Implementing supervised placement – Diversity and change in different professional programs.

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Implementing Supervised Placement – Diversity and change in different professional programs[1]

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to start a discussion about the variation in how work-based training is described and performed in different academic programs. Every year, for three years, heads of academic programs have been interviewed about their implementation the local reform for supervised placement. The interviews have been conducted at a university that aims to have supervised placement in all programs. Our findings suggest that there are major differences in how to think "where professional education is good". Placement may take the form of training at campus, virtual placement and training at work. Different programs have varying resources to support placement. The ideas about what students should do vary from observation to practical work.

Where education is good to think

Any university, that strives to improve and profile their programs challenges staff thinking about the best places to learn. One challenge concerns how to think about placement. Place or space, however according to Lefevbre (1974/1991), Foucault (1986) and Soja (1996, 1999) has not gained much explanatory interest in modern social science research. Soja argues (1996) that this lack of interest has contributed to hiding an important dimension from critical scrutiny. This paper reports on efforts to implement supervised placement [verksamhetsförlagd utbildning] in all programs at Kristianstad University. Place[ment], we argue, serves as a summative metaphor representing "where education is good to think" and it is worth interrogating how studies of placement can inform about the production of professionalized geographies in higher education. Different forms of work-based learning have for a long time been considered important when learning a trade, and also a profession. Learning at work is one way of representing "where education is good to think". Learning at university, in a discipline, is another way. Research demonstrate however, that the notion of a boundary between learning "at work" and learning "at university" in professional education presents a simplified picture putting to much stress on physical location (Aili & Nilsson, 2011b; Bücker & Woodruff, 2008; Calway, 2008; Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Connor & McFarlane, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Halén, 2008; Rystedt &

Gustavsson, 2007, Sultana, 2005; Sattler 2011). What is conceptualized as campus-based and work-based learning is often made meaning of as a blend that lends from both forms and involves a broader context that provides as well as limits action.

Through history there has been debate about where a profession is best taught and learned. Higher education plays an important role in defining what a profession is. The production of Higher education along with traits like ties to an autonomous discipline, service fees, licensing, jurisdiction is fundamentally related to professional identities. Professions emerge and are sustained by ideas such as that it takes certain knowledge and certain competencies to perform certain kind of work. The kind of knowledge sought is science based and generated through research and rigorous monitoring of practice. It is generally considered that it is a kind of knowledge that has to be learned under specific circumstances. The place where a profession can be learned is usually a university or a form of higher education. The production of higher education can therefore be assumed to play an important role in the production of professional identities.

All higher education programs leading to a profession or an occupation must deal with issues about how to structure and organize the formal education of science based knowledge and the training of professional skills. In curriculum and course plans higher education sets standards that define what a good professional is. Selection of content and choice of training sends a message about best professional practice. Selection of items for examination and choice of form contribute to establish the level of mastery that students must reach for them to be allowed to join the profession and carry out work. In placements students meet licensed professionals and get acquainted with their professional field of. The idea of science and the idea of specific professional skills can be upheld as a part of a professional identity. Higher education and professional identity, we argue, exist in a mutually constitutive relationship, but how these two sides of education are managed shapes they will contribute to building both individual and shared professional identity.

Higher education is not an island. The ideas of higher education are challenged by ideas formed in the legal, public and local arenas (Abbott, 1988). Now a days challenges can for example be posed by standards used in course plans borrowed from transnational initiatives and national regulations such as examination orders and standards build on results from research about how and sometimes the best way to carry out professional work. At the local arenas there is a changing division of labor forcing new standardized job slots and a new use of job descriptions (Mardsen, 1986, p.32 as cited in Freidson, 2003, p. 88) that can be considered to contribute to how programs make meaning of how to carry out education. Together these factors contribute to the level of standardisation of education and training. They lend support to local education providers in their work to transform transnational and national agreements, visions, policies and rules into concrete programs for education of professionals.

At Kristianstad university, like most seats of learning, programs have well established standards, hence traditions for "where education is good to think". Standards may include lecture-rooms, net-based forums, laboratories, seminar rooms but also placements in work-life settings. However, where the best place is seems to vary between programs. Some programs educate for diverse segments of working life and diverse job slots hence they express a need for them to handle many ways to think about place while others educate for well defined job slots and organizations and give other reasons for where it is good to educate and learn.

In this paper we will explore how a strategic measure "Supervised placement in all programs" [our translation] is taken up in different programs and generate knowledge about -how placement is made meaning of and how this meaning making can be linked to specific circumstances.

Aim

The aim of this paper is to discuss the variation in how work based training is reasoned about in different academic programs. We will discuss the variation from three viewpoints; discipline, activities and context.

1. We will exemplify how programs dominated by different disciplines or base of knowledge make meaning of local strategy for placement.

2. We will analyze differences in how programs reason about what students should do during their supervised placement.

3. We will illustrate differences in how programs reason about implementing placement and discuss how forms of placement relate to different ideas about education of professions and more general ideas about where it is best to learn.

Supervised placement in all programs – a local initiative

2006 the board of Kristianstad university decided on a vision to guide the future direction of university operation as a whole. The vision was formulated as the aim to educate Sweden's most employable students. The vision aligns to the European Higher Education Areas strive for employability. Following up on the previous strategy in 2009 Kristianstad University adopted a strategy that presented "the Kristianstad model" as one of the most important tools to be used to reach for the vision (Kristianstad University, strategy 2009-2014). The Kristianstad model is formulated as a triple helix. :

> /…/ while the concept of practicum narrows down to a meeting between working life and education supervised placement refers to a meeting between research, education and working life. Supervised placement is therefore research based and scientized practice.

Kristianstad University's strategy requires all educational programs to have at least five weeks of "supervised placement", making the seat of learning the only Swedish University to ground requirements for placement on political aims for employability (Riksrevisionsverket, 2009). In the strategy it is claimed that supervised placement not only makes for better education but that it makes for a unique education that gives students the opportunity to acquaint themself with work-life, combine work-life experience with science–based knowledge, and help students sustain career networks (Kristianstad University, Strategy 2009 – 2014).

