

**abstract** Varieties of teacher expertise

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In this study we seek to explore how expert teachers mediate the many influences on their practice. The research we report is set in the context of lower secondary school teaching of Danish language and literature. Findings suggest that teacher expertise can be conceptualized by a set of 'role types' based on the dimensions of goals, norms, discourses and practices. Teachers seem to move between different types of teacher expertise according to the perceived demands of the situation, mediating policy requirements, practicing interpretations of educational goals, and administering classroom discourses and practices in ways which sometimes differ from those intended.

**Keywords:** Teacher expertise · teacher competence · Danish language teaching · Danish literature teaching · teacher mediation · teacher role types

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# Varieties of teacher expertise in teaching Danish language and literature in lower secondary schools

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## Teaching as a culturally situated activity

Teachers have been described as the ultimate implementers of education policy (Croll, 1996); they have a major influence on student experience and classroom practice, and their work has been the focus of numerous studies. Recent research suggests that teaching is socially and culturally situated; rather than being context neutral, the different systemic structures within which teachers work give rise to different conceptions of teaching and professional development, which are evident in both the working practices and espoused beliefs of teachers.

In a series of studies of teachers in England and France, Marilyn Osborn and her colleagues (Osborn & Broadfoot, 1992; 1993; Broadfoot & Osborn, 1993) linked the construction of primary teachers' professional identities and, hence, their priorities and what they saw as their responsibilities with

the national culture and national educational traditions in which they worked. The research documented how teachers in both countries mediated the external requirements placed upon them in terms of nationally specific professional values and understandings, producing interpretations of both their priorities and desirable classroom practices which were often very different from those intended by government directives (Osborn, 1996; Osborn, Broadfoot, Planel & Pollard, 1997).

Similarly, the research of the ENCOMPASS study in Denmark, England and France found that:

different national structures within which teachers worked gave rise to different approaches to teaching and learning, related to the purposes and priorities of the national schooling systems. /.../ Evidence also suggested that national policy change had created new ways of working /.../ [which had] created tensions for the teachers in all three national contexts. (Osborn, Broadfoot, McNess, Planel, Ravn & Triggs, 2003, p. 98)

The study also found commonalities across the three countries. Amongst these, newly qualified teachers tended to be more positive towards recent policy changes, and teachers in areas of social deprivation saw fitting their teaching around the lived experiences of students as being important.

The present study differs from the research above, because it explores the pedagogic practices of those teachers identified as being experts. Further it seeks to understand how expert teachers mediate the often contradictory influences on their practice. Teachers are seen not just to be the passive victims of imposed educational reform. They bring their own experiences and perspectives, and have the potential to actively mediate policy change and in some cases adapt, change or subvert it.

## Teacher expertise

Ultimately, practices that increase specific aspects of student learning could be termed expert practices. Research has, until recently, focused on identifying and exemplifying common non-contextual features of expertise. Glaser (1987, 1990) suggests amongst other features that expert knowledge is structured better for use than novice knowledge; that experts represent problems in qualitatively different ways than novices and their representations are deeper and richer; that experts recognize meaningful patterns faster than novices; and that experts are more flexible planners, and can change representations faster when it is appropriate to do so.

Kelly (2006) has challenged this view of expertise, in which individuals acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in one setting and are subsequently able to use these elsewhere, as one which is inadequate for understanding the complexity of teaching and teacher learning because it advocates an individualist view of teacher expertise which does not account for a process of knowing which is distributed across people and settings (Lave, 1991; Pea, 1993), and because it separates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding from their use, requiring a process of transfer which is deeply problematic (Desforges, 1995; Resnick, 1989) and ignores the wider social context in which teachers work and the perspectives which they bring to their work, including their identities as teachers (Wenger, 1998; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

Kelly argues for a more complex perspective which better accounts for social and cultural circumstances. Expert teachers work effectively towards the achievement of important outcomes for their communities, they are able to carry out or modify their plans according to the needs, affordances and constraints of the situation and so embody best pedagogic practice and through their

activities enable students to achieve as highly as they can in relation to the parameters deemed important within their educational context. Put simply they do «what works» to deliver «what they perceive to be required».

However, teachers' work is embedded in wider social, cultural and historical contexts, and as such educational communities have many often competing goals, norms, discourses and sets of practices; they are dynamic with teachers constantly engaged in ongoing mediation between different factors, re-negotiating their expertise and their professional identities. As Ball puts it: «[T]eaching has always involved making decisions within a complex and rich field of contradictions, dilemmas and priorities.» (Ball, 2006, p. 83; see also Berlak & Berlak, 1981)

### **The present study and its methods**

In our qualitative comparative project we focus on national language and maths teaching in Denmark and England in the context of lower secondary schools. In the present article, however, only findings from the Danish data material on Danish language and literature teaching are reported. We aim to explore how expert teachers mediate between discourses, practices and the affordances and constraints of their working environments to meet varied goals, and how this influences and is influenced by their professional identities.

