WAYS OF MAKING TEACHERS’ PEDAGOGICAL CAPITAL VISIBLE AND USEFUL

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This paper is the joint venture where the two authors use parts of their respective pedagogical, research and citizen capital as they emerge and take shape when we work together. We deal with the questions: How can educators encourage teacher trainees and mentors to make visible their pedagogical capital? What are the possibilities in school development contexts to encourage, make visible and use the teachers’ pedagogical capital? How can the methods of written stories and sketching be used and developed to help teachers identify and make visible their pedagogical capital?

Initially we also want to establish two basic assumptions:

The development of society is dependent on the contributions of its members in a crucial way and the development of the school is dependent on the contributions of teachers, leaders and pupils. The possibilities to make these contributions visible and useful in the school setting are focused in this paper.

Pedagogical capital

The idea to use pedagogical capital as a metaphor was initially created in a joint research project between the teacher education institutions in Malmö and Copenhagen concerning different influences on the development of teacher students in the two countries (Henningsson-Yousif, Jacobsen & Viggósson, 2007). It has been developed into a concept (Field, 2010) and a specific use, focusing on teacher trainees writing their pedagogical capital and the significance of this for teacher education and the students themselves. In this form it has become an integrated part of a teacher education program (Henningsson-Yousif & Viggósson, 2009, Viggósson, 2011). The concept has further been developed in studies with teachers (Henningsson-Yousif, 2011, 2012). These studies focus what gets expressed of the pedagogical capital when teachers or school leaders are asked to sketch and comment upon different school development related questions. In this paper Aasen has joined the discussion of the concept stressing the qualification of pedagogical capital.

Pedagogical capital is what is activated and emerges in pedagogical situations from our individually attached and more or less integrated assets. These assets can also be used in different circumstances and situations and take shape as other forms of capital. They are in movement. They are conscious, half conscious or subconscious. They are partly shared by other people and partly unique. Whether they are regarded or judged as assets by the individuals themselves or their surroundings is an open question. This is culturally and socially conditioned.
How the capital is expressed is dependent on how and when it is brought to life and who it is that evokes it. It can be defined as assets of competence, experiences, thoughts and emotions that are available in pedagogical situations. The capital is neither positive nor negative in itself. We do not associate pedagogical capital with educational achievement, our focus lies on what gets expressed and the contribution this gives in different pedagogical situations regardless of its origin. Whether people are free to express their capital or other aspects of their individual assets is another question.

While Bourdieu's use of the concept capital (the cultural, the social and the economical) are assets of symbolic value and related to power and conquests of social positions (Carle, 2007), we are more interested in capitals as assets in a democratic society (democratic is used in an everyday way). The idea is that everyone at every moment possesses a pedagogical capital that can be expressed and that can be used in her own life or as a contribution for a common purpose. An association to pedagogical capital as a way of describing people's experiences as rucksacks or luggage can indicate something more or less heavy to carry. But by using the word capital we aim to highlight the value and potential we all contain.

Different kinds of capital are labels on expressions of different aspects of what individuals embrace within themselves. They are not separate entities. It is debatable whether the elements and dimensions of the capital as it emerges in a situation are conscious and reflected upon by the individual. In an educational context the educator or teacher might make it a mission to help students to become aware of their capital in order to strengthen their self esteem. A therapist would perhaps try to help a person to transform heavy and difficult experiences into something useful and valuable, to make them see them as assets.

The capital doesn’t need to have a specific content or have been acquired in a certain way. It exists on its own merits and is important in its own right. Man has a place among other people “across culture and history” (Hostrup Larsen, 1987).

The use and esteem of pedagogical capital as contribution to analyses of social contexts and purposes is a focal point in this paper. What is a contribution? The word in itself contains a viewpoint that there is something recognised to contribute to. Whether citizens and in this case teachers consider that there is some common element that they contribute to is a question for discussions and research. We consider the school to be a vital part of society to be contributed to. In Swedish as well as in Norwegian the word for contribution is “bidrag” (German beitragen). If you contribute to something you have something to offer. This contribution can be considered to be a gift, a problem, an insight, information, a disturbance etc.