Transnational initiatives and national regulations are among the resources that can inspire local reform. Some of these initiatives contain guidelines suggesting that more programs should include courses or modules that are situated in the students' assumed future work place. Different competencies have for decades even centuries been trained in close proximity of the working environment. It can be assumed to have been the original way of learning a trade and possibly even learning a profession. Through the professional project the idea that professions should be educated in special institutions have caught on, and in some cases at least, practical training has moved to universities. What appears to be new is that there are transnational attempts at governing (e.g. European Union, OECD, professional organizations). Through these attempts, standards and benchmarks are put in place that introduce recommendations for how much of an education that needs to be supervised placement, what parts of an education that needs to have placement and what the relationship between placement and academic knowledge should be (see e.g. Aili & Nilsson, 2011b; Bücker & Woodruff, 2008; EUT 2005L0036-SV, article 30 Halén, 2008; The Swedish Higher Education Ordinance 1993:100)

The organization of education and work-life training

The local reform supervised placement in all programs has been presented as a strategy to educate for employability. Therefore it seems fruitful to draw on theory of profession. Theory of profession takes an interest in occupational strategies for developing trust and legitimacy in the labor market. Formal education can be seen as such a strategy. According to Freidson (2003), education of professional occupations is characterized by training that foremost takes place at the educational institution not in working life. Involved teachers are usually former practitioners that work as full-time

educators and actively devote their time to the project to develop the professional knowledge base through development of theory and research (p. 92).

Learning at work or clinical training as Bücker and Woodruff (2008) conceptualizes it when speaking of legal education has a long tradition. The authors argue that clinical training may be prior to other forms of training and give the example that aspiring lawyers in colonial America became lawyers by "participation in one of England's Inns of Court, hiring on as an apprentice to a practicing lawyer, or through the study of the classical legal treatises of the time" (p. 579). The history of university education also shows that different forms of training and exercises have been used to develop the skills to carry out the daily work as a professional, both at the university and elsewhere. For medicine students parts of their education has been performed in places such as anatomic theatres, hospital wards, mortuaries, accident scenes and laboratories (Freidson, 2003).

The presentation of abstract knowledge in formal education is intimately associated with education of professionals and the ideology that legitimizes how professional education is organized often stresses knowledge of theory and abstract concepts (Abbott, 1988, Freidson, 2003). These forms of knowledge are considered to be important for professionals' ability to carry out discretionary work. Many researchers stress the symbolic value of science based education and downplay the ability to choose correctly from a narrow set of methods, routines or mechanical technologies. This set can also be presented as subordinate to science based knowledge. To control that choices are made based on evidence the training of methods, routines and mechanical technologies has periodically been shifted to the university away from the work sites where skills normally come of use. Training of competencies and skills can also be placed at the end of or after the educational program when students' science based education has been completed. There they can be put into perspective during prolonged periods of post education training such as for example the German referendum or the year spent in court by lawyers graduated in Sweden. Freidson concedes that how the relation between theory/abstract knowledge and methods/routines/technologies varies over time between different occupations and educational locations. He also points out that training as it is carried out can be organized in many different ways. Usually, however, students are educated in cohorts rather than as individual by individual professionals that go about their work at the same time as they try to teach. The reason, according to Freidson, is that it is difficult to standardize, control and provide guarantees that a particular content is covered in individualized approaches. The location of education, from the perspective of Freidson, is to a high degree dictated by how the choice influences the possibilities for the education provider to ensure content and quality.

Many new professions however, have used the idea of scientific knowledge as a strategy for what Sarfatti-Larson (1977) have called the professionalization project and the symbolic aspect of abstract knowledge were brought to attention. Fransson, (2009, p 22, our translation) stresses that "professional autonomy in its traditional form requires a university with a position as exclusive and distanced in relation to other dominant social and cultural spheres". Science main importance, according to Collins (1979) is symbolic and the value of holding scientific knowledge obscures the fact that professional knowledge to a high degree has been acquired through processes of socialization in work places (Collins, 1979). Svensson (1989) suggests that professionals' most important cultural capital consist of the ability to master the social practice of professional work where theories from the professions centre of knowledge transmission are being intertwined with experience into an inseparable whole. The critic issued by Schön (1992) follows the same line of reasoning. He asserts that the technical professional rationality conveyed in academic education is of little use in work life because work life has another ecological rationality. What becomes professional competence in real work situations is formed by complex relationships in work life. That these must be made sense of and managed before it is possible to discern different possible lines of action is stressed also by Lipsky (1988). For that reason expert knowledge can also be seen as developing through practice. Expert knowledge needs to take the client into account but also conditions in a wider sense as defined for example by organizational, economic, political and bureaucratic conditions. Expert knowledge from

such a perspective requires training in the context of every day work. Only there the critical ability to reconcile professional dilemmas can be fostered. For example that professionals cannot handle every single case with quality because of lack of recourses (Lipsky 1980) but that they at the same time can be expected to be held accountable for how they handle the single case (Aili &Nilsson, 2011a, submitted).

How vocational training and professional education should be organized regarding where and how required competencies are best learnt provides for a dilemma for educators in higher education to be reasoned about. The selection of environments where students can be educated may be entangled in concerns about the content they need to master. Ideas about content may in turn be more or less dependent on the interests of disciplines and departments that dominate programs. Alternatively content can be made up from subsets of different fields of knowledge depending on how disciplines influence curriculum.

The way placements are organized in different programs could be understood in relation to what students are expected to do. Placements may be organized based on whether activities can be considered as high risk or low risk. Medical students who diagnoses patients and make ordinations are involved in high risk activities and consequently they need close supervision from staff that is licensed to carry out these work tasks. Teachers work with instruction can be considered low risk and consequently supervision may take the form of repeated inspections and retrospective discussion about what went well and what did go wrong.

Variations in what the students are expected to do place different demands on the organization placement. Another aspect that can illustrate variation is the extent to which planned activities require particular resources, for example a placement organization, placement contracts, health screening of students or access to technology. A student in water management has to have access to the system of technology that makes up a waste water treatment plant to get something out of the supervised placement, while students in personal and administration may need access to advanced application but applications that will run on computer technology that qualify as standard equipment in any office, and are probably less exclusive than the computers the students carry with them.

