



Preservice teachers working with narrative inquiry

- a case from Danish teacher education

Danish teacher education

- 4 year programme (240 ects), educating for teaching in primary and lower secondary schools
- Practicum (30 ects)
- General didactics, psychology, etc. (60 ects)
- Bachelor project (15 ects)
- Subject matter teaching (120 -140 ects)
- Optional courses (0 - 30 ects)
 - **Efterskolepædagogik (10 ects), 6 weeks fulltime course**

Why narrative inquiry?

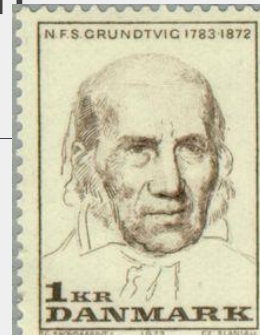
- Inquiry in general is gaining momentum in teacher education:
 - Connect to local community, (Nicholas, Baker-Sennett, McClanahan, & Harwood, 2012)
 - Curricular modelling, (Oliver et al., 2015)
 - Address teacher student concern, (Salerno & Kibler, 2015)
- Narratives bring forward:
 - Experience
 - The individual perspective
 - Setting sensitive



What is 'Efterskole'

- Youth folk high school – since 1879

- Bildung as general enlightenment
 - Historical-poetic enlightenment
 - Nordic **mythology**
 - Logic-scientific enlightenment
 - Farming - originally
 - Living interrelation and spoken word
 - **The narrative**
 - Cooperative movement
 - COOP, but especially within farming
- N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), clergyman, poet and politician
- Christen Kold (1816-1870), the teacher



Danish youth folk high school - in numbers

- 250 schools
- 28.000 students*
 - Year 8 and 9: 37%
 - Year 10: 63 %
- 110 students in average
- Parents pay according to income for a school year
 - Min. 46.150 kr. = 6.153 Euro
 - Max. 71.476 kr. = 9.530 Euro

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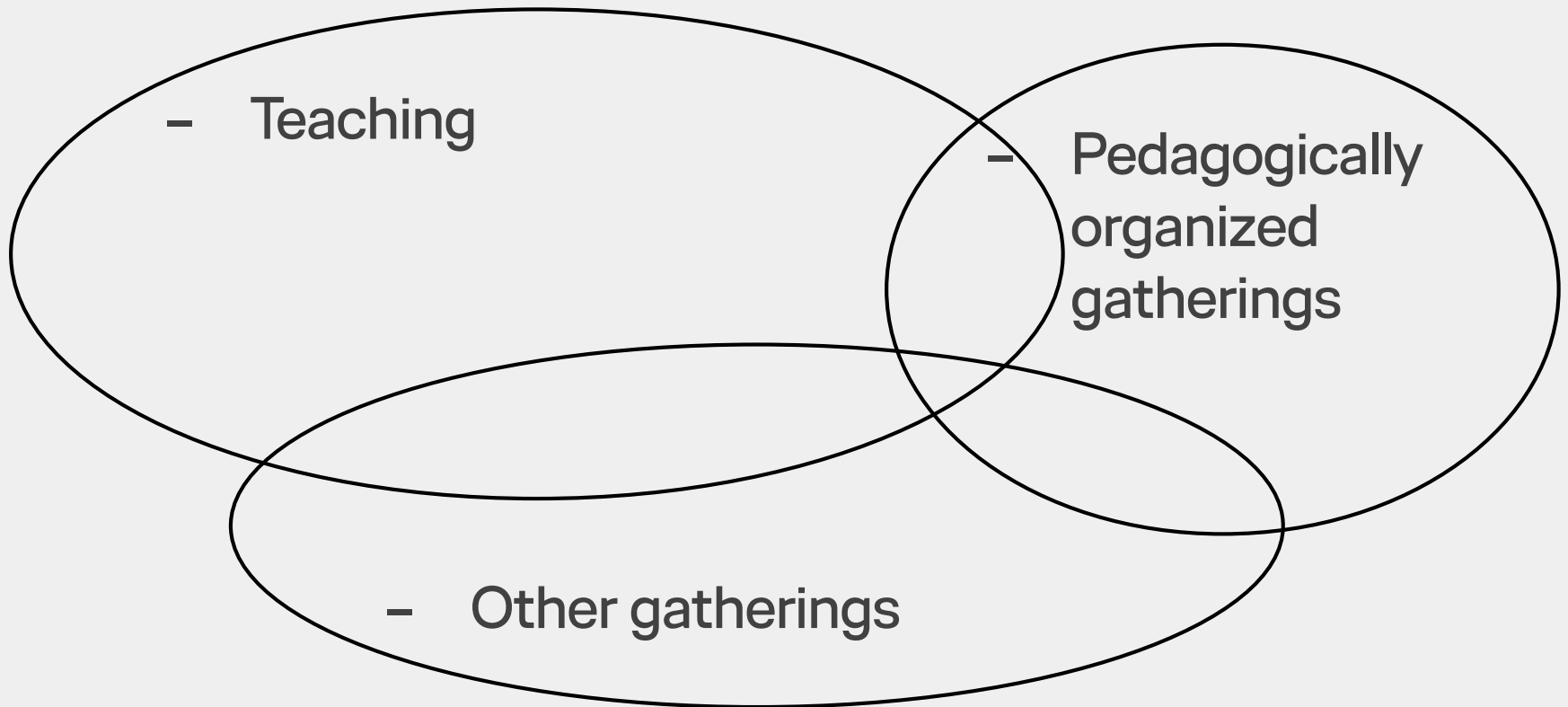


