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  Nanny Hartsmar & Maria Sandström

• When the field of sport crosses the field of physical education
  Tomas Peterson

• Human rights and education for citizenship, society and identity: Europe and its regions
  Alistair Ross
EDUCARE is a peer reviewed journal published since 2005 at the School of Teacher Education, Malmö University. EDUCARE reflects and articulates a wide range of research in education, in the arts and humanities, and the social sciences. EDUCARE is a Swedish and Nordic research forum for faculty, practitioners and policymakers.

Articles can be submitted at any time. In accept articles in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and English. The author’s name, affiliation and academic title should appear at the beginning of the article, together with full postal and email addresses. An abstract (100-200 words) should also be provided. The article itself should be between 5000 and 12000 words. All material works cited in the article need to be included in an alphabetical reference list at the end. The APA style should be used, but slightly modified to include both surname and first name. Pictures, diagrams and graphs should be made to conform to the length and breadth (0-12 cm) of the printed page. We recommend using the EDUCARE-template when processing the article. Manuscripts should be submitted as email attachments (Word) to the editor: educare@lut.mah.se

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Editor: Björn Sandmark
Editorial board: Margareth Drakenberg, Ingegerd Ericsson, Nanny Hartman, Bodil Liljefors Persson, Ann-Christine Vallberg Ruth

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This issue of EDUCARE is our first all-English publication (2008:3). The articles have been selected and edited from papers submitted after the conference Citizenship Education in Society: A Challenge for the Nordic Countries, 4th – 5th October 2007 at Malmö University, organized by the Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe thematic network (CiCe). The first three papers were originally presented at a Symposium within the conference – “Childhood, Learning and Didactics” (CLaD). Jens Qvortrup was the invited keynote speaker to this session. Annika Månsson’s as well as Nanny Hartman’s and Maria Sandström’s articles which follow represent some of the breadth and depth of CLaD as a field of research at Malmö University. Another strong presence at Education, Malmö, is Sports Science. Tomas Peterson’s article provides an example from this area. The final word is given to one of the other CiCe keynote speakers, Alistair Ross, on “Human rights and education for citizenship, society and identity.”

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Table of Contents

Childhood and politics ............................................................ 7

The construction of “the competent child” and early childhood care: Values education among the youngest children in a nursery school...................... 21

The right of all to inclusion in the learning process:
Second language learners working in a technology workshop.............................................................................. 43

When the field of sport crosses the field of physical Education ........................................................................... 83

Human Rights and education for citizenship, society and identity: Europe and its regions .......................... 99

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Abstract: Childhood and Politics
Our culture’s attitudes towards children are ambiguous – as found also in the relationship between children and politics. The protective mood that has befallen children over the last two centuries entails their separations from adults – and from the serious business of economics and politics. How do we deal with the dilemma, which as a consequence makes it difficult to have a discourse about children and politics? This article nevertheless makes some reflections over the theme and suggests that one can, as far as politics is concerned, in principle talk about (a) children as subjects, (b) children/childhood as a non-targeted object (i.e. in terms of structural forces’ impact), (c) children/childhood as targeted objects (political initiatives having children in mind), and finally as (d) instrumentalised objects. The thorny question raised in each case is to which extent children are beneficiaries or if that is the case primarily as a side effect of gains to adult/adult society. Would public investments in children have been made to the current extent, if expectations of a surplus return were not an option?

Keywords: children, childhood, politics, policies, protection, participation, social investments

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Childhood and politics

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The Swedish poet and singer, Beppe Wolgers, rightly deserves fame for his beautiful ballad about "Det gåtfulla folket" – The mysterious people. It is full of magics, metamorphoses and other enigmatic charms which are all alien to adults. In my translation each of its three verses begins: "Children are a people and they live in a foreign country," and ends like this: "All are children, and they belong to the mysterious people." 1

No one can doubt for a second that Wolgers' ballad is a declaration of love to children and no one should be allowed to subject the poetry to a dissecuing analysis with its risk to jeopardize exactly this impression and the poet's intention. The wording cannot help though to prompt in the mind of a childhood researcher associations in terms of an interesting triple portrayal of children each of which portrait is symptomatic for current discourses about children: as sentimentalised, as irrational and as being separated from the adult world.

Sometimes the three portraits run together, as it actually does in Beppe Wolgers' ballad. Sometimes one would rather say that they send divergent messages. In any case, it is hardly exaggerated to suggest that our culture's attitude to children is ambiguous. This ambiguity is clearly found also in this article's theme about the relationship between childhood and politics.

It is not too difficult to find representatives for Wolgers' views among researchers dealing with children. James Garbarino, a well-known US-psychologist, may serve as an example, when he many years ago suggested that in our modern era to be a child is to be shielded from the direct demands of economic, political and sexual forces ... childhood is a time to maximize the particularistic and to minimize the universalistic, a definition that should be held by educators, politicians, and parents alike. (Garbarino, 1986, p. 120)

This view underlines the observation made by Viviana Zelizer, the Argentinian-US-sociologist, whose remarkable book Pricing the Priceless Child convincingly revealed a profound change in our culture's attitudes towards children – a change in the direction of a much more emotional attitude capitalism. This view underlines the observation made by Viviana Zelizer, the Argentinian-US-sociologist, whose remarkable book Pricing the Priceless Child convincingly revealed a profound change in our culture's attitudes towards children – a change in the direction of a much more emotional attitude capitalism. 7

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tured by Zelizer (1985) in notions of sentimentalisation and sacralisation. This direction is of course in complete harmony with Garbarino’s protective mood. At the same time – and this is imminent also in Garbarino’s definition – the historically changed position of childhood was one, which created a distance between age groups. This is an observation made also by other scholars with partly different stories to tell than Garbarino. Ruth Benedict, a renowned US-anthropologist, put it in this way in the 1930s:

From a comparative point of view our culture goes to great extremes in emphasising contrasts between the child and the adult’ and she commented that ‘these are all dogmas of our culture, dogmas which … other cultures commonly do not share. (Benedict, 1938, p. 161).

The famous French historian, Philippe Ariès apparently shared Benedict’s view, even if he applied it in an historical context where Benedict compared contemporary cultures at the beginning of the 20th century. Ariès thus observed the beginning of a long process of segregation… which has continued into our own day, and which is called schooling’ and he talked in this connection about ‘this isolation of children, and their delivery to rationality. (1982, p. 7)

There is, though, an important difference between Garbarino (and Wolgers for that matter) on the one hand and Benedict and Ariès on the other. While Garbarino is advocating the separation of children’s worlds from that of adults for reasons of protecting children against a dangerous world and thus advocating a small family setting as an ideal one for children, Benedict and Ariès are rather sceptical to the new state of affairs. They regret what they believe to be observing, namely that children have lost their position as participants in society.

This debate between various positions is still with us: should we do our utmost to protect children at the cost of setting them outside ‘society’ or should we acknowledge them as persons, participants, citizens at a price perhaps of exposing them to economic, political and sexual forces – seen as dangers by Garbarino?

I believe that both Garbarino and Ariès/Benedict have a good case. Nobody is really ready to sacrifice the necessary protection of children in order to expose them to any risks of a modern society; on the other hand, nobody should accept children’s exclusion from experiencing themselves as contributing persons in society. The question is now if these various positions have bearings for our discussion today about childhood and politics?

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Children as subject in politics

There are these days much scholarly considerations and public debate about children’s rights and children as citizens. These discussions have much to say in general and also in more particular terms about children’s status in society and about what children can legitimately expect as members of society. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) did not find a place for children; the US philosopher of law John Rawls (1971) was equally perplexed, and the German/British sociologist, Ralf Dahrendorf (2006), directly talk about children as “a vexing problem” – in other words an irritating and annoying problem disturbing serious discussions among adult people about mature persons.

It is in this connection, and highly relevant for my theme Childhood and Politics, remarkable that the academic discipline which has shown least interest in the new strands of childhood studies is political science. It’s taken any curiosity at all for children, this interest concentrates exclusively on political activity, and in any case sufficient to fulfil a democratic system’s minimum expectations: to cast the vote.

These are all articles giving the child subjectivity – but there are a number of limitations. Most significant in my view is the limitation in article 12 which states that only in matters affecting the child, he or she should have a right to express views freely. This is a severe limitation but one which is probably symptomatic for the child as a political subject in our societies.

In discussions not only of children’s rights but also in general terms about citizenship researchers and politicians are leaving us a kind of wilder-

ess, and demonstrating that children have not really been thought about. Thus Marshall (1950), the British political scientist who wrote a seminal book after the Second world War about citizenship, did not find a place for children; the US philosopher of law John Rawls (1971) was equally perplexed, and the German/British sociologist, Ralf Dahrendorf (2006), directly talk about children as “a vexing problem” – in other words an irritating and annoying problem disturbing serious discussions among adult people about mature persons.

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It is in this connection, and highly relevant for my theme Childhood and Politics, remarkable that the academic discipline which has shown least interest in the new strands of childhood studies is political science. It’s taken any curiosity at all for children, this interest concentrates exclusively on political activity, and in any case sufficient to fulfil a democratic system’s minimum expectations: to cast the vote.
This expression of citizenship – the demonstration of the real sovereign, the people as a voter – is one which the CRC does not mention at all as an option. One reason is perhaps that such an expression would transcend what is said about the child’s own affairs, which is apparently understood in a very narrow sense. The idea that larger structures might influence the child quite directly seems to be beyond the purview of the CRC. Another reason is clearly related to that, namely that the child is not supposed to hold the competence to vote. The child is simply politically immature.

In response to the first question one might make reference to Hilary Rodham – now better known as Clinton – who many years ago as a child lawyer made the provocative suggestion “to reverse the presumption of incompetence and instead assume all individuals are competent until proven otherwise” (quoted by Lasch, 1992, p. 75). What she is suggesting is thus that one cannot take for granted that persons under a given, arbitrary age, is politically incompetent. It is not difficult to find someone under that age who has that competence, as it is fully possible to find quite a few above the age who is not politically competent. If this is so one has a problem of fairness, which is not solved but merely glossed over with reference to expediency, while assuming that everybody under 18 years of age is incompetent. Nobody would contest as a fact that it would be extremely impractical to test not only children’s competence, but also that of each and every member of the society. I do not think it is a trivial problem, and much thinking and writing has been invested in it, but I will nevertheless leave it.

With regard to the second question it would probably be hard to prove that society as such will be running a risk if children were given suffrage. My assumption would be that the distribution of votes would not deviate greatly from a normal outcome. I will not dismiss the claim that it might be highly disturbing for any conventional wisdom, but on the other hand it might be a way of emphasising responsibility for communal values.

With reference to the third question it is much more important to ask given their disenfranchised status – if children have got a proper political representation. It is worth the while to bear in mind that in European countries as a matter of fact are talking about some 20 to 25 per cent of the population (those under 18), in other parts of the world the percentage is even higher for those who cannot claim to be directly represented politically.

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Children/childhood as a non-targeted object of politics

Turning now to my next section, which I have called children/childhood as a non-targeted object of politics, one has to be aware of the fact that quite a lot of policies have unintended consequences, i.e. consequences that were neither foreseen nor necessarily wanted. We must in other words make a division between politics which aims at protecting children or childhood on the one hand and politics which does not have this aim, but nevertheless may establish such channels.

Now, it could be and is often argued that they have good representatives in their parents.

Let is look at this argument. The main assumption as far as voting behaviour is concerned is that people vote in accordance with what they assume to be their own interests. Thus adults without children, among them the elderly, are not supposed to have children’s interests in mind when casting the ballot. One cannot be sure even that parents support children’s interests when voting, but in this argument I assume that they actually do. In this case, then, children will be represented merely by parents currently living with them. We know that for instance in Scandinavian countries there will be children in merely one fourth of all households; we also know that an ever larger group of persons are more than 60 years of age and that this share of the population will increase. We can calculate that within relatively short time more than half of the electorate is over fifty years of age, and we could continue. In a sense, much of it is speculations, but the demographic development does not work in favour of children’s interests.

If we refrain from considering the possibility of letting children vote, there is the final possibility of furnishing parents with additional ballots – one for each child. A couple with two children would therefore receive four ballot papers at each election – whether they should all be given to the mother or to the parent of the same sex or opposite sex as the child is another matter. The proposal may cause constitutional problems which I would, in case, leave to political scientists, lawyers and politicians to deal with – with an eye also to negative effects that may accrue from it.

The point is in any case that children arguably are not well represented currently and given the demographic development, there are no prospects that this imbalance will change. We can therefore conclude our deliberations on children as political subjects by suggesting that our system does not leave channels for children to act as such and a growing ageing population is not likely to establish such channels.

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able argument – in fact I would suggest that much of what happens to child-
hood, towards forming and transforming childhood and much of what influ-
ence children and their daily lives is in fact instigated, invented or simply
take place without having children and childhood in mind at all. If this is true
the means to either prevent the negative or promote the positive of such poli-
tics must follow a diagnosis as far as children and childhood are concerned.
Why is it that many children are poor? How come that children, more often
than other groups are densely housed? The reason is not likely due to a con-
spicuous against children. Rather, it simply happened that way – due to inat-
tentiveness, structural indifference or whatever.
It is not difficult to find examples of the kind of politics – or, indeed, socio-political or political economic events – that could be defined in terms
of an unintentional influence on childhood or children’s life worlds. It can be
any societal, political or economic event or development of a certain magni-
tude. Let me mention an example with which we will be familiar.
As we all know, during large stretches of at least the second half of the
20th century there has been a dramatic increase in women’s participation in
socio-political or political economic events – that could be defined in terms
of an unintentional influence on childhood or children’s life worlds. It can be
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If we take a bit further back in history – to for instance the beginning of
“the century of the child,” as it was labelled by Ellen Key – we will observe
quite a few events, which were characteristic for the transition towards mod-
ern, industrial society.
We observed phenomena such as industrialisation, mechanisation, ur-
banisation, secularisation, individualisation, and democratisation. These
headings, as it were, represent transformations in society at large and were
answers to demands to make economic growth continue. If we would ask:
where are the children, the answer would in the first place be that they were
not considered; they were not the target as such. However, if we nevertheless
go on to look for children we shall soon find out that they were impacted
dramatically of the transformations that did not have them in mind. This can
be seen on another list of simultaneous events: abolition of child labour, the
child savers movement, mass schooling, fertility reduction, sentimentalisa-
able argument – in fact I would suggest that much of what happens to child-
hood, towards forming and transforming childhood and much of what influ-
ence children and their daily lives is in fact instigated, invented or simply
take place without having children and childhood in mind at all. If this is true
the means to either prevent the negative or promote the positive of such poli-
tics must follow a diagnosis as far as children and childhood are concerned.
Why is it that many children are poor? How come that children, more often
than other groups are densely housed? The reason is not likely due to a con-
spicuous against children. Rather, it simply happened that way – due to inat-
tentiveness, structural indifference or whatever.
It is not difficult to find examples of the kind of politics – or, indeed, socio-political or political economic events – that could be defined in terms
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tion and new scientific interest – to mention the more important and conspicuous among the new variables.

The point made here is that the transformation of childhood was not really the result of a deliberate politics set out with this explicit purpose in mind. Nevertheless one can hardly underestimate the range and significance of the impact on childhood of macro-economic, macro-political and macro-social parameters. Childhood never became the same again after its passage through the industrialisation period.

The first lesson from this is that childhood is inadvertently – whether we like it or not – part of society and of societal politics. Any effort to exclude it or to keep it aside is wishful thinking. Therefore the second lesson is that one has unremittingly to be attentive to consequences for childhood of all kinds of politics – inclusive that, which does not have childhood in mind. In some countries ministries for children has been established. This is where, one would suspect, children politics and policies are made. No doubt about it. Nevertheless one might assume that decisions made in ministries for finance, for housing, for transport, for urban planning, and similar overarching ministries are of much larger impact on childhood than children’s own resort department.

Children/childhood as a targeted object of politics/policies

There are obviously political initiatives, which directly target children and childhood. We may go through a country’s legislation or we may look through the CRC and find quite a few pieces of legislation which actually focus on children, whether as terms of protecting them, providing for them or enabling them to participate – the 3 P’s as we mentioned. One could also imagine, by the way, that such initiatives may aim at protecting adult society. When in some countries like the USA and UK curfew bills are enacted, this is partly, at least, likely to be the case.

Often, however, it is not so easy to determine if certain initiatives or bills are targeting children, the family, parents, mothers or somebody else. Is a kindergarten for instance for children or for parents – or for the state and the trades? At the end of the day it may well be that kindergartens will be an advantage for several parties, even if it is also likely that someone will benefit more than others from them.

In Diagram 1 below I make two distinctions: one between childhood and children (or the child) and one between politics and policies. The notion of childhood does not have the individual child in mind but rather the legal, spatial, temporal and institutional arrangements available for children in a given society. We may talk about childhood as a social phenomenon, a social construction or the like. Its form or architecture depends on parameters of childhood does not have the individual child in mind but rather the legal, spatial, temporal and institutional arrangements available for children in a given society. We may talk about childhood as a social phenomenon, a social construction or the like. Its form or architecture depends on parameters.

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such as economy, technology, culture, adult attitudes etc and the interplay between them. Since these parameters change and continuously assume new configurations, childhood is never the same – even if it is of the same nature. You may compare childhood in Sweden in the year 2007 with childhood in Sweden 1907 and you will realize in your mind that you keep talking about childhood but also that it has changed. It has changed due to the fact that society and its industry changed – but also because the state may have intervened to correct unintended changes.

If we use the notion of “house,” of course children, literally speaking, live in their parental apartment or house. But you might also metaphorically say that children live within the house of childhood – as it has come to look like as a result of both intended interventions and unintended consequences. They live there for a certain period only; then they move out of the house of childhood and first into the house of adolescence and then into the house of adulthood which likewise constitute cultural institutions with a certain permanency.

The notion of politics is an answer to questions of orientation, of where to go, and it includes ideological questions. Policies on the other hand are more responses to practical problems and will result in piecemeal decisions.

Diagram 1 Political initiatives in relation to children/childhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>Policies</td>
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If we thus talk about politics of childhood, as in cell 1, we will have in mind political decision about what we as a society want with or for childhood, i.e. decisions about the framework of childhood, about the place of childhood in an adult-dominated society, about children’s rights to vote, about mainly large scale or macro issues dealing with children’s life world in general terms. How childhood looks like depends on historical period or civilisation, and politics of childhood is about how to structurally design childhood and how to consciously change the architecture of childhood. We are interested in the situation of and the development of childhood as a structural segment of society.

If on the other hand we look at cell no. 2, politics for children, we have in mind long term national initiatives aiming at development of children as a group. “Politics for children” will encompass several cohorts of children and is thus independent of individual children.
Children/childhood as an instrumentalised object in politics

I have now dealt with the issue of children as subject and children and childhood as a non-targeted and a targeted object of politics and policies. The last major part before my conclusion will be children or childhood as an instrumentalised object in politics or policies.

Children have always assumed a particular role – namely that of being raw material for the production of an adult population. This is why we incessantly talk about them as our future or as the next generation. This way of talking gives an inevitable suspicion that childhood is not our main target but merely an instrument for vicarious purposes. It is an answer to all adults’ question to all children: what are you going to be when you grow up? Typically, adults are not interested in what children are while they are children.

Children’s role as raw material or as a resource is historically, I will argue, the most enduring and the most dominant view on children, but despite the enduring view, the arguments in its favour may change completely. So, for instance, it was once common knowledge that children should be smacked or spanked with the argument that it was necessary for a successful future adult life. “Spare the rod and spoil the child” is only one among many proverbs or expressions to this effect. Now, however, as we have become wiser, we have found out that one should not punish children physically. Interestingly, however, our goal has not changed: we still want to produce a better adult. The new version, though, has the advantage of establishing a win-win situation: children are supposed to be happy while developing into ideal adults. A crucial question would in this situation be: how would we act towards children if the winds once again changed and new insights proved that prospects for a successful adulthood were unambiguously in favour of smacking them?

Actually, I think we know that, for in most countries in the world children are spanked, and even in certain social classes in countries where it is forbidden by law and thus known to the public, many people do not run the Cell no. 3 – policies for childhood – might focus on what Bronfenbrenner (1979) called the ecology of childhood and would typically be introduced at the municipality level.

Finally, cell no. 4 – policies for the child – would typically include special programmes for individual children, for instance children at risk.

How the measures mentioned in the diagram are balanced against each other will probably vary form one political regime to another. In very family oriented systems, initiatives are likely to be fewer than in for instance Nordic welfare states.