We recognize that there are many socio-cultural influences on the construction of expertise outside schools which cannot be analysed separately in a study such as this one. We focus on pedagogic practice in the classroom and use communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) as an analytic construct; for us, identifying clusters of related discourses and practices around

specific goals, conditioned by contextual norms, provides an important analytic tool. By focusing on expert teachers we hope to identify clusters where the relationship between goals, norms, discourses and practices is relatively clear and uncluttered by issues of (insufficient) competence. It is our contention that such clusters combine both the embodied and reflective faces of experience (Dewey, 1922, 1925).

#### **Empirical focus**

We considered teachers in lower secondary schools, that is, teachers of pupils aged 12–13 years in grades 5–6. This allowed consideration of subject knowledge teaching beyond a basic level. The focus was on eight teachers in four schools (two from each school) in Funen. In view of the limited quantitative scope of the study, schools were selected using a criterion of diversity rather than representativeness. In the Danish language and literature study we selected two schools situated in middle class (ethnic white), predominantly private home environments, one of them with a reputation for educational development activities, the other set in an affluent area, and two schools situated in low income, hence multicultural social housing environments, one recently established and one well established, but both with a reputation for educational awareness.

Since for a number of methodological reasons, some of which have been briefly mentioned, expert teachers could not be pointed out on the basis of pupils' test results or other objective criteria, and formal teacher evaluations do not exist, school principals were asked to identify two experienced teachers acknowledged in the school community as being able teachers of Danish, but not necessarily with similar educational profiles. Admittedly, this is a liquid criterion, since school principals can be mistaken. It does not fully meet the description of teach-

er expertise given above, but it does respect the notion that teacher expertise must be understood in a cultural setting. Thus, the study cannot assess teachers' practices in terms of pupils' learning accomplishments, but rather in terms of their movements on and between dimensions along which their practice is performed.

During the summer term of 2009 two double lessons for each teacher were observed and audio recorded with an interval of two weeks and on each occasion both the teacher's plans and samples of the pupils' work were collected. Following each lesson the observer's notes, audio recording of the teacher in the lesson, plans and pupils' work provided the basis for lesson analysis. Immediately following each lesson a detailed interview was used to explore teachers' goals, discourses and practices. Participating teachers were asked to reflect on their teaching between visits, keeping a journal over the three week period of the study. Their reflections were used as a basis for further questions in the second interview to explore their decision-making processes in the light of their professional identities.

### **Analytical focus**

Our observations of teachers' discourses in the classroom and with individual or groups of pupils were mainly inspired by the work of Bernstein (1990, 1996, 2000). Bernstein seeks to link empirical discourses at the level of school politics with his concepts of visible and invisible pedagogy, of classification and framing, and, at a more concrete level, of rules of structuring educational interaction. Insofar as these concepts also reflect pedagogical goals, they seem to offer promising categories for characterizing types of teacher expertise.

Rules referring to classification are keys to understanding the attribution of authority to structures, contents and roles at the level of

classroom organization; similarly, rules referring to the locus of control of the pedagogic discourse (framing) explain the distribution of legitimate communication. They may be implicit or explicit, weak or strong. In the last couple of decades, it has been claimed with some empirical basis in a number of research contributions that the Scandinavian post-1960s educational tradition has been dominated by the discourse of 'invisible pedagogy' and that this may account for the failure to increase completion ratios in the educational system, for supporting a false opposition of social and academic values, or for making classroom management a source of latent conflict (Frykman, 1998). Therefore, we argue that their application in different socio-cultural and individual contexts should be included as elements of teacher expertise.

Expert teachers are expected to be both flexible and adaptable in meeting a variety of purposes. Our approach, following Leont'ev (1981), is to begin by identifying the varied and sometimes competing goals and normative conditions which orientate expert teachers' work. Following this, competing discourses and practices are analysed in a similar way, exploring how teachers mediate between what are sometimes contradictory or incommensurate positions within the affordances and constraints of their working environments. Particular concerns are their views on the subject they are teaching, on the goals of teaching, on the adequate selection, organization and communication of subject content, and on ways of working with the pupils to make them learn best.

### **Role types**

Drawing on Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice, we constructed a number of role types of expert teachers using Max Weber's notion of ideal types (Bruun, 2007), idea-constructs that stress certain ele-

ments or characteristics common to most participants, comprising related goals, norms, discourses and practices. Each captures an aspect of expert teachers' activities. Our construction of the role types and of their status should be clarified: as a starting point, an outline of prototypes was derived from our reading of educational cultures. These prototypes were put to the test by being used as preliminary interpretative categories in observation and interviews. Through the repeated interviews, observations and analyses they have undergone substantial revision. As they are presented in the findings, they are a 'result in progress' rather than a starting (or end) point of the analysis, and in the course of a comparative analysis of mathematics teaching, which we are currently working on, they will probably change further.

In the findings which follow, each role type is illustrated by examples. In order to better allow exploration of teacher mediation between clearly or less clearly related dimensions we grouped types in three pairs representing instructional goals (subject specific and general) and regulatory goals (socialization related) (Bernstein, 1990). The constructed types attempt to combine related goals, norms, discourses and practices into a single meaningful whole. Participant validation tested their verisimilitude and usefulness. Sometimes teachers may adopt positions without difficulty, at other times they may need to negotiate between types in tension and contradiction with each other. Here we report both the categorisation into role types and how expert teachers move and mediate between them.