*) A Danish birth cohort is approx. 60.000 - slowly decreasing

Bildung as Education to democracy

- Empower youth (age 14 – 18) to be autonomous and consciously acting in relation to the reality you reside in as human and citizen:
 - Human interrelation and compassion
 - Social justice and power
 - Environmental awareness and responsibility
 - Self awareness and human life enlightenment
 - Action competence and rationality

The pedagogical practices

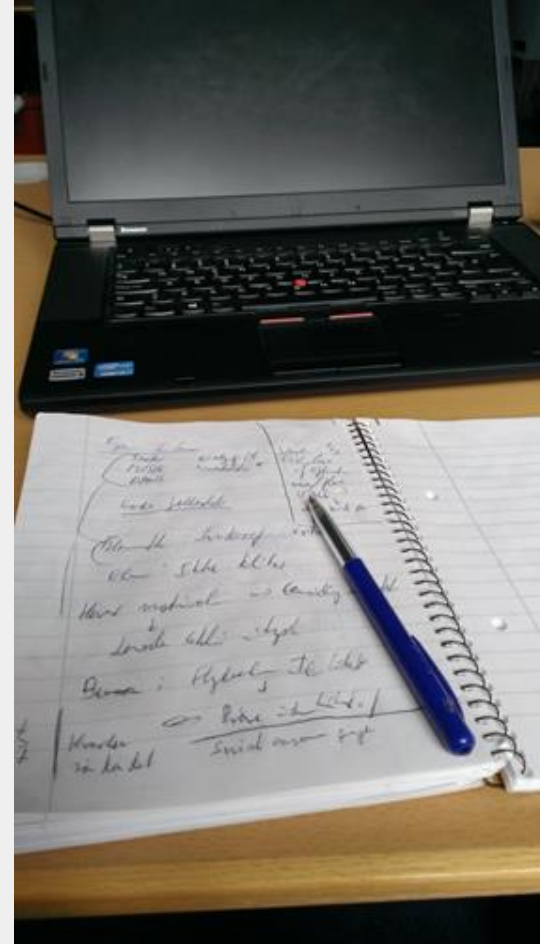


16 elements in the different types of youth folk high school gatherings.