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risk not to punish children physically. In case of doubt, in other words, these people opt for a situation where children lose and adults win or children are instrumental to producing a good adult (see Diagram 2).

Similarly one could reason about current initiatives concerning social investment strategies from both the British New Labour and from the Euro- pean Union – underwritten by notable figures like Tony Blair, George Brown, Anthony Giddens and Gosta Esping-Andersen. Arguments in favour of these strategies are almost entirely phrased in terms of human capital development and quality of a future labour force. In general terms, a coincidence of societal interests and quality of adult life is suggested. As the abolition of corporal punishment of children, they postulate a win-win-situation and take for granted that we are all having the same interests. But do we know that this is the case? Do we know that what is good for state and corporate society is also good for children? And do we know what good adulthood is that we aim at producing? The social investment strategies have the citizen worker in mind, but we may also have in mind the good and caring partner and the loving parent. Do we know what it takes to produce the worker is the same as what it takes to produce the partner and the parent?

Diagram 2 From favourable to unfavourable options following degrees and/or types of social investments (or corporal punishment of children)

In any case, it is the postulate of the investment strategies that the futurist and productivistic perspectives coincide with what they believe to be a good life for the child. Even if we accept that, the crucial question again remains: what happens if this connection is shown to be much less evident? In principle we have, as before with corporal punishment, four options or situations (see Diagram 2): win-win, lose-lose, win-lose and lose-lose.

Win-win is best and lose-lose is worst – these are trivial statements. If we have any influence we will reject lose-lose, but we cannot be sure for that to get a win-win. We may then be left with a win-lose and a lose-lose. Can we imagine the outcome to be win-lose, i.e. an outcome where children win and adults lose? Yes, in particular families, perhaps, but in the long run adult society will not allow this option to prevail. I therefore suggest that second

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to win-win in the ranking order is lose for children and win for adults. This is suggested primarily because adults as a matter of fact have the right and the power to choose. It is part of the logic of all conventional arguments, supported by Esping-Andersen (2002) for instance, that in case of doubt, adult society or adults will get the best of it.

For the time being we are witnessing new discussions about schooling and to some extent we have the same debates about kindergartens. The interpretation of current results of for instance PISA is that discipline has become too loose and teachers have become too pupil friendly. These are features which are supposed to be in the interest of pupils – at least in the short term. However, these arguments do not count as long as the results demanded by adult society are not delivered or questioned. Therefore we have these European wide discussions about tightening the rope, about re-introducing tests, discipline etc. In general terms Gordon Brown in 2001, while Chancellor of the Exchequer, made the investments in children contingent on their return:

Child poverty is a scar on the soul of Britain and it is because our five year olds are our future doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers and workers that, for reasons not just of social justice but also of economic efficiency, we should invest in... all of the potential of all our children. (quoted by Jenson, 2006, p. 39, italics mine)

In economic terms, experience shows what may happen if a slump replaces a boom in the economy: in so well-reputed welfare states as Sweden and Finland in the early 1990s public expenses on children and child-related issues were disproportionately cut back. As we already knew and as was confirmed: children do not have a claim on societal resources, and besides: their strengths and negotiating powers are negligible.

The two examples mentioned here demonstrate a basic unanimity about the goals – and indeed, how it is possible to disagree in a wish for having good adults? At the same time we also realise that the means to end may vary over time and between countries or perhaps rather between classes or religious groups. In the case of the USA, Philosopher Lakoff (2002) has for instance shown how the country in terms of attitudes to spanking is divided in a fundamentalist religious South and a more liberal North.

Conclusions

It is obvious that childhood and politics are inherently connected. It is equally obvious that we all wish to protect children from the worst effects of politics and economics. To keep children apart from economics and politics is however unrealistic. If not for other reasons, this is proven by the fact that to win-win in the ranking order is lose for children and win for adults. This is suggested primarily because adults as a matter of fact have the right and the power to choose. It is part of the logic of all conventional arguments, supported by Esping-Andersen (2002) for instance, that in case of doubt, adult society or adults will get the best of it.

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children are part of a project which forces them to be material for constructing a future.

If one were to sum up, I would suggest that children are caught between two strands: on the one hand a sentimentalisation, which seeks to separate children from and protect them against the adult world. On the other hand a structural indifference or heedlessness (Kaufmann 2005, pp. 152-153), which in reality may run out to the same. Economic and political developments happen behind our back and takes place without giving children and childhood sufficient consideration – not necessarily of bad will, but simply because we have got used to children as a highly privatised phenomenon.

I have sought to demonstrate that even if politics and policies to some extent are deliberately targeting children and childhood, perhaps the much more dominant influence on children’s lives come from the non-targeted and the instrumentalised actions against children and childhood. It therefore remains important to target children directly, but we should perhaps be much more attentive to all the influences on children which we did not plan and which we are not informed about.

The idea of children as political subjects is now as before a fairy tale.
Abstract: The construction of "the competent child" and early childhood care: Values education among the youngest children in a nursery school

The phenomenon I focus on in this article is the construction of "the competent child", which has developed from both psychology and later the sociology of childhood and has influenced the Swedish Childhood Education. One purpose of this paper is to investigate the pedagogical signs in this construction of "the competent child" and to contribute to the discussion of the influence of a new understanding of children in a nursery practice. In addition to the theoretical part of the article, I present analysed material from a limited case study. I have chosen a Reggio Emilia-inspired nursery, with its emphasis on democracy and view of children as competent and active, to shed light on the connections between this view and a values education. I also aim to problematise this paradigm of childhood. The methods used in the present study are field notes and video recordings. Material from my case study illustrates how values education is expressed in a child care practice.

Keywords: Childhood, participation, pre-school, Reggio Emilia, the competent child, toddlers, values education.

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The construction of “the competent child” and early childhood care: Values education among the youngest children in a nursery school

Annika Månsson

Childhood as a social position

The focus of this article is the youngest children and the child care practice and it is based on a lecture held at the Cice conference (Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe) in Malmö 2007. At first I thought that the two concepts, toddlers and citizenship, were not compatible. Most of the historical tradition connected to democracy and citizenship has been entangled with power, gender, ethnicity and age. Public life has been organised by men and for men. Women and children have had a subordinate position with connections to the private sphere of life. Public life has been a male coded culture and a word like citizenship is historically impregnated with male power (Davidoff, 2001). I have thought about the incompatibility of toddlers and citizenship and believe that it is important to study the possibilities, if any, for participation and agency among the youngest children in an institutional practice.

Swedish pre-school involves nurseries with children aged 1-3 years. These institutions have been organised and equipped based on the discourse of the small child in need of care and nursing. This view has lead to home-like pedagogical environments with an emphasis on nursing and a sense of security. Experimenting and exploration have been given little consideration in the nursery (Nordin-Hultman, 2004).

In this paper I want to discuss and problematise the construction of the competent child in different perspectives focusing on the youngest children in pre-school. The “the competent child” is not a precise concept but it seems to share some characteristics of current childhood (Ellegaard, 2004). It has been strong, especially in the Nordic countries e.g Sommer, 2005 and it is based on a lecture held at the Cice conference (Children’s Identity and Citizenship in Europe) in Malmö 2007. At first I thought that the two concepts, toddlers and citizenship, were not compatible. Most of the historical tradition connected to democracy and citizenship has been entangled with power, gender, ethnicity and age. Public life has been organised by men and for men. Women and children have had a subordinate position with connections to the private sphere of life. Public life has been a male coded culture and a word like citizenship is historically impregnated with male power (Davidoff, 2001). I have thought about the incompatibility of toddlers and citizenship and believe that it is important to study the possibilities, if any, for participation and agency among the youngest children in an institutional practice.

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In this paper I want to discuss and problematise the construction of the competent child in different perspectives focusing on the youngest children in pre-school. The “the competent child” is not a precise concept but it seems to share some characteristics of current childhood (Ellegaard, 2004). It has been strong, especially in the Nordic countries e.g Sommer, 2005 and it has often been used in popular language and has been influential in children’s institutions. The term “the competent child” may be seen as opposite to earlier representations of the child as needy and not yet fully competent. One of the characteristics that Ellegaard mentions is “that children are seen as social actors participating in the formation of their social reality instead of...
merely objects of adult socialisation" (p 178). A study is presently carried out at a nursery inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy which focuses on democracy, investigative pedagogy and a view of children as being active and competent. It is an exploratory study with the purpose of testing some research questions and getting material for identifying some new problems. "The competent child" can be identified using observations made at this nursery. Studies that focus on toddlers’ participation in educational contexts are rare in a Swedish context; mostly they involve older children (Folkesson & Emilson, 2006). Age is connected to institutionalised lives; the organisation of these lives is based on age and has consequences regarding social position (Krekula, Närvinen & Näsman, 2005). Broadly speaking e.g. developmental psychology with sequences of stages has had an influence on research on children and has formed a great deal of pedagogical principles. As a consequence, the child “in needs” has been emphasized and sometimes described in static terms like “a child should be able to count to three at a certain age” (Vallden-Roth & Männson, 2006). Age as a power structure is one of the ideas that characterize the hypothetical relationship between adults and children in institutions such as pre-school and school. In sociological research, the youngest children in particular, have been marginalised because of their subordinate position in societies (Corsaro, 2005; Prout & James, 2006; Qvortrup, 1994).

The meaning of conceptions

“Statements about what a child is, do not just say something about the child, but also reflect the adult’s perspective on the child. Even if the perspective may be founded on many concrete experiences about children, there is also an interpretation screen influenced by cultural ideas, values and the view of humanity” (my translation) (Sommer, 2005 pp. 82-83). The author calls this interpretation screen “a childhood filter” (a.a. p. 83). Dahlberg and her colleagues (2003) believe that the educators’ ideas about the competent child yield productive traces in their work. Our conceptions of children and childhood become a determinative factor when defining a child’s social and ethical identity, their rights and the learning context that is offered to them (Ri- nald, 2006, p. 83). The pedagogical attitude, the interaction between the adults and the children and the choice of materials used can all be viewed as indications of a competent, learning child; early on it can be active and investigative, be listened to and make its own decisions. Walkerdine (1995) points out that it is fully possible to show a connection between different practices and the specific presumptions concerning for example learning and teaching. All of this can also be viewed as parts of a “values-education,” a merely objects of adult socialisation" (p 178). A study is presently carried out at a nursery inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy which focuses on democracy, investigative pedagogy and a view of children as being active and competent. It is an exploratory study with the purpose of testing some research questions and getting material for identifying some new problems. "The competent child" can be identified using observations made at this nursery. Studies that focus on toddlers’ participation in educational contexts are rare in a Swedish context; mostly they involve older children (Folkesson & Emilson, 2006). Age is connected to institutionalised lives; the organisation of these lives is based on age and has consequences regarding social position (Krekula, Närvinen & Näsman, 2005). Broadly speaking e.g. developmental psychology with sequences of stages has had an influence on research on children and has formed a great deal of pedagogical principles. As a consequence, the child “in needs” has been emphasized and sometimes described in static terms like “a child should be able to count to three at a certain age” (Vallden-Roth & Männson, 2006). Age as a power structure is one of the ideas that characterize the hypothetical relationship between adults and children in institutions such as pre-school and school. In sociological research, the youngest children in particular, have been marginalised because of their subordinate position in societies (Corsaro, 2005; Prout & James, 2006; Qvortrup, 1994).

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The competent child in research

“What is a child?”; a question of importance, both for the academy and the professional practice. There has, since the nineties, been more focus on the questions of and research on children and childhood within the social sciences, particularly within sociology, previously more focused on the adult world. “The competent child” has been discussed in both sociological and pedagogical/psychological research, particularly in the Nordic countries e.g. Sommer (2005) and Kampmann (2004), but to some extent internationally as well e.g. Alonen (2001), Mayall (2001) and child psychology, for example by Stern (1991), whose research is summarised in “The infant’s interperson- al world.” Through clinical studies and studies of children and families in the everyday life, he gives a picture of the, in many ways, competent infant, a picture of great importance for the view on children in child psychology. The image of a child as being competent, learning and searching for meaning has become of significant consequence for the research on pre-school and children in pre-school.

“The competent child” is an influential construction that may be explored. The emphasis on the childhood as only a social construction can lead to reductionism, a notion later discussed by Prost (2000). The emphasis on a self-governed, self-regulating child can lead to expectations of the child as being able to handle too much on its own, to make tough decisions demanding adult responsibility. There are indications of adults tending to abdicate from their responsibility in some situations (Sommer, 2005). In the discussion of “the competent child” there is a tendency of making the relationship between children and adults symmetrical, meaning an equal relationship regarding decisions, matters of responsibility and authority. Sommer (2005, p. 47) quoting Brembeck (2000, p. 11) maintains that the view of the child as competent has levelled out the relationship between children and adults: “The view of children as competent individuals also calls for adults to renounce their authority to some extent and be the child’s friend” (my translation). The quote shows a problematic connection between being a friend and taking an adult position. There is no entirely equal relationship between children and adults regarding competence and authority (Sommer, 2005). A fear of being authoritarian can sometimes lead to adults not using their greater experience and their authority in situations where children may be in need of support. An open relationship, participation in decision making and listening need not be obstructed by the use of adult authority.

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How is the term “competence” to be understood? It can be defined in different ways. Sommer (2005) who has discussed the construction of the competent child, classifies the concept: It can be viewed as inherited skills, as already conquered skills and abilities, but also as potential future possibilities depending on situation and age among other things. I choose to view competence as potentials, to avoid the essential view on children, where the ability and the power to act are embedded as a natural instinct.

According to Ellegård (2004) among others, the term “the competent child” primarily can be viewed as a break against the previously prevailing, directly opposite representation of the child. He also states that it is far from everyone who embraces this image of the child and that still other, partly opposite, discourses about children, childhood and practices with a connection to children exist parallel to the competent child. One example is the developmental psychology with sequences of stages, especially Piaget’s (1977) theory on the development of the child. A study on individual development plans by Vallberg Roth and Månsson (2006) is an example of this discourse. The image of the child emerging in this study shows, as a predominant discourse, a self-regulating child out of context, often described in terms of developmental psychology.

In an article Woodhead (2006) questions the formulation of universal rights for children (UN’s declaration of human rights). He problematises the thesis on children’s needs and he argues that it is not possible to find general, universal needs regarding children, because children’s needs are related to their environment and culture and that “the competent children” have no say in the formulation of their own needs. He argues that the generalization of needs is founded in a biological view on children while needs are cultural constructions. I believe that the term should be contextualized and deconstructed, but the questioning of a number of universal rights for children can have great and unwanted consequences. It would mean, for example, that a child’s need for physical care and freedom from violence could not be generalized. To question the UN’s child convention could be counterproductive in countries where children’s rights are not being prioritised. Hence, children’s need for physical care and freedom from violence could not be generalized. To question the UN’s child convention could be counterproductive in countries where children’s rights are not being prioritised. Hence, children’s need for security and physical care should be treated as general and universal rights.

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Children’s participation and agency

The importance of children’s participation in the institutional practices is emphasized by many researchers besides Mayall and Alanen, e.g. Nutbrown (1996) and Pramling Samuelsson and Sheridan (2003). They discuss children’s possibilities of participating as a value and a pedagogical question and the interdependence of these two dimensions. They refer to the UN’s declaration of human rights and the preschool curriculum (Lpfo 98, Ministry of Education and Science), both documents stressing the importance of children’s influence and participation. Nutbrown, furthermore, discusses the differences in perspectives between children’s needs and children’s rights.

Concepts like democracy and participation can be interpreted in different ways and must be seen as relative and strongly connected to adults’ actions in relation to children. Communication is a key factor here and adults’ way of thinking and communicating with children offer the opportunities and the frames of children’s possibilities for participation (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2003).

In a research project, Johansson and Pramling Samuelsson (2001) studied two nursery groups named the “Banana” and the “Orange” during several meal times. Among others, two questions were asked: “Has the children’s notion of their own competence increased?” and “What kind of learning is possible?” The observations revealed that the educators’ attitude and behaviour were different in the two groups. In one of the nurseries, the “Banana,” the educators believed in the ability of the children and confirmed their skills, which was not the case in the “Orange.” One author’s conclusion is: at the “Banana” the children seem to get experiences of being competent and worth listening to, i.e. that they are respected as children with rights, an important component in care as well as in learning (aa. p.99).

Folkesson and Emilson (2006) have used the term “competence” to analyse the form of the pedagogical situations concerning relations and communication.

Children’s agency is bound by context and situation. The term context can be understood in many ways and has disparate theoretical starting points. In this article it is consistent with the view of Cicourel (1979) it is a term including both the institutional context and the action and interaction of people within “social practices” (Siljö, 2000). According to Alanen (2001) it is im-

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important to study individual children and their behaviour and participation in their own social context. Children relate to both people and things in their every day lives in different social practices. As these practices vary they give different meanings to childhood. Almen uses the concept “Childing practises” (p 135). One author who has focused on the question of children’s agency in different contexts, and especially child-adult relationships, is Mayall (2002). He argues that psychology traditionally emphasized children as “becoming” in the sense “going to be” and childhood as a period of preparation, and he believes that sociologists today are seeking to challenge these notions. Mayall notices different possibilities for children’s agency and that the social setting is of importance. In school, children struggle for agency in a “future oriented regime” (p 85) while at home the “here and now” agency is in focus. Mayall (2001) discusses the children’s competence and agency and its dependency on the social context. In his study, children describe different participant activities according to family life, for example conflict solving and decision-making. By contrast, the children’s talk about school experiences are commonly described in terms of their lack of agency (a.a.).

The pedagogical setting

The pedagogical environment is an important part of the Reggio Emilia Education. The importance of the pedagogical settings and the materials as part of children’s subjectivity construction is emphasized by Malaguzzi (1993), the founder of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, and it is illustrated by his expression “the environment as the third pedagogue” (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 76). Rinaldi is one of the Reggio-pedagogues and considers a good pedagogical environment as a part of children’s rights and points out the connections between the quality of the environment and the standard of learning. The part played by adults in the creation of these pedagogical rooms that make it possible for children to use their opportunities to learn and become competent is very important (Rinaldi, 2006). Mayall (2002) argues that the social setting has emerged as a crucial determinant of children’s experiences and that the school and the home enable different childhoods through the ideologies the adults involved in each setting hold about childhood. The way of organising space and materials in the Swedish pre-school (nursery) according to a strong cultural pattern is called a “home discourse” by Nordin Hultman (2004, p. 111) in her thesis “Pedagogical settings and children’s subjectification” (my translation) comparing Swedish Childhood institutions and their pedagogical environments with British ones. Inspired by Foucault (1980) Nordin Hultman writes, about the links between space and power and that the power of space is part of the ascribing of people’s identity and subject formation. Foucault (1980) has in his research emphasized the importance to study individual children and their behaviour and participation in their own social context. Children relate to both people and things in their every day lives in different social practices. As these practices vary they give different meanings to childhood. Almen uses the concept “Childing practises” (p 135). One author who has focused on the question of children’s agency in different contexts, and especially child-adult relationships, is Mayall (2002). He argues that psychology traditionally emphasized children as “becoming” in the sense “going to be” and childhood as a period of preparation, and he believes that sociologists today are seeking to challenge these notions. Mayall notices different possibilities for children’s agency and that the social setting is of importance. In school, children struggle for agency in a “future oriented regime” (p 85) while at home the “here and now” agency is in focus. Mayall (2001) discusses the children’s competence and agency and its dependency on the social context. In his study, children describe different participant activities according to family life, for example conflict solving and decision-making. By contrast, the children’s talk about school experiences are commonly described in terms of their lack of agency (a.a.).

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sised the organisation of space in social practices like school, prisons and hospitals as conditions for subjectification. This “home discourse” has a long history in Swedish pre-school. The Hamnrålädjär (Kindergarten) had “the good home” as an ideal with Frölö inspiration, something that both Tallback Broman (1991) and Valberg-Roth (1998) describe in their historical research. The home represented the kindergarten (Valberg-Roth, 1998, p. 119). It has a strong symbolising function and communicates an agenda of a home supplementary function and expectations of the way children at a certain age should act. This can lead to an absence of challenges and experimentation. The environment could instead communicate a message of a variation of activities. Rooms are not only physical but they also express expectations of the relationships of the persons in the rooms and the relationship between them as well as the conditions for identity formation. Markström (2005), who studies normalisation processes in pre-schools, points out that the frames and conditions of the pre-school are dictated by society and within these frames the institutional order is negotiated and created by educators as well as children.