Our standpoint is that teachers have important analytical contributions to make. The analysing can be regarded as a dimension of the teacher’s pedagogical capital: This should not be understood as proposing that anything goes, but rather that all kinds of perspectives and analyses are of value to consider with an open mind, but not necessarily agree with or act upon.
What is an analysis? In this case we consider an analysis to be a qualified judgment that includes both pulling factors apart and putting them together again in accordance to the individual's special knowledge and viewpoint of the world. We are interested in the teachers' analyses concerning in what context the schools exist and the roles and tasks they ascribe the schools and themselves in this context (Bengtsson, 1998; Henningsson-Yousif, 2003). We regard these analyses on a philosophical level as well as a concrete work level as relevant and useful. This standpoint is also related to the kind of research that aims at democratic knowledge processes (Holmstrand & Härnsten, 2003).

The use of pedagogical capital in different situations for different purposes.
Everyone at any moment has a pedagogical capital that can be asked for, expressed and made use of in people's own lives as well as in school and in society as a whole. The pedagogical capital can be asked for, captured and used in different shapes, ways and circumstances:

- as a story told by the individual in a text, where there are possibilities to choose events, as well as individual viewpoints and perspectives / analyses of life, society, school, etc.

- as perspectives and analyses, to be pondered over in different ways in the context of school development arrangements and as contributions both in long term development work, but also in short term.

- as deliberate features in educational situations - courses.

- silently in everyday actions. Sometimes this capital can be asked for in hindsight with the question: How did you reason to act like that?

- frequently and in everyday thoughts.

Work with pedagogical capitals in two contexts
In our work we discuss and use pedagogical capital in the context of School development ambitions as well as in the contexts of Teacher education.

The use of pedagogical capital for school development purposes
It is not unusual that school leaders during different school development arrangements ask for teachers' opinions or perspectives using different methods, like group discussions etc. Quite often a teacher would describe this event as a moment where they were asked to give their opinion. An impression is that these teachers don't attach much value to the occasion. They might also lack in respect of their own analyses as of being of importance. Sometimes these attempts to ask for teachers' opinions are very seriously intended from the part of the leader and sometimes they are used as and regarded as quasi democratic actions.
The manner in which the leader invites her teachers to contribute with their perspectives is of importance for the development of a dialogue (Dysthe, 2001). Teachers are obligated to work within a set of values and rules. This can be interpreted by the teachers and leaders in different ways either as an obstacle to creativity or as an asset. In Sweden a concept Deltagande målstyrning (participating steering by objectives) was introduced in the 1990ies when the idea was that teachers should interpret goals and use their liberty, so called free space (Berg, 2003) within the system. It seems that many teachers never embraced or perhaps, for different reasons, understood this idea (Henningsson-Yousif, 2003). One reason could have been distrust in the real possibility to actually have an influence on the development of the school. Other explanations could be routine, lack of interest, confusion etc. One consequence of the neglect of taking the opportunity to explore the free space and be creative might have contributed to a new steering that is detailed and strict.

To ask for teachers' pedagogical capital is to pay attention to and acknowledge the value of their contributions. And it makes it possible to make use of the competences and experiences of the teachers as contributions in the development of the school work. What is expressed by an individual can be seen as an asset in the common explorative work, regardless of its origin in the individual. Hostrup Larsen (1987, p 29) puts forward the necessity for each person to be able to explain herself; but it is also vital to be able to lift oneself ahead of the status quo and the logic explainable, in order to withhold a physical space, which is unattainable from the power of the lasting. Thus it becomes possible to maintain what exists now as resources that can create the new in spite of the old.

In certain situations it might be important to try to explain why a person thinks the way she or he thinks. But there are situations when a focus on these explanations can be an obstacle. “She thinks like this because she is like that and has made these experiences.” This way of reacting rather closes the perspectives then opens them up in situations when we actually do need each others' analyses of the situation. In this context we might instead need to challenge our usual way of thinking and our preconceived opinions of each other (Ehn & Löfgren, 2002).

There is no absolute line between the growth of ways of thinking and making an analysis and the instantaneous analysis itself. But there is an advantage to separate these two.

From a leader’s point of view it can be valuable to ask for the pedagogical capital of staff members in order to get a better grasp of their background and motives for their choice of occupation and their interests. This can be done in the context of staff welfare but also in the context of listening to the analyses of the teachers in order to be able to make a better job as a leader.

What another person actually sees, judges and analyses is of importance to make use of, despite the fact that it is not uncommon to begin to think about why this person makes this analysis. But the analysis is valuable in itself, regardless of whether the
person who makes the analysis quickly makes associations to different experiences in order to explain her or his way of thinking. Thus chains of explanations and thoughts about “why does she/he think like this?” become subordinate to what is actually expressed. And it is the expression that is of importance to focus in this context of school development.