Structuring	Teaching	Guiding	Institutionalised
The good everyday life	High professional standards	The conversation	The good workplace
Use of 24/7	Teaching and learning	Educational guidance	The good management
Health and responsibility	Pedagogical experimentarium	Individual and community	Professional awareness
Good physical settings	Professional challenges	Democratic fora	The strong institution

How narrative inquiry?

- Oral narrative as genre – 15 minutes presentation
- Identity as narrative (Sfard and Prusack, 2005)
 - Who is telling the identity of who to whom
- Address (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007)
 - Narrative documentation
 - Narrative analysis
 - Narrative communication
- Task
 - Description, analysis, reflection, assessment and suggestions for development
 - 5 pages written documentation of method
 - 20 minutes presentation and dialogue



Inquiry design

- a 2 week inquiry stay

- Inquiry questions or interests
- Who will be in focus: one student (age, gender, seniority) and who else
- Methodology – how to generate narratives
 - Concepts, language (theory/literature)
 - Analytic approach
 - How talk and write about what you are inquiring
 - Datatypes
 - How can you get your participants to give you insight in your inquiry interest?
 - How will you decide when your narratives are saturated
- Methods
 - Interview
 - Observation
 - Questionnaire



An acceptable ...

- J at 'True North'



- True North is a school that follows a concept called True North in all its activities and relations. [True North](#) will learn youth to navigate in their lives using five compasses.
- J was inquiring into the attending youths personal Bildung.

Written task excerpts

- In the middle of both compasses is the respect for humans, environment and yourself. When you ask the pupils to the compasses content then **they are very conscious about what the concepts cover, and also in a way, where you despite fundamental agreement gets different answers depending who you ask.**
- After this we should all take turns and tell little stories from your school or leisure life and award each other the strengths we could hear was prevailing in the stories e.g. **how she experienced her parents divorce and others told stories from** their everyday life or from their interest or experiences as e.g. scout leader. When all had been through the round several times you were left with some top strengths you had been awarded more often then others.



My response to the written task

- A very reporting report
- I miss narrative documentation!
- You have few narrative analyses, but it appears somewhat postulating without documentation by quotes. I also miss references to teacher professional literature, that could have provided some general perspectives to the schools concept pedagogue.
- You lack elements of narrative communication unless one can say there is some in your retelling of the school value basis with compasses.
- I look forward to more quotations in the presentation.

The oral presentation

Focus on the school concept pedagogue, circulation of value cards.

Very descriptive presentation.

Some reflections on the difficulties and the differentiation options in the use of the concept.

A good ...

- J at Venø

- [Venø](#) is an small island and the school offers outdoor life, sailing, sports and an author line.
- J was inquiring into dynamics in the rooms and how you make a room work well.



Written task excerpts

- They are not afraid of talking to each other, so if someone is sad, then you can talk about it in the room and find a solution. One tells also that she thinks that it is an advantage that they have some common interests, but also that it is good that they are not alike, because then it soon be dull to be at the room.. **One of the girls tells in the end: "these girls are not just my roomies, they have also become my sisters, and the room is our home!"** The three other girls nod consenting to the statement.
- **Helle Rabøl Hansen explains the concept "social exclusion anxiety", that is the fear of being excluded from the communities, you are part of e.g. school classes, friend groups and the like (Hansen, 2014).**
- As girls thrives best in groups or pairs, it is my theory that she has asked if any of the others in the room would join her on nightly stroll and as one of the girls admires her as the popular one in the room, she is inclined to say yes, **and as the third of the girls has been used to be the adult at home, but now is together with peers, she is afraid to be socially excluded from the group and she also decides to participate.**

My response to the written task

- I miss primary data in your report, some more narrative documentation could have given you evidence for your analyses. They appear plausible, but unsubstantiated. You haven't used the entire frame of 13000 characters, so you would have had room for some more verbatim quotes.
- You use relevant literature in your analysis of the group dynamics and the characterisation of the individual girls.
- Your entire report has character of a coherent narrative communication, but it could have been clarified in relation to the significance of the relations the room dynamics consist of on a more general teacher professional perspective.

