

arctiChildren

**CRYSTALS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN'S WELL-BEING**  
**CROSS-BORDER TRAINING MATERIAL FOR PROMOTING PSYCHOSOCIAL**  
**WELL-BEING THROUGH SCHOOL EDUCATION**

Crystals of Schoolchildren's Well-Being is an investigative experiment carried out in four countries, involving a topic that is very much of this time, and very global. Children's behaviour at home, at school and in the immediate community says a great deal about the environment, sphere of life and world the children are living in. Despite economic, social, cultural and ethnic differences between countries, the ability of children to cope in the societies of the future is crystallised into a question about the present quality of life, the psychosocial well-being the natural and developed living environment should be able to provide.

Health and well-being are supported in a safe and caring school environment free of bullying. At their best, the schools, parents and nearby communities offer a growth environment in which the children's psychosocial health and well-being are the focus of attention. Teachers and educators are more and more conscious of the ways in which they can foster a child's health and development by applying teaching methods related to social interaction and health promotion as well as by utilising the opportunities provided by art and culture in teaching. This book examines the theme by offering both carefully reflected knowledge and practical examples of applications with which psychosocial well-being is being produced in schoolwork.

The book is meant for teachers, planners and decision makers who are interested in developing growth environments that support psychosocial well-being as well as cross-cultural cooperation.

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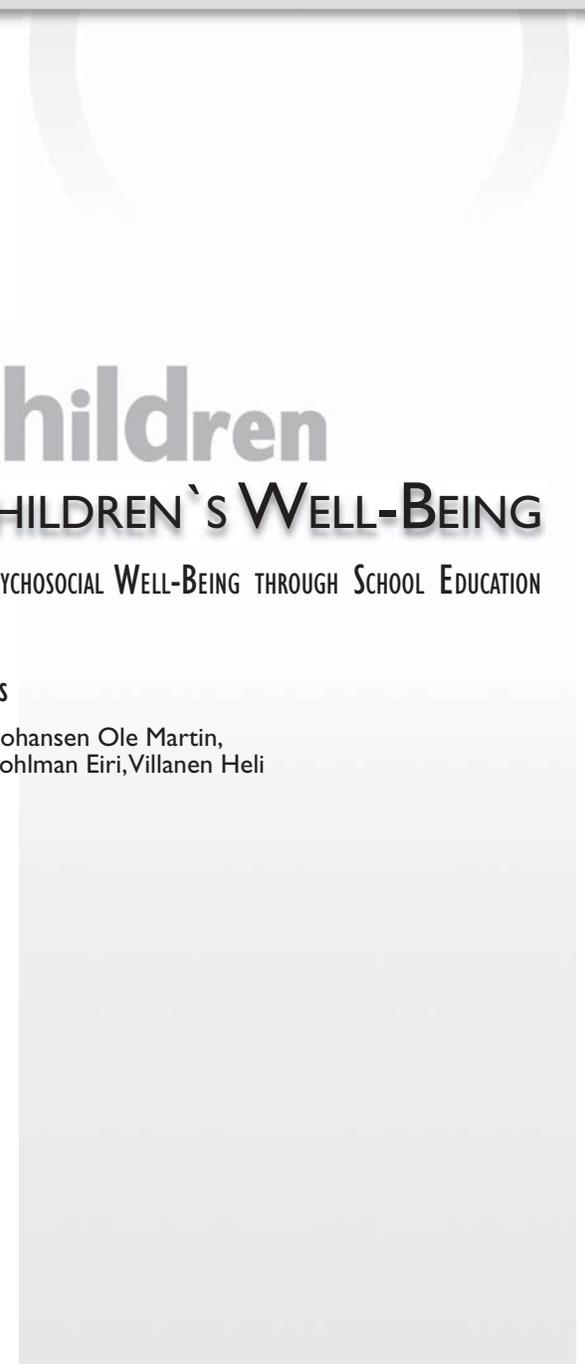
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## Preface

In 1998, the Sustainable Development Working Group, a working group of the Arctic Council, established the Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic Initiative to improve the health and well-being of children and youth in the Arctic and to increase awareness and understanding of sustainable development. The Arctic Council's programme, *The Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic*, led by Canada, has been a remarkable step in developing the status of children and young people in the Arctic.

The first phase of the project, *Psychosocial Well-Being of Children and Youth in the Arctic*, started at the University of Lapland in April 2001. The beginning of the project was influenced by Finland's chairmanship of the Arctic Council in the years 2000–2002. The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health allocated funding for the University of Lapland to start work on participating in the Health Programme of *The Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic Initiative*. The concrete work this involved was collecting data on the psychosocial health indicators of children and young people in Finnish Lapland. The report *Analysis of Arctic Children and Youth Health Indicators*<sup>1)</sup> was published in August 2005. The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health also wanted the University of Lapland to start dialogue and collaboration between the colleges and universities in the Barents region. The aim of the dialogue was to plan a new project dealing with the psychosocial well-being of children and young people in the Barents region.

Since 2002, the goal of the ArctiChildren projects has been to develop a cross-border network model and create new working methods for improving the psychosocial well-being, social environment and security of school-aged children in the Barents region. The consortium co-ordinated by the University of Lapland started ArctiChildren I - *Development and Research Project of the Psychosocial Well-Being of Children and Youth in the Arctic* in April 2002. The project was implemented in two stages: stage I 2002–2003 with Russian and Finnish partners, and stage II 2004–2006 with Swedish and Norwegian partners as well. The project was funded by the Interreg III A Northern Programme, the Kolarctic Sub-programme and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Its goal was to investigate and compare the stages of school children's psychosocial well-being in the Barents region. Intervention methods for improving the psychosocial well-being at the pilot schools were also developed. Altogether, 27 schools with cultural (minority/majority) and environmental (rural/urban) differences from all four countries have co-operated in the project. A book entitled *School, Culture and Well-Being* (edited by Ahonen

<sup>1)</sup>See [www.sdwg.org](http://www.sdwg.org)

A., Kurtakko K. & Sohlman E. 2006) has been published about the ArctiChildren research and development findings from northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and northwestern Russia.

ArctiChildren II 2006–2008 - *Cross-border Training Program for Promoting Psychosocial Well-Being through School Education in the Barents Region* - was started to utilise the best practices from the earlier stages and to produce cross-border training material. The purpose of the project was to increase educational capabilities for strengthening the working culture at schools in terms of promoting children's psychosocial well-being. The project was funded by the Interreg III A Northern Programme, the Kolarctic Neighbourhood Programme and Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The cross-border collaboration network of the ArctiChildren I and II projects includes the Murmansk State Pedagogical University, Department of Social Pedagogics and Social Work; Luleå University of Technology, Department of Health Sciences and Department of Education; Finnmark University College, Department of Educational Studies and Department of Culture and Social Sciences; and the University of Lapland, Faculty of Education and Faculty of Art and Design. Schools with cultural and environmental differences have also been involved in the ArctiChildren II project. The school teachers have constructed training material together with the university actors involved in the ArctiChildren II project.

According to the WHO (1986), health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase their control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and realise aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Health promotion therefore goes beyond a healthy lifestyle to well-being (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, WHO 1986).

Schools are an educational environment that engages every child for nine or ten years. Therefore discussion should focus on whether schools could take on a more significant role in promoting psychosocial health and well-being not only through work done by social and health care services, but also through work done by school education. Psychosocial health and well-being means health and well-being in terms of mood and interaction. Therefore consideration should also be given to new approaches and working practices, i.e. more discourse on the ethics of teaching and educational methods

that will be needed to promote psychosocial health and well-being.

A cross-border training material entitled *Crystals of Schoolchildren's Well-Being* will take cognizance of the practices of social and cultural sustainable development as well which influence school children's psychosocial well-being. Social and cultural sustainable development is intended to guarantee the transfer of conditions for well-being to later generations. These same factors are also a basis for psychosocial well-being. Through better life management and personal responsibility, children will be able to use their social, physical, economic and environmental influences to greater advantage.

The introduction of this book includes two articles. The first article describes what "promoting psychosocial well-being through school education" means in teachers' educational work. The discussion focuses on its main principles – dialogue, encounter, caring and empowerment. Another article describes the context in which the cross-border training material has been devised and put together: the Barents region and the school systems in northern Finland, Sweden, Norway and northwestern Russia. The training material itself consists of two themed sections with titles *Health Promotion and Social Dimension in Education* and *Outdoor Experiences, Art and Identity*.

The sections are themed partly according to country-based best practices developed during the earlier stages of the ArctiChildren projects, but also according to themes which have been developed as new and innovative approaches in the cross-border ArctiChildren collaboration. At the beginning of the book there are brief descriptions of the country-based interests behind the *Crystals of Schoolchildren's Well-Being*. Two sections are split into three separate headings: theoretical review, theory meets practice and practical exercises. Under "theoretical review", the main theories or principles on which the country-based approaches are founded are described. Under "theory meets practice", the educational methods on which the practical exercises are based are described. The main point of these chosen methods is primarily to describe the connection between education and children's well-being – how teachers can more consciously promote children's psychosocial health and well-being through school education.

March 2008  
Eiri Sohlman

## Crystals of Schoolchildren's Well-Being

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## Pilot Schools of the Project

### Russia

**Murmansk Secondary School No. 3** is one of the old-  
est schools in Murmansk. It was opened in 1933 when the workers of the  
Murmansk merchant port decided to open a seven-year school at a factory. In  
1949 the school was reorganised into a seven-year school for boys. In 1961  
the school moved into a new stone building in Touristov Street and became  
an eight-year school. In 1967 the school received the status of a secondary  
school. At present there are 331 pupils and 31 teachers at the school.

**Lovozero Secondary School** was founded in 1938. The goal  
of the school is to encourage pupils to develop a socially-orientated personal-  
ity, to have legal knowledge, know their rights and responsibilities and be able  
to meet the challenges of life. At present there are 253 pupils: 80 primary  
school pupils, 131 secondary school pupils and 42 senior school pupils.

**Lovozero Boarding School** was started in 1969 when an  
eight-year boarding-school was opened for 180 pupils. On 1 September  
1974, according to the decision of the Murmansk Executive Committee, it  
was turned into a secondary national boarding school. 1976 was the first  
graduation year. At present there are 117 pupils in 11 classes, including 33  
pupils and 84 foster children. There are 55 Sami pupils at the school, 26  
Komi, 31 Russians and 5 pupils of other nationalities.

### Norway

**Kvalsund School, 1-10** is situated in a small Finnmark coastal  
municipality. The school has approximately 100 pupils and 13 teachers. The  
pupils are divided in mixed classes where 2 or 3 age groups are taught to-  
gether. Plans follow a 3-year cycle in terms of setting educational goals.  
Nationally, goals are normally set in one-year cycles. The school was built in  
the 1950's, and the buildings are now quite worn. Every year a considerable  
proportion of the staff changes, and the average age of staff is quite low.

### Sweden

**Mandaskolan** is situated 2 kilometres south of Luleå, Sweden, in the  
suburb of Bergnåset. The children are 6–12 years of age, 165 in total, with  
approximately 22 professionals on staff. The school is close to a beautiful  
natural area where the children and adults enjoy their breaks and sometimes  
the lessons are held outside. Some of the main aims of the school programme  
are developing the school children's understanding of democratic principles as  
well as promoting the children's active participation in their own learning  
process.

**Bergskolan** is located next to Mandaskolan. It is a grade 6-9 school  
with around 300 pupils and 50 staff. The school has a well functioning anti  
bullying team and has put a lot of effort and interest to develop and imple-  
ment the Equality of Treatment Act.

**Måttsundsskolan** is situated 20 kilometres south of Luleå, Sweden,  
in the rural community of Måttsund. Approximately 70 children of 6–12  
years of age attend the school. The main aims of the school programme in-  
clude working with the environment and nature.

**The Sami School in Jokkmokk** is situated in a small north-  
ern Swedish municipality. The school has approximately 40 pupils and 6  
teachers. The pupils are organised in mixed classes where 2 or 3 age groups  
are taught together. The school was built in the 1950s. Every year changes  
take place and this year the school has not had a principal for most of the  
period. The children's backgrounds vary a lot, some learn the Sami language  
at home, and some do not. In Jokkmokk we have two main dialects and one  
minor one, which is a very demanding situation.

### Finland

**Sevettijärvi School** is located in the municipality of Inari, in the  
far north of Finland. The school is surrounded by the beauties of nature and  
a long, sandy beach. The very small but active school covers years 1-9 and  
there were 15 pupils and 5 teachers in the school year 2007-2008. Most of  
the pupils are of Skolt Sami origin and they learn Skolt Sami either as their  
mother tongue or as foreign language. Skolt Sami culture is emphasized e.g.  
by organizing the annual Orthodox pilgrim festival at school and dancing the  
traditional dances at different occasions.

**Korkalovaara Comprehensive School** is one of the  
biggest elementary school units in the municipality of Rovaniemi. It also  
covers years 1-9 including special classes. During the school year 2007-  
2008 there were 618 pupils and 52 teachers altogether. The school is situated  
about 2 kilometres from Rovaniemi city centre. Korkalovaara Comprehensive  
School is also part of the EU's Comenius project.

## Brief Descriptions of the Country-based Interests behind the “Crystals of Schoolchildren's Well-Being”

### Sweden

**Eva Alerby, Luleå University of Technology**

When conducting research, taking account of different perspectives is a common method of reduction, concentrating the illumination of a phenomenon from a specific direction. It is the teacher's, the parent's, the school nurse's or the children's perspective that is in focus at different times. The Swedish ArctiChildren research group discussed what or which perspectives needed to be in focus. The objective for the project was as follows: *To develop a supranational network model for promoting the psychosocial well-being, social environment and security of school-aged children in the Barents area.* We agreed early on to take on a child's perspective backed by documents from the National Board for Health and Welfare and the Swedish Children's Ombudsman. Our respective experiences pointed to the fact that children are able to put their experience into words and that their capability to do so can be trusted. Another aspect of the importance of taking on a child's perspective is the possibility of empowering the child or children involved in the process. The main areas of interest of the Swedish ArctiChildren project are bullying and stress-related problems among children, as well as children's experiences of health and well-being, ethical learning and school.

### Norway

**Ole Martin Johansen & Eva C. Schjetne,  
Finnmark University College**

The psychosocial well-being of children and young people on a municipality level was part of the main focus of the Norwegian national *Opptappingsplan for psykisk helse 1999–2006*, [plan for intensifying actions to secure mental health] described in a Government Official Report (St.prp. nr. 63 1997–98)<sup>[1]</sup>. The ArctiChildren project has provided the possibility of a local scientific approach to this important issue. The Kvalsund local authorities, their social services and Kvalsund elementary school as well as their staff faced great challenges regarding psychosocial well-being and were strongly motivated to take part in the project. The Kvalsund community is highly representative of many local coastal communities in Finnmark with a mixed ethnic background (Sámi, Kven, Norwegian)

<sup>1</sup>Official document

and facing the need for major adjustments to their traditional forms of earning a livelihood.

The school has approximately 100 pupils, organised into mixed classes where 2 or 3 age groups are taught together. Plans follow a 3-year cycle instead of the usual 1-year plans, thus providing an excellent situation for engaging all pupils in social and relational competence building and physical activities during the school day. There have been two main areas for the school's activities. The staff are quite young and all enthusiastic about integrating the methods that proved to be successful during the project period. The fact that almost half the staff change every year has for quite some time been perceived as a threat to the socio-emotional school climate by pupils, their parents, school staff and school authorities. The teachers have voiced new enthusiasm and job satisfaction following the project work and closer cooperation between pupils, parents and school staff, a new optimism that may have a positive influence on this problem in the coming years.

### Russia

**Inna Ryzhkova & Andrey Sergeev,  
Murmansk State Pedagogical University**

The ArctiChildren international educational project was initiated in an effort to compare and combine various approaches to the problems of understanding childhood and children's growing up towards maturity, and their integration into adult life – a process that naturally requires an analysis of the key mechanisms whereby a child's mind with its characteristic activities becomes “incorporated” into modern society. This project is being carried out in the territories of Finland, Russia, Sweden and Norway, the north being its foundation for combining the cultural environments of these countries and their peoples.

The specific character of its northern setting is evident. Anyone living in the north, whether a child or an adult, has to come to terms with this specific character, i.e. those features that are clearly and sharply different from what one would experience elsewhere – the long period of darkness known as the “Polar night” in winter, and the equally captivating intensity of daylight during the Arctic summer with its “mid-

night sun"; the particular poignancy that the cold gives to the shapes and aromas of flowers, and the frequent occurrence of the *aurora borealis*; and, of course, the very harshness of the northern landscapes where the ebb and flow of the sea and the beauty of the northern lakes and rivers are seen side by side with the rocks and mountains and the occasional point where the coniferous forests are penetrated by areas of the tundra whose vast space stretches all the way to the horizon – and beyond. All these northern phenomena, together with a variety of other interrelated features of northern life, cannot but exert a lasting and profound influence on the formation of a child's psyche, and this influence therefore inevitably affects the whole process of socialisation and education.

The content developed by the Russian researchers within the framework of the ArctiChildren project is primarily orientated towards interpreting the problems in terms of *social pedagogy*. The stability and coherence of its specific approaches which are largely due to its focus on the process of a child's socialisation and the integration of a child's inner world into adult life and the Russian social environment, reflect at the same time in their own way the changes and transformations that Russia's traditional educational system has undergone. The social pedagogy that has emerged from within the traditional theory and practice of education is a significant component of the current educational environment in the north and may be treated as "support of school teaching". The basic element of the Russian content of the cross-border training material is the *family* which is defined as a structure reflecting the whole range of social, psychological and pedagogical problems of modern society.

## Finland

### Raimo Rajala, University of Lapland

In 2007, two role adventure-based teaching activities were planned and carried out in Rovaniemi at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School. The first activity was more drama-orientated and was carried out as a role adventure camp in May. During the school camp, pupils learned about the past of their own region and their roots by playing roles from the past and carrying out activities from the past. The second activity was carried out in September. It was more adventure-orientated. Pupils were given a variety of adventure assignments during the camp. Both camps had the same general objective of promoting pupils' psychosocial well-being. During the first camp more emphasis was placed on group work and acceptance of the diversity of skills and personalities of the pupils. The sec-

ond camp stressed, in turn, a sense of security, collaboration skills and boosting self-confidence. During both camps, parents were actively involved in the activities and the debriefing sessions after the camps.

Other types of activities were also organised at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School during the school year 2006–2007 and the autumn of 2007. Methodological experiments on how to thematically integrate biology, geography and art instruction were performed. The objectives of the experiments were to obtain experience of how to integrate the contents of the three subjects and how to foster pupils' personal growth through environmental art. This integrated whole served as a learning path of sorts for years 7–9, complementing and integrating the respective curricula for the three subjects. Instead of individual performance, the teachers emphasised the importance of cooperation. They wanted to provide an opportunity for the development of empathy, self-knowledge and tolerance. Recognising and acknowledging various emotions was also an important goal.

## "Culture and Identity"-activities in Finland, Sweden and Russia

### Arto Ahonen, University of Lapland

The Department of Art Education at the University of Lapland has developed community and environmental art education projects into a method for promoting inhabitants' well-being in northern villages and towns. Their knowledge was utilised in the projects' "Culture and Identity" section. The central concept was to strengthen socio-cultural understanding of the multicultural situation in northern villages through contemporary arts. In recent years, the Department of Art Education has been working to implement environmental and community-based art education in schools to strengthen children's understanding of their own local culture, ecological issues and arts which take local circumstances in consideration. In this project the aim was to promote psychosocial well-being in schools in collaboration with families and other sectors of social life.

The goal was not 'to bring art to people', but to use it as a way of understanding the present and imagining the future. More community involvement was needed in art education projects in rural areas. Teachers, parents and community members could also be involved in developing activities that build upon local resources and histories. Community-based approaches to art education placed local cultures and local contexts in the spotlight. This was of special significance in rural contexts because the rich, unique cultural backgrounds of families living in rural communities have tended to be neglected in art curriculum development. The art education project supported local identities and facilitated the development of art-based innovations in school, inspired by northern cultures.

## Promoting Psychosocial Well-being through School Education - Concepts and Principles -

Eiri Sohlman

Schools are an educational environment that engages every child for nine or ten years. Therefore school is also an important arena of possibilities where new practices to improve children's health and well-being can be found. Now that children increasingly have symptoms of ill health and problems with psychosocial well-being - in terms of mood and interaction - like tiredness at school, self-esteem issues or peer bullying, the discussion should focus on whether schools could take on a more significant role in promoting health and well-being not only through work by social and health care services, but also through work done by school education.

Psychosocial well-being in the school context is mostly approached through multiprofessional collaboration between school staff and social and health care services. In this article the discussion will focus on what "promoting psychosocial well-being" means in a teacher's educational work by describing some of the main concepts and principles which it is based on. Of the principles defining the school's activity, culture, *dialogism*, *encountering* and *caring* are discussed in this context. These principles also entail the idea of cooperation with the children's homes and the community. The objective of all the efforts for the promotion of health and well-being is the empowerment of the individual and his or her immediate community (Savola & Koskinen-Ollonqvist 2005, 63).

American sociologist P. H. Ray (1996) has studied the characteristics of transmodern culture and argues that we are today giants of technology but, at the same time, mutual respect, trust, belonging, neighbourhood, community, love and caring represent an under-developed area of virtue (Huhmarniemi 2001, 474.) The negligence prevailing in society is a growing problem and makes children and teenagers especially feel like nobody cares about them. Among other factors, the school culture that concentrates on performance communicates to students what the adults consider important and which kinds of features they appreciate in a child. More often than not, the message is that love and caring from an adult is achieved through success. (Noddings 1992.)

By (Värri 2000) education should always be committed to the ideal of a good life. It cannot even be defined without referring to values, the virtues we must seek to communicate to those we educate. The educational good should be defined as something that supports and fosters the self-realisation and responsibility of the person being educated. (Värri 2000.)

### Concepts related to the promotion of psychosocial well-being

There are different bases on human being and human growth. One of the bases on which to describe the view of the human being is according to humanistic psychology, in which the individual is seen as an open system; this system is self-regulating, frequently unique and constantly changing. The human being searches, investigates, weighs alternatives and is prepared for changes. The topics that best reflect the development of these dimensions include selflessness, self-actualisation, creativity, love, values, individuality, a person's internal nature, spiritual growth and personal wholeness. The aim of humanistic psychology is to promote positive growth in the person, to help him or her become healthy and happy. This requires that the person's own resources be freed up to enable the internal growth process. (Rauhala 1993.)

The holistic conception of man is based on the view that man is realized in three basic modes of existence: bodily existence (existence as an organic process), consciousness (existence experienced as being aware of himself), and situationality (existence as relationships to the world within one's individual life setting or situation). These three basic forms have to be presented and discussed as if they were separate, but none of them can be reduced to another. Man is always realized as a whole, not only as either organic or conscious or situational. Because man's consciousness reflects his situation, his organic existence and action, the totality of his existence manifests in his consciousness as meaning relationships. Therefore, when consciousness is studied, the object being studied is not only consciousness as such but also the wholeness of a human being as it is organized into meaningful relationships. (Rauhala 1978, 1989.)

Psychosocial is a concept that implies a very close relationship between psychological and social factors. Psychological factors include emotions and cognitive development – the capacity to learn, perceive and remember. Social factors are associated with the capacity to form relationships with other people and to learn and follow culturally appropriate social codes. Human development hinges on social relationships. Forming relationships is a human capacity and it is also an important need. (Loughry 2003.)

Psychosocial interventions seek to positively influence human development by facilitating activities that encourage

positive interaction among thought, behaviour and the social world (Loughry 2003).

A psychosocial environment in the school context includes a supportive and nurturing atmosphere, a cooperative academic setting, respect for individual differences, and involvement of families (Nicholson 1997).

The fostering of health can be viewed from the perspective of promotion and prevention on the levels of the individual, the community and society. Promotion refers to the aspiration to create living conditions and experiences that support and assist the individual and community in their survival. Promotion means the creation of opportunities for improving people's living conditions and quality of life by means of reinforcing the resources and coping possibilities of the individual and the community. Prevention refers to the prevention of disease. The common denominator for all activities that foster health is that the work is based on the values of respecting human dignity and independence, and of building the activities based on people's needs, as well as empowerment, fairness, inclusion, the culture-specific nature of activities and sustainable development. (Savola & Koskinen-Oltonqvist 2005.)

In the school community, the main emphasis in health and well-being should lie on promotion, which is to say the development of the school's activity culture in such a way that it supports children's health and well-being, but we should not forget preventive activities with regard to problems and upsets having to do with health and well-being. In the context of mental health promotion (or the promotion of socio-emotional health), the best promotional effort is achieved when teachers nurture and care about their pupils. (Savola 2007.)

### Health and well-being in the school context

A holistic view of health and well-being dictates that our efforts to promote child health in the community must focus on children living in harmony with their physical, social and cultural environment. The human communities closest to the individual constitute a major challenge for promoting health and well-being. (McMurray 2003.) Konu & Rimpelä (2002) argue that health and well-being at school have mostly been separated from other aspects of school life. They note that well-being in school has not gained a central role in development programmes but is mainly seen as a subject separate from the comprehensive schooling. Pupils' health and well-being in school is a vastly wider issue. The School Well-Being Model developed by Konu & Rimpelä strives to study the

school and schooling as an entity. Its main aim is to complement the perspective of achievements and processes with the well-being of pupils to fulfil the challenges set in The Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN 1989): "... the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".

A theoretically grounded School Well-being Model is based on Erik Allardt's sociological theory of welfare. In describing his theory of welfare, Allardt (1996) has emphasised the fact that our society has reached a stage of development in which the notion of duty and an analysis of virtues cannot be excluded from a discussion on the collectiveness of well-being (loving). In today's society, and among the youth in particular, pointless violence, discrimination of small minorities and groups with special needs, as well as substance abuse, are quite common. These phenomena occur especially among those who do not have responsibility or the kinds of contacts that offer an example of good citizenship and moral codes or any kind of meaningful community life. Questions related to the environment should also be included in the research on well-being, as well as aspects entailed in category of being a person that have to do with the aesthetic experiences drawn from nature, meditation and the joy produced by nature activities. (Allardt 1996.)

Indicators of the School Well-being Model are divided into four categories: school conditions (having), social relationships (loving), means for self-fulfilment (being) and health status. The School Well-being Model can be extended and specified in at least three directions: 1.) teaching and education, 2.) learning, and 3.) the impact of the surrounding community, including pupils' homes. Well-being is the key concept of School Well-being Model, it takes into account environmental considerations, social relationships, personal self-fulfilment and health aspects. Teachers, educators and other education professionals in cooperation with other professionals have the competence to discover those teaching practices and learning processes that promote health and well-being in school. (Konu & Rimpelä 2002.)

### Parenting and home-school collaboration

The first place to address child health issues is within the family, where individual health and well-being are constituted. Although the context in which children's and adolescents' needs are met has changed with every generation, the needs themselves have not changed over the years. Children and adolescents still need physical care, love, nurturing, pro-

tection and a sense of belonging. The family is the single most important influence in society. Genetics, personal health and the accessibility of health and support services play a part in health and illness, but it is the basic patterning of behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values within the family that primarily determines whether and to what extent people make choices for healthy lifestyles. In this respect, the family is where health literacy, or health competence, is developed and nurtured. (McMurray 2003.)

Parenting has changed in many ways over the years, reflecting changes in family and society and in conceptions of childhood. Today, the population of our cities and towns is largely a mixture of people with a variety of cultural backgrounds who have been brought together by large-scale migration. Parenting under these conditions is more challenging than in the past. Today's urban lifestyles often leave parents feeling alone and lacking in meaningful relationships with others as they daily emerge from the workplace exhausted and in need of reassurance. Therefore, families also need support in the task of raising children. (McMurray 2003.)

A child belongs to both the school and the home, and problems in one are reflected in the other: problems in parenting will be seen in classrooms, and a child's bad experiences at school will be felt in the home and the relationships there. Therefore, collaboration between these two environments is needed for children's better growth and learning results. (Solantaus 2004.) According to Epstein (1994), home-school collaboration is a multi-faceted, dynamic and creative process influenced by the environment and culture in which the school operates as well as by the children, parents, teachers and other actors in the school community. Epstein (1994) has proposed six main categories of home-school collaboration, which can take the form of cooperation between institutions (schools, families and communities) or between individuals (the teacher, parents and the pupil). The six groups are 1) the basic responsibilities of the parents, an especially important aspect of which is a positive home environment that supports the child's learning and behaviour; 2) the basic responsibilities of the school, which include fostering interaction between the home and the school; 3) parents' involvement in

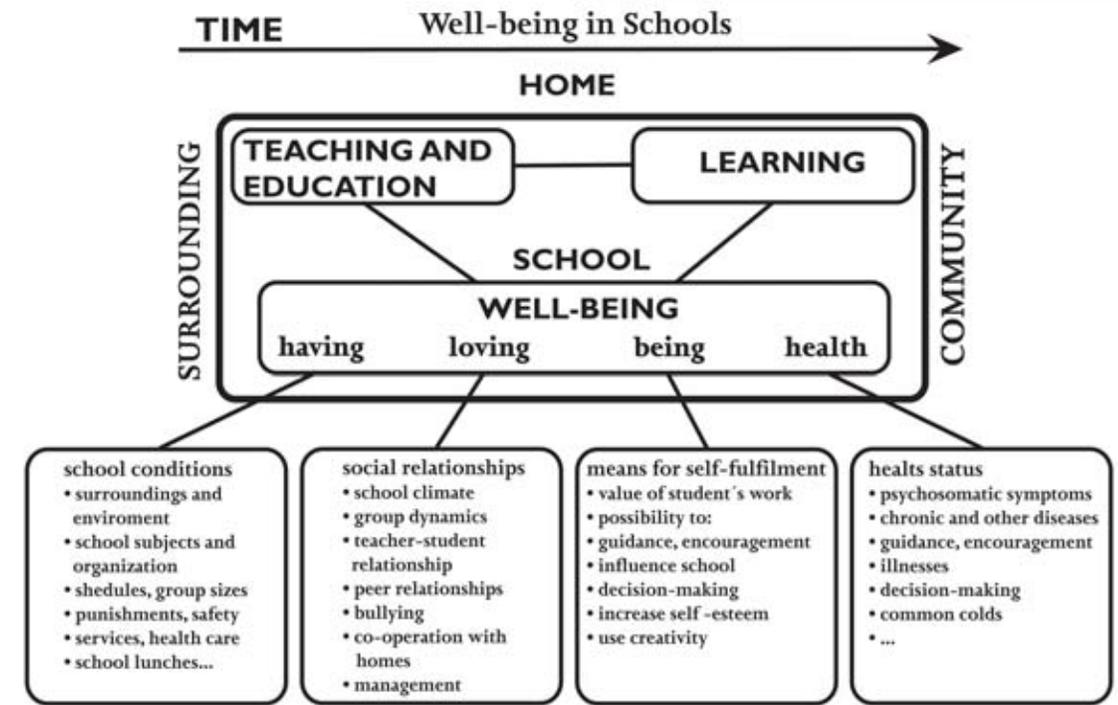


Figure 1. School Well-Being Model by Konu & Rimpelä (2002)

school activities, e.g. as volunteers or as members of the public; 4) parents' involvement in children's learning at home; 5) parents' involvement in decision-making at the school; and 6) cooperation of the school and parents with other organisations in society. All of the forms of participation have particular practices, challenges and outcomes associated with them, and schools may vary their practices in accordance with their specific objectives. (Epstein 1994.)

Home-school collaboration is essential for a child's success at school. Co-operation providing effective communication on different levels and dialogue on educational aims is one of the hallmarks of the successful school today. (Williams & Chavkin 1989). According to Christenson, Rounds & Gorney (1992), home-school collaboration is an attitude, not simply an activity. It occurs when parents and educators share common goals, are seen as equals, and both contribute to the process. It is sustained with a "want-to" motivation rather than an "ought-to" or "obliged-to" orientation from all individuals.

### Encounter and dialogue between teacher-student relationship

The other people we encounter are probably the most meaningful aspect of our lives. The uniqueness of interpersonal relationships has been studied by the phenomenologists with the aid of such concepts or concept pairs as I-other, I-you, encounter, dialogue-monologue and otherness. Here, the starting point for thinking is always "I" and the relationship of this "I" to other people. This approach is the foundation for the concept "other" or "otherness". It is something opposite myself, something different from myself, other to me. It differs from the way many other fields of science look at interpersonal relationships from the outside, as it were, through the eyes of an objective observer: two people are seen encountering each other and doing and discussing this and that. The phenomenological language therefore does not include references to interpersonal relationships in this sense, stating that encountering another person is always viewed from the perspective of someone living in the situation. (Laine 2001, 122–123.)

According to the existential conception—which understands the meaning of the concepts of encounter and dialogue in a limited sense—Martin Buber (1962a) emphasises that 'genuine encounters' and dialogue are, if anything, exceptional occurrences in a person's life and that their significance arises from this exceptionality. Buber argues that we live most of our lives in monological relationships to other people. The current discussion on the difference between "traditional"

and "new" educational thinking, as well as all guidance work with clients, can be viewed from the point of view of this suggestion by Buber. A teacher or another professional implementing his or her plan—for example, the basic education curriculum—is bound to be in a unilateral, monological relationship with others (Figure 2); the professional has an objective to pursue. Education is always goal-oriented, and the goals and objectives are never determined by the person being educated. Therefore, the concept of monologue should not be understood as an evaluative term in the sense that it automatically denotes something bad and that all human relationships should be dialogical. (Laine 2001, 124–126.)

A dialogical encounter with the "other" is often facilitated by discussion and mutual understanding, but it can also be non-verbal, and non-verbal relationships and silence can also be dialogical. In such cases, the term dialogical refers to a hermeneutic and ethical attitude that takes the other's perspective into consideration. (Laine 2001, 124–126; Väri 1994, 248.) Dialogue is active, voluntary, reciprocal and reflective. However, dialogue is not reduced to mere speech; it is always something more. It requires openness and tolerance, and the objective is usually to build reciprocal understanding. Dialogue is not just the participants taking turns to communicate; it also entails the participants gradually becoming aware of the thinking of not only the other but also of themselves. (Silkelä 2003.)

Learning is frequently understood as a cognitive phenomenon. However, a dialogical encounter is a broader issue that often has a unique and meaningful impact on the development of our whole personality. We can also look at this issue from the opposite direction. The less we consider the "otherness" of others and the less consideration a teacher awards to the uniqueness of the pupils he or she is teaching

<b>MONOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP</b>	
"I" -----	one-way relationship -----> "OTHER"
-influencing	-an object
-goal-orientated interaction	
-methodicalness	-through a role
-exercising of power	
<b>DIALOGICAL RELATIONSHIP</b>	
"I" < -----	two-way relationship -----> "OTHER"
-unaffected relationship	-a subject
-without planning	-a person
-sincerity to the other	-wholeness
-desire to understand the other	
-respecting the other	
-responsibility	

Figure 2. Two ways to be in interaction by Laine (2001, 124)

at a given moment, the more clearly monological the activity is in nature. (Laine 2001, 125.) In a dialogical relationship the teacher has to renounce his/her power, and teacher and student will meet as conversation partners. Dialogue is defined as a 'pedagogical communicative relationship'. It is not a form of question-answer communication but an engaging 'social relationship' with emotional as well as communicative aspects. The emotional factors in dialogue include concern, trust, respect, appreciation, affection and hope. The communicative virtues are the dispositions, qualities and practices that support these relationships. (Burbules 1993.)



Caring theme, environmental art, photo: Ulpu Siponen

### Caring - an attitude towards teaching

Teacherhood in the 21st century is evolving towards an ethically insightful and active developer of society. A teacher's competence then includes, to an increasing extent, the ability to analyse societal phenomena and development trends as well as to define values and to work on and for the same (Lukkainen 2005). Value education at its best means the fostering of growing as a whole person—bringing mind and heart together in instruction and education. The "point" of teacherhood is in the constant development of a person and humanity. The highest form of a teacher's sophistication is therefore ethicality, which combines empathy, aesthetics and truthfulness (Skinnari 2004).

The ethics of caring emphasise the special value of empathy and nurture, also in teaching. A teacher's ethical nurture means genuine caring, a will to understand and an ability to make the effort to protect, support and develop the pupil. The ethics of caring and nurture at their best are realised when people take care that everyone is heard and treated equally (Gilligan 1982).

Caring is a way of being in a relationship, not a set of specific behaviours. A caring relationship is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings – a carer and a recipient of care, cared-for. When I care, I really hear, see or feel what the other tries to convey. The engrossment or attention may only last a few moments and it may or not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and essential in any caring encounter (Noddings 2005).

The desire to be cared for is almost certainly a universal human characteristic. Not everyone wants to be cuddled or fussed over. But everyone wants to be received, to elicit a response that is congruent with an underlying need or desire. Cool and formal people want others to respond to them with respect and a touch of deference. Warm, informal people often appreciate smiles and hugs. Everyone appreciates a person who knows when to hug and when to stand apart. In schools, all children want to be cared for in this sense. They do not want to be treated "like numbers", by recipe, no matter how sweet the recipe may be for some consumers.

When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment or attention is. In order to respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its own contents. We cannot say this fellow needs care and here is a list I have to follow for that. (Noddings 2005, 17.)

When we discuss teaching and teacher-learner relationships in depth, we will see that teachers not only have to create caring relationships in which they are carers, but that they also have a responsibility to help their students develop their capacity to care. Every child at school should experience what it feels like to have someone care about you. A child must learn to live together with other people, to form and maintain positive interpersonal relationships and to care about other people and their thoughts and lives. Receiving and accepting caring and nurture is a precondition for a child's well-balanced growth and development. It is only through having been the object of caring that the child also learns to care about others. (Noddings 2005.)

### Empowerment as a goal of "promoting psychosocial well-being through school education"

The concept of empowerment can be used to describe the objective of a teacher's educational work from the point of view of the pupil, when the instructional and educational work is being examined from the perspective of promoting psychosocial well-being. I am here referring to Juha Siitonen's (1999, 83–86) views on the concept, which he has examined in his dissertation while studying empowerment theories.

The concept of empowerment began to be used in the 1980s as the objective of projects for the promotion of people's well-being, and in the 1990s the concept also became substantially more common in education. (Siitonen 1999.) All the approaches emphasise the aspiration to somehow facilitate the development of a person's own power and sense of responsibility for his own development. This calls for encouragement, activity, participation, the utilisation of one's own abilities and experiencing the power of one's own self. The fundamental purpose of all the tools and methods of empowerment is to make people feel that the best authority is, after all, found within themselves. (Heikkilä-Laakso & Heikkilä 1997, 347.)

The core issue in the concept of empowerment is the sense of inner power. The process of empowerment offers resources,

skills and opportunities to develop the sense of self-control. Rodwell (1996) emphasises that a person's empowerment is seen above all in improved self-esteem and an ability to set goals. It is also evident as a sense of control over one's own life and changing process, in addition to hopefulness in the outlook on the future.

Adams (1991) has considered students' empowerment processes. According to him, students oppose all processes which undermine their own resources. Students respond in their own ways to education which is unequal and which undermines their own competence – among other things by silence, poor levels of academic achievement, guile, lateness and absenteeism. Many familiar school routines reflect this kind of alienation: the teacher speaking, passive learning material, mechanical practices, anonymous and shabby classrooms, and students' exclusion from planning the curriculum, for example. Schooling is too often a negative and fruitless experience for the students. (Adams 1991, 197.) According to Hagquist and Starrin (1997), empowerment can be seen as a relational concept in its meaning of giving power and authority to a person. A feature of empowerment activities is that they presuppose mobilization of persons. This means, taking an example from schools, that active participation is required on the part of the pupils if the school environment in its entirety is to be improved. The objective is to strengthen and develop the pupils' own capabilities, which is one of the ingredients of empowerment.

In his study, Siitonen (1999) arrives at the following definition of the concept of empowerment: "Empowerment is a process which begins within the person himself: the power cannot be surrendered to another person. It is a personal and social process that is not produced or caused by another human being. Empowerment is a process or course of events for which the conditions in the environment (e.g., freedom of choice and a secure atmosphere) may be significant, which is why the realisation of empowerment may be more likely in one environment than in another. An empowered person has found his own resources. He is self-defined and free of external obligation. In the empowerment process, he has not been empowered by someone else, but he has empowered himself." (Siitonen 1999, 93.)

### Concluding comments

The activity culture of a school has a marked impact on how the instruction, education and learning, and the health and well-being of the entire school community are constructed and implemented in practice in everyday schoolwork. Indeed, a school community should be seen more as a whole, in which case the promotion of health and well-being is present in all school activities (Konu & Rimpelä 2000). This begs the question of how school instruction could better accommodate and promote the health and well-being of pupils, and which kinds of school activity culture principles this kind of instruction could be recognised by.

The core of all educational work lies in the ultimate essence of the universe, love. A good teacher is a professional who masters educational content and technical details, but the core of teacherhood will be found in a genuine concern for both pupils and universal truth. A loving teacher "asks" with his or her attitude for growing children to find a meaning in their own lives. The principal idea of love is an I–You relationship that entails a dialogical encounter. The other is therefore not a sum of characteristics but a whole, an identity that is more than the sum of its parts. Hence I do not consider myself—whether as a student or as a teacher—as the sum of my characteristics or performances, but recognise that I am unique, just as everyone else is also unique. This description can also apply to the expression pedagogical love, which is expressed as a presence and as activity that respects and loves the mental uniqueness in ourselves and in others. Truthfulness of thought and empathy in emotions are the roads leading to such pedagogical love. With pedagogical love, we realise the perfection of every person, including ourselves. According to Skinnari (2004), "to learn learning" should widen "to grow growing-up", when we can develop our emotional life and ethical will in a more conscious way as well. This concerns the core of all pedagogies that determines how a human being encounters the phenomena of the world; other people, himself or herself, and life as a whole. One final question is whether, when we are at school, we learn to love or to objectify each other, nature and the entire universe.

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## A review of School Systems and Cultures in the Barents Region

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In the PISA study on academic skills, Finland was on the very top level, Sweden was just above the OECD average, Norway a bit below average and Russia at the lowest level of the countries in the Barents Region (Kupari et al., 2004; OECD, 2004). But research into school satisfaction shows that Finnish pupils are not doing quite so well. Several studies show that Finnish pupils' level of school satisfaction is one of the lowest in Europe. In the 2002 WHO study (Välilä & Danielsson, 2004), Norway was in second place for school satisfaction, Sweden was average, Russia below average and Finland in last place. Pupils in Finland do get very good results even though they do not like going to school, unlike in Norway where the pupils like going to school but do not learn very effectively. When you consider the connection between good academic results and liking for school, this is a rather confusing result (Linnakylä & Malin, 1997)

### School climate and well-being

Some hypotheses can be derived from earlier research on the process that may contribute to the worsening of school children's well-being. Linnakylä and Malin (1997) studied the quality of life at school of 14-year-old children in Finland and suggested that it needs to be examined from various perspectives and at many different levels. Opdenakker and Van Damme (2000) studied the well-being of pupils in a school context using an eight-point questionnaire. Their study indicated that some school characteristics have an effect on both academic achievement and well-being, but the relative influence was higher on achievement than the influence on well-being. Konu and Rimpelä (2002) used the General Subjective Well-being Indicator (GWSI) with 13 items to establish how well-being is divided between the individual and the context. They noticed that there was very little variation in the pupils' well-being between schools. The variation occurred mostly on an individual level. Also according to Karvonen et al. (2005), many school-related factors, such as the teacher-student relationship and academic achievement, were connected to well-being but they did not explain the rise in the health complaints of the pupils. On the other hand, the school atmosphere, contacts with teachers, involvement in class and at school, school regulations and infrastructure were among the best predictors of the well-being of Flemish pupils according to Engels et al. (2004). Karen (2002) found in her study in the

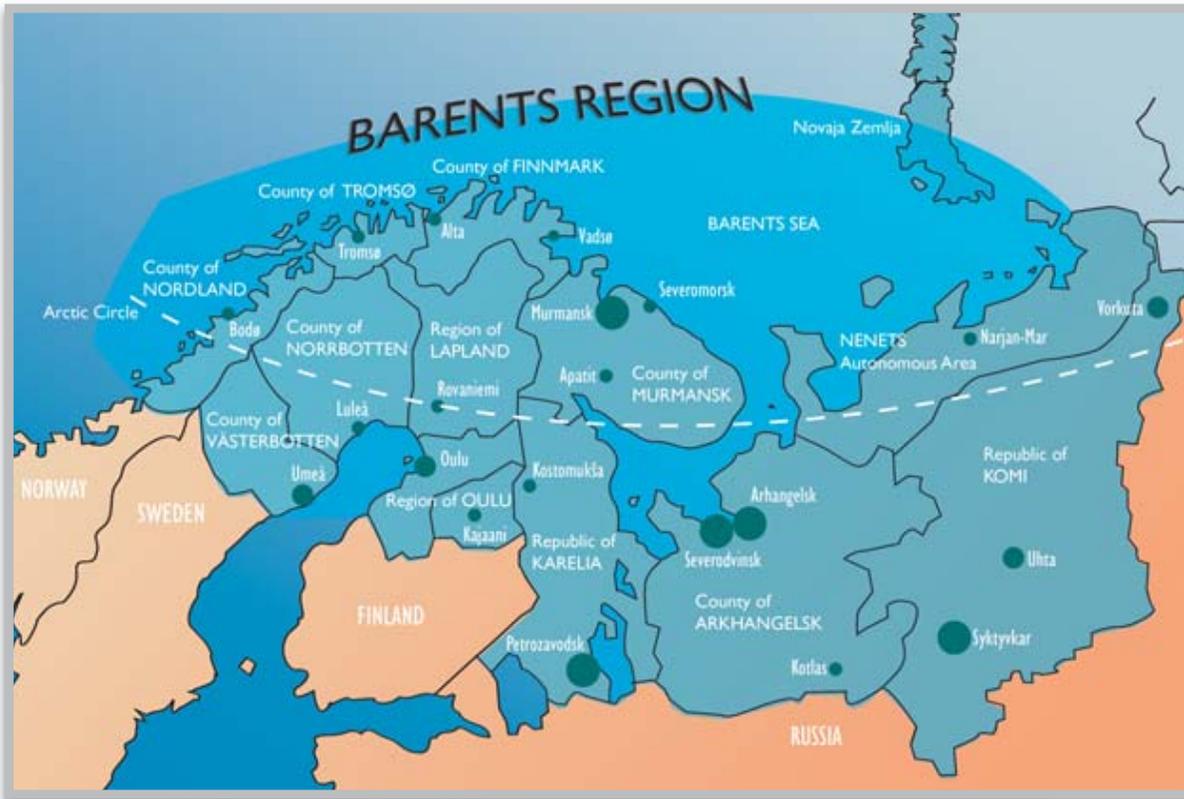
USA that the school climate was the most important single factor affecting the pupils' sense of well-being. In Finland the school climate has been found to be worse than average in the OECD (Välilä, 2002). According to Pulkkinen (2002) this is a sign of problems in the social capital of schools.

Still, in the last ArctiChildren study (Ahonen, 2006) and the last HBSC study (Välilä & Danielson, 2004) general life satisfaction was at its highest among Finnish pupils, with significant differences from the others. According to those studies, Norwegian pupils, especially the boys, were the least satisfied with life, but they still liked school a lot. This brings up interesting questions about the role and purpose of the school systems in the daily lives of the school children, and the different school cultures in the Barents Region. Some preliminary results can be found in the last School, Culture and Well-being publication (Ahonen et al., 2006). This material is based on those results and is intended to highlight some basic issues relating to promotion of the psychosocial well-being of school children in the Barents Region.

### Introduction to the Barents Region

The Barents Region is a name given, by political ambition to establish international cooperation after the fall of the Soviet Union, to the land along the coast of the Barents Sea, from Nordland in Norway to the Kola Peninsula in Russia and beyond all the way to the Ural Mountains and Novaya Zemlya, and south to the Gulf of Bothnia of the Baltic Sea. The region has approximately 5.5 million inhabitants in an area of 1.75 million km<sup>2</sup>, with three-quarters of both belonging to Russia. The area is mainly populated by Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians, but several indigenous peoples and minority groups also live in the region, like Sami in all the four countries and Nenets, Vepsians and Komi in Russia. (Barentsinfo 2007.)

The regional cooperation was formally opened in 1993, initiated by Norway. It includes the administrative regions Norrland, Troms and Finnmark in Norway, Västerbotten and Norrbotten in Sweden, Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia and Kainuu in Finland, and Murmansk Oblast, Komi Republic, Republic of Karelia and Nenets Autonomous Okrug in Russia. (Picture 1) The four countries take turns at chairing the cooperation. (Barentsinfo, 2007.)



