Disruptive Behavior in School

The Skill Model and Giftedness

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This is a study of disruptive behavior in School through the theories of the Skill Model and giftedness.

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Summary

Background

This thesis is part of the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School", led by Professor Liv Duesund at University in Oslo. The research project is a comparative study of elementary and middle schools between the United States of America and Norway. This thesis is a qualitative case study of one student displaying disruptive behavior in a middle school in the United States of America. The student is defined as gifted and his behavior is discussed in light of the theory of the Skill Model with focus on *involvement*, and theories regarding giftedness.

Research questions

I have developed two research questions for this study.

1: What kind of disruptive behavior is displayed?

2: How can the Skill Model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?

The first research question is a necessity to be able to distinguish between different types of disruptive behavior, and to include this thesis in the larger research project "Disruptive Behavior in School". The second research question puts the disruptive behavior into the context of the Skill Model and binds the behavior together with giftedness.

Methodology

As this thesis is part of the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School", there were some pre requirements in regards of methodology. I was required to use qualitative observation as a method, and to use a pre structured observational form for recording my notes. I conducted five observations in total, on four different days. All observations except the last one was conducted in the second period of the day. The duration of the first observation was a full hour of the class as total, and I had a specific focus on my informant. The second, third and fourth observation were 15 minutes each and with focus on my informant, but they were conducted in different time frames during the second period. The fifth observation was conducted during the recess following the fourth observation.

Results

The student displayed three different types of disruptive behavior, the first type only disruptive to himself, and the second and third type were disruptive to fellow students and the teacher as well. In the first type, the student (referred to as NN) was resting or sleeping with his head on the desk. In the second type, NN was talking with a fellow student about non-school related matter. In the third type, NN was hitting another student in a playful manner. When NN displayed all of these types of disruptive behavior he did not get involved in the assignments he was supposed to be working on.

The Skill Model describes that emotional involvement is needed to reach absorbed coping in a task, and I asked myself initially if students displaying disruptive behavior lacked this involvement, and were therefore not able to achieve absorbed coping in the learning activity. When NN displayed disruptive behavior, he was not involved in the learning activity, and he also interrupted the involvement of other students when he displayed the second and third type of disruptive behavior. NN's lack of involvement may be caused by different aspects of himself, of the teacher or of the learning environment. NN is described as highly intellectual, and is in this study defined as gifted. Gifted students may become bored at school as a result of not getting the academic challenges they need, and this boredom may lead to a lack of involvement. NN displayed signs of low academic self-confidence, and his self-confidence may stand in the way of him getting involved. NN is also described as an underachiever as his grades are significantly lower then what his cognitive abilities would suggest. An underachiever may refuse getting involved, as he does not want to risk the possibility of failure. And this might also be a contributing factor to NN's lack of involvement.

When NN displayed disruptive behavior (in particular the first type), he was often ignored by the teacher and the assistant. Being ignored when displaying disruptive behavior may worsen the behavior, and it might not be a successful tactic for getting the student involved in the learning activity. In my observations I saw no signs that this strategy of ignoring NN's behavior was beneficial for NN.

This thesis does not make any definite conclusions as to what contributed to NN's lack of involvement, but the fact that he was not involved when he displayed disruptive behavior was clear.

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1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the background and aspects of this study. I present my two research questions and the reasons for why they were formulated this way. Finally I outline an overview of the thesis.

1.1 Background

This thesis is part of the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School", and I feel honored that I was able to take part in this research project and by that spend my last semester writing my thesis and conducting my research at the University of California, Berkeley. The research project "Disruptive Behavior in School" is led by professor Liv Duesund at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo. The project is a collaboration between University of Oslo and University of California, Berkeley, and is a comparative study between Norwegian and American Schools (Duesund, Nilsen and Opdal, 2012).

My interest in disruptive behavior slowly became obvious during my bachelor in Special Needs Education, and especially during my first year at my masters in Special Needs Education, with specialization in social and emotional behavioral difficulties. Disruptive behavior is a big challenge in schools today, and something teachers and educators must face each day (Colvin, 2010). This fact drove me towards writing about disruptive behavior. By learning more about these types of behavior, and how to handle them, I can develop strategies for how I, as a special needs teacher, may help students displaying this behavior to a best degree. This will not only benefit me, but also give me ample opportunity to pass on this knowledge and guide other teacher struggling with how to handle this behavior.

My interest in gifted children was sparked when I started on my bachelor degree in Special Needs Education. I started to wonder about how it would be for those children who had learned reading on their own at the age of four, to restart on ABC again at the age of six? I wrote my bachelor thesis on this subject, and that made me want to read and discover even more about this group of children and why I had not heard much about them before. The Norwegian culture is egalitarian, and this also reflects our view on education. This may be one of the reasons why this group of children has been left on their own in Norway. I started

to ask myself "what happens when you go through school bored, when you are always ahead of the teacher's plan, and never get the opportunity to challenge yourself with schoolwork? How will you find other means of stimulation, and how will you manage with this boredom?" The opportunity to combine these two fields of study, disruptive behavior and giftedness, and explore them further, is what drove me to apply to the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School" and I am profoundly happy that I was accepted and got this opportunity.

1.2 Introduction

Disruptive behavior is said to be one of the biggest challenges in schools today, and it can vary from small chatter to vandalism (Colvin, 2010; Befring and Duesund, 2012). Disruptive behavior is part of the umbrella term social and emotional problems and behavioral problems. Behavioral problems are behaviors that are in discrepancy from what is expected at the child's age, and that clearly disturbs or inhibits their own development or disturbs others (Aasen, Nordtug, Ertesvaag, Leirvik, 2002). In this study, disruptive behavior is defined as behavior that is disruptive for the student in question, and when the behavior is displayed, the student does not get involved in the learning assignment. The behavior may also be disruptive for other students and the teachers. In this study, it is important to note that the disruptive behavior is always disruptive for the student displaying it, but not necessarily for anyone else. I use the term "students displaying disruptive behavior" instead of "students with behavioral difficulties" or "disruptive students". The reason for this is because the first term sets the focus on the behavior as a problem, and not the student itself as the problem.

My empirical knowledge in this study comes from five observations of in particular one student in 7th grade. This student displays disruptive behavior, and is referred to by his teachers as highly intellectual.

Note that I use the term students. This term does not apply to students at university or college level in this thesis, but to elementary and middle school students. I use the term students, because this is the term used by teachers and educators at this level of education in the United States of America.

In this study, I have chosen to explore disruptive behavior particularly through the Skill Model and giftedness, and other sub-theories related to these two theoretical categories. This does not mean that these theories are the only relevant theories for explaining or analyzing

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disruptive behavior. I am profoundly humble in this aspect, and do not mean to discourage other theories or explanations. But to be able to explore some theories deeply I had to limit my choices, and by that ended up on the Skill Model and giftedness as main theories. I chose these two theoretical points of views because of my specific interest in gifted children, and I found the Skill Model to be really interesting in the combination of disruptive behavior and giftedness. It intrigued me that this point of view had not been explored to an extended degree.

Research on gifted children is relatively new in the Norwegian educational research. Kjell Skogen and Ella Cosmovici Idsoee released their book: "Our gifted children" ("Våre Evnerike Barn" my translation) in June 2011. A search in University of Oslo's (UiO) database showed that there has been written six master theses at UiO on the subject of gifted children. Ellen Straube wrote the earliest thesis in 2003. The only major Norwegian research I could find on bibsys (The Norwegian library database) before 2000, was a study written by Arnold Hofset in 1968 where he focused on gifted children in the elementary school. The University of Stavanger's Centre for behavioral research has included gifted children in their research project "Skoleklar!" (Ready for school!) (http://www.saf.uis.no). This study is led by Ella Cosmovici Idsoee, and she says herself that this is the first major study that includes gifted children in Norway (http://www.saf.uis.no).

I would also like to point out that I have not been researching disruptive behavior, the Skill Model or giftedness for long. This may cloud my vision, as I do not know everything there is to know about these theories, and therefore I might reach conclusions that differ from other researchers who have studied these theories to a bigger extent.

The Skill Model is a model for skill acquisition made by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), and it displays how we go from novice to expert in a particular skill. In the Skill Model it is made clear that to progress from advanced beginner to the level of competence, the student needs to become emotionally *involved*. First the student becomes involved in the results after the chosen action. To progress to proficiency, the student needs to become involved in the action itself. I discuss whether or not a lack of this involvement in the learning activity at school may lead to disruptive behavior. If the students are not engaged and focused because they lack involvement, this may lead them to other means of engagement, e.g. disruptive behavior.

Gifted students are students who display a high cognitive ability (often the threshold is set at IQ above 130), and who show motivation, endurance and creativity (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2006; Skogen, 2012; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Webb, Amend, Webb, Goerss, Beljan and Olenchak, 2005). Gifted students are in need of individual assessment, and if they do not get their academic needs fulfilled, they may become bored and act out disruptively or shut down completely (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2006; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Webb et al., 2005). Gifted students may also lack the involvement necessary to progress in the Skill Model as a result from boredom.

The potential link between giftedness and disruptive behavior has not been studied to an extensive degree in Norway, although it has been studied in international research. This study will hopefully shed new light on an area that has not been prioritized in the Norwegian field of Special Needs Education, namely giftedness.

The arguments I present in my discussion are not meant as a full out recipe for dealing with disruptive behavior or gifted students. They are my take on what I observed, and how I feel it could have been handled differently. I do not mean that the actions taken by the teachers were wrong, because I am humbly aware of the fact that I only observed on five occasions, and that this may flaunt my observations. I am deeply impressed by the work teachers do on a daily basis, and I do not mean my arguments as a harsh critique on them. Nevertheless, as this is a study that brings a new perspective to disruptive behavior, it will hopefully be beneficial for teachers and educators in the future.

1.3 Research questions

In this study I have developed the two following research questions:

1: What kind of disruptive behavior is displayed?

2: How can the skill model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?

The first research question is a necessity to be able to distinguish between different types of disruptive behavior, and to include this thesis in the larger research project "Disruptive Behavior in School". By categorizing the different types of disruptive behavior I observed, further research may benefit from it to see what type of behavior consistently emerges as disruptive. To answer this research question I need to identify and describe the different types

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of disruptive behavior I found, present my results and describe how these types of behaviors can be seen as disruptive.

The second research problem was envisioned as I read Dreyfus (2001) *On the Internet.* He wrote about the Skill Model and distance learning, and concluded that distance learning would only be able to get the students to the level of competence, since they would lack the involvement necessary for further skill acquisition. I started to wonder about this theory about involvement and whether I could see the disruptive behavior as a result from lack of involvement. Gifted students may become bored at school and that aspect also fit excellent in this view, as they too would lack the necessary involvement. The Skill Model then became an interesting way of combining these two aspects and look at how different situations, different aspects of the student, and how the teacher handled disruptive behavior could affect involvement. Also of interest is how this potential lack of involvement could affect the learning of the student in question, and perhaps other students as well.

1.4 Overview of the thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters.

In chapter 1 I introduce the background, introduction and present the research questions.

Chapter 2 describes the theoretical framework of this thesis. I present theories about disruptive behavior, the Skill Model, absorbed coping, Heidegger's disturbances, Merleu-Ponty's intentional arc, giftedness and underachievers, and link them together with disruptive behavior.

In chapter 3 I give a methodological overview of the qualitative methods used in this study, hermeneutics as an analytical method, validity, reliability and generalizibility, ethics, and a case description outlining the student, school, the subjects and the teachers.

Chapter 4 presents my results and a discussion of these results. I link the theory from chapter 2 with the results from my observation focusing on *involvement,* and I provide answers to my two research questions:

1: What kind of disruptive behavior is displayed?

2: How can the skill model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?

These answers are summarized below.

A short answer to the first research question is: The disruptive behavior displayed was categorized in three different categories. The first behavioral category was behavior only disruptive to the student in question. This behavior was noted by NN laying his head on the desk and resting/daydreaming. The second and third behavioral categories were behaviors disruptive to both the student in question and other student as well. The behaviors noted in these categories were talking about non subject-related matter to other students, and playful hitting on another student. NN displayed all three categories of disruptive behavior to a varying degree. All three behavioral categories may be seen as disruptive since the student was not involved in the learning assignment when he displayed these behaviors.

A short answer to the second research question is: The Skill Model displays that involvement is necessary to progress in skill acquisition. Learning to learn can be seen as a skill, and this skill requires involvement as well. If a student lacks this involvement he may as a result engage in disruptive behavior instead of engaging in the learning activity. Gifted students may become bored in school if they do not get their needs met, and this boredom may lead to lack of involvement and by that lead to disruptive behavior.

In the fifth chapter I give a short summary and a conclusion to the thesis where I take a look at what kind of research is necessary to progress from this thesis.

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will give a theoretical overview of the perspectives of interest in this study and the refinements made. Disruptive behavior can be explained by a variety of theories, and in this study I have chosen to explore disruptive behavior through the Skill Model and giftedness. This does not mean that these theories are the only relevant explanations for disruptive behavior, but in regard to the limits of this paper, in terms of pages and time, I had to choose and refine some theories to explore further. Firstly I will give a brief theoretical overview of disruptive behavior, then the skill model and it's relation to disruptive behavior. Then follows giftedness and underachievers and how this relates to disruptive behavior.

2.1 Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is a part of both the umbrella social- and emotional problems in school, and the umbrella behavioral problems. Behavioral problems can be described as behavior that is in discrepancy from what is expected at the student's age, and that clearly disturbs or inhibits the student's own development or disturbs others (Aasen et al., 2002). In a society, there are a lot of established opinions, rules and norms on what is right to do and what is wrong. These moral reviews become internalized and they create a framework for our understanding of the world we live in. When someone breaks these rules they are met with reactions from the society, which differ to the severity of the rule broken (Aasen et al., 2002). For example killing someone will be met with the reaction of imprisonment, or even death penalty depending on the society. Talking out of turn in a classroom may be met with a warning from the teacher, and if it continues, the student may find himself sent to the principal's office. Disruptive behavior breaks rules and norms to a varying degree, and children who show a disruptive behavior can be characterized as difficult and often have a hard time at home, preschool, school and in the society (Aasen et al., 2002; Befring and Duesund, 2012). Tackling disruptive behavior is one of the biggest challenges for teachers and educators on a daily basis (Colvin, 2010).

Behavioral problems, and by that disruptive behavior, is behavior that can be viewed as normal in some settings, and that almost everyone to a varying degree shows from time to time. But when the behavior is displayed at the wrong time, in the wrong setting, to the wrong

people and in an inappropriate amount, we look at the behavior as a behavioral *problem* (Aasen et al., 2002). Disruptive behavior can be of both verbal and physical character. It can be described as everything from small chatter to vandalism. Students who show this behavior have often developed it as a result of negative attention from their environment and constant academic defeats, which may result in low self-esteem and low coping-skills. They have entered a bad circle where their behavior prompts more negative attention, and the negative attention then releases an even more disruptive behavior (Befring and Duesund, 2012). Students who show disruptive behavior may learn through their academic defeats that they cannot learn, that they are stupid. This meta-learning may result in the student becoming an academic looser (Aasen et al., 2002).

Context is essential when it comes to disruptive behavior. Running around in a physical education class is not disruptive, rather it is expected. But most people would consider running around in a history class as disruptive. Of course if the history class was re-enacting a historic event, running might be appropriate, but for regular history classes, where the teacher is lecturing the students, an individual running around between the chairs and desks would certainly disrupt both teacher and classmates.

Disruptive behavior can be distinguished as two different groups of behavior, namely *primary* behavior and *secondary* or *reactive* behavior (Porter, 2007). The primary behavior is behavior that is internally triggered by the student, while secondary or reactive behavior is triggered as a negative response to the teacher's or another adult's attempt to control the primary behavior. These secondary behaviors are often more numerous and more disruptive than the primary behavior, and when the secondary behavior is triggered the situation can be said to be escalating (Porter, 2007; Colvin, 2010).

Teachers often blame students' disruptive behavior on characteristics of the students or a disadvantaging home life, rather than aspects of their teaching methods (Porter, 2007). Although teachers are entitled to feel this way, it is not necessarily the truth. There are numerous researches documenting how schools' quality affects achievement outcomes and behavioral difficulties (Mortimore et al., 1988; Rutter, 1983; Rutter & Maughan, 2002, from Porter, 2007). How teachers tackle behavioral difficulties can therefore be seen as one of the contributing or dismantling factors to disruptive behavior in the classroom. Every student needs the teacher's attention to some degree, and often the easiest way to obtain attention is showing disruptive behavior (Colvin, 2010). Even though the documentation from research

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points in the direction of the school when it comes to explaining disruptive behavior, there are still theories, for example assertive discipline, that focus on the family as the big source for disruptive behavior (Canter & Canter, 2001, from Porter, 2007). In the assertive discipline theory it is claimed that children want and need clear limits. These limits helps the students so they know what to do, and it makes them feel well when their good behavior is acknowledged. Disruptive behavior is then explained by a lack of discipline, support and stability from the home environment (Porter, 2007).

Disruptive behavior may be described in a variety of ways, but mostly it is considered as behavior that is disruptive to fellow students and the teacher (see Befring, and Duesund, 2012). What if the behavior shown is not *that* disruptive to the other students, or the teacher, but mostly disruptive to the student displaying the behavior; is this behavior to be considered disruptive? How does one notice this kind of behavior? This type of behavior can be referred to as off-task behavior; one example of this is daydreaming. Off-task behavior is every behavior that is not connected with engagement or completion of the assignment or task set by the teacher (Colvin, 2010). This means that both the regular disruptive behavior, e.g. talking out loud and daydreaming, may be referred to as off-task behavior as the students showing both these types of behavior can be said to not be engaging in the assigned task. Daydreaming may also become disruptive for the teacher or other students, if the behavior spreads. If almost every student in a class is looking out the window, or lies with their head on the desk, I believe the teacher would feel the behavior to be disruptive to his teaching and the learning environment. Another reason that teachers do not necessarily report daydreaming and similar off-task behavior as disruptive might be because they define problematic behavior as behavior that are likely to cause organizational difficulties (Hastings, 2005). Teachers are also influenced by disruptive or problematic behavior, and their response to the behavior is often affected by the behavior itself. Hence the teachers are likely to respond in a way that maintains the problematic behavior (Hastings, 2005).

Chinese teachers reported daydreaming as the number one misbehavior in classrooms, in contrast to western teachers who reported "talking out of turn" as the number one misbehavior in class (Ding, Li, Li and Kulm, 2008). This behavior can be seen in relation to the definition of behavioral problems, as it might disturb their own development (Aasen et al., 2002). The behavior shown by the student in this case study is both of this daydreaming kind, and of the more "western" kind. I will describe the student's behavior thoroughly in chapter 4.