Placement

There are many established conceptions of learning that involve efforts to stage learning situations that focus on work skills and competencies. Sometimes the term work-integrated learning is used as a collective representation of these forms (Rystedt & Gustavsson, 2007; Sattler 2011). What many of the arrangements share is the ambition to stage activities that are equal or similar to those students will carry out in their future lines of work, while at the same time a certain overview and control can be maintained[2]. Sandwich courses, Volunteerism, Community service or Traineeship, leave more room for the student (and the work place) to assert influence over the kind of training the students take part in. The kind of training the individual work place can offer and the supervisors' commitments are factors that can become decisive for what the students learn. At the same time it can be argued that another kind of authenticity can be achieved since the learning environment and the terms for learning are not arranged by the educational provider, but instead result from students being exposed to the conditions at the work place and involved in the actual work. Some argue that forms of work integrated

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[2] Internship, Remedial training, Work experience, Pre-course experience, Practicum
Work-based projects, Vocational education, Technical preparation, Apprenticeship
Experiential education, Contextual learning, Praxis, Service learning, Business laboratories, Clinical laboratories, Externships, Field studies, Internships, Cognitive apprenticeships, Professional practice, Preceptorship, Work based learning, Cooperative education, Organisational learning, Industry-based learning, Sandwich courses, Project based learning, Cooperative partnerships, Volunteerism, Community service, Traineeship

learning are the most important part in any vocational training, even in academic programs educating for professions and other occupations. In some quarters bridging theory and practice has in acquired a symbolic value.

The room afforded placement and training in professional education has been scrutinized by research into professions. The same applies to the symbolic value of professional education and its relationship to the abstract knowledge base of the profession. Sattler (2011) has reviewed research and made an attempt at constructing a typology of work based learning. He suggests that different forms can be grouped into apprenticeship, field experience, compulsory professional practice, co-op, internship, applied research and service learning (s 38-39). Sattler's review demonstrates how different factors such as pedagogical thought, possibilities to pay student/tutor, demands on students advance knowledge, possibilities to recruit supervisors at different levels of competence and other aspects needs to be managed in the work integrated learning designs of different programs, and that it is important that besides the strategic professional issues pointed out by researcher these are factors that need to be taken into consideration.

Theory

The idea that special knowledge and competencies distinguish professional occupation from, for example craft occupations, have been crucial to all groups that aspire to be associated with quality performance and to gain legitimacy both from clients and the state (Aili, 2002; Terum & Grimen, 2009). This idea provides the background for our study. Conceptions about what professionals need to know and master presented in policies and research can be assumed to be constitutive of conceptions about where different aspects of professional competence are best learnt or acquired. They provide foundations for pedagogical solutions such as "verksamhetsförlagd utbildning", internship, cooperative education, preceptor-ship and industry-based learning, all representations of educational space.

From the perspective guiding this study professional education is always historically situated and dependent on the social and cultural context. There is a temporal aspect. When we approach professional education from a socio/cultural/historical perspective, we need to take in account the importance presently afforded supervised placement through transnational, national and local efforts. How to educate is dependent on interpretation of social and cultural resources such as policies, instructions, disciplinary discourses, economy and technology. In an earlier paper staff meaning making about the local university strategy for employability has been studied (Nilsson & Aili, 2011b). Strategy was studied as a practical accomplishment, as strategizing. Here we are concerned with how staff reason about "the where" of education. Staff's need to make sense of resources such as a strategy for placement in situ rule out the existence, even the production of a universal space for education and opens up for different ways to organize activities. Strategizing amounts to a production of educational space. In Lefebvre's (1979) terms staff engage in spatial practices. Consequently conceptions about knowledge and competence need to be approached as something that not only gains its' form in a field where quality and problem solving in a real sense is shaped, but where also symbolic value that give legitimacy and access is shaped.

The context

In transnational, national and local regulations standards are produced for where good education can take place. There are many examples cited in literature (se for example Axelrod et.al, 2003; Bücker & Woodruff, 2008; Fischer et.al, 2009; Guile & Griffiths, 2001; Field et.al, 2009; Sattler, 2011) about efforts to strengthen education through new relationships between formal education and work. Transnational agencies produce standards and benchmarks for the place of learning at work. Two examples can serve as illustrations. In 2005 EU issued a directive (2005) for acknowledgement or qualifications for different occupation such as doctors, nurses and architects. The directive differentiates between theoretical and clinical/practical education indicating that both are expected to

be a part of vocational training for some occupations. Clinical education for nurses is defined as the part of education where students as member of a team or in direct contact with healthy as well as sick groups and individuals learn to plan, execute and assess all work tasks belonging to the occupation. The theoretical part of the program should be at least one third and the clinical part no less than 50 percent. The Degree ordinance in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100, 1st supplement) specifies that placement is a requirement for some degrees for example nursing degrees, teacher degrees, engineering degrees and master of science in pharmacy. Placement may be called "praktik" [practice, our translation] and specified as a requirement that the student must have practiced at a pharmacy for a period of six months. Placement may also be called "verksamhetsförlagd utbildning". Literally this means education that is placed at the work site. In policy documents the introduction of this concept is usually presented as a shift from mere practice to practice guided by theory and evidence (HSV, 2010; SOU, 2008). The standards for what counts as knowledge in campus based and work based education should be the same. Placement becomes more than placing students in work-life. In terms of Lefevbre (1974/1991) it becomes a social space and it is populated with authoritative voices, problem definitions and solutions to problems, technologies for representing the problem to take some examples.

The material used for this paper derives from a study of "verksamhetsförlagd utbildning" at a Swedish university where the board has decided that all programs must have at least 5 weeks placement, where as it were, placement has been considered good to think with (Kristianstad University, Strategy, 2009 -14)[3]. This implies that the university accedes to an international trend that results in more occupational programs with educational modules that are carried out in the future work environment and a national trend that learning during placement should be guided by theory and based on evidence. In the strategy placement is presented as a model that will support the universities vision to support education of Sweden's most employable students. One motive behind the effort is the trend that requires universities to excel through more specialized efforts. The rhetorical production of this educational space is tied to the development of the universities brand. The university aims to become known for its placement model. The primary component of the model is placement. It is made clear that placement in this context is something different from practice. Placement cuts through a triple helix containing working life, research and education drawing on theory, practice and research and development collaboration. The strategy states that

The universities programs were differently situated as the reform was to be implemented and the study was conducted. Some programs had recently been subjected to national audits. Some of the programs had been approved while others' had been criticized. As a result some of the programs had through their own efforts to appreciate the audit reports identified reoccurring standpoints from the reviewers on placement. To these programs the local reform "supervised placement" presented opportunities for change that could be acted upon.