Obviously, empirical analysis based on a very limited number of cases cannot substantiate generalizations to the effect that the findings are representative of different educational cultures, national or local. What it may be able to do is to illustrate and render probable the existence of a characteristic ar-

ray of role types constituting relevant dimensions of empirical teacher expertise in different settings and to demonstrate teachers' movements between them.

### **Findings: expert teachers in Denmark**

At the level of Danish school politics, a particular array of educational discourses has been visible from the 1990s and onwards. In the 1990s, the political discourse on global market competitiveness and the pedagogical discourses on learning-to-learn, self-governing responsibility for one's own learning and personal competences joined hands to challenge the preceding discourse on community and democracy. From the turn of the millennium, however, these discourses were themselves challenged though not entirely replaced by the discourses on subject competences governed by external goals and evaluations and on social cohesion and citizenship education (Hermann, 2007; Dorf, 2010).

Even if we identified different sets of educational goals among the teachers of our study, this array of discourses was only partly reflected in our material. The teachers did not refer to global competition. They did refer to pupils' self-governing responsibilities but with important variations from school to school. They did refer to subject competences in their plans, in their communication with the pupils, and in the interviews. They did not refer to central goals and evaluations in front of the pupils, but they sometimes did so in the interviews. Finally, the citizenship dimension was present as a discourse in our interviews, but less so in the observations, again with noticeable school variations.

The subject matter of the Danish lessons observed was predominantly literary analysis and text production (including non-written media). The teaching plans were mainly con-

cerned with subject goals predominantly of a formal character (competences in language usage, methods of text analysis and presentation, etc.). The interviews supported our assumption that this reflects to some extent the existence of national subject goals since 2003.

The skills manager role type of expert teacher focuses on the pupils' acquisition of formal skills ranging from those of linguistic correctness to skills enabling them to analyze and «read the meaning and structure» of texts and to produce their own texts. This type of expert teacher may refer to national competence aims to justify her emphasis on formal subject competences, but skills may also be seen as important tools for communication in a cultural environment.

However, the teachers also focused on core problems present in the texts having qualities as educational focus points. The goal of the subject content guide is to ensure the inspiring transmission of existentially and culturally important themes which the subject of Danish is able to offer through works of literature and other manifestations of language. The subject is referred to as a container of meaning with a potential to open, widen and deepen pupils' discourse worlds.

Sometimes the teacher is looking beyond subject skills and knowledge towards a wider developmental goal of facilitating the pupils' citizenship. This concern seems to be latent in most teachers in our material, while the recent transnational political focus on citizenship is not strongly reflected in the subject of Danish. It is typically handled by the teachers as a perspective inherent in the subject work or in the human relations work and often explicitly connected with the last of our role types, that of the adult companion. Particularly in the schools situated in mixed ethnic local environments some teachers emphasize social integration as a major goal.

Another role type with a general developmental focus is an individualistic one with its roots in the child-oriented educational paradigm which became prevalent in Denmark during the 1960s, mated with the critical democratic paradigm in the 1970s, and went to the market as a *production factor* in the neoliberal 1990s (Hermann, 2007). This personal development facilitator focuses mainly on abstract competences such as autonomy, critical sense or self reliance.

In our material, however, the personal development goal seems to be linked either to subject-related progression, to the macro level of citizenship or to goals of social interaction and cooperation. The latter is seen as a prerequisite for ensuring adequate and suitable learning and team-working conditions. However, in a wider sense interpersonal competences and respect are also thought of as prototypes of social intercourse, particularly in the schools situated in multicultural environments. Danish school debate has sometimes treated the functions of social and academic development as alternatives; this antinomy is not prevalent in our material.

Finally, most of the teachers in our material, particularly those working in schools with a mixed ethnic catchment, referred explicitly to their roles as adult companions of their pupils. The teachers emphasized the personal relationship between teacher and pupil. The notion of 'personal' is distinguished from 'private' indicating that the relationship is still a professional and educational one. The teacher's personal involvement was seen as a dimension of an open classroom climate and as a valuable basis for the pupils' maturation in a wider social sense. This role type sees the teacher as a competent, empathetic adult worthy of identification and thus as the bodily counterpart of the citizenship facilitator.

In conclusion, it seems empirically warranted to distinguish between the following goals based on role types:

Role types with a subject-related focus

- Skills-related subject goals: *the skills manager*

Content

- related subject goals: *the subject content guide*

Role types with a development-oriented focus

- Personal developmental goals: *the personal development facilitator*
- Citizenship goals: *the citizenship facilitator*

Role types with a socialization focus

- Social interaction and cooperation goals: *the human relations worker*
- Authentic relationship goals: *the adult companion*

The particular mix and directionality of these types would seem to constitute the empirical realities of the subsequent role types of expert teachers.