2.1.1 Final definition of disruptive behavior

To include the off-task behavior such as daydreaming into the definition of disruptive behavior, I have developed a definition of disruptive behavior that fits this study. *Disruptive behavior is behavior that is considered to be disruptive for the student in question. It might also, but not necessarily, be disruptive for other students and/or teachers. The behavior may be of verbal, physical or of non-active character. The result of the behavior is that the student does not get involved in the learning assignment when the behavior is shown.*

The last sentence is of importance because it defines that the behavior needs to disrupt the student (or students) from working in order to be referred to as disruptive behavior. If two students are talking with each other and doing their work at the same time, the talking might not be seen as disruptive, since they are still getting work done, they are still at least partially involved in the learning assignment. But if their talking disturbs other nearby students from getting work done, it will be defined as disruptive.

2.2 The Skill Model

Can disruptive behavior be seen as a consequence of feeling distant from the teacher and the classroom? Is the student getting emotionally involved in the learning? Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) have developed a model for how we acquire skills and go from novice to expert in a particular skill. The Skill Model is made with adult skill acquisition in mind, and some of the theory might not be as relevant for students in elementary and middle school. Even so, the main issue of involvement is highly relevant not only to adults, but to students in elementary and middle school as well. In this section I will give a description of the Skill Model, and then relate it to disruptive behavior. But firstly I will define the term "absorbed coping".

2.2.1 Absorbed coping and the ecstatic body

Absorbed coping is a term derived by Heidegger, and it relates to what happens when people get so involved and absorbed in their activity that the equipment they are working with "disappears" from view (Heidegger, 2010; Dreyfus, 1991). Dreyfus and Dreyfus were inspired by Heidegger when composing their Skill Model, and the proficient and expert levels has in their model achieved absorbed coping. Dreyfus (1991) uses the example of hammering

a nail. The first time you hammer a nail you have to think explicitly about how to hold the hammer, how to hold the nail so you don't hit your thumb instead of your nail, and how much force to use when hammering. After a lot of practice, hammering will become natural and you will no longer think about exactly how you need to hold the hammer and the nail. You just do what you have done before, as this has worked before, and you have reached absorbed coping in the art of hammering (Dreyfus, 1991).

We can become absorbed in every activity, also learning activities. And this absorption may manifest itself through an intense focus, and a tendency to not focus on what and how we are doing the activity, but just doing it. I will go out on a limb her and say that most of us have experienced being so involved in an activity that everything else seemed to disappear; there was nothing else of interest, only the activity in question.

Merleau-Ponty (2002) uses the term "ecstatic body" which refers to a similar experience as absorbed coping. When we are in the ecstatic body, we do not notice our body because our body is involved in the activity and everything is working the way it is supposed to. For example when we are walking, we do not think about how me move our legs, we are just walking and our legs are working the way they are supposed to.

Oedegaard (2011) draws a line between absorbed coping and disruptive behavior. He debates that students who display disruptive behavior often have low attention span and therefore may easily get disturbed. This constant disturbance may result in them not achieving absorbed coping in the learning activity.

2.2.2 The Skill Model

When Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) first developed their Skill Model, there were five stages of skill acquisition: *novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficiency* and *expertise*. In a later version Dreyfus (2001) incorporated two more stages, *mastery* and *practical wisdom*. These two stages will not be included in this description, as they are not as relevant for this study.

At the first level of the Skill Model, the novice, we learn to recognize certain facts and we learn rules governing actions appropriate to those facts. At this level the knowledge is context-free and the rules are to be followed regardless of the surrounding context (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001). After enough experience in different situations, the novice is able to move up to the next level, the advanced beginner. At this stage, knowledge is

not just context-free; the student can start to relate previously learned rules to new situations that are similar in some ways. Those new elements are called situational, and cannot be learned from a teacher, but must be experienced to understand. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) give the example of the advanced beginner driving student. The driving student has learned a rule for when to change gears (when he is driving manually), it must be done when he reaches a certain speed. But after enough driving experience he will notice that the engine makes different sounds when it is speeding or stalling, and therefore he can apply the previously learned rule about gear changing to the sound of the engine. At the third level, competence, the students learn to organize the situation and adopt an order of arranging the decisions, so they can do what needs to be done in the best order. By doing this the students can improve their performance and simplify it. The competent students differ from the novice and the advanced beginner in the fact that by organizing and arranging an order of what to do, they become involved in what occurs afterwards. Was the outcome as planned? If it was, they feel deeply satisfied, but if not they are left pondering on what they could have done differently. The novice and advanced beginner only apply learned rules and therefore feel little responsibility for the outcome. The outcome is just a consequence of whether or not they followed the rules correctly (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001).

To make the leap from competent to the next level, proficiency, we must become involved in the situations, not only what occurs after a decision is made. The proficient student is deeply involved in the task; he is absorbed in his coping, and uses intuition and memory to do what needs to be done, rather than using analytical decision-making (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001). Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) call this intuitive ability "holistic similarity-recognition" (p. 28). The proficient students recognize the whole scene, the whole situation and acts intuitively from that memory, instead of recognizing smaller aspects of the total situation. To come to this level the students need a lot of practical experience. The proficient student can still be analytical when deciding on a course of action, but this analytical and detached decision-making comes after an intuitive understanding of the issue. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) use the example of the car driver again. "On the basis of prior experience, the proficient driver, approaching a curve on a rainy day, may intuitively realize that he is driving too fast. He then consciously decides whether to apply the brakes, remove his foot from the accelerator, or merely reduce pressure" (p. 29). When the proficient driver consciously decides on a course of action, he is no longer absorbed in his coping, but analytically thinking about what to do.

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The last level in this version of the Skill Model is expertise. The experts are totally involved in the situation and generally know what to do based on what has normally worked before. They are fully absorbed in their coping. The experts are engaged in the performance and the experience is not one of driving a car, for example, but of *driving* (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001).

Why is this of interest when it comes to disruptive behavior? Dreyfus and Dreyfus write about the need to become emotionally involved in the task to step up from the level of competence to the level of proficiency. If a student in history is displaying disruptive behavior, one can assume that the student is not involved or engaged in the learning activity presented by the teacher in the class. By using Dreyfus and Dreyfus' theory, the student can be referred to as *detached* from the situation. The Skill Model is, as its title says, a model for skill acquisition. Most of what is taught in school today is not necessarily referred to as a skill, but knowledge in a more academic and abstract sense. Is the Skill Model of use when referring to schools then? Can the Skill Model be used on academic knowledge as well? Reading and writing are definitely skills, and an interesting comparison to the Skill Model is made with reading. An expert reader will also read words that are not written correctly, as long as they are similar enough to the original word, or makes contextual sense. This is not something you think about when you read, you don't analyze the word, you just read it as you would a normal word. How you acquire abstract knowledge may also be referred to as a skill, in lack of better words a "learning-skill". For the students to improve their skills in learning, they have to become emotionally involved in the learning activity. How can the teacher manage that? First and foremost the students' academic level in the particular class has to be known. If the subject the teacher is lecturing is too difficult for the student to understand, the student will in most cases have problems with becoming involved in the learning activity. The same can be said in the opposite direction. If the subject is too easy for the student, the student may also have problems with becoming involved.

Dreyfus (2001) writes about the problems concerning distance learning and how this may affect the educational system. He says, "…only emotional, involved, embodied human beings can become proficient and expert. So, …teachers must also be incarnating and encouraging involvement" (p. 48). To become better the students have to be attached and involved in the learning activity. They cannot be detached from the learning activity, whether it is through the Internet, through not understanding or through boredom does not really matter, the effect

would be the same. Dreyfus (2001) continues: "For the case method to work, the students must become emotionally involved" (p. 43). Is the student showing disruptive behavior involved in the activity? Could the disruptive behavior come as a result of not feeling involved? How then can the teacher get the student involved in learning and make the student focus on the activity in the classroom and not on whatever else comes to mind, for example daydreaming or talking to another student? If we have established that the students need to become involved in the learning activity to be able to learn, how could this detachment manifest itself? That would of course depend on the student, and that will be one of the aspects deliberated in this study, in chapter 4.

Is being involved and achieving absorbed coping the same thing? In my view there are some differences. Involved is defined as: "connected or concerned with someone or something, typically on an emotional or personal level" (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com). Absorbed coping is a deeper kind of involvement; you are so involved in the activity in question that the equipment you are using disappears from view (Dreyfus, 1991, Heidegger, 2010). If you have achieved absorbed coping in writing, you don't think about how you use your pencil or how you form your sentences, you just write. I will use both the term involved and the term absorbed coping in this thesis. I will use the term involvement as a pre requirement for achieving absorbed coping. The student's can still become involved, even if their skill level is not high enough to achieve absorbed coping.

2.2.3 Heidegger's disturbances

In relation to the Skill Model there are other relevant points of interest. Heidegger (2010) writes about circumstances or disturbances that might disrupt the attention to the activity that is in the state of absorbed coping. One of these circumstances is called *obstinacy*: "[It] occurs when something: "...'stands in the way' of our concern" and: "Anything which is unready-to-hand in this way is disturbing to us, and enables us to see the *obstinacy* of that with which we must concern ourselves in the first instance before we do anything else"" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 73-74/103 ref. from Eriksen, 2011, p. 20). Could something be standing in the way, and by that disturbing students attention to the learning activity? Dreyfus has named this circumstance for *temporary breakdown*. Temporary breakdown implies that something blocks our ongoing activity. Instead of being transparently absorbed in our coping, we have to act deliberately by paying attention to what we are doing (Dreyfus, 1991). To give an example of

this I will go back to the proficient driver. He is absorbed in his driving, but as he approaches a rainy curve he realizes that he is going too fast and then consciously decide on what action to take. The rainy curve can therefore be seen as the obstinacy or temporary breakdown, and when the decision is made and the curve is passed, the proficient driver can return to absorbed coping. Instead of being absorbed in the learning activity the student have to pay attention to what's being done. For example, the students are asked to write an essay, and instead of being absorbed in writing, something stands in the way, for example the students pencil breaks, and the student's attention is drawn away from the task and on to the pencil. After sharpening the pencil, or getting a new pencil, the student can become absorbed in writing again

Another disturbance is *obtrusiveness* (Heidegger, 2010)*,* which Dreyfus (1991) refers to as *total breakdown*. When the person in absorbed coping is permanently interrupted, for example by a missing piece of equipment, he can either choose to stare helplessly at the remaining objects or engage in a detached theoretical reflection over how to explain this and what to do further (Dreyfus, 1991). For example if a student sets out to become involved in writing and achieving absorbed coping, but realizes that his pencil is gone, he can either choose to stare helplessly at the sheet or he can start deliberating how to find a new pencil.

2.2.4 Context

As mentioned in section 2.1, when it comes to disruptive behavior context is essential and the social context even more. "To describe a skill developmental process that can be understood as isolated from the social world surrounding us has been met by skepticism and critique. 'Community of Practice' and 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' are examples of approaches that reject the view that learning may take place isolated from a social context" (Lave & Wenger, 1991 from Eriksen, 2011, p. 22). Do the students feel themselves as a part of the social context in the classroom? Does the social context provide an encouraging learning environment? If the student does not feel himself as a part of the social context, in which way could this affect his behavior? A not inviting and not encouraging learning environment might not give the students the context necessary to be involved in the learning activity.

2.2.5 Merleu-Ponty's "intentional arc"

Merleau-Ponty (2002) describes the "intentional arc" in his work *The Phenomenology of Perception:*

> …the life of consciousness – cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life – is subtended by an 'intentional arc' which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation, or rather which results in our being situated in all these respects. It is this intentional arc which brings about the unity of the senses, of intelligence, of sensibility and motility. And it is this which 'goes limp' in illness (p. 157).

This intentional arc pulls us so we can get an optimal grip on the world, and it "goes limp" in illness. Merleau-Ponty (2002) is referring to an illness of the body in this setting, but maybe we can look at disruptive behavior as an "illness". Not an illness in the usual sense, but an illness that makes the intentional arc go limp so that we no longer get an optimal grip on the world. In a classroom setting the intentional arc will pull us to engage in learning activity and follow the rules and norms that have been set so that we and the other around us can function optimally. But when someone engage in disruptive behavior that student is no longer pulled to get an optimal grip in the classroom setting, and the disruptive behavior might also pull other students away from their optimal grip. The student displaying disruptive behavior might then not only damage his own intentional arc and make it go limp, but the intentional arc of other students as well. Disruptive behavior may be seen as "contagious" (Oedegaard, 2011) meaning that other students may follow the example set by the disruptive behavior and engage in disruptive behavior themselves. The "illness" of disruptive behavior may then spread around in the classroom like a disease. Of course one could say that the "illness" is not the disruptive behavior itself, but what lies behind the disruptive behavior. But that is a discussion I will not engage in at this time. When referring to the intentional arc later in this thesis, I will not use the term illness, as this may give the wrong impression when I am referring to disruptive behavior.

Another way of looking at the relationship between the intentional arc and disruptive behavior, is that perhaps previous experience has changed the intentional arc so that it no longer pulls the student toward the optimal grip, which implies following the rules and norms and engaging in the learning activity, but instead pulls him towards disruptive behavior. His

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optimal grip on the school setting is now defined by disruptive behavior. If a lot of students are engaging in disruptive behavior in the classroom and the disruptiveness spreads, the intentional arc of that classroom might change. The optimal grip in that class is now engaging in disruptive behavior, which of course may be seen as sub optimal.

2.3 Giftedness

In this section I present different theories of giftedness, definitions of giftedness, characteristics of giftedness and profiles of giftedness. I also present theories about underachieving and characteristics of underachievers and how underachieving relate to giftedness.

2.3.1 Definitions and characteristics

In a classroom with many different students who all have different needs, it is understandable that the teacher may think that it is not necessary to give, what *he* perceives as, the gifted student any special thought; he will manage on his own (Skogen, 2012). A teacher might think of a gifted student as a student who is smart, who likes school and does well, who always listens to the teacher and does what he is told (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). This is not necessarily a gifted student; this is an "academically bright child". The gifted student will not necessarily manage on his own, and with no real challenge in school, he will be at *risk* to: start performing under his actual level, have social issues with peers, be negatively motivated for school, and act in a disruptive way (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2006). Hagenes (2009) wrote in her master thesis that she believes over 50% of the parents that contacted the Norwegian parental network for gifted children (*Lykkelige Barn* / Happy Children, my translation) felt that their children had problems of a varying degree in school. Some of the children had issues with adapting and well-being, while other had socially adapted, but were bored. A study by Baltzer and Kyed (2008, from Hagenes, 2009) documented that 40% of the gifted children in the study had problems with well-being. Another study by Gross (2005, from Hagenes, 2009) documented that 20-25% of gifted children showed signs of emotional problems. A study on 87 boys documented that the group of highly gifted boys (IQ 140-154) showed behavior problems similar compared to the group of learning disabled boys (Shaywitz

et al., 2001). On the base of these studies one can conclude that being gifted does not necessarily provide the child with positive experiences from school.

There are several definitions regarding giftedness, and the most widely used is that gifted children are those who are among the 5% with the highest intellectual ability, which means IQ above 130 (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2006; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Webb et al., 2005). But it is not enough to only have a high IQ; to fit this definition of gifted, the child also need to show motivation, endurance and creativity (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2006; Skogen, 2012; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). Other definitions can be narrower than the one previously mentioned and only include the intellectual ability. Or they can be broader and include other talents, not only the intellectual ones (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). In the United States of America the definition of giftedness in the Federal Javis Gifted and Talented Education Act is this:

> Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools (Jefferson, 1993, p. 5).

This definition of giftedness is a broad one, as it includes talent in other areas, not only high intellectual ability. It builds on the definition from the Marland Report to the U.S. Department of Education from 1972, which for the first time gave a broader definition of giftedness. The report also gave a boost to gifted education and concluded that the needs of the gifted students were being neglected in the American schools (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2007).

Characteristics of gifted children are many and diverse, and it is not necessary for a child to possess or show all the characteristics to be accounted as gifted. The characteristics are distributed between cognitive properties and emotional properties. Cognitive properties found in gifted students of elementary and middle school level are among others: the ability to process and remember a significant amount of information, curiosity and diverse interests, high level of linguistic and verbal skills, flexible thinking, notice of unusual contexts, original ideas, need of educational freedom and individual learning approach, wanting to work alone, and learning certain things earlier than peers (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). Emotional properties

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in gifted students of elementary and middle school level are among others: a rich emotional awareness, an unusual sensitivity to the emotions of others, often have a subtle sense of humor, self-consciousness, high expectations, and a high level of moral judgment (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011).

As mentioned there may be variety in the characteristics of gifted students and because of this Betts and Neihart (1988) have developed six profiles of gifted students of elementary, middle school and high school level.

1) The successful
The children belonging in this group have learned the system. They know the appropriate behavior to show at school and at home and do well academically and on intelligence tests. Hence they are often identified as gifted and placed in gifted programs (if such programs exist). These children are regularly thought of as able to manage on their own, but they often become bored with school and get by with doing as little as possible. The result of this is that they will not learn necessary skills for autonomy, and they might loose their initial creativity. These children are liked by peers and included in social groups, and they seem to have a positive self-concept since they get praise for their achievements. They are dependent on the system, but not aware of the fact that they are. Children who become underachievers later in college are often from this group. These children may become competent, but they might not fully develop their gifts and talents.

2) The challenging
This type of gifted children possesses a high level of creativity and often question authorities by being obstinate, tactless and sarcastic. They might question the teacher in front of the class and receive little recognition and honors for their talents. The relationships both in school and at home are often marked by conflict.

3) The underground
Generally these types of children are gifted girls who hide their talent as a result from wanting to fit in, and be socially accepted by peers. This need to fit in usually comes forth in middle school. These children will benefit from being accepted as both who they are, and whom they want to be, and they should not necessarily be pressured to keep all their academic interest as this pressure might alienate the children further from their parents and teachers.

4) The drop-outs

The gifted children in this category are angry, angry at the school system and angry at adults for not being recognized and getting their needs fulfilled. They feel rejected by the school. This anger may manifest itself as depression and withdrawal, or by acting out and being defensive. The self-esteem of these children is very low, and they require working with an adult they trust to keep from dropping out.

5) The double-labeled

The double-labeled are children who have an emotional disability, a physical disability, or a learning disability as well as being gifted. They are rarely recognized as gifted by the school system, and the schools often focus on their weaknesses and fail to nurture their gifts and talents. These children might act out in a disruptive way and often feel discouraged, rejected, helpless and isolated. These children are also referred to as "twice exceptional" (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). The term twice exceptional refers to the fact that these children are exceptional by being highly intellectually gifted, and by having a disability as well, hence *twice* exceptional.

