

pairs at their desks while the teacher gives a lecture or instructions related to a subject, etc. Alexander (2000), states that the main procedure for whole class teaching is instruction and teacher-led discussion.

Expected conclusions/findings: Considering that the circle time has been a ritually part of the school day – and is the main activity conducted by the teacher and also where school subjects, instructions and frequent use of question and answer sequences is an integral part and despite the arrangement, it will be tempting to define this activity as whole class teaching. To pursue this thought I have observed and analysed the use of circle time both in kindergarten and in year 6/7. Further, I will compare the use of circle time in the respective grades to see if there are some similarities, which can be a point of departure in the discussion concerning the interpretations of circle time as a new form of whole class teaching. Based on the above-mentioned sub-parts, I will also look at what kind of subject matters is most prominent in the respective grades circle time.

Methodology/research design: The study will be empirically oriented and primarily based on observation.

Relevance for Nordic Educational research: Findings in this study will contribute to highlight research related to primary education in a Nordic dimension. Further, it also gives us the opportunity to discuss new forms of classroom activities across the Nordic countries.

Teachers' understanding and use of a learning theory

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62

In a praxis-oriented research project a group of teachers (3) worked together with researchers to improve their teaching and to develop their understanding of a learning theory. The project was introduced as an in-service training for the teachers and the method used was Learning study. The aim of the research was to study the teachers' development. Because of the iterative process of a Learning study it appeared to be an appropriate method for data collection as well as a model for the in-service training. A Learning study had to be associated with a theory of learning and in this case variation theory was chosen. In variation theory, learning is defined as to develop an ability to see something in a new way and the basis of the study is that learning always is the learning of something. The learning object for the teachers was to develop their understanding of the theory. At the same time they were carrying out three Learning studies during the years 2003-2004. The theory focuses on the distinction between an intended object of learning, an enacted object of learning and a lived object of learning. The studies were carried out in Literacy with Swedish as the First Language and the students were 11 years old. In the second Learning study the intended object of learning was to develop the students' abilities to discern when it is suitable to use the question mark instead of a full stop or an exclamation mark at the end of a sentence. When planning the first lesson the teacher with the longest experience claimed she wants to work with one mark at a time as she was used to while the researchers, following the variation theory, advocated a simultaneous use of all three marks. Thanks to the iterative process the teachers had the opportunity to develop the forthcoming lesson and here it got obvious it was more successful to simultaneously contrast

the three marks. The reason for the teacher just to contrast two signs was that she was afraid of confusing the students. She had been a teacher for many years and she was used to take one thing at a time. She had developed her own personal theory or praxis theory and the variation theory challenged her thoughts about instruction. A result of the study concerning the teachers' learning is that they developed their ability to focus on the content and the ways in which they believed their students would understand it. Positive differences in the students' learning followed the observed change in the teachers' discussions.

As a conclusion you can say it is possible to carry out a praxis-oriented research project where teachers and researchers work together to develop the teachers' pedagogical knowledge. It is also possible for teachers to be contributors in a developmental process of the school.

Oral skills in 9th grade classrooms

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63

Research topic: How do teachers teach and students learn oral skills in 6 different Norwegian classrooms?

Theoretical framework: In the national curriculum and the preceding Stortingsmelding 30: "Kultur for læring" (White paper: Culture for learning) the intentions for the oral skills education are being described. The developments of oral skills are emphasized to help students to be active participants of the democratic society.

There is a limited amount of research about how much oral skill work there is in Norwegian classrooms. Most of the Nordic studies that deal with oral skills in schools are case studies (Palmer 2008, Haugsted 1999, Aukrust 2003, Penne 2006, Løvland 2006) and many focuses on the classroom discourse. The exception is one more comprehending study by Hertzberg (2003), where she is investigating to what degree the teachers were teaching oral skills, and to what extent the teaching included concrete text specific guidance.

Methodology/research design: The research project is based on analysis of video recordings from a large research project, called the Pisa+, carried out at the University of Oslo (Klette, et al., 2008). I have studied some of the recorded lessons from this project; 43 norwegian lessons from six different classes. The lessons have been categorized by Videograph (software from IPN, Kiel), to find out the frequencies and different forms of oral work that occurs in the lessons.

Expected conclusions/findings: Two types of oral work gain distinction, that is presentations (lecture, speech or discourse) and workshops (work in groups preparing an oral sequence), which total constitute more than 80% of the time spend on work with oral skills in the observed classes. Other oral work forms like debates and meta teaching on oral skills occur rarely.

Relevance for Nordic Educational research: I find that oral skills seldom are the subject matter in the norwegian lessons. The students gives different forms of presentations in front of their classes, but there is little focus on what the students are supposed to learn, the meta linguistic aspect is almost absent, and the feedback the students gets from the teachers are general and short.