Picture 1. Map of the Barents Region

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) operates at government level and the The Regional Council operates at regional level. The purpose of the Barents Cooperation is to strengthen east-west infrastructure and establish people-to-people contacts, and thereby contribute to the economic, cultural and social development of the region. The Barents Cooperation promotes people-to-people contacts and economic development, and creates good conditions for inter-regional exchange in many different fields, like culture, indigenous peoples, youth, education, IT, trade, environment, transportation and health. The Barents Cooperation is regarded as an integral part of creating a stable, democratic and prosperous Europe (Barentsinfo 2007). In this article the aim is to highlight and compare the school systems in the Barents Region. Special attention is paid to the basic education, but the whole educational systems in these four countries are also compared and discussed.

### Schools in the Barents Region - mirrors in the north

Generally the Barents Region is sparsely populated. Nowadays schools are becoming rare institutions in the region, even if the situation is sometimes caricatured a bit. The role of the school differs quite a lot depending on whether the school is located in a small village or in a bigger town. In the small villages the school and teachers provide a lot more than just teaching for the children and their families. The school is usually the centre of all the cultural activities and it has a very important role in motivating and supporting the recreational field of the pupils' everyday lives. In bigger towns the school mainly provides the teaching and is in collaboration with parents on questions of education.

The population in the northern parts of all four countries has been strongly centralising in the last three decades. This has led to different consequences. In Norway there are a re-

markable number of small schools remaining due to the difficult natural conditions and the political agreement that every child must have a right to attend a school close to his/her home. In Finland and Sweden this has led to longer transportation for the schoolchildren. In Russia there are not many people living in so-called remote areas; most of the people living in the Kola Peninsula are centred in towns, which are very tightly built. Only some reindeer herders live in the true wilderness, without even a road connection. The children of those families live in boarding schools, like in Lovozero, throughout a school year.

The indigenous groups have their own impact on the local cultures in the area. According to Barentsinfo (2007) the biggest group is that of the Sami with about 70000 people. The Sámi culture has different representations in different countries and parts of the area. The Nenets (6000 people) and Vepsians (7000 people) have their own impact in northwestern Russia. The numbers of Sami are still rather inexact because no systematic census has been carried out on the Sami populations in Norway and Sweden, and the definition of the Sami also varies according to the legislation in the countries concerned. Sami language and culture are nowadays fairly well represented in the schools of Finland, Sweden and Norway. In Russia this is also a developing issue.

### School system in Finland

Basic education in Finland is provided free of charge for all age groups. Comprehensive school lasts for nine years and is intended for children between 7 and 16 years of age. Within certain limits, pupils are free to choose the comprehensive school of their preference. If it is impossible for a pupil to attend school for medical or other reasons, the municipality of residence is obligated to arrange corresponding instruction in some other form. Special education for pupils with learning disabilities is usually integrated in the comprehensive school. There are also some private schools in Finland. They usually have a religious character or use a special educational approach such as Montessori, or Steiner-pedagogic. Only less than a two per cent (75 schools) of the Finnish schools are private. The private schools accepted by the Ministry of Education also receive their funding from the government.

The compulsory education lasts for nine years, plus a one-year voluntary pre-school class for 6-year-old pupils (Figure 1). After the basic education there are two main possibilities to choose from, the upper secondary school for general education and vocational school, both are planned to last three years. Both upper secondary school choices offer the basic eligibility to continue studies at the university level. In practice,

almost all Finns go to nine-year comprehensive school. More than 99 % of comprehensive schools are run by local municipalities, and drop-out rates before the end of the compulsory education range from 0.2 to 0.3 % (Karvonen et al., 2005, 3). About 92 % of all the pupils that complete basic education continue in the upper secondary education (Finnish National Board of Education, 2006). Day-care for schoolchildren is obligatory for communities to organize for pupils at grades 1-2. The day-care is available both in the mornings and in the afternoons.

The network of comprehensive schools is supposed to cover the entire country. Free transportation is provided for school journeys exceeding five kilometres. The comprehensive school in Finland is legally one unit, but, due to former governance, it is still usually divided into two levels: a lower level (grades 1-6) and an upper level (grades 7-9). The teaching system has differed a lot between these levels, but this is changing and is more flexible nowadays. Traditionally, the teaching at the lower level has been organized by class teachers who are competent to teach all subjects. At the upper level the teaching has been organized by subject teachers, who teach their major subject to all the pupils in the school. Nowadays there are more united comprehensive schools, where all the com-



Figure 1. The school system of Finland (Finnish National Board of Education, 2004)

prehensive education is given in one school building by one group of staff.

The Sami children do not have their own general curriculum in Finland, but they can be taught in their own language or learn their own language as their mother tongue in the comprehensive schools in the Sami area. The Sami culture is also suggested to be part of the teaching. The Sami language can also be studied as the first or second language in the secondary school. The Sami communities get special funding for organizing the Sami teaching in their schools. Sami teachers are not educated in Finland; they are usually Sami who have undertaken regular teacher training at a university.

### School system in Sweden

The Swedish public school system (Figure 2.) is made up of compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Compulsory schooling includes the regular compulsory school, the Sami school, the special school, and programs for pupils with learning disabilities. Non-compulsory schooling includes the preschool class, the upper secondary school and the upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. It also includes municipal adult education, and adult education for adults with learning disabilities. All education throughout the public school system is free. There is usually no charge for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport. (Skolverket, 2005.)

The 9-year compulsory school program is for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 years. Upon the request from the parents, a child may begin school one year earlier, at the age of 6. (Skolverket, 2005). Almost all compulsory school students continue direct to upper secondary school and the majority of these complete their upper secondary education in 3 years. Upper secondary education is divided into 17 national 3-year programmes. All of the programmes offer a broad general education and the basic eligibility to continue studies at the post-secondary level. Alongside the national programmes there are also a number of specially designed and individual study programmes. (Skolverket, 2005.)

Most children attend a municipal school close to their home. However, students and their parents have the right to choose another municipal school or a privately run (independent) school. About 4 % of compulsory school students attend one of the independent schools (in the year 2001). Independent schools are open to everyone and must be approved by the National Agency for Education. The education in independent schools has the same basic objectives as municipal schools, but may have a profile that distinguishes it from the municipal school. For example, schools may have

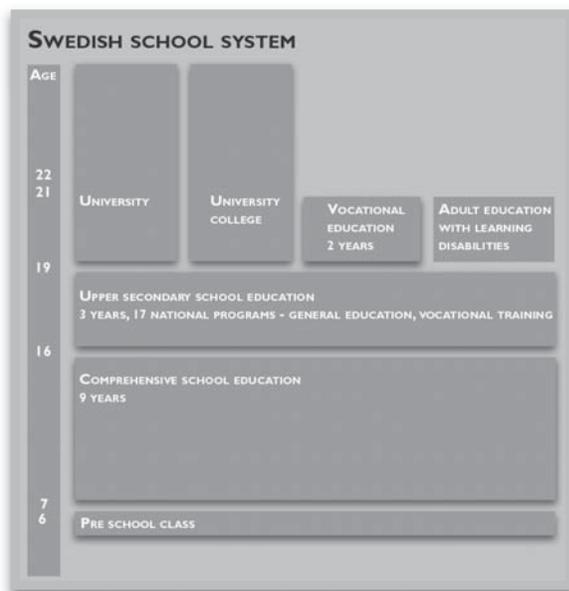


Figure 2. Swedish school system (Skolverket, 2005.)

a particular religious character or use a special educational approach such as Montessori or Waldorf (Steiner-pedagogic). (Skolverket2, 2005.)

Childcare for schoolchildren is for children up to and including the age of 12 years who attend school (preschool class or compulsory school). Municipalities are required to provide childcare for school-aged children whose parents work or study, or for children with a particular need for this form of care. Childcare for schoolchildren is a collective, overall description of activities that occur during the hours of the day when the children are not in school. The care provided can take the form of a leisure-time centre, family day-care or open leisure-time activities. (Skolverket3, 2005.)

Sami children can receive education in a Sami school that covers grades 1-6. This schooling corresponds to the first 6 years of compulsory school. There is a special Sami school board that provides the Sami schooling in the Sami areas. In the Sami school the curriculum is same as in the comprehensive school, plus the Sami language. It is up to the teachers' abilities to approve the Sami pedagogic, culture and the Sami language in their teaching. At grades 7 to 9 the Sami children attend communal comprehensive schools and can continue the language studies as part of their curriculum. There is no education for Sami teachers in Sweden, but the teachers are

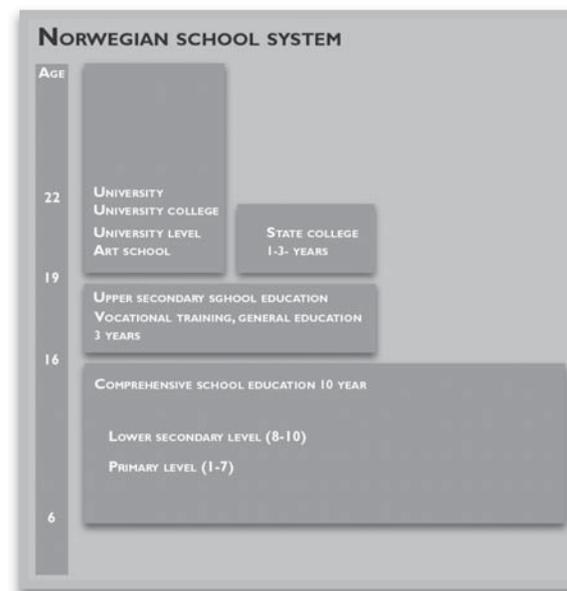


Figure 3. Norwegian school system (Government.no, 2007; Hjulstad-Junttila, Lounela, & CIMO, 2002)

usually Sami themselves and have regular teachers' education.

### School system in Norway

One of the most important priorities of the Norwegian government is to invest in education and knowledge (Government.no, 2007). Education for all is a basic precept of Norwegian educational policy. Wherever they live in the country, all girls and boys must have an equal right to education, regardless of their social and cultural background and possible special needs. All public education in Norway is free up to and including the upper secondary level.

Compulsory schooling in Norway lasts for ten years and children start school at the age of six. The Norwegian general education school system can be divided into three parts: primary school grades 1-7 ("barneskole", age 6-13), lower secondary school grades 8-10 ("ungdomsskole", age 13-16), upper secondary school or high school ("videregående skole", age 16-19). Compulsory education covers the comprehensive school (first ten grades); the upper secondary level is non-compulsory.

Knowledge Promotion is the latest reform in the 10-year compulsory school and in upper secondary education

and training. It introduces certain changes in the substance, structure and organization from the first grade in the 10-year compulsory school to the last grade in the upper secondary education and training. The goal of Knowledge Promotion is to help all pupils to develop fundamental skills that will enable them to actively participate in the society of knowledge. The Norwegian school system is inclusive; there must be room for all. Everyone is to be given the same opportunities to develop their abilities. Knowledge Promotion, with its special emphasis on learning, is meant to help ensure that all pupils receive differentiated education when needed. (Government.no, 2007.)

As a result of Norway's scattered population, forty per cent of primary and lower secondary schools are so small that children of different ages are taught in the same classroom. Primary and lower secondary levels are often combined in the same school. (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2000.) Childcare for schoolchildren is obligatory for communities to organize for the pupils in the first four grades. The day-care is organized both in the mornings and the afternoons.

The culture and traditions of the Sami community are part of the common Norwegian and Nordic culture that both the national curriculum and the special Sami curriculum require all pupils to be acquainted with. In areas defined as Sami districts, and according to specific criteria elsewhere in Norway, this teaching is given in accordance with the special Sami curriculum. For Sami pupils, this teaching is intended to build a sense of security in relation to the pupils' own culture and to develop the Sami language and identity, as well as equipping Sami pupils to take an active part in the community and enabling them to acquire education at all levels. State support is provided for the development of textbooks written in the Sami language. The Sami College has special responsibility for training Sami teachers. The University of Tromsø has responsibility for the Sami language and Sami studies. (Government.no, 2007.)

### School system in Russia

General education in the Russian programmes comprises eleven years of studies. The extension to the total duration occurred at the expense of an earlier school enrolment at the age of 6-7. So students normally finish secondary general education at the age of 17-18. General education comprises three stages corresponding to the levels of educational programmes:

- Primary general education (as a rule, the standard duration is 4 years)
- Basic general education (the standard duration is 5 years)



Figure 4 Russian school system (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, 2007)

- Secondary (complete) general education (the standard duration is 2 years). (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation b, 2007)

Compulsory basic general education in Russia lasts for nine years. Graduates of this level may continue their education at upper secondary school to receive secondary general education. They may also enter vocational school or non-university-level higher education institutions. (Education system in Russia, 2005.) There is no day-care for schoolchildren in the Russian school system, but most of the pupils attend different after-school clubs like music, visual arts and sports. The clubs are provided for all the pupils of the comprehensive school.

The Basic Curriculum provides for disciplines that could be added because of their being specific to the particular region in which the school is located as well as optional disciplines in accordance with the interests of the pupils. In practice, each school designs its own curriculum, basing it upon the Basic Curriculum. At present, the system of general education includes 67,000 educational establishments in which 21 million students are enrolled. Several hundreds of private schools have also been established over the last few years. The official name of general education schools is the Secondary General School. The authorization to grant nationally recognized certificates (certificates of the State format) is linked to success

in the State accreditation procedures. Certificates awarded by non-accredited institutions (of non-State format) do not grant the right to be admitted to higher education institutions. (Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation b, 2007.)

There is no mention of the Sami teaching in the official Russian documents about the general education. This is understandable because there are several other indigenous languages and hundreds of peoples speaking their original languages. The Sami of the Kola Peninsula have settled in the Lovozero district. The majority live in the village of Lovozero. Kildin Sami is still spoken by about 800 people in the Kola Peninsula, Russia. (Scandinavian.com, 2006.) Unfortunately, the support for the ethnic culture has been weak during the Soviet time, but now, with the help of the Nordic countries and the Sami community, the Sami culture is raising its head in Russia as well. The language speakers are still very few, but there is beginning to be some teaching in the Sami language and culture in the schools.

### Comparison of the school systems

According to Raivola (1984, 74), it is not necessary to define the concept of comparison itself. It is only necessary to choose the contemplation viewpoint, *tertium comparationis*. The identification of comparability rests upon establishing a categorical and thematic interrelationship between the chosen subjects aimed at *similarity* (affinity) and *diversity* (discrepancy) (Lauterbach & Mitter, 1998). When comparing the school systems of the four different nations it is rather easy to create the contemplation viewpoint. The similarities and differences in the school systems can be recognized by the organization of the whole educational system, by the length of education and the studied subjects and programmes in the schools. All this is now done only on a descriptive level. In this article the main interest is on comparing the systems of basic education, so the comparison is done based on the elements of that.

When comparing the school subjects and school systems in Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland it can be noticed that there are a lot of similarities (Table 1). In the Nordic countries the school subjects do not differ very much from each other, some differences can still be seen. In Sweden there seems to be more combined school subjects, like geography, history, religion and civics, than in the other countries. Also in Norway there are combined school subjects under the name of social studies. In Finland and Russia there are no combined school subjects at the curriculum level. English is the most common foreign language in all the countries. In the Russian curriculum most of the school subjects are mentioned, which

	Russia	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Length and start of compulsory education	9 years / 6-7 years old	9 years / 7 years old	9 years / 7 years old	10 years / 6 years old
School subjects	Russian literature Russian language Mathematics Algebra and Geometry Physics Chemistry Russian History World History Geography Biology Foreign Languages (English, German, French or Spanish) Physical Education Cooking, Arts and Crafts (girls) Manual Work (boys) Art of Drawing Music Astronomy	Mother tongue and literature Foreign language A (English, German, Russian) Foreign language B (Swedish/Finnish) Mathematics Environmental studies Biology and geography Physics and chemistry Health education Religion/ethics History and social studies Music Visual arts Craft Physical education Home economics Guidance counselling Optional studies	Arts Home economics Physical education and health Music Textiles and Wood- and metalwork Swedish English Mathematics Geography, History, Religion and Civics (combined) Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Technology (combined) Language options Student options	Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education Norwegian Mathematics Social Studies Art and Crafts Science and the Environment English (compulsory from the primary level) Music Home Economics Physical Education Compulsory additional subjects

indicates the hierarchical organization of the school governance. In Finland there are quite precise descriptions of the school subjects, but in Norway and especially in Sweden there seems to be a lot of freedom for the schools to arrange their teaching in their own ways. Table 1 shows the school subjects and some principal characteristics of comparison between the countries.

Table 1. Comparison of school systems and subjects of the comprehensive school in Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland (Education system in Russia, 2005; government.no, 2007; Ministry of education, 2006; Skolverket, 2005)

## Conclusions

The Barents Region is wide and multiethnic, which you can read more about in Eva Carlsdotter Schjetne's article<sup>[1]</sup>. In this project, ArctiChildren II, the participating schools have been located in Finnmark in Norway, Norrbotten in Sweden, Lapland in Finland and Murmansk oblast in Russia. All these areas are closely connected to each other. Lapland, Finnmark and Murmansk have common national borders, and Norrbotten borders Finnmark and Lapland. Similar natural conditions and a long history of cooperation create the basis for the collaborative work between the regions. When working together in the promotion of the psychosocial well-being of school children it is good to know the field, in a literal sense. Similar input may create totally different output based on the cultural differences between schools and families. Learning from others is probably the most fruitful but at the same time demanding way of learning. In this book there are some experiments which will hopefully be useful for making a start.

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<sup>1</sup>See further Eva Carlsdotter Schjetne, Culture, Ethnic Identity and Psychosocial Well-being in the Barents region – A Holistic approach



## Well-Being among Children – Some Perspectives from a Swedish Viewpoint

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Children's health is of great importance for their ongoing growth and development. It is therefore important to increase our knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence children's health. The main areas of interest for the Swedish part of the ArctiChildren project are bullying and stress-related problems, as well as children's experiences of health and well-being, ethical learning and school. In this chapter we will discuss some perspectives on well-being among children from a Swedish viewpoint and we will present some thoughts on how we as adults can aid the process of promoting health together with children.

### Children and health

Health is created and experienced in daily life, and children's meetings with all adults are important for their growth, learning, play and development. Such meetings can promote children's healthy development, but in some cases they can also lead to the opposite. When the World Health Organization (WHO) was established in 1948, two important statements about health were approved. One of these was the well-known definition of health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." According to Wass (1994), this decision has been important since then, because it not only defines health in terms of the occurrence of medically defined problems but also provides a much wider perspective on the view of health. In addition, it offers a goal for human beings to strive for. The other important statement was about the role the WHO thought that governments had in the promotion of health: "Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures." In spite of the time that has passed since the WHO's statements were made, it has been observed in the last 10–20 years that Swedish school children's mental health is not what it ought to be. Most children and young people feel well, but the proportion of young people reporting psychosocial health problems has increased in Sweden (SOU, 2006:77; Öhrling, 2006).

The question of how children experience their health might seem easy to answer, but new problems arise when we try to understand the meaning of the concept of health. When planning to ask children in the compulsory nine-year

school system how they regard their state of health, we had to think carefully about the formulation of the questions. It has proven to be easier for children to understand and answer questions based on how they feel than questions about their health (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2006). As a concept, health is often seen in relation to a number of other concepts such as illness, injury, inability and disability. For this reason, the meaning of the concept of health has often been used to illustrate lack of health or the occurrence of health problems. According to *Nationalencyklopedin* (1998), the Swedish word for health, *hälsa*, stems from Old Swedish, means 'happiness', and is related to the sense of the word *hel* ('whole'). From such a perspective, a healthy life appears to be synonymous with a "happy" or a "good" life, according to Bremberg (SOU 2006,77). From a holistic perspective, the idea of health may be described as people's potential or ability to perform certain actions or realise certain goals. In meetings with children and in dealing with issues concerning children's health, an important question to consider is who should set the goals. But other questions to be considered are about when, or rather at what time or at what age, children's participation in health matters should be initiated. Yet another important question is about what opportunities, rights and support children are given in order for them to formulate goals for their own lives and health themselves. Children are dependent on parents and other adults to get their needs satisfied, which restricts their freedom of action. But as children develop and learn, their autonomy and self-determination also increase. Kellet, Forrest, Dent and Ward (2004) describe how ten-year-old children who are given greater responsibility also grow and develop their own competence.

Throughout people's development, their health is affected by the environment and the culture that surround them in their daily lives. To children, events in life, in their own bodies, in their families and in society mean that life and health constitute a whole. Children and children's health cannot be regarded as an object but as a part of life. Meetings with adults are important to children, because adults can facilitate, challenge and protect children's development and learning.

## Face-to-face meetings

A large number of meetings take place within the framework of schools' activities. Buber (2002) thinks that a human being really exists only in relation to other people, that is to say that, by nature, the world consists of meetings. A question worth elucidating somewhat more thoroughly is, however, what types of meetings take place and whether these meetings benefit a pupil's health and hence also her/his learning. The context and the social conventions are important for the relations that are created. The social aspect is the connection between people that results in common experiences and actions. Even if the community of a social group can lead to personal relations, this does not automatically mean that these personal relationships exist, only the shared existence. The personal sphere risks being superseded by the collective sphere and there is an obvious risk of being regarded as an object. Objectifying other human beings means attacking their possibilities of making choices of their own (Skjervheim, 2002). There is also something beyond the social conventions that may be described as face-to-face meetings. There is an instrumental and objectifying element in social relations that is lacking in face-to-face meetings (Buber, 2002; Lévinas, 1969). According to Buber (ibid), these meetings appear to be a separate category in our existence, a dimension that we are so self-evidently familiar with that we do not see it. The social sphere and face-to-face meetings are thus two different areas in human beings' lives. Taking another human being seriously is the same as being willing to consider her/his views and possibly discuss them. In face-to-face meetings, two people become mutually aware of each other, and each sees the other precisely as the particular Other<sup>[1]</sup>, not as an object but as a partner in a phase of life (Lévinas, 1969). The involvement of both parties is in principle an absolute requirement. A face-to-face meeting can consist of profound relations, but also of momentary encounters, such as when strangers' eyes meet on the bus; it is something that transcends mental and physical states (Buber, 2002).

Lévinas (1969) thinks that face-to-face meetings can both constitute a personal challenge and enable the learning of new knowledge. To Lévinas (ibid), these face-to-face meetings mean welcoming the Other. When I meet another person, it is important that I do not reduce her/him, regarding this person as similar to myself. It must be possible for the Other to be something else than what I myself am. In order for a meeting to be a face-to-face meeting, I must turn to the Other as the kind of person s/he really is, take her/him

seriously and refrain from forcing something of my own or of myself on the Other. There are many challenges in Lévinas's ideas, because they challenge us as human beings to welcome strangers and those who are different from ourselves and also to refrain from trying to alter them. This might not be as easy as it seems to be. In spite of this, Lévinas (1969) points out that there are many opportunities for people to learn from each other in these face-to-face meetings.

Noddings (2002, 283) emphasises that "Education may be thought of as a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding, and appreciation". This means that there are good chances of learning different types of knowledge in meetings where there is a natural connection between life in and outside school. These meetings can affect a person's inner life and feelings.<sup>[2]</sup> Lévinas (1969) thinks that ethics exists as a natural part of every human action and relations, and consequently also in meetings between people. This has ethical consequences for schools. Teaching is, as Campbell (2003, 116) says, "a profoundly moral activity". She also stresses that it is through these relations and meetings at school that pupils learn important values such as honesty, respect and tolerance (Campbell, 2003). The curriculum for the Swedish pre- school and compulsory nine-year school system also emphasises the ethical aspect of schools' mission by stating that children and pupils should be encouraged to develop an ethical attitude to people around them (Ministry of Education, 1994, 1998). Since schools are an important environment for learning and development, we think that it is central to enable face-to-face meetings.

On the one hand the school as an institution has a mission to encourage children to take on the frameworks of knowledge, norms and values that are advocated by society. On the other hand every teacher has an important mission to meet every child in a caring relation. Human meetings have a double nature that is important in how children and teachers meet. By only emphasising the first mission there is a risk of objectifying the children. Von Wright (2000) describes teachers' attitudes to children as punctual or relational. In the punctual perspective, the teacher is only interested in the individual child's inherent qualities and abilities, while the relational attitude is characterised by an understanding that phenomena are at least two-sided. A child must be seen in relation to the context. According to Lévinas (1993), it is not possible to understand oneself through objectifying thinking, which serves to dominate, control and make uniform. We must be aware of the double nature of the relations and live in the field of tension that this involves.

<sup>2</sup> See further Bergmark, U., *Learning for life through meetings with others*, in this publication.

The way children are treated is of great importance for their learning but also for their identity development. The meetings that children experience in the educational situation may affect their identity development both positively and negatively. How then can identity be viewed? And what connections are there between identity and psychosocial health?

## Identity and health

Identity is not merely a matter of our self-image or other people's image of who we are. Our identity is our being in the world, our way of leading our daily lives, and it is the layer of experiences and interpretations we have made through participating in social contexts (Wenger, 1998). Identity is something that is created in a continuous process. It is not an unambiguous concept, and it may be described in many different ways and from several aspects. The word is derived from the Latin *identitas* meaning 'sameness'. This means being the same person from one day and one situation to the next – *I am me* (Stier, 2003). What different types of descriptions of the meaning of identity have in common is its close connection to social relations and the context – the situated nature of identity. A person's identity is constituted socially in relation to other people, groups or phenomena. The contexts may be physical as well as social, cultural and existential. There are different levels of descriptions and points of departure when it comes to understanding identity and its meaning. There are descriptions focusing on the body and self-conception, others that focus on people's biographic narratives, socio-psychological descriptions of groups, and there are descriptions focusing on sub-identities such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, class, lifestyles, etc. (Stier, 2003). In this connection, the individual's identity should also be contrasted with the group identity. There is an antagonistic relationship between the two (Simon, 2004; Goffman, 1963). In the group identity, there is a role expectation that the individual has to relate to, which is a tense relation. In our modern Western society it has become a cultural and ideological ideal to emphasise the individual's identity at the expense of the group identity. At the same time, the group identity is an important motivating driving force when it comes to taking part in organised leisure activities, for example (Simon, 2004). Csikszentmihalyi (2003) describes it as the two pillars of happiness and thinks that being able both to differentiate oneself from others and integrate oneself with others provides the best opportunities for creating a happy and meaningful life.

The process of individualisation gathered momentum with the growth of industrialisation and the new petty bourgeois

class that developed in connection with it (Featherstone, 1995; Bourdieu, 1984). Featherstone (1995) thinks that the construction of lifestyles is central in our society. By promoting an individualistic view where individual self-realisation with concepts such as 'lifestyle' is drawn into commercial advertising, the market both creates needs and claims to satisfy them. The rapid flow of signs and images targeted at desire is constantly creating new needs. The desire is constantly being altered through new images, and presentations and exhibitions are becoming more important than the utility value of a product (Giddens, 1991; Featherstone, 1995). There is great awareness that, among all social groups, we speak through our clothes, homes, leisure interests and lifestyles, not least among children and young people. The view of the body has also changed radically through the consumer culture. The body is a mouldable instrument for pleasure, and it is the individual's own responsibility to form her/his body. The image society is forever reminding us of what we look like and what we should look like. According to Featherstone (ibid), a good constitution is not merely a matter of power and energy, but also of a person's own human value. There is an obvious risk that narcissism will flourish in the consumer culture (Giddens, 1991; Featherstone, 1994; Bauman, 2002). There is a shift from creating good character to creating personality. It is not enough to be able to appear in particular contexts, since it is equally important to demonstrate "a winning image".

Identity is thus a complex concept. For one thing, identity is closely linked to social contexts and their prevailing discourses, but that is not all. Wenger (1998) thinks that identity is about negotiating meaning in a social context. Identity is about a person's own negotiated experience, her/his membership, personal learning history or biographical narrative, where membership is part of several social contexts that all shape her/his identity. Children's participation in different social contexts means that they carry with them different kinds of experiences, which they also carry along to different social contexts, for instance leisure activities and school. The work of building bridges between the social contexts is, according to Wenger (ibid), both an active and a creative process. In this way it is not only our own identities that are negotiated in the context; we always take part in negotiating other people's identities too. There is thus a double relation between identity and social contexts – they shape and are shaped by one another.

For most people and on most occasions, meetings and identity creation may have a positive effect on the development of good psychosocial health. But adapting constantly to new trends, tastes and lifestyles as regards for example clothes, music and leisure interests is often stressful to children and young people – being able to show a winning image and liv-

<sup>1</sup> Using a capital O means that it is others in a definite sense that are referred to. The Other is regarded as a subject, a person with a body. See further Lévinas (1969).

ing up to the constantly changing ideals of the consumer culture. This is manifested not least in schools. These meetings are very difficult for some people, which in turn may have a profound impact on their own identities. Some of these meetings might be called occasions filled with bullying.

## Bullying

### – one of the greatest problems in schools

In spite of conventions and legislation that are supposed to offer pupils a secure learning environment, bullying of pupils is one of the greatest problems in schools. The fact that children can be unacceptably cruel to one another is not just a contemporary phenomenon. Such negative sides of human relations used to be called teasing, peer oppression, etc. In the late 1960's, Heinemann initiated the debate and research on bullying in schools (Heinemann, 1972). He coined the Swedish term for bullying, *mobb[n]ing*, based on *mob* from the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* meaning 'the easily moveable crowd'. It was thus established that bullying is a group phenomenon. In Anglo-Saxon parlance, one of the meanings of *mob* is 'association of criminals', 'mafia', and the behaviour of a group of bullies might perhaps be compared to mafia methods. The consequences for the victim of being exposed to acts of cruelty and harassment may be serious health problems. Heinemann was followed by Olweus (1973), who is now regarded internationally as a guru in the discourse on bullying, and by his contemporary Pikas (1975). Both developed programmes of measures and methods for preventing and taking steps against bullying in schools. Ljungström (1997), Staff (1997), Roland (1996), and *Friends and Tillsammans* ('Together') are further examples of people and organisations that have developed anti-bullying models, programmes and methods.

Everybody who has worked in or had anything to do with a school will have heard about a pupil that has been bullied. About 100,000 pupils in Swedish schools are involved in bullying every day, and this exposure must be regarded as the greatest threat to pupils' health and development. Bullying may consist of pupils being verbally assaulted, harassed or degraded, excluded from the community of their class and classmates, or mentally or physically attacked during their school days. The victims are likely to regard as empty rhetoric the control documents' commitments to the inviolability of human life and schools' obligation to protect every child from being exposed to acts of cruelty and insults. The pupils themselves have ranked protection against violence, acts of cruelty and bullying as the three most important factors that must be secured in schools (Friends, 2006).

There are field reports indicating that pupils have become crueler to one another, a new manifestation of hardening attitudes in schools. For the first time in the history of Swedish schools, a school was closed down on 11 May 2006 due to failure to guarantee the pupils a secure learning environment. In this particular case, it was a small group of children who terrorised others, damaged the school's premises, and sabotaged its teaching.

On the other hand, the upper secondary school at Rinkeby has shown that developments can be influenced. From having been threatened with closure and almost impossible to work in a few years ago, the school has now won both national and international prizes for entrepreneurship, enterprising and knowledge development, and the pupils' working climate is very good. Pupils are now applying for this upper secondary school.

Although Sweden is considered a leading country as regards preventing and taking legal measures against bullying in the compulsory nine-year school system (Forsman, 2006), about 100,000 children are estimated to be involved in bullying on a daily basis, as victims, perpetrators, sometimes in both capacities, and as various categories of sympathisers and helpers. In every class there is at least one pupil who sometimes or often experiences fear of the coming school day. Many children's psychosomatic problems are likely to be related to the working environment of their school<sup>3</sup>. Another aspect found in our human meetings and affecting us negatively as individuals is stress.

## Stress

### – the public health problem of our time

Stress in schools is often on a personal level very tangible, and in a general perspective it constitutes one of today's greatest public health problems. Stress is increasing in society as a whole and in children and young people stress is also on the rise (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). As pointed out initially, there are tendencies indicating that children's psychosocial state of health has deteriorated over time (Clausson, Petersson and Berg, 2003; SOU, 1998, 2000, 2006), and the commission for Swedish Government Official Investigations, recently appointed to investigate children's and young people's stress and mental health, also points to this downward spiral. This commission emphasises that "... there is a clear connection between schools' ability to implement their principal assignment and children's mental health" (SOU 2006, 261). In a report from Barnombudsmannen ('the Children's Ombuds-

<sup>3</sup> See further Forsman, A., *Bullying at School – A threat to Pupils Health, Learning and Development* in this publication.

man') (2002), Swedish children state that bullying, stress and the working environment in schools are the most important things to work with<sup>4</sup>. According to Einarsen et al. (1998), one of the causes of bullying and harassment is the increase in stress in schools, and in the National Agency for Education's report *Attityder till skolan 2000* ('Attitudes towards School, 2000'), stress in schools is described as a growing problem (Skolverket, 2001). School nurses, school psychologists and school welfare officers were interviewed about children's health, and 95% thought that children's observable stress had increased in the last ten years. The rest thought that the stress level had not changed, and none of the interviewees considered that children's stress had decreased at their workplace (Barnombudsmannen, 2001). A Swedish study revealed that the meaning of stress for children aged 10–12 is experienced as an emerged focus on them being caught in life's challenges (Kostenius & Öhring, in press). In this study children's lived experiences of stress were described in the following five themes: being out of time; being less than one can be; being ordered around by others; being in a fleeing, fighting body; and being pushed to excel. A number of stressful situations presented themselves when relating to others (ibid). Children experience well-being in relations where they are being met as a "we" and when trust and respect are the basis for communicating (Kostenius & Öhring, 2006).

## The double nature of silence in connection to well-being

Another important aspect of human communion that can also affect children's well-being is silence. There is always silence in our daily lives and we can never escape it. But the nature of the silence has to be observed – is it good or bad? Or, in other words, is the silence perceived as constructive or destructive? Silence may sometimes be experienced as divinely pleasant and desired, while at other times it may enforced and very unpleasant. These two sides of silence constantly interact, and the boundary between constructive and destructive silence may often be very thin (Alerby & Elidottir, 2003).

We can be forced into silence for various reasons, for example through oppression, ignorance and/or somebody exercising her/his power, which is often the case for example in bullying situations in schools. A person upon whom silence has been forced, for example through oppression or execution of power, may eventually experience that s/he has no

<sup>4</sup> See further Kostenius & Nyström, *Health Promotion with the pupils in the Classroom*, in this publication.

voice and hence cannot be heard. Freire (1972) wrote, among other things, about "the culture of silence", where, after a long period of enforced silence, people came to believe that they had no voice and therefore no control of their situation either. They experienced, so to speak, that being able to have an influence was beyond their control. Losing the opportunity to voice one's thoughts and views may be devastating from several perspectives, as Arendt (1958) pointed out when claiming that it is not bad people's evil but good people's silence that is dangerous.

From a psychosocial perspective, the situation in many of today's schools is not the best, and it has been observed that bullying is one of the greatest problems of schools (Forsman, 2003). To relate Arendt's (1958) argumentation to present-day schools and the bullying problems that often occur there, silence is found to be an important aspect of bullying. Silence is not only an important component of the very act of bullying, where for example ostracism, withholding information, and condescending looks may occur. The silence of other people who observed the bullying but chose not to act is devastating to both the bullied person and the bully. Arendt talks about the danger of good people's silence, of not reacting and making their voices heard. She also claims that if silence is allowed to rule in such situations, evil will be banal and people will stop reflecting on and caring about what is really happening. According to Forsman (2003), bullying treated with silence, that is, when allowed to continue unchallenged for a lengthy period of time, may lead to mental blunting eventually resulting in acceptance. In Arendt's (1958) words, bullying then risks becoming a banality.

In an earlier study, children describe their experiences of lack of time, which in turn leads to a stressful lifestyle, in their opinion (Alerby, 1998). One way of handling stress was, according to children in yet another study (Alerby, 2004) to be in the silent area of the school – the Peace Area. There the children had a place where they could collect their thoughts and reflect on existence in peace and quiet. The fact that a quiet place like the Peace Area can reduce the children's experiences and feelings of stress is naturally important for their experiences of school as a whole and hence also for their learning. Stress has a negative effect on our health, and our ability both to communicate and to achieve is affected when we are exposed to stress (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). Moreover, studies have shown that noise is generally stressful for human beings. A high sound level has a physical effect on us, among other things in the form of high blood pressure and a higher pulse rate as well as an increase in stress hormones (Babisch et al., 2001; Englund, 2000). According to Passhicer-Vermeer and Passhicer (2000), high sound levels will be precisely one of our chief public health problems

in the 21st-century. What in this context we can pause and think about is whether the sound level of schools contributes to stress among those studying and working there. Children themselves clearly underlined the importance of being in silence during the school day – “The Peace Area is my favourite place because it is quiet. It is important precisely because it is quiet” (Alerby, 2004).

### Concluding remarks

As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, children's health and well-being is of great importance for their ongoing growth and development, or in other words; “Health is a breeding ground for development and improvement” (Bergmark & Alerby, in press). Therefore it is important to achieve increased knowledge and understanding of factors influencing children's health and well-being in general, and in schools more specifically. We have illuminated aspects like bullying and stress among children, which are increasing ill health and decreasing children's experiences of well-being (Forsman, 2003, 2006; Kostenius & Öhrling, in press). We suggest that instead of focusing on factors which are problem-orientated, we shift the focus to possibility-orientated experiences and activities. One way to develop a healthy school can be through appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). Instead of problem-solving, appreciative inquiry focuses on positive experiences and what we want more of (ibid). Antonovsky (2005) emphasises the significance of seeing health and positive aspects in our lives, which has a close connection to appreciative inquiry. According to Bergmark and Alerby (2008) appreciative inquiry involves listening to the student, in this case the child, and focusing on the health and positive aspects in school, or as they express it: “It focuses on the discovery of people's gifts and strengths and equality of voice”. Kostenius and Öhrling (2008) suggest that adults keep asking questions and listening with ‘a sensitive ear’ when working with children, to be open to the children's experiences by giving them a voice in the process. Positive question has a tendency to result in positive solutions which lead to positive action (Ghaye, 2005). In the light of these thoughts we would like to end with two questions which might aid the health promotion process: How can we discover a child's gifts and strengths? How can we meet children with openness and listen to them with a ‘sensitive ear’?

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## Growing-up, Psychosocial Well-Being and Social Pedagogy as a New Research Trend in Russia

Andrey Sergeev and Inna Ryzhkova

The first part of the article is based on Andrey Sergeev's considerations "On the way to oneself: Metaphysic thoughts" published in 2004.

Before discussing the process, forms and methods of adults' communication with children, it would seem necessary to reflect on the foundations of the very possibility of such contacts. This is why it is important to consider the problem of differences that exist between the world of a child and that of an adult. We may also come to understand something else in this connection too, namely why we, as adults, tend to remember our childhood with a sense of nostalgia, from time to time reviving memories of what happened when we were small children, with the feeling, or maybe even the understanding, that something is gone forever. Where do the origins of this nostalgia lie? Why do we, all of us, have to face this sense of our own deficiency, as adults, in comparison with our childhood image? And how can we proceed from the understanding that as one grows up, one not only gains a lot, but also loses something important, when we look at ways of building up the process of educating our own children, or other people's children if we have chosen a career in education?

It stands to reason that the differences between the world of a child and that of an adult are innumerable, as are the specific features of a child's psyche that differ from those of an adult's psyche. So, let us consider the difference of attitude and characterise, as far as the limited scope of this text allows, the structures of the child's and the adult's attitudes to the same things, events, phenomena and processes.

By way of introduction, it should be noted that children have no problem at all in ignoring those concerns inherent to adult life that are connected with maintaining their existence as living beings. At the same time, there is, undeniably, a whole range of other concerns with which the child is confronted and under the influence of which their psyche is gradually formed, and, if anything, this range is constantly expanding. Such concerns, that we only too readily brush off as 'childish', are connected with an inner dimension of the child's life, with their 'life world' *Lebenswelt*. These concerns are connected with children's matters such as games and various incidents that occur in the course of playing them, and which continue to be on the child's mind afterwards. In other words, the child's concerns are connected with what unfolds during

the playing process and proceed from what the child sees as connected with themselves or what they regard as their own.

In the context of such concerns, the child is unable to perceive the range of concerns that the adult considers as potentially his or hers and that he/she is prepared to shoulder. It is precisely this willingness to shoulder a growing number of concerns and to expose himself or herself to the circle of being-concerned-with-something that testifies to the fact that we are dealing with an adult rather than with a child. It is in a perspective of permanent concern and exposure to ever new concerns connected with existence that a sense of responsibility is formed in a young human being, a sense of responsibility not only for their own actions and behaviour, but even for their thoughts. Responsibility is something that distinguishes an adult from a child. Responsibility is a frontier – as well as a barrier – to the way that leads from the world of a child to that of an adult, and vice versa.

It should also be noted that, as the adult plunges deeper and deeper into this dimension of concern, they become less and less preoccupied with their very presence in the world, with their *Dasein*. Something alien invades what seems to them to be their own, and nobody else's, world. Once this invasion of what is one's own by what is alien has taken place, the adult has no choice but to regard it as their own, although subconsciously they may have a feeling that they should not do it. It may be a feeling that some kind of substitution has taken place. Is not the reason why we sometimes grow nostalgic for our long forgotten childhood that we have a sense of loss and a feeling that our inner world is being deformed in a way which is independent of ourselves? To some extent, at least, this may be true.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that the process of growing up and the accompanying formation of a young person's psyche, since these processes come to be felt with particular and even exaggerated acuteness due to the lack of previous growing-up experience, deserve the most careful attention. Otherwise, in the process of substituting what is 'alien' for what is one's 'own', i.e. substituting the ever growing stream of the Others' experience, connected with communication with the adult world, for the child's inner experience, the deformation of the psyche would assume pathological forms.

It is equally understandable that the child's experience of preserving the integrity of their inner world is one that an adult, too, can learn something from. This is why one should

look more closely at the child's attitude to concerns. The child seems to disregard those concerns in particular that are directly connected with existence, leaving them entirely to the adult, while thoroughly focusing on their own openness to their world. When the adult has to act as a professional educator who is making a conscious effort to transform the child's world, the adult must be fully aware of the fact that the child is above all concerned with the events of their inner world and not with that space of existence where the adult's authority is displayed, whose demonstration is connected with the elusiveness of what is 'within', caused by its comparison with the experience of other people. By way of digression from the main thread of our argument, let it be noted that where an adult makes a break with the dimension of concern and responsibility, they also make themselves similar to a child and become 'infantile', slipping, as it were, back into childhood.

It has now been made clear that the process of growing up which everyone has to go through is an extremely contradictory one. First of all, we should fully realise that we must grow up, in any case. Secondly, proceeding from the unavoidable nature of this process, we can understand that the substitution of what is 'alien' for what is one's 'own', that we have been discussing, is something inevitable, whether we like it or not. This is why one has to accept the very direction of the individual's development, when their world becomes open to the invasion of the new and the unaccustomed. In the context of education and development, particular importance should be attached to the problem of translating what is alien into what is one's own, whereby the former becomes capable of being 'incorporated' by the latter. This is only effected if and when the 'alien' begins to be perceived as something to do with the 'Other', i.e. as the kind of experience that the child can, in principle, make commensurable with themselves and their world. It is equally understandable that, failing this, the contradictory nature of growing up assumes an antinomic, i.e. irresolvable, form of development.

A common feature of all those going through their period of growing up is their orientation experience, where the events and phenomena of the adult's 'life world' appear to the child as forms that constitute and structure the separate contents of their life. Thereby the inner space of the child's life is structured according to principles other than those underlying the unity of their individual world. In fact, the events of the adult life world become forms that keep together the various contents of their own life under new adult conditions. In this respect, it may be worthwhile to draw the reader's attention to one of these forms that serve to orientate the child, namely to the body that changes in the process of growth and development, when a growing child's encounter with their

own body is something desirable, but also frightening; when it is inevitable, but also problematic.

The disintegration of the psyche's inner unity with which the child is permanently confronted proceeds from their encounters with their body that can behave in unexpected ways simply by changing itself, by increasing in size and becoming 'not their own'. This 'disintegration' is, in fact, connected precisely with the destruction of 'child' contents and the formation of a new constructive bodily position, directly linked to the emergence of an 'adult' body. On the contrary, the adult luckily has a familiar and fundamentally known 'dimensionality' of their body defined by them from the perspective of their own consciousness. The adult's body is their property, capable of bringing them life dividends. Everyone has a body, and everyone, whether an adult or a child, has to come to terms with its manifestations. And the pressure of the body can, of course, always turn out to be something unexpected, both for the 'owner' of the body and for those around them. It is important to emphasise, however, that, unlike the adult, the child does not know the language of their body which begins to behave in the process of its change in a way that the child is not accustomed to. The association of specific bodily movements with specific meanings induces the child to study their body. In this matter of knowledge acquisition, great significance must be attached to the cultural perspective, whose parameters either leave open the possibility for the child to understand their body's changes, or bar them from doing so.

If the cultural environment is based on the levelling of bodily experience or its reduction to negative cultural signs, the body has to achieve a verbal expression in a strange and 'uncultured' way. The signs wherein the body finds its expression cannot be numerous in this case and are perceived as a challenge to culture. Then, breaches begin to appear in the cultural field, breaches in which the body is trying to survive: in these apertures of passions and effects, cultural meanings may degenerate into their anti-cultural counterparts. And if the body fails to find ways for a 'normal' and 'culturally' acceptable manifestation, it will manifest itself in an affective way, e.g. through crying, fighting or an excessive display of feelings. Such a spontaneous 'excess' is, of course, incapable of communicating bodily experience, since it is entirely closed within itself. However, if the child has the possibility, given by culture, of studying the language of the body, and not only that of an actor on stage, an athlete in competition or a model on the catwalk, but also the language of the changes of their own body, their growing up will be swift and productive. In this case, the child's body does not become a problem for them; on the contrary, it is understood as a dimension in the realisation of the 'event' of their growing up.

Focusing more specifically on the child's experience of growing up by highlighting the orientation towards their changing, i.e. maturing, body, one has every reason to turn to the phenomenon of touching, or tactile contact. Every adult knows that the child is in great need of tactile contact. The child would particularly enjoy touching, physically, the various elements of adult life: this aim is achieved by physically touching the adult's body. The child yearns for touching wants to be carried 'in the adult's arms' and wants to get a hug or a pat from the adult. The process of growing up is connected precisely with the ability to touch things not physically, not 'with one's body', but with one's sight and hearing, one's sense of taste and smell, when one develops, as one's leading and determining ways of contact, those that serve as substitutes for the tactile reactions to the world and that are, in relation to them, their artificial supplements. Growing up turns out to be an art and a technical skill that the human being uses to overcome their somatic dependence.

It should also be mentioned, however, that the adolescent approaching adulthood finds touching to be something increasingly problematic, as they see the transformation of their spectrum of sensations and reach beyond the confines of compulsive tactility. In fact, they can barely tolerate it, often perceiving it almost as an act of violence if someone should touch their body. Under certain circumstances, it becomes increasingly difficult to pat such a child approaching adulthood on the head or to touch their body.

But it is also true that a young adult, as well as older adults, too, may develop a growing nostalgia for touch; and this nostalgia is twofold. On the one hand, it can manifest itself as an adult's desire to pat an adolescent, even if the latter does not want it, which may sometimes lead to a psychological conflict with one's child who is approaching adulthood. On the other hand, the adult has a wish to be touched themselves, a desire which is so strong that sometimes it may bring them to the point of fainting. It would seem reasonable to suppose that the importance of the erotic dimension in modern life is directly connected with the adult's need to be touched and the impossibility of finding 'culturally' acceptable forms for that. The exceptionally varied sexual palette of modern culture and the 'eroticisation' of people's feelings are a result of the domination of those senses that are, in evolutionary terms, of relatively recent origin, i.e. those of smell, taste, sight and hearing, over the sense of touch. This is a historical response to the adults' 'culturally' determined loss of their natural connection with their body which is so easily achieved through the sense of touch.

It should also be mentioned that the child's love is based on their touching the object of their desires and is constituted by such touching. Every adult capable of interaction with the

depths of their inner world would probably remember and, from time to time, willingly recall those occasions at the time they were in love that were connected with touching the 'object' of their love. But the dominant tendencies of adult life are connected not with 'platonic love', which is based on either touching in the direct 'bodily' sense or touching with one's glance some part of the body of the person that the child has fallen in love with, but rather with sexual love, connected with an articulation of such touching and its transformation into the technical rhythms of one's living body. Thus, passion achieves self-realisation in an instrumental dimension of one's attitude to one's body connected with its purely technical expression through a definite cultural form.