The philosophy of Reggio Emilia and the experiences of the pedagogical work there have caused a development and have challenged the current pre-school pedagogical tradition. The Reggio Emilia inspired pedagogy is described as a pedagogy where the ability to listen to children, to be able to be inspired by children and learn from them is important (Rodari, 1988; Rinaldi, 2006).

A values educational way of working

Ideas of democracy have always played an important role in Swedish pre-schools as well as in the other Nordic countries (Brembeck, Johansson & Kämpmann, 2004). These ideas have been part of a bigger society related democracy project that still has influence over the everyday life of the institutions (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2005). Moss (2006) points out that, institutions for children can be a platform for democratic work and that the childhood and the pedagogical work are very important in expanding democracy in complex post industrial societies.

In this paper I use the term values education in accordance with Thomberg and Colerard (2003). Values education is the term used in the Anglo-Saxon countries and includes pedagogical programs, methods, interventions and methods, which intend to stimulate and affect individuals or groups to construct, understand or critically reflect on values and norms. The second one is: Activities, situations, relationships or processes sised the organisation of space in social practices like school, prisons and hospitals as conditions for subjectification. This “home discourse” has a long history in Swedish pre-school. The Hamnrålädjär (Kindergarten) had “the good home” as an ideal with Frölö inspiration, something that both Tallback Broman (1991) and Valberg-Roth (1998) describe in their historical research. The home represented the kindergarten (Valberg-Roth, 1998, p. 119). It has a strong symbolising function and communicates an agenda of a home supplementary function and expectations of the way children at a certain age should act. This can lead to an absence of challenges and experimentation. The environment could instead communicate a message of a variation of activities. Rooms are not only physical but they also express expectations of the relationships of the persons in the rooms and the relationship between them as well as the conditions for identity formation. Markström (2005), who studies normalisation processes in pre-schools, points out that the frames and conditions of the pre-school are dictated by society and within these frames the institutional order is negotiated and created by educators as well as children.

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that include some sort of learning in relation to values and norms through individuals’ and groups’ constructing, interpretations, incorporation or questioning of values and norms. Consequently the term values education does not only include educational methods but also conscious and unconscious activities and processes as well as relevant learning. Thornberg (2004) discusses the different values of the term and reasons about explicit and implicit value pedagogy. He points out that, besides the official goals and directions for the value pedagogical work in pre-school and school which are formulated in separate curricular texts at different levels, there is also a hidden value pedagogical practice in school. The comparison can be made with the term “the hidden curriculum,” discussed among others by Halstead (1996) and Broady (1991). Halstead uses the terms explicit and implicit values education and believes that teachers themselves are role models and constitute a part of this “hidden curriculum.”

With implicit values I assume that the educators have internalised models for behaviour and organisation that are built on values of the pre-school education and its goals. In my opinion, their values in educational work is explicit as well, based on explicit goal descriptions on different levels. Related questions concerning play in pre-school are discussed by Gannerud and Rönnerman (2006) in a report “Contents and meaning in teachers work in pre-school and school” (my translation).

Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the meaning of pedagogical choices and the significance of the pedagogical setting for children’s participation in pre-school.

Hopefully my study can contribute by adding some new knowledge to the discussion of toddlers’ opportunities for participation in an institutional context, like a nursery, despite their early age, and to discuss the construction of the competent child in relation to a values education.

A case study

This article is based on a case study, carried out in several short periods during one and a half year at a strategically chosen pre-school nursery. My choice of pre-school is based on the fact that the pre-school applies an investigative way of working and is influenced by the pedagogical way of thinking, inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy with its strong emphasis on children’s agency and participation.

The reason to stay for a long time making observations at one and the same nursery, is to get the opportunity to study actions and interactions in an ordinary day to day context in order to be able to make interpretations which can result in patterns and variation (Patton, 1991). To focus on the meaning of social practises implies a methodological position: “It is not just about that include some sort of learning in relation to values and norms through individuals’ and groups’ constructing, interpretations, incorporation or questioning of values and norms. Consequently the term values education does not only include educational methods but also conscious and unconscious activities and processes as well as relevant learning. Thornberg (2004) discusses the different values of the term and reasons about explicit and implicit value pedagogy. He points out that, besides the official goals and directions for the value pedagogical work in pre-school and school which are formulated in separate curricular texts at different levels, there is also a hidden value pedagogical practice in school. The comparison can be made with the term “the hidden curriculum,” discussed among others by Halstead (1996) and Broady (1991). Halstead uses the terms explicit and implicit values education and believes that teachers themselves are role models and constitute a part of this “hidden curriculum.”

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studies what children do or say that they do. It is also about discussing these practices and the consequences for the children” (Hållén, 2003, p. 17).

The fieldwork observations emanate from one nursery in the pre-school with a staff of five educators and 26 children 1-3 years of age. Eleven girls and 15 boys. Four years ago the pre-school merged two nurseries, which accounts for the large number of children. Every group has its own part of the nursery at meal times. Apart from that, the rooms of the merged departments have been organized to suit different activities. During a two year period a variety of situations has been video-taped on several occasions (15 hours of video recordings) and field notes primarily with a focus on the interaction between toddlers and educators and between toddlers and the pedagogical environment. Different situations, like daily activities as meals but also circle times and planned group activities, have been registered.

The main question of the study is: is it possible to distinguish traces of children’s initiatives made in a nursery practice with small children, according to the educators’ conception of children as competent? Another question is: what might participation be on a concrete level in an institutional practice? What are the possibilities for the children to participate and to take an active part in the pedagogical setting?

The analysis of the material has been directed towards the nursery as an institutional social practice and what appears in the actions of the children. The material has been grouped in themes on the basis of educators’ arrangement of situations with opportunities for children’s participation. The choice of the video sections and other observations are made with support of the method “Critical incident” (Erickson, 1986). Situations of interest are those where the children participate in the pedagogical institutional practice. One way of understanding toddler participation during the analysis of the material was to look for answers to questions like: What is the role of the teacher? What are the possibilities for the children to be active and take initiatives? What opportunities of agency and meaning making are offered by the pedagogical environment?

The analysis of the collected material from the case study is based on the implicit value message of the practice, i.e. about the possibilities for the children to participate and to be active. Therefore propose that the offers and the possibilities for participation and agency in the pedagogical environment can be seen as a part of a values education, an opinion I share with e.g. Colenut (2004) and Thornberg (2004). The following section of the article is the analysed material from my study and one ambition is to keep close to the observations and put forward examples of toddler participation in different situations.

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Possibilities for children's participation at a Reggio Emilia inspired nursery

In this section I would like to explain the institutional order created by the educators, based on an idea about children's ability and agency. The educators have organised a large room with opportunities to play games of construction, building and experimenting. In the nursery there is a library with books visible and accessible on a shelf at child height and also a room for painting.

I have been able to make observations of situations where the children get different offers through the pedagogical environment that seems to indicate to the children what can be explored, investigated and worked with. There are easels always ready to use and also paint in small jars, made of glass so that the colours show, with brushes in them. Despite the early age of the children, the educators use different technical teaching aids, like over-head projectors and computers located in a way that make it possible for the children's spontaneous use. The following observation examples are related to the question of children's interaction with the pedagogical environment.

Jakob (2 years old) looks at the easels and walks towards one of them and starts taking a brush. One educator comes and puts on an apron. Jakob stands at an easel and starts painting. He first uses a dark green paint. He is about to change to light green. He puts the brush down in the light green jar. Takes a look and moves it back to the dark green jar. He then takes the light green colour and keeps on painting, concentrating for a long period of time on the light green paint.

One of the educators commented that, when the children are given opportunities to take their own initiatives and be investigative in the nursery environment, e.g. by the placing of materials at child height, she notices how the children develop abilities she did not initially notice. The educators make it possible for the children to take initiative by keeping materials available constantly.

In a space between the hallway and a room sits an older sandpit on legs, a pedagogical detail, commonly used during earlier pre-school periods. In this sandpit the educators have placed a lot of different wild animals made of plastic and clay. On the wall behind the sandpit hangs a piece of fabric with similar animals of the same shape and colour.

When I pass the sandpit, one of the first days, a little boy is stood in front of it and is looking intensely at the animals in the sand and then at the ones on the wall. He looks at me and points to an elephant on a shelf at child height and also a room for painting.

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Observation in the pedagogical environment and the effect of art on the walls in children’s height: The educator sits with the children on the floor and they look in a book of arts and a picture of Magritte with a blue jug on it. Little Klara, 1½ years old, becomes eager and points at the wall in front of them and says: “The same, the same!” The educator looks surprised at Klara and she continues saying: “The same.” The educator looks at the wall and sees a picture with a similar jug although smaller and in another colour. The educator does not know the name of the artist and looks at the picture where it is printed Magritte.

The children are stimulated by the pedagogical environment. They get various impressions and notice similarities as well as differences and make new discoveries.

**Everyday competence through the children’s active participation**

The routine situations of everyday life (the daily run of things) such as meal time, is very time-consuming in nurseries. The organisation of these activities and the children’s possible part in such social practices, as well as their understanding of these practices, may encourage them to participate (Sommer, 2005). The following observation from a meal time illustrates children’s agency in spite of their young age. The educators sit at different tables together with three or four children.

Mia, a girl of two and a half years says: “I want more.” An educator, Malin, at her table says: “You can go and get it at the other table. Mia goes to the other table and Ingrid, another educator asks her: “What do you want, couscous?” Mia nods and gets couscous and walks back to her table with her plate looking concentrated. When the children have eaten they all take their plates, knives and forks and walk to the sink and put it there.

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After lunch one child is often asked to help to put out the mattresses for the rest time, which the following observation exemplifies:

Lunch time is just finished and the educator Jane asks the children who wants to help to put out the mattresses. Elin, two and a half years old answers: “Yes!” Elin drags one mattress behind her. Jane: “You can put it on Mira’s place. Where shall it be?” Elin puts it on the right place and takes a pillow and puts it on the mattress. Jane: “And Konrad’s, where shall that one be?” Elin puts Konrad’s mattress on the right place and afterwards also her own. In spite of her young age, Elin gets the opportunity to participate in arranging the rest time together with an adult.

Most things are placed at child level in the toilet area, for example the basins are at the children’s height as are the mirrors. The children are encouraged to actively participate in activities like changing of nappies and washing. On one occasion an educator (Anna) goes into the toilet room with a girl (Neda, 18 months) who needs a new nappy. In that room there is an adjustable nursing table.

The nursing table is at floor level. Neda lies down on it by herself. Anna pushes a button to make the nursing table elevate with Neda on it. Anna looks at Neda, smiles and talks to her while the nursing table slowly rises. Anna changes her nappy and washes her slowly while continuously talking to her. Neda is smiling. When the nappy has been changed Anna pushes the button to make the nursing table slowly descend back to floor level. When it stops at floor level Neda gets off. She turns to the button and pushes it to make the table rise again. She looks at Anna looking pleased.

On another occasion I watch Kia (22 months) who needs a new nappy in the toilet room with the educator called Monika. Kia gets down on the floor and starts to take off her nappy with some difficulty. Monika sits next to her on the floor and smiles encouragingly. Kia then gets up and picks up the used nappy from the floor, walks over to the nappy disposal unit, pushes down the pedal with her foot to open the lid and throws the nappy away. Kia concentrated very hard on the task and looks pleased when it is completed. Monika then helps her with a new nappy.

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One possible interpretation of these observations is that the children are al-
lowed to take an active part in the daily activities and be both dependent
and competent and they are also examples of how care and learning meet.
The care situations, like changing nappies, are allowed to take time during which
both interaction and learning take place. Neda has after a few times on the
nursing table learned how to operate the elevation function, she pushes the
button herself and stands watching the table rise.

Agency and participation in theme situations
The educators have an ambition to involve the children and make sure they
get to be subjects in the nursery collective. This is accomplished in different
ways. One of the themes at the nursery, “Where I live,” starts with the par-
ticipation of every child, in order to make the child visible as an individual.
Every child is the centre of attention and is supposed to show the way to his
or her home. The parents participate and can prepare the child for the task.
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theme from the nursery:

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Tilde (all of them about three years old) John is the one who is direct-
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Ingrid: “Where do we walk now?” John: “Through the gate and then
there” (points to the right). John: “Then you push a button and cross the
street. It has come up there” (points to the right). The children look
at the button. John: “That is the bicycle repair shop. That is
where I fix my bike.” John points to the parking meter: “I live over
there by that.” Ingrid: “What is it?” John: “It is where you park the
car. You get a ticket for your car here” (John points to a slit in the me-
ter). Someone comes out from the yard and says hello to John and lets
him in.

The educators plan a situation where, on this specific occasion, John is the
one who shall take the initiative and be the one who directs and leads the
whole group. The subordination of the small child is deliberately exchanged
in the position switch between child and adult and the relative asymmetry in
the child-adult relationship is partly revoked. Situations, where the children
can get the feeling of being capable of accomplishing a task are of great im-
portance to the creation of subject (Nordin-Hultman, 2004).

Agency and participation in theme situations
The educators have an ambition to involve the children and make sure they
get to be subjects in the nursery collective. This is accomplished in different
ways. One of the themes at the nursery, “Where I live,” starts with the par-
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portance to the creation of subject (Nordin-Hultman, 2004).
The educator Jane is the leader of a group of four children aged two and two and a half: Lukas, Emelina, Elin and Miriam. They are experimenting starting out from the question of resemblance and difference and they are investigating shadows:


The children are allowed to handle various technical equipment, like overhead projectors and computers, in different situations. Thereby giving them the possibility of achieving an early technical competence.

In my analysis I have found that the children in this nursery can get the opportunity to be active and to participate in the daily activities like meal times, rest times and care situations partly because of the availability of the pedagogical environment and partly because of the educators’ way of involving children in assisting in the routines of daily life. The representation of the child as potentially competent, as in the Reggio Emilia philosophy, is productive and is expressed by the educators’ way of organising the pedagogical practice and interaction with the children. The children in my study who are from 1 and ½ to 3 years old (toddlers) have by tradition been treated as mostly dependent and needy. However, in my study, I have found various situations giving opportunities for children’s agency and participation. Such a nursery practice, with active, exploring children in focus has not been the possibility of achieving an early technical competence. In order to nuance the findings a little I intend to mention situations when the children are not participating in the way as they are in the daily routines and in the planned thematic project situations. The adult guided situations, like the circle times, follow a rather rigid pattern of name training, singing, providing information about the day’s activities and adults asking children questions. These circle times follow a traditional pattern with adult dominance and with few child initiatives. This can be compared to previous research by Rubinstein Reich (1993) and Månsson (2000). Both authors discuss the circle time structure compared to that of classroom interaction.

Age and power

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standard concerning the youngest children. Age can be viewed as being socially and culturally constructed. Different age groups get different responses because some physiological, cognitive and social processes are connected to chronological age. A big part of the positioning among the children is performed in dichotomy relationships such as child-adult; child and therefore not adult (Taguchi, 2000). “Age is connected to a institutionalised life course. These life courses include standards that define rights and obligations and anticipated activities.”

A pedagogical practice based on the concept of an active child, given a lot of opportunities to partake in the different practices of pre-school, gives the children more influence and opportunities for participation, which could be connected to aspects of power. The asymmetry between the adults and the children might partly be displaced when the children are allowed more space and a more active part in the pre-schools practices.

Children in pre-school all too often are put in situations in which they experience the feeling of failure (Hultman, 2004). However in this situation, the child is engaged in a situation of coping and, instead of experiencing shortcomings, is offered possibilities of success and is practicing competence.

Mayall (2002) discusses the adult-child relationship. He says that children often are viewed as weak and ignorant because they are looked upon as helpless and dependent on others. They are often not allowed to gather new experiences and new knowledge. Many children believe so strongly that they are perceived as ignorant and immature and that is how they are supposed to be, it is presumed that they should stay that way during their childhood.

The pedagogical environment signalling access and activity

In my analysis I can see that the educators’ way of organising the nursery environment, with furniture and different materials in the height of the children, indicates availability and possibilities to be active. The variety and the attraction of the materials, with painting colours in different colours and pencils in eye height, construction material lying available on the floor, clay on a table and walls decorated with paintings in height of the children, stimulate them to take initiatives of their own, to be active and creative and to examine the environment. The connection between children’s possibilities of making choices and decisions for themselves and participation is a conclusion drawn by Folkesson and Emilson (2006) in a study on toddlers, “Children’s participation and teacher control.” The importance of the structures and the materials is related to agency. Children’s agency is to be understood as possibilities (or limitations) of actions as determined by the structures, which they are standard concerning the youngest children. Age can be viewed as being socially and culturally constructed. Different age groups get different responses because some physiological, cognitive and social processes are connected to chronological age. A big part of the positioning among the children is performed in dichotomy relationships such as child-adult; child and therefore not adult (Taguchi, 2000). “Age is connected to a institutionalised life course. These life courses include standards that define rights and obligations and anticipated activities.”

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Involving the children in the daily routines and pedagogical themes

I have registered that, despite of the early age of the children (some of them just started walking), they get the opportunities and are able to be active in the meal time routines e.g. cleaning the tables. They are also involved in putting out the mattresses at rest time and assisting in the toilet area. The organisation of these activities, letting the children take the time and encouraging them to take an active part, results in children’s learning that they are a part of the everyday life and the daily run of things. The meal, with cooked food at least once a day, and with educators participating during mealtime, with pedagogical and caring aims is an old tradition in the Swedish pre-school (Johansson & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001; Månsson, 2000). The mealtime is associated with feelings, ethic and care but education and learning are evident aspects as well.

The conclusion of the study is that the matter of importance is the educators’ beliefs in the children’s abilities and skills. (Johansson & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001, p. 99). This result corresponds with the observations made in my study. The children are entrusted with different tasks and get encouraged to accomplish them. In Sommer’s (2005) opinion the routines in everyday life that children participate in are fundamental to the acquiring of culture and are of importance to their development of competence.

In the thematic projects the children are allowed to take initiatives, to be active, solve problems and experiment. To work with problem solving has mostly been part of the natural sciences didactics in Swedish pre-school education. In the Reggio Emilia philosophy with its emphasis on the pedagogical environment and its meaning related to children’s agency an participation (Rinaldi, 2006; Dahlberg, 2003).

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The examples in my material can be interpreted as an expression for a pedagogical practice, where children are allowed to take a position as potentially competent (Sommer, 2005). By this I mean that children do not have an inherited competence but that they have potentials for further developing different competences.

In a practice where children are allowed to and able to act, they can explore, experiment and investigate different possibilities that confirm or contrast their own notions and thoughts (Dunne, 2006). Dunne argues that this pedagogical attitude toward children’s strength and potential is opposite to the one that turns children into consumers and teachers into intermediaries. “The competent child” is an influential construction that should be discussed and that can lead to a reduction of the child as strong, non dependent children differ from adults in the way that childhood is to be seen as a period when children may need protection because of less maturity and strength and that it means unequal power relationships.

James and Prout (2006) have recently started to problematise the strong emphasis on the autonomous and competent child. It is said that when dealing with the question about children as competent you can be criticised of being essential. “The competent child” can be seen as a return to “the child as nature,” which was the starting point for the critical scrutiny of developmental psychology.

This later view can lead back to the previous child paradigm “the child as nature,” which was one of the starting points for the scrutiny of developmental psychology. I believe that the children in the nursery I have observed can take the position as dependent with access to adult nursing and care, but also as independent players with many offers in the pedagogical practice of the nursery. These aspects can be part of a discussion about the discourse concerning the competent child and the connection to questions of morality and how values education is expressed in practice.

Dahlberg and her colleagues (2003) integrate a view of ethics of care in the learning process with a connection to citizenship and democracy. The link between care and learning is strong in the Swedish child-care system and it has a prominent role in the curriculum for pre-school (Lpfö 98). However, not much is said about care in terms of nursing and physical knowledge. Care is instead one of many ways in which the children learn and knowledge (Hulldén, 2003; Lindgren, 2000).

This discussion about moral questions in relation to children is founded on a relational outlook, where interaction and dialogue as well as the educator’s behaviour and attitude towards the children are of great importance.

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Our construction of child and childhood is productive (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2003). By this the authors mean to say that there are many ways to understand child and childhood and we make choices in what we believe the child to be. These choices affect the pedagogical work done in the childhood institutions. This raises questions about how and in what ways adults are part of the construction of childhood and in what ways they offer the prerequisites for the development of further competence that is potential and not a born quality.

The prevailing child/childhood discourse (the educators’ conceptions of child and childhood) affects the relationships between children and staff at pre-schools, their organisation and choice of design and content. In my opinion, the providing of possibilities for children’s participation and influence could be labelled “a values education.”