Some programs were not required to have supervised placement so placement could only be a part of audits if they existed. Even if placement was not required other stakeholders could express opinion about placement outside of or in connection to audits. Student evaluation of the economy program for example included requests for placement. To these programs supervised placement could present opportunities for change but also demands on the programs that could be hard to meet. Hence supervised placement in all programs posed different challenges for different programs. How programs make sense of the reform in this context is what is studied.

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[3] Six papers have been produced from the collected material. The first paper (Aili & Nilsson, 2009) concerns transnational and national attempts steering and local realization, the second paper and third paper concerns the organization of supervised placement (Aili, 2010; Aili & Nilsson, 2010), the fourth paper concerns the rhetorical presentation of electronic support for supervised placement (Nilsson, 2010), the fifth paper concerns strategizing and the presentation of supervised placement on the Internet (Nilsson, 2011) and the sixth paper the local uptake of local strategy on employability and supervised placement (Nilsson & Aili; 2011)

Method of the study

Every year, for three years, heads of academic programs have been interviewed about their implementation of work-based training as part of a process to ensure quality. During the first two years questions have been sent to the heads of the programs in advance and they have answered by mail. The answers have been used to support dialogue between university leadership and program leadership. Notes were taken at these meetings by a secretary from the university administration. After the second year additional interviews were carried out by mail and in face to face sessions. The third year regular interviews were carried out by the research team, digitally recorded and transcribed. The interviews were scheduled and conducted together with the dialog seminars and can be considered as a part of the quality work carried out by university leadership. In addition curriculums, course plans and syllabus have been collected. Material for this paper derives from the recorded interviews.

Heuristics for the analysis have been drawn from Lefevbre (1974/1991). He argues that every society and its sub-variants, in our case higher education, its' programs and disciplines, produce a space, its own peculiar space as an object for analysis. He rejects the notion of space as a purely physical or geographical phenomenon. From such a perspective education can be considered to be a social space. Social space contains or assigns appropriate places for example for reproduction of social relations and relations of production by means of spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. It contains and assigns appropriate space for professional education, including space for instruction and training and also for administration and marketing. Social space, Lefevbre argues, incorporates social action. Rather than being a natural space for learning, we regard placement as a space produced in interaction and we have argued earlier (Nilsson & Aili, 2011) that it can be studied as strategizing. As people interact around issues of implementing strategy they involve themselves in spatial practices producing particular locations and sets of characteristics to go with these places. They represent space through knowledge about for example how to relate and how to order them. They endorse representational spaces such as ideologies, traditions, memories or symbols. There are three moments to social space. Perceived space is the space of everyday life and its' practices. It has been materialized making it a space for observation. Conceived space is imagined. It can be found in strategies, organizational charts and course plans as a normative form of spatial knowledge. To Lefebvre (1974/1991) it is he hegemonic and institutionalized form of spatial knowledge. Lived space is the space of representation. Lived space is a divergent space created in everyday practices.

Result

Program heads reasoning about placement in the dialog-meetings provides a useful case to explore how Lefebvre's (1974/1991) conceptualization of space can be used and how their application show how professional space is continually produced and reproduced in staff deliberations about placement. In this section we will use transcripts from the dialog meetings to demonstrate how staff gets involved in the production of professionalized geographies. This will support our suggestion that Lefebvre's conceptions can be used to explicitly discuss "where professional education is good".

DOMINATING DISCIPLINES AND THE ORGANIZING OF SUPERVISED PLACEMENT

Transnational and national policies provide examples of guidelines about placement. It seems fair to say that Kristianstad University's strategy aligns with these guidelines but also take them a step further requiring all programs to have supervised placement. At a national level the concept supervised placement is used to represent this place for professional education. In the local strategy it is describes as a form of placement that should be based on research and scientized. In contrast to this unitary political image of how to organize professional education differences play out in the programs talk about supervised placement. Two programs sociology and psychology define themselves as

disciplines first of all and this becomes important for how they perceive of their relationship to placement.

> I don't know if this is what you mean to say but in any case I believe we think about it the same way. We don't have any. We run courses. We don't have formalized supervised placement.

Courses are constructed as a form that excludes supervised placement. Programs that only run courses concentrate on disciplinary content. The do not get involved with work based training whether it be practice or supervised placement. The way program is made sense of here is twofold. Program may be a degree program in a narrow sense. Sociology, psychology and biology share with degree programs that they are treated as programs in the dialog meetings but they present themselves as disciplines that give courses. In their imaginations they present disciplines as a counter place. However as disciplines they also ponder how to align to university strategy. The biology program states that:

> "Our program at bachelor level was not particularly well suited for as an education with supervised placement because our program was designed with self-contained courses in biology, chemistry and earth sciences"

Self-contained courses are counter spaces that do not have room for placement. The ambition to set up courses at advanced level that contain placement is shared by biology, psychology and sociology. Economy presents itself as a program rather than a discipline. Placement is new to the economy programs introduced as a result of university strategy. It is represented as business simulations. These are perceived of as games to be run during the first semester and as something that needs to be squeezed.

> We had some problems handling it at the beginning. We did, as it were, manage to schedule some business simulation games now during the first semester. Then during the second semester they take national economy and this discipline does not combine well with supervised placement"

The disciplinary content, theory and methods come first and they do not blend well with supervised placement as it is imagined in strategy. Business simulation games can be organized at campus. Simulations are made meaning of as modules that can be squeezed into a tight disciplinary schedule. Supervised placement comes later. In program practice it is perceived of as an arrangement where:

> Students during their second semester go out and observe what an economist actually, what an accountant does, some kind of observation what not".

Students observe but do not take part in actual work. There is a common idea that supervised placement is embedded in disciplinary structures and carried out like prolonged observations providing examples that can be used for reflection on how theory can be applied.