The process of growing up would become more easily comprehensible if we were to compare children's and adults' attitudes to the spontaneous manifestations of their own behaviour, as well as their attitudes to the procedures of controlling one's own actions.

It should be noted, in particular, that the child clings in every possible way to accidental and inadvertent actions, and even in their efforts to explain their motivation to the adult, they would normally insist that they were just that – something that happened inadvertently, that was not caused to happen by them, but that occurred independently of their wishes. The child's words "I did it by accident" may sound like an apology to the adult, but they express no such thing. The adult is only too ready to take a suspicious view of all things 'accidental', because they are sure that they know the answer beforehand. They know it, because, in their view, nothing occurs of its own accord, everything that happens must be analysable, controllable and calculable. Anything that may happen should, in the adult's view, admit the possibility of forecasts and projections. In this respect, the adult tries to rely not on an event itself, but on their consciousness of it, when, thanks to consciousness, whatever has happened becomes incorporated into the adult's life as one of its aspects.

In an effort to connect themselves with what is unexpected and lacks motivation, the child tries to orientate themselves towards the idea that anything can happen. The adult, on the other hand, would try to act everywhere as a subject, i.e. one who is the basis or foundation of their own actions, believing that they are acting on the territory that is their property. Giving everything the form of an object, they may, in principle, ignore the spontaneous dimension of life. Speaking more generally, the process of growing up which is connected with the acquisition of theoretical thinking is linked in particular to the domination of the idea that the subject has of themselves as a being not directly affected by spontaneity, whereas the child resorts to the form of 'happening-by-accident' as a useful means to draw others' attention to the spontaneous

It is very significant that the child would not put up with boredom which the adult, however reluctantly, would accept: the adult would accept it for the simple reason that it is the reverse side of normative behaviour that proceeds from the acceptance of concern and responsibility as something to be taken for granted. It is true, of course, that the adult, too, would be irritated at boredom. And in this case, just like the child, the adult needs spontaneous actions of their tongue and their body. It is on this basis that the 'underground' dimensions of the adult's cultural experience are formed that come to create the marginal areas of culture. The spontaneity of speech is expressed through the refusal to follow standard usage and through the use of loose language, the spontaneity of the body is expressed through dissipation and loose living. To put it another way, the adult is driven to sensual variety by their own inner uniformity, connected with the intention of their consciousness to control, calculate and analyse everything that happens to a human being. The child finds it easier to overcome boredom, since the arbitrariness of their actions is not limited so severely or so thoroughly as is that of the adult's actions. Many spontaneous forms of activity acceptable for a child are taboo or something discreditable in the adult world. This is true of both the spontaneity of the body and that of speech. A sense of devastation that may overwhelm the mind of an adult testifies to the fact that they are not at all completely free to determine the contents of their life as their 'own'. When certain contents of an adult's life defy incorporation into the integral experience of their consciousness as its elements, the psyche begins to suffer excessive tension leading to psychosis or neurosis. For this reason, the adult's consciousness is in need of a rational environment outside it, however far-fetched the rules that underlie its existence might be.

It should be noted that different cultures solve the problem of the clash between the child and adult types of consciousness in different ways. Some cultures that are unable to solve it in principle and that are constantly preoccupied with their 'lack of time' are orientated towards a rapid growing-up process and advise the child to cease to be one as soon as possible. In archaic cultures, the child's consciousness was not only recognised as a certain stage in the adult's development which had to be left behind, but was also essentially rehabilitated in its own right. On the contrary, a civilised attitude to life is connected precisely with the establishment of a ban on the very possibility of a spontaneous display of feelings that express themselves outside any norms or regulations.

In this context, civilisation reveals itself as a sophisticated technique for relieving people of their moods. In those societies that have gone through the process of civilisation, people are taught not only to ignore their moods, but also to get rid

of them. If someone happens to be in a particular mood and does not try to resist that when in public, they will find that their behaviour is strongly disapproved of by other people. One might even say that happening to be in a mood in a way that is connected with one's further integration into this state is perceived not as an action, but rather as a form of inactivity. The adult's activity is supposed to be connected with blocking their moods and resisting them.

It is highly significant that the child cannot hide or conceal their moods. And they would not like to be taught to do it. On the contrary, they quite easily abandon themselves to their mood and stay in it. 'Falling' into a mood is not infrequent in the life of a person growing old, either, when one has overcome the adult, or civilised, period of one's life and starts 'slipping back' into childhood. While an adult behaving in accordance with their moods is seen as either 'abnormal' or 'God's fool', with respect to children and old people such behaviour is regarded as acceptable.

A depressed mood ousted to the periphery of one's psyche is often a characteristic feature of the life of someone who has been 'refined' by civilisation and has therefore grown up. We would also like to point out that, if some specific mood becomes taboo, it is not only an indication that such a mood is simply not there, but also that such moods are not welcome here and now. The very business-like readiness to give up certain moods may serve as a sign of a deep-rooted orientation of the adult world towards such moods. Then this business-like readiness may be understood as the reverse side of a suppressed or unwelcome mood. Thinking on the basis of one's mood, i.e. adhering to one's real mood, is something that only those who are not afraid of being at ease with themselves in full view of the public can afford to do. This is why sacrificing our moods may be seen as the price we pay for growing up.

By orientating themselves towards the adult world, the child is learning to distinguish between their feelings and to separate the various contents of their life. It is thanks to the emergence of the adult forms that, in the child's inner life, a differentiation of the integrity of their 'life world' is effected, as well as the separation of the specific sensations from one another. It is this process that serves as a basis for a programme of developing the child's finer feelings (*their education sentimentale*) by an adult, which is connected with correcting some elements of the child's emotional life and even programming some of its contents. The child receives an experience supplementary to their own perception of life, something that, in principle, cannot come from within themselves. Such an experience, which is a form of combining the child's sensations, may be regarded as an experience of enlarging their feelings, i.e. an experience of consciousness. It is precisely through structuring the emotional composition of their life

that a young and growing person acquires an experience of understanding themselves. A further formalisation of thinking, and the translation of various contents into new components that it effects, serve to single out precisely those grains of the child's 'own' experience that make the most crucial contribution to their integration into adult life.

### General description of the Russian module "social pedagogy as a support for school education"

Inna Ryzhkova

The module developed by the Russian researchers within the framework of the ArctiChildren II project is primarily orientated towards interpreting the above-mentioned problems in terms of social pedagogy. The stability and coherence of its specific approaches which are largely due to its focus on the process of a child's socialisation and the integration of a child's inner world into adult life and the Russian social environment, reflect at the same time in their own way the changes and transformations that Russia's traditional education system has undergone. Social pedagogy that has emerged from within the traditional theory and practice of education is a significant component of the current educational environment in the North and may be treated as support of school teaching.

The factor of socialisation which may be interpreted either as a process involving the use of a whole range of instruments, methods and techniques to do with the individual's integration into the social environment, or as a process whereby the individual acquires the operational skills and behaviour and activity scenarios offered by society, is one of the key factors responsible for the success or otherwise of a child's efforts to achieve self-realisation in society. The phenomenon of socialisation has long been attracting the attention of researchers specialising in a number of fields which share a common interest in subjects such as social environment and social life. It was on this basis that a variety of conceptual approaches arose and were elaborated in such branches of knowledge as philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, theory of literature and history of art. However, for all the significance they have in their own right, any theoretical concept belonging to one of the abovementioned fields is only put to a real test if and when it is applied to the process of a child's socialisation into the world of adults. In this respect, the social aspect of educational strategies, and that of education systems created on their basis, can be considered independently, i.e.

within its own limits. In fact, this is exactly what manifests itself in efforts to create social pedagogy. For this reason, it might be a good idea to dwell on the specific features of the concept of social pedagogy currently predominant in Russia, before we turn to the circumstances attending the realisation of the Russian part of the ArctiChildren II project in the Murmansk region.

### Social pedagogy - development of a new direction in Russian education

The history of social pedagogy in Russia officially began in 1991 when the Russian system of higher education created a new professional specialisation, called 'social pedagogy' and gave an official description of its qualification requirements. From that moment on, social pedagogy "began to develop concurrently in all of its qualitative conditions: as an area of practical (social) activity, as an academic subject and as a branch of research" (Lipsky, 2004).

It should be mentioned, however, that scholars specialising in the history of social pedagogy maintain that its evolution can be traced back to the earliest philosophical texts and the classic treatises on education written at different times in a number of different countries. Thus, in her study of the origins of social pedagogy as a specific research field, Prof. M. A. Galaguzova (2000) identifies five periods in its development, setting the chronological boundaries of the first period in the following way: from the earliest periods up to the 17th century. A basis for the new educational approach in this period was created by the idea that education was a social phenomenon, which resulted in spontaneous education giving way to a conscious educational effort. It was during this period that the practice of education became a subject for reflection, and a theory of education, including social pedagogy, was gradually elaborated (Galaguzova, 2000).

The term 'social pedagogy' was introduced in 1844 by K. Mager, but it was due to the work of A. Diesterweg that it gained universal acceptance in the theory of education. In K. Mager's view, the proper aim of social pedagogy was to focus on the social aspect of education. Elaborating on this view, A. Diesterweg called for special emphasis to be placed on the pedagogical aspect of social development and its tasks, creating a perspective in which social pedagogy was interpreted as pedagogical support under certain social conditions. Thus, the German educational tradition produced two approaches to the definition of social pedagogy and, accordingly, two trends in its development (Galaguzova, 2000).

A representative of the first trend, or approach, P. Natorp, one of the 'founding fathers' of the Marburg School of philosophy, gave several definitions of social pedagogy in the context of his interpretation of Plato and Kant. Let us quote one of the most significant among them:

*“What we bring under this heading [that of social pedagogy] is, therefore, not a separable part of the theory of education which is parallel, say, to individual pedagogy, but rather a concrete way of setting the task of general pedagogy, and that of pedagogy of will, in particular. A purely individual perspective on education is an abstraction which has, of course, some limited value of its own, but which must ultimately be overcome.”* (Natorp 1911, 77.)

“The social conditions of education and the educational conditions of social life” were defined by Natorp as a thematic line which predetermined the entire development of social pedagogy. The object of social pedagogy, according to Natorp, is the problem of integrating society's educational resources with a view to raising people's cultural standards.

The most outstanding representative of the second approach, or trend, K. Mollenhauer, wrote that social pedagogy had to deal “not with the transfer or communication of cultural contents, but, exclusively, with the solution of problems that arise in the process of the younger generation's development and its integration into society” (Galaguzova 2000, 65). It was his belief that, since individual social institutions were incapable of solving pressing social problems such as, say, that of child homelessness, it was necessary to create a third “educational environment”, that of state support schemes.

Even today, there is no such thing as a universally accepted definition of social pedagogy. Let us quote a number of widely influential definitions recently given by Russian scholars. In the opinion of Semenov (1986), social pedagogy is a discipline that studies the educational influences of the social milieu: “Social pedagogy, or ‘milieu pedagogy’, is a discipline that integrates the achievements gained by researchers in the contiguous fields of study and realises them in the social practice of education” (Semenov 1986, 16). Y.V. Vasilkova defines social pedagogy in the following way:

*“Social pedagogy considers both the theoretical and the applied aspects of the education process and the sociology of the personality. It studies deviations or conformity in human behaviour caused by the influences of the social environment, or what has come to be known as the socialisation of the individual.”* (Vasilkova 2001, 15.)

A.I. Arnoldov gives the following definition:

*“Social pedagogy can be defined as a natural component of general pedagogy and, at the same time, as an independent research field*

*within the human sciences, as a modern branch of the latter which is concerned with the education and upbringing of a human being seen as a social subject, as well as with his or her defence from social aggression.”* (Arnoldov 1999, 11)

Treating education as part of socialisation and social education as one of the five types of education, alongside family, religious, corrective and dissocial education, A.V. Mudrik proposes his own definition of social pedagogy and its object:

*“Social pedagogy is a branch of pedagogy that studies social education in the context of socialisation, i.e. the education of all the age groups and social categories of people, both in the institutions specifically set up for that purpose and in those which do not have education as their main function (e. g. factories, army units, etc.)”* (Mudrik 2000, 186.)

It is natural that in different countries one finds different approaches to the definition of social pedagogy's status as an academic discipline, to the understanding of its object and field of study, as well as of its main aims. The terminology employed in social pedagogy, the essence of its key notions and categories are given different definitions in different cultures, depending on a variety of different cultural and historical traditions and on the differences in the level of social development. However, the essence of this research field itself is largely determined by those common elements that inevitably make themselves felt as one turns to the social and pedagogical problems facing different countries: at a certain stage of its development, every society has to face the problems of interaction between society and the individual, the problems connected with the education and upbringing of the younger generation, the problems of children belonging to high-risk groups, and other social challenges.

Social pedagogy came into being in response to society's needs and serves, in a way, as an “answer” to them. An analysis of the leading conceptions of social pedagogy seems to substantiate the claim that social pedagogy provides serious foundations for further development in a variety of cultural environments. I.A. Lipsky has identified the following groups of reasons to explain why social pedagogy can be expected to develop further on a firm objective basis:

*“Reasons to do with the history of pedagogy (knowledge accumulated at the earlier stages of social and political development); sociopolitical reasons (society's needs and demands); academic and practical reasons (the varied experience of sociopedagogical activities on the part of individuals and social institutions); theoretical reasons (the sum total of knowledge of a varying degree of systematisation that can be elevated to the level of theoretical knowledge).”* (Lipsky 2004, 14.)

It should be emphasised that social pedagogy has objective grounds for development not only as a theory, but also in the form of practice. As a branch of practical activity, social pedagogy aims at “harmonising the interaction (or relationships) between the individual and society” (Bocharova, 1999). The contradiction between the individual and personality-based organisation of human activity and the social form in which the individual achieves self-realisation is a serious problem.

*“The social organisation of human activity can both contribute to and serve as an obstacle to the development of an individual personality, which results either in the loss of its capacity for social functioning or in a deformation of social development.”* (Lipsky 2004, 117.)

Proceeding from the aim of social pedagogy as an area of practical activity, Lipsky reflects on the “strategies of social pedagogy”, treating them as “the major avenues for harmonising the interaction between the individual and society”, on “the social development of the human personality itself” which is connected with “the involvement of individuals in society at different stages of their lifetime's activity”, on “the pedagogisation of the social environment”, on “the pedagogisation of society as an effective utilisation of its pedagogical potential”, on “the management of the day-to-day interaction between the individual and society based on the principles of harmonisation in accordance with the aim of socio-pedagogical activity” (Lipsky, 2004). In accordance with the interpretation given above, the following branches of social pedagogy as an area of practical activity have been identified: *social environment pedagogy; social work pedagogy; social development pedagogy.*

The general aim of social pedagogy has naturally caused it to penetrate the areas of education, health care, social welfare, youth movements, culture and the arts. Lipsky remarks that “the field of activity of modern social pedagogy” has reached enormous proportions and is determined by the key structural elements of both state and society. Penetrating as it does all the abovementioned spheres, social pedagogy uses a whole range of methods and techniques to exercise a beneficial influence on the institutions of education, public health, social welfare, industry, culture, science and the arts. Social pedagogy also influences the family which I.A. Lipsky even takes to be a “priority” field of activity for social pedagogy.

Even a cursory look at the present-day situation of social pedagogy in Russian society reveals that this branch of knowledge is in the process of development. This accounts for a number of contradictions within the discipline, as well as for some problematic interpretations that are particularly prone to coming to the fore when efforts are made to formulate unequivocal definitions. The overall ‘inner’ orientation of social

pedagogy towards focusing on the process of socialisation in the context of education and upbringing, once forced into the confines of a specific definition, may very well fail to be adequately expressed. It is important, however, to appreciate the very inevitability of this approach in social pedagogy, as well as its realisation in the framework of practical activity: even if we have to confront theoretical failures, the practice of social pedagogy, at least, is something undeniably real. This is particularly important for the realisation of various projects, of which ArctiChildren is a good example.

## Psychosocial well-being as a complex challenge

The socio-pedagogical dimension that highlights areas of concern in the present educational environment as a whole focuses on the problem of people's psychosocial well-being as one of the most acute problems whose potential solution would require a consideration of a group of social, economic, cultural and psychological factors. The notion of ‘psychosocial well-being’ which is, in some ways, almost synonymous with the notions of ‘mental health’ and ‘social health’ is connected with an orientation of a child's psyche towards upholding the model of a healthy way of life. The World Health Organisation interprets health as a state of medical, psychological and social well-being, which would seem to suggest that an integrated study of the problem of health is required not only from a purely medical point of view, but also in the framework of a socio-pedagogical approach.

At the present stage of social development, it is evident that social and psychological factors have an impact on public health. The levels of analysis of psychosocial well-being can be as follows:

- physical and mental health of the population and of the target contingent of children;
- specific characteristics of their way of life (learning routines, ways of organising leisure activities, incidence of drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, attitudes to sex and plans for family life, the sphere of social contacts);
- children's psychological peculiarities, including their system of values, interests and purposes;
- their families' levels of psychosocial well-being, including peculiarities of family structure, the specific features of their parents' lifestyles, “social scenarios” and overall social and professional orientations;

- communication with peers, adults and teachers; their reference groups; specific styles of communication in the classroom;
- peculiar features of the social and economic situation in their city or town, etc.;
- political strategies and specific policies implemented by the local administrative and public bodies with respect to well-being;
- impact of global social and natural factors on people's well-being (geopolitical problems, environmental safety and social security).

### Family as the basic element of the Russian module

The basic element of the Russian module "Social Pedagogy as a Support for School Education" is the family which is defined as a structure reflecting the whole range of social, psychological and pedagogical problems of modern society. The family is prioritised by social pedagogy as an area of its activity.

We rely in this respect on what we see as a "keynote" definition given by A.V. Mudrik in his "Social Pedagogy":

*"The family is a small group based on marriage or consanguinity whose members are connected with each other due to their common living conditions, reciprocal moral responsibility and mutual help; the family elaborates a range of norms, sanctions and behaviour patterns that regulate the relations between the spouses, between children and parents and between children."* (Mudrik 2000, 91.)

In A.V. Mudrik's terms, the family is a crucial socialisation factor. He has identified four groups of factors, or conditions, of socialisation:

- megafactors (the Universe, the planet Earth, the world – they affect, in one way or another, the socialisation of any human being through other groups of factors);
- macrofactors (the country, its state and society, and the ethnic group in question, which affect the socialisation of anyone living in a particular country);
- mesofactors (socialisation conditions affecting large groups of people identified according to the type of locality or settlement where they live [their region, town or city, etc.], or according to the type of media audiences they belong to [radio listeners, television viewers, etc.], or according to their subcultures);

- microfactors (the home and the family, neighbourhoods, peer groups, educational institutions, various social, governmental, religious and private organisations or counter-cultural groups, the immediate social surroundings) (Mudrik 2000).

At the same time, the family is seen as a crucial socialisation institution for the younger generation which performs the following socialising functions:

- creating conditions for physical and emotional development;
- influencing the formation of the child's gender identity;
- influencing the child's intellectual development;
- creating conditions for the acquisition of social norms;
- shaping the individual's system of values;
- creating conditions for the individual's social development.

The socialisation process in the family is determined by its [the family's] objective characteristics (its size and composition, educational level, social status, prosperity, etc.), its value orientations (pro-social, asocial or antisocial), its lifestyle and relations between the family members (Mudrik, 2000).

The family is generally believed to be the most significant of the social groups in which the formation of a child's personality takes place: the family exercises a profound influence on the child's physical, psychological and social development. It is in the family that social experience is acquired and the country's cultural and historical traditions are passed on to the younger generation, which ensures a culturally adequate development of the child's personality.

In the existing variety of family typologies (psychological, pedagogical, sociological), one should single out, in the perspective of the problems under discussion, an integrated typology which identifies four categories of family differing from each other in terms of their social adaptation level ranging from high through medium and low to extremely low: successful families, high-risk families, underprivileged families, asocial families (Galaguzova 2000). While 'successful' families are generally good at performing their functions, the other three categories are in need of social and pedagogical support.

High-risk families (single-parent families or those on low incomes) are characterised by the presence of factors negative for social adaptation and by deviations from the norms. Underprivileged families have lower than average adaptation capacity, which accounts for the problems they experience in the process of upbringing. Asocial families are in need of far-reaching changes due to a variety of social problems connected with the parents' immoral behaviour, inadequate housing

and living conditions, neglected children, etc. The problems reflecting deformations in families' development and general activity transcend territorial frontiers and naturally require sociopedagogical assistance and specialist support.

### Conclusion

As a branch of knowledge which is still in the process of formation and which aims at an integrated approach, social pedagogy exercises an influence on socio-pedagogical practice, bringing to light its problems, identifying major trends in its development and generally raising the level of its theoretical validity. Social pedagogy is now entering a qualitatively new stage in its development, a stage which makes it necessary to acquire new socio-pedagogical knowledge and to implement the existing socio-pedagogical methods and techniques more actively in practice. The numerous models created in the framework of social pedagogy are currently in need of transformation and of wider practical application in specific socio-pedagogical conditions.

Reflecting on possible future prospects, I would like to say the following. Psychosocial well-being as the joint research interest of four countries has many aspects and dimensions relevant to its realisation. In addition to its established interpretations that have already produced some practical results in research, it seems possible, as well, to consider the specific stages of a child's mental activity involving visual and auditory images which are inevitably integrated not only into the activity of an individual personality, but also into the fabric of society and into its language, i.e. into certain series of a culture's visual and auditory images together with their characteristic vibrant rhythms. With relevant contributions by researchers specialising in other fields, such as philosophers, philologists, historians, psychologists and psychiatrists, and with adequate attention being given to the Sami component of the project in the framework of comparative studies of the Finnish, Russian, Swedish and Norwegian educational and pedagogical systems, the ArctiChildren II project provides enough room for new research objectives to be set and achieved.

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## Social Competence and Coping Successfully

Ole Martin Johansen

This article aims to discuss the meanings that form part of the concept of social competence, the challenges faced by schools and the organisational requirements for social competence training. It will also include a discussion of the key challenges that are likely to be faced by schools when they implement formally established and ready-made programmes for social competence work.

The central concern of the ArctiChildren II project is the psychosocial situation and well-being of children and adolescents, with a particular focus on the possibilities and mandates of schools to address this issue in a preventive and solution-orientated manner. The tendency that children spend ever more time at school invests schools with an increased responsibility for creating favourable conditions for the child's learning situation as a whole. In the last revision of the core curriculum for Norwegian primary schools, the development of ethical, social and cultural competence was established as a compulsory subject, on a level with core subjects such as languages, mathematics and sciences (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). Clearly, this had the effect of highlighting the school sector's social mandate and its function as an arena for social learning. There is an obvious ideological intention behind the curriculum's focus on the capacity for solidarity, cooperation and assuming responsibility as crucial phases in a pupil's individual development. Its general section establishes that "Pupils who are insufficiently stimulated at home and in their neighbourhoods must be given the possibility to mature in a learning environment where they learn to take responsibility for each other's development. Becoming involved in shaping a social community will lead to personal growth, especially because it involves cooperation between people on different levels or with different predispositions and capacities (KUF, 1996, L97, 41).

There are also solid research-based arguments that underline the importance of social competence work. In recent years, scholarly literature and several research reports have established that social skills are decisive for the individual development of pupils. It can well be argued that social competence functions to protect individuals as it improves their ability to establish positive social relations (Schneider, B. H. 1993; Ogden, 95). It is also beneficial for their school work. The findings of the ArctiChildren project also indicate that good school performance is frequently connected to a child's

well-being, which is, in turn, in most cases a result of social competence (Johansen, 2006). Carolyn Webster-Stratton (2005) points out that social competence can also prevent aggressive behaviour at school. Thus, social competence may operate as a "vaccine" against psychosocial problems, enabling pupils to deal with frustration and adversity (Elias et al., 1994), functioning as a crucial benefit to their well-being and development.

### What is social competence?

In scholarly texts, the concept has had several different definitions (Ogden, 2002). Ogden (ibid) points out that while some of them are excessively broad, making it difficult to discern the types of behaviour that would not be included in them, some are narrow to the extent that they are only able to incorporate a tiny spectrum of human behaviour and therefore lose explanatory force. It also has to be kept in mind that social competence is always culturally and contextually determined, which means that types of behaviour that are appropriate in one social setting will not necessarily be so in another. In today's society, this issue may be most in evidence in multicultural environments. Ogden's definition states that

*"Social competence is characterised by fairly stable features in the areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes which make it possible to develop and maintain social relations. It gives individuals realistic notions of their own competence, and the capacity to acquire social acceptance or close personal friendships"* (Ogden 2002, 196).

This definition includes the objectives described in the Læringsplakaten (the "Learning Placard" of the L06, 2006), and is included in the knowledge and skills which various authors have seen as essential to socially competent children. Children who possess a sufficient degree of social competence will be successfully adapted to their environment, but without being servile, conformist or submissive. They are proficient in understanding social situations, group norms and social rules, which also makes them skilful at adapting a flexible, appropriate mode of behaviour, while acting on their own independent initiative (Ogden, 2002).

As a result, such children are more likely than others to be regarded in a positive light by other children, are more easily accepted and will be able to contribute to the development of their social environment and help solve problems. Ogden (ibid) emphasises that socially competent children know how to assert their own rights and points of view in a positive way, without offending others. Because they are more careful and skilled in the way they communicate, it is easier for them to establish contact, and they are capable of articulating their reasons for disagreeing at the same time as they propose alternative solutions (ibid). Another of the benefits of social competence is that children will have more faith in their own competence, a crucial asset when encountering adversity or stressful situations. Since socially skilled children also experience being sought after in their environment they are more likely to have their social position confirmed in new contexts (Ogden, 1995). It is then likely that the overall strengthening of social competence will also help prevent problems such as criminality, violence, discrimination and other forms of problematic behaviour. Socially competent children will possess a range of functional and adequate coping strategies that will enable them to be flexible in relation to others.

It should clearly be acknowledged, however, that the reverse of this ideal vision of social competence is often the case. Many children have a difficult relationship with their school environment, experiencing one setback after another, and many leave school with a shattered self-image, sometimes in bitterness. An educational society as a whole, with the school system at its centre, will constitute an opportunity for many children while marginalising some. A full explanation of this would be very complex, but we have good reason to assume that some of the problems experienced by pupils are the result of deficiencies in social competence. In this respect, the key challenge for schools is to acquire insight, charting and analysing the situation of their pupils in order to work out appropriate plans and strategies to address the problems. While some schools will find it natural to link up with existing projects on social competence issues, others will prefer to make their own plans. As I will discuss further on, there may be pros and cons attached to both of these approaches.

### The extent of social competence problems

In a Swedish sociometric study, pupils were to select which among the other pupils they would want to be with at school. 18% of the pupils were not selected by any of their peers (Sundell & Colbiörnson, 1999), and were thus doomed to isolation and loneliness, since nobody else wanted to spend

time with them. In a similar Norwegian study, 13% of 14-year-olds were never selected when pupils were asked about who they spent time with in the classroom, and 16% were omitted when they were asked about who they wanted to be with in breaks (Ogden, 1995). On closer scrutiny it emerged that those who were never selected displayed a significantly poorer degree of social competence than those who were (ibid.). This made it possible to conclude that around 18% of the pupils did not have friends, or experienced difficulties in getting other children to be with them at school. In view of contemporary knowledge about the likely consequences of deficiencies in social skills, the rewards for addressing such problems in a preventive way may be great. While the prime gain would be the successful personal development of individuals, there would also be possible benefits in a macro perspective, as such efforts may help reduce criminality, violence and drug abuse.

### Possible reasons for social competence deficiencies

The development of social skills should be understood in terms of the interplay between an individual and his or her context, the most important elements of which are the child's family, school or pre-primary school, fellow pupils and the local environment. All these settings, however, also hold potential risk factors that may cause inadequate development of social skills, functioning as sources of anti-social behaviour. On the individual level, an ADHD diagnosis, or associated behavioural patterns, may constitute one such factor as it may cause the child to be rejected by children of the same age, or the local environment as a whole. Elliot and Gresham (2002) have explained individual deficiencies in social skills, regardless of their underlying causes, with a lack of knowledge. They have observed, firstly, that children who are not familiar with, say, rules in children's games, or are not clear on when it is appropriate to use certain skills, risk being excluded from play, becoming spectators instead of active participants. Secondly, pupils who fail in these contexts are not allowed the same degree of practice and feedback in situations in which they would be able to test their social skills. Thirdly, such children are more likely to misinterpret the social signals from others, in cases when a correct interpretation would have helped them become included in a collective activity. Elliot and Gresham (ibid) also address the issue of disturbing behaviour, when a child's impulsivity, conflictive disposition, anguish and low self-esteem make other children refuse to be with the child.

### Compensatory behavior

All children have social needs; they need to be in contact with others and are almost always in settings where they have to relate to other individuals. In cases when they lack adequate social skills they may have experiences which make them infer that certain forms of behaviour will give them "rewards." For example, displaying anger, a demanding attitude, threats, etc. may give a child the impression that such negative behaviour is likely to get it what it wants. This type of behaviour can be established as one that competes with more socially acceptable behaviour, because it appears to give the individual rewards.

We may also explain this type of behaviour from the perspective of skills involved in coping successfully. As part of his research, Michael Ungar (2000), a Canadian scholar, carried out interviews with adolescents with problematic and anti-social behaviour. It was apparent that they knew that their behaviour was wrong and that it created problems for themselves and others, but they nevertheless felt that it gave them a sense of successful control of their environment. This may suggest that such behaviour gave them a sense of control over their own lives, and that it helped them cope with their situation in terms of their own particular circumstances. Thus, negative behaviour functions as the individual's "solution" to the problem of the relationships with its social surroundings, while the knowledge that such behaviour may create problems for others is of secondary importance.

### The school environment as a factor for socialisation

Schools have always been an important factor in the socialisation of children. As early as the 1960's, Philip W. Jackson (1968) described the existence of a "hidden curriculum", suggesting that pupils learned attitudes and forms of behaviour that were implicit in the activities and core values of the school establishment. This latent function was, Jackson argued, transmitted in the teacher's behaviour inside the classroom, where it often unconsciously defined relationships of power, the hierarchy of taking turns, collaborative relationships between pupils, and not least gender relationships; that became evident in the way that teachers treat girls and boys differently. A closely related notion is the "school code" described by the Swedish pedagogical theorist Gerhard Arfwedson (1984), who showed how the intrinsic culture of the educational establishment was modified by external and internal influences,

and that such changes were subsequently established as unwritten rules in the school community.

The concept of the "school code" is ideal for describing such phenomena, and can be defined as a set of rules which efficiently control teachers' behaviour. The class as a learning arena was also in the foreground in Otto L. Fuglestad's research (1993), which showed that the social learning of students to a great extent happens in the classroom. While, formally, pupils have little responsibility for each other, Fuglestad observed that informal pupil groups in the classroom greatly influence the relationships among pupils, and between pupils and teachers, shaping norms for collaboration and loyal behaviour. Such informal groupings can both foment and counteract the development of the class environment (Fuglestad, 1993).

The research of Erling Roland (1995) goes even further in this respect, proposing that a form of group which he prefers to call "the pupils' collective" can be formed within the class, comparable, in his view, to the influential collective groups of workers within a company. The members of such a pupils' collective share a set of rules and norms which function as "social traffic regulations", based on a common language and a common range of symbols, and they become increasingly dependent on each other as the collective develops. Roland's notion about the function of this collective in the class is that "The pupils' collective is thus in an intermediary position between the pedagogical system and the pupil. The demands in terms of knowledge, behaviour, skills and values can not be directed towards the pupil. These have to be approved by the collective. The collective will thus function to cushion the impact of the educational system on pupils, thus impeding its unrestrained influence on individuals" (Roland, 1995). One of Roland's key ideas is that "that which concerns human beings the most is other human beings" (ibid.). In this view, the pupil's collective should be seen as a crucial factor in the socialisation of fellow pupils. The central challenge, I would argue, is to enable the adult environment and the pupils to work together to achieve social competence.

### Working on social competence in schools

Work on social competence among children has become an important part of school activities, the question is no longer when, but how this work is to be done. Many schools rely on well established routines, but need to evaluate and revise their plans and strategies in order to make further progress. Experiences from ArctiChildren I in Finnmark showed that different schools and local authorities had sharply differing starting points for the future work on these issues. One important

circumstance for the eventual outcome is whether local actors are willing and able to take the time they need to formulate plans and strategies. There are, however, two principal ways of dealing with this. One alternative is to implement already established programmes for social competence work, another is to let schools make their own plans, for themselves or their established programmes for social competence work, another is to let schools make their own plans, for themselves or their local district. Both possibilities may have advantages and disadvantages, and I will discuss a few consequences of each choice below.

### Programmes for social competence work

There are a number of programmes for social competence building whose target groups are schools and teachers. Some focus on preventive work, while others provide guidance for interventions in the case of persistent problems or crisis situations. Most of them, however, emphasise the five dimensions that Gresham et al. have proposed as crucial to social competence work (Elliot & Gresham, 2002):

- Co-operation
- Assertion
- Responsibility
- Empathy
- Self-control

These words together make up the acronym C A R E S, which is certainly in tune with the programme's focus on social competence.

One of the best known programmes, frequently used in Scandinavia, is Dan Olweus' anti-bullying method (Olweus, 1999), the main part of which recommends ways of dealing with bullying at different school levels. It has been widely implemented, and frequently evaluated with positive results. Its main disadvantage, however, is that users need quite extensive preparation, and may have to rely on assistance and advisory services when following it up.

In Norway, Kari Lamer (2002) has designed the programme "You, me and us too" in order to promote social competence among children in pre-primary school. It consists of a theoretical text and a manual which should make users independent of specialised preparation. A further advantage is that this programme is very flexible and can be adapted in very different local conditions. An evaluation of Lamer's programme is under way, but no results are available at this point. The programme, however, has been recommended by [www.forebygging.no](http://www.forebygging.no) (18.12.07), an internet base which provides knowledge about drug abuse prevention and health work.

The "Second Step" programme, published in the U.S.A by the Committee for Children (1989), has been translated and published in Norwegian as "Steg for steg", by Nasjonalforeningen for folkehelsen (the Norwegian National Health Association). It consists of an educational package with equipment for work on pro-social actions and social competence from pre-primary school to the 7th compulsory year. Its main advantages are that it requires no previous knowledge and that it is to be used for a limited time period only. While "Second Step" is currently being evaluated in Norway, American assessments have already shown promising results.

Carolyn Webster-Stratton addresses both the treatment and prevention of problematic child behaviour in her book *How to Promote Children's Social and Emotional Competence* (2005). Her pedagogical programme focuses on children between 3 and 8 years of age. A certification course is needed before using it. The web page of its Norwegian rights holders claims that significantly improved social skills were in evidence among the children who had taken part in the programme. ([Deutroligearene.no](http://Deutroligearene.no) 2007).

While only a few of all the available programmes have been mentioned here, plenty of research is currently being undertaken in Norway on the effects and results of such programmes. So far, incoming results indicate that their success to a large extent depends on support by the whole school environment. It also appears important that the programme that has been selected is suitable for the issues that a school wishes to address, and that its implementation is carried through as planned, without significant alterations; if not, the measures may, in the best of cases, have no consequences (Sørli, 2000). Some existing reports, however, lay great emphasis on planning and implementation as crucial conditions for obtaining the desired effect. The phase of implementation, it has been suggested, may even be more important than the selection of which programme to use (Lindberg, 2007). For schools that are planning to use measures of this kind, it is vital to make thorough preparations and be aware that the quality of the implementation may be decisive for the outcome.

### Schools making their own plans

If this alternative is chosen, comprehensive planning is essential. While the existence of study plans for different subjects such as the native language, mathematics etc. is taken for granted, becoming the object of discussion and recurrent revision, this is not always the case for social competence work. Firstly, whether schools have elaborated their own independent social competence plans at all is an open question.

Secondly, it remains unclear whether and how such plans are followed up, a fact which is probably due to a widespread reluctance to prioritise social competence training, and perhaps to some extent also to a lack of competence among school employees. Reports from ArctiChildren I in Sweden showed that even when schools had decided to use the Olweus programme it had little influence on their plans on how to implement it (Forsman, 2006).

In a purely strategic sense, it is imperative that schools formulate a comprehensive plan of action. Also, plans and measures need to be anchored within the school as an organisation and be defined as a collective concern, relevant to the school community as a whole. Measures will have a weaker effect if the problems they address are thought of as merely individual concerns, aimed at particular students and teachers (Backe-Hansen, 2007).

In a thematic sense, plans can be designed to include content such as the one described by C-A-R-E-S. In terms of organisation, the plan can be implemented as a particular teaching project, with special classes set aside for the purpose, but it is equally possible to integrate social competence training in other subjects and disciplines. The most formidable challenge, I would argue, is to make the concern with social competence shape all subjects and activities, even the school culture as a whole. Thus, the subject should be incorporated in the school's general statement of purpose and its plans, in formulations that are both clear and binding for all participants. It may well be that breaks between classes, the school playground and other arenas are as important for the development of social competence as the classroom. Such comprehensive planning, however, does not exclude the possibility of bringing up the issue as a teaching subject.

While the format of this article will not allow us to dwell in much detail on how social competence training is to be planned in the school framework, it should be mentioned that positive effects have been obtained under certain conditions. The first one is that clear demands are put on pupils, the second one that there is a collective enforcement of rules, and the third that pro-social behaviour is encouraged. Unambiguous and caring leadership has also proved important to social competence building (Backe-Hansen, 2007). In this way, pupils can build up their social skills by forms of practical cooperation with the teachers and other students, which aim at building up experience of exerting self-control and exercising responsibility, practising different modes of communication and taking an active part in shaping one's own environment. It is in the nature of things that such competences are also extremely relevant outside the school setting.

This article has chiefly been concerned with preventive measures. Schools also need plans for handling more pressing

and critical situations, but this issue falls outside the scope of this article.

### Cooperation with parents

It is important to develop well-functioning cooperation with parents, grounded in openness and information, which makes it possible for parents to participate in school activities. This fact has been clearly exemplified at a school in Finnmark, where a project to facilitate physical activities was to be implemented (described in this book in the article by Anne Stokke and Rita Jonassen). Before the project was set in motion, the parents were invited to a meeting in which the entire plan was described. The project's aims were stated, along with the expectations the school had in terms of the parents' contribution. Among other things, it was made very clear that the school needed them to help with practical work. This meeting was to be important for how the project was later carried through, as it helped win parents over and encouraged them to get more engaged in their children's daily activities. This example demonstrates the strategy of the school/home cooperation of getting parents involved at an early stage. This goes well beyond the traditional teacher-parent meetings and requires more from the teacher's planning and competence. In return, it provides a base for a well-functioning cooperation with parents.

We have good reason to believe that such openness can be equally important for the implementation of social competence training. The school needs to make its attitudes and values very clear in relation to children and parents. This will also help clarify whether parents have notions of socially competent behaviour that differ from those held by the school. It is crucial for the school's collaboration with parents that it is aware, and respectful, of their attitudes and ideas, while making its own standpoints very clear.

### Evidence-based measures

At present, extensive research and meta-research (research on research) is being carried out into the effect of different programmes for social competence training. Its aim is to document the degree to which, and under what circumstances, programmes are successful, and whether their goals are realistic. Even before this research yields more unified conclusions, however, there is still plenty that can be done to increase the probability of success. The social competence plans should be evidence-based, which means that they are

based on a series of arguments as to why they will work according to the intentions. In concrete terms, this means that a plan needs a solid theoretical foundation and a content whose internal logic will increase the likelihood of attaining its goal. For example, it is probable that encouraging helpfulness among pupils, or making them practise how to adopt the perspectives of others, will increase their social competence. Such a plan will also need to be viable, and contain realistic aims. This will strengthen its validity. Last but not least, it is necessary to make plans for how the outcome of the measures that have been implemented shall be evaluated, in order to form a well-grounded assessment of their effects.

### Coping successfully

While this is not the place for a comprehensive definition of everything that this idea implies, it is nonetheless very important to stress the central importance of experiencing one's attempts and intentions having a successful outcome. Social skills are at least as important as skills in mathematics, playing an instrument or downhill skiing. It makes individuals feel positive about their own capacities and experiences. Carol S. Dweck (1999) has applied the notion of "entity theory" to articulate the sense that one's talents and aptitudes are permanent phenomena. Conversely, the experience of failure in spite of great effort may seem to confirm that one's talents or aptitudes are lacking. In such a state of mind, making an effort may be experienced pessimistically, making it preferable to fail because of a lack of effort than because of a lack of talent. Thus, individuals who expect failure are likely either to reduce their efforts or refrain from trying at all. Thus, individuals who expect failure are likely either to reduce their efforts or refrain from trying at all.

This underlines the importance of creating favourable conditions for experiences of successful coping in all the pedagogical activities involving children. At the same time, children should be generously provided with challenges that may expose them to the right combination of experiences of failure and success, which may inspire them to develop their skills further. As I have argued above, such challenges would also include issues of social competence.

### A few conclusions

The definition of social competence given above makes it clear that social skills are important for establishing personal relationships, setting realistic expectations for oneself and attaining social acceptance. Accordingly, social competence is an important element in the individual's development. Schools are becoming increasingly important in the work on building pupils' social competence. Pupils spend more time at school, and some belong to high-risk social environments and display a greater need to learn to deal with new social contexts.

A school's work on the subject of social competence should be grounded in a survey of its own needs, which enables it to make a choice about whether to participate in established programmes or to make its own plans. Since both options have advantages and disadvantages, the school's own priorities should be decisive. Regardless of further ways of approaching the issue, there are arguably some factors that can be decisive for the outcome of the work. These include, among other things, the implementation of plans that are well-founded and tried out, a close working relationship with parents, and the school being able to provide pupils with experience of coping successfully with their environment.

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## Health Promotion *with* the Children in the Classroom

Catrine Kostenius & Lena Nyström

In our modern society the compulsory nine-year school system has a highly central role for the education and socialisation of children. In the control documents and guidelines we have to follow, there are a large number of norms and objectives aiming at providing guidance for the school staff but also at ensuring equal education irrespective of where people live in the country. In the guidelines for school health care, the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare states, “The assignment of school health care, as defined in the Education Act, is to maintain and improve the pupils’ mental and physical health and promote sound habits of life” (2004, p. 7). The document states several times that the activities should promote health. The Swedish term used, *hälsöfrämjande*, is a direct translation of the English expression “health promotion”, a concept coined by Marc Lalonde, Canada’s Minister for Health and Social Affairs in the mid-1980s. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, which he introduced, aims, among other things, at building on what is healthy by seeing health from a holistic perspective in a positive sense. It is also important to maintain health by increasing each individual’s control of her/his own health while at the same time being jointly responsible for public health (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006).

Promotion and prevention are often mentioned in health work (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). Promotion is a matter of building on what is good and hence promoting health. Health promotion includes empowerment, that is, that each individual should participate in activities affecting health. Prevention focuses on a problem or on something unhealthy and involves stopping this, as in the expression “*nip something in the bud*”. Prevention is based on knowledge of what causes ill-health and tries to decrease the risk of falling ill. The two may be seen as either side of the same coin, and neither is better or worse than the other. They complement each other in the health work. Depending on the situation, one working method may function better than the other. In the work we (both authors) did in the classroom, both promotion and prevention were necessary, although health promotion was the main thread, that is, building on what is good and promoting health in this way. On the following pages there are various different examples of activities based on promotion and prevention.

In the Swedish curriculum under the heading “*The fundamental values and mission of schools*”, we can read that all activities in schools should “be organised in accordance with funda-

mental democratic values and that everybody working in a school should promote respect for every human being’s own value” (Lpo 94, p. 3). It says further, “Care for the individual human being’s well-being and development should characterise the activities” (Lpo 94, p. 3) and, “health and lifestyle issues should also be attended to” (Lpo 94, p. 6). These may seem to be self-evident formulations, but the question is what the situation is like in all the classrooms of the country. Work with democratic values is done through a democratic attitude towards the pupils or is democracy something that they read about in the book on social studies during a theme assignment? Is time and scope available for discussing and reflecting on individual human beings’ well-being and development? How do schools supervise pupils in health and lifestyle issues in a practical and sustainable way? The formulations in the control documents state the objectives of the activities, but how to reach them and what means to use are up to each municipality, school and individual teacher, depending, among other things, on the pupils’ abilities and needs.

According to the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare, it is “extremely important to maintain and improve activities that will satisfy children’s and young people’s needs” (2004, p. 7). Children’s needs can be evaluated by adults with the children’s own good in mind, but a more complete picture of their needs requires opportunities for them to express their experiences and thoughts. The adult perspective, albeit valuable, is not the same as the child’s subjective perspective (Rasmusson, 1994). The challenge is not merely to assume a perspective in order to allow the children to speak, but also to actually use their experiences and expressed needs. According to Halldén (2003), the child perspective focuses on working for what is good for children without any need to receive any contributions from them. The children’s perspective, on the other hand, presupposes that the children themselves make contributions so that their culture can be captured. Control documents and guidelines are written for children by adults and assume at best a child perspective. In our view this is important for what is good for children at societal and organisational levels, but in order to proceed from words to action, it is important that the children’s perspective be included in the process. Halldén (2003) suggests that children’s lived experience be linked to societal structures in order to understand children better. This may be compared to health promotion in

the classroom, where the classroom and the school constitute the societal structure in which children's views are heard.

Each group consisting of children is just as unique as its smallest component, the child. During the time a teacher spends in a group of children, there are extraordinary opportunities to influence both the group's and the individual child's development in many different areas. We have used activities to improve group dynamics generally and at the same time give space to individual children in the group, which are presented in this chapter. By creating an atmosphere of community and security in the school environment, the children's willingness and desire to learn will be stimulated, and the individual pupil's and the group's well-being will be essential parts of the schoolday. We have to be well aware of and actively pay attention to and develop our attitude to the children, since this is completely decisive for the way we treat them in different situations. A person's attitude is reflected in her/his daily contact with other people, in this case children. An attitude may be described as a positive, negative or mixed reaction to a person, an object or an idea. Our attitude affects our thoughts or feelings, and in the long term our behaviour as well (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). If we think well of a person, our behaviour will reflect this in friendly actions, just as negative thoughts will have the opposite effect (Pollack, 2001).

#### Teachers should:

- base their activities on each individual's needs, abilities, experiences and ideas;
- strengthen the pupils' willingness to learn and each pupil's trust in her/his ability (Lpo 94, p. 12).

Our mission cannot be misinterpreted; we are to assume the children's perspective (see Halldén's definition of children's perspective on previous page) on our activities, that is, focus on what is aimed at satisfying the child's needs and work for what is good for the child in all situations. This may seem to be a fairly natural and self-evident attitude in activities with and for children, but the question is whether schools have succeeded in fulfilling this ambition.

## Health promotion with children – a framework

“With all due respect to teacher education, but it's when I meet the children in the classroom that the real education starts.” These words were uttered by a student teacher after some weeks of trainee work. This is true for all of us, whether we are teachers, school nurses, health instructors or have some other occupational role where we have to put theories into practical actions. However well prepared we might be, theoretically speaking, things will be completely different when we have to transfer our knowledge from education to practical activities. Every day in the classroom is an examination, and those who will receive a share of and assess our capacity are our clients, the children and parents. They have the right to make great demands both on our ability to teach the different subjects and on the way in which we tackle our assignment in and outside the classroom. “Giving a lecture” is not difficult, whereas “stimulating the children's desire and willingness to learn” is quite another thing. Likewise, “providing information about good habits of life” is not very difficult. The challenge lies in “stimulating the children to participate in what concerns their own health and well-being”.

The number of objectives to attain in the Swedish syllabi for the fifth and ninth grades respectively may easily cause learning stress in both teachers and pupils. The compulsory school system (primary and lower secondary school) has nine years, or 6,665 hours in which to impart education so that the pupils will attain the 749 objectives defined by the Government (Krokmark, 2006). There is a great risk that due to feeling stressed teachers will choose teaching methods that reward quickly learned factual knowledge, which can then be examined in terms of right or wrong. Teaching that is instead aimed at a learning process that may take a longer time, but where facts are placed in contexts and where the pupils can exchange knowledge and experiences through different forms of cooperation, often turns out to give better and more lasting results as regards both knowledge and social and emotional effects, through training in cooperation, talks and discussions among the pupils and together with the teacher in the classroom.