It is obvious that the relevance of particular role types, being idealizations of empirical findings and functioning as analytical grids, must vary with cultural contexts, and hence different sets of role types may prove relevant to national language teaching in Denmark and England. A division of labour distinction of entertainer or supervisor/facilitator proved relevant for England. In Denmark, however, a similar distinction of lecturer/discussant or supervisor/facilitator would have covered all teachers in the Danish study almost without variation, and another dimension was deemed more relevant: that of citizenship or personal development facilitator, which appeared less relevant for

England. Thus, three pairs were considered appropriate for handling the material without complicating the overview.

In the following presentation of the analysis of the Danish material, we have chosen to limit the number of teachers actually quoted to four. This was deemed sufficient to render a picture of the diversity of the 'mix' of role types and the movement between them represented in the material. Including additional teachers in the presentation would add unfavourably to the complexity of the presentation, given the level of detail that we found necessary to provide a coherent picture of expertise in motion.

#### **Role types with a subject-related focus**

*The subject skills manager*

Teacher A, who works in a multicultural school, embodies this role type. She says her pupils generally have a poor and stereotypical command of the Danish language, which she would like them to develop. Therefore she is very explicit when discussing their text productions with them, challenging them according to their abilities to find other expressions and correcting errors. She planned the program we observed after seeing the results of a reading test which alarmed her. Thus one of the tasks presented to the pupils was a multiple choice reading control task. «I would like them to use such questions when they consider 'how can I approach this text'.» The program in question was about myths, legends and fairy tales, and the concept of 'genre characteristics' was familiar to the pupils:

I have become so conscious about genres after having prepared older pupils for their exams, and I can see that it's a catastrophe if you are not 100% sure of that – and I think it will help them to have some conceptual boxes, then they can concentrate on the linguistic dimension.

She sent pupils to collect the flowers of one particular legend to study them closely so as to really appreciate the quality of the metaphors – and to improve their awareness of their local surroundings. She also pointed to the critical citizen function of subject concepts:

At their age they find it hard to distinguish between facts and fiction, they simply believe everything they see on that stupid television.

The subject content dimension was not absent, however. She reported that the pupils were very interested in knowing more about what happened to the main characters in the myths and legends before and after the narrative, and she found it interesting to compare the universe of the narratives with historical evidence and religious tradition, besides discussing their notions of good, evil and justice, etc.

Teacher B, who teaches an ethnically mixed class, integrates the ‘subject skills manager’ role type with that of the ‘subject content guide’ (see below). The program was about the genre of historical myths (which B explicitly compared to sagas and folk tales). It centred around the tale of the old Danish King Vermund who is challenged by the king of Saxony to give up his kingdom, but whose hitherto passive son Uffe rises to the challenge and defends the kingdom successfully – with the sword only his father has been able to master – in a man-to-man combat against two Saxons and subsequently becomes king himself. The tale was narrated by Teacher B as an example of oral tradition, and genre characteristics were given primary attention. Teacher B asked subject specific questions all along, quite a few pupils gave answers, and B summed up the characteristics on the blackboard. Later when the pupils were working to find genre characteristics in other narra-

tives, he instructed and supervised them in conceptually precise detail (sometimes prompting), and their contributions were brought to a plenary conclusion. He explained his focus in the subsequent interview, starting from the national subject targets, but adding:

Working with genres is one of the most important things you can do in Danish, it's about acquiring categories, different ways of writing – it's about identifying some genre characteristics which help you to identify... These are old narratives, but later there will be many new media, we meet all sorts of media in our daily life, everything from reality TV to documentaries and soap documentaries, and I think it is very important to know, what you see – what are the ‘rules of the game’ that you are occupied with – to be able to understand and see in your daily life.

This argument for working with genres is elaborated further:

It is my conviction that by occupying yourself with genre characteristics and the fact that genre differences can be small /.../ this is a thing you need to be able to do today. The difference between empirical documentaries and something like non-empirical documentaries, like soap, is small, it can be hard to see whether this is arranged or whether it is empirical, and you have to notice the details. And I think it's good already to train /.../ I hope that if you train it to the point where you know it, then you can use the competence you acquire to read a text and transfer it to other things. [However] some pupils can do this and bring it along, and I can see pupils who don't. It's not necessarily about ability, but also about involvement /.../ in a school class cultures evolve. I think that if you accustom yourself to not raising your hand, your school day will become like that. They have to be provoked once in a while, because when they do contribute, it actually makes sense.



Teacher D explicitly supports her pupils' development of subject skills as part of her literature teaching. Working in depth with «Death Mass» (a narrative of love, friendship and power relations set around a leper hospital in the Middle Ages) over six weeks in cooperation with a colleague in the parallel sixth grade, she presented her pupils with detailed tasks of identifying linguistic characteristics, artistic effects, dramatic curves and spikes, etc. However, the part of the program we observed centred on issues of content and Teacher D's subject-related practice and reflections are therefore presented under the following role type.

*The subject content guide*

Teacher B's pupils were absorbed by the historical myth of Vermund and Uffe, and when asked what accounted for their fascination he suggested:

First of all I think they are engaged by the form, the fact that I tell the story, and then I think from their comments that they are engaged in who wins the fight and they are fascinated that he dug out his father's sword. (Twice, pupils gasped at the strength in this!) And then they are absorbed by the transformation Uffe goes through, that he personally changes his character – that, I think, is a good motor for a story /.../ Themes can do something which genres can't – engage the person /.../ If there is character development in this, it must be about taking charge when it really matters. To do it when the time has come to do it. And then there is the father-son relationship. It's a classic theme that the father doesn't really appreciate his son, but then the son takes his stance, and his father is pleasantly surprised. I think it's good for the children to know that as a child you can make your parents happy.