The professional qualification of pedagogical capital.
A special feature of the teachers’ role is the relationship to many parties; students, colleagues, leaders, administrators and parents. These relational conditions can lead to critical and challenging situations where the teacher is placed in a stressful situation and there is no time to reflect on alternative courses of action. It is expected that the situation should be handled in a professional and ethical manner. This requires awareness of the teacher’s role and confidence in their own professional practice. How can such awareness and confidence in relation to their own professional practice be developed and made visible?

The discussion about the teacher’s role as a professional has lately escalated in Norway (Grimsæth & Hallås, 2013). One example is the national focus on the newly educated teachers, and how mentoring can contribute to professionalize the teachers work from the starting point of their careers as teachers. A mentor’s main focus is to help the new teachers to discover and use their pedagogical capital in a proper way and be aware of their pedagogical capital as an individual power in the school context. Through reflection on being a professional teacher, mentoring programs can help the new teachers to be aware of their own pedagogical capital in difficult and demanding situations, and have the courage to act professionally in these situations (Aasen, 2013).

With a mentor’s support and through reflection on and in action (Schön, 2001), the new teachers’ invisible knowledge and pedagogical capital will become visible. However, the quality of mentorship will be essential for how the invisible can and will become visible for the new teacher. Likewise the school leader’s interest and participation will be important in making the invisible in the school context visible.

The quality of mentoring programs depends on different aspects e.g. the mentor education. In Norway there is a national framework defining the following contents in the mentor education;
- theory and methods in guidance, communication and interaction
- professional knowledge
- organisation, culture and innovation
- learning and learning activities and
- ethics of teaching and guidance.

The curriculum is based on these contents. Through theoretical and practice exercise, the mentors will be qualified to become mentors for newly educated teachers. The needs of mentors can be related to
Developing an awareness of the multi-faceted and conflictual role, understanding of adult learners’ need and workplace learning, a critical capacity in the analysis and reflection of classroom and mentoring practice and mediating skills and emotional intelligence. (Jones, 2010, p.127).

In the multi-faceted and conflictual role we also add the understanding of the school as an organisation and the complexity of school culture and innovation.

**Practice theory - a way to make pedagogical capital visible?**

Teachers' reasons for practical actions in school life can be linked to the concept of practical vocational theory. This practice theory is subjectively the strongest factor in how teachers perform their work in schools (Handal & Lauvås, 1983), and is rooted in the teachers’ own experience and knowledge they have acquired through life and the values that the teachers' life and work is rooted in. How conscious these action choices are at any given time can be varied. Being a teacher means being able to justify the choice of action in the light of experience of what works, research-based knowledge and values that the school is rooted in.

What the teacher does in certain situations is related to the teacher’s experiences, knowledge and values. The three dimensions blend into each other and interact. The teacher’s individual experiences through life for better or worse have given a ballast which is capitalised and lifted up in recognisable situations. The teachers’ consciousness of their own experiences and the distance they have to their own feelings in the situation can have consequences for their chosen actions in such critical situations. Habits like "we have always done like this and it works!" needs a new focus to become conscious and professional actions.

The teacher has through her life acquired and been transferred knowledge, experience and structures on how society in general works and how special interests and teaching disciplines are related. The knowledge people have acquired interplays with other people’s knowledge and the establishment of learning situations in school which affect others, for example students 'and colleagues' learning. What the teacher perceives to be important in order to live and work in a democratic society will have an impact on the individual teacher's actions in school. It is reflected in the rights and obligations granted and expected, and what values are considered more important than others. If awareness of their own practice theory is low, for example, situations that require professionalism, grounded on the basis of habit and personal experience rather than reflective knowledge and a conscious choice of values.

In exercises to justify practical action in everyday school life, students write a story about a challenging situation in the school or in their mentorship as they want to get guidance. In this tutorial situation practice theory could seem to be an analytical model whose purpose is to create an awareness and development of the teacher's own pedagogical capital. Questions like

"*Do you have previous experience that you can attach to the challenges you face?*"
(experience-based reasoning),
“How can academic and theoretical perspectives help you see the connections to the challenges?”, “What kind of methods can be appropriate in this situation? (theoretical reasoning), and “Which values do you base your actions on in this challenge? How will you defend the action selected based on these values?” (value-based reasoning).