*“Knowledge is not an unambiguous concept. Knowledge is manifested in different forms – as facts, understanding, proficiency and familiarity – which presuppose and interact with one another. The work of schools must be aimed at providing scope for different forms of knowledge and for creating learning in which these forms are balanced and become a whole” (Lpo 94, p. 6).*

Time is a concept that is often used in discussions of education. Just as in society outside school, the discussions are usu-



“The children are presenting the geography of Europe through dramatization”

ally about lack of time, that is, about wanting to do more than what we really do. For the staff working in school health care, time may be a stress factor. The commitments and the existing recommendations from the Swedish Board for Health and Welfare (2004) take time, for example “an important ambition in the work of school health care is to develop and achieve good working conditions with a number of actors around the school's pupils” (p. 24). “It is important that school health care, in health talks and contacts, widen its interest in the pupil's situation...” (p. 26) and “it is important that the school health care collaborate actively in the health educational work at school...” (p. 28). These are big issues that take time and it is necessary to make priorities. How is cooperation among different actors prioritised for the good of the pupils? How is meeting with each individual child prioritised? Is it nursing, prevention or promotion that fills the working week?

But let us pause for a moment and think about how to deal with and utilise the time at our disposal at school in a good and sustainable way. What is required of us at school in order for the children really to feel “I want to and am willing to learn”, “I have great trust in my ability”, “I feel that the adults in school cares about my well-being” and “I know what is needed in order for me to feel well in life”? How can we who work with children at school, through our attitude and our time planning, take part in affecting our



“Play and a sense of community are important for children's development and well-being”

working environment so that the children will experience participation, trust and well-being during their schooldays? There is of course not just one answer to this question. All groups of children are different, and every adult at school therefore has to use knowledge as well as inventiveness, intuition and sensitivity in order to succeed. The time we spend on social and emotional issues in and outside the classroom is a good and absolutely vital investment in the learning and development of the individual pupil as well as of the group.

## Health promotion with children

There are many different ways of creating preconditions for a good classroom and learning environment, and some of the most important components in creating them can, in our view, be based on the meaning of the concepts of health promotion and the children's perspective. Together they form the fundamental values of health promotion work and may be compared to pieces that, when combined, give a total picture of health promotion with children. For the sake of simplicity the pieces are numbered, but they have no ranking in real life. The interplay between them makes the puzzle a whole entity (figure 1). We also wish to add that these pieces are only four in number and that there are naturally more pieces that

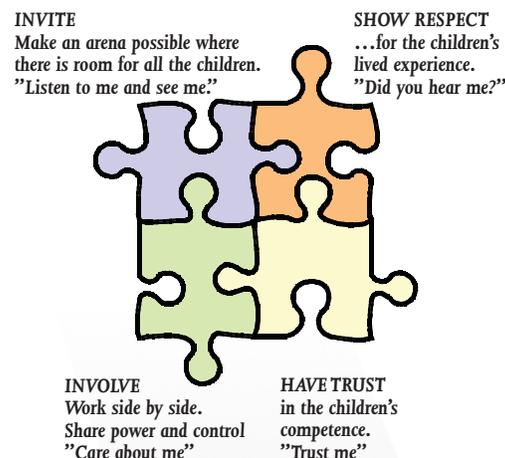


Figure 1: A framework for Health promotion with the pupils in the classroom

enrich health work with children. While taking in the text we have written about the puzzle, you can think about what pieces you would like to add and why.

**Piece 1 – invite.** The first piece is about inviting children to collaborate and making an arena possible where all the children's voices are respected. Even if the children are invited as participants in the health promotion activities, these may be predetermined and controlled by the adults, which means the individual will not be able to exert any influence. This might be called health promotion for children. On the other hand, health promotion with children presupposes that the children participate in the whole process and not merely in health promotion activities. Compare this to the concepts of child perspective and children's perspective on page 2. Openness is needed in order to be able to see and hear another human being (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2008). If I already have ready-made answers, I am not open to other people's ways of thinking and experiencing.

**Piece 2 – respect.** A recent study focusing on schoolchildren's lived experience of health and ill health showed that close relationships were of great importance for their well-being (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2006). Furthermore, the children's experiences showed that when they were treated

as a "we", their well-being was positively affected. What can it mean then to be met in relationships as a "we"? The second piece is about respect and is based on the question "Did you hear me?". In a good conversation, the individual's ability to listen actively is of central importance. In the classroom, active listening is absolutely decisive for people's ability and willingness to respect each other (child-child, adult-child, child-adult). Listening actively has a component of feedback where the person listened to gets confirmation that the other person heard what s/he said. Öhrling (2006) calls this way of communicating listening with "a sensitive ear", which in itself can contribute to greater well-being. Listening and being listened to contribute to developing the ego, and in an atmosphere where people respect one another's stories, they not only pay attention but also meet the child half-way, thus increasing their mutual understanding.

**Piece 3 – involve.** It is not by chance that participation and co-determination are on the agenda in schools. Being allowed to participate and influence things that concern them is good for pupils' health (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2006). Booth et al. (1991, 31) think that "power can be healthy", that is, power to influence can be a positive health factor in itself. Working side by side and sharing power and control are a challenge. By allowing the classroom work to be governed by a democratic attitude with successively increasing responsibility and, from the child's point of view, a "care about me" attitude, the participation can contribute to a learning environment in which health and well-being can grow.

**Piece 4 – have trust.** For a partnership to work, trust in the other person's competence is important. The request "trust me" is an expression that might indicate such trust. Security and trust are intimately linked. According to Mayerhoff (1971), trust is an important aspect of caring about others. Being able to really trust somebody presupposes a "letting go aspect", that is, an aspect of abandoning control and relying on the other person being there.

### Health promotion with the pupils – how can it be done?

The framework is to be filled in by the pupils and the question is how it can be done. What we have found is that the above pieces contain important components that, when transformed into actions, contribute to a healthy process. These are:

- Openness – inviting is based on seeing and hearing

without having ready-made solutions and answers.

- Respect – allowing the good conversation to serve as a tool for showing "I have heard you".
- Participation – a democratic attitude with successively increasing responsibility is a health factor.
- Security – security for the individual child but also a feeling that security in relation to one another in the group is based on mutual trust.
- Emphasising what is good – positive confirmation is a good breeding-ground for well-being and an important part of health promotion.
- Community – devoting time to shared, positive experiences of well-being shows the children that we value and prioritise this at school.

We want our readers to treat the examples we present precisely as examples, not as a bag of ready-made solutions. Since no group of children is like any other, every classroom and learning environment also needs to be formed by, for and with these actors, the children.

### The good conversation and the individual's ability to listen actively

The feeling of security in groups of children is to a great extent based on everybody daring to state their opinions and put their thoughts into words, which is a skill that most children need to develop. All people, big and small, have a need to share their thoughts with others, and every day in a classroom there are many wise and important thoughts that need both the scope for them to be formulated and a chance to have an audience in good conversations. The conversations in which these thoughts are given scope and time can often start spontaneously, but pre-planned conversations also need to be included in teaching and in health work at school. The planning of a school day must not be so important and static that no scope is allowed for a spontaneous topic that needs discussing.

In order for people to want and dare to share their thoughts and views with others, the others in their environment have to be good and active listeners, which is something that children can also learn and understand the importance of through purposeful and frequent training. In every group of children there are both those who like talking in front of the class and those who are considerably less inclined to share their thoughts with others. To encourage the cautious children and train them to voice their views, the teacher can, with the children's consent, call upon pupils to speak who have not asked to say anything, just to put them on the right track. Everybody

has the right, however, to refrain from answering. The end does not always justify the means or, in other words, respect for the individual child's feeling of security always takes precedence over the teacher's ambition.

A fair distribution of the talking time in the classroom is something that, as adults, we have to take responsibility for by training the children to ask permission to speak and wait for their turn. If there are 21 children in the class, each child has, mathematically, the right to 1/21 of the time, and even if it is not possible to count minutes, we should be aware of and speak of everybody's right to a reasonably even distribution of the total talking time. It is not by chance that we are born with two ears but only one mouth. By letting the children talk in small groups, more children are also given an opportunity to take part in the conversation, provided that the members of the group respect the turn-taking even if the teacher is not present. Conversation in small groups also gives more of the cautious children courage and willingness to voice their thoughts and views, which is an important part of their feeling of security.

Spontaneous conversations, which occur every day and often on the children's initiative, may for example be about somebody having seen something special on TV that s/he wants to share or somebody having experienced something unpleasant during the break that needs discussing. Conversations may also arise about what the children have just experienced through the book that is read aloud or something important that happened on the way to school and is felt to be of value to tell the class. If the aim is to promote a favourable environment for good conversations, the children's spontaneous initiatives should be both encouraged and prioritised. In the health-promoting conversation we say to each other "I heard you" by for example repeating what we heard and linking it to our own thoughts. With planned conversations there are also a large number of different possibilities and opportunities for making use of the children's contributions and letting them be the leading actors. Giving them training in the art of participating in conversations and voicing their opinions is an element of the fundamental values of schools, namely that "the activities should be formed in accordance with fundamental democratic values" (Lpo 94, 3) and "prepare the pupils for taking an active part in social life" (Lpo 94, 5). A form of conversation that usually results in good activity in the classroom and lively engagement among the children is a conversation about a shared reading experience. One of many different forms of conversations about a book that has been read is Chambers's model (Chambers, 1993), which is usually described as a form of "I wonder conversation". This model aims at inviting the children to take part in conversations and dialogues about their thoughts on the book instead of having them answer ques-



Presenting a school assignment sitting on the “speakers-chair”



“The children write about and reflect on their learning in their individual logbooks every week”

### Positive confirmation for the individual and the group

tions in terms of right or wrong (Nyström, 2000). In these conversations the reading experience is often the beginning of further thoughts and reflections on what the children themselves have some experience of. Book conversations according to Chambers's model therefore have a good chance of becoming good and important conversations about life.

Another example of planned conversations is when the children give an account of something, for example the news of the week, and there is time for reflection and viewpoints afterwards. The topical issues that are then discussed are not only part of social studies teaching but also training in contributing one's own views to the societal debate and being informed about other people's views on the topical subject. On these occasions it may also be good training for the child who recounted the news to lead the conversation (with support from the teacher) in the classroom afterwards, by for example granting permission to speak and by also being able to ask follow-up questions and carrying on the conversation. Leading a class in a conversation can also be a good opportunity for the children to realise the value of asking permission to speak and the importance of listening actively when somebody else is speaking.

**Logbook.** One of the many preconditions that are required in order for children to develop their learning as well as their social skills is that they are given feedback and positive confirmation of their everyday life at school. Health promotion focuses precisely on what is positive, sound and healthy in order to improve the conditions for better health and well-being. The teacher can use the goodness that already exists in the pupil's everyday life as a breeding-ground for the good life by putting it in words and encouraging repetition (health promotion). Most teachers are likely to experience difficulty in finding time for conversations with each individual pupil as often as they would like, and it is therefore necessary to find methods and tools that nevertheless make the child feel seen and confirmed. It says in the curriculum, “in collaboration with homes, schools should promote the pupils' development into responsible people” (Lpo 94, 5). It is important to learn to take responsibility for one's own health and well-being and at the same time contribute to other people's well-being by being a co-creator of a healthy environment. Regular use of some form of logbook is an example of a tool for facilitating good communication between the teacher, the individual

child and the home, and training the children to take successfully increasing responsibility for their learning. Both planning and important memos can be combined in the logbook with personal thoughts and reflections written by the children.

When reflecting on their own working week and their learning, they also get important training in seeing their own knowledge development linked to the latest working week and the objectives listed in each child's individual development plan (IDP). The logbook is then given to the teacher who, by wearing what we call “health glasses”, writes personal comments to each child, who in this way receives regular, positive confirmation and encouragement linked to the school week's activities and her/his IDP. The time it takes for the teacher to write the personal feedback to each individual child is a good investment in strengthening the children's positive self-image and encouraging their reflections on their own knowledge development. If something negative has happened, this should of course also be included in the logbook, from both the child's and the teacher's perspective, so that it can be handled in order to find a solution to the incident and leave it behind (prevention). The children then take their logbooks home, for example over the weekend, so that their parents will be informed about their working week, their reflections and the teacher's notes and can also write their own encouraging comments to their children, questions to the teacher or other things that they feel are important.

**Hero of the day.** By very simple means, everyday heroes in the classroom can be given credit and strengthened. Appointing heroes of the day is a group activity that promotes both the individual's and the group's health and well-being (health promotion). By making it a habit to encourage those that are extra helpful and thoughtful towards their classmates, a fine, social working environment can be created and a trend of negative attitudes can also be broken. Nominating *Heroes of the Day* takes only a few minutes at the end of the school day. The children can bring up some everyday event from the same day, something that has involved helping and supporting a classmate. It might be a small, simple gesture but still something meaning a lot to the person who was helped. For example, someone offering to wait for someone else after physical education, going home with someone to pick up a forgotten piece of homework, or inviting someone to take part in a football game during breaktime. The heroes are congratulated with a warm round of applause by the class. Nominating *Heroes of the Day* is a very simple and hearty kind of encouragement and, in addition, totally free!

**Supporter of the week.** Another variety of *Heroes of the Day* is *Supporter of the Week*. The nominations are made every day of children who have done something out of the ordinary for somebody in the class. These children's names are written on the nomination board, and at the end of the working week a *Supporter of the Week* is appointed from among the nominees. The jury responsible for the election and for giving reasons for their choice may consist of some children in the class, say different ones every week, or on occasion the teacher. A pre-printed diploma with the jury's reasons written on it gives the person appointed *Supporter of the Week* a nice memory.

**The positive club.** When negative attitudes are spreading in the class, rapid and distinct measures are required to break the trend. By starting from what is negative and aiming for what is positive, both the process and the result become important aspects. Starting a *Positive Club* in the class means, as the name suggests, that all the work concerning the mental working environment should take place in a positive spirit. What is positive can be emphasised, for example by pointing out all the positive things that are happening in the class at the end of every school day. With the aid of one pupil acting as secretary with a flipchart, the children can be given the task of making a list of all positive situations, big and small, in which they took part during the day. There are likely to be more and more situations with each day, and the children will be happy to mention all the positive things they have experienced. By reminding one another to assume a positive attitude during breaks, in the classroom and in the dining hall, the children will spread a positive spirit among one another (the process), which will result in a nourishing instead of a destructive spirit (the result).

**Plates with praise.** One of the finest things that children can give one another is honest, positive confirmation. Through the examples mentioned so far, the class gave credit to and encouraged classmates who demonstrated thoughtfulness and helpfulness in various different situations. One way in which the children can give everybody in the class individual and positive confirmation, while at the same time being trained to see what is good and fine in one another, is making *Plates with Praise*. The teacher prepares as many paper plates as there are children in the class by writing the first names of the children on them (one name per plate). The class sits down in a ring with their own plates, and at the teacher's request they send their plates on one step, for example to the right. Everybody should then write something honest, positive and personal about the person whose plate they have in front of

them. In order for the giver to remain anonymous, their pens can all be of the same colour or they can change pens with one another at regular intervals. When they have all written something about everybody else, that is, when the plates have gone full circle in the ring, the plate will at last reach its rightful owner. Every child will now have a medal-like plate in front of them, with as many positive, personal statements as there are classmates.

Giving the children an opportunity, perhaps twice a year, to write these positive statements about one another and also to receive their classmates' praise results in considerable well-being. Some children might initially find it difficult to accept what the others have written about them, but practice makes perfect. Even if some of the pupils do not manage to show complete happiness about their "medal" the first time, the friendly words and expressions will be stored in the children's minds and become yet another building block in the development of the individual child's well-being.

**Feeling secure at school.** Developing security and well-being in a group has to be based on honesty and cooperation among all the people involved. It is therefore extremely important that we adults also talk to the children when we see or hear something happening that is not good and does not promote well-being. Prevention focuses on guarding against ill-health, and it is precisely prevention that is needed in this activity. It is important for the teacher, the adult in the classroom, to emphasise and maintain boundaries for the good of everybody. By putting into words the things that make pupils feel bad, for example bullying, mobbing or insulting expressions used by pupils, a discussion about their effects can be conducted in the classroom. Since it is not possible for the adult to see everything that happens among all the children, the members of the class need to help to observe negative events and attitudes. Telling the teacher that somebody has been badly treated or exposed to insult must never be regarded as telling tales. The meaning of this attitude, honesty and cooperation, has to be brought up for discussion in the class at regular intervals as part of the work involved in the equal treatment plan of the school. If something unpleasant has occurred, affecting one or several children in the class, it is often sufficient to talk to those involved. But it is sometimes necessary to bring up the incident in the classroom with all the children present in order to emphasise the measures that will have to be taken. Such measures might for example be for the class to give somebody their whole-hearted support for some time, for example if a child has been feeling ostracised, or to make particularly careful observations during breaktimes in order to prevent the negative occurrence from going on. In

this way the children are shown how very important they are for one another's security and well-being and that everybody can have a positive effect on somebody else by being helpful and thoughtful.

Knowing that the children can be given help if they get into trouble at school is important both to the children and to their parents. It is also equally important for a person who has treated somebody badly to be given an opportunity to talk to the child who was treated badly. Together with an adult the children can be helped to put matters right, ask forgiveness, be able to forgive, say what they should have done or said instead, in order to be able to put the incident behind them and learn from the experience of what happened. It is also a good thing to speak with the person who was ill-treated and hear what this child felt. This gives the children training in finding strategies for future situations and hopefully in preventing the same thing from happening again. "It is not in a following wind but in a contrary wind that a kite will fly" (quotation from an unknown source).

**Journal of gratitude.** Reflection is a self-evident part of learning but it can definitely be used in a wider perspective as well. Becoming aware of one's own situation is an important prerequisite for taking part in one's own health development (empowerment). The awareness strengthens the feeling of participation, thereby also affecting the individual's well-being. A journal of gratitude can be used over a period of time to create awareness of "what is good in life" and to attain consciousness that can be used later on for promotional purposes, that is, in order to strengthen the goodness that already exists. The pupils can answer in their own words the question: "What am I grateful for today?". Putting into words what enhances the experience of health and well-being starts a process that may be compared to a magnet. Attention is drawn to what is fine, good and experienced as positive. As the saying goes: "Seek and ye shall find".

In a study by St. Denis, Orlick and McCaffrey (1996), pupils in the fourth form were asked to take part in various different activities aimed at encouraging them to look for simple, positive experiences and events in their everyday life, so-called *highlights* or *grains of gold*. The result was that the children increased their attention to positive experiences and strengthened their self-esteem markedly in comparison to the class that served as a control group. The researchers' conclusion was that the pupils increased their joy of living, that is, they saw more positive things both in their surroundings and in themselves because of these activities. The result could probably also be described in terms of greater well-being among the children in this study.



"Proud children show their "plates of praise""

**Positive well-being experiences.** The opportunities for strengthening the social working environment together with the children and enhancing their well-being are almost unlimited. With a good knowledge of human nature and a great deal of imagination and will, the teacher can find ways of developing this together with the class. This effort can be aided by utilising the tried and tested examples and methods that have been developed and documented through research as well as methods documented by professional teachers, school health staff, health instructors or other occupational categories working with children's health. Using search terms such as "coping with stress", working with "fundamental values" and "well-being" in libraries or on the Internet will yield many suggestions for interesting reading and exercises.

Allowing the class to participate and create their own well-being is, in our view, better than using somebody else's method, since participation and free choice increase our well-being (promotion and empowerment). The children themselves are those who can best determine in what way their well-being can be improved, but they must of course be given time, supervision and encouragement in this process.

An initial inventory (piece 1 – to invite) of what each pupil associates with the words *well-being* and *lack of well-being* respectively may serve as a starting point for this work. The class can then proceed by proposing, planning and actively implementing activities or events that they think will strengthen their well-being and prevent development in the opposite direction (piece 3 – to involve). One hour can perhaps be timetabled every week for testing different forms of well-being experiences. When an activity has been finished, an evaluation can be made in which each pupil estimates the degree of well-being using, for example, a mark out of ten. These evaluations can then be used in order to develop and improve the well-being experiences of and with the pupils (piece 2 – respect). By involving the whole class in the work, inviting them to participate, listening to their ideas, showing respect and confidence in their ability (piece 4 – have trust) to plan, implement and evaluate, the teacher will have used the whole framework (the puzzle) in the health promotion work. The time-tabled well-being experiences can be the starting point for healthy thinking in the class, but it is also important that small, spontaneous occasions for well-being are given scope

in the daily classroom work without being timetabled. It is a matter of adults showing children the way by constantly being attentive to the class's needs and allowing scope for this in everyday work.

**Massage as a well-being experience.** Massage can be one of the well-being experiences that the class can develop for itself. Kristina Blombäck, health guide, thinks that massage is not only a pleasant, relaxing activity to do during the school day but can also improve memory and powers of concentration (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). The massage can easily be combined with other relaxing activities such as listening to reading aloud, drawing a little or listening to music. Children who choose not to participate in the massage activity can opt to lie on the floor instead, just relaxing. What feels right on a particular day for the individual child is the way in which he or she finds a way to relax and recover. We feel it is important that there are no "musts" when trying to find well-being experiences as free choice enhances the possibility of feeling empowered which, according to Kostenius and Öhring (2008), can increase health and well-being in children.

The massage can be given sitting in a massage row, with everybody massaging the person in front of them, or a massage circle where everybody can both get and give a massage. There



"Massage on the floor, everybody receive and give massage at the same time"

are many different massage techniques but the technique itself is not of great importance and our experience is that finding different ways to massage can be part of the process. The children can improvise and use tactile or touch massage which involves them stroking the back, the back of the neck, the hair and the arms of one another with their hands open or closed in a fist. There are also special wooden massage balls that can be bought for the classroom to help the children to improve their well-being. The person receiving a massage can influence the way he or she wishes to be massaged by means of whispering, gestures and/or body language. After half the relaxation time, everybody can turn around in the circle so that they will be massaged by the person they had just been giving a massage to. It feels good to stretch a little and change position half-way through. In order to prepare the body and mind for the return to the classroom you can finish the relaxation with two or three minutes of nice calm music. The last thing everybody does before ending the massage for the day is say "Thank you for letting me give you a massage" to the person in front of them. This is a small symbolic act of politeness indicating how important it is to give one another well-being.

The time allotted for this is approximately 20 minutes every day. Prioritising massage in the classroom as a daily activity raises the status of relaxation and leads to it being regarded as an important part of the working day. The forms of relaxation must be developed by the class and can, of course, include many different parts. The main purpose is to give the pupils

an opportunity to experience their own well-being, individually or as a group, every day and to let it be as important as every other part of the school day. By letting the pupils try out various activities and ideas and then talk about their experiences they can agree on something that they will use for some time. Again, we feel that since everybody has different needs as regards relaxation, every activity has to be voluntary. The only requirement is that they should all give one another an opportunity to experience peace and find relaxation.

### A teacher's reflections

What I personally feel and think about how we can take breaks in the classroom every day will have to wait. Instead I'll start with the children's own words. These are some quotations from the pupils in the class:

"I LOVE reading-relaxation, it's like being in heaven"

"It's so good because I invent my own stuff with my imagination when you read the book aloud"

"I thrill, it's so nice being given massage by my friends"

"A day without reading relaxation feels incomplete."

"It's surely the most important part of the day, getting relaxation."

These are some of the comments taken from the children's logbooks, resulting from the children's own reflections after a reading relaxation period I had introduced for the class. The term 'reading relaxation', which some also call 'reading relaxation massage', is the class's own name for their daily relaxation and well-being experience. These sessions of reading relaxation are so important for the well-being of the children as individuals as well as for the whole class and I believe that this should never be taken away. The sessions might be scheduled later in the afternoon, but the reading relaxation period must have a time and place during the school day. It is a very pleasant tradition created by, for and with the children. As an adult I am very happy and grateful that the children have found a way of resting and finding relaxation. The atmosphere in the classroom is often so comfortable that we do not want to stop in order to go on to do ordinary school work. But it is a tight timetable every day and we know that the relaxation and the atmosphere will return the next day. I am also certain that everybody, including the children who do not take part in massage but sit on the side or lie on the floor, gets a share of the peace-and-quiet hormone oxytocin that

is circulating in the room. It is almost as if you can see the hormones jumping around...

The choice of a book for reading aloud seldom causes any problems. I am willing to receive suggestions, but I reserve the right to say no to books that I consider too difficult to read aloud or to be understood by the listeners. Although hesitant, I have on occasion been persuaded to start reading a book suggested by the children. This may work, but the last time it happened, I had to ask the children to be allowed to change books. It was *A Child Called It* ('Pojken som kallades det') by Dave Pelzer that was voted by the class as the next book for reading aloud. Some of them, including myself, had already read it, but they still wanted to listen to it. I read for a few days, but experienced such a difference between reading to myself, being able to skim the text when the descriptions of violence were too strong, and reading aloud and having to read with feeling all the horrible situations described in the book. This required far too much of me as a reader for it to work. The children did not object, so we chose a new book instead. It's all about working side by side to find ways to relax and feel good!

Lena Nyström

### Individual development plans

The curriculum says "The pupils should be given opportunities to take initiatives and responsibility. They should be given preconditions for developing their ability to work independently and to solve problems" (Lpo 94., 6). We have already mentioned the 749 objectives that every pupil is to attain in the compulsory nine-year school system (Kroksmark, 2006). Self-evidently, not all pupils need to practise the same things all the time, but how can schools train the pupils to recognise their own needs and take responsibility for developing these? From 1 January 2006 in Sweden, all pupils in the compulsory nine-year school system are to have their own individual development plans (IDP), a document in which each individual pupil has participated in designing a plan for her/his learning with stated short-term objectives and a plan for how to attain these objectives. The responsibility for working with the objectives should be up to the pupils themselves, but it is important for them to be allowed to shoulder this responsibility in an ongoing way, and above all to be given time for planning, working with, and reflecting on their objectives. Regular, timetabled Individual Work (IW) sessions are a good method for training the pupils in planning



"Relaxing on the floor is an example of a well-being activity"

and taking responsibility for their learning. The length of the IW sessions may vary, but it is important for the children to be trained at an early stage to manage their own time. Based on their objectives, the children should plan their work during the IW sessions. Training for some objectives is provided by working with current assignments, while other objectives require specific training events and methods. Examples of how the pupils should attain their objectives should also be stated in the IDPs, but the teacher must of course be available to guide and help the pupils in their learning and to see to it that everybody manages to take responsibility. Regular reflection on these IW sessions, on how the planning, implementation and responsibility worked, is important and necessary for giving the children an opportunity to develop their ability to take responsibility for their own learning. Since this is a new way of working there are no evaluations available but it is important to elicit both teachers and pupils' experiences with IDPs in the future.

**Flexible school hours.** We have noted that the pupils should have a certain measure of individually planned work in order to attain their objectives, but how individually adapted are the pupils' working hours? Gerhard Nordlund, a researcher at Umeå University, has shown in a study of adolescent pupils that those who function markedly better in the evening have worse preconditions for managing their schoolwork in the way it is conducted in most schools (Nordlund, 2004). He thinks that the body's biological circadian rhythm affects the pupils' well-being and their performance. Flexible school hours (for example starting the day between 7.30 and 9.00 a.m.) and individual choices of subjects (IW) in the first lesson are examples of measures that might result in a better working climate at school and better preconditions for the pupils who function best in the evening.

Younger pupils can also benefit from choosing when to start their school day. For example having flexitime one day per week and also doing individual work at the beginning and end of the day will provide good training in taking responsibility and attaining a high level of individual education.

## Final words

Antonovsky (1987) emphasises the significance of seeing health and positive aspects in our lives, and this is what our aim has been when working with the children in the classroom. We believe focusing on what is healthy and good is a way to increase children's psychosocial well-being and promote it. Bergmark and Alerby (in press) suggest focusing on the health and positive aspects in school to increase well-being. We believe that adults in school should invite and involve children in health promotion efforts as well as try to stay open to the children's experiences, giving them a voice in the process (c.f. Kostenius and Öhrling 2008). As positive questions have a tendency to result in positive solutions which lead to positive action, according to Ghaye (2005), we would like to end with some questions which might aid the health promotion process.

## Reflect and Discuss

In this chapter we discussed some of the statements in the Swedish Board of Health and Welfare's guidelines for school health care and the assignment of the curriculum linked to children's well-being. We shared our thoughts on the difficulties and opportunities to be found in the statements in the control documents, and also on the implications of assuming a child perspective or a children's perspective. We then described the framework on which we have based our practical work with health promotion in the classroom, and finally we gave examples of classroom work aimed at increasing the children's well-being and strengthening and stimulating their learning. Below are some questions that we hope can stimulate reflection and discussion.

- How can you create an atmosphere in the classroom in which all the children's voices are heard?
- How can the talking time in a classroom be distributed? What methods can be used?
- What is openness to you?
- In what way do you say, "I have heard you?" to the pupils in a your class...  
(a) ...as individuals? (b) ...as a group?
- Think of the difference between a child's perspective and children's perspective. In what situations during a schoolday can you assume the children's perspective?
- What does a democratic attitude mean to you in practice?
- How can you promote the children's chances of having trust in their own abilities?
- We speak about time at school, what may take time at school? Who decides what may take time?
- How can you involve the children's parents in the work with the children's well-being?
- Flexible school hours? Is it possible to implement this in working team? What obstacles might there be? What solutions might exist?



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## Bullying at School

### A threat to Pupils Health, Learning and Development

Arne Forsman

This article gives an account of the research, theory and empirical findings of a research and development project lasting nearly five years which took place within the framework of the ArctiChildren Project. In terms of background, bullying is viewed from an educational and societal perspective, in which developments and trends in research are elucidated. The control documents regulating the activities of schools are accounted for and the Equality of Treatment Act is extensively dealt with. The concept of bullying is discussed under its own heading. National and international research on the effects and consequences of bullying are accounted for. The theory section concludes with a survey of various different programmes, models, plans and methods for preventing and dealing with bullying in schools. Under the headings *Development Work in the ArctiChildren II Project* and *Research in the ArctiChildren Project*, the work done in the participating schools is reported.

### Background

Everybody who has had anything to do with schools will have heard about a pupil that has been bullied. Despite conventions and legislation intended to guarantee a secure learning environment, bullying of pupils is one of the biggest problems in schools. Although Sweden is considered a leading country as regards preventing and taking legal measures against bullying in the compulsory nine-year school system (Forsman, 2006), about 100,000 pupils are estimated to be involved in bullying on a daily basis, as victims, perpetrators, sometimes in both capacities, and as various categories of sympathisers and helpers. In every class there is at least one pupil who is afraid of going to school. This exposure is the biggest threat to pupils' health, learning and development. The victims are likely to regard the control documents' commitments to the inviolability of human life and schools' obligation to protect every pupil from being exposed to acts of cruelty and insults as empty rhetoric. Pupils are to be protected against violence, acts of cruelty and bullying, in that order, which are the three most important factors to come to grips with in schools (Friends, 2006).

In the public debate on education, several ministers for schools and education have stated as a mantra that prevention of bullying is to be given the highest priority. In the 1960's the debate on bullying in schools and research into it started

(Heineman, 1972). The Swedish term for bullying, *mobbing*, is derived from the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus*, meaning 'the easily moveable crowd'. It was thus established that bullying is a group phenomenon. Heineman was followed by Olweus (1973), best known internationally in the discourse on bullying, and his contemporary Pikas (1975). Both developed ways of preventing and taking measures against bullying in schools. Lagerman and Stenberg (2001), Ljungström (1997), Staff (1997), Roland (1996) and *Friends and Tillsammans* ('Together') are further examples of people and organisations that have developed anti-bullying models, programmes and methods. The approaches chosen in order to prevent and take measures against bullying are subordinate to the users' ambitions and the resources available for implementation (Forsman, 2003). Peer bullying in a school is a serious signal that the school as a whole is not working properly. Focusing only on the pupils' relationships is therefore an insufficient measure (Fonagy, 2005). Gill and Eriksson's study of reports to the recently established *Ombudsman for Children and Pupils* showed that more than a third of the bullies were teachers (Gill & Eriksson, 2007). Frånberg (2003) and Skolverket (2002, 1999, 1997) pointed to shortcomings in schools' ways of preventing and taking measures against harassment of and acts of cruelty against pupils. The highest control authority, the National Agency for Education, also leaves a great deal to be desired in its investigative and follow-up duties (Forsman, 2003). Larsson (2000) showed that teachers' lack of basic theoretical qualifications in social psychology and education implies an obvious risk of interstructural and intrastructural conflicts and problems being neglected. The problems that they cannot deal with are made into non-events or "swept under the carpet". A new, promising niche in the context of bullying is the method of school reconciliation (Marklund, 1997) intended to teach pupils to solve conflicts in a constructive way. By means of simple and brief educational efforts, pupils learn to solve conflicts constructively in order to be able to proceed without unnecessary obstacles in the form of blocks, tensions or further confrontations. Systematic harassment, acts of cruelty or direct violence are found in all sectors of society (Hallberg & Strandmark, 2004; Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare & Daneback, 2002; Leymann, 1986), in trade union organisations (Berlin & Enqvist, 1998), in health care (Lennér-Axelsson & Thylefors, 1999; Thylefors, 1999), in religious organisations and in sports (Friends, 2007). If schools are mirrors of

society, a harsher climate and more violence may be expected among pupils (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2006).

### What is bullying?

The concept of bullying is vague because there are many different definitions. Some of these are very restrictive, while others are as generally worded as “bullying is when somebody is badly treated” (Staff, 1997, 13). There is still uncertainty about what kind of bullying should be dealt with by the pupils' care services of schools and what falls under the criminal code, for example unlawful threats, violation of a person's integrity, assault and battery, etc. and must hence also be reported to the social authorities, and, if the perpetrator is criminally liable, to the police authority for further investigation. Bullying may be active and physical like kicking and hitting a person, or passive in the form of exclusion. It may also be actively, deliberately mental through “psyching”, often verbal or passive through silence, pretending the victim does not exist, mimicry and gestures. The criteria of continuity, systematic behaviour, some form of violence and unequal treatment to the detriment of the victim should be present. The concepts of stalking and penalising have been added to the discourse on bullying. Stalking is not leaving the victim alone in order to create a feeling of constant insecurity and fear, if nothing else. Penalising involves justly or unjustly accusing a person of something that will have to be replaced or compensated for. For girls this might imply having to pay with sexual services. One difference between bullying and harassing somebody is that the harassment may be a single occurrence. In his questionnaire Olweus says “...once a week or more often”. Bullying is systematic, performed in the same way or at the same place and time. Boys most often bully directly physically with kicks and punches (Olweus, 1998). Girls bully more subtly through spreading rumours, verbal allusions, gestures and mimicry or by ostracising somebody (Wrethander Bliding, 2007; Besag, 2006). The power relation does not necessarily have to be based on the bully's physical superiority, however, but may be a matter of the group's oppression of a single individual. Many victims are so downtrodden and have such low self-reliance that they are unable to defend themselves and avoid the violations, which they might have done if they had only had a little more faith in their own abilities, or if there had been somebody with sufficient moral courage to protest against the abuse (Olsson, 1998).

### The effects and consequences of bullying

A small or subtle but recurring dose of actions violating a person's integrity over time will drain this person's reserve power (Forsman, 2003). Besag (2006) found that girls' subtle bullying may cause more severe health effects than boys' more direct manifestations. If there is no opportunity for recovery, further violations may result in a total breakdown in the form of burnout, or in diagnostic terms, exhaustion depression. The rehabilitation may take several years and require high therapeutic qualifications (Krauklis & Schenström, 2002). The experience of being bullied may be compared to a walk along the path to Golgotha (Rannelid, 1997), where the victim has been violated and tormented from the first to the last day in an obligatory nine-year school. The consequences of the trauma involve a grave crisis with lifelong negative physical, mental and socially disabling effects (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Cullberg, 1973). Bullied persons suffer from depressive states with suicidal tendencies six times more often than the normal population (BRIS, 2006). Every year a couple of pupils choose to take their own lives as a last desperate resort. Other may take a dreadful revenge on their tormentors as well as on teachers who participated in or did not protect them from the abuse. Such acts of violence have been committed in the USA, Russia, Australia, Canada, Germany and France. The most well-known case is the Columbine High School Shooting, where the perpetrators harboured hatred for the school and the community that they felt had ostracised and discriminated against them (Hasday, 2002). Up until 7 November 2007, when eight people were murdered at the school in Jokela outside Helsinki, the Nordic countries had been spared from school massacres. Perpetrators also fall within the danger zone of negative psychosocial development. As adults they are found disproportionately more often in social and criminal records as assailants and maltreaters (Olweus, 1998). Einarsen et al. (1998) made a connection between school bullying and subsequent bullying of adults.

Men (Einarsen et al., 1998) and adolescent boys (Pikas, 1998) often denied that bullying had taken place if the perpetrator was a woman. Berlin and Enqvist (1998) showed that there are enormous social costs caused by sick leave, rehabilitation, nursing and early retirement. An unhealthy working climate is very expensive for employers. According to Hallberg and Strandmark (2004), bullying is a public health problem that may cause the victims to enter into a spirit of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975), in particular if they have had previous experiences of being harassed. Just as in the case of women who suffer domestic violence, the victims of bullying may soon think that they deserve to be harassed and maltreated. The often recorded anxiety in victims of bullying and

parents' fear for their exposed children might well be a result of bullying. Olweus is of the opinion that victims of bullying are anxious by nature and that being overprotected by their parents is therefore perceived as another violation. Violence connected to bullying has become more aggravated and elaborate (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2006). Mobile phones are used to send offensive messages or photos. The Internet with its chats and blogs is a common forum for harassment, threats and pictures taken in sensitive situations. These pictures and texts, often produced without the victim's knowledge or consent, may remain there permanently and be utilised by unscrupulous people in an improper way. The latest report from Bris (BRIS, 2006) states that 1,100 conversations and e-mails indicated that many young people had a problematic virtual existence. Child psychiatry has warned against ignoring and making light of observed lack of empathic ability in children. Where pupils murdered schoolmates and teachers, there were as a rule signals that something serious was going to happen. Yet people in the surroundings did not react until it was too late. Since nobody becomes a bully from one day to the next, Levander's, Adler's, Gefvert's and Turinger's (2007) research concerning early signals of personality disturbances must be taken more seriously. Children who do not get help to handle their lack of empathic ability before their early teens risk developing psychopathic traits that will become difficult to treat later on (Hare, 1993).

Petersson (1997) showed that preschool children and younger children know what is right and wrong and what consequences their actions will have. But already among these small children there are those who consciously hurt others without feeling any remorse or guilt about their behaviour. TV productions like Robinson reward scheming and cheating with prizes of up to half a million Swedish crowns. To be fair is more or less a disadvantage in this and similar TV series, many of which are financed by tax money. In 'entertainment violence', there is a pattern-forming effect in the form of model learning. If the perpetrator of an outrage gives the impression that the violence is legitimate and serves a good cause as well as seeming to like the activity, the watcher's threshold will be lowered. Entertainment violence can weaken the barriers and lead to latent aggressions developing into real violence (Bandura, 1973). Individuals with feelings of exclusion, insufficiency and inferiority can imitate or identify themselves with the role character and ultimately act in the same way later on. The most serious consequence of entertainment violence is its blunting effect. When an unacceptable attitude is allowed to pass without protest and harassment becomes an everyday occurrence, the watcher will get used to it and become indifferent to the suffering of the injured person (Olsson, 1998). The frequently escalating bul-

lying, or as Arendt (1988; 1963) said, evil, becomes a banality that nobody reflects on or cares about any more (Billig, 1995). The real face of bullying is sometimes hard to discover. There may be an *éminence grise* who stealthily controls her/his classmates and dictates the relationships in the class. Often the teacher does not detect the “brain” behind the harassment and the infringement. If this person functions well socially and verbally and is intellectually well equipped with a good position in the group of mates, her/his surroundings may be manipulated for a long time. Sympathisers in the class may unconsciously run errands for the *éminence grise*. They can lend themselves to actions against the victim that many years later, with hindsight, they will have difficulty understanding or explaining (Gardell, 1992; Forsman, 2003).

### Research approaches and research into the bullying discourse

In spite of increasing attention to and insight into the problem, bullying does not seem to be decreasing in schools. An inter-group study from preschool to municipal adult education and in the annual inquiry Personligt (“Personal”) (Pititidningen, 2007) in Piteå showed that bullying in primary and secondary schools is a big problem. The belief that it will decrease with rising age and maturity is probably no longer accurate. Fors (2002) and Björk (1999) studied and slanted the research on school bullying towards a power perspective. Fors calls the bully a tormentor who, with the aid of power, quickly breaks down the health of the victim. Björk showed that bullying may be compared to a game. Forsman (2000) also described many bullies' eminent ability to “orchestrate” scenarios in which the bully is the expert on changing and breaking rules in order to suit her/his intentions. Kamperin (2002) used a gender-power perspective in a study of the bullying of schoolboys and schoolgirls, where the bullying boys utilise their physical superiority, chiefly against victims of the same sex. Eriksson et al's (2002) point of departure was chiefly in sociology, where, like Rigby (2002), they thought that the field of research must be widened to include arenas like barracks, institutions, ships and prisons. Petersson's (1997) research into preschool children's way of relating to one another identified children lacking in their empathic ability. Both Häggglund (1996) and Bliding (2002) applied a socio-cultural perspective in their research. Wrethander and Bliding (2007) regard bullying in a group of children “... as an expression and a consequence of children's interaction to create relationships and social order in a group” (preface) and focus on a wider social whole in order to better understand the

social life of schools. Menckel and Witkowska (2002) investigated language use among upper secondary pupils. La Flamme and Menckel (2001) conducted research from a public health perspective with its long-term negative consequences for children's health. Elheim (2002) related school bullying to a children's rights perspective, and Frånberg's (2003) study has an educational professional perspective. No single study covers all aspects of the bullying discourse, and a future more interdisciplinary approach should yield a more valid picture of the problems of bullying and its inherent mechanisms.

## Documents

The activities of schools are regulated by a number of conventions, laws and ordinances. The UN Declaration of Children's Rights states that all children have the right to education and to protection against violence. The Education Act (SFS, 1997) regulates what is permitted and prohibited respectively in the activities of schools. Like the Education Act, the National Board on Occupational Safety and Health's Code of Statutes and the Working Environment Act (AFS, 1999:6) are intended to guarantee all children a safe and secure working environment. The Social Welfare Act (SOL) is a complement to both the Education Act and the Working Environment Act. The Curriculum for the Compulsory School System (Lpo, 94/98) states in greater detail the guidelines for school tuition. Every municipality, school management area and individual school is bound by law to set up a bullying prevention document. On 1 April 2006 the Government passed a new law, the Child and Pupil Protection Act, generally called the Equality of Treatment Act, which tightens up the responsibility of schools to guarantee the pupils safe and secure learning conditions. No pupil must be discriminated against because of gender, ethnicity, religion or other creed, sexual disposition or disability (Report of the Government Committee 2005/2006: UbU4). Every school is bound by law to set up an equality of treatment plan, which will eventually replace earlier plans, models and methods for preventing and taking measures against bullying. The municipalities' boards for children and education or the equivalent authorities are responsible for following up and evaluating the work of schools against all forms of violation. An Ombudsman for Children and Pupils with its own authority has been established for the purpose of protecting children's and pupils' interests. According to the Equality of Treatment Act, this authority is to take legal action against schools that have not tried and exhausted all possibilities of remedying discrimination against pupils. Actionable omission will result in damages. A number of cases have been tried in court and some municipalities have been sentenced to pay damages due to insufficient action. The cases

of bullying dealt with in the media often lead to settlement between the parties, however, as the victims of bullying and their families do not manage to bring an action against the municipalities involved.

## Action plans, models, methods and programmes against bullying

The Equality of Treatment Plan (the Child and Pupil Protection Act) by and large replaces earlier anti-bullying documents. The most established plan for preventing and taking measures against bullying is Olweus's (1998) programme of measures. The programme is divided into different steps and targeted at pupils (individual level), teachers (class level) and school management and parents (school level). Norwegian schools working with Olweus's method are to have an eleven-day course for all their staff. Olweus's evidence-based data from hundreds of thousands of pupils showed that the use of his programme against bullying (Olweus, 1996) and his Teacher Handbook (Olweus, 1999) led to a decrease in bullying by more than half. The method is based on clear rules, follow-up and established sanctions for breaches of rules. Vandalising also decreased and the social climate among staff and pupils improved. The pupils' attitudes to education and learning became more positive and the effects lasted over time. There is an enormous amount of data from countries that have used Olweus's questionnaire and measure programme. Earlier results have also been confirmed where the programme has been followed according to instructions (Frey, 2005). Pikas's *Gemensamt-Bekymmermetoden* ('the Common Worry Method') (1998) is focused on breaking the destructive dynamics in the bullying group through individual and collective talks and making the ambition of creating a favourable class climate a common desired goal. The method is structured into five phases and steps where the end result is to at least put a stop to the bullying. In the optimal solution, everybody will have gained a better insight into and greater respect and tolerance for other people's "doings". It is not a matter of looking for scapegoats but of making everybody take their responsibility for changing and improving a bad situation. Ljungström's *Farsta Method* (1989) is an effective and at the same time controversial method. Bullying is to be stopped through forceful and immediate intervention, which is not negotiable. In the talks, the suspects are not told what the teachers know, and since pupils do not want to be caught lying, the picture of the incident is usually informative and real. In the subsequent treatment work, the victim of bullying, the bully/bullies and others are taught to handle conflicts through exercises. Sympathisers are encouraged to call forth their moral courage to intervene in

bullying the next time. When the bullying has ceased, the bullies are to be treated as any other pupils. Fors (1993) calls this method fascist because of the power inequality that suspected bullies are confronted with in the interrogation of them, as Fors calls it, conducted by two teachers. Another criticism is the risk that parents may be kept uninformed for quite some time if the interventions do not work immediately. Lagerman and Stenberg (2001) base their *Österholm Model* on the methodology of the *Farsta Model*. The model contains a teacher guide, a theory section, questionnaires, and individual and group exercises. The implementation of the model has led to a reduction of bullying by up to 80%. Roland's and Sörensen Vandal's *Zero Programme* (2003) is based on zero tolerance of bullying. Together with parents and supported by experts, schools work actively for a year to implement the programme. The programme contains idea booklets, action plans, films and a manual for parents (Roland, 1996). The purposeful and systematic work at individual and system level has a preventive effect on bullying.

## Development work in the ArctiChildren project.

The development work in the three schools involved consisted of regular, monthly visits. In addition to lectures and study circles as well as education mainly of pupil welfare and anti-bullying teams, the work concerning bullying was conducted on a consultant basis. In one school, *Den onda dagen* ('The Evil Day') (Hildefors et al., 2004) was introduced as study circle material. In all three schools different methods of preventing and taking measures against bullying were studied, and research into, theories of and explanatory models for bullying were discussed. The schools' anti-bullying programmes were evaluated and complemented. The staff were helped to work out the schools' equality of treatment plans, which were made vital instruments in the schools' everyday life. The consultant support was regarded as very valuable for the schools' competence development. Lectures on bullying for pupils and at parents' meetings were recurrent and appreciated activities. The symbolic value of an external person talking about bullying had a very great effect on the pupils' ideas and attitudes. Implementations and models for conflict solution were accounted for and discussed.

*During a break, the teacher on break duty sees four pupils in a second-year class hiding after luring another pupil into running an errand. The teacher on break duty comforts the pupil when he discovers his classmates' deceit. The teacher on break duty directly has individual conversations with all those involved and then reports to the anti-*

*bullying team. In the individual talks with the four pupils, emphasis is placed on their and the victim's experiences of the incident. Having realised the extent and the gravity of their action, they are noticeably regretful. The conversation concludes by informing them that they will be under special observation during the next few weeks. The follow-up takes place three weeks later with individual talks with all those involved. The talks and the class teacher's and the teachers on break duty's observations show that all pupils are now invited to take part in the games during breaks and that the atmosphere in the class has improved. Great importance is attached to encouraging and supporting conflict solutions and to praising the pupils for their altered attitude and the new good friendship. The matter is considered settled after these talks. The conflict documentation is concluded and filed. (A member of the pupil care team)*

In one school, a victim of bullying belonged to the category of provoking or provocative victims of bullying (Olweus, 1998; Pikas, 1998). After a great deal of work with classmates, other pupils, the victim and his parents, the latter were recommended to get into contact with a child psychiatrist and social authorities. The work on preventing bullying has been presented at both national and international conferences. Outside the participant schools, the project has also attracted a great deal of interest. Lectures have been given in schools and teacher education programmes in Norway, Finland and Russia. One result of the development work is that the organisation Friends visited a school on two occasions in order to educate pupils and staff in their programme (Friends, 2007). Other results are Jokkmokk Sami School's cooperation with Sevättjärvi School in Finland and the R and D work with snow arranged by the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi. Special attention was paid to the coarse language used in another school.