> It should rest on a scientific ground, so they have to hand in a methodology-report to me, how they have gone about the investigation, on what grounds they have chosen their theories, and so on

The conceived space for supervised placement is represented in the strategy as based on research and guided by science. This space is perceived of by for example personal administration, health sciences, bio medical analysis and teacher education as one made up by accepted theories, methods and subject content drawn from relevant disciplines. Being placed at a work site is not enough and not a requirement. Students need to do assignment rooted in the respective disciplines that make up the program. However, the need to educate for the work place also has to be taken into account. So students will:

> Learn the design of a report because later when they do their degree project or examination project during supervised placement it will not take the form of an essay instead they should learn how to write reports because that is what they do very much in their future profession.

Program heads sense that there is a space for the training of future work competencies in one of the disciplinary core assignments, the degree assignment. Competence to write report is perceived of as something that future employers will want their employees to have, but not exactly in the form usually used at work. But there has to be a clearly visible scientific foundation. The biomedical analysis program head makes clear that alignment to science comes first and makes practical observations:

> The large universities have supervisors in the field that supervise degree projects, that is degree projects in bio medical science [unhearable] and they have to have done a doctorate in the biomedical science

The connection between discipline and placement that can be traced to the strategy. In program practice it can be discerned through the descriptions of examinations carried out during the placement course. Students are supposed to relate their experiences during practice to theories of learning. Placement has to be scientized:

> So you always try to collect, they should out from what has happened during supervised placement produce oral and written reports. These are the once we assess.

Assessment as exemplified here first of all concern disciplinary content not the competencies students train at the work sites. Engineering sciences represent the relationship to disciplines as problem solving of a more practical nature. Students have to master what is perceived of as academic knowledge such as math, physics or computer science but:

> as I see it you can focus on work life all of the time and that students should get some training in how to observe how things work at a production site but it would also be reasonable that you argue in terms of the more conceptual development students need to undergo and the kind of more generic academic competencies that the program also aims to cover. Problem solving, to deal with complex problems in engineering

We suggest that the representation of placement in university strategy has a significant impact on the programs. Even programs with a less pronounced disciplinary base align former forms of education to the strategic conception of supervised placement. Conceptual knowledge, theory, and method as well as evidence is understood as disciplinary knowledge. When work-life competencies are talked about, as in engineering, these are related to the normative space for placement presented in the strategy. Placement has to be research based and scientized.

STUDENT ACTIVITY DURING THE SUPERVISED PLACEMENT

The university strategy conceives of placement as a solution that will support employability. The designated location for placement is work-life. Research can be seen to lend support for how to carry out placement. Campus provides guaranties for the necessary theoretical perspective on placement activities. When university strategy presents supervised placement as a form that is differentiated from how "practice" has traditionally been carried out this would seem to be at odds with how research into professions describe work with work life competencies. Research into the emergence of professional education show that there have been many solutions.

Program heads perceive of placement as a particular place for learning. Some activities are simply regarded as best carried out at students future work site. During placement students are expected to engage in activities pertaining to the line of work they are educated for. When reasoning about placement however the "doing" is perceived of and handled in many sometimes even mutually exclusive ways. Engineering programs have "real projects". Economy programs have particular task

that need to be observed through the lens of economic theory. The nursing program has checklists for "all" work tasks that should be trained. Teacher education has few rubrics to be checked during placement. Instead program heads perceive of supervised placement as an activity that makes meta-reflection or reflection on action possible. Control of how students plan their work or instruct students is weak. Control of their ability to reflect on their planning and their instruction appear as more important. Teacher work during placement provides a foundation for reflection.

Overall, when programs describes what should be learnt during supervised placement hands on competencies are rarely used as examples. Hands on activities such as doing audits, dressing a wound, or counseling a client are not exclusively reasoned about as work life activities. They are activities that can very well be simulated at campus or observed during visits at a work site. The opposite relationship is also live to some program heads. Methods taught in the courses can be used at the work sites. In bio-medical analysis this is given as a reason for supervised placement:

> "What supervised placement aims at [unhearable] but it is actually that they should be learning in site, and it's about learning methods main subject, in green science and, methods that is in this discipline"

People (supervisors) at the work site are positioned as competent user of the methods of the discipline. Consequently supervised placement provides grounds for learning disciplinary methods and for reflection on them as well as how work is carried out, and how the work place is organized. The boundary between work site learning and learning at campus is not upheld strictly.

There are several reasons given for differences in how the boundary between learning at work and learning at campus is constructed. Often the nature of the work site or the nature of the particular kind of work carried out by the profession is mentioned. Reasons are given for why students may not be directly involved in work at the work place. Sometimes such as in bio-medical analysis and nursing safety, security and economic issues prevents direct student involvement even when a task can be seen to be best trained at work. In economy supervision of their work can be considered too costly. In nursing there are ethical considerations. In engineering the field is described as to wide.

In economy it is claimed that students cannot be involved in use of financial instruments. In the biology and landscape science programs limits on student involvement is elaborated. It is claimed that students do not have the tools needed to carry out real work. Students need both disciplinary knowledge and competence to make use of typical tools:

> They need to have, they are placed now in green biology at the regional council and work doing inventories and tasks so they need basic course in gis [geographic information systems] how they can handle maps with computers. They need to know how to make an inventory, they need environmental law

Sometimes students can train competencies at the boundary between campus and work place. The personal administration program states that their students arrange for their own placement. Employment issues are a core concern for students at the program and it is argued that contacting companies and arranging your own supervised placement can be seen as an application of a wanted professional competence.

What is conceptualized as supervised placement and conceived of as a unitary ideal type relationship between research, education and work is complicated when applied by the programs. Sometimes place rather than the need for work life training is used as a resource when staff makes sense of supervised placement. Instead of foregrounding work tasks that needs to be trained, the place where you send students is foregrounded. Placement is described as a series of typical workplaces that students need to have visited during their studies. A place can be a physical space such as a laboratory or an unemployment agency, but can also be understood as an organizational function such as management or accounting. The work site is treated as representational space as if,

as it were, it is self evident what can be learned there. The canonical case can be found in nursing education.

> Two weeks in school health care and it's a placement that has no examination it's more like a study visit or what you would say. Then they have the other two periods one specialization is primary care units at the regional council or in the private sector. The other part is geriatric care or individual care

Staff describes placement as type of organization, kind of parties involved, through the kind of care or the kind of specialization rather than through the kind of work students are expected to carry out. For some programs specialization complicates the notion of learning the trade at work. Personal administration, engineering, bio-medical analysis and water management all state that there are far too many specialized work places for the program to be able cover all aspects. Division of labor is used as a resource to make meaning of why placement cannot be used to teach students their future work:

> so this is something we will never be able to do. The company, it's not, that kind of knowledge the company does not teach. Later when the student […] comes to a particular branch or company, then we, more what company does and what machines they use, and what technical systems they work with on a daily basis, and software and so on.