Society requires qualified teachers. Teachers should be able to justify their work to academic, educational and value standards embodied in the national framework and legislation. It is therefore essential for the teacher to become or be aware of the experiences, knowledge and values that appear to be important in the choices they make. To dare to recognise and reflect on their own practice theory could contribute to a greater understanding of themselves as professionals and through an increased confidence in both individual and collective reasoning about situations that arise in everyday school life.

Students who are studying to be mentors have shared practice situations in their mentorship, both from everyday life in school and in more long-term analyses of mentorship. Focus in the reflections on mentoring has been:
1. Reflection on the mentor role.
2. Ethical challenges in the mentor role.
3. Reflection on the mentor education. What have you learned? etc.
4. What do newly educated teachers need in the way of support a start of their teacher careers?
5. How will you exercise your mentor role to the new teachers?

Each student has written their individual stories and these stories have been shared, first in groups of four to five mentor students and some of the stories have been followed up by a collective reflection in larger student groups, up to 25 students. Some of the written reflections have also been elaborated on in counselling exercises in groups of three students. This method can be one way to make the invisible pedagogical capital visible.

Students in the mentor education in Hamar University College have been introduced to the practice theory through studying, exercise and reflective dialogues. They have written stories from the school context around the five perspectives above and their inner dialogue has been shared with the other students and teachers in the mentor course. What do students tell about how the study has affected their pedagogical capital?

After each study collection I must digest new knowledge and new experiences. It's like a process is set in motion, I sort into old and new ideas, old reflections are challenged, and new reflections arise. It helps me to develop personally and makes me stronger in my profession. (our translation)
The program has given me useful theory, either as a refresher or as new knowledge and understanding of already acquired knowledge and experiences, in both personal and professional relationship. (our translation)

To support and help the new teachers to make visible their contributions in school, the mentor students have to make visible and raise awareness of their own contributions and qualities as teachers. Two students put it like this:

As a mentor I have a desire for contribution so newly educated teachers will have a good and safe introduction into the Norwegian school system. As a former newly educated teacher I came into an inclusive environment where everyone did a bit extra for me to find my feet and flourish as a teacher. It gave me a good start, and this experience I will hand on to others. Today I see that creating confidence, giving a sense of belonging, providing opportunities for reflection on their own practice and not least being receptive and accessible are all of my duties.“(our translation)

Another student writes:

To be a mentor in my work place is basically pretty scary. So, I have for my own part used some time to reflect on myself as a person and as a colleague. In this thinking process I have come to the conclusion that my strength in mentoring is my openness and honesty as a person and I am not afraid of making sacrifices myself. I feel respected in my role as a teacher by both children and adults, and I have a good relationship with all my colleagues and I contribute in the social scene. In our school we have a very good climate generally in the staff. There are great tolerance and a lot of humour. The atmosphere is characterised by the fact that most people do not take themselves too seriously. You are allowed to both succeed and fail - and not least, an open atmosphere! (our translation)

The teacher education setting
For a number of years hundreds of students in one of the teacher education programs at Malmö University have written documents named Pedagogical capital. This has been the start of a course in School development with the aim to prepare students for a well thought through position in school in relation to colleagues, leaders and the political system. As a start in the course the students looks into themselves. The second task is to make a proper interview with a working teacher. This interview is recorded, transcribed and analysed. The subject being how the teachers work to develop their own skills. And also experiences of school development processes at their school. Later on teams of students are organised according to their interest with the task to create a possible strategy for school development. Thereby taking into account their written and unwritten pedagogical capital, the interviews, the course literature, the seminars, the practice experience and each other.

The message in this course is that we need to look into ourselves, then listen carefully to one another, making use of the different pedagogical capitals and their expressions
as analyses and work, explore the context and go ahead and develop work in the school.

The students write a document of ca five pages, where they choose elements and dimensions of their pedagogical capital. This document is only available to themselves and the educators of the course. The students also get an instruction with recommended things to write about:

- your life history, life experiences in general
- your network, fellow students, friends, family, outdoor life etc
- sources of inspiration, idols, role models, literature, special events
- the surrounding world in general, the society or the media
- your own school teachers or other education
- significant work experiences.

With this task we want you to pay attention to resources in shape of people, experiences etc that you use or that are possibly of importance when it comes the way you think about pedagogical work. (our translation.)

To ask students to write her pedagogical capital is to challenge them in a very concrete way to explore their own reality and background and perhaps to deepen their understanding of their own behaviour and perspectives on the world. The students choose how much they want to tell and the stories and perspectives we get acquainted to by reading these texts are of great richness and value. Sometimes we get access to very personal stories of crisis they have lived through. As teacher educators our profession does not include therapeutic work and we stay out of that area. In addition there are many students with backgrounds in other countries who give evidence of extensive experience of life, ordeals and work etc.