*"Just as I came out of the staff room, I heard it... "You whore, give me a cigarette." It was Kent in 8B, accompanied by Nils, and he was shouting at Lena, who was standing with Eva from the same class further down the corridor. I just felt myself getting violently angry and barely managed to restrain myself from laying hands on the boy when I more or less ran up to him. "Do you know that you are insulting Lena, and I never want to hear you say that again," I nearly shouted. I must also have looked very angry, because I noticed that Kent got afraid of my facial expression. "What are you talking about?" he said, and I ordered him to go to his classroom and wait for me there. Nils had moved aside a little and was looking almost uncomprehending. I went up to the girls. "I will talk to Kent and he will have to apologise to you for this. But you should not have to put up with being called things like that. But why don't you say that you will not tolerate this kind of thing?" "We have given up, you know," said Lena." (A member of the anti-bullying team.)*

## Research in the ArctiChildren project

In 2004, 283 pupils in year classes 6–8, with an even gender distribution, answered Olweus's (1996) questionnaire. The purpose was to survey the bullying problems in their school. The 278 questionnaires that could be compiled and analysed (Ahonen et al., 2006) showed that 10% of the pupils had been bullied in the last few months and that more than one pupil in every class was afraid of being bullied by classmates. This, together with the fact that more boys now bully and are bullied, is consistent with previous research (Smith et al., 2001). That the climate in schools is harsh (Brottsförebyggande rådet, 2006; BRIS, 2006) is evident from the findings that every fifth boy could take part in bullying someone they did not like, and that an equally large proportion, in total, thought that it was the victim's own fault. This attitude is more marked in the higher year classes. The lack of moral courage was confirmed in that only two out of three pupils were prepared to intervene even if they thought that they ought to help the bullied person (Olsson, 1998). The material showed that more than one pupil in every class had no or only one friend, often a person in the same situation. In several school shootings (Hasday, 2002), the perpetrator was often a bitter and rancorous "lone wolf" or had a like-minded, ostracised friend. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of thefts and damage occurring in the school, none of the respondents stated that they had stolen or damaged anything. This data may be explained by the theory of *Social Desirability* (Pervin & John, 1997). More than every fourth pupil thought that the teachers were not doing enough to prevent bullying. This figure must be questioned, however, since a great deal of work done by teachers to sort out a bullying situation is conducted without other pupils knowing about it. In a follow-up to research done on seventh-year pupils only marginal improvements were observed apart from slightly fewer pupils stating that they were being bullied. It was interesting to note that some pupils had themselves written on the questionnaire, "...I was bullied before..." This might indicate that the school's anti-bullying work had started yielding results.

## Summary

History, research and daily living conditions in the school show the urgent need for more reliable intentions from politicians, heads of schools, parents and pupils to create sustainable resources to deal with all types of violence in school. Too many pupils are mentally and physically abused in school every day. Competence and further education are two areas that must be strengthened among school staff. To create and keep the municipalities', the school districts' and the individual schools' documents for preventing and taking measures against peer bullying as living instruments must be of the highest priority. Although it might be a utopian idea to totally eradicate peer bullying in school, more actions against ostracism and intimidation will have a good effect in the school. The costs of preventing violence and creating good learning conditions in school are less than those of taking care of both the victims and the perpetrators in the future. Among others, Olweus (1973, 1976, 1998, 1999) has shown that peer bullying could be reduced considerably by a properly implemented action programme and one spin-off effect could be a better social climate in school. In Sweden some smaller positive effects in the field of peer bullying have been achieved by the ArctiChildren II Project. The costs of preventing violence and creating good learning conditions in school are less than taking care of both the victims and the perpetrators in the future. Among others Olweus (1973, 1976, 1998, 1999) has shown that peer bullying could be reduced considerably by a properly implemented action programme and one spin off effect could be a better social climate in school. In Sweden some smaller positive effects in the field of peer bullying has been achieved by the ArctiChildren II Project.

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## Learning for Life through Meetings with Others

Ulrika Bergmark

### Learning meetings – an example from the world of schools

Different kinds of meetings are natural for every pupil and teacher in schools in Sweden as well as other countries around the world. These may be meetings at a distance or close encounters. Different kinds of stories have a leading role in meetings between people. Lesnick (2006) describes and discusses pupils' meetings with fictitious people and events through reading literature in teaching. She thinks that these encounters with literature may enable pupils to train their ability for empathy and for ethical considerations. Fictitious meetings and stories are the focus of Lesnick's study, but it follows that the intentions of these meetings might instead be transferred to real meetings between living people in a classroom.

According to Lesnick (ibid), stories can play an important role in pupils' development of different abilities. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also emphasise the importance of stories in teaching. They mean that experiences grow out of other people's experiences, and that these are both personal and social. People must be understood both as individuals and as parts of a social context. A pupil's individual learning takes place in a context, for example in a school (ibid). Stroobants (2005) and Clandinin et al. consider that a story is often based on life experiences and that by narrating, writing and/or listening to different experiences of life, people can learn a great deal about themselves and about other people. Stroobants (2005) also claims that reflection plays an important role in making development possible in this narration, writing and/or listening. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) suggest that reflection can be made before, during and/or after a situation or process, for example. Through written reflection, a person can step back, think about and rethink things (Appelbee, 1984). This creative process of questioning oneself and, for example, events and activities in a school may lead to individual learning for a person and to changes in schools (Starratt, 1994; Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998). Hammond (2002) believes that the effects of learning depend on the educational setting and the learning experiences that take place. In an educational setting that encourages co-operation and sharing, it is more likely to lead to a positive psychosocial culture and well-being among pupils and teachers. This chapter is about meetings with other people, stories, reflection and learning experiences from a Swedish compulsory nine-year school. The chapter is partly a revised version of the article "Ethical learning through meetings with Others" published in *the International Journal of Learning*, vol. 14, no. 5, 2007.

A teacher's mission in the Swedish school system is multifaceted – one task, for example, is to help pupils to learn subject knowledge, and another is to encourage and support pupils in developing an ethical attitude to people around them. The curriculum for Swedish compulsory schools (Lpo, 94) emphasises that ethics should permeate all education (Ministry of Education, 1994), which may sometimes be easier said than done. What could teachers do to unite these two tasks in one whole? The course that is described and discussed in this chapter is called "Ung möter..." ("Young people meet...") and may be seen as a concrete example of how an ethical attitude can permeate teaching in compulsory schools. A teacher initiated, planned and implemented this course, where the pupils and the teacher had an opportunity to meet people with different life experiences: a homosexual, a refugee and a disabled person. The objective of the course was that the pupils should train their empathic ability and that through these meetings they should develop as human beings and learn from life, for life. As a postgraduate student I took part in the course by being in the classroom and by reading the pupils' and the teacher's written reflections in connection with the course. The pupils' and the teacher's experiences were documented through their own reflective journals, my field notes and electronic communication between the teacher and myself. Each visit by the guests was divided into three parts. The first part consisted of a question and reflection period before the guest entered the classroom. The second part was the actual visit for the day. The different guests told their life stories for about an hour, after which the pupils and the teacher could ask them questions. In the third part the teacher gave the pupils time for reflection after the visit. Each visit was video recorded so that the pupils and the teacher would be able to go back to the film in order to reflect on what had taken place during the course.

### Reflective journals

Every pupil was given a notebook and instructions on how to write reflective journals. As headings on each double-page spread in the book, they wrote "Action" on the left-hand side and "Reflection" on the right-hand side (see Figure 1). Under

“Action” they wrote down the activities that took place in connection with the visit to the classroom, and under “Reflection” they wrote down thoughts, feelings and questions that had arisen before, during and after each visit. After each lesson the teacher collected the reflective journals and gave continuous written responses to what the pupils had written in their books. She then returned the books at the beginning of the next lesson, giving the pupils time to make comments on and respond to her reflections and questions in the reflective journals. In this way there was a constantly ongoing dialogue between the pupils and the teacher. The teacher also kept these “double logs” during the course. An example follows of what a pupil wrote in the reflective journal during and after the first lesson, which served as an introduction to the course. On that occasion the content and the organisation of the course were presented, and the pupils also had an opportunity to start practising writing a reflective journal.

Action	Reflection
Introduction	The reflective journal, then.
Organisation	Perhaps you can't always think of something,
Reflection	but most often there will be something,
Ulrika	but well, we'll see about that.
Katarina	
The visitors	Hm! I rather think Linda's visit will be is
Reflective journal	the most interesting to me, because my uncle is gay, but I don't think about what it's like to be homosexual in one's everyday life, but the other things will also be interesting, but that is what is closest to me!

Figure 1. Excerpt from Jenny's "Double logs" (Translation from Swedish)

This example of a reflective journal (see Figure 1) was written by a pupil during the first lesson of the course. On the left-hand side she wrote down the programme of the lesson, which the teacher had written on the board. She then reflected on this and wrote down her thoughts on the right-

hand side. By writing double logs, all questions, reflections, thoughts and feelings were gathered in one and the same book, which made it possible for the teacher to maintain a dialogue with each of the pupils.

### The pupils' and the teacher's experiences of the meetings

Analysis of the empirical data resulted in a main theme – learning from the Other. My understanding of the pupils' and the teacher's experiences is presented and discussed in terms of this theme with its two aspects – learning different kinds of knowledge, values and skills through the whole body, and appreciating one another and what we do together.

### Learning from the other

The pupils and the teacher learned from the Other<sup>1</sup> in the meetings in the classroom (see Figure 2). This course provided opportunities for learning from each other in different relationships, for example between pupil and pupil, between pupil and teacher, between pupil and visitor and between teacher and visitor. Through Karen's dialogue both in the classroom and in the pupils' reflective journals, she encouraged them to challenge their own learning. Noddings (2006) believes that this, making pupils reflect on what, how and why they are learning, is something that a teacher should do in order for the pupils' learning and critical thinking to develop. Karen asked the children questions that they were to reflect on and give answers to. Examples of such questions are:

- “What was the most important thing you learned?”
  - “Are you prejudiced? Can you talk openly about your prejudices with your friends?”
  - “When do you think you learn the most and the best?”
  - “Do you feel that what you learned last Wednesday will be useful to you later on?”
  - “As a teacher I often find it difficult to bring this (sensitive subjects) into teaching in a natural way. Do you have any suggestions about what I, as a teacher, could do?”
- (Karen, in pupils' reflective journals).

The questions were about many important aspects of education, such as: reflection on one's own learning, teaching styles, how to treat one another (e.g. prejudice), lifelong

<sup>1</sup>I use the capital O, because it means others in a specific sense. The Other is viewed as a subject and an embodied individual. For further reading on this, see Lévinas (1969).



Figure 2. The students and the teacher meet one of the guests

learning, and pupils' influence on teaching. These questions could serve as points of departure in the children's reflection process, because the teacher gave them questions that she expected them to answer.

The pupils stated that they were learning a lot from the guests that visited the classroom. One pupil wrote:

“Today I have learnt that too much hard liquor can cause disabilities” (Linda, reflective journal).

This pupil was reflecting here on something that she seemed not to have thought very much about before – that alcohol might be the cause of many of the accidents that occur in society. Another pupil wrote:

“I have learnt that disabled people perhaps live a little differently, but except for a few things they are just like everybody else” (Cathrine, reflective journal).

This quotation shows that, through meeting the disabled man, the pupil had gained important knowledge that is likely to influence her ideas and actions the next time she meets a disabled person. The pupils also showed that they were thinking further about their new knowledge:

“It is easy to feel pity for people, and it might be nice for them for a while, but you don't help anyone by pitying them, so it is better to try to help them to get better” (Emily, reflective journal).

In this case the pupil demonstrated awareness of what she had learnt from the disabled man. Because of his situation – still being partially paralysed – it might be natural to feel pity for him, but the pupil had thought a bit further, as she stated that this would not help him any further. There are ways of helping people with problems other than feeling pity for them.

In the teacher's comments in the pupils' reflective journals, she expressed a feeling of having learned a great deal from both the visitors and the pupils when writing (in the pupils' reflective journals):

“I also discovered that I too am very prejudiced, more than I had thought.”  
 “The new people we are going to meet will experience our new way of treating people, which I think is more humble and less prejudiced!”  
 “I think it is great fun running this course... 8 interesting, curious and clever girls. Could it be better?”  
 (Karen, in pupils' reflective journals).

Karen stated that the knowledge gained from this course through meetings with both the visitors and the pupils would influence her treatment of people in the future. This quotation shows that experience develops out of reflecting on encounters with both oneself and other people, which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasise.

### Learning different kinds of knowledge, values and skills through the whole body

When the children and the teacher learned from each other, they also stated that in these meetings they learned different kinds of knowledge, values and skills. They learned this by means of their whole bodies, not merely through their reason. The pupils expressed views to the effect that the course had taught them a great deal of new knowledge about different lifestyles and the conditions of different people in the world.

*"We have learnt what it may be like to come to another country, but I still think that nobody can understand it... We will learn more from somebody who has been in an accident or something like that than if you [the teacher] stand in front of us and tell us it" (Jenny, reflective journal).*

These meetings probably had an impact on the pupils' own lives, since they made associations with their own lives and experiences based on the guests' stories. One of the guests, the disabled person, told them that he had been in an accident because he had been too drunk and walked into the middle of the road where a car ran over him. This influenced the pupils, one of whom wrote:

*"I learn to reflect on things after each meeting. Like this time, that you should be careful about alcohol and that you should be happy/careful with what you have got" (Sara, reflective journal).*

One of the other children associated what the disabled man had told them with her own life and how she wanted to treat other people:

*"I think a lot about not treating disabled people, for example, differently from other people. When I meet Kristina in the ninth grade I will talk to her. She is nice although she is disabled" (Anna, reflective journal).*

Noddings (2006) stresses that associations with a person's own life and interest in something are two important factors in a learning process. She believes that when we are genuinely interested, we will listen and read attentively. The children

demonstrated evidence of this genuine interest in the visitors' life stories through their active and reflective listening.

The pupils stated above that they had learnt new knowledge through meetings with others, but they also thought that they had acquired deeper knowledge. One pupil wrote:

*"It would be fun to find answers to all the questions, because there are some things you can't guess; I mean for example coming out and daring to tell your parents, friends and people around you [that you are homosexual]. Hearing people say what it might be like is pretty good, you learn a lot, and so on. I already knew some things, but this was sort of deeper, and you can enter into other people's feelings and lives" (Caroline, reflective journal).*

This pupil stated that she already had some knowledge of the subjects dealt with by the visitors in the classroom, but also that this knowledge might be more superficial. Through "face-to-face encounters" with people with varying life experiences, the knowledge was embodied and therefore influenced her in more profound way. It may be assumed that the deeper learning in this case might have to do with this pupil learning in an emotional way. The teacher also discovered the importance of acquiring knowledge through feelings, which she described in the following way:

*"I acquired knowledge that I can feel in my stomach and heart after our meetings... This knowledge was easy to acquire, interesting to share, and I will probably remember this better than if I had read it in a book" (Karen, in pupils' reflective journals).*

Learning not only through reason but also through feelings may lead to a deeper understanding of something and hence also to opportunities for real learning. Merleau-Ponty (1996) emphasises this when pointing out the importance of the body in a learning process. We learn and experience through our whole bodies, because body and soul are closely interwoven with each other. Feelings in the stomach and the heart are bodily manifestations of learning in the teacher's example. The children also showed that they were learning through emotions and feeling empathy for the visitors:

*"The most important thing I learned was probably to see things a little from his perspective... I really feel pity for him; it's sad, sad. I wouldn't like to experience anything like that... I was really moved by his story" (Jenny, reflective journal).*

Noddings (2006, 24) argues that the source of information is important in a learning process and that if the children experience a "strong affective response" to the person giving

the information, they will tend to remember the knowledge better.

Through the meetings in the classroom, Karen learned a great deal about herself as a teacher by reading my field notes from the course. She wrote in an e-mail to me:

*"When I read your reflections, I could see myself as a teacher with other eyes. I borrowed your glasses!... I regard your participation in this pupil project as a great benefit! I have already learned quite a lot and have a great deal to think about!" (Karen, e-mail to Ulrika).*

### Appreciating one another and what we do together

Another important aspect of learning from one another is that this course provided moments when the pupils and the teacher could appreciate one another and their respective activities. In Karen's comments in the pupils' reflective journals, she appreciated, confirmed and encouraged them with her words. She wrote for example:

*"This business about reflective journals is not so special, really; you try to write a few lines about what you are thinking, feeling/wondering about. You don't have to worry about it! You will get used to it."*

*"Thank you for letting me share your reflections."*

*"It would be interesting to hear what you think."*

*"I have noticed that you like people, so this [course] suits you well. Have you considered your future choice of occupation?"*

*"I agree with you – that you learn more when people with experiences of their own tell their stories themselves" (Karen, in pupils reflective journals).*

I assume that the pupils appreciated reading all these sentences and that hopefully this resulted in their developing even further. Confirmation is an important part of ethical and moral education in schools, as Noddings (2006) points out. She claims that really significant confirmation can only be achieved in a relationship, in this case in a relationship between the teacher and the pupils. The teacher must know the pupils well enough to be able to give confirmation in a credible way that will strengthen them. Karen also encouraged the pupils to change when writing for example, "How can we be less prejudiced? Have you got any suggestions?" The teacher

here gave the pupils an opportunity to think for themselves and make their own suggestions. This shows that Karen also encouraged the pupils to exert influence and take responsibility on their own. Karen stated that she valued the pupils as individuals and that she was really trying to see them and treat them as equals. This may also be said to be an expression of care for and trust in them. These ideas are closely linked to a concept in organisations, appreciative inquiry, which focuses on positive experiences and what we want more of (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005).

*"[Appreciative inquiry] deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities... And it is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible" (Cooperrider, 2001, 12).*

These ideas of development could also be applied in a conscious way in schools, since they fit in well with the curricula for pre-primary schools and compulsory schools.

The idea of making a documentary film of these meetings may also make it possible for the teacher and the pupils to appreciate what happened in the classroom, as the learning experiences will be saved audiovisually for the future. The film is a lasting record, so the pupils and the teacher will be able to watch it many times afterwards and reflect on the meetings. In addition to paying attention to and appreciating events, stories presented in a visual way, as films or digital photos, can also provide opportunities for reflecting on a practice and on learning from one another (Lemon, 2007). Learning from one another can take place for example between a teacher and pupils, as in this case, but it can also include other people. The pupils and the teacher can for example decide to show the film to other people in the school, so that they can also share their experiences in these meetings and hence maybe learn something new. One pupil also had this idea of the pupils sharing their experiences with others in the school. She reflected on the importance of meeting different people that they might not normally meet. She wrote:

*"I think people should talk more about things like this [homosexuality, immigration and disability] in the rest of the school" (Sara, reflective journal).*

In this quotation she stressed the importance of more pupils in the school having an opportunity to talk about these issues, which she found important. This clearly shows that she had really learned a lot from the different visitors, and that she also wanted the knowledge she had gained to benefit other pupils.

## The twofold task becomes one

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a teacher's task is, among other things, to promote children's learning, but at the same time the importance of ethics in schools and pre-primary schools is emphasised. The question is then how these two tasks can be fused into one, so that neither of them is overshadowed by the other. The first task may be said to be more about factual and comprehension knowledge, while the second is perhaps more about values, skills and behaviours towards other people. There are no sharp distinctions between these two tasks, which might cause problems if the two are too strictly separated. The consequence might be that teachers place too much emphasis either on subject knowledge or on fostering and training pupils in an ethical attitude to the people around them. According to the curricula for pre-primary school and compulsory school (Lpo 94; Lpfö 98), the two tasks should instead form a whole, as they state for example that ethics should permeate pre-primary schools and schools (Ministry of Education, 1994; 1998). This does not imply, however, that the learning of, for example, a particular subject should be decreased – on the contrary, there should be no competition between the “subject task” and the “ethics task”. My interpretation is that the two tasks were fused in the “Young people meet...” course into a unit that might be called ethical learning. This might imply that the participants in the course developed different abilities and hopefully acquired new knowledge and deepened the knowledge they already possessed. They probably also learned more about values and behaviours toward other people through these meetings. When a learning process, in a conscious manner, also deals with issues to do with our ethical attitude to others, this is ethical learning, as I see it. In this concept, ethics is about something inherent in every human relationship (Lévinas, 1969) and it is closely linked to Noddings' (2002) emphasis on ethics being a relational phenomenon and a matter of natural care for somebody else. This might imply that ethics should be seen as an underlying basis of all activities in pre-primary schools and schools – which might, for example, consist of teachers acting in an ethical manner when showing care for the children, by attempting to adapt their teaching to the pupils' wishes, needs and abilities. The concept of ethical learning indicates that both ethics and learning are in focus and that together they may, in the best-case scenario, form a unit.

When ethics and learning form the unit of ethical learning, I can see that learning from the Other is a basis for this, and I found many things that exemplify learning from others in the classroom meetings described in this chapter. The objective of the course was that the pupils should develop their empathic

ability and develop as human beings, hence learning from life, for life. A general feature of the pupils' and the teacher's reflections in the reflective journals is that they learned a great deal from the visitors and that they will benefit from this in life, both now and in the future. In the learning encounter with the Other, it is important for the relationships to be based on confidence, trust and attention to one another (Bergmark & Alerby, 2008). Pupils emphasise the importance of healthy relationships at school. In order for real learning to take place, it is crucial for the pupils to have confidence in and be seen by their teacher and their classmates (ibid). The importance of good relationships in an educational setting is also emphasised by Kostenius and Öhring (2006), when they point out that the children in their study experienced increased well-being in relationships of togetherness, love and support. The children developed ‘positive health experiences’ (ibid, 231). Lévinas (1969) further describes learning from the Other as openness to the Other, which means both openness to the Other's abilities and being a learning human being. When two subjects, you and I, have a relationship to each other, there will be an opportunity for this openness and for learning from each other.

*“It is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I ... this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation is ... an ethical relation...this conversation is a teaching [enseignement]. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain.”* (Lévinas, 1969, 51.)



Figure 3. Students learning from each other in the classroom

This quotation underlines that when we learn from each other, we are in an ethical relationship and that as individuals we will gain more if we have an open attitude and learn from each other than if we merely learn in isolation from other people (see Figure 3). Learning is interaction. We learn individually as well, of course – but learning through meetings with the Other in the classroom are perhaps more successful and may hopefully lead to a deeper understanding of what we learn, to lifelong learning in which we develop as human beings and at the same time enhance our well-being.

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## School Disadaptation of Children and Teenagers: Problems and Ways of Handling Them

Tatiana Tegaleva & Elena Shovina

### The notion of disadaptation and school disadaptation; main approaches to the analysis

Recently, considerable attention has been drawn within the school community and other concerned institutions to the problem of school disadaptation of children. In 1997 the Ministry of General and Professional Education of the Russian Federation issued a decree "On organising the work with children suffering from school disadaptation" which presented the initial progress and direction of work on preventing and rehabilitating children suffering from disadaptation. At the same time it mentioned that at present conditions in educational institutions and families quite often promote the development of disadaptation in children because they cannot and do not have any way of taking into account the individual characteristics of a child and provide the child with timely help. It noted the negative role of current educational overloading of children; a lack of clear diagnostic criteria for disadaptation, laid down a programme and methodological provisions for teachers and parents on how to identify, prevent and overcome school disadaptation; it referred to a lack of special institutions for correction and prevention; the absence of a unified state system for protection of children and teenagers and the prevention of child neglect and delinquency, etc.

Despite the fact that almost 10 years have passed since this decree was issued, the general position of children leaves much to be desired. According to some research the number of children suffering from school disadaptation is as high as 30% (Vyakina, 2006). The research we conducted within the project "Psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers in the Arctic region" in 2004–2006 showed that 32% of school children respondents think that "not everything is all right" in their life, and 4% have big problems. When answering the question "What do you think about your school?" 35% of school children admitted that they did not like it very much, 11% said they did not like it at all. As for their own achievements at school, 48% of school children noted that teachers assess their achievements as average, 7% as worse than average, i.e. they do not believe in pupils' abilities and talents. 10% of school children think that they are rejected by the class, 22% describe their relationships with classmates as unstable and contradictory (Ryzhkova, Tegaleva & Shovina, 2006).

Before studying the notion of school disadaptation, it is necessary to give a definition of disadaptation. In Russian science and abroad there are various approaches to defining this notion. Initially, disadaptation was connected with physical and mental problems endured by children and adults that limited their opportunities in life. Modern Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology have a broader approach to disadaptation. For example, disadaptation is a defect in the process of interaction between a person and the environment; a defect in or loss of full interaction between an individual and their environment (Belicheva 2000, 7); disadaptation is a process connected with the withdrawal from habitual living conditions and adaptation to different ones (Dichev & Tarasov, 1976); disadaptation consists of defects which reveal themselves when one has accentuated character traits or under the influence of psychogeny (Lichko, 1977; Kagan, 1984).

A variety of approaches for identification of and mechanisms for development of disadaptation are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Basic approaches to the mechanisms of disadaptation

	Author, concept name	Brief description
1.	R.M. Baevsky (1979), N.K. Smirnov (1981), S.B. Semichev (1981), Concept of "pre-disease", somatic-oriented approach	Disadaptation is a condition occurring before a disease which is characterised by the absence of clear symptoms for diagnosis, and by the readiness of the body to become ill with a disease caused by endogenous and exogenous factors.

2.	Ye. Olkinuora (1983)	Disadaptation is a state that appears as a result of a sudden change in living conditions, the habitual environment, or a difficult psycho-traumatic situation. Disadaptation develops according to the principle of a vicious circle, when one situation causes another etc.
3.	L.S.Vygotsky (1983). Ontogenetic approach (concept of "social development of a person")	Disadaptation is a state that appears when a child experiences crucial, critical moments of life when a sudden change in the "social development situation" takes place.
4.	V.N. Myasishev (1960), I.G. Bepalko (1981) Psychologically-orientated approach	The disadaptation process depends on the motivation structure and the emotional and intellectual characteristics of an individual, i.e. each person has different sensitivities to different influences.
5.	S. Freud, K. Horny Psychoanalytical approach	Social-psychological disadaptation is a final effect revealed in defects in the homeostatic balance of a person and the environment as well as inner subjective defects, i.e. defects in social-psychological adaptation. The content of the social-psychological adaptation is described by the formula: conflict – anxiety – protective reactions. If protective reactions prove to be insufficient to remove the anxiety from the consciousness then protective mechanism 'failure' takes place, anxiety strengthens and disadaptation is caused. Social-psychological disadaptation is an inevitable and necessary stage of development in the formation of children's anxiety and its resolution. K. Horny describes disadaptation as an attempt to find a compromise in a conflict between opposing tendencies, as a deviation from the generally accepted forms of cultural interpersonal behaviour, and as a slowed process of self-realisation.

In our article we consider that disadaptation is a defect in the interaction between a person and their environment. Disadaptation can be viewed not only from the negative side but also from the positive. It can take the form of a relatively short situational state which is the result of new, unusual en-

vironment irritants which signal a problem in the balance between mental activities and environmental requirements and stimulate re-adaptation. In this sense disadaptation is an essential component of the adaptation process revealed at the stage of acute psychic introgression reactions, and it is the basis for its content.

The problem of school disadaptation is one of the most serious because its consequences are persistent types of psychosocial disadaptation, defects in behaviour on a somatic, mental and social (legal, moral, criminal) level, i.e. school disadaptation must be viewed as part of a broader phenomenon – social disadaptation: it becomes impossible for a child to implement their social role in certain micro-social situations.

School disadaptation can be viewed from several perspectives as:

- 1) as a structural element of the social disadaptation in general
- 2) as a result of the general social disadaptation
- 3) as a cause of the general social disadaptation

There are several approaches to understanding and explaining school disadaptation:

- 1) School disadaptation is a defect in the adaptation of a school child to the conditions of education at school that takes the form of a specific disorder in the child's general psychic adaptation ability due to different pathological factors. In this context school disadaptation is a medical and biological problem.
- 2) School disadaptation is a multifactor process involving the worsening of the child's ability to learn due to the inadequacy of the conditions and requirements of the educational process, the surrounding social environment and the child's psychological and physiological potential and needs.
- 3) School disadaptation is mainly a socio-pedagogical phenomenon in the development of which the key role is played by integral pedagogical and school factors. The unsuitability of pedagogical requirements to a child and the child's capacity to meet them is a starting point for the development of school disadaptation.
- 4) School disadaptation is a complex social and psychological phenomenon the essence of which is the child's inability to find "their place" in school education where they can be accepted as they are with their identity, opportunities for self-realisation and self-actualisation. This approach concerns the psychic state of the child and the psychological context of interdependent relationships that develops during education: "family-child-school", "child-teacher", "child-classmates", "individually preferred education technologies – the ones used at school". This situation is based on external manifes-

tations of school disadaptation as a "mask" in which reactions take place that are undesirable for parents and other adults who are in charge of training and education, as well as manifestations of the inner subjective, unsolvable conflict of a child connected with education and solutions to the conflict which are acceptable for the child.

None of these approaches gives a full picture of the development of school disadaptation. The most reasonable is a complex approach to this phenomenon. Thus, it is possible to use the notion of "school disadaptation" when looking at any difficulties which appear during school education. An analysis of theoretical and methodological literature shows that there are biological, psychological and social mechanisms of school disadaptation development which interact.

### The main manifestations and factors of school disadaptation

Most frequently, school disadaptation can take shape during the following periods of education: the beginning of school education (1st year); passing from junior school to senior school (5th year); graduation from secondary school (7th–9th years), i.e. time periods correspond with the "crises" of growing up (Vygotsky, 1984), which are determined by the change in the social role.

The whole life of a child involves a number of challenges to overcome. The way a child copes with them can either cause disadaptation or result in a new stage of development. In this sense coping with any crisis is an achievement for the child and contributes to their self-esteem and social maturity. A teacher should remember the main crises in the childhood period and try to thoughtfully and diplomatically help to cope with them using the data of age-related psychology.

The main factors of school disadaptation can be divided into two groups: endogenous and exogenous (see Table 2).



Table 2. Factors of school disadaptation

Endogenous	Exogenous
1) Intrinsic: a child takes on psycho-physiological features from their parents which influence their development and future life in one way or another.	1) Dominating character of relationships between adults and children: unsatisfying emotional atmosphere of relationships between adults and children (mistrust, anxiety, pessimism, boredom, inactivity, unfriendliness); aversion of children to adults; inflexibility of adults in their relationships with children; inconsistency of parents in their behaviour towards children; communication on the basis of false ideas about parents' authority (pedantry of parents, physical or moral suppression, bribery of children, etc.).
2) Problems existing from birth (prenatal problems): prematurity, weakness and ill health, unusual development and functioning of organs and functional systems in the body that influence its further development, physical defects (too tall or short, excessive weight or excessive thinness), unusual appearance, stammering, poor sight etc.	2) Education which does not take into account individual characteristics of a child, pedagogical faults in work with the child: lack (absence) of proper education in early childhood; indifference to a child; desire of parents to base their upbringing on science, disregarding the child's individuality, following fashionable tendencies of the pedagogical elite; "forcing" measures of influence on a child in a family; connivance in education; desire of parents to isolate a child from the environment etc.
3) Problems arising in early childhood, caused by a variety of factors, which require considerable care for a child (post-natal problems): artificial feeding; getting infections from breast-feeding; conditions of everyday life; diseases and their consequences; evident or latent malnourishment; injuries to the head, traumas, etc.	3) Family problems which influence the upbringing of children: a child is unwanted and as a result a negative attitude is displayed towards them; conflictual relationship between parents; aggression; parents' neglect in bringing up a child for various reasons; absence of the usual requirements, consistency of behaviour in the education process; absence of discipline and order within family, lack of positive educational examples to follow etc.
4) Personal psychological problems (easy to influence, lack of self-control, weak will, aggression, easily tired)	4) Entering a new stage of development (for example, passing from one stage of school education to another)
5) Personal problems (self-assurance, arrogance, absence of adequate communication skills etc.)	5) Negative social environment (casual acquaintances, groups of neighbourhood children, negative example of neighbours etc.)
6) Capacity for personal integration (self-esteem, level of pretension etc.)	6) Relationships within the school, school atmosphere: low level of culture of staff at the school; unsatisfactory resources of the school; insufficient professionalism of teachers; absence of desire among teachers to understand the specific characteristics of the personal development of a child; absence of interaction between a family and school; absence of social teachers, psychologists and social workers in many pedagogical communities; rare contact between schools and medical/psychological/pedagogical centres and services etc.

Attention should be paid to the following points:

- The abovementioned factors can become causes for school disadaptation in certain situations but they do not make it inevitable.
- The abovementioned factors can be viewed from two sides: as actual prerequisites for disorders and as part of the symptoms of disadaptation.
- The abovementioned factors are rarely encountered in "a pure form", the factors are more often revealed in complex ways and can interact in a latent form through mediators.
- Inner and outer (endogenous and exogenous) factors are generally mixed.
- Among the main spheres in which school disadaptation can manifest itself are school, family, friends and society as a whole (see table 3).



Table 3. Main manifestations of school disadaptation in different spheres of the life of a child

In society	At school	In the family	In groups (with friends)
Inactivity Deviations Delinquent behaviour etc.	Poor progress Absenteeism Refusal to go to school Loss of interest in studies Misbehaviour Rudeness Idleness etc.	Conflicts, Distrust, anxiety, pessimism, boredom, inactivity, unfriendliness etc.	Restraint Tendency to stay apart from the group, be isolated etc.

At present there are three main types of manifestation of school disadaptation (Vyakina 2006) in consideration:

- falling behind when studying according to programmes corresponding to the age of a child, including symptoms such as constant academic failure and insufficient and fragmentary general educational information, without systematic knowledge and skills (the cognitive component of school disadaptation)
- constant inappropriate emotional/personal attitude to various disciplines, education on the whole, teachers and matters connected with studies (the emotional, personal component of school disadaptation)
- systematically repeated misbehaviour during the education process and at school (the behaviour component of school disadaptation)

It is easy to observe all three components among children with school disadaptation. Which one of the school disadaptation components is predominant depends on the one hand on the child's age and stage of personal development, and on the other on the causes of the school disadaptation (Vostoknutov, 1995).

The main directions of socio-pedagogical activities on preventing and dealing with school disadaptation of children and teenagers in educational institutions

The following general points for preventing and dealing with a child's disadaptation can be identified (Mardahaev, 2003):

1. increasing the role of the family in preventing socially deviant behaviour among children;
2. increasing the educational role of educational institutions in preventing and dealing with deviant behaviour in children and teenagers;
3. developing purposeful interaction between the family and the school, and family, school and administrative bodies at local level, in preventing and dealing with deviant behaviour in children and teenagers;
4. identifying the child's social contacts and monitoring them in the process of the child's development and education;
5. developing an out-of-school consultation and help system for families and children dealing with deviant behaviour;
6. increasing the role of special institutions in helping to

compensate for educational setbacks and correcting deviant behaviour in children and teenagers;

7. developing a network of centres for solving the socio-pedagogical problems of children, teenagers and young people: pedagogical correction, pedagogical rehabilitation; medical, social and pedagogical help in coping with children's and young people's alcoholism and drug addiction, as well as rehabilitating victims of violence and bullying;
8. using mass media as a positive force and protecting children and teenagers from its negative influence;
9. attracting children and teenagers to participate in beneficial activities in public centres and organisations (sports, culture, leisure, tourism, theatre, etc.);
10. multifaceted motivation for self-education, self-improvement activities and correction of negative characteristics and bad habits, helping and supporting a child in their self-improvement efforts.

Preventing and dealing with school disadaptation in children and teenagers is a primary focus of the work of the school community which requires complex efforts involving specialists with different profiles. In our opinion it is reasonable to identify the main directions of the socio-pedagogical work of the various professionals as follows:

1. work with the school community;
2. work with parents;
3. work with pupils;
4. joint work with educational and social institutions in the city (municipality).

**Work with the school community** is a difficult and complex process affected by multifaceted relationships within the community, the complexity of taking into account the personal and professional characteristics of specialists, and the necessity of considering the rights and interests of all the parties which are acting to reach the common goal of the social institution, i.e. educating children. Social teachers can promote the prevention of school disadaptation while working with the school community by using the following approaches and methods:

1. organising pedagogical workshops with different themes aimed at raising the professional competence of school specialists: for example, "Motivation of teachers' work" created by Elena Vorobjeva, Vice-Principal of school No 3, and published in the third part of this book;
2. creating the most favourable possible atmosphere for pedagogical work in the educational institution, raising the level

of social and psychological security of teachers by organising individual and group consultations, and teaching methods of relaxation, self-control and ways to release psychic tension;

3. encouraging teachers to undertake self-improvement activities and increase their pedagogical skills and level of culture.

**Work with parents** includes a block of questions about social, psychological and pedagogical family support, and how to keep in mind the interests of the child. Social teachers take an active part in building the system of psychological and pedagogical enlightenment of parents, they participate in discussions about the characteristics of the personal development and psychosocial health of a child, and they organise social protection and support for the family.

Cooperation between the family and the school strengthens the influence of education on children and teenagers. It therefore includes:

1. methodological seminars for parents in schools (lectures and workshops for parents), individual consultations on the psychological, pedagogical and legal issues involved in the education, training and development of a child, the social protection of a family etc.;
2. psychological/pedagogical and socio-psychological training sessions aimed at promoting the self-development and self-actualisation of parents;
3. assistance in the work of parents' committees and increasing their authority in school life; assistance in maintaining contact between parents and teachers;



Extracurricular activities of schoolchildren

4. parents involved in active participation in class and school activities; joint activities organised;
5. teachers visiting children at home (to show interest and concern for the children's lives);
6. social diagnostics organised for families along with social monitoring of a "risk group";
7. specialists from the multiprofessional group helping and supporting parents in educational work with children.

**Work with pupils** involves the following:

1. out-of-school educational work with children and teenagers: clubs and societies with different focuses, opening of sports clubs;
2. activities to help in forming a healthy lifestyle, and to prevent bad habits and neuro-psychic and somatic diseases; the educational process is re-organised in the most appropriate way for the situation;
3. psychological and pedagogical diagnostics of a child, specific features of their development, revealing their social contacts, important friends and adults (People who are in close contact with the child strongly influence their development and education. These people's authority and ability to convince determine the future life of the child to a large degree. As a result it is necessary to identify the social contacts of a child and try to monitor their interaction with people in a pedagogically correct way.);



What is health?

4. promotion of the preservation of national traditions, organisation of national festivals;
5. assistance in professional orientation and self-determination;
6. work with children who require more attention (gifted children, children from families in a "risk group", children with limited capacities);
7. complex lessons, psychological and pedagogical training sessions with children and teenagers aimed at teaching them to control their psycho-emotional state, resist stress, increase their self-esteem and form skills for confident behaviour in problem situations (An example of such work is a lesson produced by Svetlana Okruzhnova, social teacher from Lovozero boarding school, which is given in the third part of this book.);
8. social services in educational institutions that promote individual work with children and teenagers with deviant behaviour, and help teachers and parents in their work.

**Joint work with educational and social institutions** in the city presupposes the development of interaction between families, schools and administrative bodies on a local level to prevent deviant behaviour in children and teenagers.

Principles for organising help for children and teenagers:

1. creating an emotionally comfortable atmosphere of cooperation and partnership;
2. inclusion in collective activities;
3. constant teaching and practice of social skills and knowledge;
4. constant diagnostics of the condition of children and teenagers;
5. no rigidity or arrogance in communication;
6. complex approach to the prevention and correction of school disadaptation including the work of social teachers, psychologists, class teachers, administration and medical workers.

When working with children and teenagers suffering from disadaptation it is possible to use the methods and principles of appeals for volunteer help (asking for help), and the principle of offering help.

## Pedagogical factors in preventing school disadaptation:

1. knowing the social situation surrounding the development and life of a child;
2. analysis of the child's primary, subjectively unsolvable, conflict within school disadaptation;
3. assessment of the phases and levels of physical and psychic development, individual, mental and personal characteristics, the nature of the leading relationships and the unique features of the child's reactions to the crisis situation and personally significant conflicts;
4. taking into consideration factors that lead to and deepen school disadaptation; personally orientated ways and means of communication between a teacher and pupils; respect for the personality and individuality of each child suffering from disadaptation;
5. reasonable and optimal organisation of the pedagogical process based on sustainable content, forms, methods and requirements adapted to the child.

The leading factor in preventing and dealing with school disadaptation is a complex interaction between teachers, educators, school psychologists, social teachers, i.e. all educational professionals, and parents. The basis of interaction is mutual understanding between the members of the professional group, a desire to reach a common goal and mutual responsibility for the results of the work in the form of an integrated educational environment whose functions are the socialisation and development of a child's personality.

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## Interaction between the Family and the School as a Factor in Improving the Psychosocial Well-Being of Children

Tatiana Tegaleva and Elena Shovina

### The familial dimension of children's well-being



Evening party at school

The future of contemporary society and the state depends on the physical, mental and intellectual health of children and their social well-being. That is why concern about the psychosocial health of children should become a fundamental part of life. The social influences which are the closest to a child and which initially determine his/her level of development and the preservation of his/her psychosocial well-being are the family and educational institutions (school in this case). Like the family, schools are interested in finding an efficient solution to this problem because the success of pedagogical and educational activities in a school to a large extent depends on the health (in the broadest sense of the word) and well-being of children and their families as well. The family is a complex organism which integrates many factors and which can exist in a certain system of relationships only. In contemporary Russian society, the family and family education experience considerable difficulties for different reasons: problems with interpersonal communication in the family; family conflicts; "faults" in family teaching; the inability of an adult to help a child to solve his/her personal problems; violence in the family, etc. In practice, damage to the psychosocial health of children often coincides with the beginning of school education when family problems are aggravated by difficulties connected with school attendance.

Some parents do not tolerate interference from outside and prefer to rely on their own resources – they do not trust an educational institution because of the negative influence of schooling on the child's health: an excessive study load, stress, hypodynamia and other problems. At the same time, many parents are not able to overcome the difficulties they experience by themselves. According to the results of research into the psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers in the Murmansk region (2004–2006) two thirds of parents admitted that their psychological and pedagogical knowledge was insufficient and said that the most difficult aspect for them was developing a relationship of trust with their child. There was evidence of deviation, emotional coldness and ambivalence towards education on the part of the parents (Ryzhkova et al., 209–218).

The research also indicated that some parents were unable to maintain self-control, had a latent tendency towards authoritarianism, leading to disrespect for the child, and suffered from an inferiority complex. This was particularly the case in incomplete families. There are objective and subjective reasons for these phenomena. The objective reason is the absence of conditions for a harmonious family life in society; the subjective one is a limited level of interference in the life of a family because relationships within the family are created by its members only. The well-being of a family as a social institution depends on it being in balance with the environment. Any imbalance caused by environmental conditions results in the need to re-group the structure and functions of the family. In order for a family to be stable and capable of successfully implementing its socially important functions, all of society's educational efforts need to be integrated so that serious and multifaceted help and support can be provided to a family.

## Interaction between the family and the school

Scientific pedagogical literature devoted to the problem of integrating educational efforts uses the following terms synonymously: *a school's work with the family; joint work; cooperation; joint activities and interaction*. We believe that the term "interaction" is the best reflection of the process of purposeful mutual influence between the school and the family to contribute to a more successful realisation of their educational possibilities. "Interaction is a process of simultaneous and two-part actions involving two or more systems; this process is natural and is revealed in their objective attributes" (Gurov, 1998, 118). This process has certain limits and the following parameters: a beginning, intermediate stages, an ending; two or more sides of the interaction; content which depends on the nature of its component parts. It is possible to present a model for this interaction. Social interaction presupposes the integration of social processes in different social institutions (family, school, group of friends) within specially organised activities. These processes include: 1) the social development of a person 2) the pedagogical transformation of society (by methods of intervention – promotion of a healthy lifestyle, prevention of bad habits, introduction of certain rules of behaviour, etc.) and 3) ensuring the interaction of people and society.

The content of interaction is determined by its goals and objectives. The stages of interaction differ in terms of the activity level of the subjects of the interaction: the leading subject of interaction is the one which is more active in the most significant aspect, but the correlation of activity changes as the cooperation develops.

## Interaction of the family and the school as a socio-pedagogical process

It should be noted that the concept of a school's social work teaching with a family is not yet supported by fundamental research focusing on methodology and theory, which would provide bases for the methods, means and factors involved in finding positive solutions for the family's problems. At the same time, there are a number of works on social interaction and its role in personal development (Antonov, 2000; Kon, 1989; Lisovsky, 1990). V.G. Bocharova (1993), B.Z. Wulfov (1994) and T.V. Lodkina (2007) have studied the socio-pedagogical work of schools with families in Russia. I.V. Grebennikov (1991) and V.N. Gurov (1995) have studied the specific features of introducing different forms, methods and content

for the socio-pedagogical education of parents into school practice. In our research we used the research data of Swedish scholars G. Bernler and D. Jonsson (1991) who considered socio-pedagogical work as 'work to change'. They viewed changes of subjective characteristics as a process of mutual influence.

A group of Canadian scholars (L. Smith, B. Taylor-Holton, K. Tindal) led by Professor R. Ramsey produced their own model of the theory of socio-pedagogical activities (Ramsey, 1991). In their opinion, the central function of social work is socialisation and improving the interaction between people and their environment. They proceed from the basis that there is a common structural constant in all systems which ensures that they maintain a fundamental order. The same universal constant applies to the basis of socio-pedagogical activities; it makes it independent of nation states, prevailing ideologies and cultures. At the same time this global model can take the form of 'local variants' in local conditions. These discoveries led to the conclusion that "the world consists not of things but of interactions. These are interactions that possess certain attributes, not independently existing objects. This is scientifically confirmed knowledge that must be music to the ears of social teachers" Ramsey writes (*ibid*, 10).

As a result, at present scholars in Russia and abroad are trying to create a model of socio-pedagogical work based on the interaction between the subjects in the process. There is no doubt that socio-pedagogical work is a systematic type of work in which changes take place constantly during the interaction, for example, between the family and its members, the family and society, the family and the school. When organising socio-pedagogical interaction with the family, the following should be taken into account: 1) There must be a

sound basis for intervention in the family; 2) Situations in which an external influence becomes internal and causes changes (in the role of a person or a group of people) must be taken into account; 3) Any intervention in the life of a family must be done carefully, taking into account the family's individual characteristics. The goal of this type of action should be achieving harmony between all those involved in the process. According to A.I. Lipsky (2004), harmonising interaction involves three different dimensions: socialisation of a person, pedagogisation of the social environment and ensuring interaction between the person and their environment. Figure 1 presents a model of how to harmonise interaction between subjects in society.

The intersection of the two circles (1) denotes the inclusion of a person in society during her/his life, i.e. her/his social development. Depending on the theoretical approach employed, it can be called socialisation, social education, social formation or social development (Wulfov, 1993). Circle 2 denotes 'the pedagogisation of society' which presupposes the rational use or strengthening of the influence of pedagogical potential in society (Lipsky, 2004). Circle 3 denotes the management of daily interaction between a person and society on the principle of harmonisation, i.e. "pedagogical management of relationships between a person and society" (Filonova 1998, 9) according to the goal of the socio-pedagogical activity. In this case such a goal is to increase the psychosocial health of all subjects in society.

## Specific functions of the family and the school

The basic idea in defining the opportunities and specific character of interaction between the school and the family in improving the psychosocial health of children is that of perceiving the specific characteristics of this phenomenon as a socio-pedagogical process characterised by the simultaneous existence of a number of subjects of interaction, the interdependence of changes in them and an increase in their possibilities while preserving their specific character. The essence of pedagogical interaction between the school and the family is determined by the development of specific and general aspects of their activities. The school's and the family's ability to improve a child's psychosocial health is determined by the functional characteristics of their relationship to the child. We think that the family's potential lies in its opportunities for prevention, parents' natural care for their child and the influence of parents on the development of the child's personality.

The school's opportunities school include professionally trained staff (teachers, psychologists, medical workers, social teachers and other experts); the content of the educational process, which is based on data from physiology, psychology, medicine and pedagogy; and facilities that enable conditions to be created for the multifaceted development of a child. Interaction increases the possibilities of the school and the family and contributes to building conditions for more efficient work aimed at improving the psychosocial health of children. Interaction is viewed as the leading factor in psychosocial well-being. Defining the possibilities of the school and the family allows us to identify the functions of each subject in the interaction. We can identify the general and specific functions of the school and the family in improving the psychosocial health of children and teenagers. What is common to the school and the family is support for the natural development of a child, in which the following positions are typical:

- The natural development of children is the primary focus; the goals and objectives of adults are secondary (the basis of mental and physical health);
- The socio-cultural development of a child takes place in her/his contacts with the environment and her/his own awareness of this environment (social health);
- The assessment criterion for adults' work with children is the development of the individual characteristics of a child and the constant appearance of new creative resources.