Teacher B is moving towards the personal development facilitator role type (see below).

Teacher D works in a «middle class» school with a strong culture of teacher autonomy and cooperation, group work and interdisciplinary teaching. The school architecture affords working areas outside the classrooms. When our observation started, Teacher D had already introduced the program, and the pupils had read and started working with Death Mass. We observed the pupils' work with and presentations of a number of tasks centred on interpretation and own (co)production of the thematic content of the novel. The work tasks were optional – ranging from a fictional diary or letter and analyzing the dramatic curve of the novel or writing/acting a role play to constructing and defending a thematic flower, a dummy of (a) main character(s), or a model of the leper hospital – but at least one task was to be an individually written product. The pupils worked independently in groups with D as an itinerant consultant. She mostly asked specific and detailed questions at various levels of reflection according to the situation and the pupils' abilities, related to the thematic content and the way it was expressed in the novel and in her pupils' own work.

Asking a pupil about his thematic flower:

Teacher D: What could be a theme in 'Death Mass'?

Pupil: Leprosy.

Teacher D: Yes, what else is important in relationship to it? How does Peter feel when he comes into the hospital?

Pupil: He feels disgusted. [D]: Yes, but does he change his attitude to the lepers while he is there?

Pupil: Yes

Teacher D: From what to...

Pupil: That they are not dangerous.

Teacher D: Yes, and do they eventually become friends?

Pupil: Yes. [D]: OK, what's another theme, then?

Pupil ?: Friendship.

Teacher D: Friendship, yes! – like that.

Asking girls about their thematic flower:

Teacher D: If there's love, then between whom? Is it romantic love, someone falling in love?

Pupils: No.

Teacher D: Perhaps between Peter and Ellen.

Pupils: Between Peter and his father.

Teacher D: Yes, there's a strong love between them. Are there other forms of love?

Pupils: Between mistress and Peter.

Teacher D: Yes. If you could find documentation in the text, because love is a broad notion ... the fact that Peter leaves the life of the healthy for his father's sake, what could you say about that?

Pupils: It's faithfulness.

Teacher D (exclaims): Yes!

Assisting a group of boys:

Teacher D: It's a really good idea to describe how she perceives the smells and sounds, isn't it?

Pupil: Yes.

Teacher D: But this has become much better now, because I can see that you have moved into her head much more than before. What you had written before was more like descriptions of how it looked. I can see that you have changed it towards sensations.

Pupil: Can I write «shit»?

Teacher D: Yes.

At the presentation, after having asked her pupils to sum up the rules of being a serious audience, Teacher D went into detail with questions related to the selection of thematic issues, the modes of presentation and the work process. Pupils were encouraged to give feedback, and did so by asking specific questions. A girl presented her thematic flower:

Teacher D: Which theme do you consider the most important one of the novel?

Pupil: I think that it's about power.

Teacher D: Why?

Pupil: It is sort of divided into who has a lot of power and who hasn't.

Teacher D: Does that make a difference as to who gets leprosy?

Pupil: No, but some get their own house while the others must live together.

Teacher D: Yes, so it was a characteristic of that time that there were big differences between people, and they were visible.

Pupil: Yes.

After that, Teacher D asked factual questions as to the nature of leprosy, a parallel to AIDS was suggested by a pupil, and prejudices against diseases were discussed.

Later, two dramatic curves and their number of thematically based 'spikes' were compared (posted side by side on the blackboard) and discussed in detail with a number of pupil contributions as to positions and amplitudes, and Teacher D pointing out how this illustrated different readings of the text.

In the interview Teacher D explained that understanding texts is essential. This includes being:

able to analyse how an author uses the language to express himself... and Danish as a subject must also work with how a sentence is constructed, and the different word classes must be known. But I think that precisely so that we can deal with texts, films and poetry it is important that the subject includes a development aspect so that we can work with books and themes which the children can relate to. The development aspect in this context could be that the pupils can use «Death Mass» to think about issues like diseases – in this period it's leprosy – the prejudices which exist, the way people can think and put other people into boxes, is this something you can compare to the present situation, what they do? They are quick to call each other «homo» and «argh, you have AIDS» /.../ and they become aware that some things may repeat themselves. The subject of Danish can show that

the novels dealing with the past or written in the past reveal what sort of view of life and society is being expressed. And this contributes to giving these children a sensibility of the fact that we are where we are in the present, because we have been where we were.

Teacher D is moving to the role type of citizenship facilitator.

### **Role types with a development-oriented focus**

#### *The personal development facilitator*

In our material, this role type was represented in the middle class as well as the multicultural schools. Discussing the educative value of the themes of historical myths Teacher B said:

I think the «character development» aspect means that you have a tape recorder in your head telling you, when everything else is going on, how you live your life, what's right and wrong, what I can do with my life to improve it – without it being said directly that you should do it like that – it's like having a sense of 'pitch', you could say...it's something you learn alongside the subject knowledge.

