of the individual. The intention among the stipulators in the front line with the concept term "inclusion" is to express a completely new dimension and a new way to understand this special education concept.

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