Sensitive collaborations in social pedagogy inquiry

Research topics
Along with the rapid development of decentralisation of social care institutions, wide ranging social reforms have been taking place that aimed to fight against societal exclusion of disabled populations such as people with developmental and learning disabilities. The deinstitutionalisation movement placed many individuals with disabilities into community residential settings, although, they comprise a relatively small proportion of the population to be successful in supported employment. Following these reforms of decentralisation and ideology of social inclusion, social pedagogy within social work has to develop its practice and research implementation to new collaborative ways of operation.

Theoretical framework
Individuals interact with the environment in a complex way. Service planning and provision must incorporate a system approach in meeting the needs of individuals with learning disabilities. A system approach notes the characteristics and constrains of each level of a system, for example individuals, groups, institutions and societies, and the interrelations between the systems. To understand how social workers deal with new challenges, it is stressed the importance of examination of how the social care staff and their clients form sense of themselves in relation to ways of occupying their roles as client and helper and power dynamics in participation and non-participation related to clients’ social roles and social positions that matter to them. An emerging line of participatory action research (PAR) in the last years, mends to some extent the shortage of research in this area.

Methodological design
The present study follows the PAR line of research conducted in daily activities centres for people with developmental and learning disabilities. The general aim of the inquiry is to identify, understand and interpret the sense that socio-ecological context and social pedagogy concerns of integration into mainstream community form complex and fluid collaborative structure, resulting in both opportunities and constrains on learning.
The findings show that all involved stakeholders such as clients, their significant others, staff and community actors need to shift their traditional identities regarding their supporting role identity and collaborative approaches in order to develop change. Their collaborative models have to include their role change from traditional formative ones as giving social care in particular situations to be more progressive and comprising socio-pedagogical perspectives of inclusion and empowerment when managing collaboration in power-laden meanings in everyday situations.

**Relevance to Nordic educational research**

Theoretically, this research deepens our understanding of the role that social care communities of practice play due to the effects on a care receivers’ lifeworld and their dependence on help with alternative forms of participation that are a great source of personal identity formation. It is concluded that socio-pedagogical concerns may be an important source of support to construct a client centred sense of practice, increase mutual engagement and in-between forms of collaboration. Inclusion of daily activities centres to municipally located workplaces need to be seen as a significant form of lifelong learning and societally connected participation for people having learning disabilities.