The specific functions of the school in this process are organising the educational process and thereby teaching pupils ways to adopt and implement knowledge as a basis for developing their individuality; organising work to increase the professional skills of teachers and the pedagogical awareness of parents; and coordinating the work of all those involved in the interaction to improve the psychosocial health of children. The school is responsible for preserving the health of children and improving their psychosocial well-being, which is why it is necessary to organise the educational process rationally, to optimise physical education and to provide remedial, prophylactic, social and psychological support for pupils.

The specific functions of the family are creating a structure for family life which lets each family member realise his/her potential and compensate for the negative influences of the environment; preventing deviant behaviour and promoting the development of a healthy lifestyle; organising communication within the family which is characterised by trust, moral protection, empathy and psycho-physiological comfort; and arranging common activities involving both parents and children which give the children a feeling of personal significance. The family is responsible for the genetic, physical, mental and social health of children. It must create everyday

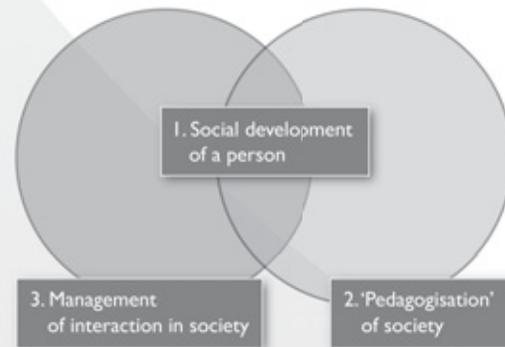


Figure 1. Model of how to harmonise interaction between subjects in society

living, material, psychological and pedagogical conditions to enable the child to develop comfortably. The family microclimate, its cultural, pedagogical and educational capacities, and its attitude to health and a healthy lifestyle influence the health of children and their attitude towards their own health and the health of others.

However, despite the clear responsibilities of the school in terms of preserving the well-being and health of children, there are certain problems. Our experience shows that not all school teachers have sufficient knowledge about the psychosocial health of children, and the possibilities and roles of the family and the school in preventing deviations. School teachers believe that the health of a child is the concern of the child's family. Parents also lack knowledge about the psychosocial health of children and what can harm it, and they believe that the school can solve this problem. This makes it important to create a new model for interaction between the family and the school on the basis of a multiprofessional group of specialists whose goal is to maintain and increase the psychosocial well-being of the family as a whole.

### Social pedagogy as a support for school education

We offer the following model of *Social Pedagogy as a Support for School Education*. This is a model for how to provide socio-pedagogical and medico-psychological help to the school community and the family in order to increase the psychosocial health and well-being of children. To realise the model, it is necessary to create a multiprofessional group which includes all school specialists: teachers, social teachers and social workers, medical workers and other experts. According to the model, the goal of these multiprofessional groups is to create psychological and socio-pedagogical conditions for improving the psychosocial health of children and teenagers.

The interaction of social teachers, psychologists, social workers and others in schools must raise the efficiency of the educational process and provide efficient help to children and parents. The result of this interaction should be an improvement in the psychosocial health of children and adults. In the first stage of the interaction we defined the functions of all the specialists in the multiprofessional group: teachers, class teachers, psychologists, medical workers, social teachers and parents.

### Functions of the specialists in the multiprofessional group

A teacher observes the child while communicating with him/her. They study the relationships between the children, discuss children's problems with other school specialists and participate, together with parents, in activities to improve the psychological and pedagogical culture. They also implement the recommendations of the specialists from the multiprofessional group on how to improve the educational process in order to increase the psychosocial well-being of the school community.

The *psychologist* diagnoses the level and specific characteristics of the personal development of children, defines the psycho-emotional and social status of pupils, studies the level of school and environmental adaptation of children, and provides school specialists with advice about the age groups and individual characteristics of children and teenagers, and about the organisation of the educational process, in order to improve the psychosocial health of pupils. The psychologist also supervises the organisation of the cooperation and interaction between teachers and parents within the school system in order to increase the professional skills and psychological and pedagogical culture of parents. As a result of the efforts of the psychologist, a certain minimum level of knowledge about the psychosocial health of children is used in practice and readiness to engage in constructive cooperation appears.

*Medical workers* arrange medical diagnosis of pupils (when necessary), monitor health and hygiene standards in the school, carry out disease-prevention work, and create a programme of joint activities for the school and the family in agreement with other specialists in the multiprofessional group to improve psychosocial conditions in these social institutions.

The *social teacher* studies the specific character of the pupils' family life, organises social diagnosis of the child's immediate surroundings, works to prevent school disadaptation, addictive behaviour and violence in school, protects pupil's interests in difficult living circumstances (divorce, illness or anti-social behaviour of parents), coordinates the work of the various services that help a child to overcome difficult living circumstances, and organises psycho-pedagogical and legal education of school specialists and parents.

Parents take an active part in the system of psycho-pedagogical education, they change the family life dynamic according to the requirements in terms of preserving and improving human health, and participate in discussions about the personal growth characteristics and psychosocial health of a child. Improving interaction goes hand in hand with increasing the educational possibilities of the family and the

school as subjects, and this leads to changes in their activities.

Depending on the level of educational potential, determination and readiness of a teacher to cooperate, school specialists and parents prove to have different levels of commitment and so are involved in different kinds of activities. At the same time, despite the increase in commitment of parents and the educational potential of the family it should be admitted that the school has the leading role in all stages of the interaction since it has professionally trained staff.

### The main focuses of the socio-pedagogical work of the multiprofessional group during interaction between the family and the school

The model presupposes implementation of the following focuses of the socio-pedagogical activity in family and school interaction, directed at pupils, their parents and all the specialists in the multiprofessional group.

**Educational help (help in teaching and educating children):**

- prevention of the school disadaptation of a child (refusal to study and to learn, inability to cope with academic subjects, conflicts with class mates and teachers etc.);
- a personal approach in educating and teaching children;
- help in professional self-identification;
- orientation towards a healthy lifestyle (prevention of addictive behaviour);
- development of a culture of good behaviour.

**Psychological help (support and correction):**

- correction of relationships (teacher-pupil; parent-child; child-child; teacher-parent);
- prevention of aggressive behaviour;
- correction of the behaviour of children with a tendency towards aggression (violence).

**Mediator help (coordination, information):**

- providing information about changes in legislation, the rights of children and benefits and guarantees for families;
- involvement of different specialists to provide help to those who are enduring difficult living circumstances.

There are various ways of carrying out work involving the interaction between the family and the school in order to improve the psychosocial health of children and teenagers: training specialists in the multiprofessional groups, parents and children (lectures, business games, training sessions, con-

sultations, etc.). We believe that implementation of this model will lead to improved conditions in the school community, which will in turn promote the socio-psychological health of the children. After our experimental research it was possible to define four main stages in the development of interaction between the family and the school.

### Stages of interaction between the family and the school

In the first stage, relationships between the school and the family take the form of non-personal communication. Teachers and parents implement non-agreed pedagogical influences on a child who is at this stage an object. Studies of the readiness of school specialists and parents to work on improving psycho-pedagogical conditions in both the school and the family show that the majority of adults lack knowledge about the theoretical basis of the notions of psychosocial health and well-being. On the basis of the research results we defined the content of the interaction as: increasing the psycho-pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary in specialists in the multiprofessional group; increasing the psycho-pedagogical awareness of parents; timely diagnosis of the personal characteristics of a child; creation of optimal conditions for identifying and developing the child's abilities as a means of self-realisation in his/her activities; and organisation of joint activities involving school specialists, parents and pupils, aimed at creating "success situations", amongst others. Improving the professionalism of specialists in the multiprofessional group and raising the psycho-pedagogical awareness of parents are the leading conditions for interaction to improve the psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers. Training of school specialists and parents must be formulated according to their role in the future stages of the interaction. A specific requirement in the training stage is the introduction of knowledge based on integration of various sciences – medicine, psychology, pedagogy, etc. – into the day-to-day practice of those involved in socio-pedagogical activity.

In the second stage of organising the interaction, the school's active role in improving the psychosocial health and well-being of children increases. The relationships between the school and the family are contradictory because one of the subjects in the interaction (the family) uses the activity of the other (the school). The child is only a passive object. In the third stage, evidence of the consistent influence of the work of the school specialists from the multiprofessional group, together with parents and pupils, begins to emerge. In the fourth stage of the joint activity, interaction becomes personal and turns into cooperation with the goal of improving

the psychosocial health of all those involved in the interaction. Thus, the school and the family are focused on solving common tasks: personal socialisation, enriching the positive social experience of school children and creating comfortable psycho-pedagogical conditions to improve the psychosocial health of children. When it influences society and the family, the school does not limit their freedom of self-realisation but rather creates favourable conditions for this process. Their interaction and mutual influence is very important and it is vital that the family does not find itself being just a passive object of social work.

## Conclusion

The efficiency of the interaction between schools and society to a great degree depends on the school in question and its cooperation with other social services that work with families. This suggested model for interaction between two or more social institutions which are important for a child is realistic and admits certain conditions for tasks to improve the psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers.

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## Ways of Coping with Stress – Practicum for Children

Svetlana Okruzhnova



What am I?

The goal of the practicum is to train teenagers to control their psycho-emotional state. The objectives are to find out what teenagers know about stress and how susceptible they are to stress. Another objective is to acquaint the participants of the training session with the impact of stress on the human body and its negative results as well as to teach teenagers basic methods of coping with stress. In addition to this, the practicum is orientated towards contributing to their skills in terms of confident behaviour in stressful situations. The target group is teenagers aged 13–15.

We use “How are you today?” charts and a “What is your level of susceptibility?” test. In addition we use “Methods of self regulation” information cards. The practicum takes the form of a practical lesson. This practicum can be used by school specialists in multiprofessional groups in preventive work with teenagers. This article presents the materials for 6 lessons which were prepared by the author. Depending on the age and individual characteristics of children, the materials can be used in different combinations.

The practicum starts with motivating the participants. In the beginning we greet the participants of the working group and describe the objectives and plan of work. The content of the lesson is as follows. After greeting the class, the teacher shows children a chart saying “Today you feel...” and asks pupils to examine it. Then pupils are asked to describe their own mood today, yesterday and last week. They are also encouraged to share emotions with the class. The participants of the train-

ing session describe their mood and explain it. There may be teenagers among those present who feel tired, guilty, angry, lonely and uneasy.

The following questions can be used to support the discussion in class:

1. Why is our mood not always good, how does that happen?
2. What changes in our body can it cause?
3. How can we cope with these feelings?
4. What does the word “stress” mean? How does it reveal itself?
5. What methods can be used to cope with stress and maintain good health?

These questions are followed by the group discussion. Children try to define the notion of “stress” themselves. The negative consequences of stress (despondency, a bad mood, developing aggressive behaviour, neurosis) and causes of such conditions are also pondered together. After listening to children’s answers the trainer offers a test called “What is your level of susceptibility?” The task is to read each statement and circle the answer which corresponds to the child’s behaviour and condition the most.

No	Question	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
1	I am easily annoyed and offended	3	2	1
2	I can't stand falling behind	3	2	1
3	If anyone judges me or criticises me I get angry but do not show my feelings	3	2	1
4	I am impatient when I have to stand in a queue	3	2	1
5	I can take on more responsibility though I know I will feel uncomfortable	3	2	1
6	It is difficult for me to ask for help when I need it	3	2	1

7	I take medicine to cope with stress	3	2	1
8	I discuss problems with people I trust	1	2	3
9	It is difficult for me to apologise if I make a mistake	3	2	1
10	I am very much distressed and blame myself if I make a mistake	3	2	1
11	If other people offend me I let them see this	1	2	3
12	I think I give my friends more than I receive from them	3	2	1
13	I have leisure time and enjoy entertainment	1	2	3
14	I have time for physical exercise every day or almost every day	1	2	3
15	I often smile and laugh	1	2	3

The total score of the answers shows the level of susceptibility to stress.  
 The key is as follows:  
 Group 1: – scores of 15–25 (low susceptibility to stress);  
 Group 2: – scores of 26–35 (medium susceptibility to stress);  
 Group 3: – scores of 36–45 (high susceptibility to stress).



Work in groups

In any case, whatever the test result is, no one should panic or get upset. Forewarned is fore-armed, as the saying says. Then the trainer suggests getting more closely acquainted with the notion of stress, and gives a definition of the concept. The trainer also talks about how stress can influence the human body, the adaptive capacity of the human body and how and with what exercises it can be developed.

Another interactive exercise is called “a minute”. The goal of the exercise is to define the adaptive potential of teenagers. The trainer asks participants to close their eyes and try to feel when a minute is up after the command “Start!” Participants are advised not to count. As soon as pupils feel that the minute is over they should raise a hand and open their eyes. It is important to continue sitting quietly. Then the teacher tells each child the duration of his “individual minute”. The teacher also tells the children that people with a high adaptive potential are able to “extend” time. Sometimes their individual minute lasts for 80–85 seconds. People with a low adaptive capacity count the minute quicker, perhaps 35–57 seconds.

One interactive exercise is called a “Balloon”. The goal of this exercise is to model an emotionally important stress situation. The teacher-psychologist puts a glass (a plastic one) on their palm or takes a balloon and says: “Imagine that this plastic glass (balloon) is a container filled with your innermost feelings, desires and thoughts. You can put anything you love and appreciate in it.” There is silence in the classroom for a few minutes and then suddenly the teacher crumples the plastic glass (or pierces the balloon) with a loud noise. This is followed by a collective discussion. This works with the emotions and feelings of the participants. It is important now to discuss what the children felt when the trainer made the unexpected

loud noise, what they wanted to do at that moment etc. Then the trainer draws parallels with stress situations which appear unexpectedly as well. When do such feelings appear? Who controls them? Where do they disappear?

### Summing up the first part of the lesson

Each of us faces various situations in life that make us worry. We find our heart starts beating faster, our hands get colder, our head gets dizzy and we have to use all our strength not to give up and to cope with the situation properly. This is an individual situation for each person, connected with their own life experience and problems. There are people who worry about performing on stage and those who are anxious about answering in front of the class. There are some whose date went wrong and others who experience pressure from parents or friends. Each of us wants to control ourselves very well and stay calm and confident in all the situations I mentioned. In this case the art of self-regulation will be helpful. By this I mean the ability to control ourselves, to cope with our own bodies and not allow them to let us down in a difficult situation. It is very important to understand that this skill is individual and each person can only learn it by themselves. This skill depends not only on our desire to accomplish it but also on the processes which take place in our bodies in stressful situations.

If you got into a difficult situation it is very important to quickly restore your strength and to return your condition to normal so that solving new problems is not made harder. For this purpose everyone should know what goes on in their

bodies at such moments, what processes start and how well all the systems work. We are now very close to the notion of stress. Stress is one of the body's responses to factors which require adaptation to changes in the environment. A factor that causes stress is called a stress factor or stressor. The body's response is called a stress reaction. Stress is not just a result of negative influences. Even great joy and excitement can be stressful. They become stressful because of their strength and the extent of their influence on the mind and the human body as a whole. The result of the stress can be deep concern or worry.

Of course, we react to stress in different ways; some people cope better than others. How does stress influence the human body? It is considered that stress only has a negative, destructive impact on human beings. In practice, different phases of stress have different influences on the body. The first stress phase is moderate and, on the contrary, contributes to mobilising the body's strength. A person's activities become more efficient and successful. During the second phase, the body's energy begins to run out, strong tension develops and then the body's responses become chaotic and the process of its destruction begins. Intense and long-lasting stress can lead to the development of chronic, somatic, neurological and other complications. Diseases which are the result of stressful situations are called psychosomatic diseases. The psycho-emotional factor plays a major role in the development of widespread diseases such as coronary heart disease, peptic ulcers and bronchial asthma. People tend to cope with stress in three different ways:

- Trying to change their view of the problem;
- Trying to change the situation which led to stress;
- Trying to cope with the stress reaction caused by the problem.

We hope to gain life forces through our work and affairs. Each person finds their own methods of resisting stressful influences. Some talk with friends, others spend time on sports or music, while others dance or go on walks in the countryside. All these methods help to restore your normal state of mind and vitality.



Compliments



Drawing as relax

### Let's compliment each other

The teacher-psychologist suggests that all participants should practise ways of coping with stress. One game fitting into this theme is called "Let's compliment each other". The goal is to teach pupils to say nice things to each other. The teacher tells pupils: "You know, all it takes is a simple compliment to improve your mood and someone else's mood at the same time. You look great! You gave a really interesting report yesterday, everyone was interested! You're the best at choosing presents, you've got great taste! No matter how low your spirits were, words like those can encourage you and make you think: are things that bad? And they might prevent someone from doing something rash. I suggest we should have a contest for the title of "King or Queen of the compliment"". All the game participants sit in a circle. In the centre there is a throne. Each game participant has a paper heart. Some participants have hearts with an arrow painted on them. A chosen participant (or a volunteer) sits on the throne. The rest compliment that person one by one. Then the one on the throne comes up to each game participant and gives him/her a heart. The heart with an arrow is given to the participant whose compliment made the greatest impression. The game lasts until all the participants have sat on the throne. Then the one who got the most hearts with an arrow is crowned "King or Queen of the compliment".

Questions for the children to support the discussion in class:

- Was it easy for you to formulate the compliments?
- Was it easy for you to say compliments aloud?
- How did you feel when you said a compliment?
- How did you feel when you heard a compliment made to you?
- What was more pleasant – to hear compliments or make them?

### Methods of relaxation

One relaxation method is *diaphragmatic relaxing breathing*. It is a very efficient way to overcome difficult situations by calming down and relaxing. Anyone can learn it! "Take up a position. Breathe in through your nose, without tension. When you breathe in, blow out your belly like a balloon. Exhale through slightly closed lips – slowly, smoothly, calmly, with full muscle relaxation, and slowly retract the abdominal wall. When exhaling you should feel that tension leaves you together with the air. You could put one hand on your chest, the other on your stomach. When inhaling make sure that the hand on your stomach moved while the one on your chest did not. When the exhalation pattern develops (approximately 3–5 exercises later) you will not need to control inhalation with your hands and will be able to relax. (The proportion of inhalation and exhalation is 1:3, i.e. exhalation must be 2–3 times longer than inhalation.)"

Another method is called "Quicksand". The teacher gives this advice: when you are upset, try to understand why it happens and how it shows ("I am angry because he took something of mine without my permission. I feel anger in my chest"). Change your typical reaction (loss of temper, giving way to your temper) and say: "quicksand". This word describes a feeling of being "sucked in" by the problem. If we get stuck in the negative feeling we cannot get out of it, like quicksand. By saying "quicksand" to ourselves we remind ourselves about it and realise that something should be changed. To change something you need to look at yourself from outside. This is a demonstration of self-control, not weakness. If you are too upset to look at yourself from outside, take a deep breath. You can say "I will rise above this feeling and will not get stuck in it".

The last two methods are called "Tropical island" and "giraffe". In the first one the teacher offers the participants a relaxation exercise. The exercise starts by sitting comfortably. Par-

ticipants close their eyes and imagine that they see a tropical island, like a mystical forest. It can be a place which you visited once or saw in a picture, or an imaginary one. The instructions continue: "You are the only person in this place. There are plants, trees, flowers, animals and birds around you. What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? You can see the shore and the clear water. What is the weather like in the forest? Hold on to the wonderful feelings you have just felt. You can remember them at any time." The "giraffe" method is carried out as follows. "Breathe in and relax. Put your chin on your chest. Turn your chin and neck right and left slowly. Repeat 3 times, and now rotate your neck. Lift your shoulders a little, and then lower them. Repeat 3 times, then lift each shoulder several times. Sit up straight and comfortably. Feel your neck relax." These methods of progressive muscle relaxation can be effectively combined with the diaphragmatic relaxing breathing. In addition, together with role-playing games it is possible to use the method of progressive muscle relaxation to demonstrate the capacity for self-control when solving difficult situations.

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## Thematic Practical Seminar for Parents

### Encouragement and discipline: a rational balance

The purpose of the exercise is to provide parents with knowledge about how to use non-physical methods in upbringing that are consistent with the age of the child. The objectives of the seminar are to specify the description of the term “discipline” and to describe the difference between “discipline” and “punishment”. The purpose is also to point out the most widely used forms of encouragement aimed at teaching children in a disciplined way. One additional objective is to present the objectives of an effective disciplinary system, rules for the use of encouragement and other disciplinary methods in the family, and to describe the disciplinary methods corresponding to the effective discipline objectives. The final two objectives are to see the boundaries of negative results for the personal development of a child and their behaviour that are caused by physical influences and to develop the constructive behaviour skills of adults when teaching with discipline. The target groups for the seminar are parents and school professionals.

The practicum works with families and school professionals. To achieve maximum efficiency in interaction, it is advisable to organise practicums for school professionals and parents at the same time. Joint work will give the participants an opportunity to get to know each other better. It will also promote mutual understanding and as a result will increase the psychosocial well-being the children.

### Motivation

The practicum starts by greeting the working group members and describing the objectives and work plan. The teacher talks about the growth of violence among teenagers. One of the reasons for this can be copying relationships between parents and children in the family. Violence is caused by a lack of knowledge among parents about methods of encouragement and punishment, and the absence of a pedagogical culture. It is therefore important to learn how to use disciplinary methods when bringing up children.

Work in groups with the theme of “*Encouragement and discipline: types and reactions*”. Participants are divided into two groups. One group of parents discusses “*the most remarkable encouragement situations from their childhood*”. The second group of parents discusses

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“*the most remarkable cases of disciplinary measures from their childhood*”. This is followed by a joint discussion. Participants are to analyse and assess the effectiveness of disciplinary methods used in their past, and compare it to the methods used nowadays towards their own children.

Questions for parents to support and direct the discussions during the class:

1. What were the methods of discipline used in teaching you?
2. What do you think today about the methods of upbringing used in your childhood?
3. What types of encouragement do you use nowadays?
4. How do your children react to them?
5. What do you use more in bringing up your children: encouragement or disciplinary measures?
6. Is it possible to bring up a child without using any disciplinary methods?
7. What is the reaction of your children to disciplinary methods?
8. Is the use of disciplinary methods always effective?
9. What disciplinary methods do you use?

Group work will tackle the issue of spanking. The participants are divided into two groups. The first one is to provide arguments for the use of spanking, the other against. We believe that arguments against using punishment are as follows:

1. Parents show their incompetence and inability to find a reasonable way of influencing a child, they inflict personal humiliation upon the child and rancour proliferates.
2. The child loses their belief in their own abilities and their self-respect
3. To get physical results is wrong and is not a civilised method of problem-solving with children.
4. Application of physical force by the parents releases a child from guilt and makes the child think they are free to behave as they wish, and they also become obstinate.

Arguments for punishment can be viewed through the thoughts of P. Lesgaft, that *the role of a positive word is great and there is no kind of punishment which could be equal to it*. Both adults and children face the problem of desirability in the use of punishment. The attitude towards punishment has changed

over human history. But it should not be treated as a compulsory method in upbringing. We can mention the following viewpoints while considering the disciplinary measures. Rebukes must be very clear to a child and it might be necessary to talk to the child seriously about his/her unacceptable behaviour. To make safe pedagogical boundaries clear for the child, it is possible to forbid something pleasant like watching their favourite programmes, eating sweets, going out, etc. It is important to let the child know the reasons for such measures. We believe it is intolerable to punish with work, as that should be associated only with something positive. There might be a discussion about the use of types of punishment such as the natural consequences method: "If you made a mess of your room, you clean it up". Excessive prohibition should be avoided, because it may lead to the child rebelling against the adults. Adults should point out things to allow and forbid children to do, supported by a clear motivation.

During the joint discussion, adults should formulate the negative consequences of corporal punishment (for example, decreased self-esteem, short-term imitation of good behaviour only, aggressive behaviour, an inferiority complex, development of withdrawal behaviour, petulance, cowardice, vulnerability). In addition, they need to specify the factors which have the greatest influence in terms of choosing a disciplinary measure (for example, the child's behaviour itself; the cause of the behaviour; relationships with a child; the location of a conflict; the people present).

Questions for teachers.

How and when should we encourage children?

1. for efforts and attempts;
2. for activity (regardless of the result);
3. For initiative;
4. for attentiveness, consideration and care;
5. for discipline and industriousness;
6. for following the rules of parents.

How can children be stimulated and encouraged?

1. Making the child responsible for very important things;
2. increasing the child's rights;
3. giving generous praise;
4. material encouragement;
5. shared leisure time (excursions, fishing, going out together to the theatre, cinema, etc.);
6. non-verbal encouragement (tactile, visual).

In our opinion, effective discipline comes from joint objectives. These objectives are teaching self-control and responsibility, care about the psychosocial well-being of a child, meeting the needs of a child, trust relationships between parents and children and prevention of problems and conflicts.

The characteristics of the main disciplinary methods are setting rules, providing an example to be followed, showing approval, and limiting favourite activities or communication. Joint discussion with parents should relate to the questions of what knowledge is necessary for setting discipline. Issues of patience, commitment, disclosure, knowledge of the individual and the age-specific considerations regarding the child are certainly important.

Role-play activities for adults can deal with the question of how to break out of bad behaviour patterns and set the limits of discipline. The purpose of the work is to develop knowledge and skills in terms of constructive adult behaviour in the process of effective discipline. Adults are divided into pairs and enact short situations devoted to the theme of how to say "no" and "forbid". One person takes the role of a parent forbidding something to their child, and the other person is an expert who is evaluating the actions of their partner and the effectiveness of their arguments. For this kind of activity we may take several concrete situations: 1) The child asks you to buy something; 2.) The child communicates with people who you dislike; 3) The child is trying to make you let them go to a nightclub with friends (i.e. let the child stay out later than usual); 4) The child eats products harmful for their health; 5) The child backtracks; 6) The child is doing things which you consider to be inappropriate. At the end of the role play exercise, there is a further joint discussion, the purpose of which is to analyse the educational strategies chosen by parents.

We consider it important to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of different strategies. In a role play for adults, methods of teaching discipline should be remembered. It is also important to demonstrate possible reactions to the children's behaviour. Joint discussion will deal with the issue of the meaning of punishment – influence on the emotions of a child, calling on the child's senses of guilt, regret, shame and grief. These are very effective methods, but they are to be used very carefully considering many aspects such as the motives for the children's behaviour and age-specific characteristics. We would like to emphasise that parents should not jump to conclusions, shout at the child or be sarcastic. Adults' actions should be pedagogically based. Corporal punishment is unacceptable.

## Conclusion

At the end of the seminar we ask parents "Is the theme of the seminar important to you? Have you ever thought about methods of encouragement and instilling discipline? Were these methods suitable for use?" The conclusion is that all parents can learn the art of bringing up children. We also give parents a task to do at home in which they are asked to analyse how they encourage their children during the day. We want to highlight that parents should be very careful and attentive to the actions of their children and they should not get angry and shout at them or punish them. We encourage parents to try to see the roots of an action, its motives.

### Don't be shy to encourage your child.

The theme and content of the practicum are complex issues that require an individual approach. That is why we suggest avoiding direct recommendations and insisting on them without taking into account the specific character of the family as well as the individual psychological peculiarities of the child.

Later on, discussion of this theme will continue with special lessons (practicums for parents, training sessions): parents learn new methods and ways of bringing up children and different strategies for family education, and they receive advice on complex and troublesome issues involving education, the development of values and person-specific aspects

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## Motivation of Teachers' Work

Elena Vorobjeva

This practicum is one of the forms of work with school specialists which presupposes a number of class practicums on issues regarding how to improve the organisation of the educational process (working conditions, motivation, job satisfaction). Before the practicums research was carried out into the psychosocial well-being of school specialists. It was an assessment of their level of satisfaction with work and with their self-realisation as a professional. Within our project research was carried out into the level of psychosocial well-being of teachers. It revealed the most significant aspects of school specialists' work. The intention is to organise classes on the problems revealed such as a number of conflicts at school; mutual understanding between colleagues, pupils and parents; an atmosphere of trust, understanding etc.

As our experience shows, this kind of work makes specialists feel greater involvement in the educational process. It also contributes to the feeling of their importance in terms of giving children better conditions, and gives them an opportunity to present their own opinions about issues of school life. Through this it has a positive influence on psychosocial well-being.

The goal of the practicum is to define the specific character of the motivation of school specialists. The three main objectives are to:

1. Study external factors which influence school specialists' work;
2. Find out the inner motives which increase the satisfaction of school specialists' work;
3. Define possible ways in which the school administration can encourage school specialists' work.

The target group of this practicum consists of subject teachers, class teachers, educators, psychologists and social teachers. The materials needed are sheets, pens, markers and magnets. The illustrations that we used were 1. The external and internal motives of teachers' work, 2. Factors that influence the work behaviour of teachers and 3. Strategies for encouragement of teachers' work.

The content of the lesson is divided into the introduction and group work. The introduction session begins with greeting the working group participants and describing the objectives and plan of work. We discuss the following issues: What associations do you have when you hear about the concept of motivation? What motives determine your attitude to work?

After the questions the participants think through their answers. The following definitions of the concept of motivation are offered and put on the blackboard:

- Motivation is a process of stimulating oneself and others to act in order to achieve personal goals and the goals of the organisation (M. Mescon).
- Motivation is a process of blending of the organisation's and employees' goals in order to meet their needs in the best way (Bakuradze 2005).
- Motivation is a process that determines the energetic aspect and orientation of behaviour (A. Zankovsky).
- Motivation is a number of stimulating factors which cause personal activity and determine its orientation (L. Jakobson)
- Motivation is a system of motives and the activities of a person when these motives are activated (Ye. Sidorenko).

Participants discuss and choose the most adequate definition. The trainer concludes that motivation is a complex notion with many meanings. According to the definition of motivation we should be able to encourage ourselves and others (teachers, pupils, parents) to achieve goals as well as monitor the process of setting goals. We should also be able to know and satisfy our own needs and the needs of other people and define and influence factors and motives affecting teachers and pupils. In addition to that we should be able to use different methods of stimulation and influence our own behaviour and the behaviour of other people. The trainer suggests studying the group members' own ideas about the desirable behaviour of a teacher during his/her pedagogical activities in the educational institution.

The group work is called "Motivation of teachers' work: external factors and inner motives". The tasks for the groups are to define and write down thoughts about the external and inner motives of teachers' work. After that the results will be presented and general discussion will follow. The visual aid A 1 below, "External and internal motives of teachers' work", can be used to support the discussions.

Illustration 1

External and internal motives of teachers' work	
1. Level and regularity of teachers' salaries.	
2. Work regime, workload.	
3. Possibilities of professional training through communication with colleagues.	
4. Level of amenities at the workplace (light, noise, recreation areas, etc.)	
5. System of control used at school.	
6. Possibility of improving living conditions using the resources of the school.	
7. Fear of losing their job and becoming unemployed.	
8. Relationships in the pedagogical community, psychological climate.	
9. Technical and methodological resources necessary to organise the pedagogical process.	
10. Volume of non-prestigious and uninteresting work done by a teacher.	
11. Level of awareness of teachers about school activities	
12. How far the personal and business features of the principle of the educational institution correspond to the positive expectations of a teacher.	

Then the trainer asks a question: "What internal motives stimulate you to work? Do they differ much from the external ones? Is it possible to clearly divide internal and external motives? Is it possible to change external and internal motives?" A collective discussion takes place afterwards. The trainer notes that internal motives include public appraisal, level of responsibility, relationships with the administration, possibilities of making a career and moving forward, work content, achievement of personal success, interest in the work done, etc.



Work in groups

Illustration 2

Questionnaire "Factors that influence the work behaviour of teachers" Using a score out of 5, evaluate how much the following factors satisfy you in your work						
External factors	5: entirely satisfying	4: almost entirely satisfying	3: satisfying to a certain degree	2: not very satisfying	1: hardly satisfying at all	0: unsatisfying
Level of salary						
Daily and weekly timetable						
Comfortable workplace						
Relationships in the community and with colleagues						
Technical and methodological means						
Relationships with the school administration						
System of control used at school						
System of distribution of bonuses, allowances, rises in wages.						
Possibility of using privileges, continuing education						
Level of workload, volume of non-prestigious uninteresting work						
Influence of job on health						
Level of risk of losing their job and becoming unemployed						

Internal factors	5: strong influence	4: influence to a certain degree	3: some influence	2: weak influence	1: very little influence	0: no influence at all
Possibility of personal growth, self-development, self-realisation						
Possibility of communicating professionally with colleagues and getting methodological help						
Possibility of achieving success in work that raises the teacher's status						
Level of responsibility and creative work						
Possibility of influencing colleagues' work, involvement in school management						
Possibility of getting a promotion						
Appraisal of teacher's work by pupils, parents, colleagues						
Awareness about school life						
Interest in own work, perspectives on professional life						

New activities, possibility of choosing forms of work, experimenting						
Moral support from the administration, personal example of the administration in terms of its attitude to innovation. Atmosphere of cooperation.						
Possibility of participating in contests and competitions with other teachers						

After the discussion of the results, the trainer sums up the lesson and lists the main strategies for stimulating school specialists (see illustration 3).

Illustration 3

Strategies for encouraging school specialists' work	
Revealing and strengthening the influence of factors that encourage teachers to work efficiently	
Revealing and decreasing the negative influence of factors that lead to dissatisfaction of teachers with their work	
Revealing factors that influence the professional growth of a teacher and maintaining them	
Introducing perspectives dominating the motives of teachers' work that keep their level of motivation high	
Creating basic working conditions in the school environment that maintain all teachers' level of satisfaction with their work	

In the next phase of the group work, the trainer suggests evaluating satisfaction with internal and external work conditions at school. For this the participants are divided into 2–3 groups and each group gets a questionnaire (Illustration 2). Each group evaluates the given factors using a score out of 5 and they then present their results. The results of all groups are put into a single table and compared afterwards. The trainer concludes by marking the conditions that received the lowest score. The group then has a discussion: which factors are important and which are not? Why?



Learning new material



Presentation of results of group work

Then the trainer divides the group into sub-groups and gives them the task of defining possible ways to encourage work. He/she suggests answering the question: “What can be changed at school to raise the efficiency of school specialists’ work?” Each sub-group has a brainstorming session and makes recommendations. Then a representative from each group shares the results with everyone. The trainer suggests discussing the recommendations and assessing whether they are suitable for the real situation at school. The trainer also raises the question of the possibility of implementing these recommendations and emphasises the need to listen to the critical comments of the other sub-groups. At the end of the discussion the trainer draws conclusions about the results.

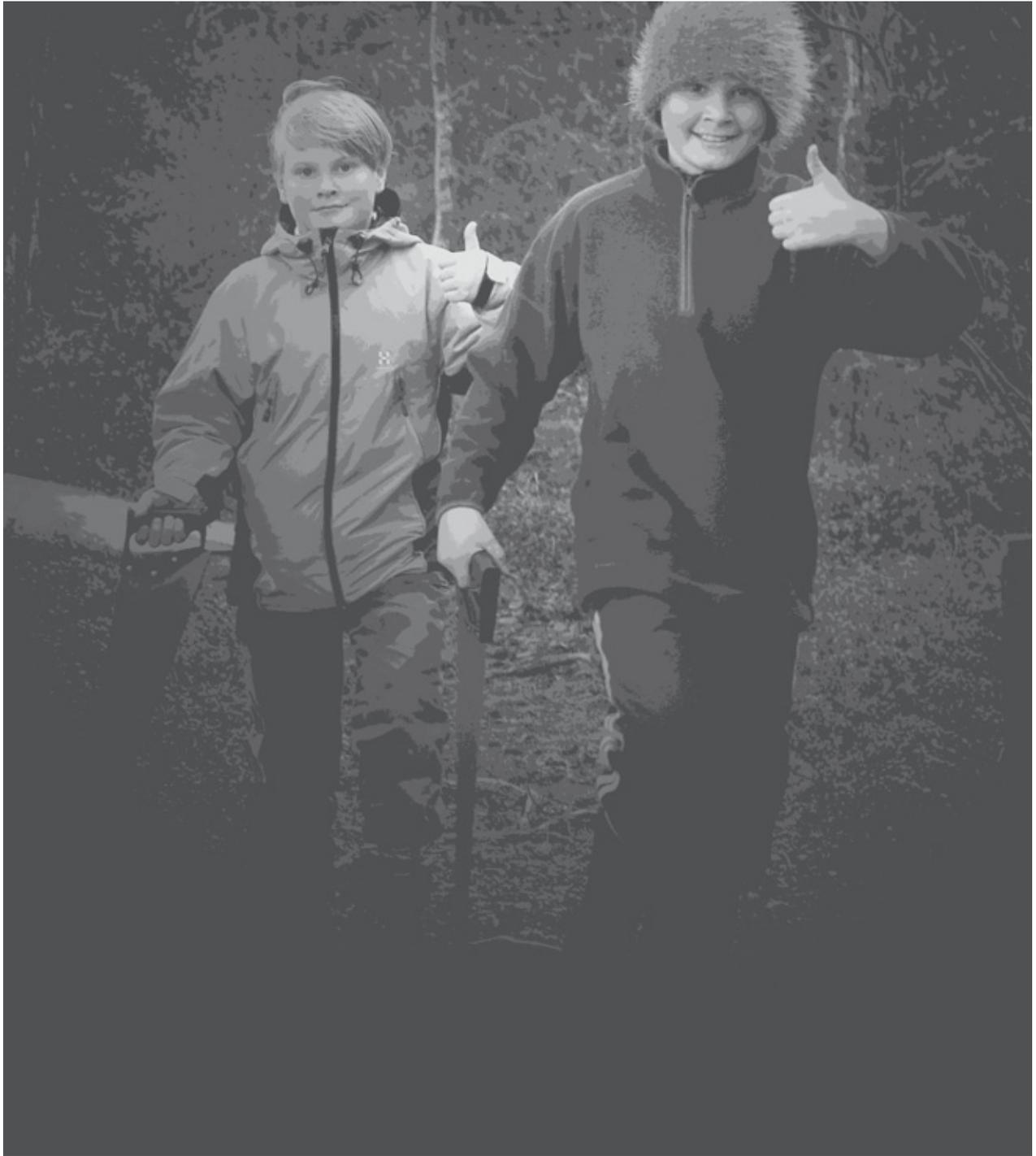
At the end of the practicum there is a summing up session involving a questioning blitz of the teachers in order to provoke reflection. Is the topic of the lesson important to you? Has it made you think about methods and strategies for forming motivation? Has your view of the problem of managing your own and other people’s motivation changed? How does it manifest itself? What questions would you like to discuss later on?

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## Culture, Ethnic Identity and Psychosocial Well-Being in the Barents Region – a Holistic Approach

Eva Carlsdotter Schjetne

The importance of cultural values and ethnic identity in relation to mental health and psychosocial well-being have been well documented over the last few decades. Among the many publications are: Høgmo, A. 1986; Berliner & Hommelgard 1987; Phinney & Roteram, 1987; Blum et al., 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Stordahl, 1996; Berry & Sam, 1997; Berry 1997; Eidheim & Stordahl, 1998; Kværnmo, 1999. A considerable amount of this research has been carried out from an arctic perspective.<sup>[1]</sup>

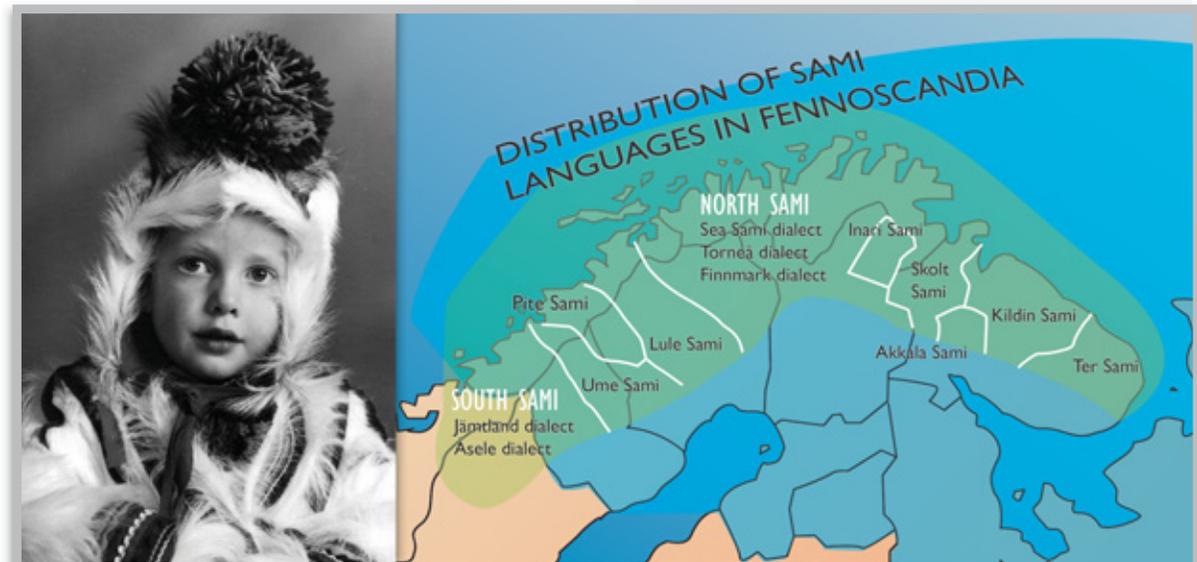
Social experiments over the centuries have influenced the cultural practices of the indigenous people in the circumpolar regions. The state and church ambitions of “christening, civilising and nationalising” that have been the subject of projects since time immemorial are today incorporated into the cultural heritage.<sup>[2]</sup> Later came the great modernising projects of the 20th-century: for the Russian North, collectivisation and industrialisation during the Soviet era, and for the whole

Barents Region, the impact of the Russian revolution, Finnish independence and the civil war, World Wars I and II and the last peace treaty when the Skolt Sami settlers migrated from Russia to the Sevetijärvi district. The Barents Region not only includes the national territories of four countries, but also the traditional homeland of many indigenous ethnic groups. Starting in the east, Russia is home to the Komi, the Nenets, the Ter, Kildin and Skolt Sami, the Veps and the Karelians, while the Skolt, North and Inari Sami and the Kvens live in Finland. Sweden and Norway are home to the South Sami, Pite Sami, Lule Sami and North Sami – the coastal and mountain settlements and Kvens share their historical territory across the border, and across the Finnish border in the north as well (Anttonen, 1998). Norway has a small Skolt Sami settlement in the North and a Mark Sami settlement close to the Lule Sami and Pite Sami regions.

Economic development has changed the importance of primary industries such as reindeer herding, fisheries and fishing/farming, all of which are closely connected with cultural practice. Developments in infrastructure, mining, industrialisation, the tertiary sector and service industries have raised the question of interdependence between primary industry,

<sup>1</sup> Finnmark, Greenland, Canada, Alaska

<sup>2</sup> Among the best known: Roman Catholic, Olaus Magnus. Protestant: Thomas v. Westen, Hans Egede natural scientist Carl v Linné, minister & historian J. C Fries and historian, natural scientist and minister L.L.Læstadius. Greek/Russian Orthodox: monk and missionary Trifon, the Pechenga and Solovki Monasteries in the present Northwest Russia.



traditional knowledge and ethnic identity (Nergård, 2006). Today, indigenous people are represented in all professions, throughout the labour market and economic activities. To a large extent they share the same modern urban life as the national majority populations. Over the centuries there has been migration from the north to the south and across the borders in the Barents region from indigenous groups, ethnic minorities<sup>3</sup> and national majority populations. Inter-marriages have been common. A considerable part of the national populations and national minorities have a mixed ethnic background. Ethnic belonging is based on self-identification and figures can only give hints about the size of the indigenous population of the Barents region. Refugees and asylum seekers have added to the ethnic diversity of the region over the last few decades.

### Culture and ethnic identity

Culture and ethnic identity are interrelated concepts. Culture has been defined and the definitions criticised over and over again in scientific literature since 1871, when English anthropologist E.B. Tylor formulated what is regarded as one of the earliest definitions:

*“Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”* (Tylor 1871: I, in Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952).

The historical dimension in later definitions like that of Norwegian anthropologist A.M. Klausen (1992) points out how culture is passed on from generation to generation. For the indigenous people as well as the Kvens and majority culture settlers of the north, arts and crafts, musical expression and storytelling interrelate with primary industries and are thus embedded in their daily life. As this is to a large extent tacit knowledge (cf. Polyanyi) there is a fear that important aspects of cultural practice will be lost in the modern economic development of our society. Ethnicity has been defined by Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth (1982) as follows:

*“A population keeping their originality, sharing cultural values and creating a field of communication and interaction. They identify themselves or are identified by others as a group or category among other categories on the same level.”*

<sup>3</sup> Kvæns, Jews, Rom (Gypsies), Romani-travelling people and Wood-fins are the official national minorities in Norway (St.meld. nr. 15 (2000-2001))

In culture/ethnicity discourse, the essentialist focus is on history, traditions and cultural artefacts while the constructionist view of culture sees it as part of the dynamic forces of the modern way of life, technological development and interaction between cultures in the global arena. From the latter perspective, it is likely that cultural values are constantly challenged and perceived as a threat to the population's maintenance of their originality and identity. History, traditions and cultural artefacts become useful tools in communicating originality and also provide guidelines about whom to include or exclude. With awareness of cultural matters, exclusion/inclusion affecting inter-ethnic relations is likely to be dealt with, while intra-ethnic interrelations seem to be more obscure. In everyday discourse conversation in the Finnmark, the Sami core area, one still refers to “bad” or “good” families (Balto, 1991). A notion still exists that some people and family lines carry evil properties (sami: neavritt), casting spells and invoking bad luck upon others. Families are stigmatised over generations by exclusion from the fellowship (Hanem, 1999; Bongo, 2002). Both authors point to how marginalisation of families is passed on to the next generation and the severe consequences for psychosocial wellbeing that this has among children and young people. As many communities in the arctic region which only have a few inhabitants might be vulnerable in this respect, we want to stress the importance of an ongoing discourse regarding ethnic and cultural relations and their impact on psychosocial well-being.

### Identity

Like culture and ethnicity, identity is a complex concept, frequently used both in scientific and everyday discourse as if there was a common understanding. However this phenomenon can be approached quite differently. Psychological theories present different aspects of “identity”, “personality” and “self”, depending on the scientific traditions in play (Leary & Tagney, 2003). The psychodynamic tradition focuses on interpersonal aspects as well as intrapersonal aspects from birth onwards. The different stages developed through early childhood<sup>4</sup> are seen as a lifelong process (Stern, 1985). Erikson's (2000) epigenetic life cycle, often referred to in works about ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Kværnmo, 1999), is in the same tradition. All stages are equally important, however the importance of “basic trust” developed during the child's first year as well as the identity-seeking period as a teenager are of special interest. Freud's (1936) work in

<sup>4</sup> Sense of an Emergent Self (birth-2 months of age); Sense of Core Self (2-6 months); Sense of Subjective Self (7-15 months); Sense of a Verbal Self (15 months on)

the same tradition shows how individuals, when their normal coping strategies fail, turn to self-defence mechanisms for protecting their ego and self-respect.<sup>5</sup>

In cognitive theories, identity is linked to organisation of self-relevant information and in social learning theories identity is a question of mastering strategies and the locus of control. Together with social psychology those theories contribute to the understanding of the socialisation and acculturation processes. “Mirrors and Masks – The Search for Identity”, Strauss's classic contribution to identity theory based on social psychology, functionalism and interactionist tradition, stresses the role concept, which is fundamental in explaining the “cultural nomad” phenomenon (Woon, 1992). People move between different cultures, with different social codes, sub-groups, values and life themes. Attitudes towards culture and ethnicity are often described this way among children and young people in Finnmark today (Juuso, 2005).

In humanistic and existential theories, self-worth and self-actualisation are central concepts. Environmental psychology theories have been developed over the last few decades (Proshansky et al., 1983, Lappégard Hauge, 2007). Place identity is of particular interest regarding indigenous cultures who express strong ties to their land territories. Interviewing young Sami women who had been under the protection of the child care authorities, Hanssen (2004) found a strong identification, not only with extended family systems but in particular with nature, the landscape and the places that they had been separated from.