Reasons are provided for solutions that allow the programs to develop generic work life competence seems sensible. The economy programs use business simulations to simulate work practices and support students' reflection on practice. The personal administration program use students' application for a placement as a method to mimic application for a job. Two other ways of reasoning about placement can serve as illustrations m. The dental hygiene program has had problems securing places for their students. They imagine supervised placement to be something that can be carried out at university with university staff as supervisors. As a result the program has set up its own clinic at the university. The work place has become a part of the university organization with "real clients" that pay for their visits.

Many of the engineering programs do not have a placement in a company or public organization. Programs that deal with software design imagine placement as taking part in an authentic project. Students do real work but in virtual space.

> they have a seven dot five point course where they should improvement project, development project or construction project during the education and then we have degree projects and we regard these two as placement.

The programs relate the strategies placement model to produce their own but treat it as incompatible with their needs:

> and then there are some musicians. I don't think they have a larger number on it at all. They kind of work and do some free lancing or have their own private company. The other is a small company among ten small companies. He has some kind of small apartment or somewhere. And should you sit at these companies you would be sitting at home.

If they are going to find placements, these need to be run as authentic projects. One person companies, with a low budget and the office in the kitchen cannot provide a place for the student but are far too important to the programs placement effort to be removed from the data base. Place and supervision has to be imagined differently from programs such as nursing and teacher training.

Engineering students must be allowed to carry out their projects online sometimes supervised by the programs staff. In the rhetoric of engineering programs the boundary between supervision from campus and supervision from the work place becomes blurred.

THE REFORM CONTEXT FOR DIFFERENT PROGRAMS

The circumstances for implementing placement vary in other important areas than relation to discipline and perception of activities. Some programs have hundred year long experience in arranging practice. It is mainly the definition of practice that causes problems. Placement is mandatory and the percentage of education that ought to be placement is regulated. State subsidiaries finance placement. Other programs are not required to place their students in work-life. The do not have government founding for local supervisors. Accesses to sites where students can be placed depend on the willingness of the receiving organization to take on the extra work. Programs such as teacher education and nursing are required to include placement in their programs while social work and engineering are not and local policies can be treated as recommendations.

Regarding rules the former program head of nursing refers to an EU-agreement that states that all nursing programs should have at least 50 percent supervised placement. She deplores that these requirements have not been met by her program indicating that transnational standards are important to her program. The new head does first not recognize the requirement. 50 percent is more than the national standard and much more than the local five week initiative. Other countries and universities are also used as resources for meaning making.

> But if EU has that standard, I mean, then it is, I mean Denmark that has extremely little practice in their". And: "But "2 "But if I understood it correctly, Luleå, so they have, they were out for three to five week periods and they were not supervised

Denmark and Luleå can be considered to be introduced as counter spaces. Compared to Denmark and Luleå Kristianstad universities nursing program have much placement. Programs such as biomedical analysis, the gastronomic program and water management all make sense of supervised placement with reference to the local policy. They grapple with how to implement five weeks. However five weeks is a minimal requirement and the symbolic value in exceeding five weeks is important. The program head of the gastronomy program claims:

> We have five weeks the second term and five weeks the third year and then our student have to do thesis work.

The local placement policy affects programs differently. The state subsidizes placement in nursing and teacher education. At best students in engineering programs can get paid for projects. Economy and personal administration programs have to find ways to finance placement. What local policy treats as simple requirement must be dealt with financially by the programs. There can be large consequences for program budgets. The absence of state subsidiaries can have effects on how much money programs can spend on campus courses. Ultimately subsidiaries will also be important for what kind of placement the programs can set up. Supervisors can perhaps not be paid. The economy program and dental hygiene claim that it is difficult to get supervisors when you cannot give compensation. If there are subsidiaries there may be rules that are consequential for how they can be used. Nursing programs can par for supervision however rules state that school health cannot be compensated:

> we have had problems getting supervisors. They are municipal employees, school nurses and we don't have any subsidiaries for school and they have said that they don't want any students

Personal administration wants trained supervisors. Lack of subsidiaries affects their ability to provide for training but also the programs ability to compensate thos that attend supervisor courses:

> It all fails because we don't have any compensation to give and yes they don't get any reimbursement for them not even for travel costs,

Some programs recruit placements on a national, even global arena. The gastronomy program states:

> The compensation is zero, even for students, when they travel to their placement and some of them have problems with that, but it is like it is we don't have any funds, only if they go abroad then they can apply for travel grants"

Finally, lack of subsidiaries means extra costs for the program and this in turn can influence expectations of organization that accepts a placemen. The bio-medical analysis program phrases this as a question of customer expectations:

> "instead it costs us a lot just to get them referred and then we think we are entitled to have some expectations about a return because there we pay substantial sums for this and what is a problem is that it seems like these sums just disappear into the regional bankruptcy account.

Programs have to co-operate with different types of organizations to arrange their placements. University strategy conceives of this as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between university and the surrounding society. Placement implies joint projects and shared interests. When joint ventures with the surrounding society is translated into local practice programs face the challenge to deal with a large variety of organizations of different sizes, with different aims and resources, and impetus to receive students. Teacher education deal with large municipalities rather than with local school districts Students are rarely placed at small private school-organizations. Nursing education deals with the large regional council and rarely with small private clinics. These programs deal with organizations with thousands of employees. Teacher education talk about private-schools as possible placement schools but at the same time imagines there placement organization as one designed for large scale contracts. Personal administration, engineering, gastronomy, water management typically talk about smaller units and very diverse work places. Gastronomy students may be placed in organizations as large as IKEA but imagines their program as one that has to find placements at the local apple farm.

