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Perspectives on Inclusion

Karen Bjerg Petersen
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About Perspectives on Inclusion

by Karen Bjerg Petersen

Inclusion has long been on the agenda of public discourse, in basic schooling and in research in Denmark and other Scandinavian countries. Since the adoption of the Inclusion Act in 2012, however, a particularly intense focus on inclusion and inclusive practices has been evident in the Danish educational debate. Research and discussions about inclusive practices and the notion of inclusion have often been linked to an understanding that students with special educational needs should be included in primary and secondary schools. This anthology, entitled *Perspectives on Inclusion*, thus forms part of the current debate and research on inclusion. Unlike other publications on this topic in recent years, the hallmark of this anthology is its *broader perspectives* on the notion of inclusion and inclusive practice. Apart from involving various Nordic studies, the expanded perspectives also encompass sociological and philosophical discussions. In addition, a number of empirical studies on various inclusive practices in vast educational areas are introduced, covering both special needs education and a number of other educational areas in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in which inclusion is a central concept in theory and practice.

Keywords: inclusion, exclusion, marginalization, inclusive practice, social inclusion, special needs education, investigations of inclusive practice.

Inclusion – as a Theoretical Concept and Pragmatic Endeavour

by Susan Tetler

Inclusion as a theoretical concept used in educational reforms has been pivotal in the last 30 years, resulting in tension between inclusion as the ultimate ideology and inclusion in the form of everyday pragmatic efforts. To illustrate this point, it is relevant to take a closer look at the concept of inclusion, as its success risks diluting its meaning so it ends up meaning everything and nothing at the same time.

Studies show that even though the concept of integration was based on values of democracy and equality, it was not able to change segregation in practice, primarily because concepts of 'normality' and 'shortcoming' were not basically challenged and therefore continued to govern the activities of schools. The concept of inclusion was introduced to mark a clear shift from viewing 'inclusive

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education' as a matter of placement in mainstream or special settings, to viewing it as a matter of dealing with a growing diversity among pupils in schools, socially and culturally. However, the success of the concept among researchers, policy-makers and practitioners has also led to a certain amount of vagueness in definitions, with inclusion meaning different things to different people. In order to revitalize the concept of inclusion, the challenge is to be engaged in the twofold activity of increasing participation *and* removing exclusionary barriers. In facing up to this challenge, it is the 'duty' of the research field to contribute to articulating the complex and difficult requirements that are associated with becoming and being inclusive.

Keywords: inclusion, integration, dilemma, 'othering', stigmatizing, diversity, discourses of inclusion.

From International Principles Towards Inclusive Practices in Schools

by Berit H. Johnsen

Around twenty years after UNESCO's (1994) introduction of the principle of the inclusive school, there is still a considerable gulf between principle and practice. What is meant by inclusion? How can inclusion support development of educational practices in a local school where all children are welcome; a school addressing the diversity of educational needs in the community? This article discusses these issues through text studies highlighting aspects of historical and contemporary discourses. A selection of related traditions is in focus. These are the pedagogical traditions of humanism, care and relation, as well as the Vygotskian cultural-historic school. Philosophical, theoretical and empirical analyses are discussed in light of inclusion "in the space between principle and practice". Two arguments are highlighted as particularly fruitful for further research and development: 1) Educational inclusion cannot serve as a supplement to ordinary classroom pedagogy. A new pedagogy must be developed through reconstruction of knowledge from mainstream and special needs education (Slee & Allan, 2001). 2) Inclusion is a multifaceted and difficult process that, although it can be defined within policy level rhetoric, is much more complex to define in practice (Coles, 2005; Johnsen, 2014c).

Keywords: inclusion, special needs education, history of ideas, cultural-historic tradition, pedagogy of care and relation.

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A Student Perspective on Inclusion

by Line M. Laursen & Karen Bjerg Petersen

Taking the student's perspective on inclusion and applying concepts from Bourdieu, this article analyses and discusses whether it is possible for students entering the Danish 'Folkeskole' (Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school) with a "special needs school habitus" to acquire the necessary capital to consider themselves included in the school. The article is based on a qualitative study in which nine students, aged between eleven and fifteen, have been moved from special needs schools into the 'Folkeskole', and are observed in the new classroom and interviewed several times.