Finally: this article is based on an exploring study in which I have intended to test some questions and also raise some new ones. The study is a starting point to a more extensive study at a number of pre-schools. The new questions raised in this study are, first: when and in which relationships do children use agency and competence and in which relationships do they not? and second: in what way is gender a part of this use of agency and participation in a pedagogical setting?

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Abstract
With its background in research on the development of the second language and the language use of immigrant children as portrayed in political discourse, this article discusses the significance of the mother tongue in the access of newly-arrived pupils to learning in school subjects while the development of their second language is in its earliest stages. The starting point for the project is a socio-cultural perspective of teaching and the development of knowledge, and that language is discourse. If one sees citizenship as an expressed goal of education with the aim of stimulating inclusion and critical thought, language plays a decisive role in how all voices can make themselves heard.

Two preparatory classes in Malmö were invited to problem-solving work sessions in the technical workshop at the School of Education. The student teachers acted as supervisors and observers alternately, and documented the conversations that took place. Sequences of conversation were recorded for analysis. The study illuminates and problematises the content of the conversations during problem-solving, what initiatives to conversation are taken by pupils and students, what the possibilities of problem-solving using the mother tongue are, and what the pupils’ texts contain and if they are functional, in the sense that it is possible to understand what the pupil wants to mediate to the reader. Excerpts from the recordings show that both children and students use a variety of “strategies” in the conversations and this has a number of consequences for the processes of knowledge.

Keywords: second language development, citizenship education, mother tongue, observations, socio-cultural learning, technology

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At the School of Education at Malmö University, teacher education is organised into major subject areas such as "Mathematics and Learning," "Knowledge of History and Learning" and "Culture, Media and Aesthetics." During 2005, a review of syllabuses was carried out with a view to bringing forward the issue of language development. The aim is that all students, regardless of choice of major subject, are equipped with sufficient knowledge of language development that by the time they graduate they are able to deal with this issue in their subject areas as a natural and self-evident process.

Criticism, political discourse and consequent media debate has implicitly and explicitly focused skills training without focussing on the question of content, both for those who have Swedish as their mother tongue and those who study Swedish as a second language. What has not been emphasised in the same way is the conversational use of speech, reading and writing and interplay with others in functional contexts, with their stating point in authentic texts.

The purpose of this article is to highlight and to discuss the importance of the mother tongue as a support for the successful development of a second language and of knowledge acquisition in school subjects, and to discuss the conditions applying to newly-arrived pupils.

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- That the Swedish language is to be the main language of Sweden.
- That Swedish is to be a complete language with the capacity to support all aspects of society.
- That the Swedish used in official forums shall be well formulated, simple and easy to understand.
- That everyone has the right to language: to develop and to acquire the command of the Swedish language, to develop and use one’s own mother tongue and national minority languages and to have the opportunity to learn foreign languages.

In consideration of the proposals about Swedish as a second language put forward first by the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet, fp) members and later also by members of the Moderate Party (Moderaterna) there is cause to look carefully at the fourth goal listed above. In Dagom Nyheten (The Daily News), two leading Liberal Party politicians in Malmö write that they would like to introduce into the local school plan the requirement that pupils should only speak Swedish during their lessons. “Then children from immigrant backgrounds will have better chances to practice their Swedish” is their argument. Those proposing this consider it to be self-evident that one teaches in Swedish schools and that forbidding the use of other mother tongues in the classroom will make it easier for teachers to maintain discipline. While Minister for Integration Nyamko Sabuni (fp) thinks that this idea would work well in schools where many pupils come from immigrant backgrounds, the teachers’ union points out that the proposal is at odds with the law that pupils may not be discriminated against on the grounds of ethnicity, and that the mother tongue is the only language that newly-arrived pupils have.

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which newly-arrived pupils with various mother tongues attend. The politicians maintain that if one only speaks Swedish in the preparatory class, one will be able to understand better the teaching in the ordinary classroom.

One can see historical parallels to today’s demand for one language. Until 1809, the Finnish region of Tornedalen was part of Sweden. With the new borders that were established at that time, Tornedalen was split so that a part of the Finnish-speaking population lived on the Swedish side. Others came to belong to the Russian Grand Duchy. At first, Finnish children continued to be taught in Meänkieli, but in 1888 it was decided that only Swedish was to be used both in the classroom and in the playground. School textbooks in Finnish were discarded from use and were not re-introduced until 1857, when the Swedish identity of the region was secure. Pupils were then also allowed to speak Finnish in the playground. The prohibitions had left deep scars in Finnish-speaking pupils and evidence given about this discriminatory school system has over time become overwhelming.

Today’s syllabus for Swedish as a second language in the compulsory school states that:

The aim of the teaching is that pupils should acquire a functional command of the Swedish language which is at the same level as pupils with Swedish as a mother tongue. Ultimately, the aim is that the pupils should achieve the level of first language-users.

One must ask the question what the political debate on “just speak Swedish” is really about and how the curriculum’s direction to “achieve the level of first language-users” should be interpreted. Should this level be achieved in every respect? In a study made by Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam (2004), a comparison was made between individuals with good second language skills (L2), who had spoken Swedish for at least 10 years, with speakers born in Sweden (L1). L2-speakers were between 4-23 years of age when they started their studies in the second language. Researchers could show differences between L1 and L2 speakers, irrespective of what age the second language was introduced and that second-language speakers did not achieve first language level. Considering these results it is reasonable to problematise the curriculum’s direction that second language speakers should achieve first language level.¹

¹ Meänkieli means "our language." The Finnish spoken in Tornedalen has particular characteristics that separate it from standard Finnish. (SOU 1997:193-195)

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It is also interesting to consider what politicians think second language users should be talking, reading and writing about while they are developing their second language. “During the first year, no other studies should be conducted than those in the Swedish language” write three representatives for the Moderate Party. What does this mean, in concrete terms? Does one imagine that for a number of years the pupils should simply practice vocabulary and grammar as isolated skills, have lessons on verb conjugation, noun endings and pronunciation until they sound as Swedish as possible? When do the pupils start their education in other subjects and how should that be carried out? Let us imagine that a 15 year old who has arrived from Iraq is placed in a preparatory class. If he is only allowed to speak Swedish, it is obvious he will not gain anything from the teaching in the various subjects. He will not understand anything of the discussion about the Second World War, problems with the environment, social studies topics or in mathematics.

Marks of being Swedish" (p. 166). In the SPRINS project (Evaldsson, 2000) second language pupils are considered to be disadvantaged. In a research report they derive from a one-sided perspective where language plays a decisive role for how different voices can make themselves heard, Giroux (1992, p. 134). The political propositions and demands noted above do not encourage the pupils’ acquisition of knowledge. They act in an excluding way as they derive from a one-sided perspective where one encourages “citizenship education” by inclusion in democratic decision-making processes, and to be included in influencing the way society develops in various respects.

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the importance of the pre-school’s and school’s view of multilingualism is discussed, often defined as either a resource or a disadvantage. In a thesis on Swedish for immigrants, Sjögren (2001) and Carlson (2002, p. 133) show that the teaching in SFI often reveals the dominance of the view of multilingualism as a disadvantage and its focus on problems.

The suggestion about only speaking Swedish at school also stands in stark contrast to the task given to the Agency for School Development and which in 2006 resulted in a national strategy for educating newly-arrived pupils in compulsory and senior secondary schools (U2006/5104/S) and comparative forms of schooling. In this text the Agency emphasises the importance that teaching in mother tongues and the teaching of Swedish as a second language should be parallel processes and that positive work methods demand that the personnel involved have “intercultural awareness that supports the development of the individual.” (p. 15).

In National School Development – minimising differences and improving results it is stated again that special efforts are necessary to support language development in pupils with foreign backgrounds. “The road to a good command of the Swedish language is via the mother tongue and it is therefore necessary to strengthen both instruction in the mother tongue and in Swedish as a second language.” Finally, a new evaluation (Skolverket, 2008) carried out by The Swedish National Agency for Education shows that pupils who take part of Mother tongue education achieve study results higher than average.

Language is discourse

The starting point for the second language and technology project is that language is discourse. On a formal level, both in the syllabuses for Swedish and for Swedish as a second language, it is officially expressed that “language has a key role to play in the work in schools. Communication and cooperation with others occurs through language.” It is through language that knowledge becomes “visible and usable.” (pp. 96 and 102). The discourse on language as communication and the enable of knowledge indicates a process-oriented view of learning and the development of knowledge. In the work carried out in school each day, various schools and individual teaching styles show a variety of discursive practice. It is through the use of language in social interplay and interaction with others that children have their greatest opportunities for participation in the work in schools.

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The subject of technology, according to Lpo94

With the introduction of the 1994 curriculum for the compulsory years of the school system, Lpo94, technology became a standalone subject with a separate syllabus, objectives and assessment criteria. By offering an attractive, exciting, creative and problem-solving technical subject, one hoped to encourage both girls and boys to choose to continue studying in the fields of science and technology. “Active citizenship” as well as the influence of technology on the development of society was emphasised in the syllabus. Technology can be described as a subject where practical problem-solving with a theoretical groundwork is central. Products are made and these, like other complete technical solutions, are to be evaluated and discussed. Possible improvements, strengths and weaknesses are identified and in this process, scientific knowledge and explanatory models are used. Alexandersson (2008) problematises the division of schools into theoretical and aesthetic subjects and writes:

Theoretical knowledge cannot be “thought forward” just as practical knowledge cannot be “made forward.” If one cannot relate to a practical reality, it is difficult to create theoretical concepts about it. To learn geometry only as an abstract concept without transposing this to concrete practice – for example by measuring the schoolyard or calculating the area of one’s own room – is just as mistaken as to create three-dimensional rooms in cyberspace without theorising about the picture as one of a number of media for human communication. (p. 207)

To ask newly-arrived pupils to solve a problem in the production process in a technical workshop demands interplay between cognitive, manual and language skills. Theoretical knowledge cannot be “thought forward” just as practical knowledge cannot be “made forward.” If one cannot relate to a practical reality, it is difficult to create theoretical concepts about it. To learn geometry only as an abstract concept without transposing this to concrete practice – for example by measuring the schoolyard or calculating the area of one’s own room – is just as mistaken as to create three-dimensional rooms in cyberspace without theorising about the picture as one of a number of media for human communication. (p. 207)

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pupils need to be allowed to think and express themselves in their first lan-
guage in order to have the opportunity to develop in all these areas.

The aims of the workshop project and research questions
to be answered

Various situations and the content of various subjects require their own par-
ticular language. Björk & Liberg (1996, p. 17) exemplify this by talking of the
difference between using typical formulations from a social science per-
spective to describe, for example, democracy and describing sunlight from
the perspective of a physicist. Through the use of various types of text they
show the language variance one needs to acquire in a systematic way.

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- the social, cultural and linguistic aspects of children’s experiences and understanding. In interaction with someone more experienced, a child...

A socio-cultural perspective on learning

How pupils come to take initiatives in conversation during work is not dependent only on their language ability but also upon earlier experiences in a similar context and the new social purpose-dedicated group they now participate in. They have to feel secure and accepted when coming to and working in the unfamiliar university environment. The way in which children learn is closely connected to the environment they find themselves in. It also requires authentic forms of interaction with a meaningful content that stimulates the children in being active participants who are able to make use of the different previous knowledge they command. The work in the technical workshop introduces new tools that mediate learning. Some of these tools that are common in a Swedish context are new for some of the children in the project group. All these things are central to the social-cultural perspective on learning. (Dewey, 1938; Dyble 2003, Lave & Wenger, 1991; Säljö, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

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Swedish as a second language and communicative competence

In the context of education it is common to hear opinions such as, “it’s not strange that they can’t speak-read-write about this. They don’t know much Swedish.” One can infer from opinions like this the assumption that one has to learn Swedish first in order to be able to use it to learn something about the world one is part of. What is it that one learns if one learns Swedish first? Which “Swedish language” is referred to? Is it items of vocabulary, individual words learned one after the other to be threaded on a string like a grammatically-correct necklace, or are we referring to subject content and subject language?

Small children develop their mother tongue in authentic contexts in the little world that so closely surrounds them. The child’s understanding is widened by everything it meets in its surroundings at the same time as the parents help by putting words to all these new things. The first language is defined as the language used by the child during its first three years of life. There are also families where children grow up with two first languages; the mother speaks one and the father speaks one. The second language here is defined as the language used by the child during its first three years of life. The acquisition of a second language differs from the acquisition of the first language in that it most often does not take place in the home environment and in that the pupils can have passed the age at which the basis of the mother tongue normally is founded. Viberg (1993; Gibbons, 2002) uses the terms foundation and extension to define the two components in the development of language. When, for example, a Swedish-born child starts school, given the support which is needed in initial stages. Bruner (1983) calls the processes leading to the achievement of what is possible for that child “scaffolding.” Rogoff (1990) also maintains that the child needs what she calls “guided participation” when it is confronted with a new learning environment. New learning environments require that one is included in the communication that is taking place. In agreement with Bruner (2003 p. 151) we maintain that what is usually called competence or skill is to “master the communicative code in the inter-subjective room that dominates the classroom,” or as in this case the university technology workshop.

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the foundation comprises that the child has mastered the sounds, system of conjugation and syntax of the mother tongue. One has a vocabulary of 8000-10000 words and has the skill of telling simple stories. The school assists in the extension of language in the form of subject and content-related language and the further development of grammatical and written language skills.

Hyltenstam (1996, p. 31) maintains that in fact it takes a number of years before the second language functions as well in the learning process as the first language. A sudden transition to a new language makes the learning process more difficult. The school has to handle the difficulty of allowing the children to successively grow into a second language at the same time as the school workload risks being experienced as boring and uninteresting if there is not much to talk about, because “they can’t speak Swedish yet.” If it is thought that one first has to lay the groundwork for a “general” foundation before one can study something of substance in the school subjects, going to school can in fact retard intellectual development. The starting point, therefore, is that the mother tongue has to, where needed, be allowed to support the development of the second language. This gives security in first being able to ask questions and to discuss things in a language one already masters.

Cummins (1981) has shown that it takes 5-7 years to develop the second language to the level required for it to function in learning processes that are cognitively demanding.

In contrast to Swedish-born children, the children in the preparatory class work with foundation and extension language in parallel. The children who participate in the project are in this way at the beginning of their learning of a second language at the same time as they are being introduced to the concepts that make up the technical subject. The syllabus for Swedish as a second language directs that the language must be used in a variety of contexts and have meaningful content. This encourages the development of both thought and language skills.

That which is typical for the subject may give opportunities for thought and communication on a knowledge or concept level which often is higher than the level of Swedish language. In this way the interplay between mother tongue and other subjects is important. (p. 104)

It is through cooperation and language communication that children grasp their own and others’ experiences, and how they understand different phenomena in the world about them. By integrating new knowledge with that which already exists, one sees alternative aspects and contexts.

Cummins (2000) defines a further element, which is dependent on situation and on level of cognitive difficulty, which is of importance for the child’s ability to participate in language and knowledge development. In a situation of practi-
When they express their thoughts they do it in various ways and corrections hear the language spoken by others than the teacher and this leads to what is development takes place in a meaningful way. The pupils get an opportunity to hear the language spoken by others than the teacher and this leads to what is called a larger inflow. Interaction between pupils also leads to a larger outflow since the work let them take more responsibility in making themselves understood and if and when the teacher is not around. During the interaction in a well-planned group work pupils exchange ideas and solve problems together. When they express their thoughts they do it in various ways and corrections and improvements of the language take place in a specific context.

Writing as a tool in the learning process

In the National quality audit (Skolverket, 1998), it was pointed out that the school’s task was to “lead students to different ways of using language.” The review team identified three varieties of language environments. The A-environment, which is to be preferred, promotes authentic, systematised and process-directed writing which is important in all subjects and which is seen as essential in knowledge acquisition. Activities should be multi-voiced and characterised by dialogue. The report emphasises the importance of the connection between what the children read and what they write as both activities support each other.

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In this way, communicative language ability in the school situation cannot be reduced to the simple oral form of communication. To communi- cate here has to mean that one has and can take part in conversations that are carried out in a given context of knowledge. Viberg (1996, p. 129) brings forward the importance in second language acquisition of varying “whole class” teaching where the teacher dominates the speaking that occurs, with activities where there is the possibility of cooperation in pairs or small groups. Mohan (2001) is rejecting the sometimes expressed idea that an in- tegration of language, content and thinking is something that comes about by itself. Instead it requires systematic planning.

Gibbons (2002) with reference to Mc Grouty (1993), argues that work- ing in groups in many ways and by genuine communication may support second language development, since the language use and the language de- velopment takes place in a meaningful way. The pupils get an opportunity to hear the language spoken by others than the teacher and this leads to what is called a larger inflow. Interaction between pupils also leads to a larger out- flow since the work let them take more responsibility in making themselves understood and if and when the teacher is not around. During the interaction in a well-planned group work pupils exchange ideas and solve problems together. When they express their thoughts they do it in various ways and corrections and improvements of the language take place in a specific context.

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Project time and participants

The project was carried out during a two-month period in 2006. Two preparatory classes (named below groups A and B) from two compulsory schools in one of Malmö’s suburbs, and the class teacher from the preparatory class in school A, participated in the project. The pupils were placed in the preparatory class as they were deemed to have insufficient language skills to be able to follow the teaching in an ordinary class. In each pupil group there were 10 pupils aged 8-12 years. One pupil was 15. The pupils had arrived in Sweden relatively recently and most came from non-European countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia, The Philippines, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, Palestine, Poland, Serbia and Somalia).

The work was carried out by Malmö University in the School of Education’s technical workshop located in the building known as Örkanen. 13 student teachers who at the same time were following the course in technical education were present alternately as teachers and observers. One of the student teachers who at the same time were following the course in technical education were present alternately as teachers and observers. One of the student teachers who at the same time were following the course in technical education were present alternately as teachers and observers. One of the student teachers who at the same time were following the course in technical education were present alternately as teachers and observers.

When the pupils tell a story and write it down, they are doing so from common experience; the work in the technical workshop. Teachers and friends in the preparatory class and the university teachers and students are all possible readers. “To write is to participate in a conversation,” writes Dysthe (ibid p. 15). In writing “here and now,” the pupils’ thoughts return to the workshop “there and then.” The chance to first orally tell a story about what they have done and listen to each other in the mother tongue gives the foundation for working on a text in two steps, first in the mother tongue and later in Swedish.

Dysthe (2002, p. 14), referring to the Russian language and literature philosopher Bakhtin’s (1981) formulation that writing is like a dialogue which goes both backwards and forwards in time. When one again converses about common experience, both the cognitive and the literary processes are supported. By reformulating the subject matter of the experience into one’s own words, one develops the thought processes about the “formal cultural terms employed,” writes Dysthe (ibid p. 15). In writing “here and now,” the pupils’ thoughts return to the workshop “there and then.” The chance to first orally tell a story about what they have done and listen to each other in the mother tongue gives the foundation for working on a text in two steps, first in the mother tongue and later in Swedish.

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**Documentation of conversations**

Thirteen teacher students were engaged to work with the pupil groups A and B. Seven worked as teachers and six as observers with the task of watching and documenting the discussions. The students who observed and took notes directed their attention to particular children and their friends, but kept them- selves at a discreet distance. The observations were done mainly on the con- tents of the discussions, how and what the pupils were communicating about themselves with the student teachers, and the exchange of ex- periences and construction ideas during the progress of the work, and the problems they confronted. Words and expressions which were used during the work were written on the board. These were then transferred to paper that the pupils later took with them to school.

**Work sessions in the technical workshop**

The students planned problem-solving tasks for the children in groups A and B to work with, and did all the practical preparations in advance for each session. Five different themes were prepared: boat building, strength/bridges, electricity, vehicle/Lego and parachutes.

Malmö University is situated in the old wharf area of Malmö harbour. Boat building was a natural starting point for the project. The bridge theme connected with common scenes in Malmö. When this theme was worked on it took the form of the bridge that all the children had heard and read and sung about in the tale of “The Three Bilygoats Gruff”. Teaching about elec- tricity is part of the normal curriculum in schools and in the project the task was to make a torch, which is a tool or toy that all children have come into contact with at some time. Playing with and constructing with Lego is some- thing that always happens in the homes of Swedish-born children. Of the children in the preparatory class, only a few had heard of Lego or built with it. The level of difficulty increased with this theme as the pupils were then required to follow and interpret a drawing for how to build a car. The final work with the construction of a parachute was the biggest task. It required much thought about how it should be constructed so as to bear the weight of a person, and also to be able to quickly and safely fly from the upper storey of the Okaken building to the ground floor of its atrium. All the tasks were designed to stimulate the pupils’ creative and aesthetic skills.