In the programs the conceived space of a surrounding society is transformed to partners in flesh and blood. The context for placement may be very different when the program predominately deals with large public or private organization as compared to when they deal with small entities but placements are perceived of as partners in flesh and blood. Working with large companies and public organisations however implies having a professional partner to deal with. Teacher education program states that:

> Predominately we work with Kristianstad municipality eh but in some other municipalities we have contacts with school, eh municipal school districts. We have agreements and these are, that have been checked by the university lawyer. We have a placement our own organization with administrators that work with placements and they they the municipality has a corresponding organization. So actually they place our students based on the requests in the "VFU och Valwebben"[4]. We have tried to attract private schools but and we send them, when they see our agreements they usually opt out. It's just too much for them.

Large organization also implies having access to expertise. The nursing program has negotiated an agreement that allow supervisors to work both sides of the fence:

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4 VFU-valwebben refers to the software used in administration of placement.

> But then I think like this because we are out there that much, as teachers I mean we are there and meet the student three times for each placement then I think, and then we have clinical lecturers [kliniska adjunkter] that are also out there

Teacher and nursing students are envisioned as embedded in an organization that supplements their placement. Placements in personal and economy programs to the contrary perceive of placements as entities with little time to take care of the student. Furthermore they have to grapple with problems such as with high risk. Students placed in these companies may only be allowed to observe or to take part in routine work:

> But in staffing companies there is the real danger that all you will be allowed to do is to go through CV's or ring in consultants and that's not what you are supposed to do during your education"

Programs that don't have a fixed organization to deal with placement and a partner organization in a company or public organization such as economy, gastronomy engineering and personal administration express that it is difficult to find places for their students. This is dealt with differently depending on the kind of contacts programs have. Often such as in engineering staff rely on contacts of a personal kind. Personal administration has many students. Finding placements for them without contracts with a large organization may prove difficult. The program head perceives of the action of contacting organizations and finding your placement as extension of placement and ascribed it pedagogical value both as a job experience and as preparation for future job hunts.

> The students themselves go find their placements and given what they are going to work with it stands to reason that they do. Because many work places if we recruit and it happen that they call us and ask and they just want to meet the students. And if you are going to work with management issues you need to be able to take contact."

Personal networks appear to be crucial for programs that have not entered into agreements with partner organizations. This appear to be particularly so when it comes to programs that place students in small organizations.

> To me it appears to be more practical to build a real net with contacts

Networks provide access to knowledge about local and in some cases national work life. Program heads report that they know when a company has needs. When local organizations work on a technical design students can be perceived of as a resource rather than as a burden. A possible disadvantages reported by the heads is that not all students. The companies need students that have the right competency level. Not all students meet the requirements and the program head expresses that since this is education all students have a right to a place:

> yes we, well sometimes because they have not always been so many students, so it becomes kind of a case of hand-picking students. And there are companies, that have good contact with somebody and they can ask if you have some students. But its also the company needs to get something back.

Placement in engineering programs demands that staff take on extra responsibility. Program heads report that staff needs to monitor projects. Since projects are grades assignments staff can have difficulties finding the balance between fulfilling the promise to the company and keeping to an appropriate level of supervision. The program needs to present a successful project to satisfy the company. But the program is also responsible for accurate assessment of students' performance.

Finding placement is one problem, financing placement a second and financing them a third. Secrecy is another problem acute in health, care and education. Programs with long traditions, mandatory placement and supporting laws follow established routines. Students in these programs have to present health certificates and sometimes even excerpts from criminal records. A similar problem can be found in engineering, biomedical analyses and gastronomy programs. Industry need to protect

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research findings and product designs. A dilemma in programs that get involved in real projects is that grading teachers need access to results on order to correctly assess students' performance. Projects need to be separated in such a way that they can be assessed and at the same time remain secret. Programs have to balance the kind of intervention that companies can be expected to except against their need to assess students.

Programs also have to be able to take on responsibility for students mistakes. Mistakes can be costly for industry but also for public organizations such as laboratories:

> "Then I say, we can't place a test that a student conducts in an array of tests set up for analysis because it jeopardizes the whole set so it's both the discipline and the supervisor at the placement"

Contextual features appear to be an important resource as programs make sense of the local placement reform. Requirements placed on programs by transnational, national and local policies and laws, the presence of subsidiaries, differences in the organizations that can be used for placement all surface in accounts used to describe how programs manages the local reform. As such they can rightly be called the context of the reform.

Concluding discussion

Transnational, national and local governance introduces normative definitions for placement. In Kristianstad University strategy (strategy 2009 – 2014) demands that all programs have at least five weeks of supervised placement. The local reform presents what can be perceived of as a unitary model for where to think professional education and a way to measure success. It challenges the imagination for all programs even programs that have a long tradition for organizing placement for students. The strategy definition raises questions about placement that programs need to reason about. In the terms of Lefevbre (1974/1991) and Soja (1996, 1999) it turns placement into a real and imagined place.

Professional education can be expressed through dichotomies such as practice driven or theory driven, skills and competencies or research based knowledge and work-life or campus. Neither history of professions (Freidson, 2003) nor research into how professional education is organized supports the simplified relationship supported by such a dichotomy (see e.g. Bücker & Woodruff, 2008; Calway, 2008; Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Connor & McFarlane, 2007; Groenewald, 2004; Halén, 2008; Rystedt & Gustavsson, 2007; Sattler 2011). The catch-phrase "where to think good education" has been used by us as a heuristic tool. Terms such as internships, externships, co-ops and business-labs indicate that placement can be conceived of in many ways sometimes reflecting what is most valued in professional education.

Strategies, plans and models are imagined representations. In the writing of Lefebvre (1974/1991) and Soja (1996, 1999) they are convergent. The normative conception presented in the strategy does however not exclude a local reception of supervised placement. Local reception according to Lefebvre and Soja is usually divergent. There are many examples in our findings of how local practice diverges from the imagined model. Programs that define themselves as disciplines can refrain from introducing supervised placement simply by pointing out that they are disciplines and organized around giving courses. If, and it can be argued that disciplines in fact resist change, it can still be argued that our findings show that heads of disciplines imagine a future where they will run professional programs and need to organize supervised placement. They need to start reasoning differently about where to educate.

There are major differences in where heads of academic programs state that education is good to think. Supervised placement, the term used in the examination order (SFS 1993:100, attach 2) for some programs and in the local strategy (Kristianstad University, Strategy 2009 – 2014) for all

programs is by far the most common name used for representation. Strategy however does not continuously surveil and order where to educate. It does not uphold dichotomies such as the one between campus learning and work-based learning. Other locations for learning are produced such as business labs, field work, observation, degree work and clinical training that establish. More precise ways of representing how strategy is carried out are presented. Common names such as internship, apprenticeship and work based learning however are rarely used in the dialogues.