### Culture, identity and psychosocial well-being – research findings in northern Norway

Regarding psychosocial well-being among children and young people in the northern region, several comparative studies have been conducted over the last twenty years. Research has focused on acculturation processes and mental health among the Sami, Kven and Norwegian populations. Studies (Kværnmo, 1999) have shown that there were few significant differences between the ethnic groups regarding behaviour problems. Sami boys were at risk in areas with a low Sami population density. Sami language is a stronger determinant for Sami identity than cultural context/home area, although both the Norwegian and the Sami identities are dependant on the cultural context. Bilingual young people identify themselves equally strongly with both Sami and Norwegian eth-

<sup>5</sup> Immature, psychotic or neurotic defence mechanisms like denial, projection, passive aggression, intellectualization, reaction formation and dissociation or mature defence mechanisms like humour, altruism, sublimation.

nicity. In the Sami core area, young people, in particular those engaged in reindeer husbandry, have a strong Sami identity while those in the coastal area have a weaker Sami identity, and vice versa in terms of Norwegian identity. Recent research in Finnmark and the northern Norwegian region (Kvernmo et al., 2003) indicates that Sami ethnic identity does not influence mental health among children and young people, and there is no difference in the suicide rate between young Sami and the majority population. A strong national identity (Norwegian) among Sami boys seems to have a weak tendency towards behaviour problems. Bicultural and bilingual competence is associated with good mental health/psychosocial well-being among Sami youth, while minority status has a negative effect. In the case of marginalisation there is an increased risk of social problems, attention deficiency, antisocial behaviour (boys) and aggressive behaviour (girls). In those cases however, it is likely that factors other than ethnicity influence psychosocial wellbeing. In Kven youth there is an indication that ethnic factors can influence psychosocial wellbeing in a negative way. There are no differences in mental health between Finnmark and other regions in northern Norway, and self-reported physical health among boys in Finnmark is the best, while their mental health is average. In relation to efforts in the development of Sami institutions, health care, school development and language politics over the last few decades, those studies point towards positive results regarding psychosocial wellbeing for children and young people in the region. At the same time the results stress the importance of further research and active work against marginalisation, both culturally and economically, for all ethnic minorities in the north.

### Identity and psychosocial well-being in the Finnmark cultural landscape – a holistic approach

Culture as defined above provides its members with common values, acting as guidelines for interaction. The northern societies of today are dominated by cultural diversity. To a large extent, western societies can be described as de-traditionalised (Madsen & Mikkelsen, 2005). Interpretations and meaning are no longer passed on from generation to generation to the same extent, through shared history and everyday life. This seems to be the case for ethnic minorities and the majority population alike. Individuals are left without guidelines and thus have to interpret and find meaning in their life (cf.

Husserl<sup>[6]</sup>) on their own. Individual reflection is needed in order to manage the many different contexts and conflicting values and find meaning in life. To be able to navigate socially one is dependent on knowledge about cultural values, as cultural values tell us what is considered right or wrong, what is important and what is not. This reflective activity is, however, dependant on access to cultural fellowships.

Danish social pedagogue Madsen points in his research (Madsen, 2006) to rising demands by individuals in terms of conforming and adapting to modernising forces in society. People who are unable to live up to those demands are at risk of being excluded and marginalised from the established communities. In this perspective, promoting psychosocial well-being calls for work not only on an individual basis but also on institutional, community and national levels.

At the start of the 21st century, sociologist Z. Baumann (2000) described society as a post-modern setting where pluralism and fragmentation were accepted as a basic form of life. He pointed to new forms of mutual dependence being constructed. A radical change in the established class structure in society can be expected. Growing social differences could breed distrust and a growing gap between different ethnic groups. At the same time these social differences may lead to the same gap and distrust between a global elite with access to the assets necessary for realising the opportunities available and a developing local class of people, deprived of any possibility of thriving using the same resources. He describes a mobile global elite of cosmopolitans, at home in this global cultural construct. Mobility and possibilities of following up individual projects are highly valued at the cost of less commitment, and networks which are elusive and change rapidly. These elites spend their lives in metropolitan international societies, in what Baumann describes as “gated communities”, guarded in order to keep out people that do not seem to belong there. As there are no weak or dependant people in those societies, no social responsibilities limit their freedom. However, this lack of commitment and awareness of social responsibilities can have destructive effects regarding political decision-making. There are reasons for taking Baumann's predictions about changes in social structures seriously. The growing number of supra-national organisations based in central European metropolises challenge national, and not least local, political power and living conditions for the populations in the north. There is an open question about the extent to which those organisations are influenced through recruitment by the elite systems which operate across national borders. Representatives from different ethnic groups

<sup>6</sup> Phenomenology - the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the individual – the first-person point of view (Smith, 2007)

who are accepted in those elite systems might, by the very nature of the systems, become alienated from the groups they represent.

While revitalisation projects concerning minority cultural heritage are high on the agenda, northern societies are at the same time affected by forces acting in favour of globalisation and modernisation. To obtain and keep a mono-ethnic context is a project that is bound to fail, from this point of view. To keep a dual focus is necessary, local versus global practices as well as cultural diversity as a way of life. According to Madsen (ibid), developing cultural competence is important for children and young people. In order to do this, they need to move freely between “the well known” for confirmation, “the strange” for reflective thinking and “the unknown” for freedom and development. To succeed in such a project, recognition of the different aspects of identity formation and cultural nomadism as a consequence of mixed cultural heritage and identity has to be taken seriously.

The development of cultural competence as described above offers guidelines for a working strategy. For confirmation of who you are, “the well known” has to provide certain qualities for a positive outcome, psychosocial well-being. In this respect, qualities like safe foundations in a cultural and social context influence the choice of coping strategies. Whether they appear to be constructive or destructive will influence the next steps in terms of encountering “the strange” in a constructive way. Offering an opportunity for reflective thinking, on the other hand, “the strange” can be met with fear and distrust. To face “the unknown” to utilise possibilities of freedom and development, basic trust and a safe, well-established identity helps. Here local cultural praxis through organisations and the education system plays an important role in developing and securing cultural competence.

## Summary

The aim of this article is to present a holistic approach and the theoretical background to work with psychosocial well-being in context. The ways cultural diversity is dealt with in daily life, social interaction between the local people, the municipality and institutions are important predictors of quality of life. In our Finnmark project municipality, part of the ArctiChildren project on psychosocial well-being, our main objectives have been to start a community work process where local people can become aware of possible future scenarios and local resources are mobilised so that they can take responsibility for their own future.

For our work towards greater psychosocial well-being, we chose the “Community work model”, Gulbenkian Foundation, UK (1966). “Community work” was developed in the 1960's to inspire local people to decide, plan and take action to meet their own needs with the help of available outside resources. The education system is one outside resource with a great impact. Besides the family it is the main arena for socialisation, acculturation and building knowledge for every child through childhood and adolescence. School projects theoretically founded in the identity theories presented above have been initiated<sup>[7]</sup> and will continue. Developing social competence as described in Ole Martin Johansen's article in this book clearly shows the importance of support from parents and family and the local community's social and cultural competence, created by the population. Community work also includes helping local services to become more effective, usable and accessible to those whose needs they are trying to meet and taking account of the interrelationship between different services in planning for the inhabitants. The project work started on the initiative of municipality childcare authorities and social services. Moving from “learned helplessness” to empowerment and developing new coping strategies for clients are the main objectives in their ongoing action research project within the ArctiChildren project. Not the least important factor is forecasting the adaptations necessary in municipal administrations to meet new service needs in constantly changing circumstances. Here the first step has been taken in establishing a dialogue with the municipality administrative leaders and staff. The next step will be an analysis, stating the current situation of the community from the perspective of its inhabitants, employees of the municipal administrative system as well as the local political administration. Environmental psychology and place identity provide a theoretical base and theme for cooperation between professions, municipal functions and local people in the further development of the community and handling environmen-

<sup>7</sup> Ref. Norwegian school projects, See Stokke and Jonassen in this book

tal challenges. The education system has an important role in this work, as the curriculum has objectives linked to local environmental, historical and ecological conditions.<sup>[8]</sup> Families through all the generations have an important role as this project has a great impact on matters with a community context and on living conditions – psychosocial wellbeing.

<sup>8</sup> See AC-cultural projects in local culture – Ahonen et al, Jokela and also Sipiläinen in this book

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## Learning, Emotions and Well-Being

Raimo Rajala

School is a place for learning. I want to raise a question of whether people involved in teaching and learning activities very seldom think in a more profound way of what learning is all about. The Collins English dictionary defines learning as “the act of gaining knowledge.” This illustrates how, in lay thinking, learning equals acquisition of knowledge. It is one of the learning metaphors presented by Anna Sfard (1998). Traditional school learning is based on the acquisition metaphor (AM). According to that, learning is teacher-led; teachers teach subjects. Learning takes place in an ideal way when the goals are specified and the learning processes are defined. Students are in a role of receiving and processing information. Transfer of knowledge and learning skills are valued. Learned things are primarily individual and, in a few instances, public knowledge. Knowing equals having or possessing something. To a great extent, this is an overwhelming idea of education on the primary and secondary levels as well as in higher education. Learning provides you with knowledge capital, which can be used outside school in working life and free time.

In the second metaphor, the participation metaphor (PM), learning is seen as an ongoing process that has no clear end point. The end states of learning, such as knowledge, concepts and schemas, are replaced by a constant flux of doing. Furthermore, the ongoing learning activities are never considered separately from the context within which they take place. Learning is pronounced by talk about situatedness, contextuality and social mediation. Learning a subject is instead of having knowledge conceived of as a process of becoming a member of a certain community. The learner socializes into the norms and rules of the community and acts according to them. The social side of learning is emphasized because you learn from and with others. Knowledge is not an objective concept, and the participants may have their own interpretations of it, but by communication and interaction they can arrive at a joint meaning.

It is sensible to expect that learning takes place according to both metaphors because the metaphors are complementary rather than opposing each other. The AM paradigm stresses the learners' individual information processing, learning strategies and construction of the content of the learning tasks. PM, in turn, takes the social side of learning into account - i.e., learning always takes place in a certain context and group with a specific learning culture. Besides mentally constructing the content of a learning task, learning is also participation in the activities of a group and adopting the socio-cultural

norms of knowledge creation and judgement (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Knowing is being aware of the norms and rules related to knowledge creation. In a case of learning a profession, step-by-step adoption of these rules and norms is seen as an extending participation in the activities of a community of practice.

### Learning and emotions

Learning and emotion have been seen as dissociated with each other in the research into learning. Only in the field of motivation have emotional and affective issues been taken into account. From the perspective of Simonov's information theory of emotions (1981), emotions give information about the extent to which one has been successful in activities realizing one's goals and motives. Emotions provide us with information on the end states of activities. Lazarus (1999) differentiates emotions into anticipatory and outcome-related ones. Anticipatory emotions, such as confident, hopeful, worried, restless, appraise the possible outcome of activities on the level of emotions. Outcome-related emotions, such as happy, satisfied, sad, guilty, assess the outcome of concluded activities, whether it be harmful or beneficial for a person.

Applying this to the learning context, learning activities always have outcomes. They are both primary outcomes comprising the performance of the learning tasks at hand and secondary outcomes, such as the applicability of learning in future learning situations and the emotional outcomes of learning. If students are successful in achieving their goals, they feel happy, satisfied, pleased. In the opposite case, they feel sad, guilty, ashamed, disappointed.

Rosenberg (1998) has distinguished three levels in the organization of affect: affective traits, moods and emotions. Affective traits, such as trait-anxiety, are predispositions to experience certain emotions in specific situations. Trait-anxiety predisposes people high on trait-anxiety to produce an anxiety reaction in ambiguous and unsafe situations. Moods and emotions differ in terms of intensity and duration. Moods are longer lasting, less intense states, whereas emotions consist of short, intense episodes. As emotions fade over time, they may change into general mood states. Moods refer to a general affective state without a special referent, whereas emotions always have a specific referent (Schwarz & Clore, 1996). Linenbrink and Pintrich (2002) have developed the achieve-



Joy of learning. Photo: Arto Liiti

ment goal theory, within which emotions and moods are in a bidirectional relationship to each other. It extends the scope of the traditional achievement goal theory, which considers how achievement goals differentially predict emotions, by adding a link from general moods to achievement goals. In their theory, moods rather than specific emotions influence students' perception of goal structures in the classroom, as well as their own adoption of the goals. Specific emotions emerge as students work on a learning task or as a result of a particular goal achievement.

The theory put forth by Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) enables us to analyze emotions on the personal and classroom levels. According to relevant research, moods are related to the perception of classroom environment goal orientation (classroom climate). Students in a positive mood view their classroom environment as supportive and perceive an emphasis on classroom mastery goals. Students in a negative mood are more focused on handling their own mood state and are less tuned in to the classroom environment.

Meyer and Turner (2006) have also distinguished general affective states and specific emotions. General affective states or moods are indicative of classroom climates and supportive instructional interactions over time. Affective climates set the stage for students' appraisal processes, goal setting, strategy

choice and taking action. They also affect the creation of specific emotional experiences. The affective classroom climate was found to be related to the patterns of supportive motivational-emotional-social teacher discourse.

Smeltzer Erb (2004) has made an important point about how pupils and teachers co-construct emotions in classroom interaction situations. If, for example, a teacher is showing care and support for his/her pupils, his/her way of acting creates positive emotions in his/her pupils and the pupils put more effort into the learning tasks. This, in turn, gives positive feedback to the teacher and he/she is prone to support the pupils. This support and encouragement improves the learning outcomes and results in increased positive emotions. Thus positive emotions and a supportive classroom climate affect each other, and the favourable interaction frames between the students and their teacher are co-constructed.

Learning tasks can be a source of stress for pupils. In a modern learning society, increasing demands are put on people's information processing and learning. In a recent Finnish study, Reinikainen (2007) found that less talented pupils were more strained by the load induced by exams. His explanation is that their processing of the learning tasks is overloaded. Kwakman (2001) has analyzed the relationships between job demands and decision latitude (control) on the one hand and stress and learning on the other. She contends that demands as such are not harmful but when combined with a low decision latitude (low control), this combination makes work stressful. The decision latitude mediates between stress and learning such that a low decision latitude prevents people from constructively handling stress induced by the learning tasks at hand, resulting in low learning. A high decision latitude, in turn, helps students find the resources to handle their stress. The demand-latitude research has recently integrated social support into the theoretical model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). This serves the same function as decision latitude - i.e., helping people find resources to handle the demands put on them.

This line of reasoning emphasizes two issues: how students' learning and studying activities are organized in school and out of school, and how pupils can be provided with social support and encouragement by teachers and other pupils. Low stress and high emotional well-being can be expected to occur when pupils are given reasonable learning demands, pupils' work in school is organized such that they have high autonomy and decision-making opportunities in their own learning, teachers are supportive and encouraging, and peer relationships are functioning well.



Learning by participation during a camp. Photos: Arto Liiti



## Learning and well-being

According to the three-component well-being model put forward by Allardt (1989), the learning processes and classroom climates are related to the being and loving component of the model. Successful learning resulting in positive emotions feeds back to the learning motives behind the students' learning activities by reinforcing them and increasing the future opportunities for self-fulfilment. Positive classroom climates and student-teacher interactions give the students feelings of social acceptance and encouragement in a classroom.

Emotions being indicators of and reflecting successes and failures in goal achievements are also important for a person's emotional well-being. Successes produce positive emotional evaluations and failures undermine well-being. Of course, the relationships are not this straightforward. Random negative emotions have a different meaning in well-being, whereas repeated experiences of negative emotions can start a cycle of negative development; the more negative emotions, the more negative the general mood, the less favourable the perception of the classroom climate and environment goal structures. The more experiences of failure, the lower the self-efficacy expectancies and achievement goals.

When short-term emotions tend to generalize into long-lasting moods, it is important that the school and teachers increase the positive experiences in learning leading to the positive emotions. This could break the vicious circle of negative emotions. According to the Finnish experiences of role adventure<sup>1</sup>, when a more participatory mode of learning is applied, new kinds of successes and positive emotions were noticed in students who usually had few positive experiences in learning - e.g., pride in being able to solve real problems and the joy of being able to accomplish a long role adventure project on one's own. The other important finding was that existing social interaction patterns among student and between students and teachers could be restructured by applying role adventure. This may have a spillover effect into the school context and open up new opportunities in the classroom climate.

<sup>1</sup>See Heli Villanen's article on role adventure in this book

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Pupils at the School Camp. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

## Community-based Art Education – Contemporary Art for Schools and Well-Being for the Community?

Mirja Hiltunen

In this article I examine community-based art education from the point of view of psychosocial well-being in schools; in a wider perspective, however, this issue is also related to the status of art and culture in an affluent society. As an art educator and researcher, I am interested in how the special characteristics of the arctic socio-cultural environment, particularly that of village communities, could be transformed through art into a resource for the individual and the community. The question is also whether the community-based practices of contemporary art have a place in the school and the surrounding environment, and whether genuine dialogue, encounters and respect for others can be achieved through art.

I will concretise the starting points of community-based art education by figuratively constructing a building, which, in the present framework, represents the school. The building could also refer to a village hall or some other facility that gathers the villagers together. Instead of a concrete space, the building may also refer to a strategy, attitude or, as an example, the promise and dreams of or plans for cooperation that has its sights on the future (cf. Arendt 2002, 247–248). In constructing the school building, we must bear in mind the formal educational duties assigned to it, which again are tied to the prevailing historical and societal time and place. Furthermore, the nature of community-based art education is related to the obscuring of the line between formal and non-formal art education. At times the line may disappear from view completely, when the objective is to support and increase the collective life of the community from a broad perspective. In the words of John Dewey (1980/1934, 81), the father of progressive education:

*“Works of art that are not remote from common life, that are widely enjoyed in a community, are signs of a unified collective life. But they are also marvellous aids in the creation of such a life.”*

The foundation of my schematic building representing the starting points of community-based art education is closely tied up with locality, the village culture and the environment. The basement of the building is bricked with the notion of community. The roof – the perspective for the examination and an extensive channel of activities – is art. Community-based art education serves as the door to the building, and in my article the steps leading up to the door draw their material from socio-cultural animation as well as community-based

and experiential artistic learning. The walls of the building represent psychosocial well-being, which is constructed with the support of the socio-cultural foundation and the community-based basement through art education processes. I will start the construction process from the concept of community, which is, together with art, the most central definer of community-based art education.

### The foundation and basement – longing for community

According to philosopher Antti Hautamäki (2005), the notion of community is once again gaining more ground. He states that social theories have traditionally included an assumption of locality and a group of people who share values and know each other. The more recent research in social science, however, concludes that communities are based on the search for meaning and identity (Hautamäki 2005, 8). In the view of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2002), the new rise of community has to do with a lack of security: community-based ideas are an expected reaction to the “liquid” nature of modern life. He sees the need for community as a reaction to the growing imbalance between individual freedom and security. The attractiveness of the idea of community is based on the promise of a safe haven, which “all the sailors lost in the turbulent sea of constant, unpredictable and confusing change dream of” (Bauman 2002, 204; back translation).

The notion of community has been outlined in varying terms within the different schools of research. The classic *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, the division by Ferdinand Tönnies between community and society, remains to be seen in more recent thinking on community. The traditional *Gemeinschaft* community is largely based on physical interaction and closeness defined by commitment to shared values. The members of such a community are also tied together by moral and social duties. The community relies strongly on tradition, and its cultural basic task is to uphold locality.<sup>1</sup> (Hautamäki 2005, 8; Lash 1995, 158–159; Lehtonen 1990, 153–154; Veijola 2005, 95–96.)

<sup>1</sup> According to Tönnies, modernisation means that a mechanical society will replace living community-based relationships between people. His perception of the future of community is, therefore, quite pessimistic.



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The aim in community-based art education is to maintain the locality typical of traditional community thinking; however, this is not achieved solely by means of preservation or cultural regeneration but also through searching for alternatives and supporting change. The strict social control, the clear demarcation and the questioning of diversity and foreignness which are characteristic of a traditional community are alien to community-based art education. Instead of authority, hierarchy and inequality, community-based art education strives for dialogue, inclusion and the acceptance of diversity by means of reflexivity, i.e. through self-reflection and self-awareness.

Here, reflexivity refers to a gradual liberation (*Freisetzung*) of activities from structure. We can distinguish between a subjective and an institutional level in the concept of reflexivity. In his discussion on the reflexive modern, sociologist Scott Lash maintains that institutions are becoming more cultural. The more clearly cultural institutions, such as education, science and media, have also become central to reflexive modernity. They no longer principally regenerate; they themselves have shifted to the spotlight of study. Furthermore, the societal relationships of reflexive modernity are, according to Lash, more and more often formed outside the institutions. (Lash 1995, 280–283.)

As a contrast to the traditional community, we can therefore see the emergence of a kind of superficial experience society. In this context, Bauman (2002, 237–239) uses the concept cloakroom or carnival community, which refers to explosive communities independent of place that are short-lived and concentrate on a single characteristic or goal. Such communities need a spectacle that appeals to their shared

emotions. The spectacles do not blend and fuse the interests of the individuals into group interests, and Bauman argues that the illusion of unity brought about by the spectacle does not survive much longer than the thrill of the spectacle itself (*ibid.*, 238).

According to Reijo Kupiainen and Juha Suoranta, an experience society offers an abundance of material and external stimuli for the construction of identity but provides few, if any, guidelines for how to construct the identity and what the purpose of identity actually is (Kupiainen & Suoranta 2002, 121). Carnival community – or, as also mentioned within the sphere of sociology, consumption, lifestyle or tribe communities – cannot deliver on the promise of security. People plunge into a community to express and fulfil themselves in addition to seeking powerful and exciting community-based experiences. For such an impulsive union of individuals, there is no demand for loyalty or commitment. (Veijola 2006, 96–98.) Sociologist Michel Maffesoli argues that all manner of fanaticisms, spending frenzies, sports, emotions and rituals, the “re-enchantment of the world,” are signs of the original and often invisible community-centred nature of man, which does not disappear as the modern society is overturned but merely takes on new forms. (Maffesoli 1995, 23–28.)

Scott Lash (1995, 167) argues that the basis of reflexivity is not in societal or social structures so much as in a collection of global and local networks of information and communication structures. He goes on to reflect on whether a reflexive community is even possible in our current societies that are dislocated both in terms of time and place. According to him, we should search for meanings from the area of aesthetics and that instead of pining after the creation of meanings we should



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look for the meaning that already exists. Perhaps the meaning is already present in various subcultures and practices to which we reflexively commit. Lash brings up the possibility of hermeneutic, insightful reflexivity and defends the notion of community against the individualisation of aesthetic and, especially, cognitive reflexivity. (Lash 1995, 223–225.)

The objective of finding a balance that emphasises open interaction between the individual and community, as well as between the community and the environment, is typical of reflexive-aesthetic community thinking. Expressing the common way and style of living by means of images, symbols and other stylistic tools is characteristic of a reflexive-aesthetic community. The starting point is everyday reality and the experiences and practices that arise in it through collective activities. A reflexive-aesthetic community is constructed in continuous dialogue through which the members of the community develop an awareness of themselves in relation to the community and the environment. People grow into a person, a subject, together with other persons or subjects within the community.

Reflexivity requires a willingness and ability to face and understand the world outside the community. This entails the acceptance and utilisation of dissimilarity, divergence and diversity in developing the community. This starting point is central in community-based art education. In the background we can find the notion of the possibility of growth with regard to the subjects' own resources that is suggested in reflexive modernity. Professor of Social Policy Antti Karisto sums up reflexive modernity in that it requires and produces a mentality that revolves around self-observation. Constant questioning, self-reflection and self-encountering are aspects

that are required of both individual people and the entire society with its various organisations. (Karisto 1998, 76.)

### The roof – on the performative and dialogical nature of contemporary art

In the building that demonstrates the starting points of community-based art education within the school, the roof represents the vast sphere of art, which is examined here primarily through the performative and dialogical nature of the contemporary art. The concept of performativity has been established during recent years as part of the discussion in Women's Studies. Judith Butler sees identity as a functional dimension and a series of concrete acts, performatives. For Butler, gender and the expression of the same are a constant repetition of acts, which is to say performativity. (Butler 1999 [1990], 179–180.) Repetition creates a perception of identity, and Butler maintains that a subject as such does not exist but that it is a product of repetition realised through others, in Butler's own words, “[m]y argument is that there need not be a ‘doer behind the deed,’ but that the ‘doer’ is variably constructed in and through the deed” (Butler 1999 [1990], 181). In Cultural Studies the concept of performativity has been employed in analysing the construction of gender, ethnicity and nationality, among other issues.

According to art researcher Helena Sederholm (2006), contemporary art shifts between and plays with artistic methods in a performative manner. In contemporary art, images are seen as contextually bound, cultural constructions that, above all, have been created as a means of communication in various discourses. These constructions can themselves be transform-

able, or at least their meanings vary in different contexts or are perceived differently by various actors and receivers. They can also be functional outside the artistic world. As important aspects of art instruction, Sederholm mentions concentrating on the processes of producing meanings and the formulation of artistic knowledge. (Sederholm 2006, 52–53.)

According to Sederholm (2000, 190), performativity in art refers to a unique situation, the documentation and evaluation of which is problematic after the fact because the situation has already changed. What is highlighted is the meaning given to the experience brought on at that particular moment; art is therefore perceived as action.

Performative art emphasises dialogue and interaction – and, indeed, contemporary art does entail plenty of discussion. An example of this is the *Tent* project of the artist couple Lea and Pekka Kantonen (1991–2005), which was an art project based on cooperation and discussion. The project included workshops, research, exhibitions, audiovisual material and interaction with various school groups in Finnish Lapland, Sweden, Estonia, Mexico and Arizona.

In her dissertation on the project, Lea Kantonen (2005) examines the ways in which art could be utilised in building encounters between young people who represent different cultures and ethnic groups. The central yield of the study is precisely the reflections on the kinds of presentations of collective and individual identity such encounters construct. Kantonen also analyses her relationship with the young people who participated in the workshops: “We can teach them technical skills, but as a community, they create the meanings for the cooperatively made works of art, and we may not be able to fully understand or control these meanings” (Kantonen 2005, 57). As a community artist, Kantonen does not wish to become a therapist who takes it upon herself to correct the misperceptions of the public – the purpose is rather to invite the viewers to engage in a discussion about community art and to expose the work to the ‘therapy’ provided by the public (Kantonen 2005, 48).

The community-based processes of contemporary art seek to make room for interaction and participation; it is a form of work conducted with various groups and communities. By means of community-based art education, the art instruction provided at schools can expand across the boundaries of school subjects and yield projects that also involve the larger public outside the school community. However, art is not created through just any kind of cooperation or discussion. According to Grant Kester (2004, 69), who has been developing a theory on dialogical aesthetics, what is essential is not dialogue *per se* but the extent to which an artist has succeeded through dialogue to activate and initiate emancipatory points of view. This calls for a critical understanding of the many ways



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in which such points of view can be limited and threatened. The most central aspect of dialogical aesthetics is the reflexive orientation. Only through empathy can we re-identify ourselves and recognise and understand our attachment to others. Listening is an essential aspect of knowing. An artist is defined by openness and a willingness to listen and to accept relinquishing one's independence, in addition to an internal vulnerability in relation to the viewer and cooperation. The image of an artist painted by dialogical aesthetics therefore departs from the traditional one – moreover, a work of art should be understood as a process of a communicative exchange rather than a physical object. (Kester 2004, 90, 110, 114.)

### Steps and windows – glimpses of social animation and artistic learning

The steps leading up to the door of our figurative building receive their material from the starting points of *socio-cultural animation* and *experiential artistic learning*. The steps take you in to the culture of the school, but through them the pupils and teachers can also connect with life outside the school. Furthermore, the surrounding community is encouraged to step onto the stairway and to come inside and participate in school activities.

Socio-cultural animation (*animation socioculturelle*) can be considered an emancipatory social movement and, at the same time, one of the forms of participatory methodology in social pedagogics. According to social pedagogue Leena Kurki (2006), socio-cultural animation refers to goal-oriented activities, the aim of which is to change individual and collective attitudes through the personal involvement of people,



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which also leads to improving the social reality. People grow into active contributors in their personal development as well as that of their communities and societies. Socio-cultural animation has three dimensions: pedagogical, social and cultural. (Kurki 2006, 150–158.)

The objective of dialogue and social transformation, the generation of situations that facilitate qualitative change, is characteristic of both community-based art education and the pedagogics related to animation. Socio-cultural animation aims at improving the quality of people's lives mainly within the sphere of informal education. It can also provide perspectives on the processes of community-based art education – for instance, tools for a socio-cultural analysis preceding the activities. The activities usually take place at the interface between the formal educational environment of the schools and the informal educational environment surrounding them.

Community-based art education also aims at improving the quality of people's lives. In this respect, community-based art and dialogical aesthetics seem to be following essentially along the same lines within contemporary art. What special aspect could community-based art education offer in terms of achieving this goal? The aspiration to improve the quality of people's lives does not exclude, for example, the basic task of the art education provided in schools, the objective of which can be defined as the supporting of artistic learning (reception, interpretation, personal expression). The starting point for the art subjects taught in schools is provided by their respective field of knowledge objectives, which become concrete on the level of the school curricula.

It is precisely the perspective of art that distinguishes community-based art education projects from, for example, tra-

ditional social work or participatory environmental planning. Community-based art education combines an understanding of not only artistic but also educational and community-based processes. This involves skills, knowledge of artistic techniques and materials and, above all, an understanding of how meanings are constructed in artistic processes. In schools, the teachers of various subjects bring the special know-how of their respective fields, and when representatives of various sectors and villagers of varying ages are also involved, the range of perspectives is accumulated further. Cooperation with, for example, the school nurse and village social worker, regional planning architect, reindeer keeper and senior citizens brings more depth to the themes being studied in addition to providing new approaches from the point of view of art education in schools.

Doctor of Arts Marjo Räsänen (1997) has developed an experiential-constructivist model for artistic learning in connection with her theory on the experiential art understanding. Artistic, experiential learning is based on transformation; the experiences and observations are related to a wider context. The issue is the ability to transform internal or external experiences.<sup>[2]</sup> The giving of meaning, recognition, understanding and action become entwined. “The goal is a shared, conscious experience that leads to emancipation and new activities.” (Räsänen 1997, 38–39.) The model combines various art education approaches. In the background, we can find similarities with the approach that Efland calls integrated art education, in which art is understood as a crossroads of various fields of knowledge and school subjects. (Räsänen, 2006, 20; Efland 2002; see also Sava, 1998.)

How about the windows of our community-based art education building – what do you see when you look out through them? What kind of view do the windows give on the life inside the building to someone looking in from the outside? By the windows I mean works of art, exhibitions, events or, for instance, festivals. They are the end products of community-based art education processes and more or less object-based art works – however, they can always be shared in one way or another. They often represent everyday issues, themes arising from the community, which are thus given a form and a voice. These windows are frames which help the participants to focus on the theme and transform it into a form which can be shared. At the same time these windows, art works, exhibi-

<sup>2</sup> In artistic learning, transformation occurs by means of mental and material tools – the learner seizes the experience through words, images and other artistic tools. In artistic learning, knowledge and observations related to the external reality are transformed into internal experiences. These, then, are transformed into works of art through understanding. People reflect on observations and emotions in groups and alone. This leads to new works of art and new observations.

tions or festivities are a showcase for the school and its activities to the community members and the general public.

The projects rarely aim at constructing spectacles, but this does not detract from the experiential nature of the products. The works can be pieces of environmental art that improve the attractiveness and functionality of the school yard, props and costumes for a cooperatively created role-playing adventure, village festivals or stories relating to the socio-cultural environment acting as the foundation and the sense of community serving as the basement of the building. The windows of the building can be opened both from within and from outside. The most essential meaning of the works and acts of art is not in their physical essence but rather in the communication and encountering, the mediation of meanings that is facilitated by the entire process, including the making of the works and, later on, the actual finished pieces.

### The door – moving towards dialogue and non-exclusive participation

In his work, John Dewey has emphasised art as the process of arranging various things in relation to one another and as studying and experimenting things with an eye on different perspectives, contexts and the concrete conditions. Sederholm suggests art education could teach others methods for dealing with change and ways to compile meaningful collages of information from fragmented pieces of knowledge. For example, conversational art produces interactive ways to act and guides us towards solving problems through dialogue. Art as a method falls in line with pragmatist thinking: knowledge in itself is not significant if it is not used for anything. (Sederholm 2006, 54–55.)

The particular potential of visual arts educators in art education is to guide, teach and train their pupils in those tools, techniques and skills related to the visual form from which meanings are constructed. An essential challenge for skills instruction is the sensory aspect emphasised by Doctor of Arts Sirkka Laitinen (2003) in her research. Pupils experience great joy from experimenting and practising with materials. The relationship with art is born of being in contact with the materials with the aid of making art. Increasing the pupils' sensitivity is, according to Laitinen, an important content area of visual arts instruction. She suggests that art education must take multi-sensory experiences as its starting point, combining visual as well as other sensations and observations and the touching of materials. (Laitinen 2003, 144, 189.) This challenge cannot be answered by, for example, conversational art in its narrowest definition.

Professor of Art Education Juha Varto considers that many works or acts of contemporary art do not require the kind of skills that can be achieved by learning the traditional making of an image, so contemporary art does not support the learning of skills. The visual in art is beginning to be seen as making something visible or initiating discussion – an activity that can take place in several different ways. He emphasizes that the significance of visual arts instruction is in its possibility to create states where people themselves have more power over the world in which they live. (Varto 2006, 150, 155–157.) However, teaching traditional skills in art does not necessarily exclude the emergence of such a state. This is not a matter of medium or technique but of how the choice of the same is made into a problem and discussed into being part of the meaning of the work. It is my position that with art, and also with the skills related to art, we can pursue a state in which, in Varto's (2006, 157) terms, we are able to “nurture and cherish the freedom” to discuss anything from any point of view and in any way, so long as it promotes thinking, mutual understanding and appreciation in people.

It is precisely in the practising of skill, a physical and sensory activity, that a state that facilitates encounters and dialogue can appear – one that cannot be achieved solely through, for instance, discussion and reflection. Here, I am referring to the physicality of artistic activity and the opportunity to tap into the tacit knowledge or pre-reflective thinking within ourselves. For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the pre-reflective level of knowing forms the basis for all types of knowing in that it precedes reflection and theoretical thinking. The level of pre-reflective knowledge requires sensing and holistically perceiving the world in a physical manner. (Merleau-Ponty 2004/1945, 473–475, 502–503; Matikainen 2003, 186–205.) Hannele Koivunen (1998, 204) gives a broad definition for tacit knowledge in that it involves “all the genetic, physical, intuitive, mythical, archetypal and experiential knowledge that a person has, even though it cannot be expressed by means of verbal concepts.”

This is something that is especially important to acknowledge in our work within multicultural arctic communities. According to researcher Elina Helander (2000, 172), the Sami world view is outlined and alive in the midst of everyday work. Man is a part of nature and the lifestyle is flexible. Helander maintains that the youth still learn many things about reindeer management from their elders in lean-to shelters, cottages and by campfires. Knowledge develops or is expressed via stories or conversation and is put to use immediately. Helander's view is that there is no great difference between knowledge and action (2000, 175). In discussing the obstacles faced by the Sami people in expressing their world view and relationship to nature, she highlights the various co-

lonialist institutions, such as the school and church, as being problematic. Helander goes on to state that the purpose of the resistance by the Sami is not, however, a return to some old, somehow more authentic age. Indeed, the purpose could be “a transition to a new age, realising one's own world view and culture, critically examining the Western way of thinking and developing something alternative and new.” (Helander 2000, 180.)

If we take the nurture and cherishing of freedom and openness of discussion as the artistic starting point of community-based art education, it will, at best, facilitate the expression of anything, from any perspective and in any way, as long as this promotes thinking, mutual understanding and appreciation in people. Each individual could thus join the projects living their own culture and developing something alternative and new.

Whether community-based art education in arctic, multicultural projects can actually yield genuine dialogue, and whether such projects can steer us towards non-exclusive participation, is left to be critically examined in connection with each individual project. Indeed, reflexivity is interlinked with the very essence of community-based art education from the first moments of planning and brainstorming all the way to the final evaluation of activities. This end is pursued by means of collaborative, participatory methods. In the words of Ulrich Beck, “the old, instrumental and rational order, according to which the duty of experts is to ‘enlighten’ the laymen, is dismissed” in the reflexive modern, and Beck encourages us to try new approaches, decision-making structures and means to combine competence and non-competence as well as various fields of authority (Beck 1995, 49; back translation).

We can also examine community-based art education as procedure, as if it were the door to the conceptual building. The door is functional, it is constantly moving, and through it you can step inside and outside. Community-based art education offers various kinds of art techniques and operational models for encounters, interaction and the construction of meanings. The door may also be closed so that you can concentrate behind it. The door is always located on a boundary. It is like the hinge between the school's own activity culture and the outside world, or a channel between the self and others, i.e. the surrounding community. The door also reminds us of the possibility of being closed in, of prejudice and isolation. The threshold of stepping in or out may, for one reason or another, be high. The active nature of community-based art education visualises the ways of thinking and acting customary to the community and the individual – at the same time, new meanings and action cultures can arise with the aid of art education.

### The walls – culture brings well-being to schools and villages

In my article I have examined the dialogical and performative forms of art, the concept of community, socio-cultural animation and experiential artistic learning from the point of view of community-based art education. To conclude, I will reflect on the relationship of community-based art education with psychosocial well-being – that is to say the walls of my schematic building that keep it standing and protect it. The walls can be leaned on, and, when necessary, they can also withstand pressure.

In the European Union, culture is seen as the generator of creativity, vitality, interaction and cohesion. The prevailing cultural policy trend in Finland also emphasises the significance of creativity, health and well-being. For example, the project entitled *Taide hyvinvointiyhteiskunnan uudistamisessa*, or art in the regeneration of affluent society, launched in 2005 (THU 2006–2016) will provide a survey of the possibilities of art and culture as promoters of well-being. The project aims at combining creative economic, social and health policy as well as issues related to culture. The work entails reflection on how applied artistic activities could be established as part of the structures of affluent society. In the project, art is viewed as a significant and active contributor to society. The objective of the project is to make new kind of welfare policy, and the starting point is to create more clearly outlined contacts between the spheres of, for example, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. (THU 2006–2016; Bardy et al., 2007.)

Information on the utilisation of art as part of healthcare and social work has been accumulated through various development and research projects (see Bardy & Känkäinen, 2005, Krappala & Pääjoki, 2003). The positive effect of art and culture on our well-being and perceived health has been established in several Finnish and international studies (Hyypä & Liikanen, 2005, Liikanen, 2003). The connections of art with occupational well-being and the maintenance of working ability have also been studied.<sup>13</sup> The empowering effects of art reported in the studies and surveys are not news to the art teachers working in schools, but it is important that the significance of art and culture is recognised on a wider scale as an aspect of our well-being. Unfortunately, the broader meaning of art subjects may not necessarily be recognised in

<sup>13</sup> The report published by the Centre for Occupational Safety states that the visual arts can offer opportunities for developing occupational safety from the point of view of, among other issues, experiencing joy at work, coping with emotions related to work, coping with uncertainty, promoting mental growth and taking equality perspectives into consideration (von Brandenburg 2003).

school policy or, on the other hand, within the working community of a particular school on the local level.

The wide-scale *ArctiChildren* research and development project is an important addition to the current broader discussion on well-being and cultural policy, which analyses the significance of art as a part of an affluent society. The presence of the field of knowledge of art education in the project can serve to diffuse, for example, the mystification of art, which has been criticised in connection with certain social-sector projects. On the practical level, expertise in art education relates art to the concrete practice of education, which is intentional and steered by a goal-oriented approach as well as conscious pedagogical starting points and solutions. Art is seen as an activity that can be evaluated and thus developed further in the direction of the objectives of community-based art education. This is accomplished in a performative manner, in interaction and dialogue with those involved, and reflexively, by means of self-awareness, appreciation of the processes of producing meanings and the formulation of artistic knowledge, in addition to communicating the meanings entailed in artistic expression in a broader socio-cultural context.

This has to do with slow growth processes. The end result of a community-based art education project can be a subtle change in attitudes and often the beginning of a new process. Instead of a finished building, community-based art education could indeed aim at the idea of a constantly active construction site on which psychosocial well-being – such as the aspects of self-appreciation, life management, social security and inclusion – is not viewed as having a given unchangeable essence but is seen as a state that is constructed and changes through lifelong learning. The central concepts in such a process are community and dialogue, both of which are also highlighted in contemporary art as well as socio-constructivist learning theories.



Sevettijärvi 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

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## The Northern Schoolyard as a Forum for Community-Based Art Education and Psychosocial Well-Being

Timo Jokela

The central forum in my article is a schoolyard. I examine the schoolyard as a learning environment, approaching it from the perspectives of art education, strengthening cultural identity and the psychosocial well-being of school communities. Kiilakoski (2005) analyses the current discussion on school from the perspective of critical pedagogy and claims it to be crisis talk. Luukkainen (2000) and Mikkola (2006) demand the school system opens up to the society. The opening up starts from the school culture, or the school community's internal collaboration, and continues with the school's external relations. The Finnish school system as an administrative institution offers a much better framework for developing the school towards an active, outward-looking community than is being realised in practice. In the final report of OPEPRO, a project by the Finnish National Board of Education, Luukkainen (2000) declares: "The key developmental needs as to the content of teacher training are community spirit, leadership, facing diversity, co-operative skills, opening and changing learning environments and societal awareness". The ability of the school to open up to the world, setting the concept of learning free from the boundaries of the classroom, is considered even a critical question, as Rinne and Salmi (2000, 48) point out. The first steps out of the classrooms lead to the schoolyard, the interface between school and the surrounding world.

### Art as part of school culture

While examining the internationally high scores of Finnish students in the PISA results, Välijärvi (2004, 187) sees the important pedagogic message of these results as being that a high performance level and equality of the results are not mutually exclusive objectives. At the same time, he demands a strengthening of community-based operational culture in schools to increase school satisfaction and commitment. Launonen and Pulkkinen (2004, 15) examine school as a growth community, breaking the developmental needs down to the school's collaborative relationships and the growth's community-based development factors. They also highlight art education as one of the objectives: "more space should be arranged in school work for those experiences where children and adults have a chance to face the basic questions of life through art". It seems

there is a widespread trust in the power and possibilities of art, but those working in the field of art understand that art is not a uniform phenomenon. Within art, there are conflicting and competing perspectives based on different values.

### The contextuality contemporary art: the bond between environment and community

Contemporary art has been seen as the central starting point for art education, and demands for introducing more of the methods of modern art into art education practice have been voiced (Jokela 2006; Sederholm 2006; Varto 2006). The environmentally-bound and community-based intentions of contemporary art need to be examined more closely in relation to the predominant individualism and universalism of modernism. In modernist thinking, art was understood as a universal phenomenon and the formalistic forms of art as universally valid. Neperud (1995) notes that art educators have followed the practices of modernist artists, for example by deluding themselves into believing that borrowing archetypal forms from artists and constructing them in nature would serve the purposes of sustainable development in environmental education or support the development of environmental responsibility. The methods of contemporary art have changed significantly in recent years as eco artists have become increasingly interested in using natural materials, powers and processes to comment on environmental issues. (e.g. Gablik 1991; Grande 1994; Jokela 1995). Johansson (2004) speaks about *environmental turn*, by which she refers to the arrival of land art and environmental art on the Finnish art scene.

Art was considered an autonomous phenomenon in the era of modernism – that is, it was seen as almost independent of other social factors. Good art was art for art's (or art institution's) sake, and it was not committed to local, regional or political ends. With the arrival of post-modernism, the relationship of art and art education to other social phenomena was reassessed. (Efland, Freedman & Sturh 1998; Gablik 1991, 1995; Lacy 1995a). In Finland, this discussion has involved people like Hiltunen and Jokela (2001) and Sederholm (1998). The relationship of art to indigenous cultures



Jokkmokk, spring 2008. Photo: Timo Jokela



Lovozero, autumn 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

and the colonialist nature of art also became a target for critical examination (Thomas 1999). Lippard (1997, 7–20) especially has paid attention to the encounter between locality, indigenous cultures and contemporary art in observing them, and has emphasised the psychosocial dimensions of being bound to a certain locale. Trends in contemporary art – especially community art and environmental art – underline the links of art to man's daily activities, events and places instead of emphasising universalism. This is thus a matter of man's situationality, or the interlocking of culture and our whole existence to a time and place highlighted by phenomenology (Rauhala 2005). In contemporary art, this ever-changing situation is also a fruitful starting point for performative art activities, emphasises Hiltunen<sup>[1]</sup>, who has studied art education in northern local communities.

Local, as a counterpoint to global, does not mean, however, a nationalistically coloured emphasis on one's home region, nor does communality mean commitment to following a specific preordained political programme created elsewhere. Rather, it is about a new way of exploring and understanding people's connections, spontaneous networks and common pursuits in contrast to over-individualism, consumerism and globalisation (Hautamäki 2005). The meaning of art in people's everyday activities has also become the focus of study in the circles of pragmatic aesthetics led by Shusterman (2001). One branch of pragmatic aesthetics, the phenomenologically-oriented environmental aesthetics, has become a significant trend-setter in art education as well, laying a foundation for the recognition of the meaning of the aesthetic and stimu-

lating nature of the everyday environment as part of human well-being.

The first requirement for community-based and environmental art activity is that this activity focuses on the environment of those who make and experience it (that is, the participating audience) and materialises as activities within it. This obviously means the conventions of traditional art overlap those of non-art consistent with modernist thinking (popular culture, folk art, entertainment, local customs, etc.). This is thus also a break from the art work-, artist- and exhibition-centred idea of art, emphasising art as a performative event with action. Creators of art and the audience are not seen as separate; they are often simultaneously both creators and recipients (Lacy 1995b). This brings artistic activity close to the principles of sociocultural animation (Kurki 2000, 2005), combining it with the aware and active citizenship demanded by critical pedagogy (Giroux & McLaren 2001; Suoranta 2005) as well as with the purposes of social education (Suutarinen 2006) and participatory environmental planning (Bäcklund, Häkli & Schulman 2002). Modern art interested in people's everyday lives has been successfully applied to regional development work (e.g. Hiltunen 2007), to dealing with social problems among young people (Savolainen 2002) and to finding tools for promoting psychosocial well-being (Hyyppä 2007).

Taking the background and contextual nature of contemporary art into account as the starting point for teaching thus leads to the same challenges as the critical examination of school and education. As the central underlying influence in art education, contemporary art has challenged the traditional teaching of art to find new modes of work outside the classroom and to pay attention to the community and environment instead of the individual. These art education

methods based on contemporary art have been developed by using the action research approach as part of the project studies belonging to the University of Lapland's Art Education Programme, and they have been applied not only in the Barants Region but also elsewhere in Europe (e.g. Jokela, Mikko & Kynman 2004; Hiltunen 2005).

### The many meanings of environment

The school is the environment and community of a child's and young person's activity. Schoolyards function as places for activities, but also as showcases for the school's work and as places of encounter for the school, the parents and the village community. When exploring the starting points for environmental art it is necessary to first consider what an environment actually is. Ingold (2003) examines the concept of environment from three perspectives. In the first approach, environment is seen as an entity located outside the human being and examined from a distance with the aim of achieving objectivity. This view of environment that some consider scientific has largely developed around the natural sciences. According to Neperud (1995), this is also too often the basis for the environmental education taught in schools. As a pair for natural environment, there is the term *built environment*, based on the same idea of man being outside the system, and it describes the various man-made constructs like architecture, cityscape or design. Neperud sees these views that are considered objective as part of the environmental problem, as they have institutionalised the separation of man and nature through language. Environment is "something out there", which people have control over.

The second approach defined by Ingold is related to the lived-in environment, by which is meant the milieu tied to a specific time and place, defined by various matters and phenomena perceived as significant. According to this mindset, each person has their own environment, which gains meanings through the individual's experiences and activities. This phenomenological view of the environment is prevalent in environmental psychology, environmental aesthetics and environmental ethics. The phenomenological view emphasising the experience of place marks cultural geography (e.g. Haarni et al. 1997) and environmental art (Johansson 2004, Jokela 2005) as well. It is also strongly present in participatory environmental planning (Horelli & Vepsä 1995) and in architecture (Bachelard 2003; Norberg-Schulz 1980). This perspective has often been blamed for being too individually centred and over-emphasising individual experiences.

Environmental psychology has, however, brought up the concept of social environment, which refers to people, communities and their interrelationships. People act and experience their environment in groups, which means the construction of common meanings becomes central. Aura, Horelli and Korpela (1997, 15) state: "Both physical and social environment include cultural symbols, language, meanings, customs and written or unwritten rules, which can be collectively called the symbolic environment." Tuovila (1992) has studied the symbolism of the built environment, aptly analysing the different meanings an environment holds. It is exactly the area of producing and interpreting symbols and meanings where art typically meets the environment. According to the post-modern view of art, "Art is a form of cultural production, the most important purpose of which is to construct symbols for our common reality" (Efland, Freedman & Stuhr 1998, 87; back translation).