6) The autonomous learner

The children in this category have learned how to make the system work for them, and in contrast to type 1, who strive to do as little as possible, these children use the system to create new opportunities for themselves. They are successful and receive positive attention both for their accomplishments and for who they are, and they are well liked by peers. They are independent and have a strong positive self-concept, and they know that they can create change in their own life.

The student in this study can be identified as type 5. He is said to perhaps have ADD or ADHD and he is taking medication for this. Whether or not his diagnosis is accurate is not of interest in this study, but I would like to make the point that gifted children might be misdiagnosed as a result of others seeing their behavior as a part of a diagnosis, instead of seeing it as a characteristic of giftedness (Webb, et. al, 2005). Although this is a valid and interesting point it will not be explored further in this study. This is due to the limits of the thesis, and because I have chosen to not include his diagnosis as an aspect in the discussion, this is discussed further in section 3.8.1.

Some psychologist believes that there always is a similarity between high intelligence and high achievement scores. But this is not necessarily true, because in the order for the gifted and highly intelligent student to be able to achieve, he has to be met by a nurturing and stimulating environment. This way he gets the opportunity to explore and refine his gifts and talents (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008).

2.3.2 Underachievers

Underachievers are students who do not reach or show their potential at school. There is a huge inconsistency between their intellectual capabilities and what they perform at school (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). I have purposefully not said *gifted* students initially in this paragraph, because underachieving may apply to students who are not gifted intellectually (they don't have IQ above 130), but who also have an inconsistency between intellectual level and performance (Wellington and Wellington, 1965). If a student has an IQ of 110 and fails English and History he is certainly underachieving, especially if there are no other obvious reasons e.g. learning disorders, and he is in need of help to start performing at his actual level as well. Underachieving is also a common trait in students with social and emotional problems (Aasen et al., 2002). These students fall out of the school system, not because of lacking the abilities necessary, but because of non-intellectual factors. The students often feel discouraged and they feel that they are being controlled from the outside, hence they are not in control themselves of their behaviors. Characteristics of underachievers are among others: negatively self-concept in relation to school, short attention span, problems with acquiring written information, low dominance combined with disinterest or boredom, negatively attuned to school and teachers, low motivation, parents and teachers dissatisfied with the results at school, low capacity to work under pressure and the tendency to rely on pressure from others, test anxiety and low social confidence (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Wellington and Wellington, 1965).

The following citations are obtained from "Peggy", a former college student who was interviewed by Wellington and Wellington (1965) about her former status as an underachiever and how she viewed herself. Peggy got into college, and she had high scores on intelligence tests, but almost failed her freshman and sophomore year. She replied this as part of the answer to a question about respect for teachers, parents and other interested parties: "…as long as I didn't try my best, I could keep the illusion that I had the ability, because I always

had the excuse that I hadn't put my mind and energy to studying anyway" (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, p. 29). This shows lack of self-confidence, she is afraid that she won't do well in her studies, but she laughs it away saying, *it only happened because I didn't study*. Her view changed in junior year, she enrolled in a class where they were asked to write papers concerning their personal reactions and thoughts to the ideas studied in class. "Suddenly I could see that courses were supposed to mean something to *me*. The ideas became exciting, and I couldn't wait to go back to the dorm to write about them. I became completely involved and the whole world seemed to change" (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, p. 30). She said further that what initiated this change was a lack of judgment presented in the writing of these papers: "If this lack of judgment had not been present, I could never have begun to express my real thoughts and thus to become personally involved" (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, p.30).

Level of aspiration is the ability to set goals and carry them through. Underachievers might set goals for themselves (although some do not), but they are unable to do the work required to achieve those goals. They procrastinate, and in the end do as little as possible to be able to pass. As a result of this, the underachievers have both low aspiration and low achievement rate (Wellington and Wellington, 1965). Underachievers show signs of difference between believed self-concept and actual self-concept. A low self-concept or self-confidence may influence motivation and coping skill in school activities (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2005). As shown in the example earlier with Peggy, she thought she could do well, but she was afraid to put in the real effort because this might prove her wrong. In the end she procrastinated and then just claimed that her low score was the result of her lack of study (Wellington and Wellington, 1965). Her *believed* self-concept was good, she thought she was able to do well, but her real self-concept shined through in her fear that if she really put her effort to it, she would not do well at all.

The challenging, the underground, the drop-out and the double-labeled types of gifted may all be considered underachievers, as they, for various reasons, do not perform according to their intellectual level. Of course in the case of the double-labeled there might be difficulties determining what is a trait of underachieving and what is determined by "the other label".

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2.4 Giftedness, disruptive behavior and The Skill Model

As shown earlier in section 2.3, gifted children are not necessarily the top students in class, and a gifted student might act out in a disruptive way if he is not recognized and does not get his academic needs fulfilled. Feeling constantly bored and unchallenged in the classroom might make the student act out disruptively, or shut down completely. In this study, both aspects are true for the observed student.

How does the Skill Model fit with giftedness? The Skill Model describes how we go from novice to expert when learning a skill and focuses on the need for *emotional involvement* to step up from competence to proficiency and further on to become experts. If the gifted student is unchallenged and bored at school and, as in this case, shuts down as a result of this boredom, the student will not be involved in the learning activity, he will be detached from it.

When looking at the different profiles of gifted children from Betts and Neihart (1988) it was mentioned in the first profile, the successful, that the children might become competent, but not fulfill their gifts and talents. This is akin to the Skill Model. The children in this profile get by in school by doing as little as possible and in that way they do not get any real challenges. They become dependent on the system and although they may seem engaged in the learning activities, since they are getting good grades, they are not involved per se. Because no matter what is causing this lack of involvement they will not fulfill their potential, and they might become underachievers when they suddenly get challenges later in college or university. In the other profiles the link is easier made, as the students do not get much work done (except in profile six), and the detachment from the learning activity is clearer. The challenging, the underground, the drop-out and the double-labeled are all in some way or another detached from both school and the learning activity. How to get the student involved will of course vary depending on the profile of the student, his age, social background, the learning environment in the classroom and other contextual features. But one aspect applies for all the profiles, and that is the need to thoroughly screen the students to find their specific gifts and talents, and then adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. One way to satisfy both the student and the already arranged school curriculum is by enriching the learning material for the gifted student (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). By enriching the material, the student will be able to move on to get more depth knowledge about the same material that the other

students are learning as well. In this way the teacher can still stay on topic, and the gifted student gets the opportunity to continue exploring the field at his own speed. If these strategies do not work, there are other strategies that could be applied, for example functional communication training with the element of choice making (Peterson et al., 2005), and initiating activities outside of school (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). Of course these strategies might not necessarily work for all gifted students. If the student is too old and has had too much negative experience with school, it may be a lot harder to get them involved no matter what strategy is applied.

So what about the underachiever? Peggy said it so well that I am going to repeat her again: "Suddenly I could see that courses were supposed to mean something to *me.* The ideas became exciting, and I couldn't wait to go back to the dorm to write about them. I became completely involved and the whole world seemed to change" (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, p. 30). This sudden involvement and interest changed her lack of aspiration and she realized that she had to do the work to fulfill her potential, and she wanted to do the work as well. Her involvement made her leap from advanced beginner, or competent, to a proficient, and after a while perhaps an expert learner.

The prospect of enriching material and adapting school curriculum applies to the underachievers as well. To develop a high confidence and self-concept a person needs to succeed in that area. Constant failures will deprive the confidence, but success when the topic is too easy will not enhance the confidence either. The successes have to come from challenging situations so they are really perceived as earned (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2005).

3 Methodology

This thesis is part of the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School" which is a comparative study between primary and middle schools in the United States of America and Norway. The research project is a collaboration between University of Oslo, Norway, and University of California, Berkeley, USA. It is a practice-based educational research project, led by professor Liv Duesund from University of Oslo (Duesund et al., 2012). Since this thesis is part of a larger research project, there are certain requirements in regard to methodology. Applying observation and a pre-structured observation schedule are among these requirements.

In this chapter I give a theoretical description of qualitative methods, observation, case study as research design and validity and reliability related to my project. I also describe the particular case in this study.

3.1 Qualitative research

What defines qualitative research in opposition to quantitative research? Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln give this definition: "Qualitative research is multimethod in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994 from Gall, Gall, Borg, 2007, p. 31). Qualitative methods are often used in research based on sociological traditions. Educational research is one of the fields where qualitative methods have become widely used (Befring, 2007). Qualitative research has its philosophical roots from phenomenology and symbolic interaction, where the researcher strives to understand the world as seen from the informant's view. Qualitative researchers believe that reality is constructed in the interaction between individuals, and they are interested in understanding individual's experience in the world, and what meaning they have constructed (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative methods are used to understand and explore social phenomena. The researchers use small, non-random samples and the goal is often to get in-depth knowledge about a specific area. To get this knowledge, the methods used are focused on the informant's subjective experience and the informant's self-understanding (Befring, 2007; Ringdal, 2001).

Characteristics of qualitative research is that its researchers are interested in understanding the phenomenon from the view of the participant, the researchers are the primary instrument for both the data collection and the analysis, it usually involves fieldwork, it primary employs an inductive research strategy and the product of the study is richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998). By using the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection, the data are mediated through the researcher. This way the researcher can response to the data and adapt to the different circumstances, in opposition to collecting data from a written questionnaire or a computer. By using an inductive research strategy the researcher builds abstractions, concepts and hypotheses rather than testing an existing theory. They use the knowledge gained in the field to expand the theory they find that fits the setting (Merriam, 1998).

The qualitative researcher is not bound to the initial idea of the study, and can elaborate and explore other points of interest as they show themselves during the study. This is in contrast to quantitative research where the researcher has a set hypothesis and uses the study to prove or disprove this hypothesis (Befring, 2007).

Qualitative research is often referred to as case study research, because it focuses on the study of cases rather than population and samples (Gall et al., 2007). This project will also be using case study as research design, and I will elaborate further on case study later in section 3.2. As qualitative research often focuses on single cases, the researcher cannot generalize the findings in the study to a whole population (I will give a more detailed description of generalizibility in the section about validity and reliability on page 32). But that does not mean that the research is less worthy than quantitative research. The results in a qualitative study can be used as a base for a larger quantitative study. This is the case for the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School". All the observational data from master students involved in the project will provide an important source when identifying categories of disruptive behavior, and when developing a survey applied in both countries. The findings in a qualitative study can become part of the theory in the respective field of study regardless of the fact that it cannot be generalized. By focusing on a specific instance, the research can shed light on a more general problem area. In qualitative research the goal is not to predict what could happen in the future, but to understand what it means to be in the respective setting and analyze and communicate this to others that are interested in this phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

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Qualitative methods are often marked by a dynamic connection between the informant and the researcher. In opposition to quantitative methods, the researcher in qualitative research is free to choose different methodological approaches based on what fits the situation he is in, there is room for improvisation (Befring, 2007). But, as I will get back to when discussing validity and reliability, this makes it hard to reproduce the same results in qualitative research (Befring, 2007). In the next sections I will relate the terms of case study, observations, validity and reliability and ethics to my research study.

3.2 Case study

Qualitative research is often referred to as case study research, and in educational research it is one of the most used approaches to qualitative inquiry (Gall et al., 2007). This thesis is not an exception and will study a case with one student who shows disruptive behavior in a junior high school in USA. Case study is defined as "the in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (Gall et al., s. 447). In case studies, the researchers identify a phenomenon they want to investigate, and then finds a case that represents the phenomenon in question. The case could be a person, a community, a program, a group or other definable units; the case is a specific, not a generality (Merriam, 1998). In this study the phenomenon is disruptive behavior, and the case is one student at middle school level.

Case studies are different from other qualitative methods in the way that they intensively describe and analyze a single unit, or a bounded system inside a phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). In case studies there are no rules regarding data collection, any and all methods related to research can be used in case studies, although there are some methods that are used more frequently than others. Case studies can be called "interpretation in context" (Merriam, 1998, p. 29) and it gives a holistic description and analysis of the phenomenon in question. Case studies are especially suited to situations where the variables of the phenomenon and the context are hard to separate (Merriam, 1998). Disruptive behavior is a typical phenomenon in this setting. It is hard to collect data about disruptive behavior without actually observing the behavior in its context, and in this study the context is education in a middle school.

The knowledge gained from case studies is different than from other qualitative research. It is more specific since it is derived from a single unit, and it is more contextual; the knowledge

gained is rooted in the context it was taken from, in contrast to the abstract knowledge in theories (Merriam, 1998).

3.3 Hermeneutic analysis

Hermeneutic analysis comes from the hermeneutic philosophical position. Hans-Georg Gadamer first brought the theory of hermeneutics to the field of education in his work "Truth and Method" published in 1960 (Grondin, 2011). Gadamer described that hermeneutic was really about seeing that others may be right. All our analyses are based on our presumptuousness. Through education we can become cultured people and by fusing our horizons, we learn to view things from a different perspective (Grondin, 2011).

Through narratives told to us by our parents, teachers, friends or even TV we gain what Gallagher (2011) refers to as "folk-psychology" (p. 21). Folk-psychology is a set of rules, norms and principles to explain the way people normally behave (Gallagher, 2011). I apply my own folk-psychology when analyzing the behavior displayed by students in my observations.

When I analyzed my observations I used the hermeneutical circle. Kvale (1996) gives this straightforward definition of hermeneutics: "Hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation of text" (p. 46). This is a broad definition. To interpret meaning through text one uses the hermeneutical circle. In this process you interpret separate parts of the text while keeping in mind the global meaning of the text, gained from your first impression. The global meaning of the text is how you interpret it when you read the text the first time. The global meaning influences the separate parts, and when you go deeper into the smaller parts this may eventually change the global meaning, which in part may change the separate parts again. This circle, or spiral, continues until one has reached an inner unitary meaning, free of logical contradictions, the global meaning and the meaning from the separate parts cannot contradict each other (Kvale, 1996). In this study, the text is the written field notes from my observations. I interpret the meaning of this text by using theory regarding disruptive behavior, the Skill Model and giftedness. The smaller, separate parts of the text are the individual, daily observations, as well as smaller parts within these observations. All the observations together constitute as the whole text. I chose this method for my analysis

because it helped me refine the text, and I could see that my analysis changed along the way, as I was moving through the hermeneutical spiral.

3.4 Observation

As mentioned in chapter 3, this thesis is part of the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School", and is therefore obliged to use observation as method and a pre-structured observation schedule that is developed for the research project. The schedule is found in appendix 2.

Observation is a method used in both qualitative and quantitative research. In observation, the researcher uses oneself as the instrument for register, evaluation and measurement. Observation sets certain requirements for the researcher to be sensitive and have the ability to see, hear, feel and analyze impressions and experiences gained from the observation (Befring, 2007). If used correctly, observation can avoid potential bias of data collected from participants (Gall et al., 2007). This is especially important when it comes to cases where the participants might be inclined to not tell the truth because they feel another answer would be more acceptable. Or in cases where the participants might not remember or pay attention to the particular aspect that the researcher wants to know more about. Both of these aspects are the case in this study. As I observed disruptive behavior, the participant might not share my view of what is disruptive, and therefore report a different amount of disruptive episodes than what I saw in my observations. The participant may also feel that it would be better and more socially accepted to report a smaller amount than what is actually the case, and it may also be difficult to pay attention to how one's behavior affects other people in the classroom. Although observation will yield more accurate data than self-report data it will be very time consuming. To obtain reliable data about behavior it must be observed over a period of time (Gall et al., 2007). Therefore I observed on five different occasions and on four different days.

Observation varies from being a complete observer who has no contact with those being observed, to being a participant in the phenomena studied. The most used observational role is to be an observer-participant (Ringdal, 2001). The observer-participant has inside perspective on the phenomena, but still keeps his distance to those he is observing. The observer-participant acts primarily as an observer, and only interacts with individuals in a casual way, only speaking back when spoken to (Gall et al., 2007). Being an observer-participant means

that the informants know that the researcher is there to observe, it is not a hidden role (Ringdal, 2001). The observer-participant was the observer role I had in this study. I was observing in the classroom, the students saw that I was there, but I did not engage in any activities the students were involved in.

My observations took place on five different occasions. The first observation was one full hour, and the rest were 15 minutes long. They took place on four different days and was all conducted during the second period of the day, except the fifth observation, which was conducted in the recess following the fourth observation. The first observation was of the class as a whole, but I had a special focus on the specific child chosen for this study (this will be addressed more thoroughly in section 4.1.2). The second, third and fourth observation was of the specific child chosen for this study, during class, but during different time periods of that class. The fifth observation was of the child during recess.

3.4.1 Qualitative observations

Observation in qualitative research varies from observation in quantitative research. In quantitative research the researcher has a prearranged observational theme and cannot stray from that. In qualitative observation the researcher is free to seek other points of interest than what was the initial idea (Gall et al., 2007). In qualitative observations the researchers can also use their own feelings and experiences as part of the observation, while in quantitative observation the researchers strive to remain neutral. Another difference between qualitative and quantitative observation is attention to detail in quantitative observation and the tendency to ignore context. In qualitative observation the observer looks at the behavior in relation to its context and from a holistic perspective (Gall et al., 2007).

In qualitative observation the researcher often goes through three stages during the observation period of time: the descriptive stage, the focused stage and the selective stage (Gall et al., 2007). The observations in the descriptive stage are unfocused and general, to create a base for the researcher to be able to see all the different possible interest points. In the focused stage the researcher begins to narrow down the point of interest and delve deeper into the material. And finally in the selective stage the researcher has a clear point of what is the empirically most essential to focus on, when regarding the research problems that have been made (Gall et al., 2007). In my field notes I took care not only to write what I perceived

happened, but also give a descriptive reference of the context: physical environment, the social interactions, the people that were there, interpretations, non-verbal communication and that which did not happen. The last element is also important in this study. When trying to understand disruptive behavior it is interesting to ask, for example, why did the student show disruptive behavior in the first setting, but not in the second?

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In every scientific study validity and reliability is an important factor as it tells us whether or not the research is trustworthy. Every researcher strives to make their research valid and reliable, and I have taken measures to make my research valid and reliable as well.