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Apart from the student documentation, parts of the discussions were recorded on minidisk by one of the project leaders. The recordings are of sequences of discussion. New recordings of the same children’s conversations were made later during the work. Again, it is a recording of a discussion that is already underway and then completed that is documented. This documentation was done in order to enlighten and problemize:

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The problems of making such recordings are well-known. Participants show a varying degrees of sensitivity when a microphone is recording what they say. Barnes’ (1978) experiences show the difference between speech when it is known or not that a recording is taking place. When the pupils were talking without a teacher present, the result was a probing discussion. This means that the pupils can freely try out their suggestions and points of view without the demand that what they are saying is correct, that there is a “right answer.” Barnes describes how the conversation in the presence of a teacher becomes edited. Instead of trying out their thoughts, pupils try to establish what the teacher wants to hear.

The hope was that the use of the minidisc could help the pupils to forget that the recording was taking place and not become a distraction. It would have been optimal to record all the children’s and students’ conversations during the entire work session, but this would have been far too complicated to carry out with so many speaking simultaneously. The compromise with limited sequences of recordings ran the risk of being too fragmented to give a truly representative picture of the discussion that took place. The students’ written documentation and the recordings are therefore intended to complement each other.

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The pupils wrote texts after each work session. The texts were later analysed in order to assess what the texts contain and if they are functional in the sense that it is possible to understand what the pupils want to convey to the reader. The writing was done in the preparatory class and without anyone from the School of Education present. There is an uncertainty in the documentation here concerning the instructions and directions in the writing situation in class B where there has not been much information from the teacher. The teacher of preparatory class A was present at all the sessions. The children from group B came without their teacher.

Ethical considerations

Before the start of the project, letters were sent to the parents. The schools helped with translation where necessary into their mother tongues. The letter contained a short description of the idea behind the project. The parents were requested to say if they did not want their child to participate, or if the child could participate but not be photographed or recorded during the project. All the children were allowed to participate, but five of them – two boys and three girls – were not allowed to be photographed if the photographs were to be published. In the PowerPoint presentation which has been prepared to document the project, these children have been made anonymous in the pictures.

Discussions in the technical workshop

Excerpts from the recordings of the pupils’ discussion with each other and with the student teachers are given below. The morning group is called (school) A while (school) B stands for the afternoon group. Boys and girls in school A are denoted by B1 – B7 and G1 – G4. School B pupils are denoted by g1 – g6 and b1 – b4. The preparatory class teacher is denoted by tea, while the student teachers are denoted by stud1 – 5. The University’s project leader is p-lead.

The recordings and questions to the children about why they shift between languages show that children who have been longest in the preparatory class try consistently to speak Swedish if they have different mother tongues. When the discussion dries up one turns to a friend with the same mother tongue for support and to express what one wants to say. Then they return to Swedish again and continue the conversation with the friend speaking another mother tongue. As some of the children explained it: “It feels safe to be able to ask N. when I can’t understand what you are talking about”.

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The risk of the use of recording equipment is noted above. The children’s discussions can be influenced negatively so that the conversation takes on the form of edited speech. This is hardly noticeable at those times when the children themselves take the initiative and talk with each other about how best to solve a construction problem, and the adult’s support is in the form of confirmation or encouragement and/or questions that arise from the topic under discussion by the children. These discussions are then probing in that the pupils are led to ask questions, try out hypotheses and ask for help only when they cannot go further by themselves.

In this context where the students’ initiatives take the form of questions in the form of “the teacher wants a particular response” – for example “what is this called in Swedish?” or “why do you have to use one of these?” – the children’s use of language takes on the form of edited speech. There are children who often respond with “don’t know” or “I can’t.” In these cases the weight has been placed on the naming of things, and on the children working out what the teacher is thinking of.

Analysis of recordings

The recordings were listened through several times in order to see what each conversation was about. Names of conversational partners, language, shifts between languages and content were noted. The analysis of the recordings made it possible to generalise three forms of discussion situations giving focus on content and the construction work. Parallel with this, there is always during each workshop some conversation which is entirely of a social nature. The social conversations are similar to each other but are exemplified under the final heading When conversation stops, where the differences between forms of conversation are obvious.

- What is it called in Swedish? The adults are frustrated by not being able to understand (Mostly conversation in the mother tongue)
- The electricity has to go around or the lamp doesn’t go on (Cause and effect)

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mother tongue. The adults, the preparatory class teacher and one student in a supervisory role are obviously frustrated by the children they have difficulty in getting to speak Swedish.

There is also an example here of two girls who take the initiative to open a discussion with each other. They speak Swedish, but do not use the terminology that the supervising student has indicated is appropriate during the work. Instead they paraphrase with the help of everyday words, where for example “shiny stuff” means aluminium foil. The student who was a discussion partner with the girls assumed the role of translator during the work and interrupted the girls’ conversation about the work a number of times.

g1: It shines more with that shiny stuff in it
g2: why?
Stud4: What is this called? (holds a piece of aluminium foil to a torch)
g1: Don’t know
g2: Glitter
Stud4: No, not glitter. That’s what you have in your hair when you are Lucia at Christmas. Have you seen this? What is it?
g1: Don’t know
g2: what do you do with the wire?
g1: it has to go there. There should be a circuit.
g2: Hmm
Stud4: Listen! Alu...
g2: Aha?
Stud4: Yes, and a bit more. Alumni...
g1: Alumni.
Stud4: Aluminium. Can you say that?
g1 and g2: Aluminium.
Stud4: ..um

When conversation stops. (Short utterances, encouragement, humming, gestures)

This group contains the conversations that are carried out mostly in the mother tongue. The adults, the preparatory class teacher and one student in a supervisory role are obviously frustrated by the children they have difficulty in getting to speak Swedish.

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g1: it has to go there. There should be a circuit.
g2: Hmm
Stud4: Listen! Alu...
g2: Aha?
Stud4: Yes, and a bit more. Alumni...
g1: Alumni.
Stud4: Aluminium. Can you say that?
g1 and g2: Aluminium.
Stud4: ..um
The children continue working.

Stud4: What’s the name of the thing you have there?

g1: Battery

g1: Do you have a paperclip? I have to connect the wire.

Stud4: Good, Battery. (To g2): Can you say battery?

g2: Battery

Stud 4: Battery, yes, Good!

g2: do you understand? Mine doesn’t work.

g1: no, the wire is off there.

What was said by the girls shows them finding their way to the correct word “aluminium.” The girls are engaged in conversation, sometimes in their mother tongue and sometimes in Swedish, about how to make their torch work when they are interrupted by the student who wants to check if they know to say “aluminium” instead of “shiny stuff.” One of them has picked up the term “circuit” during the introductory discussion and uses it in the discussion. As soon as they have answered the student they return to their conversation about how to get the torch to work. They are interrupted again when the student wants to make sure they know what a battery is.

The children continue working.

Stud4: What’s the name of the thing you have there?

g1: Battery

g1: Do you have a paperclip? I have to connect the wire.

Stud4: Good, Battery. (To g2): Can you say battery?

g2: Battery

Stud 4: Battery, yes, Good!

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In the next example, two Arabic-speaking boys concentrate on making a boat. They talk together in Arabic and pass each other the materials they need. The teacher stops beside them, hold up various items they are using and asks what they are called in Swedish.

The children continue working.

Tea to B5: This is a screw. Can you say “screw”?

B5 looks at the teacher but says nothing.

Tea to B6: Can you say “screw”? No answer

Tea to both: What’s this called then? (Holds up the glue gun)

Tea to p-lead: They don’t want to speak Swedish. It’s a big problem.

P-lead turns to an older Arabic-speaking friend and says:

Can you ask how it is that they find it so easy to use the glue gun?

They seem to have used one before.

The older boy asks the question in Arabic. The boys’ faces light up.

One of them answers and the older boy translates into Swedish:

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When the teacher becomes frustrated that the younger boys don’t “want” to speak Swedish, she sees them from the perspective of disadvantage. The boys, on their part, respond to her negativity with body language and facial expressions. There is something they can’t do. The teacher knows it and they know it. Bakhtin (referred to in , 1998) speaks of “adressivity” which means that what is uttered can be seen as a contribution from both from the one speaking and the one who is listening. In the case of the boys who only “want” to speak Arabic, one can interpret their body language, with bowed heads and voices lowered to a whisper, to mean that they know the adults expect that they “can’t.” The adults, through their voices, facial expressions and what is uttered become contributors in the boys’ presentation of themselves. The older friend is an opposite type of contributor. Understanding the conditions applying to newly-arrived children and with a common mother tongue, he can make the adults see something other than the disadvantage. His translation elicits from the adults a positive response both through facial expression and their words. This is understood by the boys who in their turn look up and smile at the adults.

Goffman (1959) speaks of identities and the various roles we assume during a conversation. When we observe and document the boys working together, we observe that they are engaged in a conversation in their mother tongue and that the creative problem-solving is working well for them. The older friend alternates between his roles as pupil and interpreter. In the pupil role he listens attentively to his supervising student teacher. When he is an interpreter he has a skill the teachers do not. He can convey that the younger ones have a skill they have acquired with the help of their father. Zimmerman (1998) calls this kind of changed role in conversation discourse identity. The Arabic-speaking boys become strengthened in their identity as competent when they see the teacher’s student’s and project leader’s happy expressions when they have understood what they can do, when they are allowed to use their background and their mother tongue as help. The boy who acts as interpreter “grows” when he understands that his identity as bilingual has great importance for the adults.

The project leader continues with a new question: “Can you ask them to tell us what they were just talking about. They seemed to be discussing something.” The same procedure begins. The older child asks, the younger ones discuss together in Arabic and the older one again interprets.

They talked about another way than student’s boat (model boat built by the students). Now they talk and think up better boat. That points

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- rooms.
The boys are in this way deeply concentrated on the work and they are discussing how they best can solve a technical problem. It would have been desirable, but there was no possibility within the framework of the project to have a mother tongue teacher present or interpreter who could have followed the sessions in the workshop. Such a resource would also be necessary to make a deeper analysis of the conversations that were carried out exclusively in Arabic. Thanks to the interpretation by the older boy from time to time during the work it was made clear that the boys chose to use their mother tongue for obvious reasons. They quite simply did not have sufficient skill in Swedish to be able to communicate with each other or with the student teacher about the tasks at hand. By using their mother tongue they had the chance to try out their hypotheses and discuss their way forward to a solution. The older boy concludes with: “They can’t say in Swedish. They want to speak Arabic. I help them.”

The older pupil continues later by translating and showing the younger ones every new word or expression that is used in Swedish and is written on the board. The problem for the teacher and the students is that they cannot really estimate where in knowledge development the pupils find themselves. Teachers are reminded often of Vygotsky’s (1978) concept “zone of proximal development” and the students learn to repeat its main theme, which is that in order to stimulate the individual pupil further in their knowledge development one must first know to what extent he or she understands the concepts they are working with. In the situation with newly arrived pupils with very modest skills in Swedish, and in the absence of a mother tongue teacher, it becomes obvious that one cannot live up to this pedagogical creed. In dealing with the situation as well as possible for the time being, the risk is that the teachers limit their efforts and content themselves with seeing that the technical problem is solved and that the pupils take with them a number of Swedish words and expressions. In order that we too can understand how they comprehended what they have been doing and help them to deepen their knowledge demands a didactic cooperation with mother tongue teachers – a task one cannot lay on the shoulders of friends acting as interpreters.

Cause and effect

The second discussion situation is characterised by the recurring occurrence of cause and effect reasoning. The children in the example below speak Swedish during the whole recorded sequence. When they communicate by

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giving instructions to each other, the instructions are often followed by “be-
cause,” “otherwise,” “it doesn’t work because,” “if we don’t … then.” The pupils discuss and negotiate their way to how one best gets the boat to float even in strong wind, and the connection between a large sail and better wind catchment becomes clear. In the following two conversation excerpts, the children speaking have spent one year in the preparatory class.

G3: I have to tape, no glue, the straw here.
G4: Why?
G3: Yes, because the balloon with air goes in and makes speed.
G4: Yeees, for the sail … I don’t get this.
G3: What? This straw is for motor boat and this for sailboat.
G4: Why is this sail not good?
G3: I think too narrow. The wind is outside the sail.
Stud1 to G3: Why didn’t it work with the small sail, did you say?
G3: It is narrow sail. We have to have one of those too … ah – keel.
It’s up there (board), otherwise the boat falls over.
Stud1: OK. Have you checked what works instead?
G4: Yes, with big sail. Lot of wind there. It’s better.
G3: Yes, there is more speed.
Stud1: Clever! How did you work that out?
G4: We try the small one you know … it wasn’t good. So I thought there’s more room for wind with a big.
Stud1: Good explanation! Room for more wind.

During another session the group has listened to and sung the text of the story of the Three Billygoats Gruff. Later they make moving figures. Two boys discuss together with a couple of girls how they can get the Big Billygoat Gruff to move his legs backwards and forwards instead of sideways.

b3: My goat is crazy. You can’t walk like that.
g4: You have to fasten it like this.
b3: How?

b3: How?
g4: You have to fasten it like this.
b3: How?
When conversation stops

The recordings illustrate that when the third work session with lego and the drawings takes place, what is said around the work in hand decreases in some cases to very short expressions or humming. This is true even for children who in earlier sessions have been more active conversationals. The

b4: Move that thing so the leg goes forward. Otherwise the leg doesn't get room.

Stud5: It's a good idea to try different things. Then you learn what works.

g3: Ha ha. You can't put that there. Then the leg goes out and in. /.../

b3: Yes, you must hole for both, otherwise only one goes. Now I know. Have you got another one of those? One of those clips. /.../

b4: Bag clip is the sort I will have. So my goat shall have wool like that.

b3: Don't put the clip so hard. Then it can't move. It has to be loose on.

b3: Okay, okay, I understand now.

Stud5: What a cool goat you made. What if you hadn't fixed the legs and he could only move them sideways? What would have happened then?

g3: then if the legs only go out and in, then he stays here.

g4: Poor thing. Running in one spot all the time! We jump like that in gym. Legs out and in and out.

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The student supervising the construction work takes note of their private conversation and challenges their thinking by – either directly or through an interpreting friend – consistently asking questions of the sort “tell me how you were thinking/what you were doing” and encouraging them to talk about other possible solutions.

It was also of importance that appropriate terms and expressions for the task at hand were written on the board, and there is evidence that these were used. In line with each child’s need to connect understanding to expressing themselves correctly in a more formal way, they turn to the board, or ask someone. Another child who speaks of “boats falling over” has just previously said that “you have to have that thing too …ah, keel. There it is (points to the board), otherwise the boat falls over.”
This change in the form of conversation applies when the task of following a drawing is in focus. In between, the recordings show that the same children in parallel are involved in social conversation which has more content and has the character of full sentences. The first example below has the social conversation in italic text to the right of the expressions that concern the work.

b3: Not that one
b4: you!

b3: check the picture
b4: Ah
b3: that?
fun! Look what I tried!
b4: Give it here!
Stud 4: Check the picture
b3: Ah... but
b4: Take it!
Stud 4: That’s it, that one.
b3: OK

b3: (to others) He ha. Yours isn’t as good, is it? Ours is so cool! We’re trying the ramp now. We’ll see it work.

b4: (calling others) You doing this? Our car’s going to win!

b3: (asks others) Have you tried this? Does yours work?

b4: What are you doing (calling to others) Our car’s going to win!

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Communicative questions
All the pupils we have worked with and hear in the recordings have, with the exception of the two Arabic boys in Class A, the ability in varying degrees to use Swedish as a lingua franca to communicate with each other. They have reached the level of what Cummins (1996) terms BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills). When they talk to each other and reach conclusions regarding the constructions and problem situations, they must often use an everyday language in the second language and revert to their mother tongue when the second language proves insufficient. Examples of everyday language can be found when, for instance, one of the children working on bridge construction answers one of the student teacher’s questions about the stability of the bridge. The child answers: “We have made very strong bridge. It has many legs. Then it’s strong.” Another child has understood the significance of a boat’s keel to avoid capsizing. When she explains this, she says that it is so that boat won’t “fall over.”

The adults’ attitude
The attitude expressed by the adults also has importance for the children’s conversations during the progress of the work. In one discussion where a boy wants to have the word for why in particular a paperclip can conduct electricity. The boy knows what function the paperclip will have, but wants to have the word for why in particular a paperclip can conduct electricity.

R2: but look, the electricity must go around, otherwise the lamp won’t work. Look at the board. Cir…cuit.
G1: I don’t know. What’s this?
Stud2: It’s a paperclip. Are you going to use that?
G1: Yes, and clip it on.

R2: but look, the electricity must go around, otherwise the lamp won’t work. Look at the board. Cir…cuit.
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The boy explains that he has a dad who is an electrician and that his dad will now be proud of him, because he created his own electrical circuit with his torch. What he is struggling to express in language is something that, from previous experience, he has no cognitive problem with. The student in the example cooperates with the boy and asks him the question “Do you mean metal?” after he has listened and understood what it is the boy is trying to express. A new concept, “circuit-breaker” – is used without explanation. The boy has shown with his explanation that he has understood anyway.

By contrast, instead of supporting thought processes they can be interrupted, as seen in the example of the student who in her eagerness to get the children to say a word correctly focuses far efforts on the pronunciation of the words “aluminium” and “battery.” The girls are involved in a private conversation which concerns why “it shines more with that shiny stuff in it” and that they need a wire so “there will be circuit.” The student’s directing and editing the conversation to concentrate only on language formalities overlooks the importance of noting the content and reflection the children are expressing.

The student with responsibility for the Arabic-speaking boys has without doubt the most difficult task. The recording shows a tendency to moralise, and interpret their silence as though they don’t want to speak Swedish. The preparatory class teacher has daily responsibility for the boys’ work with their language and knowledge development. Even she shows an obvious frustration over what she sees as a unwillingness from the boys to speak Swedish. Just a few weeks after the project was completed the preparatory class teacher reported that it could be seen that the boys’ communicative ability in their second language in their regular school work seemed to come into its own and was properly established.

The use of the mother tongue appears to have been one of the project’s strengths, as it gave the children the possibility to try out their hypotheses and help each other. It is also clear that the presence of teachers of mother tongue languages was just as needed in the project as in the ordinary preparatory classroom. In that case the Arabic-speaking boys and other pupils with obvious need of support in their mother tongue would have had an opportunity to express. A new concept, “circuit-breaker” – is used without explanation. The boy has shown with his explanation that he has understood anyway.

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The use of the mother tongue appears to have been one of the project’s strengths, as it gave the children the possibility to try out their hypotheses and help each other. It is also clear that the presence of teachers of mother tongue languages was just as needed in the project as in the ordinary preparatory classroom. In that case the Arabic-speaking boys and other pupils with obvious need of support in their mother tongue would have had an opportunity to express. A new concept, “circuit-breaker” – is used without explanation. The boy has shown with his explanation that he has understood anyway.

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equal opportunity to be included in the activities, and we would have been able to understand the content of their conversations and their reflections around the work in hand in a deeper and more meaningful way. The older boy, who had been a longer time in Sweden and therefore could act as interpreter from Arabic to Swedish for one of the project leaders, was prepared for communication with both the boys during the whole project. In that way, he in effect took over the adults’ responsibility for the boys’ situation.

Why is it so quiet sometimes?

What was it about the work with lego and the drawings that reduced the conversation about the construction and problem-solving to absolute minimum for some of the children? One possible explanation is that most of the children had never before played with lego, which involves following a drawing – two new tools for the mediation of learning and therefore experienced as difficult and requiring much more individual concentration. Wouldn’t it then be more natural with more cooperative effort and more discussion to solve a difficult problem? Or was it perhaps that the drawing simplified the work and that one didn’t need dialogue with others to solve the problem one confronted?

Just as in the other examples discussed above, we see possible explanations in the form of interaction between the adults and the children. Vygot sky (1978) speaks of challenging children’s thought processes. This requires an active adult. Both examples above, in the section “When conversation stops,” show the importance of two diametrically opposed attitudes. In the first conversation the student’s input is restricted to utterances that are just as short as the children’s: “Check the picture.” The children are not told why they should do this nor are they given a challenging question such as in the other example with the racing car and the wind. In that case, the children’s short expressions change to longer reflections when the student chooses to get involved in the conversation about that strange part of the diagram. One of the children compares the car’s large rear end to the boat’s sail in the first construction task, and interprets this as wind catchment that will give greater speed. What is decisive in the conversation is the comment that the car has a motor, but the boat doesn’t. The boy is stimulated to think again, and comes to the conclusion that it has the opposite effect.

