Implementing Co-production between the Educational and Cultural Sector in Denmark
Three Cases
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Implementing co-production between the educational and cultural sector in Denmark - Three cases

As other European countries, Denmark has a long tradition of school-museum collaboration and in general of using cultural institutions as informal learning environments. Today within both the cultural and educational sector there is, to a certain extent, focus on partnerships and within these a focus on co-production (samskabelse). The benefits of partnerships have for more than a decade been dictated by the museums, e.g. improving the quality of their different services, achieving greater political and societal support locally and nationally and attracting new target groups and more resources to the museum. With the 2013 School Reform in Denmark, partnerships were stated to be an important element in the daily work of the government schools. It includes an article about obligations for the schools to use their surroundings, including the cultural institutions. The article called Open School directly mentions the obligation to enter into partnerships.¹

Co-production between institutions in the educational and cultural sector is often challenged by two underlying conditions, a project culture with a fixed-term funding and a dependence on passionate participants. Both these factors can result in very vulnerable implementation and institutional integration. Based on three cases this paper illustrates efforts at different levels to implement co-production between the educational and cultural sector in Denmark. Case 1: The Museum in the Open School (Museet i den åbne skole), is a project between 15 local schools and museums, which developed a “Best Practice Model”. Case 2 are diploma modules and specialisation modules at University Colleges. Case 3: United in History (Sammen om historie) is a competency development course for teachers in governmental schools. The case-oriented perspective on the concept co-production draws on Anne Kerschaw’s work in Encouraging Writing on the White Walls: Co-production in Museums and the Influence of Professional Bodies.

The understanding of co-production and implementation in the paper

Anne Kerschaw’s definition of co-production as “museum practice conducted jointly with communities,” is used here but seen in a narrower learning-context, with the teachers, pedagogues and their pupils as the communities with whom the museum develop activities (Kerschaw, 2017, 22). Working closely with the target groups enables the development of services that neither the public sector organization (the museum) nor the community (teachers, pedagogues and children) would be able to realise alone (ibid, 21). Co-production is mostly taking place within a kind of partnership, whether orally or written, agreed upon. The term partnership regarding the School Reform and how it is executed in practice is not discussed here, however it is an interesting area, e.g. whether it makes demands on co-production or rather appears as declarations of intent or overall collaboration agreements between schools and external learning environment. Implementation is in this paper understood in a wide sense – as the efforts to promote both the quantity and quality of co-production between schools and museums through practice – an implementation of skills in co-producing and implementation of a co-production practice in the institutions. The benefits from collaboration and co-production are widely recognised and collaboration with communities is mandated in the internationally endorsed Museum Code og Ethics, which determines that museums work in close collaboration with the communities from which their collections originate as well as those they serve (ICOM 2013:9-10) (Kerschaw, 23). However, co-production is a difficult task and often

¹ Folkeskoleloven - Bekendtgørelse af lov om folkeskolen, Kapitel 2, § 3, stk. 4
meets institutional and individual obstacles along the way, such as the lack of skills required to co-produce, and reluctance by public sector professionals to share control with communities or users (ibid, 20). These hindrances are mentioned as they to some degree were present in the cases as well, but will not be an area of attention in the description. Kerschaw views co-production as a range of activities from ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ order, determined according to the extent of empowerment and the level of influence allowed to the community (ibid, 20). This distinction is useful to examine both the collaborative intentions and the specific collaborative activities. Co-production is used for the Danish word *Samskabelse*. Concepts like co-design and co-creation are not used and unfolded here, but all three terms relate to the term Learning Partnerships as they can take place within these. The term Learning Partnerships has been and still is much used in Denmark concerning collaboration (with co-production) between schools and cultural institutions, especially owing to the work by Sally Thorhauge (Thorhauge, 2014).

Case 1: The Museum in the Open School – A Best Practice Model for creating a sustainable partnership

The Museum in the Open School was a collaborative 2-year project with 15 local partnerships, each between school, museum and municipality. The project took place 2015-16. The aim of the project was to create exemplary courses at the museums for schools, and furthermore to create learning partnerships between the different institutions and professions. A research report about the project was published in 2017, focusing on 1) the partnerships, 2) the implementation of the project and 3) Learning (pupils) (Knudsen and Olesen, 2017).