3.5.1 Validity

In methodological theory (Befring, 2007; Gall et al., 2007; Ringdal, 2001) validity is defined as the question about whether or not we have measured what we wanted to measure. The operational definitions are crucial to get a high validity (Befring, 2007). The terms I had to operationally define in this study are *the Skill Model, giftedness* and *disruptive behavior*. Kvale (1996) gives a broader definition of validity, as he argues that the definition above makes qualitative research invalid if it does not result in numbers. Kvale quotes Pervin (1984) "the extent to which our observations indeed reflect the phenomena or variables of interest to us" (Pervin, 1984, from Kvale, 1996, p. 238). This means that qualitative research can be seen as valid if our observations reflect what we set out to see. In this study I set out to observe disruptive behavior from a gifted student, and during my observations the student displayed several types of disruptive behavior. Hence my study can be seen as valid as it reflects what I set out to see. I also chose to observe throughout the entire school period, even when I was only actively observing in 15 minutes. This enhances the validity in my study as I could see that the disruptive behavior also happened outside of the observational timeframe.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to obtaining the same results if the research is repeated. In qualitative research reliability is always difficult, since the research subjects are few and the research

relies on the situation surrounding the subjects. Both subjects and situations change, so it will be very difficult to duplicate the research. But by being specific in the descriptions in every part of the project you allow other researchers to read the results through your eyes, so that they may reach the same conclusions as you did (Dalen, 2011). Kvale (1996) argues that in qualitative research the issue of reliability is more a question of the consistency of the researcher and the research findings. Whether or not I was consistent in my observations will affect the reliability of my research, and I therefore strove to be as consistent as possible. I did this by rereading my previous field notes before a new observation, and kept in mind what my focus was during the observation. Since I was the only one observing in this study there was no possibility to examine intersubjective reliability, which is the consistency between different researchers in the same study.

3.5.3 Generalizibility in case studies

There are three forms of generalizibility in relation to case studies: *naturalistic generalization, statistical generalization* and *analytical generalization* (Kvale, 1996). The naturalistic generalization comes from personal experience and develops by giving the person an expectation of what this experience will lead to next time, rather than a formal prediction. This generalization may be verbalized and will then go from tacit knowledge to explicit propositional knowledge (Kvale, 1996). Statistical generalization is based on the selection of random participants in a study, and with the use of statistics one can generalize the findings in the sample to the whole population (Kvale, 1996). This type of generalization is mostly used in quantitative research where there are bigger samples, and the samples are picked at random. In qualitative research the participants are often not picked randomly, they are picked as a result of their relation to the phenomenon being studied, and often because of location. These self-selected samples can therefore not be generalized to a whole population. The last type of generalization is the analytical generalization and it involves a reasonable and logical judgment of the findings in the study, and to which extent they can be used as a guide to explain what may happen in similar situations (Kvale, 1996). Here the researcher uses the knowledge gained from the case study to build an empirical understanding of similar situations. By specifying the evidence supporting this generalization, the researcher will allow readers to judge the credibility of the generalization claim. This analytical generalization is of use in this study, as it can shed light on how other similar students, in other classrooms, in

other countries, may behave in similar situations as the ones in my case study. This may again give root to new or existing theories regarding both giftedness and disruptive behavior.

3.5.4 Observer effect

One of the aspects that might affect the reliability in this study is observer effect. One of the most known observer effects is the "Hawthorne effect" from the "Illumination experiments" on the Hawthorne plant in the 1920's. The results from these experiments documented that worker productivity increased whenever the lighting was changed, also when the lighting was dimmed. Hence it has been concluded that the changes in productivity were made as a result of the observation itself, not by the changes in illumination (Levitt and List, 2009; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

Since my observations were not hidden, the students knew I was there to observe. And therefore they may have changed their behavior and acted in a different way from what they usually do in the observed setting, when not observed. This is one observer effect that might influence the validity and reliability of the data (Gall et al., 2007). In qualitative research the researcher can take note of and include the observer effects in the analysis. If this is done correctly it may enhance the validity and reliability of the data, but if not it may reduce it (Kvale, 1996). If that is the case, the data in the project will not be reliable and the researcher may reach the wrong conclusions. But the alternative of being a hidden observer is ethically not acceptable when it comes to sociological research (Ringdal, 2001). To prevent the informants from showing what they deem to be socially acceptable behavior instead of the behavior they normally show, the researcher should become a natural part of the environment, so the informants won't think too much about the fact that they are being observed. In this study I took measures to avoid this by being a part of the class for several times before I began my observation, and observing on several days as well. I also chose to stay in the classroom during the whole period, not only during the 15 minutes I was observing, to reduce the potential observer effect that could happen if I suddenly showed up in the middle or end of the class.

Another, and more serious, observer effect is influence by the observer's intentions (Gall et al., 2007). To prevent this the researcher should not tell the participant what the nature of the project is beforehand so they won't act unnaturally. And they should be informed that all data

will be confidential and will not reflect unfavorably on those participating (Gall et al., 2007). I only told the students in the classroom that I was there to learn, I did not tell them that I was there to observe their behavior, or other aspects of the study that could have affected their behavior. But I did write in the consent form, given to the parents of my participant, about the nature of the research, so they could give informed consent. This means that the main participant might have known what I was observing. When writing my observer notes I wrote them in Norwegian so that it would not become apparent who or what I was observing. As this is a qualitative study, I had the possibility to note possible observer effects and include them in my analysis. This is especially interesting if there is a change in behavior from the first observation to the last, since one might argue that the observer effect would lessen, as the student grows accustomed to me being in the classroom. I did not see anything that might indicate any observer effects; the student quickly became comfortable with my presence, and did not seem to take any notice of me sitting in the back of the classroom.

3.6 Ethical considerations

In every research study with human participants there are ethical considerations to be addressed. As a researcher I have power over my informants and must be humble with this power. An ethical principle is that I should only use this power to the benefit of my informants, not what is best for me (Befring, 2007; Gall et al., 2007). I also have to be both academically and methodically competent so my research is credible and I avoid both unintentional and intentional errors. It is my duty as a researcher to be objective and seek the truth in my research (Befring, 2007). To protect my informants I must maintain their privacy and confidentiality (Gall et al., 2007). To do that I only refer to the student in question as "NN", and other students as Student 1, Student 2 and so forth. I have also taken care to minimize the number of people who knows the name of my participant, only I, the Special Needs Teacher and the English teacher knows this. In my notes I also refer to him as NN. To further protect my informant there is no mention of the city or school where the observations took place in this thesis.

As this research includes children, ethical considerations are even more important. When observing a child I need the permission and full consent of the child's parents or guardians (Gall et al., 2007). To give their consent, the parents or guardians need to be fully informed about the aspects of the study, the purpose, design, and possible risks and benefits (Kvale,

1996). The consent form used in this study is included in appendix 1. In this consent form I have made it explicit that all information that could be used to identify the student or school have been made anonymous. The consent form also contains information about me, the research project and this study in particular, so that the parents are able to give informed consent. As a part of the ethical considerations when doing research, I applied to the School District in the city where I conducted my research for permission to do research in that particular school. This permission is not included here as it contains information that could be used to distinguish the school and by that the student participating in this study. But this permission can be delivered to those with the necessary authority to read it. The Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD) was approached prior to this study and they have confirmed that this study is akin to their ethical considerations as long as it has obtained consent from the parents of the child being observed.

When doing research with human participants it is important to assess the risk-benefit ratio (Gall et al., 2007). Research with human participants needs to obtain benefits for both scientific and human interest (Kvale, 1996). The risks for the participant in this study where small, but not non-existent. As I was only observing, there was no risk for the participant to suffer physical harm, but he could suffer psychological harm as a result of my observations if he felt that it was uncomfortable to be observed, or that the other students noticed that he was being observed. The participant's parents consented to the research and he was informed through the consent form that he could withdraw from the research anytime. I also took care to be discrete in my observations so it was not clear that I was focusing my observations on one student. When some of the other students asked why I was there, I told them I was there to learn. During my observations I saw no indications that my participant felt uncomfortable with me being there. The benefit from this study is new knowledge about disruptive behavior and its relation to the Skill Model and giftedness. As this study is a part of a research project the benefits from this study will be larger then if it were conducted by itself. There is no direct benefit to the participant, but the results and knowledge provided by this study may help other students in similar situations in the future. This will provide benefits of both scientific and human interests.

3.7 Implementation of my observations

In this section I describe how I conducted my observations. As in any skill there is need for training to become a better observer. My training in observational methods came from theoretical courses in my bachelor degree in Special Needs Education, and especially from the course SPED 4010, *Educational research, methods and statistics* (my translation). I received a mini course in observation through one of the researchers in this research project, which where given to all students participating in the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School". I also had practical training through internships during both my bachelor degree and the first year of my master's degree in Special Needs Education. My training as an observer is by far complete, and to say it as Dreyfus and Dreyfus would, I am just (at maximum) competent in the skill of observing. But even so, I believe I did the observations to the best of my knowledge and training, and by that did a fairly good job.

Before I met with the students and teachers, I met with the Special Needs Teacher on the specific grade level I was going to be observing in (7th grade). I told her about the specifics of my study, that I was going to observe a student who displayed disruptive behavior, and that I was interested in finding a student who also would be considered gifted. The Special Needs Teacher immediately came to think of one student (which is the student who ended up being observed in this study), but needed some time to think about other potential candidates. After dwelling on it for some days she sent me a description of three potential candidates for my study. I decided that I needed to see the students for myself to be able to reach the best conclusion for whom to study. I observed two of the students on two separate days and took some notes from what I saw. These notes are not included in this study; they were only used as a way of helping me choose between the two students. After seeing them both I decided on the student that the Special Needs Teacher had thought out initially. I gave her the consent form I had written (appendix 1), and when I had consent from the student's parents I was able to officially start my observations.

My observations were conducted on four different days during the span of two weeks. Each observation was done during the second period of the day, but during different intervals in the class, except the fifth observation, which was done in the following recess after the fourth observation. The third observation was originally set to be on a Wednesday, which followed directly after the second observation. But during this period the students where only reading

in their books, and the teacher told me that they would not be doing anything else during that period. After conducting my fourth and fifth observation I decided to go back and do the third observation again, as the initial one did not yield any results.

I entered the classroom before each class, and was present during the entire period, even when I was only actively observing for 15 minutes. I decided on this since this would make my impact on the students as small as possible, and by that exclude possible observer effects. This also gave me the opportunity to validate my results, as I could see what happened outside the observational timeframe.

I wrote down my observer notes in a little logbook during my observations. When writing down my notes I took care to only write what I saw, and interpret as little as possible in my actual notes. I transcribed my notes electronically afterwards into the observational form provided by the research project. In this form there is one column for description and one for interpretations. This transcription is available for other researchers to see, provided they have the right authority.

3.8 Case description

The following section describes the student that has been subject of observation, the school where the observation took place and the subjects the student was attending during the observations. Everything in this section and chapter 4 will be anonymous. The student will be referred to as "NN", and there will be no mention of the name of the school, or the city where the observations took place. This is due to ethical considerations of protecting the personal information of my subject.

3.8.1 The student

The student is in 7th grade, he is of Caucasian heritage and born in the United States. He moved to the city where the study took place in 3rd grade. He is diagnosed with ADD for which he is taking medication. The fact that he has a diagnosis will not be the subject of interest in this study. I have chosen to not include the ADD diagnosis, even if the diagnosis might be a contributing factor to explaining NN's disruptive behavior, for several reasons. Firstly the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School" is not interested in diagnosis for

explaining student behavior. Secondly the student might be misdiagnosed with ADD, as gifted students often show similar characteristics (Webb et al., 2005). Thirdly teachers often blame student's disruptive behavior on the characteristics of the student or a disadvantaging home life (Porter, 2007), and in this study I wanted to look further then just to a diagnosis. The fourth and final reason is that having the label of a diagnosis can be traumatic for the student, they can often feel that they are not seen as who they are, they are just seen as a student with that diagnosis, and this is especially the case for students with ADHD or ADD (Roenhovde, 2004). So in this study I have chosen to exclude the ADD diagnosis and focus on other means of explaining NN's behavior.

The teacher described NN as:

"A highly intellectual boy and a gifted writer, but he does not get any work done in class".

Whether or not the student is truly intellectually gifted, as defined in section 2.3.1 with having an IQ of above 130, is hard to conclude on without screening him with an intelligence test; but his use of language clearly indicates (for me as well as the teachers) a high cognitive ability. For example, when asked if he wrote anything interesting during a warm-up poetry session, he replied:

"No, nothing noticeable."

Another day, he gave a description of the term culture to a fellow student:

"It's religion, politics, music, everything that comes together and makes a society. It's something that just happens."

He also shares some of the characteristics mentioned in section 2.3.1. He shows a high level of linguistic and verbal skills (as the citations indicate), he showed flexible thinking and ability to make notice of unusual contexts, he often chose to work alone, and he seemed to be in need of educational freedom and an individual learning approach. In NN's student profile the school has written in "strengths and interests" that he has strong Math skills, is intelligent and appreciates this fact, can hyper-focus when interested, and has brilliant comments and insights when he is engaged. On the standardized testing in 6th grade, NN scored consistently higher than the state average. For example he scored 100% on Word Analysis and Vocabulary

Development, whereas the state average is 69%. On the basis of these characteristics and the indications made by the teachers, I will in this study refer to NN as a gifted student.

The school's profile on NN mention, in concerns, that he has poor organization skills, can make errors from inattention, "hits a wall" sometimes, shuts down without warning, needs help with refocusing, lays his head down on desk to avoid work, and getting good grades is not a motivation for him. NN holds high expectations for himself and when these are not met he can become discouraged.

NN's grades are consistently below what one would expect from someone with his cognitive abilities. He is said to have strong Math skills, but his grade in Math for the last semester is 1,2 (barely passing grade, see explanation in section 3.8.2). His grade point average is 2,4 for the last semester. His grades have declined the last year, especially in Math and Science. On this basis I will refer to NN as an underachiever, as he does not seem to be performing up to his actual level.

NN does not receive special education. In his student profile the instructional strategies mentioned for NN is that he needs one instruction at a time, can reschedule the test if he "hits the wall", be flexible with assignments, and maintain high expectations. NN's clothing was usually a pair of jeans, sneakers and a hooded sweater, all from brands in the medium price range.

3.8.2 The school

NN attends a fairly large middle school (6th to 8th grade), which is the largest school in its school district. The school has about 1000 pupils and about 100 staff members. The ideals of the school are among others: Equality, Academic Excellence, Community Action and Respect for Self and Others. The Principal believes that the reason behind the school's success lies in the strength of the teaching community. The teachers are committed to their students and the students receive opportunities to explore and develop new and existing interests as well as being challenged by creative projects throughout the school year. The school's vision is to make every child known and supported through a dynamic learning environment.

The students are given grades from 1 to 4, where 1 is bottom and 4 is top. The students are given two sets of grades for each quarter year, where the first set describes habits of work, whether the students does their homework and comes to classes. A grade 4 in habits means

the student has done all their homework and been to approximately every class in that subject. The second set of grades describe how the student does according to Standard Based Proficiency, which are the standards set by the state for that particular grade level. Together the grades from two quarters in both sets give the semester grade. To pass a subject the student need to obtain 1,2 or 2,1. If the grade is 1,1 (if the student neither does his homework nor meets the standards set by the state) the subject is not passed. The students at this school score consistently higher on STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) than the other middle schools in the district.

3.8.3 Classroom subject matter

The subjects I observed were English and History. I observed three sessions in English and one in History (the last observation was made in recess). Two different teachers led the subjects, but the student group stayed the same throughout both subjects. In English there was an assistant present as well. Both of the subjects where assigned to the second period of the day, which took place from 10:26 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. I found it interesting to observe two different teachers to see two different styles of teaching, and whether that would affect the disruptive behavior.

The English teacher was a Caucasian woman in her late forties, and the History teacher was an Asian-American man in his late thirties, early forties. In English the students were sitting in groups of four or five all faced towards each other. This means that some of the students were seated with their backs to the teacher and the blackboard. In History the students were all seated in groups of two facing the blackboard. In my discussion I will point out these differences, but that does not mean that one of the arranging methods is better than the other, this applies only to my observation. I will also refer to teachers by gender, but that is only to distinguish the teachers, and of linguistic variety, it does not mean that I believe one gender is better suited for teaching than the other.

I conducted my first, third and fourth observation in English, and the topic in these observations was poetry. They started on the poetry project on my first observation. The second observation was made in History where they were working on a project about Japan; this project was to be ended on Friday the same week as my observation.

4 Results and discussion

In this chapter I present the results from my observations, and discuss them according to the theories introduced in the chapter 2. I repeat my research questions and discuss my findings in relation to the research questions in order to answer them.

As I was present throughout the entire class, even when I was only actively observing in the middle or end of the class, I had the opportunity to also take notice of what happened outside the observational timeframe. During these non-active observations the behavior noted was according to the behavior displayed in the active observation. Hence I am able to validate my observational results, they are not a one-time occurrence.

In the results and the analysis I use the names *Student 1, Student 2, Student 3* and *Student 4* to clarify the different students that NN engaged in disruptive behavior or on-task behavior with. It was not the same student all the time, and I found it necessary to distinguish them as NN showed different kind of behavior towards these different students.

4.1 Research question 1: What type of disruptive behavior is displayed?

In this section I will categorize the results from my observations and link the different kind of disruptive behavior to the theories discussed in chapter 2. In the end of this section I summarize my findings and discuss them.

4.1.1 Behavior categories

In my observations I found four types of distinguishable behavior categories. I have distinguished three types of disruptive behavior, and one non-disruptive behavior.

1) The first behavioral category is "inactive off-task behavior", the behavior the student displayed in this category was resting, daydreaming or sleeping with his head on the table. This behavior was not disruptive to other students, but it was disruptive to NN himself, as he did not get any work done during these sessions. This behavior is akin to the most reported

misbehavior by Chinese teachers, namely daydreaming or off-task behavior (Ding et al., 2008).

2) The second behavioral category is "active off-task behavior" and in this category the behavior noted was talking with other students about non-subject related matter. This type of behavior is both disruptive to NN and the student he is talking with. Depending on the sound level of the talking it might be disruptive to other nearby students as well. This behavior is akin to the definition by Befring and Duesund (2012), and the fact that talking out of turn is the behavior most reported as misbehavior by teachers in western countries (Ding et al., 2008).

3) The third behavioral category is "physical active off-task behavior" and in this category the student was pushing and/or hitting other students in a playful manner. This type of behavior is disruptive to NN and the other student involved. But as this type of behavior is physical and therefore also has a visual aspect, it is likely that this behavior is disruptive for other students and the teachers as well. This behavior is also akin to the definition by Befring and Duesund (2012).

All of the above mentioned behavioral categories align with my definition of disruptive behavior given in section 2.1.1:

> *Disruptive behavior is behavior that is considered to be disruptive for the student in question. It might also, but not necessarily, be disruptive for other students and/or teachers. The behavior may be of verbal, physical or of non-active character. The result of the behavior is that the student does not get involved in the learning assignment when the behavior is shown.*

These off-task behaviors are always disruptive to the student in question, and the second and third categories are also disruptive to other students and teachers. The result is that NN does not get involved in the learning activity when these types of behavior are displayed.

The fourth and last category is "on-task behavior", and in this category the behavior displayed was akin to the assignment given for the class.

