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Abstract NERA 2017

Development of inclusive communities of learning through relationship building and feedback

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Research topic

In Denmark the goal of the new reform of the primary school from 2013 was to develop and raise the pupils' academic skills, but the reform also has a strong focus on students' well-being and development of inclusive learning communities. The question is how this is developed or are managed successfully? A report from the Danish Ministry of Education in 2015 showed that inclusion, well-being and the development of learning communities have not yet succeeded according to ambition by 2016. The report suggested among other things that these matters should be addressed by practitioners and researchers on both a macro, meso and micro level. This project, which is still in its starting phase, is based on the issues of the micro level to target teachers and educators who work in classes marked by students in complex learning situations in the so-called LKT-problems (Learning, Contact and Well-being). On one side there are classes where it has not yet been successful in establishing appropriate and stimulating learning environments for the students. The project focuses on the concepts of well-being, relationship building, feedback and motivation within the class of approach these problems. The majority of the students having LKT-difficulties are boys. Therefore the problem of gender also comes into relevance.

Teacher's competences concerning relationship building is one of the key factors in students' academic and social development (Nordenbo et al 2008). The report further states that in addition to her own competence to establish and further build relations, the teacher also must be able to develop settings characterized by acceptance of diversity in order to develop social learning communities. In this line of work the concept of feedback is essential.

Furthermore relationship building is connected with two other essential perspectives: feedback and motivation. Feedback processes are often linked to academic learning (Hattie, Nottingham, Askew and others), but in this project one of the hypothesis is that feedback alongside relationship building is important for the student's education, personal development, motivation - and academic learning.

The goal with giving feedback in schools is to give students some insight as to: Where am I right now? - and what can I do to move forward? This applies both when feedback is focussing on academic skills but also in regards to social skills and behavior. There is both a cognitive and an affective element in this process, and that is why good relationships between teachers and students is absolutely essential. In this project we investigate interactions between the teacher's relational competence,

communicational skills and how/or if it makes a difference when giving feedback - especially when dealing with students in complex learning situations.

Based on the above central questions in our research are:

- *How can we with focus on the work of relationship work and feedback with students in complex learning situations - especially boys - understand the active / functional or dysfunctional learning communities?*
- *How can forms of interaction in work of relationship in a class be understood - and developed so well-being is increased and the learning environment develop for these students, but also for the entire community?*

Theoretical framework

The project is based on a variety of literature studies regarding relationship building in teacher, well-being, motivation and feedback. The project is carried out using methods connected to action research and interventions studies (Madsen 2012) using a variety of mixed methods (Morse 2016). In the project we observe and interview teachers and students both in groups and individually and on top of that carry out interventions closely connected to their everyday work as teachers.

Expected findings

We expect to be able to gain new result regarding how teachers work and how they perceive the concepts of relationship building, feedback and motivation using the same concepts in our work of research (thus addressing a micro level).

Preliminary literature

Askew, Susan and Lodge, Caroline (2000): *Feedback for Learning*, Gifts, ping-pong and loops - linking feedback and learning, Routledge

Hattie, J. (2014): *Synlig læring – for lærere*. Dafolo

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Morse, J. M. *Essentials of Qualitatively-Driven Mixed Methods Designs*. Routledge.

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