He reported giving a lot of attention to the pupils' understandings prior to new learning sequences. He often uses everyday discourse as a path to subject specific concepts and he refers back to earlier lessons frequently, but aims at a conceptual progression, which is why his planning is organized around genre characteristics and not general human topics. This is particularly important in a multicultural school environment, he said, though it ought really to be the same:

I think that one of the gifts of teaching out here is that you are forced by the circumstances to be sharp on the pupils' frames of reference, things like categories – that we need concepts which must be clearly stated to make it clear what we

are supposed to learn /.../ and you don't get anywhere unless you are very explicit about this out here, because they lack language, they lack concepts, they lack categories of stuff. But I actually think that the way I do it here is really the way it should be done elsewhere, and which purely Danish pupils would benefit from too. Out here it is easy to see the difference between their frame of reference and mine, but if you stepped into another school, you might be deceived into believing that there is an identity of frames and would be tempted not to consider their contexts and social backgrounds.

He pointed to the dilemma between sticking to a leitmotiv and following up on all the pupils' contributions:

There must be freedom of speech, and what is said must be taken seriously /.../ I would really have preferred them to say what should be said, but I ended up telling them the genre characteristics or at least summing them up. I would have preferred things to come from them, it's probably a combination of my asking unsuccessful questions and matters becoming too complicated, overview and precision disappearing, and then the time was up, and they were tired.

The lessons of Teacher C were rather different. Teacher C had planned a project in which his pupils were shooting and editing their own films according to their own script. This practical work was preceded by watching various films and discussing their artistic effects. Teacher C stated the goals as acquiring technical skills and knowledge of concepts related to film production, and the practical outcome of the project was a film show for the pupils' families with an awarding of Oscars. The role of Teacher C was that of the consultant. As he put it in the interview, he saw his role as disturbing a self-governing construction process, but an inherent dilemma was present:

I really try to ask questions, and then they should try to reach conclusions. I sometimes have a tendency to take charge, and I must really restrain myself in order not to make it my project but appreciate that now we are here, and now they have some discussions. There is no doubt that most of the pupils in this class need a very explicit and visible guidance, to have the frame drawn up very clearly. Within that frame they can operate on their own.

But even if some of the girls are ready to work «backside to bench», he thinks that many of the boys would rebel against ordinary subject teaching, and he does not spend most of his time lecturing, but prefers an activity approach.

Teacher D found the concept of competences useful to work with, but commenting on the political requirement of drafting pupils' development plans she said: «I haven't quite reached the point where I can use them. Actually I think that my own pupils' plans are up here [points to her head] rather than in the official template.» She said she had prepared tasks for everybody and had not planned a common line of progression, but monitored the pupils' progressions during her consulting rounds. But she makes sure that all pupils have been through the required subject knowledge and skills. She had used two types of tasks, one with specific, well defined and rather strongly framed demands – prior to our observation – and another type of open rather weakly framed tasks, those indicated above. She knows what she wants with the different tasks – and that the ways they are framed appeal differently to different pupils. She can demand more of:

some of the girls who can do analytical work /.../ When it's some of the blokes, then my feedback, my way of asking questions is different, because I know who I can put pressure on.

She admitted having somewhat different (perhaps less subject specific) aims for particular pupils:

Some of the boys find it difficult to work under forms such as these, but then, they're not good at handling group work either, and if I make highly defined demands on them only, they are never brought into a cooperative situation, which I think is also very useful for them.

In her reflection article between interviews Teacher D wrote, however, that:

in our planning we emphasized that the tasks were to have a high degree of freedom and creativity with varied ways of putting the novel into perspective. At this stage the waters are divided between those pupils who are able to work with free reins and take responsibility for the outcome of their work, and those who quickly lose focus and are in greater need of teacher guidance. Creative tasks which I thought would have been suitable for the non-writing boys turned out to make too high demands on their inventiveness and creativity.

For example, one girl spent a lot of time embellishing her thematic flower instead of defining themes. In the second interview, Teacher D reflected further that she may have a personal preference for operating in complex situations:

I can imagine a set of tasks, and hey, this could be fun, and then they could do this and this, and I can envisage it, and then maybe my disappointment becomes greater, when it's not going that way. You should probably envisage it with greater realism, can they do it? Will they do it? Is there too much free movement, how are the threads pulled together?»

On the other hand:

If it becomes too guided, then it becomes passive, then it becomes only as I want it, but I need to

have them with me, their input, their sense of humour and their eccentricities /.../ But here with these free tasks I think 'fuck, what have they really learned? I wonder if there has been too little structure' /.../ some of them would have been able to have worked better within a course structure, some of the less able. The demands are high, and some of them would have been able to meet demands if I had articulated them more explicitly and pinned them out better. (Cf. the adult companion.)