4.1.2 Results from the first observation

In the first observation, I was to observe the whole class during the duration of one hour (from 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.). As I had already chosen my subject for further study, I found it difficult to avoid observing him, so I constantly kept getting back to him. Another reason for this is that the class was very calm, and I did not see much disruptive behavior from other students. The result is that the first observation gave me a lot of relevant data about NN, but not much data about the class as a whole. My overall impression was that the class was hard working, with a positive attitude towards learning and with a positive social environment. Here is an example of this:

11:20: The students are asked to pay attention while other students are reading their poems. NN is lying with his head on the table and applauds with little enthusiasm after each poem. The other students in the class are very enthusiastic and applaud loudly as well as cheering after each poem. The class gives a radiance of being positive and encouraging.

Although there was some talking when the students were not supposed to, it was a fairly quiet session where the students worked hard. Here is an example of this:

11:13: NN raises his head, looks at his sheet and then lies his head down on the desk again. On the seating group behind NN there are five girls seated. They are talking in low voices among themselves as well as writing. The teacher is talking with another teacher at the door. Most of the students are writing and working on their poems, some students are talking with each other but the noise level is not very high. The classroom is perceived as quiet.

As mentioned, this observation yielded a lot of data about NN. And I found it fruitful to observe him through the duration of one hour, as his behavior changed drastically from the beginning via the middle and to the end of the observation.

In the beginning of the observation NN and almost the entire class showed on-task behavior. They were doing a warm-up poetry session where they were supposed to write all the time, never letting their pencils stop. The teacher was saying different words or sentences that the students could use for inspiration when they were writing. Not everyone did this, some stopped writing from time to time, but there were no talking and no disruptive behavior displayed during this exercise. The following citation gives a good impression of this session:

10:52: [The teacher says:] "Write about: 'in my language'." NN is writing. A couple of students have stopped writing, but they are silent and not disturbing anyone else.

After this exercise, the students were given the assignment of writing their own poem. They were asked to use some words or lines from their warm-up, or they could start fresh with a new idea. During this session NN did not write anything. He showed category 1 disruptive behavior for the entire time period between 11:02 a.m. and 11:38 a.m. During this period of time neither the teacher nor the assistant present contacted NN, even though they did notice him lie with his head on the desk. The following two citations show this:

11:33: The assistant is looking at NN for a while, and then turns around and looks at the blackboard. The teacher is sitting on a desk and looks at different papers. Most of the students are quiet and writing, a few are talking in low voices.

11:36: The teacher comes with some papers and starts talking with the girls in the group behind NN. She then walks past NN (who still has his head on the desk) but makes no move toward him.

How can the teacher and assistant help NN becoming involved in the learning activity when they ignore his behavior? Will this ignoring help him? As shown, they did notice his behavior, but they did not do anything to interfere or help him get started at that time.

NN had some statements that might be interpreted as signs of low academic self-confidence. He was asked if he had managed to write anything after the first poem writing-session. He replied:

"Nope. I am not that good at poems."

Later the teacher came back and asked what he wrote in his warm-up session. NN replied:

"Nothing noticeable."

Both of these statements indicate that he did not think there was anything worthwhile in his writing to continue writing a poem about.

During the full hour I observed, NN showed both on-task behavior and category 1 disruptive behavior. There were some incidents of category 2 disruptive behavior from other students,

but this was not prominent, and most of the students talking continued working at the same time, i.e. the talking did not interfere with the assignment.

4.1.3 Results from the second observation

The second observation was made during History class. In this class the students were seated differently from the English class, and this seating arrangement may have been in favor for NN, as he showed less disruptive behavior in this observation.

NN mainly showed on-task behavior in this observation, and some category 1 disruptive behavior. The following citation gives an overall impression of the observation:

10:28: The teacher writes the students' new homework on the blackboard. The students are silent. The teacher explains that their ongoing Japan project is to be finished on this Friday. The students are writing down their homework. NN is writing.

He did show behavior that may be interpreted as category 1 disruptive behavior as well:

10:35: NN lies his head down on the desk, looking at the blackboard. The teacher starts writing down three goals for his class.

The teacher did not interfere when NN put his head on the desk, but then NN was looking at the blackboard, which might indicate that he was paying attention, instead of hiding his head, which he did in the first observation.

The teacher wrote three goals for the students in his class, and these goals were:

1) Becoming an informed world citizen
2) Learn to like History and see how it affects your life
3) Becoming a responsible student

The teacher emphasized the fact that he could not go home with the students and do their homework for them; they have to do the work themselves. And if they learn how to be responsible students now as they attend middle school, they will do well in high school, get good grades and get into a good college, get a good education and have an interesting life.

4.1.4 Results from the third observation

The original third observation was set to be on a Wednesday, but as I arrived the teacher told me that they were only going to read their books during the class, so I decided to go back and do the third observation again on another day. I came back on Thursday the next week. I would have come back earlier, but due to specific school arrangements on the other days, that was not possible.

On the third observation I was observing English again, and the students were writing a poem. The teacher had emphasized that they would not be able to go to lunch if they had not finished a poem and delivered it to her by the end of the class.

This observation was defined by category 2 and category 3 disruptive behavior. During the 15 minutes I actively observed, NN only managed to be engaged in on-task behavior in the last two minutes. The following citation sums up most of the behavior displayed in this observation:

10:45: NN looks at one of the students at the table; he moves his hand in a peculiar fashion and the student laugh. The student seated next to NN returns (Student 4) and NN pushes him, Student 4 pushes back and they both laugh.

NN disrupted the writing and learning of the other students at his table, and he disrupted his own learning. Even when it was clear that the other students were working, NN interfered and disrupted them.

10:47: The three other students at NN's table all have their pencils out and are writing. NN has his head on his arms; he pushes Student 4 next to him with his elbow. Student 4 smiles and returns to working.

It took almost 10 minutes until the teacher interfered with the disruptive behavior. Before that the assistant was seated at the same table as NN helping another student, but did nothing to reduce the disruptive behavior between NN and Student 4. The following citations show this:

10:50: Student 4 starts humming and he and NN begin to push and hit each other in a playfully fashion. NN drops his paper on the floor, picks it up and starts talking with Student 4. They are talking in a low voice. The assistant is seated at the same table, talking with another student; she says nothing to NN or Student 4.

10:52: The teacher arrives and says that NN has to move. They start talking about the assignment. NN remains seated and the teacher moves on to another student. NN finds a pencil and start talking with Student 4 again.

10:53: The teacher comes back and moves Student 4 to another desk in the classroom. NN looks at him across the room. Student 4 "mouths" something to NN, and he "answers" back.

It might have been that the assistant did not feel comfortable interfering with the disruptive behavior, and that she felt that this was the teacher's job. It might also have been due to the fact that she was pleased with NN for becoming more social with his peers, but does the fact that he has improved socially legitimize his disruptive behavior? The fact that he has become more socially active is of course excellent, but that should not take precedence over his own and his peers learning environment. By not interfering, the assistant did not do anything to make NN become involved in the learning activity, and hence the disruptive behavior continued.

4.1.5 Results from the fourth observation

The fourth observation was also conducted in English, and this observation was defined by on-task behavior and category 2 disruptive behavior. The following citations show this:

11:35: NN is reading a poem from a poetry book out loud for Student 1. The teacher arrives and asks how they are doing; she starts talking with Student 1. NN reads in a low voice to himself.

11:41: NN closes the book. Student 1 is showing NN the ball of wires and talking to him. There is a lot of noise in the class so I can't hear what they are saying. NN seems to be asking Student 1 why he is playing with a ball of wires. Student 1 answers something.

In this observation NN showed that he had the ability to really focus and concentrate on his work even when other students are being disruptive towards him. The following citation describes this:

11:38: Student 1 is trying to make contact with NN; he is playing with a ball of wires in front of him. NN continue reading. NN lays his arms on the book and reads.

Reading is said to be NN's favorite assignment, and it is something he often chooses to do, even when reading is not the assignment given. It is clear that he can focus and be engaged when the assignments fit him. He was truly involved in this reading assignment. The challenge is then to get him engaged and focused even when the assignment is not what he would have chosen initially.

At the end of the observation there was a lot of talking, both from NN and the other students. But it seemed like they did not know what to do when they had finished choosing the poem they would read aloud. Maybe the instructions had not been clear enough. This rises the question: can it be considered disruptive behavior if the students who are being disrupted by others does not have anything to get disrupted from?

4.1.6 Results from the fifth observation

The fifth observation was conducted during the students' lunch break. NN was socially engaged during this observation with other students, and seemed happy and well liked by his peers. He showed some similar behavior as in the third observation (category 3 disruptive behavior), but in this setting the behavior is not disruptive in my view. The following two citations sums up this observation:

12:04: NN talks with the other students around the table, I am too far away to hear what they are talking about. NN is seated with his back towards me. The other students on his table are smiling while talking with NN. There are four students as well as NN who are active in the conversation.

12:10: NN leaves the table and picks up a washcloth. He starts to clean the table. He uses the cloth to wash a part of another student's shirt. That student stands up, grabs a hold of NN and "threatens" him while smiling. NN takes the washcloth back to the bucket.

At the end of the observation NN chose to leave the group of students that he was socially engaged with, and went to the library alone. This might have been done to pick up new books for his next reading assignments, or to get some reading done before his next class.

4.1.7 Summary

In this paragraph I summarize my findings. NN displayed three categories of disruptive behavior. One category that was only disruptive to NN, and two categories that were disruptive to NN and other students and/or teachers. He mainly displayed category 1 and category 2 disruptive behavior. Category 3 behavior was only displayed during the third (and fifth) observation. During his disruptive behavior he did not get any work done, and when he displayed category 2 and 3 disruptive behavior, the other students involved in the behavior, and perhaps nearby students, were also interrupted from their learning. The teachers and assistant did little to interfere with his disruptive behavior, but that being said, in the second observation, where I was observing History, NN did not show a significant amount of disruptive behavior. In English there were several incidents of disruptive behavior during my three observations, and during these sessions it took a long time before the teacher interfered with the behavior. The assistant did not interfere with the behavior at all. This happened both when NN displayed behavior that was only disruptive to himself, and when he displayed behavior that was disruptive to others as well. NN also showed on-task behavior, and that was especially prominent when the assignment was something he enjoyed, for example reading in the fourth observation. In this assignment he showed that he could also be focused and involved when another student was displaying disruptive behavior and trying to make contact with him. He chose not to engage with that student and instead carried on working and reading.

4.1.8 Discussion and answer to research question 1

Have I really answered my first research question "What type of disruptive behavior is displayed?"? To really answer that question I need to go back to the definitions of disruptive behavior. Befring and Duesund (2012) describe disruptive behavior as behavior of verbal and/or physical character. It is often developed as a result from negative attention and academic defeats, and can be everything from small chatter to vandalism. This definition does not include the first type of disruptive behavior noted in this study. One reason for this may be because this type of behavior (resting or sleeping with his head on the desk) is not disruptive for other students and teachers. Teachers can more easily ignore this type of behavior, since it does not interfere with their teaching. Aasen et al. (2005) describes behavioral problems (and by that disruptive behavior) as behavior that is in discrepancy from what is expected at the

student's age, and that clearly disturbs or inhibits the student's own development or disturbs others. This definition includes the first type of disruptive behavior. Yet another view on this first type of behavior is taken in China; the off-task behavior noted in the first category is the most reported misbehavior by Chinese teachers (Ding, et al., 2008). When NN displayed the first type of disruptive behavior, he did not get involved in the learning assignment, hence his behavior was disruptive, as it interfered with *his* learning and *his* involvement, but it was only directly disruptive to him and not to other students and teachers.

To include both types of disruptive behavior in one definition I had to make my own definition as shown in section 2.1.1, and this definition focuses on the fact that the behavior interferes with the learning of the student in question and perhaps other students and teachers. This is made explicit in my results. NN does not get involved in his learning activity when he displays his disruptive behavior, no matter what kind of disruptive behavior he displays. And in light of this definition, we can view talking in class (when not supposed to) as non-disruptive as well. An example of this is when the girls seated behind NN were talking among themselves, but still working. They talked when they were not supposed to, and thereby showed behavior that is usually noted as disruptive, but they were still involved and writing. Their talking did not interfere with the learning activity (at least not so much that they stopped working), and it can therefore be said as not disruptive for them. Of course if this behavior disrupted other nearby students who where working it could be considered disruptive again

As mentioned in section 2.1, context is essential in regard to disruptive behavior. And this was noted in the results from my observations as well. NN talked quite a bit with his classmates in the fourth observation, but a lot of this talking was about the assignment, and therefore it is considered as on-task behavior. In the end of the same observation the talking escalated to subjects not related to the assignment, for example NN and Student 1 talked about a ball of wires that Student 1 showed to NN. But when this behavior occurred, the students did not have any new assignments to do, they were done with the previous assignment, and the teacher had taken back the poetry book that NN had been reading previously. Hence it can be said that the behavior was not disruptive, because the students did not have an assignment or learning activity to get disrupted from. Of course if this behavior disrupted other nearby students who where still working it could be considered disruptive again. But as I saw, none of the students at the table where NN was seated were working on any assignments at that time. When NN was engaged in category 3 disruptive behavior in the

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third observation, this behavior was considered as disruptive because it disturbed both NN and other students from becoming involved in the learning activity. In the fifth observation NN showed the same type of behavior, but in this case the behavior was not noted as disruptive, only as social interactions with other students.

Porter (2007) describes two types of disruptive behavior, the first *primary* behavior and the second *reactive* behavior. NN showed only primary disruptive behavior. His behavior was not a result of an interaction between him and the teacher, which triggered the behavior, e.g. talking back in a disrespectful matter when being chastised or criticized. His behavior was internally triggered, which is the definition of primary behavior.

A full answer to the research question: *"What type of disruptive behavior is displayed?"* would be: The disruptive behaviors displayed were categorized in three different categories. The first behavioral category was behavior only disruptive to the student in question. This behavior was noted by NN laying his head on the desk and resting or daydreaming. The second and third behavioral categories were behaviors disruptive to both the student in question and other student as well. The behaviors noted in these categories were talking about non subject-related matter to other students, and playful hitting on another student. NN displayed all three categories of disruptive behavior to a varying degree.

4.2 Research question 2: How can the Skill Model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?

To answer this research question I will look at different aspects related to involvement and the different categories of disruptive behavior, and how the teacher responded to these behaviors. I discuss these responses in light of being involved in the learning activity and achieving absorbed coping. I discuss each segment separately instead of bringing them all together to a whole discussion in the end, since that would have been a very long and complicated discussion with lots of different threads to pay attention to. First I discuss involvement through ignoring the disruptive behavior. Then I discuss involvement through academic self-confidence, underachieving, personal responsibility and giftedness. I also look at it from a different perspective and discuss involvement as a pre requisite for disruptive behavior. I have to point out that the conclusions I draw are only made on the basis of what I observed. The

situation might be totally different in other subjects, and they might have changed already from what I saw in the subjects I observed. Hence the conclusions are not set in stone.

4.2.1 Becoming involved by being ignored

In the first category of disruptive behavior, the behavior displayed by NN was resting, daydreaming or sleeping with his head on the desk. NN was not involved in the learning activity, which was writing a poem. If we establish that the teacher wants to have every child engaged in learning and working towards their academic fulfillments, it is safe to say that this kind of behavior is not what the teacher strives at for her students. When describing the school in section 3.7.2, I wrote about the Principal's view of why this school was achieving so high. *The teachers are committed to their students and the student receives opportunities to explore and develop new and existing interests as well as being challenged by creative projects throughout the school year. The school's vision is to make every child known and supported through a dynamic learning environment.* In view of the school's vision and the principal's assessment of her teachers it may be safe to say that the behavior shown by NN is not what they want for their students. NN does not seem to be exploring new or existing interests, and he does not seem to be challenged when he displays this disruptive behavior. It may also be necessary to ask the question: Does NN feel known (or even noticed) and supported when he displays this kind of behavior? Of course, no one but NN can answer that question, but when looking at what responses the teacher gave when he showed this behavior, it is possible to analyze the situation.

As shown in section 4.1.2, NN displayed category 1 disruptive behavior for the entire time period between 11:02 a.m. and 11:38 a.m. During this time both the teacher and the assistant noticed his behavior, but ignored it almost the entire time.

11:33: The assistant is looking at NN for a while, and then turns around and looks at the blackboard.

11:36: The teacher comes with some papers and starts talking with the girls in the group behind NN. She then walks past NN (who still has his head on the desk) but makes no move towards him.

Again, only NN can answer the question of whether he feels known and supported when he displays category 1 disruptive behavior. When the school talks about knowing their students, I
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assume they are talking about seeing them in a broader sense. Not just knowing who they are and seeing that they are in the classroom, but seeing them as individuals and accepting them for whom they are. To be seen and accepted is an essential part of human development and human wellbeing (Aasen, et al., 2002; Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). But it is not good enough for the teacher to feel that she knows every student, the students themselves must feel known. As shown in the previous citation there was an ample opportunity for the teacher to make contact with NN when she walked past him, but she did not do so at that time. Of course it must be said that the teacher and assistant have 19 other students in the classroom that also need help and that they cannot focus on one student whose behavior only affects himself; but the two previous citations came from a period of time when both the teacher and the assistant had good opportunity to approach and make contact with NN, as there were no other students requiring their attention at that time. Dreyfus (2001) contributes to the discussion of ignoring the behavior when he states: "…only emotional, involved, embodied human beings can become proficient and expert. So, …teachers must also be incarnating and encouraging involvement" (p. 48). By ignoring a behavior that is making the student detached from the learning activity, the teacher is not encouraging involvement for this student.

To be fair I must comment that the teacher did talk with NN at 11:16 a.m. The following citation shows this:

11:16: The teacher approaches NN and asks if he wrote something. NN says: "Nope. I am not that good at poems." The teacher answers: "I am positive that's not true." She walks away to talk with another student. NN lays his head on the desk again.

During this interaction, the student showed what might be considered low academic confidence. The teacher commented on this by saying that she did not think his assessment was true. The interaction was short and did not result in any involvement from NN; when the teacher left, he put his head on the desk again.

So why do teachers react this way? Hastings (2005) discusses the way teachers and educators react to problem behavior, and manifest that staff's (meaning teachers', assistants' and special needs educators') behavior is affected by behavior problems. And especially that staff's behavior is related to what kind of behavior problems shown, and by that show more attention to behavior that is attention-maintained, and less attention to behavior that is escape-maintained. In other words, the teachers and educators choose to react in a way that enhances

or maintain the problem behavior. This choice is not necessarily made consciously, but rather as a result of training, stress and to some degree, self-confidence (Hastings, 2005). Another reason for the teacher and assistant's choice of ignoring may have been a desire to not engage in the negative behavior with a negative response, but instead praise and be positive towards the appropriate behavior. This is a well-known strategy for handling problematic behavior, which often yield positive results (Colvin, 2010). One problem with this assessment is that the teacher did not praise the other students out loud. She did praise individuals when she commented on their work, but she did not praise the majority of the class for working so that NN could hear. Another issue is the fact that this strategy may work well with behavior that is attention maintained, as it removes the attention wanted by displaying the behavior, but not with behavior that is escape maintained since it still provides the escape wanted. Praising other students for doing their work is also just the first part of the strategy; if the student still displays off-task behavior he should be intervened with a comment about starting work (Colvin, 2010).