The study indicates that the students find it difficult to bond with their new classmates and become part of the classroom community in the new environment of the 'Folkeskole'. It is also difficult for them to work in groups because they lack both academic and social capital.

The process of inclusion is further complicated by these students not knowing "the rules of the game" in the 'Folkeskole'. The article demonstrates that moving students from special needs schools to the 'Folkeskole' is not a straightforward process. Furthermore, the study shows that inclusion is not easy to implement; on the contrary, inclusion and inclusion processes are complex and dilemma filled areas. As such, the study concludes that former pupils at special needs schools are divided as to whether they would have preferred to stay in a special needs school.

Keywords: student's perspective, community, participation, Bourdieu, habitus, capital, inclusion.

Alna Between Local Community and Superdiversity

by Thomas Hylland Eriksen

This article presents some central themes from an interdisciplinary research project conducted in the borough of Alna, eastern Oslo, which explored the conditions for social belonging and integration in a multiethnic suburb. 'Løvli', which forms part of Alna, was mainly built in the 1970s, and now has an ethnically diverse population numbering roughly 9000. In this kind of environment, creating a sense of community requires hard work. Public institutions and arenas in civil societies play a part in this endeavour, but individuals with large networks and a strong engagement are also important. A comparison with an old,

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well-established small town south of Oslo illustrates the challenges of creating collective identity and belonging in a new, complex and turbulent satellite town, and may also say something about social complexity, societal forms and the challenges of cultural diversity.

Keywords: identity, urbanity, place, Oslo, superdiversity.

Problematising Categorisation

by Ivar Morken

People categorise and are categorised. When they categorise, they both include and exclude: some people are placed in a certain category, or in a certain group, and others are excluded. This implies that categories and categorisation are an important topic within different fields of inclusion.

In this article, questions related to categorisation are discussed, both within the field of special needs education and the field of cultural diversity. The consequences of reducing diverse individuals to simple categories are problematised.

There are different systems of categorisation: In the field of special needs education, professionals categorise pupils according to different diagnoses and learning disabilities. In the field of cultural diversity, people are categorised and divided into different cultures and ethnicities. When we talk about inclusion and exclusion, categorisation is therefore an important topic, both in the field of special needs education and within multicultural contexts.

Every individual is more than any given diagnosis, and much more than ascribed cultural categories. Diverse individuals are also much more than simple identities. In this article, the problem of categorisation is not seen as a primarily terminological problem, but as a problem of reductionism and of not paying enough attention to the individual's diversity and to social relations. In this way, categorisation implies a serious dilemma and a great challenge to inclusion.

Keywords: categorisation, communities of disagreement, globography, identity, inclusion, multiculturalism, relational understanding, special needs education.

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The Cultural Heritage of Greenlanders and Minorities as State Politics of Memory and Education. From Inclusion to Oblivion

by Claus Haas

The Danish Folkeskole (Danish municipal primary and lower-secondary school) has to include a rising number of pupils whose identities are influenced by other cultures and ethnicities than Danish. The question is whether this fact ought to be visible within the official curriculum of the Folkeskole. For instance, should the heritages of ethnic minorities be included in the official politics of memory of the school? That is, should the histories, memories, symbols and traditions of ethnic minorities be included in the public narratives about the 'we' identity of Danish society? One minority – Greenlanders – have been part of the Danish state for about 300 years. The first question I seek to answer is: Which place has been given to the heritages of Greenlanders within the official curriculum guidelines of history teaching, as it has been outlined by the Danish state within the last 35 years – the period of time within which Greenlanders have obtained extensive political and cultural autonomy? The answer to this question is indicated in the title of this article. However, the situation is much the same if one expands the analysis to include other school subjects. As a consequence, the analysis isn't restricted to a narrow didactical perspective of history teaching. Therefore, I seek to answer a second question: Why are ethnic minority perspectives excluded from the latest reform of the Folkeskole, within which inclusion has been a key word and a highlighted ambition? The answer to this question points to a delicate issue that concerns the ways in which the 2014 school reform has been informed by the educational strategies of the Canadian province of Ontario.