#### *The citizenship facilitator*

Most teachers in our material deal with the issue of citizenship development as a wider goal of subject teaching, but Teacher C explicitly emphasizes that teachers must represent normalcy in a school where:

quite a few of the pupils have never been outside the local area, and you could say that the ethnic Danes they meet apart from their teachers are often – this is according to the pupils, but you have to take their view of things seriously – addicts, drunkards and racists letting their dogs loose on them or yelling at them, who give them a distorted impression of ethnic Danes. That's why it was important when one film group went to the stadium in the city centre and an employee said: «Hello friends, won't you come in and film?» And they were allowed in and were even offered a hot sausage, really friendly – and this cultural meeting, I think, could be really important for their development.»

#### **Ideal types with a socialization focus**

##### *The human relations worker*

In our interviews, Teacher A emphasized that norms governing social interaction are a prerequisite for subject learning. In this particular class she initially had to give social goals more focus than subject-related goals, but gradually the balance had shifted towards the latter:

Of course I would like a lot of subject learning to happen, but if there are tensions or stuff then they don't learn what they must learn, because then that stuff is in their heads, and then we have to sort out those problems and then we can go on with the subject – and I think we solve this problem, for the pupils we see at exams have managed well, external examiners have said they are really surprised at their achievement. I always have the subject in focus, I always think about it, the other stuff I have to handle, because I have to create an environment which makes learning possible, you know. The first half year or so – I broke my back and very little was achieved as far as subject is concerned. Now I can get their attention, now they can learn.

Teacher A was encouraged by her headmaster to take the class, but she had had to battle with colleagues about the importance of having a clear set of social rules and norms and the necessity of being consistent. She defended this by referring to citizenship and personal development goals:

I would like to equip them as well as possible to get on well in society, and that is why I think it is important to explain to the kids who live here, where they only meet people like themselves, what goes on in the wider society /.../ I have to tell them «You know what, you can't get away with being late every day, in a work place you're just out, nobody will cope with that» – you know, simply get some norms plugged into their heads.

In so doing, she moves between a hierarchical and a democratic authority:

I have taught them that if I have said no, there is no point in asking again and again, because then it is simply no. But then I tell them that you must learn to use arguments /.../ it's an important thing to use arguments instead of beating your way. When they said they wanted to play ball /.../ then one of them came up with a very good ar-

gument /.../ not the usual foolery, so I said OK, then I have to give in, this is a very good argument /.../ We are in a transitory period now in which we have applied the principle of other-directedness, now we are approaching the phase of inner-directedness, and when this is firmly established, then we can proceed.

Another example of this role type is Teacher B, who is also occupied with the issue of moving from dependence to independence. The first lesson we observed started with a conflict between the pupils over access to the ball game area during leisure breaks. Teacher B and his teacher assistant decided to deal with the conflict. A pupil was asked to explain what had happened, and Teacher B asked questions about the nature of the situation, emphasizing the rules of speaking when several pupils wanted to contribute. Time and again he summed up his understanding of the situation and engaged the pupils in valuations. Eventually, he suggested that an agreement should be reached:

Teacher B: After all, it is you who should solve this, because it's you who are out there. You are the players. I can help you in here to form the teams. If you agree to this, we can do it.

Pupil: Can't we let the boys have it one day, and then the girls the next day?

Assistant: Yes, but I do think it's much better to take a point of departure like 'of course we can sort this out and reach an agreement. Yes, if we really want it and we believe in it and decide to succeed, then we can succeed'. You can do what you have a will to do.

Pupil: I will.

Pupil: We can form teams on the blackboard.

Teacher B: Should we try this? And then we'll do it while we eat our lunch.

### *The adult companion*

Teacher A very smoothly switches between a hierarchical and a democratic discourse. Explaining how she had established an unquestionable authority in the class, she said:

I think it's to do with the person you are, I have taught their siblings and even some of their parents, /.../ I show them that I like them, and I show them quite clearly what I think is OK and what's not OK /.../ Then I talk to them about a lot of different things, and we do things together; play ball together; as we did yesterday, I pat them on the back. I get to know quite a bit, they know that I am very early in class, and then they come and tell.

In the middle of a lesson Teacher A interrupted herself to share in a discussion between two boys. Asked whether this is a professional task, she said:

No, but when a child asks, his curiosity must be satisfied as far as I can oblige, but if it is too personal I neglect it /.../ you are entitled to an answer if you ask a serious question that occupies you – questions you cannot get an answer to at home /.../ sometimes we have to take care of them, otherwise nobody will. Once we discussed idols, and one particular boy said «I don't want to resemble my idol, but I want to be like my idol», I asked him who his idol was, and he answered «You». That silenced me for a couple of minutes.

Teacher B argues similarly:

We are not supposed to be friends, but they must sense that we like them and respect them and whatever they do, we are there for them, and at the same time they must be quite sure where we stand. I need to have their acceptance – and that of their parents. If they don't accept the person I am, I would never be able to maintain teaching power or influence in the room.

Part of this is, however, that the teacher is engaged in the subject matter of teaching.