Hastings (2005) also describes that teachers often define problematic behavior as behavior that impact on them or are likely to cause organizational difficulties. This implies that teachers are less likely to intervene with problematic behavior that do not meet this definition, even if the behavior can cause educational difficulties to the student in question.

Another reason for the teacher and assistant's choice of ignoring may have been NN's diagnose. They have been informed that NN has ADD and is being medicated for this. NNs behavior may then have been seen as just an aspect of his diagnose, and by that they may have concluded that there is nothing to do, he needs more or less medication. This may of course be the case, his behavior might be caused initially by aspects of his diagnose. But this is also one of the most used explanations for disruptive behavior, made by teachers, namely blaming the behavior on the characteristics of the student or a disadvantaging home life, rather than aspects of their teaching methods (Porter, 2007). But there are numerous researches documenting how schools' quality affects achievement outcomes and behavioral difficulties (Mortimore et al., 1988; Rutter, 1983; Rutter & Maughan, 2002, from Porter, 2007), and how teachers deal with behavioral difficulties can therefore be seen as one of the contributing or dismantling factors to disruptive behavior in the classroom. If NN's behavior had been dealt with in a different way, that may have given a different result and perhaps gotten him more involved.

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It is impossible to say whether or not the choice to ignore NN's behavior was made consciously by the teacher and the assistant, without conferring with them. They may have decided on a strategy to leave him alone and give him space when it seems he needs it. Or it may be an assumption that since he is not disturbing anyone (other than himself) there is no need to interfere, after all he must learn to take responsibility for his actions. The teacher tried to respond to his behavior at 11:16 a.m. in the first observation, and since that did not yield any positive results she may have chosen to ignore it instead. What lie behind the choice of ignoring the behavior will just be speculations, but the consequence is that NN was not involved in the learning activity and he did not do what was required of him. And if he is to be known and supported, and challenged through school activities he needs to be approached when he shows this disruptive behavior. In my observations I did not see any evidence of the fact that ignoring his behavior helped him become more engaged, rather the contrary. NN showed this behavior from 11:02 a.m. to 11:38 a.m. in the first observation. At 11:16 a.m. the teacher talked briefly with him, but NN did not become involved after this conversation. He continued showing this behavior until Student 1 made contact with him at 11:38 a.m.. At 11:42 a.m. the teacher returned and asked NN about his work.

To relate this behavior to the Skill Model, I must first look at the learning activity in question. The students were asked to write a poem, they could write about anything they wanted, and they had the choice to use something from their warm-up session or to write something entirely new. The Skill Model describes how we can go from novice to expert in a skill (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001). And this skill could be poetry writing, or writing in general. It is difficult to say what kind of skill level NN has in both general writing and poetry writing, but as he is a 7th grader it is natural to assume that he has done a fair bit of writing during his seven years at school. He will by then have had a lot of practice doing writing assignments at school and home. As a novice writer he would have to keep in mind spelling, grammar and at the very beginning how to form the letters. But at this grade level he probably has surpassed this skill level, and I assume he has reached the level of competence, or maybe even proficiency in writing. When it comes to the specific skill of poetry writing it is more difficult to assume NN's skill level. If NN is a novice in poetry writing he will need to learn rules to apply to his writing. These rules could e.g. be that in certain types of poems every second line needs to rhyme. His skill level in poetry writing will probably be affected by his original skill in writing and the more specific skill requirements for poetry. His skill level in poetry is a result of his previous experience and practice with poetry. When NN

replied "Nope, I am not that good at writing poems," we can assume that he has had some experience with writing poetry before, but his self assessment of his own skill in poetry writing is low. His skill level in writing indicates that he may be able to reach absorbed coping in writing, but with the limited information I have it is impossible to say whether he has had the necessary practice to be able to obtain absorbed coping in poetry writing or not. Even if his skill level is not high enough to achieve absorbed coping in poetry writing, he may still become involved in writing poetry, and by that enhance his skill level.

The Skill Model indicates that it is necessary to be emotionally involved in the activity to reach absorbed coping. But if the student is only a novice in the skill, he will not be able to reach absorbed coping. A novice needs to apply learned rules to the skill practice. The involvement start at the level of competence, where the student chooses which action to take and by that becomes involved in the results of these actions (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001). But this does not mean that the novice is not involved at all, it just means that the novice is more concerned with following the rules to produce the wanted result. To reach the level of proficiency, the student needs to become involved in the activity itself, not just the results afterwards. In the poetry session in the first observation, it seemed that NN was not involved in the activity, and not involved in the results of his actions. His action was putting his head on the desk and staying that way during most of the writing session. This action resulted in him not being able to write a poem, and by that not finishing the assignment given. If this continues he will not receive a grade in this assignment, as he has nothing to deliver. This indicates that he is not involved in the results of his action (not getting a grade, or getting a low grade). On the contrary, he might be deeply involved in the results of his actions, by wanting a good grade. But because of other issues derived from being an underachiever there are conflicts between what he wants and his actions. This aspect will be discussed more thoroughly section 4.2.3.

NN was involved in the warm-up session and he was writing most of the time. But something changed when they were going to write their own poem. In the warm-up session they could just write whatever came to mind, it did not have to have any meaning or importance; it was just a warm-up. But when the real assignment started they were asked to write a poem, they were then asked to write something with meaning and importance to the students. And this might have affected the change in NN's involvement.

In my observations NN did not only show this first type of disruptive behavior, he also showed category 2 and 3, e.g. talking with other students and playfully hitting other students. The teacher and assistant ignored all these three categories of behavior at some time. But it was the first category of disruptive behavior that was ignored the most.

In the third observation, NN was showing category 2 and 3 disruptive behavior with a fellow student while the assistant was sitting at the same table, ignoring the behavior. The following citation shows this:

> 10:50: Student 4 starts humming and he and NN begin to push and hit each other in a playful fashion. NN drops his paper on the floor, picks it up and starts talking with Student 4. They are talking in a low voice. The assistant is seated at the same table, talking with another student; she says nothing to NN or Student 4.

Neither NN nor Student 4 was involved in the learning activity during this episode. They were disturbing each other, and they might have been disturbing the other nearby students as well. But still, the assistant did not interfere. As argued in section 4.1.4 the assistant may not have felt comfortable with interfering, and felt that this was supposed to be the teacher's job. But even so, she had ample opportunity to comment on their behavior as she was seated right next to them. By not commenting and ignoring she may even have made the impression that this behavior was acceptable.

So what can be done to get NN involved in poetry writing? Is ignoring his behavior a good way to get him involved? Through my observations I would have to say no, ignoring his behavior did not seem to yield the results wanted. Oedegaard (2011) and Colvin (2010) agree with my assessment that ignoring the behavior will not make the behavior disappear, the behavior needs to be understood and identified, and ignoring it might make the difficulties more severe.

4.2.2 Involvement and academic self-confidence

How does NN's academic self-confidence relate to his involvement, or lack thereof, in the learning activities? NN showed signs of low academic confidence during my observations. This showed itself through statements like: "Nope, I am not that good at poems" and "nothing noticeable". A low academic self-confidence may influence motivation and coping skill in school activities (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2005). If NN does not believe that he will do well in

his assignment he might be thinking "what is the use of trying?", and therefore give up even before he has tried. Earlier academic defeats may also influence his self-confidence and motivation and put him in a bad circle (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2005; Befring and Duesund, 2012). His earlier achievements give him low motivation and low self-confidence, which results in him not engaging in the learning activity and by that getting even more academic defeats. Constant failure in school will only result in more failure, and the student that discovers he is good *at* nothing may become good *for* nothing (Wellington, 1965).

When NN showed the signs of low academic self-confidence, the teacher replied that she was positive that his assessment was not true. But she did not do anything more to show him that this was not the case. Students with low self-confidence may need more than just words to change their perspective (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2005). If previous similar assignments have resulted in low grades or other kinds of defeats, it may not be enough for the teacher to *say* that NN is better than he thinks, she needs to *show* it. But how can she achieve this? One way could be to take something that NN has actually written and show him how this is better than he thinks. For example, the teacher could have taken some of the sentences or words that NN wrote in his warm-up session and tell NN why these sentences were good and what he could do to build a poem on these. Changing self-confidence is not done quickly, and it may take quite some time before NN realizes that his current self-assessment is wrong.

This low self-confidence could also be seen as a temporary breakdown. A temporary breakdown indicates that something stands in the way of our absorbed coping and must be dealt with before continuing the activity (Dreyfus, 1991). The low self-confidence stands in the way and disturbs the absorbed coping by making the student think that he cannot do this after all. NN was involved in the warm-up session, and might have achieved absorbed coping during some of this session. This may be because they were writing whatever came to mind, and what they wrote did not need any specific meaning, they were just supposed to let the pencil continue, no matter what. In this session there was no pressure, no goal of performing to a certain level, and that might have taken the edge of the writing and made it easier to become involved and achieve absorbed coping. But when the warm-up session was over the pressure was on again. Now they had to write a definite poem. This is the time where the temporary breakdown steps in; the low self-confidence takes over and it may seem that NN does not think he can write a poem. "When there is a serious disturbance…[the person] is forced into…*deliberation*" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 72). When in deliberation, NN has to stop and

think over what is going on and what he plans to do. His self-confidence stands in the way of his involvement and NN has to deal with his self-confidence instead of dealing with his assignment. And the way he deals with this is by putting his head on the desk and "shutting down". Another way of looking at the low self-confidence is that it is not just a *temporary* breakdown, but rather a *total* breakdown. A total breakdown happens when our work is permanently interrupted, for example when a piece of equipment we need is missing e.g. the pencil to write with. When the total breakdown is in effect we can either choose to stare helplessly at the remaining objects, or we can take a new detached stance and go into theoretical reflection (Dreyfus, 1991). In this setting it seems that NN has chosen the first option. His low self-confidence permanently interrupts his absorbed coping and he stares helplessly at the sheet and puts his head on the desk.

When the student shows low academic self-confidence he may have trouble becoming involved in the learning activity. He may lack motivation to engage in the activity and therefore will not be able to obtain absorbed coping. Because of his low academic self-confidence one may argue that NN will not be able to achieve absorbed coping, because he either lacks the necessary motivation to become involved in the activity of poetry writing, or he gets disturbed by his low self-confidence and ends up in temporary or total breakdown. By changing NN's perception of himself and his accomplishments, the teacher may be able to get NN more motivated for poetry writing, and by that get him involved in the learning activity. Changing his perception of poetry writing may also change his perception and self-confidence in other learning activities.

4.2.3 Involvement and underachieving

As NN scores consistently lower than what one would expect from someone with his abilities he may be referred to as an underachiever (see section 3.7.1). Underachievers might have a discrepancy between their conscious self-concept and their actual self-concept (Wellington and Wellington, 1965). They have an ideal self-concept where they believe that they can do what they want to do, but in their actual self-concept they do not believe this at all. Because of this discrepancy they do not dare to try achieving, because this might ruin their ideal self-concept and prove their actual self-concept right. Instead they just defer from trying. If they do not try, they can still say: "I could have done it, if I only tried, but I didn't", and no one can prove them wrong (Wellington and Wellington, 1965). If the student is resisting involvement

as a result of this discrepancy, he may risk not only stagnating his ongoing learning, but regressing as well in that particular learning domain (Dreyfus, 2001). Dreyfus (2001) commented on this while referring to a study by Patricia Benner on nurses' skill acquisition. The nurses who were not emotionally involved would not develop further and would eventually burn out. He states: "In general, resistance to involvement and risk leads to stagnation and ultimately to boredom and regression" (Dreyfus, 2001, p. 38). The underachievers may be seen as afraid of risking their conscious self-concept and by that defer from becoming involved. The continuing effect is a negative spiral of stagnation and regression.

When looking at NN, his lack of trying might be a sign of this discrepancy. But it may also be that he has no discrepancy; he has no ideal self-concept, only the low actual self-concept, as discussed in section 4.2.2. This is difficult, if not impossible, to verify through observations. And it would require more than just these five observations to clarify his actual self-concept.

This possible discrepancy may interfere with NN's involvement. If he is afraid of proving his ideal self-concept wrong, he may be afraid of getting involved in the learning activity. Involvement may for him seem like a path to destroy his self-confidence and self-concept. It may seem better to just defer from trying and getting involved, than risking utter failure. The problem with this is that it may be very difficult for NN to get out of this circle by himself. He needs help to make him see that involvement is not a bad idea, and that it will *contribute* to his self-confidence rather than destroying it.

In section 2.3.2 I cited "Peggy", a former underachiever: "Suddenly I could see that courses were supposed to mean something to *me.* The ideas became exciting, and I couldn't wait to go back to the dorm to write about them. I became completely involved and the whole world seemed to change" (Wellington and Wellington, 1965, p. 30). In the new course she was asked to write essays about the ideas presented and what *she* thought of them, and that made her change her entire perception. Suddenly she could put behind her the former discrepancy, and really try to do her best. She continued by saying that an important part of this change was that the essays were not judged or graded, and this took the edge off the concept of trying. She could try and get engaged without the risk of failure. And when she saw that being involved was meaningful she could transfer this new knowledge to the other courses she was taking. Of course this does not mean that the answer to underachieving is removing grades and therefore removing the pressure. What happened to Peggy might not be transferable to

other underachieving students. But being able to become involved in a safe and risk free environment may contribute to a positive change.

Maybe NN would have a positive reaction to participating in a writing seminar, where the focus is not on performing, but in the joy of becoming involved in writing. And this writing seminar could take on different aspects of writing, for example poetry. NN was described as a gifted writer by the Special Needs Educator, and for him to be able to explore this talent in a risk free environment may be an opportunity to see that school activities can be interesting and fulfilling, if one only dare to become involved.

4.2.4 Involvement through personal responsibility

Personal responsibility is an important part of the school structure. The students are responsible for attending classes, following the school conduct and doing their homework. Personal responsibility is also a part of the Skill Model (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Dreyfus, 2001). When the students reach the level of competence they become personally responsible for the outcome of their actions, as they choose themselves which perspective, or which actions to apply in order to reach their goal. When the result is not what they anticipated, the students are responsible and may feel confused and distraught. But if the result is the one hoped or anticipated, the students may feel a level of elation that is unknown to the novice and advanced beginner student, who only followed the rules (Dreyfus, 2001).

The History teacher made a big point of personal responsibility by explaining to the students his goals for the class. These goals were:

1) Becoming informed world citizen
2) Learn to like history and see how it affects your life
3) Becoming responsible students

The goals may make it clearer to the students why they need to learn history, and what may come in the end if they work as they should. The teacher emphasized that he was not able to go home with the students and help them with their homework. They had to do it themselves. But if they learned good study techniques now they would benefit from it in high school, get good grades and be accepted into a good college.

By clarifying these goals the teacher made the path to involvement a lot more open than it was before. He did not put all the pressure and responsibility on the students, but he made it clear that as students, they had some responsibilities. They could not just blame their possible failure on the teacher, or other aspects of the school, if they did not do what was expected of them. These goals may make it easier for the students to become personally involved in the results of their actions, e.g. their learning and grades, and from there clear the path to becoming involved in the learning activity itself.

4.2.5 Involvement and giftedness

What sets the gifted student aside and may make it harder for him to become involved and achieve absorbed coping in the learning activity? As mentioned in section 2.3 there are different categories of gifted students, but what links them all together is the need for individual assessment and challenges beyond the normal curriculum. If the gifted student does not get his academic needs fulfilled he may be at risk to become bored at school, have troubles with adaption and well-being, get emotional problems and act out in a disruptive way (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008, Hagenes, 2009; Shaywitz et al., 2001).

NN is in this study referred to as a gifted student. He shows signs of fitting the category of "double-labeled" as he is said to have the diagnosis of ADD as well as being gifted. In my observation I did not see any signs of individual assignments or challenges for NN, but as I do not know where his true gifts and talents lie, I cannot say for sure if he needs bigger challenges in English and History, which were the two subjects I observed in.

NN displayed disruptive behavior of three different categories when he was not involved in the learning activity. Maybe this lack of involvement came as a result of boredom, that NN did not feel the assignments were challenging enough for him. Gifted students may react in very different ways if their needs are not met, they may for example act out disruptively, or withdraw into themselves (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Webb, et. al, 2005, Hagenes, 2009; Shaywitz et al., 2001). The first category of disruptive behavior in this study is NN putting his head on the desk and resting, daydreaming or sleeping. This behavior can be seen as withdrawal, it may seem that NN does not see the use or need for doing the assignment, and then instead withdraws into himself by putting his head on the desk

and staying that way until he gets interrupted by other students or the teacher. This withdrawal is not the only way NN copes with the possible lack of challenges. He also acts out disruptively by talking with other students and hitting them in a playful way.

All human development is marked by a mutual adaption. A child or student needs to feel accepted for who they are, but often the school requires the student to adapt to the school without the school adapting to the student. This one-way demand for adaption may cause problematic behavior and troubles for the student (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). Maybe the school has not adapted to the needs of NN, but still requires him to adapt to them. This might make NN feel that he is not accepted for whom he is. I quote the schools vision again: *The school's vision is to make every child known and supported through a dynamic learning environment.* Known and supported may be seen as synonymous to being accepted. If NN is not getting the challenges he needs and the school requires him to adapt without them adapting to him, is he then known and supported? Is a one-way adaption a dynamic learning environment? My personal answer to these questions are initially "no". But I have only seen a very small part of NN's school environment and this flaws my view. Even though I feel that what I saw establishes the fact that NN did not get his needs fulfilled, they may have been met when I was not observing.

Involvement comes from motivation, and motivation does not happen by itself, it has to be encouraged by stimuli from within the student or from the environment (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008). If NN feels bored and unmotivated, his involvement may continue to be low, and he may instead engage in disruptive behavior by withdrawing into himself, or acting out, talking with other students or hitting them. Since NN does not become engaged and involved in the learning activities we can assume that he does not have any inner motivations. Or he may have had inner motivations for learning activities earlier, but they may have been crushed by defeats, low encouragement, low stimulation and disillusions from not feeling acknowledged (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). If NN has no inner motivation for learning, his motivation needs to be encouraged from the environment, either by teachers, assistants, other students or parents. But how do you motivate a student that might have had his earlier motivation crushed, as a result of becoming disillusioned by not being acknowledged for whom he is? There is no easy recipe for this; the best method would be trial and failure until you find what makes that particular student tick.