Based on experiences from the project a Best Practice Model was developed and described in the report (ibid, 40). The model contains step-by-step recommendations for establishing, conducting and maintaining a good partnership. It can be seen as an prototype, as recommendations and as an approach to institutionalizing and implementing a partnership. The structure of the model is inspired by the theory of Etienne Wenger on “Communities of Practice”.

The project itself and the model as well is rooted in practice – the participants get their knowledge and experience through practice and the aim of The Best Practice Model is to guide partnerships through the different phases of co-production: 1. Potential, 2. Fusion, 3. Maturation, 4. Management, 5. Afterlife. As part of the project, the project management arranged semi-annual “learning days” during the project period. The practitioners were given inputs from both science and other practitioners.

As mentioned at the outset, fixed-term financing and dependence on passionate participants are two conditions that mostly are in evidence by co-production between educational and cultural institutions, and they challenge intentions of implementation. The Museum in the Open School itself was project-based with
a fixed-term financing and thereby facing these two challenges. The project tried to meet them by requiring that the participants were spending time on e.g. evaluation, getting institutional support and anchoring and furthermore deliberating ideas for long-term collaboration. The Best Practice Model reflects this by the two last phases, Management and Afterlife. The participants of the project itself worked with these elements, which can be seen as an effort to implement the co-production locally in the projects. The project itself can also be seen as a training element by giving the participants experience with co-production without being part of further studies (contrary to the two other examples). The publication of the research report and The Best Practice model is an effort to spread recommendations on implementing co-operation in practice.

Case 2. Specialisation and diploma modules at University Colleges

Within the last five years, training modules focusing on co-production have emerged at several university colleges in Denmark. They are both specialisation modules within the teacher- and pedagogue training and diploma modules aimed at different professions in practice.

For several years University College Copenhagen (Københavns Professionshøjskole, tidligere UCC) has for student teachers offered the specialisation module: “Interdisciplinary specialisation module: The school - The pupil – The Museum in an innovative collaboration” (Tværfagligt specialiseringsmodul: Skolen – Eleven – Museet i et innovativt samarbejde) (KP, Studieordning 2018-2019, p. 212). The students achieve competence to use museums etc. in teaching and in general to “open” the school toward the outside world.

UCL – University College Lillebælt has in 2019 for teacher and pedagogue training offered the specialisation module “Activities and learning in external learning environments”. The module is rooted in an understanding of learning that merges body, mind and surroundings (e.g. the concept “Embodiment” by Keld Fredens, 2018) and the activities are moved from the physical surroundings of the school and daycare institutions to historical environment or cultural institutions.

UC-Syd – University College of Southern Denmark offers a 10-ECTS diploma module as part of a pedagogical diploma degree. The optional module called “Open School: collaboration crosswise” (Åbent skole: samarbejde på tværs) aims at teachers and pedagogues at schools and throughout the module they learn to facilitate collaboration and create interaction between different learning processes in the school and in external learning environments (Den pædagogiske diplomuddannelse, studieordning august 2019, p. 26).

Kompetencemål
Det er målet, at den studerende gennem integration af praksiserfaring og udviklingsorientering opnår kompetencer til at

- påtage sig ansvaret for at planlægge, gennemføre og evaluere åben-skole-projekter i et tværprofessionelt samarbejde mellem lærere, pædagoger og centrale aktører
- udvikle åben-skole-aktiviteter, der rummer et samspil mellem æstetiske læreprocesser i skolen og hos den eksterne partner
- reflektere over åben-skole-aktiviteter i et dannelsesperspektiv

For at opnå disse kompetencer skal den studerende...
Viden
• have viden om metoder til planlægning, gennemførelse og evaluering af åben-skole-aktiviteter, der bidrager til opfyldelsen af folkeskolens formål og mål
• have indsigt i den historiske og kulturelle udvikling og samfundsmæssige begrundelser for rammerne af åben skole
• have viden om muligheder og udfordringer i tværprofessionelt samarbejde inden for såvel som uden for rammerne af grundskolen
• have viden om æstetiske og praksisorienterede læreprocesser og om pædagogiske og didaktiske teoriers transfer mellem skolens, fritidsdelens og eksterne partners forskellige læringsrum og didaktisk praksis.