Hägerfelt (2004) has documented the same type of short staccato conversations and long sequences of silence during science laboratory work with measuring and observations. The pupils are instructed to do experiments and to fill in a lab report. Hägerfelt maintains that it is “natural” that there is less conversation and says that “all factual procedures like this mean that the pupils during laboratory sessions don’t need to be as linguistically active as during other conversations.” (p. 126)

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Both the reported laboratory session (ibid.) and the construction work from a drawing in the technical workshop need however to be discussed from the point of view of the aim of the work and the way it is to be carried out. Aresköog & Elleson (2007) speak of “the number of degrees of freedom” or “the amount of open dimension” in an experiment. When pupils in a traditionally formal laboratory session just follow an instruction and complete a form, there is not much to talk about. If one instead chooses to allow the method and the measurements to be open for creative ideas, conversation is stimulated. It is therefore not the laboratory work as such that produces a quiet form of work. In the same way, the conversation in the technical workshop is hindered in that the instructions tell the pupils that they should follow a certain number of points in a drawing. The project group has created silence instead of – in accordance with the aim of the project – stimulating conversation.

We have referred earlier to Barnes (1978) experiences of so-called “edited” or “probing” speech. Barnes maintains that children use probing speech when they are in dialogue with each other and the teacher stays in the background. When the teacher however enters the conversation, the pupils begin to feel around for what the teacher “wants to hear” and the conversation transforms into something teacher-oriented, or edited. We think there is a risk that this is interpreted that the teacher by definition always does harm by stepping in and joining the conversation. Our examples show instead that it is the conditions of the participation that need to be discussed. If the teacher takes over and interrupts the dialogue that is underway, as in the example with the pronunciation and vocabulary exercise “aluminium” and “battery,” this leads to the conversation taking on an edited format. The teacher who, by contrast, takes time to listen to what the children are asking and to their reflections can instead with challenging comments – such as in the example of the racing car – support and contribute to reflection and development.

**Documentation by pupils’ texts**

The writing in class a was structured by the preparatory class teacher and started with retrospective conversations. The words used in the technical workshop were written on the board and the mother tongue teachers helped the children with translations which were written in individual word lists. Introductory questions and challenges were then used to build up the description of the project. These could take the form of, “tell us what you’ve been doing today!”, “What have you been up to?”, “How did you begin?”, “What did you use in your work?”. The questions were followed by challenging comments – such as in the example of the racing car – support and contribute to reflection and development. The writing in class a was structured by the preparatory class teacher and started with retrospective conversations. The words used in the technical workshop were written on the board and the mother tongue teachers helped the children with translations which were written in individual word lists. Introductory questions and challenges were then used to build up the description of the project. The project group has created silence instead of – in accordance with the aim of the project – stimulating conversation.

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The teacher who had class B has not reported how the writing was conducted when the pupils returned to school. One of the pupils was therefore asked what the reporting sessions were like. She gave the following short description: "The teacher told us to write about what we'd done." Both groups had access to the lists of words and expressions that were written down during the sessions in the workshop. This lack of information on the writing process in Class B leaves us with non-verifiable assumptions on why these children didn't seem to develop their writing as quickly as Class A.

In class A, two or three versions of text from each work session were handed in. Some of the children write first in their mother tongue, then in Swedish and finally after a supportive discussion with the teacher, a final version. Class B uses no texts in the mother tongue. They wrote one version in Swedish. The overview given below is based on the first version of the texts from class A and the only version from class B.

Texts from a couple of children in class A are missing for each work session. One of the boys stopped attending the preparatory class after the second meeting in the workshop. Class B has only handed over texts from the first three meetings. As well as this, texts are missing from the second meeting for two of these children. Finally, although differences between the groups are commented on, it is not possible to give definite comparisons due to the lack of texts in class B.

In the following we have used different numbers to denote the children. Class A again is denoted with letters where the girls are writers WG1 – WG3 and the boys WB1-WB7. Class B pupils are denoted by wg1-wg6 and wb1-wb7. One text from the work sessions “Billygoats Gruff” and “Torches” have been excluded in class B material as the texts were unnamed, and we did not know if the writers were boys or girls.

The texts were read in order by content from the different sessions. After the read-through an analysis was made for each session of the qualitative differences with consideration to:

- What the texts contain
- If the texts are functional – that is to say if one can understand what the pupil wishes to convey to the reader.

What do they write about?

Most of the texts begin with descriptions of the everyday situation of getting to the School of Education from their own school, but also deal with content that makes new demands. The children start from those experiences they take with them from the practical work in the workshop “there and then”, but work in the writing situation’s “here and now” with a vocabulary which afterwards cannot give practical illustration in the same way.

What does the teacher ask?

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In the first group there are texts with content that speaks of where one has been and what activity has been carried out. The work in itself is not closely described. The texts are very short.

We went to the university. Then we mad a boat me and X. Then we et apple. (wg4)

I will make a balloon boat. I will make that boat with Y. (wg5)

Even these texts contain descriptions of the journey to and from the university and what one has been working with. As well as this, this group also accounts for – to a varying degree – the materials used during the session. There are also more complete descriptions of how one approached the work.

We built a boat. We cut with scissors. We drew on paper the boat. (WB1)

We used many things, glue gun, milk cartons, tape, plastic bottles ... (WB5)

In group three, the texts were expanded on in such a manner that as well as describing content and process, there were also comments on the construction and reasoning about causes for why the construction was functional.

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It was difficult to build a boat. My boat floated because it was made of plastic and wood and it wasn’t too heavy. (WB6)

The compilation shows that the majority of the texts belong to group two. With regard to the first text about boat-building, there are some borderline cases between groups 1 and 2 and some between groups 2 and 3. The texts in group 2 contain to a varying degree lists of the things used during the work session. Considering that these – sometimes quite difficult words – most often are correctly spelled, we interpret this to show that the children to a great extent and reasoning about causes for why the construction was functional.

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As mentioned earlier, the information about how the texts were worked on in class B is insufficient. The short description that one of the pupils has given indicates very different conditions in the two classes. Back in their home school, class A chose, after recapitulating the session orally, to first write their texts about the content and experiences of the sessions in their mother tongue. Only then did these pupils write their texts in Swedish. According to the children in class B, their tests were written without the supportive oral repetition or the first draft in the mother tongue. The sample from class B is small, but it is in this group that one finds the shortest texts and texts that are borderline cases between groups 1 and 2. There is cause to reflect whether it is the different writing situations, with or without the supportive preparatory work in the form of the oral run-through and the first draft in the mother tongue, which has contributed to this result.

The writing in the classroom is both an individual and a social process. In the preparatory classroom, the pupils are writing in that discursive environment that is the school, but also in dialogue with the experiences gained earlier. When one assumes a socio-cultural perspective on language use, both activities should be focused on; the activities in the technical workshop, and the activities in the preparatory classroom. This report is limited by resources to the study of the activities in the technical workshop.

Each pupil formulates their experiences as isolated writers, but they are at the same time participants in a kind of conversation with teachers and friends both in the preparatory classroom and in the technical workshop. We are all prescriptive readers of their texts. Understanding, the earlier conversations in the workshop and the lists of words and expressions that were used during the work are all “language pillars” (Siljö 2000, p. 123) when pupils formulate themselves in writing about what they have experienced. It is, despite this, uncertain if the children in class B had the same help from the lists or if they had the same help as class A in using them. The content of the lists for class A can have been linguistically supportive - as indeed they were meant to be - it is possible that the considerably less helpful effort by the class teacher in class B has reduced these to formal vocabulary knowledge and thereby resulted in fewer group 2 and group 3 texts.

The pupils can be said to be on their way to a command of two different sets of tools; the physical and the linguistic. Everything, for example the drawings, the lamps, the wires, the intro, the metal, paper, wool, glue, ramp, degree have consulted the lists with words and expressions used during the work sessions. There are also more or less complete descriptions of how the work was carried out. After the third work session with torches, one can see that several of these borderline cases from the boat tests have changed to clear group 2 or group 3 texts.

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circuit-breakers etc that one has used during the work sessions occur also in everyday reality outside school. In the technical workshop, a new dimension has been brought into play, where one confronted with different construction tasks has to think about what choices one can and should make, and why. The texts that are written afterwards are authentic and can be said to be included in the inter-textual fabric (Vygotsky, 1986) where language mediates that which is important to the social practice that the work in the technical workshops consists of. The writer interacts not only with the reader but also with a number of other texts, both those already written and those which will be written. There are always more or less visible connections between what we say and write and what has been said and written, and to the future. (Lökengard Hoel, 2001, p. 42.)

Lökengard Hoel (2000) has as a starting point Bakhtin’s dialogue theory (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 94) on linguistic acts as social rather than individual psychological phenomena. It is not enough that “one is good at writing in general” (p. 41). In order to participate in the writing of texts that describe technical work, one must understand the demands of the work or the oral and written work risks being limited to isolated word knowledge. When the preparatory class pupils in their writing situation enter the cultural text world that the descriptions of technical constructions are part of, it is necessary that they even in their mother tongues are helped both with their everyday understanding and the work and language use they have participated in through the activities in the technical workshop.

**Functional texts**

All the texts are functional in that they are readable and possible to understand. The children are in the beginning of their acquisition of their second language and battle with the interpretation of all the new words and expressions. Both consciously and unconsciously they are building up the rule system of the target language that native speakers developed during the first 6-7 years of life. The aim of the project has not been to judge the formal language competence of the children. Some examples from the texts illustrate briefly the simplifications and over-generalizations (Viberg, 1996, p. 116) that second language pupils use and which demand a long-term and conscious use of language in speech and writing for the writers to develop greater certainty in their language.

“Jag klippte (klipppte) i silkespapper” (trans: I cut tissue paper) is an example of a grammatical simplification where a verb ending has been left out. “Min båt flötade (flöt)” (trans: My boat floated) and “Vi gjorde många olika bilar som kan simma (lyta) i vattnet” (trans: we made many boats that can float in the water) are two examples of over generalization. Overgeneralization-

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Functional texts
Boys and girls

Boys and girls write the same kind of texts and the classification into groups 1, 2 or 3 can be said to be equivalent. Group A has handed in texts from all the work sessions. During the two months we met them within the framework of the project we can see that both boys and girls in this group develop their writing considerably. They write longer texts and become more confident authors who do not need to do as many corrections in the second version. We see the permission to choose to use the mother tongue as a communicative tool in the technical workshop and the recapitulating conversations and the authentic text writing with the help of the mother tongue teachers in the preparatory classroom as a catalyst for the development of the second language.

What the students say

The student teachers’ reflections show that the project has had a positive influence for both the pupils and themselves. They express both worry and anticipation about what it will be like to work with children who don’t speak much Swedish, and are pleasantly surprised at how much work they have actually been able to carry out. Both the students who worked in supervisory roles and those who were observers wrote down their reflections after each work session. These express feelings of inadequacy when they are unable to explain to children who speak little or no Swedish but also how “impressed they were at how helpful the children were to one another.” The students had developed “more understanding for the sorts of problems that can arise when children do not understand language. When the second version is written one has had help in reworking it.

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stand the Swedish language. The students who acted as observers commented that those who were supervisors had had "difficulties in formulating open questions and productive questions." One of the students with a supervisory role concluded that "it is very difficult to, in a relaxed way, ask investigative questions." Of the Arabic-speaking boys, one observer says "in a group, the children speak their own mother tongue. These boys are very concentrated on their work and approach their task with great seriousness. It is great to see this degree of involvement."

All the students have had new experiences and acquired new knowledge. At the same time, it is difficult to teach when you cannot make yourself understood and do not have access to mother language teachers, so new insight into the problems of developing new knowledge through the second language if the mother tongue is forbidden from use has also been gained. That different teaching strategies with focus on formal language knowledge or challenging children with questions gives different results became clear for them through the recordings and observations made by their colleagues.

Conclusion

The aim of the project was to stimulate language and knowledge development in pupils in the preparatory class through conversation and cooperation in authentic problem-solving situations and through authentic writing of texts within the subject of technology. The aim was also to support and challenge student teachers' skills in planning and carrying out teaching within the subject technology which leads to development in both language and knowledge. In this article we have chosen to emphasise and discuss the significance of the mother tongue as support for the successful acquisition of a second language and the development of knowledge in school subjects.

At first we made a number of assertions and asked questions that can be related to a socio-cultural perspective of teaching. The children have arrived in Sweden relatively recently and they are at the start of their second language acquisition. They have no earlier experience of a university environment and Malmö University's building "Orkanen" where the School of Education is housed, is unknown to them. They enter a foreign, purpose-dedicated environment where they meet new teachers and students. The area of the work they will carry out – technology – is new to them as a school subject and its contents represent at least partly a new world of tools that means learning. The learning in itself is social-based. To be a part of the discourse represented by the university and the technology subject itself, and there to participate in new groups is all part of the difficult learning process the pupils have been part of.

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The ambition of the project has been to create authentic activities with content that is close to the children's own experiences. Authentic learning takes into consideration the participants' earlier experiences and their own questions are given a great deal of space. The texts one writes in this context build upon what one has been working on and they should be written primarily because one has something to tell, to ask about, or to report. The formal use of language is trained by use of these texts and not by the isolated training of skills without a well thought-out content.

Excerpts from the recordings show that both children and the students use various "strategies" in conversation and that this has different consequences for the processing of knowledge. The analysis of the recordings showed the difficulty a number of students had in staying within the boundaries of authentic learning. Insecurity and lack of routine in teaching pupils with Swedish as a second language led them to falling into what is normally defined as the traditional teacher role. Instead of listening to the children's probing conversation, one took over and changed the conversation to "the teacher asks and the pupils answers." The questions used on those occasions were closed – that is to say there was a correct answer that the child was expected to elicit. The conversation became asymmetrical: on the adult's conditions. It is unsure if the children who were drawn into a pronunciation exercise on the word "aluminium" understood what was going on, but they answered politely, syllable by syllable, until the student was satisfied. Then they returned to what was important to them, namely that the electrical circuit wasn't working. Other situations show the opposite. The children are involved in a probing conversation and the supervisory students intuitively or consciously sensibly enter the conversation on the children's conditions. What becomes clear is that there is more than one way to demonstrate understanding of why "shiny stuff" (aluminium) makes the light reflect and the torch shine "better" and why the electrical circuit has to be closed in order for the torch to shine at all.

The conversations in the technical workshop have mostly been carried out with the help of everyday language. Afterwards, as the pupils themselves felt the need to find more precise words and expressions for what they were working with, they had assistance from the words written on the board or by asking the adults. Vygotsky (1986) describes this as a meeting between the spontaneous, everyday concepts they have acquired at "grass roots" level, and the abstract, scientific concepts of school. The children's explanation that the wind went outside the small sail and that it was therefore better with a bigger one, or that the boat needed a keel so as not to fall over, will be challenged by scientific explanation models. This is, of course, even harder when the teaching is being carried out in a second language. In the work process, all the children are included, while the recordings of the conversations show something different. The Arabic-speaking boys were excluded when the teaching is being carried out in a second language. The Arabic-speaking boys were excluded.

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For the pupils to achieve what is usually called competence or skill, we 
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In the National Agency of Higher Education’s evaluation of teacher education there was serious criticism that not all subject areas paid attention to the language development of pupils. Language development is a prioritised area and has been written into all syllabuses at the School of Education. The students have, through the project, experienced and become conscious of the possibilities and problems involved in work with second language and knowledge development in combination, and have become aware of the significance of language development within the framework of the subject. As well as this, they have increased their experience of leading and organizing, observing and documenting practical work with groups of pupils.

Active citizenship as well as the influence of technology on the development of society has been emphasised in the syllabus. The project shows that true inclusion, with the democratic possibility for all pupils to participate and make their voices heard, demands that they are permitted to use those voices irrespective of the language they employ.

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Abstract
In 2003, the Swedish government made a "handshake" (Handslaget) with the The Swedish Sports Confederation, offering one billion Swedish crowns over a period of four years to local sport clubs in order to create projects that will engage more children in organised sport. On of the themes for creating projects is by way of sport clubs collaborating with schools, so that within the school day time pupils will be exposed to club sport, either through club instructors coming to the school or the pupils coming to the club facilities. But what happens when an activity constructed on one social field, and according to the specific conditions of that field, is simply lifted over to another social field? In this paper I discuss some consequences emanated from such a process.

Keywords: Social Field, Sport, Physical Education, Handslaget/the Handshake.

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When the field of sport crosses the field of physical education
Tomas Peterson

This paper deals with the relation between two social fields - the fields of sport and school. Both are affected by political reform called "The Handshake," which was implemented in Sweden 2004-2007. The Government announced in 2003 that The Swedish Sports Confederation would be allocated one billion SEK (950 million EURO) over a four year period to invest in children’s and youth sporting activities. The Government called the investment "A Handshake with Sport." The money would be used to support and encourage sport clubs and associations to open their doors to more members, to reduce costs, to invest more in girls' sporting activities, to take part in the fight against drugs and to intensify cooperation with schools. Measures shall also be put in place to offer children and youths, who today do not take part in sporting activities, enjoyable and health-promoting activities. Furthermore, possibilities should be created for girls to practise sport in the manner they themselves wish. Sports clubs would be encouraged, in close cooperation with the schools, to develop methods which attract every pupil to physical activity in different forms. The Handshake continues after 2007, under the new label "Idrottsflytt!" That is what was said - a powerful support for Sweden’s biggest and most active national movement, no less. Historically, the sport movement in Sweden, as in all the Scandinavian countries, was built in the form of a voluntary association, as a "People’s Movement." These organisations are regarded as the fundamentals of the democratic system, since to participate in voluntary associations has been seen as an important measure in fostering democratic citizens. The sports movements in the Scandinavian countries have, in a historical perspective, been comparatively well supported by the State. That is, state support for youth leisure activities has been directed to different youth organisations, particularly sports clubs, organised at lower levels on an every-day basis as voluntary organisations. The distinction between the State and organisations situated in the civil society is, however, blurred in the case of the cooperation between sport clubs and the schools, or more correctly, projects which take place during school time. Many projects have activities that begin just before or immediately after school time, and there I do not see any problems. But the school day belongs to the school, not the sports clubs. This is where suddenly two social fields collide, two field logics, with numerous fundamental contradictions. The Handshake continues after 2007, under the new label "Idrottsflytt!" That is what was said - a powerful support for Sweden’s biggest and most active national movement, no less. Historically, the sport movement in Sweden, as in all the Scandinavian countries, was built in the form of a voluntary association, as a "People’s Movement." These organisations are regarded as the fundamentals of the democratic system, since to participate in voluntary associations has been seen as an important measure in fostering democratic citizens. The sports movements in the Scandinavian countries have, in a historical perspective, been comparatively well supported by the State. That is, state support for youth leisure activities has been directed to different youth organisations, particularly sports clubs, organised at lower levels on an every-day basis as voluntary organisations. The distinction between the State and organisations situated in the civil society is, however, blurred in the case of the cooperation between sport clubs and the schools, or more correctly, projects which take place during school time. Many projects have activities that begin just before or immediately after school time, and there I do not see any problems. But the school day belongs to the school, not the sports clubs. This is where suddenly two social fields collide, two field logics, with numerous fundamental contradictions.
problems as a result. In which context shall one try to find the answers for this construction?

An increasingly vociferous and well-articulated criticism has been voiced regarding the number of sport hours being successively reduced during school time (Cf. Bankloppoprojektet) since the beginning of the new century, as well as the knowledge that the percentage of inactive young people has increased dramatically during recent decades, prompting The Swedish Democrats to include “50 minutes of physical activity daily for all school children” in their political manifesto, August 2002, and a decision to emphasize physical activity was implemented in the spring before the election of 2003. It was also stated that “sporting organizations would be given an important role to cooperate more with the country’s schools” (Sydvenska Dagbladet 2003-02-01). The school authorities did not reject the decision, but as usual, asked where the money for the reforms was coming from. The Government referred to the Local Authorities, who however did not accept that they had the necessary resources. At the same time that the Government launched its “Handshake with Sport,” a plan that The Swedish Sports Confederation was extremely satisfied with. A handshake is made in order to avoid written agreements, the idea was that the Swedish Sports Confederation would plan the scheme as it saw fit. However, after the election, there came a directive from the Government stipulating what type of projects sports clubs could use the handshake money for. The projects were to be divided into five themes, one being to intensify the cooperation with schools (www.rfs.se). My interpretation, possibly a little conspiratorial, is that this theme was included as a hasty improvisation which made it possible to say to the Local Authorities and schools: money is available. Such an interpretation would make the construction easier to understand.