Boredom may also be seen as a total breakdown for NN. If he feels bored enough, this boredom may stand in the way of achieving absorbed coping. The boredom disrupts him from the learning activity, and instead of engaging in theoretical reflection on how to handle this boredom he either withdraws into himself, or engages in disruptive behavior with his classmates.

4.2.6 Lack of involvement, a prerequisite for disruptive behavior?

Up to now I have discussed how different aspects of disruptive behavior, and the teachers' responses to the behavior, could affect involvement in the learning activity. I also discussed how different aspects of NN might affect his involvement. In this section I look at involvement from a different perspective and see if lack of prior involvement may contribute to disruptive behavior. I will not discuss any particular reasons for this lack of involvement further (as I have done that in section 4.2.1-4.2.5), just that it exist and how it may affect NN's and others students' behavior.

In the third observation NN was working with poetry, and he was supposed to write a poem during the class. The class had been told that they could not go to lunch if they had not delivered a poem to the teacher by the end of the period. NN had not been involved in the earlier observed poetry sessions, and in this session he was spending most of the time chatting with the other students at his table, and hitting one of them in a playful fashion.

10:45: NN looks at one of the students at the table; he moves his hand in a peculiar fashion and the student laughs. The student seated next to NN returns (Student 4) and NN pushes him, Student 4 pushes back and they both laugh.

NN was clearly not involved in the learning activity when he displayed this behavior. He was supposed to be writing a poem. This lack of involvement may have contributed to his disruptive behavior. As he was not engaged in what he was supposed to do, he found other means of engaging, and instead started displaying disruptive behavior. NN did not only disrupt himself during this session, he disrupted the other students at his table, and perhaps other nearby students as well.

10:47: The three other students at NN's table all have their pencils out and are writing. NN has his head on his arms; he pushes Student 4 next to him with his elbow. Student 4 smiles and returns to working.

10:56: NN starts talking with the only student left at his table. The student laughs and responds, he (the student) then returns to his writing.

NN's lack of involvement did not only affect himself, but also the other students seated at his table. Even though they were involved in writing they became disturbed by NN's lack of involvement. The disturbance was small, and the students became focused on their work again after responding to NN's behavior. But even if the disturbance was small, it was numerous. During the 15 minutes I observed in the third observation, I recorded six different incidents of disruptive behavior from NN, some of the incidents lasting several minutes. Between 10:50 a.m. and 10:53 a.m. NN and Student 4 where engaged in disruptive behavior, and did not stop until Student 4 was moved to another table. During this incident the disturbance was not small, it took over the previous involvement and absorbed coping that Student 4 had been engaged in.

NN's disruptive behavior can be viewed as a temporary breakdown (Dreyfus, 1991), not for himself, but for the other students at his table. When NN started talking with or hitting Student 4, his behavior stood in the way of Student 4's absorbed coping. Student 4 had to attend to NN by replying to his chatting, or hitting him back before he could engage in absorbed coping again.

[NN] pushes Student 4 next to him with his elbow. Student 4 smiles and returns to working.

NN pushes him, Student 4 pushes back and they both laugh.

NN's disruptive behavior was not a total breakdown for the other students, as they were able to get back to absorbed coping when they had attended to NN's disruption. But for NN his lack of involvement may be seen as a total breakdown. To achieve absorbed coping in the learning activity (writing poetry) he needs to first be involved. This lack of involvement may then be seen as a "lack of equipment" and it therefore stands in the way of NN's absorbed coping and implies a total breakdown instead. But this time, instead of staring helplessly at the sheet and putting his head on the desk, or engaging in theoretical reflection and figuring

out how to get past this lack of involvement, NN chooses a third path, the path of disruptive behavior. When I say "choose", I do not necessarily mean that the choice is made consciously, it may be done unconsciously as a result from previous experience and the social context he exists in at that moment. There is no way of knowing if NN sits there thinking about what path to take and then chooses the path that leads to disruptive behavior, only NN knows for sure what goes on inside his head.

The intentional arc may also be relevant in this discussion (as discussed in section 2.2.4). The intentional arc pulls us to get an optimal grip on the world, but it goes limp in illness (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). NN's lack of involvement may result in disruptive behavior, and the disruptive behavior makes the intentional arc go limp so NN no longer gets pulled to get an optimal grip on that particular school setting. In this session, the optimal grip would be to engage in poetry writing and not disturbing the other students, as well as following the rules and norms in the classroom. When NN displays disruptive behavior, he is not getting an optimal grip on the assignment, and the disruptive behavior becomes the "illness" that makes the intentional arc go limp. Through displaying disruptive behavior it is not only NN's intentional arc that goes limp, but he disturbs the other students' optimal grip as well. They are pulled from their optimal grip (and their absorbed coping) and must deal with the disruptive behavior before they can return to the assignment and get back their optimal grip again.

Student 4 started to engage in disruptive behavior with NN at his own accord after a few minutes.

> *10:50: Student 4 starts humming and he and NN begin to push and hit each other in a playful fashion.*

When looking at this example we may say that the disruptive behavior initially shown by NN became contagious, as described by Oedegaard (2011), and that might have changed Student 4's intentional arc. Student 4's optimal grip on the assignment was no longer being involved and writing poetry, but instead engaging in disruptive behavior with NN. This contagious effect may also be seen in relation to the mood of the classroom. When several students are grouped together there is a shared mood and this mood determines what matters the most to the students. The optimal mood keeps the students involved, whereas the wrong mood might make them engage in disruptive behavior as they do not deem the learning activity to be important enough (Dreyfus, 2001; Dreyfus, 1991; Oedegaard, 2011). Student 4 might then

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have been affected by NN's mood and by that changed his intentional arc. It is not certain however that it went that far, because when the teacher interrupted the disruptive setting and moved Student 4 to another desk, he (Student 4) became involved in poetry writing again.

10:53: The teacher comes back and moves Student 4 to another desk in the classroom. NN looks at him across the room. Student 4 "mouths" something to NN, and he "answers" back. Student 4 starts to write again.

It may seem as though student 4's intentional arc was not changed for the entire session, only when he was seated next to NN. When student 4 was moved, his optimal grip returned to working on the assignment and the intentional arc pulled him back to get this original optimal grip again. His mood changed back to involvement instead of disruptive behavior.

Getting NN involved in the activity may help him change his intentional arc to the optimal one, e.g. engaging in the learning activity and following the rules and norms in the classroom, not disturbing the other students. Since disruptive behavior may be contagious, getting NN involved will also keep other students from being disrupted, and avoid the disruptive behavior from becoming the optimal grip in the classroom (Oedegaard, 2011).

4.2.7 Involvement and on-task behavior

NN did not only show disruptive behavior, he also showed on-task behavior during my observations. Especially in the fourth observation there were several occasions where NN was involved and showed an extensive focus on the assignment at hand.

11:38: Student 1 is trying to make contact with NN; he is playing with a ball of wires in front of him. NN continues reading.

In this example NN shows that when he is involved in the task, he does not only avoid engaging in disruptive behavior, but he shows an intense focus on the task and by that does not get interrupted by Student 1's disruptive behavior.

11:40: Student 1 is talking to NN and he replies in a low voice. NN continues reading, this time in a low voice to himself.

In this citation NN dismantles Student 1's disruptive behavior by answering him, but not letting the conversation go on. This way NN can continue with the assignment at hand and finish his reading.

Reading is said to be one of NN's strongest suits, and it is an assignment he can be truly involved in. In the two previous citations it seemed that NN was able to achieve absorbed coping in reading. It may seem as his involvement and focus kept him from engaging in disruptive behavior, and as well kept him from becoming disturbed by another student's disruptive behavior.

In the first observation NN was involved in the assignment in the beginning. He did not show the same focus as he did in the fourth observation, but he did not engage in disruptive behavior either.

> *10:52: [The teacher says:] "Write about 'in my dream'." NN is writing. "Write about 'since you asked'." NN stops writing and start again after about 20 seconds. "Write about shiny things." NN writes focused for about 30 seconds.*

In this citation NN is clearly not as focused and involved as he was in the two previous citations. He writes with focus for some time, then stops and starts again after a little while. Of course one could say that the fact that he stops does not mean that he is not involved, he could just be thinking about what to write. If we look at the assignment however (described in section 4.1.2), the students were supposed to always keep their pencils going, always write something, and not think about what they were writing. If NN was totally involved in the task and achieved absorbed coping one can assume that he would have continued writing during the entire assignment, and not taking these breaks. But it may seem that his involvement was enough to keep him from engaging in disruptive behavior, even if he does not seem to have achieved absorbed coping in this learning activity.

4.2.8 Summary and answer to research question 2

In this section I summarize my discussions and breaks it down to give an answer to my research question: *How can the Skill Model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?*

The Skill Model describes that to be able to advance from the level of advanced beginner to the level of competence, the student needs to become emotionally involved. At the level of

competence the student becomes involved in the results of his actions, in order to progress even further to the level of proficiency, the student needs to become involved in the action itself, not just the results. A lack of involvement may then cause the student to stagnate at a lower skill level, and not progress as he should. This lack of involvement may then lead the student into off-task or disruptive behavior as a way of escaping from the assigned task.

I have discussed how NN's lack of involvement may be caused by different aspects of him, and by how the teachers react to his disruptive behavior. By ignoring NN's disruptive behavior, the teacher might rather be enhancing it, and by that making it easier and more likely that NN will engage in disruptive behavior again. Ignoring the behavior may also make NN feel that he is not "known and supported"; he is not accepted for whom he is. This does not encourage involvement for NN. NN's lack of involvement may be caused by his low academic self-confidence. He does not feel he can do the assignment, so instead of trying, he chooses to engage in disruptive behavior. As NN may be seen as an underachiever, this self-confidence might also be a discrepancy between NN's ideal self-concept and his actual self-concept. He does not dare to try for fear of proving his ideal self-concept wrong. As NN may be seen as gifted, his lack of involvement may be caused by boredom, that he feels there is no need to get involved, the assignment is boring and does not meet his need for academic challenges.

It is impossible to determine what exactly is the cause of NN's lack of involvement in just five observations. It may be some of the reasons mentioned, it may be all of them and it may be none of them. But the fact that he lacked involvement in some of the learning activities I observed was clear, and this lack of involvement may have caused his disruptive behavior. When NN showed disruptive behavior, regardless of category, he was not involved in the learning activity. And when he engaged in category 2 and 3 disruptive behavior, he disrupted the involvement of other students as well. When NN was involved in the learning activity he displayed on-task behavior, and even deflected disruptive behavior from another student.

A short and concise answer to the research question would be: The Skill Model describes that involvement is necessary to progress in skill acquisition. Learning to learn can be seen as a skill, and this skill requires involvement as well. If a student lacks this involvement he may as a result engage in disruptive behavior instead of engaging in the learning activity. Gifted students may become bored in school if they do not get their needs met, and this boredom may lead to lack of involvement and by that lead to disruptive behavior.

4.3 Are the observations and my analysis legitimate?

Is it possible to get a good view of NN and his behavior through observations? We can only see what he is doing; we cannot observe what is going on inside his head and what he really thinks about the assignments and his own behavior. Through the analysis I have used theories to explain his behavior, but they are viewed through my own presumptuousness. To understand NN better I would have to implement interviews with him, but unfortunately the time limits to this thesis would not allow that. However, I was lucky in my last observation and I received a copy of a poem that NN wrote in the very end of the period. I have included the poem the way it was written in appendix 3, and here as a citation:

Boredom backs you into a corner. Getting into that corner is so much easier than getting out. The corner turns into a cycle; a vicious cycle that you can't get out of. A cycle of boredom, and a blank mind, it gets you staring out into empty space, and waking up twenty minutes later, realizing you were staring at the same spot on the wall the entire time. Boredom has backed you into a corner. Now it is your turn to try to figure it out.

I am not going to engage in analyzing the poem here, but I feel it necessary to point out the similarities between his poem and the total breakdown discussed in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.5. Maybe it was not the low self-confidence that initiated the total breakdown, but the boredom felt by NN, as discussed in section 4.2.5. It may also be that the low self-confidence is a result from boredom, or that the said boredom is NN's own way of keeping his ideal self-concept as discussed in section 4.2.3.

I also have to point out that the students could write the poem about whatever came to mind, and it seems very interesting that boredom is what NN ended up writing a poem about, considering one of my comments is that NN feels bored and by that does not feel the need to, or want to get involved in the learning activity.

4.4 Possible consequences

What are the possible consequences of NN's disruptive behavior, how he handles school activities at this moment and how the school attends to his needs? The first consequence is

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that if this situation continues into high school, NN will not get the grades and scores he needs to get into college in order to pursue his possible academic dreams and whishes. He might even become a drop out (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011; Wellington and Wellington, 1965). This will not only be a disappointment for NN and his family, but also for the society as a whole, that will loose a brilliant mind that may be able to help research, science, medicine, politics, social sciences or whatever it is that he wants to pursue in the future. There is no doubt that NN is smart, and the world needs brilliant minds to be able to figure out and solve the challenges of the 21st century. If his probable underachievement, boredom, low self-confidence and lack of involvement continue without being cared to, we might never know what NN could have accomplished.

If NN never learns that he needs to work hard to accomplish something, he might take this attitude with him when he finish school and starts working. This kind of attitude is perhaps even more unwanted in workplaces than in schools, and he could end up becoming an undesirable job applicant.

Another and more grave possible consequence is that if this situation continues, NN might develop social and emotional difficulties (Skogen and Idsoe, 2011). His possible low self-concept could become even lower, and he might end up becoming depressed and withdraw even more from school. He already shows sign of low motivation and perhaps dislike of school and school activities. If this continues, his dislike could develop into hate, not only towards the school itself, but towards society as well (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). These possible difficulties could end up with NN becoming unfit to work and relying on social benefits.

NN may also start engaging in more disruptive behavior, and his behavior may change and become more disturbing as his low motivation and dislike towards school activities continues. If we accept that disruptive behavior may become contagious (Oedegaard, 2011), an escalation in NN's disruptive behavior may also infuse other students to start acting out disruptively.

If NN does not get his needs fulfilled at school, he may start to seek challenges other places, for example in social groups outside of school, and even criminal gangs (Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). Instead of going on the path towards higher education and academic stimulation he might end up seeking stimuli from criminal activities, and from the social relations in gangs.

This paints a very dark and grave picture of some of the possible consequences for NN's situation if nothing happens. But of course these are just possibilities, some of them even quite extreme. There is also the possibility that it all ends well. NN might somehow become motivated for school again, and become involved, engaged and start to work towards his goals, as a result of inner or outer encouragement. But as long as there is a possibility for NN to move in the wrong direction, something should be done to assess his situation and get him on a more safe, promising and fulfilling path.

4.5 Different strategies for enhancing NN's involvement

In this section I discuss different strategies that can be used to get NN involved in the learning activity when he is engaging in disruptive behavior.

4.5.1 The need for individualization

Before discussing the different strategies for improving involvement and defusing disruptive behavior, I would like to point out that the first strategy would be to give an individual assessment of NN. What are NN's strengths and talents; does he need a different and more advanced curriculum in some subjects? What kind of learning strategies does he use? The easiest way to get NN involved might be to just provide him with more challenging assignment that are fit to his cognitive level. These more advanced assignments do not need to be aside from the topics the rest of the class is working on, but be an enrichment of the topic on a more advanced level (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). NN may then be able to delve deeper into the material in question, and the teacher does not have to change topic for him. How could this have been done in the first poetry session? When the teacher noticed that NN was not writing his poem and instead laying with his head on the desk, she could have approached him (as she did later in the session) and asked about his warm-up. If we assume that NN would have answered the same, that he found nothing of interest in his warm-up and by that concluded that he had nothing to write about, the teacher could still have made the comment that she did not think that was true. But instead of leaving him at that, she could have given him a poetry book to read in and perhaps get some pointers or ideas from instead. As reading is an assignment NN likes and often chooses, this could be a

way to get him more involved in the learning activity. By giving him this different approach, NN would be able to engage in a task he enjoys and as well be on-task. This approach might not have gotten NN involved in writing a poem of his own at once, but it might trigger some ideas for his own poem. And even if he just kept on reading the poetry book, he would have been engaged in the topic of the session, and not just escaping it by keeping his head on the desk.

Another way of individualizing NN's learning could be through acceleration. The prospect of accelerations lets a gifted student move on to newer topics faster than the other students, and may even, if necessary, provide the student to skip a class (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). In NN's case skipping a class is probably not preferable as he is already in 7th grade. But acceleration in some of the subjects may be a good way to get NN involved again. If NN usually is involved and engaged in the beginning of a project, but gets more and more detached as the project goes on, this might be a sign of boredom, because he feels the project goes too slowly for him. If he gets the opportunity to accelerate his work within the project, and then when he is finished perhaps go into enriching the project, this could change his view on school activities and keep him from engaging in disruptive behavior. This may also change NN's self-assessment, self-confidence and self-concept. Of course acceleration may be extremely difficult to provide in practice, and a teacher may find it hard to let his students loose on the entire curriculum. There is no easy answer to this, but the fact remains that gifted students often benefit from acceleration (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011).

4.5.2 Extinction

Putting the disruptive behavior to extinction means that the behavior will not receive enhancement (Colvin, 2010; Peterson et al., 2005). For example, talking out loud in class without raising your hand will not receive attention from the teacher or other students when this behavior is put to extinction. When NN is putting his head on the desk and wanting to escape from work, he would rather receive attention and be prompted to start working on the assignment, instead of being ignored and by that receiving the escape he wants. An important consideration is that when a behavior is put to extinction, the behavior often escalates before getting better (Colvin, 2010). This escalation may make teachers afraid that the extinction strategy is not working, and resume to the original strategy. If the escalated disruptive

behavior gets the enhancement it wants (e.g. attention or escape) this might make the situation even worse later. But if the teachers are aware that the behavior may escalate, they can meet the escalated behavior with the proper response and it will soon defuse (Colvin, 2010).

In NN's case he displays both escape-maintained and attention-maintained behavior. The first category is escape-maintained and should by that be met with a response that prompted NN to get to work. The same example as used in section 4.5.1 with giving NN a poetry book to read, could also be used as a way of putting the category 1 disruptive behavior to extinction. The second and third category can be seen as both attention maintained, and escape-maintained. As long as NN receives attention from the other nearby students, he continues to engage in disruptive behavior with them, by talking or hitting. If this behavior were put to extinction, he would not receive attention for this behavior, neither by the teacher, the assistant nor the other students. NN did not receive attention from the teacher or assistant in the beginning of the third observation, but as he did receive attention from the other students at his table; he was receiving the attention he wanted. And by that he also received the escape he wanted. By putting these behaviors to extinction it would have to have been made explicitly clear to all students that they are not to engage NN (or others) when he is displaying these behaviors. He would also be met by prompts to start working, but receiving no comments on the behavior.