Keywords: inclusion, heritage, history teaching, politics of memory, Greenlanders, ethnic minorities.

The Positioning of Bi- and Multilingual Children in the Inclusion Debate – Framework Conditions and School Policy Discourses

by Ulf Dalvad Berthelsen & Karen Bjerg Petersen

Discussions about inclusion have long drawn headlines in Danish public debate. In this debate, the notion of inclusion is mainly used with respect to pupils and students with special needs and their inclusion in the Danish 'Folkeskole' (Danish municipal primary and lower secondary education). In recent years, however, we have also observed how the notion has to some degree been applied

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regarding second language education of bilingual children. Various educational policy discourses – teaching a second language to bilingual children and teaching children with special needs – seem to be interwoven. The focal point of this article is to explore and discuss this development. Based on studies of policy documents and a short historical review on the teaching of Danish as a second language, the authors discuss whether bilingual children have been forgotten in the Danish ‘Folkeskole’, anno 2015.

Keywords: second language teaching and learning, inclusion, special needs education, bilingual children, education policy.

Inclusion: Performative Contradiction or Sociological Concept

by Jørn Bjerre

The modern concept of inclusion has developed from the sociological idea of solidarity, but has been transformed into a psychological idea about a group, which does not exclude. The paper argues that this conceptualization directs the pedagogics of inclusion into performative contradictions; since in order to create a form of pedagogics which does not exclude, a common set of norms is needed which functions by processes of inclusion and exclusion – something that applies whenever behavior is subjected to disciplinary processes. A pedagogics of inclusion therefore needs to be based on a sociological understanding of inclusion, and must separate the notion from the organizational and psychological ability to contain divergent behavior.

Keywords: inclusion, exclusion, integration, performative contradictions, sociology.

Enclosure or Emancipation – Hannah Arendt on Education and the Politics of Inclusion

by Morten Timmermann Korsgaard

This article presents a perspective in which inclusion is interpreted as a political invasion of childhood and the school. This analysis is based on the educational thinking of Hannah Arendt and her proposal to separate education from the political. Arendt argues that, in order to safeguard the inherent freedom of human beings, education must be protected from political attempts to determine content and practice. If not, the ideals and ambitions of older generations will rob new

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generations of their opportunity to change the world through their actions and deeds in adult life. In light of this argument, the political project of inclusion can be seen as part of a larger political project embracing the standardisation and politicisation of education. This entails that the emancipatory and regenerative dimension of inclusion and the school are banished from education.

Keywords: inclusion, Hannah Arendt, education, philosophy of education, politics of inclusion, politics, school, natality.

Political Rationales in Child and Youth Policy

by Anders Kruse Ljungdalh

The purpose of the article is to identify two different rationales within Danish child and youth policy by focusing on the relationship between the concepts of participation and competence. Within educational policy, participation in educational activities is regarded as the key to development of the necessary competences among children and young people for their future inclusion in the labour market and as members of a democratic society. In this case, participation leads to competence development. Within healthcare policy, meanwhile, children must have the necessary functional capacities in order to participate in life, and healthcare is therefore tasked with compensating for any possible disabilities. The causal link between children's competences and participation is thus reversed within different kinds of policy. The analysis focuses on the causal connection between the concepts in policy as a way to identify different political rationales. The article also demonstrates that the differences in the understanding of this causal connection have implications for the documentation of effect within childcare. Finally, a third causal connection is identified within the field of social policy, implying that the relationship between the concepts of participation and competence development is reciprocal.

Keywords: children and youth, policy, political rationale, social welfare, participation, competence.

Inclusion of Marginalized Boys

by Frans Ørsted Andersen

Marginalized boys at risk of dropping out of high school have been a problem

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in the Western world for a long time. In the summers of 2013, 2014 and 2015 100 marginalized Danish 14-16 year-old boys were exposed to a new school program inspired by Martin Seligman and associates suggesting seven character strengths on which the focus should be placed in addition to academic education: self-control, commitment, perseverance, social intelligence, curiosity, gratitude, and optimism. During the three-week summer school periods studies have been conducted by the author, looking more closely at the effects of the program. Academic performance, wellbeing, motivation and personal development within the seven character strengths were measured. The data consists of interviews, learning scales and various test scores. The results of the studies show that all the boys improved substantially in reading, spelling, math, wellbeing and school motivation during the summer school.