A clear cut example of the adult companion role type is Teacher C, who suggested that the relations work is more important than the subject work, especially for the boys. Teacher C said it's OK if the pupils see him as something else than the teacher, as the authentic Teacher C, who likes working with them:

There's a reason why I come to work here. One thing is that I have ambitions that you should learn something, but another thing is that you give me something back, something interpersonal. Some teachers at this school have nothing but a professional relationship with the pupils. They enter the class, do their teaching – they are very competent subject teachers, there is no doubt about their didactical reflections, but I know that nobody would come to them with their personal problems /.../ Does a personal relationship increase the chances of learning? It's my proposition that it does.»

He added to his reflections that his school has a vulnerable group of pupils lacking parental support, and in conflict situations Teacher C talks with them, either when they arrive in the morning and he can see they are troubled, or in regular weekly talks, drawing on his own personal background – he is particularly interested in these pupils, and he thinks that it is typical of a number of his colleagues that they have biographical experience which makes their calling to this kind of school environment understandable. This is mirrored in the school culture.

In Teacher D's class a group of boys presented a short video of a role play based on a fighting scene in the novel. They admitted to Teacher D that their work process had not been serious, but when confronted by other pupils saying that you could not feel the atmosphere nor really hear what was said, they became defensive. Teacher D told them to listen to the critique, and one of them re-

torted «then they should also listen to us». Teacher D told them that their choice of scene was a relevant one and they had noticed important aspects, but the result was at the limit. Teacher D commented later:

You think you have given them something good in different ways, and then their manner is as if they want to obstruct it a bit, and you get disappointed. I like it not to be too guided, but I think that they show here that they just need me to be much more there to tell them precisely what to do /.../ I think I have an atmosphere in the class that I want to have, where I can be authentic, it's the person they meet, and I also think that I give them an opportunity to be who they are.

At the same time, she questioned whether these pupils could have been pushed to achieve a better result:

It's not because I have doubts about my authority /.../ but I think they would feel punished and isolated and then they would have punished back by producing a really poor result. They find it hard to bear criticism, as you could see in the role play. And I had to consult them a lot of times to ask them 'Where are you? Which clues have you made?' and as soon as we approach criticism of how much they have fooled about – they are very sensitive, they take that very personally.

Teacher D attributes this to a praising culture.

## Conclusions

It is apparent in the examples accounted for above that no teacher can be contained within a single role type, they all move across them, mediating between situational demands or handling them as interrelated educational dimensions. In Denmark national goals have been specified, national tests introduced, and pupils' development plans re-

quired over the last decade. However, while the teachers quoted in this article occasionally refer to political demands as constraints when explaining their decisions, they are not felt to be in gross conflict with their understanding of «what should be done». Some of the teachers actually seem to handle the demands as an inspiration, using them according to their own best judgement.

More often, however, the teachers refer to the local school culture and to the needs, constraints or affordances of the local school environment when explaining their practice at a supra-individual level. The teachers in the multicultural schools tend to consider the limited resources of their pupils as a constraint as far as main stream school readiness is concerned while perceiving them as a gift in other respects as expressed by Teacher B. Another type of reference to the reciprocal nature of education is given by Teacher D when discussing authority and vulnerability in the interaction between teacher and pupils in her middle class school.

The human relations worker role type was predominant in the multicultural schools. No such difference was identified with regard to the presence of the other role types, whereas differences in the ways they are interpreted and enacted are notable. Our observations and interviews show important school and teacher variations in the degree to which regulative rules are made explicit. One teacher in a middle class school made rules of communication explicit, but the teachers working in the schools situated in a multicultural environment tended to be more explicit about authority than their middle class school colleagues, referring to the needs of their pupils. Further, while there was no obvious difference between school districts, but clearly between individual teachers as far as the explicitness of criteria rules is concerned, there were marked differences with regard to tempo and se-

quence rules between schools in middle class (weaker) and multicultural (stronger) environments with Teacher C as an exception. Finally, though high classification and framing was more prevalent in the multicultural schools, there were examples of low classification and framing found in both school environments.

The physical affordances and constraints of the schools exert an influence on the variety of teaching and learning activities at the teachers' disposal. For example, one of the middle class schools had very narrow physical opportunities for varied activities, while the other was well equipped with work areas adjoining the classrooms. This allowed for a wider range of teaching methods, materials, learning activities and work organization, as exploited by Teacher D. However, all schools may use their local environment for educational purposes, an example of which was Teacher C's film project using the local surroundings of the school and other city areas to develop subject competences, cooperation and citizenship.

It is apparent from our observations and interviews that there is no one-to-one relationship between teachers' plans and ex-ante intentions and their actual practice and ex-post reflections. One possible reason for this – apart from inconsistency – may be various sorts of physical, organizational or other constraints. Another may be teachers' adjustments to (individual) pupils' learning progression. Yet another may be personal, institutional or cultural motives or stereotypes unaccounted for. Teachers' discursive management of the educational setting and the pedagogic relationship as distinct from their conscious professional identities such as they are expressed in interviews and didactic reflections may include less conscious elements interfering with the intentions, affordances and constraints shaping actual teaching practice.



However, it may be thought of as an additional feature of expert teachers, as illustrated above, that they are prepared to reflect on the relationship between their conscious didactic ideologies and their teaching practice, including the intricate question of why they are bearers of the didactic ideologies they have chosen.

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