4.5.3 Functional Communication Training and choice making

Functional Communication Training (FCT) is a strategy where the disruptive behavior is put on extinction, and the student learns to prompt for breaks instead of engaging in disruptive or problematic behavior (Peterson et al., 2005). With this strategy the students often quickly learn to prompt for breaks, and the disruptive or problematic behavior decreases to low levels. However the problem with FCT is that students often tend to prompt for breaks with a high frequency, and by that there is a low frequency of engaging in the assigned task (Peterson et al., 2005) In a study by Peterson et al. (2005) they introduced choice making to two students who had implemented FCT. When they prompted for break they were given the choice of either getting a short break right away, or getting a longer and more fulfilling break when they were done with the assigned task. The results were that the problematic behavior stayed low, and task engagement increased, after a short while, when the students were given this choice (Peterson et al., 2005).

FCT and choice making could be an interesting strategy for NN. He would then learn to prompt for breaks instead of engaging in disruptive behavior, and with choice making he would hopefully be more engaged in the assigned task, as that would provide him with longer and more fulfilling breaks.

The problem with this strategy is that it requires both time for the teacher and NN to learn, and it requires more continuously attention to NN, than what the teacher would be able to give, especially in the beginning. But if NN were to learn this strategy successfully, he might, after a while, not need the continuous follow-up from the teacher. He would then remember that he could take a longer break when he finished his assignment, and hopefully do so out of his own accord.

4.5.4 Activities outside of school

If there is no way of meeting NN's needs in the regular school setting, a possible solution is to find means to meet them outside of the school setting. If his home environment is nurturing his talents and providing him with appropriate challenges, this may make up for lack of challenges in school, so that NN does not reach any of the possible consequences in section 4.4 (Mönks and Ypenburg, 2008; Skogen and Idsoee, 2011). He may also benefit from joining a club outside the school with subjects that interest him. In this club he could be able to explore his interests in a safe and risk free zone without the grade pressure, as well as pursuing them at his own speed. If NN gets his academic needs fulfilled and the challenges he needs outside of school, either at home or at a club, this might be enough to keep him from dropping out of school, or heading towards unsafe social environments. But it is not certain that it will keep him from engaging in disruptive behavior in school. If he still feels bored at school and lack the necessary involvement, there is a chance that his disruptive behavior will continue.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter I have described the results from my observations and discussed them according to my research questions and the theory in chapter 2. The first research question was: *What type of disruptive behavior is displayed?* To answer this question I categorized the different behaviors displayed into four categories:

Category 1 disruptive behavior was marked by NN laying his head on the desk and resting, daydreaming or sleeping.

Category 2 disruptive behavior was marked by talking with fellow students about something not related to the learning activity.

Category 3 disruptive behavior was marked by playful hitting other students.

Category 4 on-task behavior was behavior related to the learning activity in question.

NN displayed all three categories of disruptive behavior, as well as on-task behavior, but not the same amount of the different behaviors. All three disruptive behavioral categories were linked to my definition of disruptive behavior:

Disruptive behavior is behavior that is considered to be disruptive for the student in question. It might also, but not necessarily, be disruptive for other students and/or teachers. The behavior may be of verbal, physical or of non-active character. The result of the behavior is that the student does not get involved in the learning assignment when the behavior is shown.

NN did not get involved when he displayed either of these types of disruptive behavior, and when he displayed the second and third type other students around him were disturbed from their involvement.

In my discussion in section 4.1.8 I link the different theories regarding disruptive behavior to the behaviors I found in my observations and discuss why they can be seen as disruptive. I comment that the behavior displayed by NN is mainly primary behavior (as described by Porter (2007)).

In section 4.2 I repeat my second research question: *How can the Skill Model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?* To give an answer to this research question I discuss *involvement* through different aspects of the situation I observed. First I discuss whether it is possible to become involved in the learning activity when one is being ignored. The teacher and assistant often ignored NN when he displayed disruptive behavior (mainly category 1, but it also happened in category 2 and 3). This ignoring did not help him become involved in the learning activity, and I discuss further if this ignoring makes NN feel "known and supported" by the teacher and assistant. The link to the Skill Model is made through involvement, and Dreyfus (2001) comments on this by saying: " …teachers must also be incarnating and

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encouraging involvement" (p. 48). When NN was ignored, he did not seem encouraged to be involved.

In section 4.2.2 I discuss involvement through low academic self-confidence, as NN showed signs that could be interpreted as he suffered from this. If this is true, it may be hard for NN to become involved as he think he cannot do the assignment. I also look at the possibility that the issue with self-confidence may be seen as a temporary or total breakdown (Dreyfus, 1991), which keeps NN from getting involved and achieving absorbed coping, as he must take care of his self-confidence first.

In section 4.2.3 I discuss involvement through underachievement. NN may be seen as an underachiever as his academic scores are much lower than what his cognitive ability would imply. Underachievers may have a discrepancy between their ideal self-concept and their actual self-concept (Wellington and Wellington, 1965) and by that defer from getting involved as to not ruin their ideal self-concept.

In section 4.2.4 I discuss involvement through personal responsibility. Personal responsibility is a requirement for becoming involved in the Skill Model. When the student reaches the level of competence he becomes responsible for the results of his actions, and by that becomes involved in the results of his actions (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986). The History teacher wanted to incorporate this personal responsibility in his students by defining three goals for his class. These goals were intended to make the students see how the subject of History is relevant to their lives, and how the choice they make now in middle school, to become a responsible students or not, will affect their lives in the future. By putting this responsibility on the students, the teacher may have made it easier for them to become involved.

In section 4.2.5 I discuss involvement through giftedness and look at how NN, as a gifted student, may have troubles becoming involved if the assignments are not adapted to his needs. I discuss that NN may lack inner motivation, perhaps as a result of getting earlier motivations crushed, and by that needs to be motivated through outer stimuli and encouragement. I also mention that boredom may be seen as a total breakdown for NN.

In section 4.2.6 I discuss if NN's lack of involvement may be seen as an explanation for his disruptive behavior. NN was not involved in the learning activity when he displayed disruptive behavior, and this lack of involvement may then be seen as an explanation for this.

I look at the disruptive behavior as a temporary breakdown from absorbed coping for the other students affected, and through the intentional arc. I ask if perhaps NN's intentional arc has been changed, so that he no longer is drawn to become involved in the learning activity, but rather drawn to engage in disruptive behavior.

In section 4.2.7 I look at NN's on-task behavior, and note that when he showed on-task behavior he was involved in the learning activity. He was even so involved in some occasions that he did not take notice of another student who tried to engage him in disruptive behavior.

In section 4.2.8 I give the final answer to the second research question: The Skill Model describes that involvement is necessary to progress in skill acquisition. Learning to learn can be seen as a skill, and this skill requires involvement as well. If a student lacks this involvement he may as a result engage in disruptive behavior instead of engaging in the learning activity. Gifted students may become bored at school if they do not get their needs met, and this boredom may lead to lack of involvement and by that lead to disruptive behavior.

In section 4.3 I ask if what I have seen through my observations and if my analysis of these observations is legitimate. Through the poem written by NN he shows that he indeed feels bored in the classroom, and this strengthens my reasoning.

In section 4.4 I take a look at some of the possible consequences for NN if his situation does not change, and this paints the possibility of a rather grim picture.

In section 4.5 I discuss different strategies for encouraging involvement, and defusing NN's disruptive behavior. These strategies are: the need for individualization, extinction, FCT and choice making, and academically fulfilling activities outside of school.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis I have conducted a qualitative research about disruptive behavior where my empirical knowledge was gained from five observations of one student displaying disruptive behavior. I linked the different types of disruptive behavioral categories to the Skill Model and theories of giftedness and discussed them through my two research questions:

1: What type of disruptive behavior is displayed?

2: How can the Skill Model relate to disruptive behavior and giftedness?

My answers to these two questions were summed down to:

The disruptive behavior displayed was categorized in three different categories. The first behavioral category was behavior only disruptive to the student in question. This behavior was noted by NN laying his head on the desk and resting or daydreaming. The second and third behavioral categories were behaviors disruptive to both the student in question and other students as well. The behaviors noted in these categories were talking about non subject-related matter to other students, and playful hitting on another student. NN displayed all three categories of disruptive behavior to a varying degree.

The Skill Model outline emotional involvement as necessary to progress in skill acquisition. Learning to learn can be seen as a skill, and this skill requires involvement as well. If a student lacks this involvement he may as a result engage in disruptive behavior instead of engaging in the learning activity. Gifted students may become bored at school if they do not get their needs met, and this boredom may lead to a lack of involvement and by that lead to disruptive behavior.

My empirical knowledge is scarce, as I only observed the student in question on five different observations over the duration of two weeks. This may flaunt my discussions, and the conclusions reached in this thesis are not set in stone. One is able to see a lot through observations, but one is not able to see what goes on inside the student or the teachers' head. To further validate my conclusions I would have to interview the student in question and his teachers.

So where does the road go from this? I would recommend further research on the possible link between disruptive behavior and giftedness. Qualitative research with interviews of gifted and disruptive students is in need, to get a better view of how the students themselves experience the situations in school when they engage in disruptive behavior. Quantitative research would also be necessary, to get a more statistical ground to base the conclusions on, and to be able to generalize the results to the gifted population.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Consent form

Department of Special Needs Education

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY

PARENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

for the research project "Disruptive Behavior in School"

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

Your child is invited to take part in research to evaluate disruptive behavior in primary and middle schools and how it affects the student, classmates, teachers and learning environment. This research project is a collaboration between University of Oslo, Norway and University of California, Berkeley USA. This particular study will focus on the link between giftedness and disruptive behavior and use theories regarding giftedness when analyzing disruptive behavior. The research project is led by Professor Liv Duesund, Ph.D, Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo. Astrid Lenvik, a graduate student from University of Oslo, will conduct this particular study.

PROCEDURES: WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?

The research project will collect observational data from the students participating in the study. The observations will take place on five different occasions, last 15 minutes and happen during a total span of one month in the spring 2013. The researcher will write down what she perceives happens during the observations and will not engage the students in the classroom in any way. She will take every means necessary to minimize the impact her observations may have on the students in the classroom.

Participation in the research project is voluntary. Whether or not you give permission for your child to take place in the study will have no bearing on his/her standing or grades at school.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS: HOW WILL OUR INFORMATION BE KEPT PRIVATE?

When collecting the observational data there will be no mention of name, school or city the data is collected from. Any identifying information obtained will not be revealed or shared in any way. If information from this study is published or presented at school or scientific meetings, names and other personal information will not be used.

BENEFITS: **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FROM BEING IN THE STUDY?**

There are no direct benefits to you or your child from participating in this research. However, the data collected from this research will hopefully provide valuable information about disruptive behavior and giftedness, and how to best meet the needs of the student, which could influence educational research and in turn equip future teachers with better tools for meeting the needs of every student.

VOLUNTEERING TO BE A PARTICIPANT

The participation of your child is voluntary. You can refuse to have your child entered in the research and you can discontinue the participation at any time.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have any questions about the research, you may contact Astrid Lenvik, the graduate student conducting the observations at telephone: (510) 283-4816 or e-mail: astrid.lenvik@gmail.com, or e-mail Liv Duesund, Project Director of the study at liv.duesund@isp.uio.no. If you wish to speak with someone other than the researchers about the study concerns or your child's rights as a research subject, feel free to contact the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS) at (510) 642-7461 or by e-mail: cphs@berkeley.edu

If you prefer that your child do NOT participate in the research project, you will need to return a signed copy of this letter to your child's teacher by 28th of February.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call.

We truly appreciate your child's participation.

Sincerely

Astrid Lenvik

(510) 283-4816

astrid.lenvik@gmail.com

Sign and return this page to _____ by 28th of February if you do not want your child to be included in the research project.

Please do NOT include my child in this project.

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Signature   Print name   Date

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Child's name   Age/grade

Appendix 2 – Observational form

This internship report is related to the students` internship their 2nd year of bachelors' degree in special needs education. The internship assignment involves observation of pupil/child behavior in school/preschool.

Focusarea is: students` experience of disruptive behavior in school/ preschool, i.e. behavior that appear disturbing to the pupil/child him/herself, to fellow pupils /other children and/ or to teacher /educator.

This report is to be submitted to supervisor at the end of the internship, for approval and signing. The signed report is to be submitted to Professor Liv Duesund at UCB after completed internship.

Key elements in observation:
The student must have attended two days of the internship PRIOR to observing. The first two days are used by the student to familiarize her/himself with the class/group.
The class/group as a whole is to be the focus of the 1st observation. 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th observations are individual observations where, in cooperation with the teacher/educator, the student chooses which pupil /what child that is to be the focus of the observations. The pupil/child who is selected is one that from the teachers experience shows disruptive behavior to a greater or lesser extent.
Every student in each group chooses one pupil/child each to focus their observations on. (different pupil/child for each student) Student observes the same pupil/child throughout the series of observation, starting at the 2nd observation.
The 2nd, 3rd and 4th observations are made either in the beginning, during or at the end of class/ group session. (See guidelines for observation) The 5th observation is made during recess/playtime.
Student has to provide the correct time for when observation starts and ends.
During individual observation the student is to describe what the pupil/child does/says etc. and any interaction with others during the observation period. Key questions are: What is happening? Who is doing what?
The student must try to distinguish between descriptions and interpretations. In the interpretation the student must try to assess whether the behavior described can be understood as disruptive behavior.
Observations are presented in an anonymous form, in which neither single pupils or location can be recognized.

1st observation: in class / group session
Observe what happens in class/group session during the course of one hour.

Observation is to be made on the 3rd day of the internship. Choose which class hour during the day to focus on.

Task: (use the form below)
a) Describe what happens during class/ group session (cf. handout)
b) Try to interpret your observations. (cf. handout)
c) Write down any questions/comments you might have to your observations and interpretations.

Date:	Type of institution: (school/preschool)	Grade/age group:	Subject/activity:
Number of pupils/children in class/group:	Observation starts at:	Observation ends at:	Total time elapsed:

Description:	Interpretation:

Questions you may have to what is described and interpreted:

2nd observation: Individual observation of disruptive behavior.
One single pupil in the class /one single child
in the group session.
First 15 minutes of class/group session.

OBSERVATION IS TO BE MADE ON THE 4THDAY OF THE INTERNSHIP.

15 minutes (continuous) observation IN THE BEGINNING OF class/ group session.
Selection of pupil/child is made in cooperation with teacher/educator.

Task: (use the form below)
a) Describe what happens during class/ group session (cf. handout)
b) Try to interpret your observations. (cf. handout)
c) Write down any questions/comments you might have to your observations and
interpretations.

Date:	Type of institution: (school/preschool)	Grade/age group:	Subject/activity:
Number of pupils/children in class/group.	Observation starts at:	Observation ends at:	Total time elapsed:

Description:	Interpretation:

Questions you may have to what is described and interpreted:

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3rd observation: Individual observation of disruptive behavior.
One single child in the class/ one single child in the group session.
15 minutes halfway through class/group session.

OBSERVATION IS TO BE MADE ON THE 5TH DAY OF THE INTERNSHIP.

- 15 minutes (continuous) observation HALFWAY THROUGH class /group session.
  Observe the same pupil/child as you did previously.

  Task: (use the form below)
  a) Describe what the pupil/ child does/says etc. and any interaction with others during the 15 minutes. (cf. handout)
  b) Try to interpret your observations. (cf. handout)
  c) Write down any questions/comments you might have to your observations and interpretations.

Date:	Type of institution: (school/preschool)	Grade/age group:	Subject/activity:
Number of pupils/children in class/group:	Observation starts at:	Observation ends at:	Total time elapsed:

Description:	Interpretation:

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Questions you may have to what is described and interpreted:

4th observation: Individual observation of disruptive behavior.
One single pupil in the class / one single child in the group session.
15 minutes at the end of class/group session.

OBSERVATION IS TO BE MADE ON THE 6TH DAY OF THE INTERNSHIP.
15 minutes (continuous) observation AT THE END of class/ group session.
Observe the same pupil/child as you did previously.

Task: (use the form below)
a) Describe what the pupil/child does/says etc. and any interaction with others during the 15 minutes.(cf. handout)
b) Try to interpret your observations. (cf. handout)
c) Write down any questions/comments you might have to your observations and interpretations.

Date:	Type of institution: (school/preschool)	Grade/age group:	Subject/activity:
Number of pupils/children in class/group:	Observation starts at:	Observation ends at:	Total time elapsed:

Description:	Interpretation:

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5th observation: Individual observation of disruptive behavior.
One single pupil during recess/ one single child during playtime.
10 minutes during recess/playtime.

OBSERVATION IS TO BE MADE ON THE 7TH DAY OF INTERNSHIP.
10 minutes (continuous) observation during recess / playtime
Observe the same pupil/child as you did previously

Task: (use the form below)
a) Describe what the pupil/child does/says etc. and any interaction with others during recess/playtime. (cf. handout)
b) Try to interpret your observations. (cf. handout)
c) Write down any questions/comments you might have to your observations and interpretations.

Date:	Type of institution: (school/preschool)	Grade/age group:	Subject/activity:
Number of pupils/children in class/group:	Observation starts at:	Observation ends at:	Total time elapsed:

Description:	Interpretation:

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Questions you may have to what is described and interpreted:

Main results

Describe what you consider to be the main results of the observations you have made, seeing the observations in relation to each other. Emphasize the results concerning disruptive behavior:

Learning profit

Describe what you consider you have learned from doing observational fieldwork during the internship:

Submission

Completed by the student:
Internship report is submitted (in stapled paper edition) to supervisor on
………………/……………. 2010
Students name/signature: ……………………………………………………………….

Approval

Completed by the supervisor:
Internship report is: approved   not approved.
Date: ………… 2010
Supervisors signature: …………………………………………

Responsible for the composition of observation guide:
Professor Liv Duesund, Professor Sven Nilsen and Professor Liv Randi Opdal.

© Duesund,L,Nilsen,S og Opdal,L.R.

Appendix 3 – Poem by NN

Boredom
by " NN "

Boredom backs you into a corner
Getting into that corner
Is so much easier
Than getting out
The corner turns into a cycle
A vicious cycle that you
Can't get out of
A cycle of boredom,
And a blank mind
It gets you staring out
Into empty space
And waking up
Twenty minutes later
Realizing you were staring
At the same spot on the wall
The entire time
Boredom has backed you into a corner
Now it's your turn
To try to figure it out