Færdigheder
• kunne planlægge, gennemføre og evaluere åben-skole-aktiviteter, der bidrager til opfyldelsen af folkeskolens fag og obligatoriske emner i samarbejde med brugere og eksterne samarbejdspartneres mål og interesser
• kunne sætte eksempler på åben-skole-aktiviteter ind i en historisk og samfundsmæssig sammenhæng og reflektere over samme
• kunne mestre åben-skole-aktiviteter i tværprofessionelt samarbejde mellem lærere, pædagoger og eksterne samarbejdspartnere
• kunne mestre åben-skole-aktiviteter, der rummer et samspil mellem æstetiske og praksisorienterede læreprocesser i skolen og hos eksterne partnere.

Figure 2. Objectives for the diploma module “Open School: collaboration crosswise”

UCL – University College Lillebælt offers a 10-ECTS diploma module “Learning Partnership – kindergarten, primary-, secondary- and upper secondary education, and museum”. As the title refers to the optional module broadly aims at several different public institutions. The key competencies for the module are to give the participant competency to create dissemination- and educational activities in an inter-professional collaboration between teachers, pedagogues and curators (Den pædagogiske diplomuddannelse, studieordning august 2019, p. 20).

Kompetencemål
Det er målet, at den studerende gennem integration af praksiserfaring og udviklingsorientering opnår kompetencer til at

• udvikle grundlag for lærende partnerskab mellem dagtilbud, grundskole, ungdomsmclusion og museum samt andre kulturinstitutioner
• samarbejde i lærende partnerskaber om at udvikle, planlægge, implementere og evaluer bæredygtig didaktisk praksis på tværs af det formelle og det uformelle læringsmiljø

For at opnå disse kompetencer skal den studerende
Viden
- have indsigt i dagtilbuds, grundlæggende, ungdomssuddannelsers og museers organisation, lovmæssige grundlag, samfundsmæssige betydning, sprog og selvførtståelse
- have viden om teorier og metoder om praksisfællesskaber og lærende partnerskaber

Færdigheder
- kunne kortlægge grundlaget for og etablere bæredygtige og lærende partnerskaber mellem dagtilbud, grundskole, ungdomssuddannelse og museum
- kunne analysere og vurdere formidlings- og undervisningspraksis i grænsefladen mellem det formelle og det uformelle læringsmiljø

**Figure 3. Objectives for the diploma module “Learning partnerships”**

The four examples above can be seen as efforts to implement co-operation in the profession through education. Collaboration is institutionalised in the further education though the optional modules. The different modules can furthermore be seen as an effort to secure both quality and quantity of partnerships. Both the schools and daycare institutions are obliged to use their surrounding (The Open School and The Open Daycare), and through education the students gets competencies to establish and be part of fruitful partnerships.

**Case 3: United in History**

United in History is a competency development course for teachers in governmental schools up to and including 2019. Studies since 2012/13 have shed light on the number of teachers who teach a subject without having it as main subject or other kind of teaching competence in the given subject (Undervisningsministeriet, juni 2017). For example, the percentage of teachers having competencies in teaching history was 56,9% in 2012/13 (ibid, p. 14). The School reform from 2013 contains pivotal objectives of having full “competency coverage”. In 2018 the goal was 90% and for 2020 the goal is 95% (ibid, p. 8).

Relevant in this co-production context is that, as part of the course, the teachers should actively plan and teach didactically a visit on a cultural institution in collaboration with the institution (Figure 4, “Del 2”). The museum/the external learning environment was in the project seen and treated as a learning resource and as an educational aid in the subject history and was part of the curriculum that the teachers could be examined on. In that way, their general competencies in using external learning environments in their teaching should be strengthened.

United in History is a project run by University College Lillebælt and HistorieLab - National Centre of Excellence for the Dissemination of History and Cultural Heritage. In Denmark the municipalities manage the governmental schools. Together with nine municipalities, UCL and HistorieLab provided courses for teachers lacking teaching competencies in History. More than 86 schools and as much as 200 teachers have participated in the course (HistorieLab.dk).

United in History can be seen as an initiative to implement collaboration in the profession through education, but it is also an initiative rooted in practice through the direct involvement of practice throughout the course. Policy level can also be seen in this case to have had a noticeable linkage to the
actual initiative because of municipal management and because of the school reform with objectives on competency overage.