Not least, this caused the schools and sports’ clubs a number of crucial and practical problems. In The Swedish Sports Confederation’s comments (www.rfs.se) concerning the directive, which can also be seen as a guideline for the approval boards (regarding the cooperation with the school, these are The Swedish Sports Confederation’s district organisations) was, for instance, the following:

The majority of sports leaders work on a voluntary basis, in other words, are busy with their civilian jobs during school time. If they were to take part in school activities, they should be compensated. The sports clubs activities...are designed for children and youths who join of their own free will. The physical activities in school have as their most important target group those who, for various reasons, are not attracted by the activities offered by the sports associations. A different approach and pedagogy are required which problems as a result. In which context shall one try to find the answers for this construction?

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The majority of sports leaders work on a voluntary basis, in other words, are busy with their civilian jobs during school time. If they were to take part in school activities, they should be compensated. The sports clubs activities...are designed for children and youths who join of their own free will. The physical activities in school have as their most important target group those who, for various reasons, are not attracted by the activities offered by the sports associations. A different approach and pedagogy are required which problems as a result. In which context shall one try to find the answers for this construction?

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will, in turn, require training for the sport leaders engaged in school work. Finally, it is important to emphasise the division of responsibility between the public school and the voluntary sports movement. Sports associations can be an important support resource in schools activities, but can never shoulder the responsibility for teaching.

In this commentary a number of problems are identified in cooperation between the school and the sports clubs: unpaid sport leaders who complement/supplement for school personnel; a different approach to the sports associations normal activity – based on a different pedagogy and also structuring the activity so it does not replace ordinary school work. That schools and sports clubs shall cooperate in order to “get people to exercise more” may appear to be a commendable and problem free appeal. There is a large consensus in society regarding how important sport and physical activity are for health and well being. At the same time, current research shows that those who are active are doing more and more, while those who are inactive are increasing in numbers (Engström, 2002). The Swedish Sports Confederation’s comments illustrate some of the possible problems which occur when two enterprises which are based on different conditions merge. During recent decades school sport has undergone changes. The objectives of the subject have been broadened, the content has been enlarged because new sports have been introduced and a more specific emphasis on “health work” has been included. In Sweden, the name of the subject has, to date, been changed six times during the 20th century, the most recent from “sport” to “sport and health.” The reason for the latest name change is to stress that there are similarities, but also big differences between the subject in school and the elite/competitive sport that is practised in many associations.

The revised subject description shall not be seen as dissociation from sport in the traditional sense, but rather as an indication that sport in school is used as a means to achieve overall objectives. In the curriculum for Physical Education and Health, it is emphasised that the pupils take a life long responsibility for their bodies and that every individual shall develop according to their own potential. The subject has also received an increasingly clearer theoretical profile. The Swedish Sports Confederation policy document “Sport wants” declares for its part that “We want, at all levels, to encourage our sport so that it develops people in a positive way, not only physically and mentally but also socially and culturally” (www.sfs.se). At the same time, competition is the basis for club sport with its basis in selection and ranking. Another relevant question regarding the Handshake is: what are the consequences when voluntary associations take over the responsibility for activities during school time – for society, for the school, for the sports clubs and for the children involved?

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How the fields are constituted

What happens when an activity which is constructed on one social field, and according to this field’s unique circumstances, is transferred to another? There are several schools of theory which are possible to use in order to clarify relationships between different sections of society. Employing Luhmann’s system theory, one can analyse how different systems work based on determined codes, with their own rules and rationality depending on their historical and social position (cf. Tangen 2004). The systems have their own logic and work with the help of a code that decides the difference. Every system or context has its form to see the individual. The social context and communication in this indicate and create a special form of social address for the individual. In school this is carried out by the pupil, in day care by the child, in sport by the member etc. The social address includes a direct and also limited expectation of the individual. The social arena’s specific logic not only decides the expectation of the individual and produces its own access to what is to be included, but also boundaries for what is to be excluded. This is how a child/youth moves between different social addresses, between different systems with its varying contextual values and norms.

According to Bourdieu’s field theory the crossing of the fields should give rise to a number of problems because they are constituted in different ways (Bourdieu, 1993). In our case there are a number of fundamental differences between school sport and club sport (for future reference limited, for us, to the relevant sub-fields which incorporate the school sport subject respective children and youth sport). To begin with, the school is one of the central state instruments, while club sport is the largest and most active of the form of voluntary organisations. Because the school is a state instrument, it is a bureaucracy with a heavily regulated field of activity (curriculum) and the teaching is provided by professional personnel, specifically qualified and remunerated. School activity also hinges on one of society’s few remaining compulsory statutes – obligatory school attendance.

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Children and youth sport run an activity which in these terms is the di-
rect opposite of the school – every association has the right to independently
interpret the business concepts The Swedish Sports Confederation stands for
(see “Sport wants”); nearly everybody who manages the activity work on a voluntary
basis, the level of training is low and the whole concept is founded on voluntary
input. Despite the fact that the central issue is called the same thing – sport – the prerequisites are certainly different for school sport and
club sport. Other variations that can be deduced from these differences are
how pedagogy is employed, varying forms of democratic participation, differ-
ent structure of the selection system (certificate respective performance)
and different attitudes regarding the parental role (in school, parents are kept
outside the sphere of activity, as regards sport, parents are often indispensa-
ble).

Despite these fundamental differences in requirements for the activity,
reality does not appear to be so straightforward. For example, there are a
large number of unauthorized sport teachers in our schools (Lundvall &
Meckbach 2004), and there is an element of financial compensation and ad-
vanced training courses within club sport. A considerable number of sports
teachers are at the same time voluntary trainers during their free time. There
are many indications that the activity of school sport is affected by influ-
ences from club sport over and above the Handshake and, on the other hand,
youth activity, at least in the majority of typical elite clubs, is fashioned in
such a way as to remind one of the school’s work patterns, including an ex-
plicit obligation (“you must not miss a single training if you want to com-
pete”).

Besides this it can be said that the activities of both fields have indirect
similarities assuming that school sport and club sport constitute possibly the
most important secondary socialisation factors in Swedish society. They
both constitute important tools for upbringing and influence, where knowl-
dge, skills, behaviour, and values are produced, conveyed, recreated and altered.
They both work with children and youths during the most formative
years of their lives and both work with a typically study oriented ap-
proach. They shall deliver both education and social awareness. Both act at
the same time as a selection system, where children and youths are graded
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tion and upbringing.
Svensson highlights the differences which exist between factors such as date the chance of being picked, this likelihood is evident at every stage of the Relative Age Effect (Musch & Grondin, 2001). In the study, I state that there is a systematic difference in the likelihood of priority selection within youth football, which says that the earlier in the year a person is born, the greater the chance of being picked, this likelihood is evident at every stage of the “selection ladder,” from association level to the national team level.

In my own research I have earlier discussed the similarities and differences between school sport and club sport as a fostering and educational environment. In an article about selection and ranking logic (Peterson, 2004), I state that physical maturity plays a notable role as a selection factor both for school certificates and the Football Association training system (which acts as the foundation for National Youth Teams in football). The result is in line with a large number of studies dealing with the phenomenon RAE. The Handshake is a unique political commitment in a country where sport is run and organised, from an international perspective, in a unique way (the Nordic Sport Model). Therefore it is difficult to find comparable research data regarding this area (For Bourdieuan analysis on Sport and on Physical Education, see Hunter (2004), Brown (2005) and Mountakis (2001)). There is Swedish research regarding many aspect of the two social fields we are interested in: the school’s sport training Annerstedt (1991), Karlefors (2002), Lundquist Wanneberg (2004), Carlé (2004), Sandahl (2005), Quennerstedt (2006), Olsson (2007), see also Larsson & Redelius (2004) and Skulvendt (2005), and children and youth sport Augustsson (2007), Carlén (1991), Franzén & Peterson (2004), Hertting (2007), Karpe (2000), Nilsson (1993), Patriksson (1987) and Redelius (2002). However, there is very little research about what happens when the fields cross. One exception is Rolf Jonsson’s follow up study of the Upper Secondary Sport Schools, where he conducts an interesting discussion regarding the connection between school sport and club sport (Jonsson, 2000).

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This conclusion seems peculiar considering that according to the curriculum for Sport and Health, every individual should be judged on their own merits. The combination of physical practice and the need to measure (whether it is grades or competitive results) however, often results in an aptitude (talent, ability) is confused with differences in physical maturity. One can discuss what happens as regards club sport and even be upset about it, but nevertheless, it is a voluntary activity. If you do not wish to continue, then you can stop. School sport, however, is based on an obligatorium and if you refuse to take part, eventually the police may be contacted. The connection between month of birth and sport grades indicates that the core of the subject of school sport is influenced by the same type of philosophy pertaining to the connection between aptitude and physical maturity which exists within club sport. Consequently, there arises a conflict of interest in the curriculum, where it is stated that the most important objective is to stimulate the pupils to adopt a life long responsibility for their own bodies and that every individual should develop according to their own capability. Therefore, it can be said that here is an example of what one can interpret as one field’s logic influencing the criteria of another field.

In a more recent study of the Landskrona BoIS youth activity, I put the case for examining a different course of action (Peterson, 2007). The hypothesis is that the more professionally a youth sports activity is managed, the more it will draw a parallel with the public school system. The basis for this assumption is that every professional organisation (both inside and outside sport) amongst other things, strives for a formal, consistent and comparable education with systematic subject knowledge, a standardized pedagogy and professional teachers, plus a uniform and consistent grading system. In the description of the Landskrona BoIS’ youth activity and its development during recent decades I maintain that you can see just such a development. I assume that a study of the most professional Swedish sport clubs - both within football and within other sports – would generalise these observations. A fall in membership analysis of youth football supports this assumption. Those who finished playing football between the ages of 15 and 17 were also those who chose not to pursue a high school education. When the pressure increases in football and at school, it appears that here is a group that gives both the cold shoulder, even if it is an exaggeration to say as far as school is concerned since the majority chose to continue after compulsory schooling. Consequently, football does not act – at least not for the youth who are not particularly study motivated – as an alternative to school. Therefore football cannot be seen as an opponent to school in this regard.

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Three critical theses

Approximately one third of the approved Handshake projects included Sport Clubs cooperating with the schools, which suggests that about 350 million SEK (33 million EURO) of the billion was used for such projects. If it is the intentions that the Handshake projects should offer more physical activity in the schools, then there is a critical dilemma if the sports clubs and club leaders shall be responsible for the modus operandi. The Swedish Sports Confederation instead depicts the sports clubs as being “an important support resource in school activity.” Neither can the main purpose be to reach out to those who are already active in the associations. On the other hand, it may be a basic concept behind the state’s desire that club sports encroach on the school’s field in order to activate children and youth who are not already physically active and to generate interest for a continued activity outside the school. On the other hand, this objective is included in the curriculum for school sport, while it is not included in the sports club’s normal agenda; on the contrary, this includes only those who take part on a voluntary basis. One question that therefore arises is how qualified are the Handshake sports clubs to solve this undertaking should the schools fail to do so? Shall Handshake sports clubs adopt activities with the same type of activity that the physically inactive have already rejected? Or have the Handshake sports clubs adjusted their ordinary activity according to this task? How, then, has one proceeded? And if this is the case – what happens when one, via a Handshake association, applies to a sports club and is confronted with its normal activity? In the group physically passive, there are children and youth with so called special needs; what type of proficiency do the Handshake sports clubs have in their activities to deal with these? Is school sport to be influenced by the contents of the Handshake projects and are the clubs’ activities to be influenced by the school sports design? What will happen to the sport club’s normal activities when energy and resources must be earmarked for Handshake activities during school time? And what type of success will the Handshake projects have as regards activating more people?

The First Thesis

In order to clarify my probing position I shall, in the following text, articulate and express in favour of some thesis. The first one is that the theme concerning increased cooperation with the schools complicates the work of getting the country’s children to exercise more. The main reason for this is that the Government instead should allocate resources to strengthen the subject sport to be influenced by the contents of the Handshake projects and are the clubs’ activities to be influenced by the school sports design? What will happen to the sport club’s normal activities when energy and resources must be earmarked for Handshake activities during school time? And what type of success will the Handshake projects have as regards activating more people?

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The First Thesis

In order to clarify my probing position I shall, in the following text, articulate and express in favour of some thesis. The first one is that the theme concerning increased cooperation with the schools complicates the work of getting the country’s children to exercise more. The main reason for this is that the Government instead should allocate resources to strengthen the subject sport to be influenced by the contents of the Handshake projects and are the clubs’ activities to be influenced by the school sports design? What will happen to the sport club’s normal activities when energy and resources must be earmarked for Handshake activities during school time? And what type of success will the Handshake projects have as regards activating more people?
and more, while those who are inactive are increasing in numbers. The Swe- 
dish Sports Confederation itself identifies the basic problem: “the sports clubs’ program is designed for these children and youths who apply volun-
tarily. The physical activities in school have as their most important target group those who, for various reasons, are not attracted to what the sport clubs have to offer.” Therefore, from a national health perspective, major fo-
cus should be on those who today are inactive. This is an assignment that the subject of school sport has difficulty in resolving. Why should the sports as-
sociations be the answer? Why should they, who have previously declined both the sports associations and school sport, be encouraged by even more sports association activity?

And why should one solve a problem that the school finds difficult to solve, with external help? Bourdieu’s social fields are built on power hierar-
chies. In the Swedish school field there are, at the bottom of the hierarchy, a number of subjects such as visual art, music, domestic science and sport, whose prospects are typified by this position. If a headmaster was forced to admit that the school was unable to provide an acceptable level of teaching mathematics, would the school then appoint an external and amateurish mathematics association to help out? No, but in the case of school sport, it is OK. So, the field is leaking in that section and that is what makes the Hand-
shake so problematical. The Government wants to use the sports clubs in or-
der to solve the schools’ problem. This in turn, indirectly, presents an argu-
ment for not having to deal with an extensive national health political di-
lemma.

This viewpoint is not new. Schoolchildren have always been able to meet the sports associations during school time. An element of the school’s brief is to acquaint children and youths with different aspects of society. Therefore, museum study visits, external lecturers and different forms of “try it and see activities” are included as natural components in teaching. During the SIA school construction (The internal work of schools), some decades ago, it can be certainly said that this activity, with the emphasis on people’s movement cooperation, was institutionalised. Today, many schools have es-

tablished links with sporting associations in various forms. The initiatives can come from both the schools and the associations. The cooperation can be both short term and long term and can range from a single visit from an sports club in order to provide information regarding its activities to a school having to hire localities and expertise from a club in order to carry out the teaching of sport. The latter, however, rather illustrates the low ranking of the subject of sport in the school’s social field.

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Because many of The Handshake projects are associated with earlier cooperation there is a significant risk that The Handshake would only facilitate in reinforcing this low ranking. In the framework of sports associations replacing school sport, the contents of the curriculum regarding school sport would be undermined. According to the directive, “sports associations shall be encouraged, in close cooperation with the schools, to develop methods which attract all pupils to physical activity in different forms,” and that “in this situation a different direction and pedagogy are required thus demanding qualified sports teachers who are engaged in the work of the school.” These conditions are difficult to fulfill. The following explanations are taken from my second thesis: "club sport is good at what club sport does. Club sport as we know it, under the direction of The Swedish Sports Confederation, has, since 1945, had a tricky relationship regarding other types of physical activity other than competitive sport, e.g. keep fit sport activity. For several decades, The Swedish Sports Confederation and Korpen (The Swedish Federation for Company Sports and Swedish Sport For All Association) waged a bitter fight about this very issue (Bolling, 2005; Norberg, 2004). The reason is that The Swedish Sports Confederation sport is, by and large, competition sport. It is competition that attracts children and youths to sport. But we are also aware that there large groups who are not interested in this type of activity. For these groups, the associations shall therefore develop alternative methods based on a different agenda and pedagogy than the ones being used for their own activities.

Club sport is good at what club sport does. And it is an activity that has been shaped in the field of sport, according to the field’s specific circumstances and logic. The main point is that the normal activity is transferred to school time. It is here that the effects of another problem increase regarding the profiling of the subject of school sport. In the National Agency for Education evaluation regarding the subject Sport and Health “it is evident that even if there is a large number of pupils who appear to benefit from the subject, there is another situation for a not insignificant number of pupils who, because of obesity or other problems, are physically inactive during their free time. Research has shown that the subject of sport in school is more and more becoming aligned to association sport and various ball games dominated” (Ericsson, 2005; cf. Skolverket, 2005). Once again, the fragility of the contents of the subject of school sport is illustrated, subdued in it’s own field and strongly influenced by activity in another. As already stated, it leaks. In this context, let us not forget the responsibility the sport teaching training programs in Sweden has for the present situation, including myself, since I have the main academic responsibility in Malmö.

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The Third Thesis

It is also stated that “sports clubs can act as an important support resource for the school activity, but can never take over the overriding responsibility for teaching.” This to me is contradiction in adjecto. The Handshake activity takes place during school time. Where is it placed? Deciding factors can be the time available, the pupil’s choice, school sport subject time or an extension of the school day. But only in the last case can it be said that it does not replace another subject according to the timetable. Furthermore, the Handshake activity can not be regarded as a “support resource.” It is compulsory since it is during school time. Or? When I have asked headmasters, teachers and Handshake instructors if it is voluntary for the pupils to take part, I received differing answers. The best way to summarise the situation is the following answer: “yes, it is voluntary, but they do not know that it is.” A closely related problem concerns responsibility for accidents during Handshake activities. If a pupil breaks a leg the school’s insurance covers the costs. But if a pupil’s parents file a civil suit on the grounds that a voluntary organisation has the main responsibility for an activity during school time, what happens then?

It is certainly the case that the Handshake association has the “main responsibility for teaching.” The school’s responsibility is to make sure that there is a teacher present (form teacher, assistant teacher, special needs teacher, sports teacher), which most schools do, but the teacher never has the main responsibility for teaching. Apart from this, the school seldom has any authority regarding the contents, other than obviously being able to decline the project offered. On the other hand, the project does not cost the school money, which must influence the decision, since this is one of the few things schools have been offered free of cost for many years.

My third theory is therefore what takes place during school time, shall take place during school time. The contents of the Handshake projects should be incorporated into the curriculum, be compulsory, the school should hold the legal and pedagogical responsibility and should be offered to all pupils unconditionally. I do not take this stance for formalistic reasons, but rather to make it possible to reach the ones that all interested parties wants the activity to reach: those who do not exercise enough. Therefore, I am fundamentally critical of the whole construction and nearly all of the constructors: the Government, Parliament, the public school system, the local authorities, the national sport training programmes and The Swedish Sports Confederation. The only section I do not have any serious criticism with is the Handshake sports clubs, because they do what they can. They are modern day heroes.

So, while the Handshake continues after 2007, under the new label “Idrottslyftet,” I remain critical of including the theme “increased cooperation.”

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So, while the Handshake continues after 2007, under the new label “Idrottslyftet,” I remain critical of including the theme “increased cooperation.”
tion with the schools." In order to take measures against the overriding problem, that our children do not exercise enough, the Government and Parliament should invest resources to strengthen the subject of school sport: increase the hours, ensure that there are qualified teachers and adequate sports premises in every school, give the subject a more qualitative and a more comprehensive purpose, possibly only award grades for the theoretical aspects of the subject. From this commanding position, the sports teachers can then work towards making the physical activity of the pupils an issue involving the whole school. From such a commanding position, the school would be able to establish a comprehensive cooperation with association sport, but on its own terms.
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Abstract: Human rights and education for citizenship, society and identity: Europe and its regions. This paper discusses how Universities, who train and educate professionals who work with children and young people, might contribute to the development of a citizenry for the Europe of the future. The paper considers strategies to help young people understand Europe, identify themselves with Europe, and feel that they can help frame the future of Europe. The identity and image of Europe in the minds of young people and their teachers may be very varied. Developing a positive sense and identity with Europe raises issues, particularly around those of European identity, which is only one among many possible identities (regional, national, identities of relationships). Europe is not necessarily the most dominant, and it is unlikely to be so. For young people, the identity of youth more may be more compelling and cohesive. The paper argues that enactive learning of citizenship will naturally involve enactive aspects of citizenship. This will focus on the involvement of young people in establishing rights in their own schools and societies, and extending rights to the third generation. Teaching Citizenship is learning citizenship through active participation – and is something that is done in partnership, educational institutions with and alongside a wide range of social organisations.