Work-life competencies are mentioned and some programs list competencies that are imbedded in courses and need to be assessed as student progress through the program. Not to surprise lists of work life competencies show large differences. Placements cover different aspects of students' future jobs and consequently differ. Convergence can be found in organization. Through the local reception of the Bologna initiative presentation of placement has become compulsory in course-plans (Aili & Nilsson, 2010). Courses where placement exists need to have set, observable learning results formulated for this part of the course and present how students performance will be assessed and graded. Curriculum needs to specify how students are supposed to progress and in some programs they cannot go on to placement if they have not finished previous courses.

Programs differ when it comes to where in the program placement is organized. In some programs students are introduced to their future jobs in a step by step-wise manner. They may start by carrying out observations and move up the ladder towards almost full responsibility. In a majority of programs placement comes at the end. Arguments presented for this solution resembles those presented in research about professions (see e.g., Abbott, 1988; Collins, 1979; Freidson, 2003). Students need to master the knowledge base of the profession, the tools of the profession and the ethos of the profession first.

Convergence can be found around the conceptual triple helix of research, campus education and work-life presented as the Kristianstad model. The conceptual triple helix model appears to have a normalizing effect as programs try to overcome the duality between theory and practice. Programs have "theory driven" placement. Students arrive at their placement with theories that they are required to use as they observe aspects of their work place. Even programs that "just place" students at the workplace or involve them in projects together with the organization where they are placed talk about the need for theory. Several reasons can be found for a convergence around the triple helix. The symbolic value of abstract knowledge has been considered important in research on professions. Abstract knowledge legitimizes control from campus over student learning. Abstract knowledge can be used as an argument for disciplinary and individual interests. The hegemonic position for theory advocated by Abbot (1988), Collins (1979) and Freidson (2003) and also indicated in program heads reasoning about where to locate placement in the program appear more as a convergence around the triple helix then as hegemony as described by Abbott, Collins and Freidson. Neither can work life competencies be considered hegemonic. Obedience, orderliness, and responsibility that were core values in health education in Sweden and other Nordic countries during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (Irgens 2006) and symbols for what opened and closed that space for professional education are treated as important but not exclusive. Some programs do not assess students' performance on work life competencies but have students use their experience from placement to reflect on work-life. Other programs use rubrics and check student work performance minutely. All program heads in one way or another state that theory is important.

Different programs have different ways of thinking good education, different ideas about the education of professions and more general different ideas about where it is best to learn and educate. In the terms of Becher and Trowler (2001) programs can be considered to form different tribes with different ways of conceptualizing the good place for being educated. In important respects program heads reasoning also converge on the normalizing ideas in transnational, national and local conceptions on professional education. There is more to the organization of placement then where to educate. Sattler (2011) finds seven forms of placement differentiated through twenty-two categories. Besides ideas about what students should learn, where they should learn and how they should learn, Sattler also

differentiates according to individual and institutional roles, host-worksite selection, forms of supervision, payment and other factors. Our results show that programs work under very different circumstances. If convergence on strategy hides the lived experience of what becomes placement in different programs it does so even more when it comes to the circumstances under which programs organize their placement. These come to life during the dialogs. Our results show that strategy have a fundamental impact on program budgets, allocation of personal resources, demands on contact with organizations outside university, ability to set up an organization for supervision and many other things. The diversity of the social space that opens up for programs is not one where programs can chose freely. Some have to have placement. Some have to finance placement. Some have designated partners. Some are troubled by secrecy issues.

The idea from the Bologna initiative that universities should educate for employability, that is also pushed by the local university reform seems to provide input to strategic thinking in the programs about how to learn where to learn and how to be a good professional in the field. We have demonstrated how programs seek legitimacy for the way they organize their placement. We suggest that any reform needs good conceptual tools and that research plays an important role in supporting such conceptualizations. Heuristics for our analysis have been drawn from Lefevbre (1974/1991), Foucault (1986) and Soja (1989, 1996). They all provide conceptual tools that can be used for analysis of placement in professional education. We have deliberately left out explicit analytical references to space, spatiality and spatial practices in our analysis. In future research on placement such a conceptualization can prove useful. Placement we argue is fundamentally about conceived, perceived and lived space, about the imagined places of strategies that fill a normative function, about the space of everyday life that are seen and dealt with by actors, and the lived space of actors where strategies, plans and models are reproduced in representation and resistance. Lefevbre (1974) argues that every society and its sub-variants produce a space, its own peculiar space as an object for analysis. Rather than being a natural space for learning, we regard placement as a space produced in interaction. As people interact around issues of where it is best to educate they involve themselves in spatial practices producing particular locations and sets of characteristics to go with these places.

Space is not external to professional education and separated from the empirical realm. When we approach professional (occupational/vocational) education from a socio/cultural/historical perspective, we need for example to take in account the importance presently afforded supervised placement through transnational, national and local efforts. How to educate is dependent on interpretation of social and cultural resources such as policies, instructions, disciplinary discourses, economy and technology. Our need to make sense of such resources in situ rule out the existence of a universal education space and opens up for a study of different ways to organize activities. It is a practice that produces educational space. Consequently conceptions about knowledge and competence need to be approached as something that not only gains its' form in a field where quality and problem solving in a real sense is shaped, but where also symbolic value that give legitimacy and access are developed and maintained.

Soja (1996) argues that "it is political choice, the impetus of the explicitly political project that gives special attention and particular contemporary relevance to the spaces of representation" (p. 68). Hence of the three spatialities, perceived, conceived and lived space, lived space is the "strategic location from which to encompass, understand and transform all spaces simultaneously" (p.68). The study of placement should from such a perspective concern the lived space where space for professional education is perceived and conceived. In "Other spaces" Foucault (1986) offers six principles for analysis of heterotopias that can be applied to the production of a space for professional education, analysis of; the kind of society where they can exist; the function of the heterotopia (other places) in a particular society; the kind of places juxtaposed by the heterotopia; the temporal links to particular slices in time, the opening and closing mechanisms that isolates them and make them penetrable and their function in relation to space that remains.

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