Keywords: inclusion, marginalized boys, mentorship, reading difficulties, character strengths.

Inclusion of Maladjusted and Vulnerable Young People: The Anholt Project and Alternative Approaches to Educational Intervention

by Karen Bjerg Petersen

In recent years an increased focus has been evidenced on introducing informal and non-formal learning environments for learners at primary and secondary school levels as means of re-engaging in particular school-leavers, drop-outs and disadvantaged learners in the formal educational system. Based on empirical data and research from an European project "Anholt 2013", aiming at empowering disadvantaged and disengaged young European school-leavers, and at motivating them to take responsibility for their own need for education, this article sets out to introduce research findings, and to discuss whether informal and non-formal learning environments should be considered in primary and secondary schooling.

Keywords: informal learning, non-formal learning, formal learning, disadvantaged learners, disengaged students, teacher education.

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Inclusion and Diversity – The Pedagogical Conditions in Adult Education Centers in Denmark

by Lea Lund

This article focuses on Danish adult education in adult education centers known as VUCs (a Danish abbreviation for Adult Education Centre). VUCs mostly provide education for people who have not been admitted to further education, or who have dropped out of the labor market. VUCs hence, form a link between secondary education and labor market and/or further education. A large number of students drop out of VUCs. The classrooms are characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity. VUCs can be perceived of as highly inclusive institutions.

The purpose of the article is to shed light on this particular field of adult education. Findings from an empirical study of the pedagogical strategies of VUC teachers are presented, showing how teachers handle the diverse classrooms. The analysis indicates that teachers span opposing roles: partly caring, supportive and encouraging, and partly authoritative, sanctioning and controlling leadership. The analysis also reveals that teachers experience an unresolved asymmetric situation, resulting in inappropriate actions due to the use of the authoritative controlling position. The conclusions point out that the actual conditions in which Danish VUC teachers operate are demanding due to the diversity of students. The conclusion also evidence that teachers experience dilemmas and paradoxes, manifested as unresolved tensions.

Keywords: inclusion, adult learning, teacher of adult, andragogic, classroom diversity.

Passion as a Catalyst for Inclusion and Engagement?

by Maj Sofie Rasmussen

This article takes its point of departure in a social practice theoretical understanding of inclusion, which is closely linked to pupils' movements towards becoming more (or less) legitimate members of the different learning environments within schools and to a sense of belonging. A case study at the Swedish NGO and lower secondary school Fryshuset constitutes the empirical basis for the article and is used to discuss if and how learning environments that are built on passionate interests – e.g. dancing, music, skating, basketball, and art – may support such movements and increase pupils' engagement. The article highlights how these

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processes are produced and challenged across different learning environments and (often) opposing perspectives on the pupils' participation, learning, and (dis)engagement. The concept of passion is discussed on different levels in relation to the pupils' participation and (dis)engagement; i.e., both as passionate interests and as a practice ideology, and it is argued that passion can potentially result in both expansive and marginalizing processes.

Keywords: inclusion, passion, pupil perspectives, (dis)engagement, social practice theory, practice ideology.

From Inclusive Education to Inclusive Communities of Practice - IT Perspectives on Inclusion

by Laura Mørk Emtoft

The article focuses on the potential of communities of practice to act as conduits for greater inclusion through an example of two students in complex learning environments in middle school (grades 4-6). The examples are empirically based on participant observation fieldwork carried out in the classroom. Through the appropriate management of the learning environment, particularly the use of iPads as a central technological artefact, there seems to be a potential for inclusion for these students. The article proceeds from a discussion of IT, inclusion processes and their interrelationship to the theory of communities of practice as defined by Lave and Wenger. It uses this theoretical apparatus to analyse three observation sets from the fieldwork, employing in particular the concepts of meaning, participation and reification to make sense of the group processes observed. It concludes by arguing that these analyses reveal a potential for inclusion in this kind of community of practice and that this potential is closely linked to the use of the iPad.

Keywords: inclusion, iPad, middle school (grades 4-6), participation, communities of practice, learning management.