Keywords: citizenship education, human rights, learning, Europe, participation

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Human rights and education for citizenship, society and identity: Europe and its regions

Alistair Ross

The Nordic countries have played a significant role in the history of Europe, and in the creation of today’s Europe. This paper discusses how those in Universities who train and educate the professionals who work with children and young people can, with partners from the civic societies of our countries, contribute to the development of a citizenry for the future of Europe. What images do young people have of Europe? What strategies are needed to help young people understand Europe, identify themselves with Europe, and feel that they can help frame the future of Europe.

This paper will argue that at the heart of the European idea are human rights, and these are key to both the identity of Europe and to engaging young people in a sense of citizenship. Rights can be seen as a defining characteristic of the Union. Young people are interested in rights, and particularly keenly interested in injustice. The establishment, extension and enforcement of rights are an important way of challenging and changing injustices. While young people should be aware of the way in which the rights that have been established in former times, and should appreciate the struggles and the sacrifices of former generations, they are much more likely to be excited by the rights yet to be achieved, and to learn their citizenship, and their identity, through the establishment of new rights.

Extending rights

John Ury’s (2000) has listed six new categories of rights. These suggest areas in which children, young people (and adults) might become actively involved in arguing for and establishing. It is in arguing for and achieving that enactive learning happens. Indeed, many young people are already engaged in these areas:

- Cultural citizenship, where there is wide interest in, and sympathy for, the rights of diverse cultural groups, particularly in the face of globalisation; and where there are many successful attempts to preserve cultures and languages. A rights agenda may well develop here.

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Minority citizenship, where questions of asylum, settlement and migration are not necessarily knee-jerk reactions, particularly among many young people. International conventions on refugees are under attack, and many young people are interested in actively defending and possibly extending these rights.

Ecological citizenship is a particular potent area that resonates well with young people. The right to live in a sustainable environment seems particularly interesting to the young, and is an area of active participation and active learning.

Cosmopolitan citizenship is again an area in which young people are active in many situations. Relationships across cultural and ethnic differences are increasing, in places very rapidly; yet in others they are held back. The rights to relate to other citizens, cultures and societies without state interference are another area for activity.

Consumer citizenship has a wide range of meanings: it is not merely about being an informed purchaser, but an active decision maker and actively demanding consumer rights and responsibilities: curtailing the power of producers to exploit consumers, and to exploit workers and natural resources.

Finally, mobility citizenship, the rights of visitors and tourists moving through other countries and societies.

This conception of the extension of rights to new areas opens up an important new arena for citizenship education in Europe. This is not simply because these areas are important in their own right, but because the educational approach of enactive learning suggests that young people learn well when they are engaged in the activity of doing something, rather than simply studying it. The literature on this is extensive (Bruner, 1966; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990), and the author had examined this in greater detail elsewhere (Ross, 2008).

Both citizenship and identity are contested notions, and this article is within the theoretical perspective of social constructivism: it is based on the premise that concepts such as identity, citizenship, nation and Europe are inventions or constructions made by and shared with members of a particular society. As Berger and Luckman argue in their seminal volume in 1966, we socially construct reality through everyday interactions with others. This view is in direct opposition to those who argue that there is something real or essentialist about notions of identity or nation. I assume that all such ideas
only exist in our own consciousness. This is not to advocate cultural relativism: when our construction of knowledge works for us, we pragmatically accept it as a reality that we can (and must) live with. The fact that a truth may only be specific to a particular place and time does not mean that it is not a necessary truth for social life to proceed at that place, in that time. Nor am I claiming that, because there are no universal theories, that any one account of reality is as good as any other.

Identity in the contemporary or post-modern context is rather more complex than it was in the past, and that most people are now expressing multiple identities, where the reference points and boundaries to their identities are, to an extent, malleable and contingent upon the particular social setting in which they find themselves. Identities may overlap, may be nested, may be discrete. Identities are not merely constructed – non-essentialised, created in the social market – but are also hyphenated, hybridised, shifting from moment to moment, from place to place, from social setting to social setting.

To participate as a citizen in a community requires some sense of belonging: identification with the community requires, rather than implies, participation. But this participation can have various degrees or levels of activity or inactivity. Young people are most likely to be fired up and enthused by considering issues of fairness, justice and equity, and that an issues-based curriculum is best placed to provide such a forum. This paper is predicated upon the idea that we now are not just legally European citizens as well as citizens of our own countries (as the Treaty of Maastricht set out in 1993), but also citizens in a looser sense, as participants in a community of rights. However, not everyone sees the concept of Europe in the same way: I now turn to the different images that may be held of the European identity.

Images of Europe

What is the identity and image of Europe in the minds of young people and their teachers? How can universities and NGOs contribute to the development of a positive sense of identity with Europe, particularly in this region of Europe? What images of Europe are held by adults? There are many images – each of us probably holds a variety of views of Europe.

Many Europeans hold an image of the European Community as bureaucratic, rule-bound, and cumbersome, not subject to democratic controls and as remote. Complaints are not uncommon about the inefficacy of the European parliament, or how it is too much ‘in the pocket’ of big business. But there are alternative perspectives. For example, Europe is an international market, and the members of the Union all have significant levels of intrac- 

EU trade. However, the view of this will vary from country to country: Sweden only exist in our own consciousness. This is not to advocate cultural relativism: when our construction of knowledge works for us, we pragmatically accept it as a reality that we can (and must) live with. The fact that a truth may only be specific to a particular place and time does not mean that it is not a necessary truth for social life to proceed at that place, in that time. Nor am I claiming that, because there are no universal theories, that any one account of reality is as good as any other.

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den, Denmark and Finland have a relatively small proportion of the total of intra-Europe trade, compared to Belgium or the Netherlands. But comparing the volume of this trade as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product of each country shows the enormous proportion Luxembourg's economic activity that is bound up in European trade. Belgium, Ireland, the Czechs and the Slovaks are also strongly dependent on European trade, and the relative importance to the economies of the individual Nordic countries is not very high (Dutch National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development, 2007).

Europe also sees itself as a home for refugees and as a destination for migrants. In 2003, Germany was one of the principal host nations (though taking fewer that the countries circling Afghanistan and Iraq). Of the countries in the ‘developed world’ Europe took significantly more than the USA, Canada, Australia and Russia together. There are other measures than numbers of arrivals. The European ‘Hospitality Map’ developed in 2004 by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development showed that Germany, despite being a destination for many, gave citizenship to very few, particularly when compared to Austria, Belgium, Latvia, the Netherlands, Denmark (Prince Claus Fund, 2004). The Nordic countries also accepted relatively small numbers. On the other hand, comparing the proportion of asylum seekers to those who are granted asylum, then Denmark is very significant – 53% of applicants are accepted. The UK, Germany, Sweden and Finland have similar rates of between 25 and 30%. Slovakia, Ireland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic have very low rates.

Yet another view of Europe, or at least of the European Commission, is that it is a drain on national resources. A comparison of the net payments to the Commission with the net payments from the Commission, country by country, shows some countries pay more than they get. Germany, the Netherlands and the UK are the major contributors, but when the net contributions are compared to the Gross National Product, the Netherlands pays proportionally far more than any other state. Denmark and Sweden are net contributors – but not a high proportion of their GNP, and Finland is a very slight net contributor.

Within Europe there are overall similarities, but also differences and disparities that partly colour the views of each particular country. But from outside Europe, there may be different images. The perspectives of, for example, the United States, or developing countries across the North-South divide, or from the perspective of a particular faith, such as Islam

The view of Europe from the United States is varied. Historically, Americans saw Europe as a place of oppressive regimes and poverty-striken populations. America threw itself free of European colonial shackles – Britain, Spain and France – and took in immigrants and refugees, den, Denmark and Finland have a relatively small proportion of the total of intra-Europe trade, compared to Belgium or the Netherlands. But comparing the volume of this trade as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product of each country shows the enormous proportion Luxembourg’s economic activity that is bound up in European trade. Belgium, Ireland, the Czechs and the Slovaks are also strongly dependent on European trade, and the relative importance to the economies of the individual Nordic countries is not very high (Dutch National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development, 2007).

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literally by the boatload through the 19th and early 20th centuries. As the inscription at the foot of the Statue of Liberty proclaims,

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

It was Europe that produced these tired, poor, huddled masses, the unfree wretched refuse. Comparatively, Americans were richer, and saw us as poorer.

The American defence community has a poor view of Europe. 76% of NATO funding comes from America, and only 23% from Europe. As far as many Americans are concerned, Europe does not contribute to its own defence, and relies on the US. Not that Europe is that pacific and relatively non-belligerent – about one fifth of the global manufacture and trade in armaments is by France, Germany and the UK.

While some in the United States view Europe as part of Western Civilisation, in particular Samuel Huntington (1993) in his thesis of the ‘clash of civilisations’, others on the American right describe Europe divided into Old Europe and New Europe, based around the alliances and differences within Europe over the invasion of Iraq (Ramsfeld, 2003).

Another contrast between American and Europe is the imprisonment rate. America has the global record in the percentage of its population it imprisons – 737 per 100,000. Most European countries have a rate about one tenth of this, between 65 and 100 per 100,000 – about one tenth of the US rate, though a few eastern European states and the UK have a rate of about one fifth of the US. It is notable also that some south and south-east Asian states – Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia – have imprisonment rates of as low as 50 per 100,000. Another distinguishing feature is the application of capital punishment. Less than 15% of the world’s population live in states where the death penalty is prohibited – and 60% of these are living in the European Community.

America is not the only viewpoint. How might countries in the developing world perceive Europe? One positive way that they might perceive Europe is as a relatively generous source of aid. Although very few countries reach the target of giving 0.7% of their GDP in aid, Europe does give a much high proportion of its aid in aid (0.37%) than do either the USA (0.16%) or Japan (0.19%). 63% of the world’s aid budget comes from Europe. Developing countries therefore see us as a rich region. Mapping World has produced global maps showing progress towards eight UN Millennium Goals (Mapping Worlds, 2005). Much of the developing world literally by the boatload through the 19th and early 20th centuries. As the inscription at the foot of the Statue of Liberty proclaims,

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lives on less than a US dollar a day. Similar patterns are seen in terms of malnutrition, lack of schooling, infant mortality, access to clean water and the prevalence of HIV. However, another third world perspective would be that Europe is polluted and polluting. Our CO₂ emissions are quite disproportionate to our population. This measure of difference also shows a difference from America.

The developing country’s view of Europe would be quite distinctive similar to the United States and countries such as Australia, in being wealthy, educated, healthy and well-fed, but unlike America in being relatively generous with aid, and also being less of a contributor to global warming (though Europe could do much better in both respects).

Is there a particular Nordic perspective or image of Europe today? To an outsider, it seems that there may have been significant changes in the way that Denmark and Sweden in particular were once major European players. Since then, the participation of the Nordic states has been at time hesitant. The basis of the European Union has not always acknowledged the way that Denmark and Sweden in particular were once major European players. Since then, the participation of the Nordic states has been at time hesitant. The basis of the European Union has not always acknowledged

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Nordic concerns about social equity and security, and has seemed at times to be an overly centralised economic union.

What image to children and young people have of Europe? I would suggest two particular dimensions dominate: the historic image of national rivalries leading to almost incessant wars, with most populations relatively poor and deprived, a view perhaps ameliorated by the struggle to establish political and social rights. Against this, the contemporary dimension of a Europe in which it is easy to travel and move, whether for work, leisure or study.

Yasemin Sosyal (2006) has pointed to the way in which Europe is presented in school text books, in an international comparison that examined text books over a forty year period. She found that the idea of Europe as a concept is increasing to be found in school text books. But this is presented as a diffuse idea, without clear boundaries: “Its identity is a loose confection of civic ideas, such a democracy, equality, progress and human rights” (2006, p. 34). She identifies three qualities about this text mediated identity

1) Unlike national identities (where legitimacy is located in history, culture and territory), Europe is not past-orientated – it is future directed.

2) National identities thrive on the “other” – and particularly on glorious deeds of the other. Europe in textbooks lacks a proper other – especially so in texts published from the 1990s. Europe is a peaceful continent, held together by civic ideas and universal principles, rather than separated off. The real “other” for Europe is the past – its war-ridden, conflict-dominated, holocaust past.

3) Europe lacks originality, because its unifying characteristics are (potentially) universal and not specific. These ideas may have begun in Europe, but they are not monopolised by Europe.

In terms of changes in textbook construction, Sosyal notes four ways in which the national/European relationship was developing:

1) National narratives are normalised: their unique characteristics are downplayed, so that ancestral peoples are now shown in cultural terms, through their life styles and patterns, rather than through their heroic activities, or extraordinary characteristics.

2) Heroes and myths are domesticated: they are turned into “ordinary” historical characters, who had weaknesses and from whom we can learn.

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2) Heroes and myths are domesticated: they are turned into “ordinary” historical characters, who had weaknesses and from whom we can learn.
3) National space is recognised, and regions emerge as having an identity within Europe, rather than as part of a country. Problematic regions such as Alsace Lorraine are dissociated from national imagery.

4) Nations are now revised to become diverse: there is an increasing emphasis on cultural and linguistic diversity (contemporary Spain is a good example of this), and the underlying theme of intercultural exchange.

European identity is one among many possible identities, such as regional and national identities, and other identities of relationships and with peers. Europe is not necessarily the most dominant, and it is unlikely to be so. For young people, the identity of youth may be more compelling and cohesive: European identity is not simply the European Union, a formal entity, but is much more diffuse: it is a civil society that also includes associations and voluntary bodies, NGOs, informal groups and movements. In particular it is concerned with establishment of various new social and community rights.

One way in which Europe is really distinct is in the area of human rights legislation. The application of the International Court of Justice is limited to certain major international crimes, to countries that volunteer to accept its jurisdiction, and only in cases where those accused are surrendered to the court. Europe is different: the European Human Rights legislation applies to a very wide range of rights and privileges, is obligatory on all members of the Union, and has powers that over-ride national courts. This is the very distinctive and unique characteristic of the European Union.

Education and social change

Education has always had a particular role in the development and transmission of culture – sometimes passing on the culture and ideologies of the past, and sometimes requiring pupils and students to challenge and reconstitute cultures and beliefs.

Durkheim characterised education as “the image and reflection of society. It imitates and reproduces [society] in an abbreviated form: it does not create it” (1897, p. 372). He wrote that education was “the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions for its very existence” (1956, p. 64). This view of education – as a mirror to reproduce social structures and patterns – is also shown in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1974). He argues that a particular function of education is the transmission of cultural hierarchies, reproducing social classes and thus preserving social differences between classes (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, pp. 10-11).

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Our identity has been handed down to us from previous generations... as we grow older, we modify the identity we have inherited. The identity is not intrinsic, but the scope for changing it is circumscribed by the social expectations of the group with which we are associated. By our actions, we informally reinforce our inherited group affiliation (Robbins, 1990, p. 174).

Stan Bowles and Herb Gintis (1976) considered the nature of schooling in western capitalist societies. They looked at both the reasons behind the development of state education, and the practices of schooling found in different kinds of school – elementary, secondary high and state colleges. They argued that schooling takes place in the form it does in order to effectively prepare pupils for their future role as workers in a capitalist economy. This preparation is achieved through the "Correspondence Principle." Much of our experience at school is a preparation for our future roles as workers. Capitalist Society needs a docile, obedient, motivated workforce - school prepares us for this:

1) A subservient workforce: those who conform do beat at school. Behaving in a compliant and dependable manner is rewarded by being labelled a success, while the child who is aggressiveness or demonstrates independence is categorised as a failure. At school we learn to obey.

2) Acceptance of hierarchy: those who do what they are told are described as successful learners. Workers learn to follow the boss’s orders, because as pupils, they learned to follow the teacher’s orders. We are inducted into the hierarchical structures of the workplace through the hierarchy of the school.

3) Motivation by external rewards: pupils are not interested in the subject knowledge they are taught at school, but are encouraged to go to school to get examination passes, an external reward. This is a preparation for the world of work where we do not work for the love of the job, but for the external reward of a wage.

What happens at school corresponds to what happens at work. So what experience of citizenship is provided by schools in such systems? Obedience to authority; the acceptance of (possibly arbitrary) imposed rules; the division of society into ranks; the acknowledgement of hierarchy. Cultural norms are essentialised, and individual identity is sacrificed to institutional conformity.

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107
These models of education explain continuity and social inertia, but do not allow or explain the possibility of social change. A more optimistic and more radical view of education allows education the potential of a transformative role.

Experiential learning theory suggests that people learn from their environment and experience. One of the most interesting educational theories of the past decade has been that of learning through “legitimate peripheral participation” in “learning communities.” The idea of situated learning, developed by the social anthropologist Jean Lave and the former teacher Etienne Wenger, stresses that learning is social, that it comes about through participation in everyday life, and that it is continuous through life. This has important implications for citizenship education, and the institutions we need to provide the experiences in which citizenship will develop.

Etienne Wenger argues that there is a widespread supposition that learning is an individual activity. Schools, although they are social settings, strive to develop individual’s abilities and understanding, and it is the individual who “learns.” Learning is generally supposed to have “a beginning and an end; that it is best separated from the rest of our activities; and that it is the result of teaching” (Wenger, 1998, p. 3). Lave suggests that we should recontextualise the relationship between learning, educational institutions and learners as a social process. Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) is not about schools, but about “apprenticeship” in informal learning institutions - for example, among midwives in Central America, tailors in West Africa, US Navy quartermasters, and non-drinking alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous). Their ideas have been moved on to situations of formal schooling more recently by Barbara Rogoff (1990).

Lave and Wenger argue that communities of practice are ubiquitous, and that most people are involved in a number of them, at work, school, home, or at leisure. Human beings are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds: as we define and pursue these in social groups, we interact with each other and with the environment, and change or tune our relations with each other.

In other words, we learn. Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore to call these kinds of association communities of practice. (Wenger, 1998, p. 45)

Communities of practice have varied practices, from the formal to the informal, but in each members are joined through common activities and by “what they have learned through their mutual engagement in these activities.

These models of education explain continuity and social inertia, but do not allow or explain the possibility of social change. A more optimistic and more radical view of education allows education the potential of a transformative role.

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ties." Wenger says that communities of practice define themselves in three ways:

1) By their joint nature and purpose, which is always being re-negotiated by members through their practice

2) By their functioning, and they way that members knit a social entity together

3) By their production of a shared repertoire of resources – whether these are routines, vocabularies, common understandings and beliefs (Wenger, 1998; 1999)

This is not the simple acquisition of skills and knowledge for a task, but the establishment of relationships and communities with a sense of joint enterprise and identity, with a shared set of ideas and commitments, and shared resources: it’s about ways of doing and approaching things that are shared to some significant extent among members. The relationship of this to citizenship, and to civic behaviour, is evident. Citizenship is above all a community of practice, rather than a simple set of structures and knowledge. This idea of a kind of apprenticeship is not learners acquiring a model of the world, but of learners participating in a community that has a model of the world – ‘being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities’ (Wenger, 1999, p. 4).

Education can transform, and in particular it can transform the social practices of communities. This is a powerful and inspiring message for citizenship education, and one that should give teachers a sense of empowerment, quite different from the conception of schools and teachers being doomed to merely reproduce the past. And this is particularly important in developing the conception and image of Europe.

But how do we achieve an identity such as this? Wenger and Lave proposed that the development of learning to participate, through peripheral activities, gradually building competences and involvement would be a radically different approach to learning. Attitudes to citizenship and identity are acquired, not learned – acquired through taking part in institutions, joining in, contributing. Schools are one only of the institutions to be involved. We need to incorporate a much broader range of institutions in the construction of civic identity, and the educational system needs to collaborate with, not direct, the ways in which associations are involved in civic learning. The role of community associations and non-governmental organisations concerned with human rights is particularly important in this, for several reasons.

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My argument is, therefore, that enactive learning of citizenship will naturally involve the enactive aspects of citizenship. This will not be about the study and appreciation of rights won in the past, and the icons and concepts that relate to these, but the involvement of young people in establishing rights in their own schools and societies, and extending rights to the third generation. Teaching Citizenship is learning citizenship through active participation – and is something that is done in partnership, educational institutions with and alongside a wide range of social organisations.
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  Jens Qvortrup

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  Annika Månsson

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