Different approaches in encouraging co-production

The three cases show different strategies, methods and approaches to encourage and implement collaboration and co-production between the educational and cultural sector. To illustrate the different implementation methods we can use Søren Ehlers’ analytical model “Four Approaches in education”. The model is a conceptual framework to illustrate different approaches in the education and training of teachers as an answer to the inadequate discussion of the relationship between theory and practice (Ehlers, 2019, p. 20). The four approaches (Practice, Profession, Science and Policy) have different stakeholders and the approach of stakeholders in one box will never be compatible approach in another box. Ehlers describes Practice as a non-abstract approach rooted in the contemporary world representing concrete action. Profession, Science and Policy are abstract approaches which can help to understand abstract and different depictions of reality.

Even though Ehlers’ theory is based on educational development and the model is not completely convertible to the three cases, it can help to illustrate that co-production appears in different ways at all four levels and hereby illustrate the different approaches in co-production.
The article Open School in the school reform is an initiative at policy-level initiated from the Ministry of Education. Other initiatives at policy-level economically supporting co-production has been initiated from The Agency for Culture and Palaces, e.g. the fund in 2015 to develop museum-school collaboration (Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen, 2014/2015). The third case “United in History” is an initiative embedded in both policy, profession and practice with its origin from the objectives of the School Reform, with the University College Management and with teachers carrying out collaboration with cultural institutions. Case 2 “The Museum in the Open School” is an initiative embedded in practice with teachers and curators co-producing in practice. The project was linked to policy-level through partial funding from The Agency for Culture and Palaces. The diploma- and specialisation modules are initiatives embedded in profession, with the University Colleges educating practitioners in collaboration and through representing norms and ideas emphasizing inter-professional collaboration. The modules are linked to policy-level through their reference to Open School and to some degree also Open Daycare. Science is the only approach not directly mentioned, but all the initiatives are in different ways related to science through co-production/learning partnership/communities of practice as scientific concepts that have inspired and guided their development and execution. Research (seen as the Science approach) was furthermore conducted on “Museet i den åbne skole” and “United in History” with recommendations spread at policy-, practice-, and professional level.

Different levels of co-production

Instead of describing the different ways of collaborating in the cases as either co-production or collaboration (with co-production as an equal practice) Anne Kershaw’s concept of “lower” and “higher” order activities can be used. She proposes co-production to be viewed as a range of activities from ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ order determined according to the extent of empowerment and the level of influence allowed to the community (Kershaw, 2017, p. 20). In relation to the three cases, the 15 local projects within “The Museum in the Open School” rank differently seen in a lower-higher perspective, despite a general aim at higher order partnerships. The diploma modules are educational efforts to encourage higher order co-production in practice, and the specialisation modules can be seen as encouraging both lower and higher order, since it starts with introducing co-production as a field to student teachers. In “United in History” the teachers were given the assignment to use the cultural institution as a teaching and furthermore to bring their didactic competencies into play in co-production with the institution. The many ways the teachers accomplished the assignment can be said to range from lower to higher order of co-production, some to a lesser extent communicating with the museum about the lessons at the museum and some bringing in didactic perspectives and wishes for the lessons and developing together with the museum.

With reference to Kershaw, Trine Fristrup states that the collaborative efforts in museums correspond to “lower-order forms” of co-production as the traditional and accepted forms of museums co-production, which require minimal change to the work of public sector organisations and professionals (Fristrup, 2019, p. 7). Fristrup and Kershaw refers to socially engaging practices at museums in general, and the three cases only represents engagement with the educational sector, but their findings shows an obstacle for this engagement in practice, given that the museums seem reluctant to open up for higher order co-production. Maybe the educational co-production within museums is further ahead than other areas at the museums, but Fristrup and Kershaw state in general that the programs, which is offered in museums and archives, do often not challenge the hegemonic or dominating practices. Instead, they maintain the resistance to both
co-production and co-creation at an individual, organisational and sectoral level keeping ‘the new museology’ or “a collaborative museology” at an arm’s length in their detached practices (ibid, p. 9). The involvement of government decision-making is needed in order to make room for socially engaging practices in museums and archives (ibid, p. 7). The Open School initiative can be seen as such a government decision which encourages co-production throughout the system and is reflected by numerous of co-production projects in Denmark the last five years – ranging from lower to higher order of co-production – which the three cases reflects.

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