The oral presentation

Descriptive presentation with some narrative documentation (quotes from students).
Analysis of the girls in room '17', application of stereotypes to them.

You engaged your teacher co-students in a dialogue by having few clear points for discussion.

An excellent ...

- S and J at Staby

- [Staby](#) has emphasis on gymnastics, sports, cooking, music, design, and outdoor.
- S and J were inquiring into the teacher student relation.



Written task excerpts

- ... there is rich opportunity to develop the individual students action competence and to improve the students self-esteem by feeling solidarity with others (von Oettingen, Andersen, Hansen & Komischke-Konnerup, 2011). Based on this this school make an effort out of letting the pupils feel the sensation of community as early as possible in the school year.
- One thing is agreed upon, is that the schools big gymnastics show, where they perform 25 shows in 2 months, is where the students feel the community. The headmaster says: *It is here they feel that they are part something bigger than themselves.*
- **A 15-year old second year student (boy) tells of the gymnastic shows**
 - *The gymnastics shows is the totally ultimate, I think, it is what for me described, that it was a community to attend an 'efterskole'. The I felt, that it peaked, and it was there that you felt, it was the greatest – frankly (...) when you feel, that you are there together*

Written task excerpts

A 16 year old girl (year 10) tells about the relationship to the teachers

- *At home it was the class against the teachers, here it feels not like they are against us. You are on the same team. (...) You are that because they are here in the evening as well og the like, so we not just has to sit and answer their questions. They are also with in your leisure time activities – in the school at home the teacher is not your handball coach or the like.*

A 15 year old boy tells

- *The teachers here are more like your friend – off course we do not know all about them, but you know that you can go to them, if you have problems. Off course there some you would rather go to than others. But are like friends – with a little distance.*

We see that the students regards the teacher more than him, who has to teach them German or gymnastics. They see the person and not just the teacher, as they are together beyond the teaching. It is possible, that the 'efterskole' gives the teachers better options to be authentic teachers (Laursen, 2003), as you here have a chance to see the students as fellows and not just students. The individual teacher also has opportunity to make optional subjects within a subject of interest, this means that the teacher will be dedicated for the subject – and then the students also become dedicated.

My response to the written task

- A very well-written report with few linguistic errors and vague elements. A bit too long, but as there many appendices then OK.
- You present relevant narrative documentation. You make some very qualified and well argued narrative analyses.
- I miss a bit more narrative communication, but it can come in the presentation.

The oral presentation

You addressed the community of the school using quotes and condensations. You focused on a single girl student, to provide a saturated impression of her experience with the school. You engaged your fellow teacher students in a discussion on the schools agenda and the types of community at the school

What can be learned from this

- Options
 - (some) teacher students can work systematically with inquiry
 - (some) teacher students can work with narrative inquiry
 - (some) teacher students can work with academic argumentation
- Hindrances
 - It is time consuming
 - It requires more clear tasks description and instruction if more teacher students are to benefit from it

What can be learned from this

- Benefits

- Teacher students learn to make structured (narrative) inquiry
- Teacher student learn to listen and inquire into pupils and students narratives of their experiences and emotions
- Narrative inquiry bring forwards nuances and details as it is setting-sensitive and individual-focused

- Drawback

- It is difficult to generalise as it is context-sensitive and individual-focused

Partners wanted

- research projects, exchanges, joint initiatives, ...
- How can narrative inquiry support?
 - Reflective learning
 - Teaching for thinking
- What is narrative inquiry competence?
 - What is narrative inquiry skills
 - What is narrative inquiry knowledge
 - What is narrative inquiry ethical attitude

Respond to my Linked-in call in the Teacher Training and Education group or send me an email pd@via.dk or let's have coffee ...

References

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