The texts are never commented upon by us educators or judged in any way. The responses from the students in the evaluations on this task are very positive. The learning the teacher trainees get from writing their documents Pedagogical capital is relevant not only for themselves and the people they work with and will work with in the future, but also for the teacher education institution and creation of courses. Thus one could also consider that the teacher education institution also possesses a vast and complex pedagogical capital.

**Sketching as a method to make pedagogical capital visible**

We have experiences of using sketching as a tool in research studies (Henningsson-Yousif, 2003, 2006, 2011, 2012) and as a method in educational situations. Birgerstam (2000, p 49) stresses the possibilities in sketching as a way of searching and not taking anything for granted. “The professional sketcher is protective of his openness, curiosity and intuitive perspicuity in order to let his thought flow freely. He tries to avoid deciding what it is all about.” (our translation)
Initially sketching was used as a complementary method in studies with the aim to illustrate and clarify the interviewee’s perspective. In a study (Henningsson-Yousif, 2006) with school leaders at five partner schools of the teacher education in Malmö the sketch played a central role in an interview about how the leader regarded the tasks and responsibilities concerning development of schools between the partner school and the campus part of the teacher education.

These sketches were used to discuss and get a grasp of the school leaders’ analyses of the context they consider that they work within.

![Figures 1 and 2. Different ways, created by two school leaders, to sketch the relations between the school and the teacher education institution. These sketches are placed here as illustrations, not further explained.](image)

In a study of active teachers at one partner school the main method was the sketching that the five-eight teachers made on A3- sheets at a conference table at the end of their work day on five occasions (Henningsson-Yousif, 2011). The object concerned teachers thoughts on the relationship between the contribution of their own school respective the contribution of the campus part of teacher education in the education of teacher trainees. Having finished their drawings each teacher commented on their own sketch and also were asked some questions by the others. The sketches all differ from one another and the possibilities seem to lie there for more profound understanding of the teachers' world views and their own role.
Figures 3 and 4. Two different ways to sketch the situation of a teacher trainee in relation to her practice school and education on campus etc. These sketches were created by two teachers and placed here solely as illustrations, not further explained.

Why use sketches and not written or spoken words to get hold of a person’s perspective? In these studies both modes of expressions have been used. But seeking to get an immediate expression a picture of the other person´s thinking makes it natural to ask her to make a sketch. Not everyone is comfortable with this method, but surprisingly many get straight into the task or after some small talk. Just as in the case of the written documents Pedagogical capital these sketches were never meant to be judged. They are expressions to value in their own right. They are not objects for correction, manipulation or education. They could, if the persons would wish, be objects for qualification, or rather the skill to express one’s mind could be qualified. Sketching is also being used in master courses often as a starting point for discussions of ways of viewing research, school etc.

This research using sketches has just started. The main purpose of the reports that have been written has been to make visible different ways of sketching perspectives and contexts without attempting to explain them according to theory or the persons’ personal motives more thoroughly. The first finding, and not a surprising one, is that the sketches of the teachers differ a great deal. That in itself is a promising proof and inspires to learn more about 1) the context and connections the teachers see and 2) the implications these world views could have for the construction of our school and educational systems as well as learning and teaching situations.

Our common reflections on working with pedagogical capital
Recognition of the human contribution to the development of a democratic society and a democratic school is a fundamental basis for our work. A common ground for our respective efforts in Malmö and Hamar is the focus on recognition and contribution. We are interested in encouraging teachers to express their analyses in sketches and/or stories. Recognition as a theoretical concept and phenomenon is complex. Our understanding of recognition is based on the idea that every individual has an inviolable and intrinsic value and a development potential (Skoglund & Åmot, 2012).
To share one`s own capital in a dialogue with fellow human beings can be a risky venture, because involvement opens the way for conflict. The opposite of recognition could be exclusion, invisibility, stigma and abuse of power. On the other hand, if there is no opportunity/will to raising and tackling the conflict, the different voices fail to come forward. Teachers are obliged to work within a set of values. This situation can be interpreted by the teachers and leaders in different ways - either as an obstacle or as an asset.

We recognise the value of diversity in school development, and the methods we have presented in this paper are one way to make visible the invisible in school development. Our future task will consist in developing our theoretical framework. We also want to find out more about how school leaders ask for contribution from their teachers.

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