<sup>1</sup>See further Hiltunen, *Community-based art education – Contemporary art for schools and well-being for the community?*, in this book

The third approach brought up by Ingold (2003) is represented by, for example, environmental policy and environmental legislation, where the environment is mostly seen as a societal or socially produced and managed entity. The environment in this case is a forum for exercising societal power.

### The schoolyard as environment

In school teaching, environment should be approached by taking the levels described above into account to see the environment as a physical entity, as a lived-in personal space and as a socially constructed forum reflecting ideologies and identities. A good example of an environment where all these levels are manifested is the schoolyard. The schoolyard then needs to be understood as interaction between human development and environment, in line with Bronfenbrenner (1979). The focus of attention here is the way people shape their environment, and how their view of it gradually expands, and what would be the best way for the environment to enhance this developmental process. Bronfenbrenner suggests that the environment is made up of interconnecting levels: 1) the physical environment, such as the schoolyard with its facilities and places of activity, 2) the immediate network related to that,

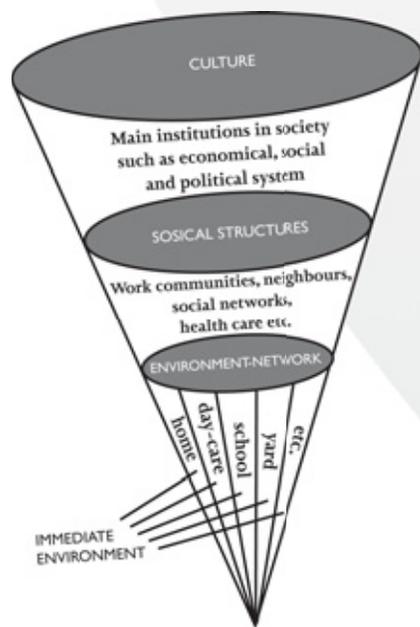


Figure 1: Interconnecting levels of environment according Bronfenbrenner. (Aura, Horelli & Korpela 1997, 38)

such as the school or classroom communities, playmates, etc., 3) the social structure, such as the systems related to education and youth work, and 4) culture, which, in turn, manifests itself in the attitudes towards schoolyards. All these levels are interconnected so that a change in one level affects another level. (Aura, Horelli & Korpela 1997, 38.)

According to Neperud (1995), it is precisely this understanding of environment as an interface between the social and the cultural that provides a foundation for developing socially responsible art and environmental education. Manzini (1994) sees environment as a meeting place for social, economic and political interests, and also as a forum for presenting ethnic and multicultural perspectives. He calls for place- and community-specific modes of operation that question the current pattern of global development and consumption. It is also necessary to think about what specific challenges for environmental art activities are brought by the present multicultural, multiethnic and post-colonial situation in the Barents Region.

### The schoolyard as a lived-in place

Many environmental educators and artists see the width and ambiguity of the concepts in environmental education and environmental art as problematic. Environment is a difficult concept to get hold of due to its multiple meanings and levels. Especially when working with children and young people, however, it is necessary to work concretely in a time and place instead of pondering abstract environmental issues. Many environmental educators and artists have settled on using the concept of place instead of that of environment. The concept of *place-specific art* favoured by Lippard (1997) emphasises the experiential and cultural meaning of place. The concept of *site-specific art* used by Kwon (2002) emphasises the spatiality of place. The concept of *place-making* has been used in the circles of art and environmental education by Neperud (1995) and Warwick (2006). In Finland, a commonly used expression is *place education*, a derivative of *place-making* (Jokela 1996). This conceptual choice underlines the existential-phenomenological emphasis, directing the focus of environmental activity from the natural sciences to humanism and from delivering information to pursuing experiences. Karjalainen (2006, 83), a Finnish cultural geographer, succinctly puts it as follows: “Environment is experienced as places. The world is always seen, understood and interpreted from a place”. Karjalainen sees the different forms of art as central material for interpreting the experiences of place. Tuan (2006) and Tani (1995) also understand the places presented in paintings, literature, films and other art forms to be interpretations and represen-

tations of place experiences. Environmental artists, in turn, see their art as creators and generators of place experiences (Jokela 1996, 2005). A place and its experience can be entered through two doors: the place interweaves space with time, environment with community. Through the relationship with place, the environment becomes understood. Community and environment cannot be separated from each other when discussing the places of our everyday lives: home, village, neighbourhood, school and schoolyard are at the same time communities and environments of the people living and acting in them. The foundation of the lifeworld is the network of places, where we operate as actors.

Thanks to the phenomenological place research that has spread to several disciplines, *Place and Placeness*, the old work (1976) by Edward Relph, is now more famous than perhaps ever before. Relph’s research still gives guidelines for the dimension of the place experience that educates, builds up identity and promotes well-being. It is clear that many of the views presented by Relph (1976, 79–117) on, for example, the negativity of the non-places created by commercialism and tourism and on the ideality of the real “unchanging” places are criticised when seen from the perspective of the contemporary multicultural and multi-identity society (e.g. Kymäläinen 2006, 210–212). But the Relphian non-places, places without identity, meaning, or an opportunity for experiencing time and place, are still an excellent starting point for environmental improvements, environmental art and environmental education. Interpreted the Relphian way, the standardised schoolyards, similar everywhere, grey and desolate and without other community functions, appear as non-places.

Karjalainen (2006, 84–85) brings up an interesting concept, *hidden places*, by which he refers to everyday life filled with familiarity and conventionality, so that a place, such as a schoolyard, is too ordinary to be noticed but remains, as it were, hidden. The schoolyard becomes visible only if something breaks or some other unexpected things happen there. It is exactly these hidden places that are also “hidden operational cultures” when examining community-based factors related to psychosocial well-being. Art activities carried out in the schoolyard can make the place and community and the experiences and views related to them visible, and, in the best case, create a framework for the longed-for interaction between school, home and the surrounding community.

### Northern cultural identity and art education

Cultural identity is one of the key issues in the project, so it needs to be examined in more detail. Western culture, both art and education, has been dominated by the view deriving from the era of the Enlightenment that claims the birth and expansion of new cultural phenomena is always progress. Progress has been understood to be radiating from the centres to the periphery, usually from west to east and from south to north. This spreading of culture into every stratum of society has been seen as something educators also participate in through their work.

As early as in the 1970s, especially in the circles of the European Council and Unesco (e.g. Hall 1992), there was emerging criticism against the idea of cultural propagation. It was seen to represent a kind of colonialist relic that aimed at civilising all men to become bearers of the same cultural values. As this happened, various minority cultures and social groups often lost their right of decision in their own culture. Many started to emphasise in this situation that all people already have a culture rooted in their surroundings and way of life, and it should be respected. The purpose of cultural policy became to preserve some sort of cultural diversity. (Häyrynen 2006). The European Union has thus advised its Member States to follow the so-called subsidiarity principle in their cultural policy. This means that a higher instance only takes action when it is clear that the planned activity cannot be implemented by the lower instance.

According to the current view, a part of cultural sustainability is to strengthen the identity and vitality of different cultural groups. This can be contributed to by cultivating regional characteristics, such as folklore, landscape, buildings and human habitats. (Hallituksen kestävän kehityksen ohjelma 1998). The common view emphasises tradition. Cultural identity is, however, not the same as cultural heritage, with which it is often equated. To clarify the relationship between identity and tradition, Hall (2003) talks about *routes* instead of *roots*, emphasising the fact that nobody receives a cultural identity at birth but it is learned in a certain culture, which, in turn, is ever-changing. Berger and Luckman (1994, 149–179) emphasise the continuous defining of collective identity and the shaping of group identity through interaction with the environment. Cultural identity is thus not an ethnic, or racial, concept. When identity is understood similarly to the views by Hall (1996, 1999, 2003), as a time- and place-specific social structure, it becomes a question of a change process of the globalising world, where permanent identities

are dissolving, giving way to more mobile and multi-faceted identities. This comes up in the research done on northern identities and mentalities as well as in the politicised discussion on the Sami people. (Pääkkönen 2003; Tuulentie 2003; Stoor 1999.)

As we accept the goal of preserving cultural diversity, we also have to take the indigenous art of the northern cultures as the starting point for our activities. Traditional Sami culture does not know visual arts, nor even art as a concept of its own. Art has long traditions, however, and many see handicraft as the embodiment of Sami art and courses on traditional handicraft as adequate art education. On the other hand, by introducing tools of contemporary art, Sami artists have now broken the long period of having just outsiders depicting their culture. Contemporary art has empowered artists to tell about their own lifeworld from within their own culture. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, Professor in Sami Studies at the University of Oulu, sees art “as a representation, which not only describes the existing identity, but also continuously builds and generates it” (Lehtola 1997, 23). The starting points for renewing Sami art and handicraft in relation to cultural identity and the post-colonialist situation have been explored by Guttorm (2004) as well.

Because northern forms of culture and cultural identities have emerged and grown in a close relationship with the environment, it was natural for the University of Lapland, Department of Art Education to select environmental art and its wintry application, winter art, as a tool for developing concrete modes of work for contemporary art activities taking place in northern communities. The choice has turned out to be successful, and the method can be seen to have met with the environmental relationship of the northern communities in an enriching way (see e.g. Hiltunen 2007; Huhmarniemi 2007; Jokela 2007a, 2007b).

### Cultural identity and the schoolyard

The school as one of the central public buildings in northern villages has a character of its own. The school does not represent the arrival of civilisation to the village in a positive sense alone. For northern multicultural and multiethnic communities, the school building with its dormitories represent authority as well, with even colonialist qualities. This is still of significance when establishing the schools' external relations and choosing ways of working. The factors relating to psychosocial well-being at school have their roots in the village community as a whole, and the parents may still remember their dormitory years and the school's repressive nature, bound to the majority culture and destroying the local

identity. It is not always easy to reconcile the cultural identity of the northern villages with a community-based effort to promote school satisfaction.

As a Western institution, the school has an established spatial form. School buildings around the world are easy to recognise. In addition to the classrooms, the schoolyard is a central functional space for pupils. Attention has been paid to the ecological and aesthetic aspects of the schoolyard (e.g. Learning through Landscape). Safety and practicality also have their guidelines (Tapaninen 2003). Discussion on the schoolyard as a learning environment, even as a manifestation of the operational culture of the whole school, has started as well (Luokola 2007). As an out-of-the-classroom space, the schoolyard actually lends itself more easily for use as a community venue. The schoolyard offers a forum for the school's activities relating to its external relations, such as co-operation between home and school, or between school and youth work.

Due to the natural conditions, northern schoolyards have their special characteristics as venues for activities and learning. Snow covers the schoolyards for the better part of the school year, shaping their nature. The usual play areas, hopscotch marks on the tarmac and climbing frames are all covered by snow. Snowdrifts create a new environment for activities or prevent the use of the schoolyard, depending on the attitude of the actors. This is a case of the concept of affordances used by Marketta Kyttä (2006), based on the definition by James Gibson. According to Kyttä, affordances – that is, what kind of possibilities a place offers for an action – not only depend on the place itself and its physical framework but are also a socioconstructive phenomenon, a culturally determined choice of the actors.

The basis for the schoolyard activities of the ArctiChildren II project is the view of the close relationship of the northern village communities, families and children with the environment and nature. Through the means of environmental art, the aim has been to create models of operation through which the northern schoolyard, the neighbouring nature, the cycle of the year and snow are understood as affordances, or opportunities for representing and building one's own cultural identity in the community (Jokela 2007c).

### Education on place: the relationship between environmental art and environmental education

Environmental art and environmental education have common roots, and their birth can be placed in the 1960s. Environmental questions arrived in the Finnish art education in the 1970s, but it was not until the 1990s that the search for scientific grounds for environmental education as part of educational research (e.g. Käpylä, 1991) and art (Jokela, 1995, 1996; Mantere, 1995) started. Hannele Cantell (2004), who has explored different views of learning in environmental education, highlights contextual teaching as one of the current trends that links the subject matter content with social phenomena and pupils' everyday lives. From the perspective of art education, this is certainly a meaningful starting point. Contextual environmental education includes a humanistic approach combined with critical thinking and a socioconstructive view of learning. Cantell (2004, 73) summarises the goals of contextual environmental education as appropriate application of learned knowledge and skills to different situations and contexts, active citizenship, participation and contribution, co-operation between different actors and a change in values and attitudes.

The model of contextual environmental education in its pursuit of experiences resembles the “art-based environmental education” well known in Finnish art education circles that emphasises activity as the starting point (e.g. Mantere, 1995), but instead of focusing on the individual it uses a strongly humanistic and multidisciplinary approach and has a participating community-based emphasis, similar to the art pedagogic project model of the University of Lapland (Jokela, 2006). Learning then occurs in real environments through common pursuits, through experiences and their reflection. Teachers are co-actors and pupils active generators of information and action. This is a case of participation and empowerment,

which are considered crucial for producing environmentally responsible behaviour by numerous studies in environmental education (e.g. Axelrod & Lehman, 1993; Hungerford & Volk, 1990; Käpylä, 1991).

Successful experiences of operating in an environment generate a sense of participation, which is one of the basic pillars of environmental education and also of psychosocial well-being. Participation is essentially an experience of being able to bring about changes in one's environment and, through that, in one's life (Gretschel, 2002). Neperud (1995) emphasises the interactive nature of action so that, on the one hand, one learns to see the impact of the environment on the self, and on the other hand, the way this impact can be influenced. Being an experience-oriented activity, art offers excellent opportunities for generating impressive experiences. Self-made environmental artworks as new symbols of one's own immediate surroundings have an impact on the ambience of the environment and directly on its makers. Doing together, participating, giving one's contribution to the work, together create a sense of participation, which, in turn, is a prerequisite for empowerment, or trusting one's abilities and possibilities to make a difference.

Art activity that is linked to one's lifeworld creates a sense of belonging to a specific place or community. According to the study on young people's relationships with their home region in eastern Finland by Sinkkonen-Tolppi (2006), the sense of adherence, or belonging to a place: “serves not only as building blocks for their life while creating a sense of security and trust, but also helps them to attach to other places or communities later in life. The experience of being part of something bigger prevents social displacement as well.” This resource thus increases the well-being of young people,



Lovozero, autumn 2007. Photos: Heidi Hänninen

wherever they may later live. “Roots gives people wings”, as Sinkkonen-Tolppi (2006, 153) sums up.

Many art educators emphasising empowerment, including Adams (2002), Barbosa (1991) and Neperud (1995), have sought a foundation for their work in the direction of participatory environmental planning and architectural education, and have used the method when encouraging participation among, for example, socially displaced people, immigrants or the young people of troubled neighbourhoods. This is the activity they call *place-making*.

In Finland, there have been a few projects with an emphasis on children's and young people's participation in the planning of their environment (e.g. Horelli, Kyttä & Kaaja, 1998; Horelli & Vepsä, 1995). By participating in real projects for the development of their settings, children are supposed to become participating adults that understand their opportunities to have a say in different matters. It is assumed that as children learn to see their part in a whole it strengthens their sense of belonging to a community. Being involved in the environment thus prevents the feeling of detachment, frustration and vandalism. Participation is ultimately a question of bringing up children into citizenship. The problem with these individually-oriented models deriving from environmental psychology is that they are difficult to apply to collaborative school work and school objectives.

### Co-operation in art education

Working in an environment, in a schoolyard, for example, requires collaboration between both teachers and pupils. The organisation of this work has a significant meaning in terms of pedagogy and content. Solutions to this have been sought in collaborative modes of work. Saloviita (2006) highlights the positive influences of collaborative learning as shown by research. Johnson and Johnson (2000) have stated collaborative teaching has positive influences on learning compared with teaching that focuses on competition or the individual. Collaborative modes of work have had an especially positive influence on students' mutual relations (Kagan 1992; Slavin 1995). It has been discovered that collaborative learning boosts students' self-confidence, and other positive influences have also been reported, such as the impact on a general positive attitude to school, on learning motivation, on unselfishness and self-control. (Saloviita, 2006, 138–139).

Collaborative working in art education is not unfamiliar for art educators, but very often artistic work, and the positive impact of art, is associated with an individual. The following concept of four squares illustrates the possibilities that artis-

tic activity planned for a schoolyard, for example, may have. The four squares have the following variables: the individual – community segment and the training of skills – construction of meanings segment. Art education activities can be placed in these segments, thus creating the following squares:

Square A: Activities that traditionally emphasise a pupil's skills. Treatment of material and technical proficiency manifest themselves as individual performances.

Square B: The expressive activities through which the pupil creates new, personally significant meanings and symbols. Personal experience and autobiographical aspects gain emphasis. The expressive nature of work and the individual experience



Jokkmokk, autumn 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

produced by the process are more essential than the end result. This is a case of experiential learning based on constructivism, common in art education (Räsänen, 1997).

Square C: Activities where the ability to do something results from the whole group working together. Together it is possible to achieve something big, something nobody could do on their own. This means learning co-operative skills, distribution of work and joint planning. Such activities are often motivating, resembling team sports in terms of physical action. Square D: Activities where a group or community produces new community-based meanings and symbols deriving from their own culture. Alongside physical action, the focus is on mutual understanding, intersubjectivity and dialogue between the actors. This is a case of community-based art education, with a background of social constructivism as the prevailing view of learning in the form defined by Tynjälä (2000, 150–168), for example.

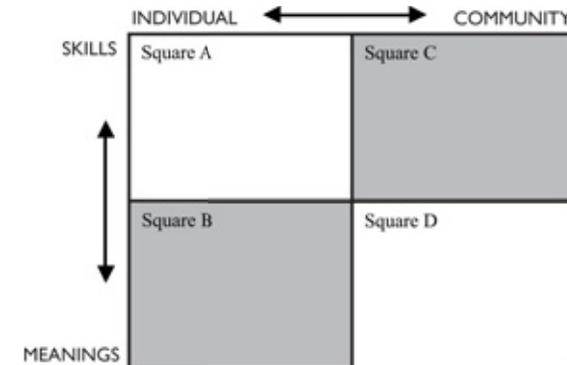


Figure 2: Four squares of artistic activities in art education

### In northern schoolyards: Sevettijärvi, Jokkmokk and Lovozero

Based on the principles described above, the ArctiChildren project launched a subproject of art activities to be planned and implemented for the schools in Sevettijärvi (Finland), Jokkmokk (Sweden) and Lovozero (Russia). The objective was to have the schools work in a community-based, outward-looking way, to make use of the potential of the schoolyard and to engage pupils in a dialogue relating to their cultural identity.

The start of the work required co-operation networks to be established. The planner of the ArctiChildren project, a pair of

art education students and their supervisors assigned to each of the schools, as well as the teachers committed to this project, started a joint planning work. At each school the project comprised an autumnal environmental art workshop, with material available in the neighbourhood, and a snow sculpture workshop utilising winter conditions. These workshops were considered the best way of implementing art activities as described in Square D above. Planning and implementation also served as training in the subject and different methods for all participants. Teaching material in environmental art (Jokela et al., 2006) and in winter art (Huhmarniemi et al., 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b) produced by the University of Lapland, Department of Art Education was used in both planning and training.

The schools of Sevettijärvi, Jokkmokk and Lovozero had in common the multiethnic background of the pupils and their close relationship with reindeer management, either through their parents, grandparents or the village community. The pupils in Sevettijärvi were mostly Skolt Sami; Lulea Sami and Northern Sami in Jokkmokk. In Lovozero there are also Komi people and Russians in addition to Skolt Sami. During the workshop ethnic differences were not highlighted or emphasised. The workshop content was found in village traditions and approached through folk belief stories relating to the environmental relationship. It is exactly the richness and depth of these belief and environmental stories that is a typical feature of the Sami culture (Huuskonen, 2004, Autio, 1993). A special selection of animal myths and beliefs were chosen as inspiration for the workshops because children easily identify with those kinds of stories, thus bringing their own meanings to the work.

Although the planning was based on shared principles, the character of each school influenced the way the project became part of the school routine and what was actually done. Sevettijärvi School is the centre of village activity. The school is actively involved in the village community, and the school facilities are used for a variety of events. The school has an approved status, with all village children attending it. The school serves as a centre for reviving and renewing the entire Skolt Sami culture, and the teachers seem to have understood the significance of project work in renewing the school and in supporting the cultural identity of the village. It was easy to introduce planning in form of a project to the school routine, and the development work was consistent. In winter the work was confined to the schoolyard, but extended to the marvellous scene by the lake close to the school in autumn.

In Jokkmokk only a part of the village children attend the Sami school, and the school does not have the same kind of position as the village centre as the school in Sevettijärvi. The goal set by the school itself thus became to increase the vis-

ibility of the Sami cultural identity from the school community outwards to strengthen the whole community. The defined, but wide and varied, schoolyard offered a good starting point for working outdoors both in winter and autumn. The methods and starting points of environmental art and winter art were new and unfamiliar to the teachers.

The pupils of Lovozero Secondary School were Sami, Komi people and Russians. The workshop in Lovozero was not jointly planned in a consistent manner due to communication problems. The project was more like an intervention, aiming at showing the teachers what collaborative methods based on environmental art in schoolyards look like. Compared with Sevettijärvi and Jokkmokk, the Lovozero schoolyard is a bare, open space equipped with just a few play apparatuses. The working methods intended for improving a Finnish school community are not applicable as such in another culture, which may lead to unexpected results; in the case of Lovozero, the surprises were positive as well. In the environmental art workshop, the marvellous willow reindeer made by teachers and pupils together were not left on the schoolyard but, quite surprisingly, distributed for the joy of the whole village community. Two reindeer, for example, were given as a present to an old lonely man whose two valuable reindeer had been recently stolen. The willow reindeer had thus gained meanings specific to the Lovozero people; they had become shared symbols, place-specific art that empowered its makers to act for the good of their own community.



Jokkmokk, 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

## Concluding comments

My aim has been to shed light on the background and theoretical starting points from which the Department of Art Education (Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland) has developed methods for making environmental art applicable to the special northern circumstances and sociocultural setting. The schoolyard projects carried out within the ArctiChildren project in the schools of Sevettijärvi (Finland), Jokkmokk (Sweden) and Lovozero (Russia) are a continuation of this development work in the context of promoting psychosocial well-being. Place- and community-specific art and its wintry application, winter art, serve as tools that have been used to encourage schools, teachers, pupils and their parents to get involved in community-based modes of operation. At its best, this kind of work brings out the schoolyard as a space for experiencing the annual cycle of northern nature; as a hub of information and action; as a showcase for the school's view of learning and for its community spirit; as a meeting place for the school, parents and the whole village community; as a forum for symbols that build up cultural identity and democracy; and as a meeting place for growing citizens and their society. The starting point is the idea of the empowering impact of art on communities combined with the promotion of psychosocial well-being in a way that respects the northern cultural identity.

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## Thematic Integration of Biology, Geography and Art Instruction in Support of Youth Well-Being

Maria Huhmarniemi, Minna Lilja and Anneli Lilleberg

A strong and vivid relationship to nature, an experience of being part of your immediate environment and a trust in your own potential to exert an influence are essential factors of well-being. The school has an opportunity to support the construction of these. In our article we discuss the theoretical and practical aspects of the thematic instructional modules that we utilised in developing the integration of biology, geography and art instruction. The instructional modules were implemented in the year classes 7–9 of the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School during the school year 2006–2007 and the autumn of 2007. The participating pupils were between the ages of 12 and 16 years. We begin our article with a discussion on the integration between subjects from the viewpoints of curricular integration and the fostering of pupils' personal growth, in addition to providing examples of the thematic continuity between subjects. In the second section, we discuss nature as a source of well-being. The third section is dedicated to describing the shared topics and teaching methods of biology, geography and art in relation to supporting well-being, and our experiences with the instructional modules.

The fragmentation of the curriculum into seemingly distinct subjects causes an undue focus on performance, over-emphasis of informative content and difficulties in grasping meaningful wholes. We designed<sup>[1]</sup> thematic modules for the instruction of biology, geography and art (Image 1), the aims and contents of which were linked to the curricula for the respective subjects and were applicable in the implementation of normal school instruction. In this way, integration serves to support and unify the curriculum, making for more profound learning. In addition to the learning objectives, the integration aimed at supporting the well-being and identity development of the young pupils.

The curricula for biology, geography and art share much of their content, such as the examination, observation and assessment of the natural and developed environment from aesthetic, ethical, ecological and design perspectives. These contents are linked to environmental education as a holistic method. When cognitive learning, emotions, value discussions, action and personal experiences are linked together, learning becomes experiential and profound (Käpylä 1994, 10–12; Wahlström 1994, 22). At the same time, this increases

<sup>1</sup>The modules were designed and implemented by Minna Lilja (biology and geography teacher) and Anneli Lilleberg (art teacher).

experiences of meaningfulness, motivation and the commitment to study, facilitating the application of the knowledge and skills learned to the world outside the school (Vauras 2004, 19).

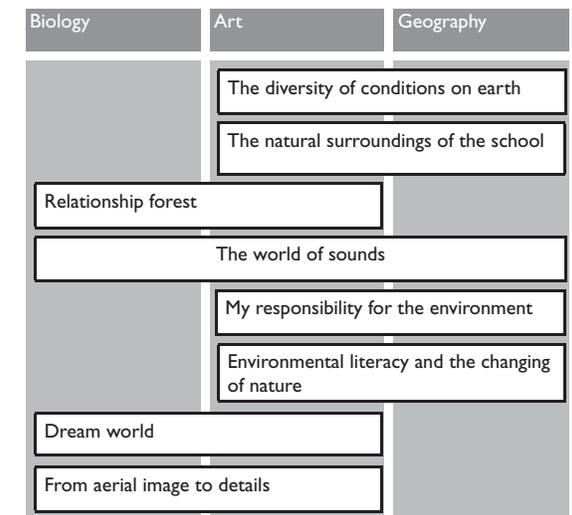


Image 1.

Integration between biology, geography and art instruction. The cross-curricular themes are based on the 7–9<sup>th</sup>-year curricula.

In the instructional modules, integration supported the holistic growth of the pupils as thinking, feeling and acting individuals. The themes of the modules were connected with the pupils' own lives and personal experiences. The things examined included, among other aspects, the natural environment and regional planning of the physical surroundings, human relationships and experiences of internationalism. Therefore, the integration not only referred to integration within the curriculum but also to actually stepping outside the classroom and utilising authentic, practical situations in the instruction. According to Arja Puurula (1998, 14–16), curricular integration refers to the combining of learning contents into integers with the aid of themes, projects and teacher collaboration. In addition to reducing curricular fragmentation, integration means, among other issues, the integration of learners

with special needs into mainstream instruction, connecting instruction with everyday life and organising teaching situations outside the classroom, in addition to facilitating encounters between different age groups and cooperation with stakeholder groups from outside the school.

During the modules we linked the contents of biology and art instruction to the pupils' personal experiences, such as with the *DreamWorld* theme<sup>[2]</sup>. During the biology lessons the pupils studied their own sleep rhythms, which helped them to pinpoint the causes of their possible sleeping difficulties and to think about the effect of their sleeping habits on their general alertness. Written records of dreams formed the topics of video animations and surrealist paintings made in art classes. Making the animations and the paintings gave the pupils an opportunity to process their dreams collectively and to share personal experiences among classmates. As stated by Pauline von Bonsdorf (2006, 158), art can be used to express experiences that would otherwise be impossible to communicate. Through art, the "experiences of others" become alive and turn into "my experiences".

An eternal issue within arts and crafts subjects is the controversy between the two paradigms of art for art's sake and learning through art. Should art be taught as a self-evident part of culture and humanity, or should the methods of art be bound with the contents of other subjects? Arthur Efland (2002, 164–170) suggests that art be adopted as the subject that permeates the entire school curriculum<sup>[3]</sup>. Efland discusses the significance of the aesthetic experience in learning and states that we should always learn something from aesthetic experiences. According to Puurula (1998), art education should not be integrated with other subjects only by means of using art as a tool for animating the contents of other subjects or as a means of connecting with the pupils' emotional life. An equitable integration also accommodates the needs of art instruction itself. (Puurula 1998, 20–21.) In the best-case scenario the distinguishing qualities of each subject are preserved and the integration produces new kinds of entities. Teachers can construct multi-disciplinary and cross-curricular practices, share responsibility and find opportunities for collaboration. (Loukola 2004, 156; Räsänen 2006, 22–23.)

During the thematic instructional modules of biology, geography and art, the curricula were integrated by creating continuums of topics between the subjects. Instruction in the different subjects adhered to the respective learning objectives, according to the principle of equitable integration.

<sup>2</sup> See Lilja and Lilleberg in this book

<sup>3</sup> According to Efland, the possibilities for integration are at their best in an examination of artistic images. Art is given meanings as it is examined within a historical and cultural context, and culture becomes understandable through art. (Efland 2002, 164.)

For example, the theme *Diversity of Conditions on Earth*<sup>[4]</sup> emerged from the geography curriculum. Gaining insight into the lives of people from different areas is an essential approach in geography instruction (Perusopetuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteet 2004, 181). This aspect was integrated with art instruction by means of strip cartoons, in which the pupils studied cultural differences between countries and compared their lives with those of young people living under different conditions. The essential aspect of making the cartoons was, in addition to fostering empathy and the ability to identify with others, the study of visual expression according to the objective of art instruction. The planning and implementation of the thematic continuums within the modules required both teachers to study the curricula of both subjects and discuss them together.

### Nature as a source of well-being

There were two reasons why we chose instruction in the natural environment close to the school as the method used for the instructional modules. For the first, themes related to the environment emerged from the curricula of biology, geography and art. Secondly, instruction in natural surroundings gave the pupils skills for supporting their personal well-being through nature experiences. In this section we will discuss the impact of education with regard to nature and the environment on the psychosocial well-being of pupils.

The fields of humanistic ecology, anthropology and psychology include many discussions on how nature functions in support of psychological well-being. According to ecologist Joseph W. Meeker (1994), nature is experienced as beautiful and balancing because of its biological authenticity. The harmony of natural forms, the diversity of the life processes and the ecological integrity of nature give us aesthetic pleasure. Anthropologist Kay Milton (2002) emphasises the significance of emotional nature experiences in growing into an environmental person. According to eco-psychologist Kirsi Salonen (2006, 51–52), the scarceness of nature experiences causes the innate relationship between people and the environment to deteriorate, and people lose contact with themselves as feeling and experiencing, ethical actors. They will then begin to act against their own values, needs and wishes, which causes stress, fatigue and mental health problems.

The debate on climate change and natural disasters creates an image of the environment as a threat. However, nature is not the sum of environmental problems but an omnipresent, diverse entity of processes that uphold life. People should

<sup>4</sup> See Lilja and Lilleberg in this book.



Image 2. The room of self (Verna Isomursu and Karoliina Raappana)

look beyond the fear caused by environmental problems and rediscover nature as a source of vitality and joy, feeling solidarity towards the environment. (Haila 2004, 8–16.) According to philosopher Aldo Leopold, an individual's commitment to ethical action for the environment requires a philosophical and ideological understanding of nature conservation, as well as the feelings of love, respect and admiration towards nature (Leopold 1997, 135). The environmental behaviour of young people may be activated through emotional experiences of nature, and they may then learn to see the calming and balancing influence of nature, in addition to acting in a way that places less burden on the environment. (Salonen 2005, 14–15; Savva, Trimis & Zachariou 2004.)

Aesthetic and visual viewpoints are emphasised in art instruction, but they also emerge in an examination of scientific phenomena<sup>[5]</sup>. The interrelationships between aesthetic, ethical and intellectual views reveal the fact that nature is a cultural resource. Communication between a person and nature is a significant aspect in the construction of identity. (Väyrynen, 2004.) During the *From Aerial Image to Details*<sup>[6]</sup> theme our pupils constructed a "self-room" (Image 2), in which they studied the interaction between their self-image and the surroundings.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see the work *Lärandets konst*. The publication includes articles reflecting on the aesthetic dimensions of special pedagogics and instruction in languages, physics, mathematics and art subjects. (Alerby and Elidóttir 2006.)

<sup>6</sup> Lilja and Lilleberg in this book

Several themes included in our instructional modules involved the pupils reflecting on their own relationship with the environment and nature. The pupils recognised the calming influence of nature, as can be seen from this text by one of them: "The environment has a huge effect on your mood—if you think a place is beautiful and full of light, you usually feel better there than somewhere ugly. For example, an ugly roadwork site or building depresses you. (...) In a beautiful environment, you gain more energy." (Girl, age 14.) In the words of another pupil: "Ducks, fountains, silence and beautiful waterways make you a lot calmer" (girl, age 15). Through instructional modules implemented outdoors and through a reflection on their own relationship to the environment, the pupils were able to recognise that the natural environment calms and stimulates a person, in addition to clarifying one's thoughts and emotions. They became more skilled in using nature to support their personal well-being.

### Intersections between biology, geography, art and well-being

**Multi-sensory observation of the environment.** Developing observational skills and sensitivity with regard to the environment is one of the points of contact between geography and art education. With the aid of various sensory exercises, the aural, olfactory and haptic sensations, as well as the aesthetic observation of the environment, are consciously



Image 4. Life Cycle, Heart of Stone and Stone Sacrificial Statue. Photo: Markku Lilleberg

sensitised (Käpylä 1994, 14–15; Neperud 1995, 238). Observation exercises are often used as stimuli for learning—they motivate the pupils to study and evaluate the environment and to describe their observations by means of art. As an example, during the *World of Sounds* theme the pupils measured sound volumes and compared the noise in the developed environment to experiencing natural sounds. They painted different “sound beings” based on their observations (Image 3).

The use of sensory exercises in instruction supports pupils' well-being. They increase the experiential, physical and active aspects of learning in parallel with cognitive learning. Moreover, learning the skills of observing nature supports life management. It has been established that spending time in nature and listening to birdsong and the sounds of wind and water generate pleasure (Wahlström 1997, 1). In the silence of nature, which is neither emptiness nor soundlessness, one can hear calming sounds that are overwhelming in the urban environment (Kankkunen 1997, 28).

The instructional modules paid particular attention to the sound environment, since noise is generally not sufficiently recognised as an environmental problem. The world of sounds has a decisive impact on the psychological well-being of a person and communities. On the physiological level, it is not possible to become accustomed to noise; it causes continuous stress to a person both physically and psychologically. In contrast, it is possible to become socially habituated to noise: despite its intrusiveness, noise has been accepted as part of our living environments. We engaged our pupils in thinking about the school soundscape because the skill of listening is disappearing and the influence of the sounds of the environment on our well-being is easily overlooked. (Kankkunen 1997, 26–28.) By means of surveying sound experiences and the world of sounds, the pupils learned to listen to each other

and to understand and consider other people's wishes regarding voice control.

**Dialogue between nature, place and self in environmental art.** Environmental art is well suited to the integration of biology, geography and art instruction for the purpose of supporting well-being. Environmental art implemented with natural materials in particular is always linked with observations of nature as well as with taking a moment to enjoy nature experiences and engage in a dialogue between the place and oneself. The starting point of environmental art is often a place that serves as an image of the artist's persona. In constructing works of environmental art on the Ounasvaara hill, some of the pupils used natural elements to depict their own lives, such as in the pieces entitled *Life Cycle* and *Heart of Stone* (Image 4). *Life Cycle* was described by the pupils as follows:

*“This is our life cycle; the stick represents our problems. Some of them are more curved and complicated, some more straightforward. The white stones are the solutions to the problems.”*  
*The Heart of Stone was a symbol of love for nature compiled by 9th-year boys.*

In nature, a person can have a positive experience of being one with a place, when the boundaries between the place and oneself disappear. At the same time, the unique character of a nature experience creates a sense of the uniqueness of oneself as a person. A place can also give a person a sense of enchantment and continuity, and of being able to break away from everyday routines. However, an invigorating effect is only achieved when the place seems to suit the person. (Salonen 2006, 62–63.) Favourite places provide an opportunity to construct and maintain one's own identity, whether they



Image 3. Girl is dancing and jumping in the evening alone, without mouth (Taina Maunula)

are found outdoors or indoors. Many studies have reported that the favourite places of Finns are often located in natural surroundings. The favourite places of schoolchildren from the north of Finland, in particular, are more often found in the natural environment than those of schoolchildren from the southern regions of the country. (Kaivola & Rikkinen 2003, 193–194, 208.)

Several researchers who have studied the impact of environmental art in environmental education have reported that the environmental sensitivity and nature relationships of the participants have been reinforced (Boeckel 2007; Jokela 1997; Erzen 2005; Savva, Trimis & Zachariou 2004, 250). Concentration, physical labour and corporality make the compilation of environmental art a more profound and integrating experience (Hiltunen 2007, 68–73; Jokela, 2005). The participants have been observed to become more uninhibited and interactive. The participants have become empowered, they have



Image 5. An expressive map painting of the immediate environment (Ella-Eevastiina Rintamäki)

understood themselves as a part of the ecosystem, and they have formed a relationship with nature and with themselves as part of it. (Savva, Trimis & Zachariou 2004, 250.) Making environmental art has been found to increase general well-being and consciousness of one's own existence in an immediate relationship with nature (Erzen, 2005).

An installation compiled of tree creatures made by the pupils was used with the *Relationship Forest*<sup>[7]</sup> theme to symbolise diversity and interpersonal relationships. In discussing the collaboratively made work of art, the pupils were able to process feelings of friendship, empathy, anger or rejection. The purpose was to grasp the significance of relationship skills and of respecting diversity for the well-being of people. Artistic expression can help young people to see themselves as part of nature, their own community and society.

**Geographers and visual artists as describers of places and landscapes.** It has always been the shared challenge of geography and art instruction to provide visual representations of places. Currently, the discussion of what places and landscapes are is also essential. At times, the concept of landscape is understood as a view appearing before an observer. In certain contexts the concept of landscape refers to a space experienced through several senses by an observer in that space. The concepts of landscape and place are then given corresponding meanings. A poem or other type of text can also be a landscape or an experience of place in a similar sense as a landscape painting. (Johansson 2006, 48; Raivo 1997, 200.)

<sup>7</sup> See Lilja and Lilleberg in this book



Image 6. Sun Canvases – a work of environmental art in the schoolyard. Photo: Anneli Lilleberg

Artists aim at creating a strong experience of place for the person perceiving the work of art. The impact depends both on the artist's representation and on the observer's ability for empathy and imagination. (Relph 1976, 52–53.)

Subjective experiences of place and mental images of environments lie at the core of art education and humanistic geography. The objective of our instructional modules was for the pupils to become aware of the experiences of place related to the immediate vicinity of the school, in addition to being able to describe the same along with the emotions, interpretations and personal meanings involved. The pupils processed their experiences of place into mind maps and expressive paintings (Image 5), in which, among other things, they expressed their feelings concerning places that they experienced as pleasant or frightening. The mind maps showed that the experiences the pupils had of their immediate environment were varied. As argued by Räsänen, art education generates questions, personal meanings and incomplete and ambigu-

ous information. Integrating art with scientific and societal thinking infuses the process with curiosity, uncertainty, conflict, unpredictability and changes of perspective. (Räsänen 2006, 21.)

The pupils also studied and captured places near the school by means of photography. Taking and looking at photographs promoted awareness of the effect of spaces and places. Writing about the photographs also showed that the pupils experience certain places as frightening, such as dark paths, abandoned buildings and unfamiliar people. During the instructional modules, pupils became practised in expressing their environmental images and forming their own opinions, thus assuming skills for active citizenship. The objective was for the pupils to understand how the design and planning of spaces affects their own lives and well-being. (See Kaivola & Rikkinen 2003, 193–195.)

### The scientist-artist as an investigative learner.

Excursions into the outdoors in the spirit of scientist-artists and investigative learning lay the foundation for integrating biology, geography and art instruction. The multiple practices and approaches of contemporary art, such as environmental, performance and conceptual art, have changed traditional landscape art. A landscape is no longer merely beheld, it is also touched. (Johansson 2006, 75–81.) Frequently, the methods of contemporary artists resemble those of scientists in that they study and make visible the processes of nature and the environment<sup>[8]</sup>. During outdoor excursions, natural materials can be collected for use in installations. The results of measuring distances, weather phenomena and natural processes can be worked into conceptual art. Documentations of sounds and the daily and seasonal cycle can be utilised in photographs, videos and sound works.

The observations of natural processes and the mapping of places connected with the learning contents of geography and biology are also suitable starting points for environmental art. Creating locally bound environmental art requires familiarisation with the place on several levels. A place is not only an environment experienced through the various senses but also a stage for history and the future. A place is always associated with the different meanings assigned to it. (Jokela 1997, 2005; Hiltunen & Jokela, 2001.)

<sup>8</sup> Environmental artists, such as Andy Goldsworthy and Nils-Udo, visualise the flow of nature, such as a breeze or the melting of snow, in their works. In Finland, the artist Anni Rapinoja has studied geography and botany and uses natural materials in her work. Tuula Närhinen records the patterns that tree branches draw when moved by the wind. The inspiration for the works by Lauri Anttila and Jussi Kivi has come from geographic expeditions, the natural sciences and a romantic nature relationship.



Image 7. The exhibition entitled A buzz of activity and excitement in the schoolyard. Photo: Anneli Lilleberg

In connection with the *Natural Surroundings of the Nearby Area*<sup>[9]</sup> theme, we studied the natural history and events of our home town and studied the relationship between man and nature. Our purpose was to reinforce the pupils' understanding of their own environment and to help them become attached to the familiar surroundings. We first studied the schoolyard, where the natural past is visible as signs from the Ice Age, among other aspects. We discussed the visible traces of history in the landscape and nature, in addition to examining the marks left by previous generations in the developed environment. Based on their observations, the pupils concluded the process by making an argumentative piece of environmental art entitled *Sun Canvases* (Image 6). In the work the pupils reflected on their own interaction with the environment and the marks they would leave behind for the coming generations.

**Learning participation and cooperation.** Developing the pupils' regional identity and their active citizenship is one of the central objectives in geography instruction. A sense of belonging to a certain place reinforces young people's respect for their immediate environment and the inhabitants thereof, in addition to enhancing their sense of responsibility

<sup>9</sup> See Lilja and Lilleberg in this book

ity for other regions and the people living in them. (Cantell 2003, 172.)

At school, pupils should be able to feel that they can have an impact on their own immediate surroundings, such as the school facilities, in addition to learning to evaluate the aesthetic qualities and functionality of the environment and understanding the influence of social, economic and political factors on environmental planning. In art instruction the aim is not only to observe the environment but also to learn to find creative and inventive solutions. (Adams 1997, 239; Neperud 1995.) The opportunities for influence and action in the planning and maintaining of one's own surroundings evoke feelings of empowerment (Koskinen 2005). Participating in development projects concerning the nearby environment supports a person's well-being through the experience of being part of a process. Before the restoration of our schoolyard, the pupils drew up plans for the yard and worked them into paintings and scale models (Image 7).

Ideally, a person's living environment meets the needs of ecology, security, invigoration, community, aesthetics and activity (Salonen 2005, 70–71). With the theme entitled *From Aerial Image to Details* our pupils learned to observe their environment critically by means of sharing experiences. The pupils photographed various faults and good solutions in their home town. The pupils gave written arguments for their choice of places to describe, they imagined themselves in the places shown in the photographs and described their feelings to each other. The development ideas put forth by the pupils included the following: "a decent sports centre and stadium to replace the central sports field, more parks with beautiful trees and benches, and a small pool would be nice; proper dressing booths and working toilets at the beach and more tables around the kiosk. This way the beach would be much more pleasant and usable." In order to construct an experience of participation and inclusion, we also sent the pupils' improvement ideas to the decision-makers responsible for municipal planning for comments.

Environmental planning in school communities, villages, urban residential areas and cities alike calls for cooperation between architects, users, artists, historians and scientists. Cross-curricular integration is a means to build skills for participation and cooperation in the future.

**Teachers as the agents of well-being.** The starting point for designing the instructional modules was a concern for the well-being of our youth in today's society. We decided to examine well-being from the points of view of integration, nature experiences and the relationship to the environment. In the instructional modules we discussed the environment

by means of cognitive, experiential and artistic methods. In the instruction situations we wanted to make time for genuine dialogue to emerge. Encouraging pupils to discuss things and express their own thoughts, feelings and perceptions calls for the ability to listen.

Integration in schools could be extended to involve the entire school community. School theme days, for example, facilitate the development of new forms of collaboration that include all subjects taught. Because the thematic modules included in the Finnish basic education core curriculum are interlinked with the respective curricula of all subjects, they can be used as a planning tool. Annual theme days strengthen and support the sense of community throughout the school and, at best, can enhance the well-being of the entire school community.

The integrated modules made it possible to examine teacherhood from new perspectives. The aspects of taking the well-being of young people into consideration in planning instruction, of making instruction less fragmented and of cooperating with other teachers arose as even more important than before. The guiding ideas in integrating the three subjects that emerged during this experiment were sustainable development, humanity and understanding the impact of human activities on our environment. Seeing natural and human diversity as an opportunity and emphasising the notion of community instead of individual performance represent significant trends in instruction from the point of view of both the environment and the well-being of people.

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## Is Daily Physical Activity Necessary for Physical and Psycho-Social Well-Being? Experiences from Norway, Kvalsund School, Finnmark

Anne Stokke and Rita Jonassen

Living at 70° north we need to learn how to live in harsh weather conditions: snow, cold temperatures, wind and ice, even if we are compensated by the beautiful light here in the north, in summer and winter alike. Since coping with one's environment as a rule means liking it, our children need to learn how to deal with the winter climate outdoors and different physical and motor challenges. If teachers and parents are able to convey enthusiasm about being outdoors and engaging in physical activity throughout the year, children are likely to get a good starting point for their physical and motor development and their psychosocial well-being, as well as a positive outlook on life.

Teachers and especially parents bear a significant responsibility in terms of spreading the message that being outdoors and engaging in physical activity – using the wind, the snow, the ice and the darkness – is good for children.

*“In the western world as a whole, the shortage of physical activity for children and adolescents is an important concern, as research suggests that contemporary children neither play very much nor get many physical challenges at school or in the Norwegian school leisure system” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2003–2004).*

Physical Education is the only school subject which explicitly targets the development of pupils in terms of their physical capacity and motor skills. The school sector sends signals to pupils about the importance of the subject through its allocation of resources in terms of facilities, equipment and teacher qualifications. In Norway, less than 50% of Physical Education (PE) teachers in years 1–7 are formally qualified, a sad fact which itself corroborates the attitudes with which headmasters, other teachers and parents appear to regard this discipline. Is Physical Education always at the end of our list of concerns, going unmentioned in a variety of important contexts?

A good playing environment in school breaks and leisure time is crucial for making it attractive to children and adolescents to be outdoors. Schools have a responsibility to provide an “outdoor environment beneficial to health” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2007). The Norwegian Education Act (Opplæringsloven) § 9 a-1 establishes that “all pupils at primary and secondary level are entitled to a good physical and psychosocial environment which benefits their health, well-being

and learning”. Further on, under § 9a-4, it is established that schools “should work systematically to ensure pupils’ health, environment and security” (ibid).

While Norwegian authorities support the implementation of daily physical activity in schools, this is not prioritised everywhere. Many politicians agree on the importance of physical activity as a precondition for good health, but in practice this is not acted upon. In 2006, the Minister of Education at the time, Kristin Clemet, raised the amount of Physical Education in years 1–7 by 0.38 hours per week, but she also simultaneously removed “frie aktiviteter” (Free Activities), which constituted 1.63 hours and “Skolens og elevens valg” (the school’s and pupil’s choice), hours often used for physical activity of 1 hour each week. In our view, this really signified a downgrading of the role of physical activity in schools, for example in terms of outdoor teaching. The Director of the Directorate for Health and Social Affairs, Bjørn Inge Larsen, also accused Clemet of passivity and of de-prioritising physical activity (Aftenposten, 2007). It is striking and unusual for one leader of a Norwegian government agency to criticise another.

Many schools do a good job of providing opportunities for physical exercise, but even if pupils have been given good outdoor facilities as well as the time to use them it is not self-evident that all pupils will actually become physically active. Even in cases where schools offer good playing environments, participation is not compulsory, something which implies that an increase in the level of activity will depend all too much on the pupils’ own initiative.

In 2004, two departments of the Norwegian Government, Education and Health, initiated a project called “Daily physical activity and meals in schools”. Different ways of implementing the project have been tried and evaluated (Samdal et al., 2006). This discussion will present the results of this evaluation report along with documented experiences from different schools. These experiences will be compared to those of our project and the results of the intervention in Kvalsund School, where we wanted the pupils to be more physically active. First, we will provide an introduction to theories on the importance of physical activity, and briefly discuss the significance of one’s cultural environment and social interaction.

## Recurrent physical activity

Research indicates that frequent and varied physical activity is necessary for normal growth and development (Meen, 2000). We also know that the 6–10% of Norwegian children who suffer from deficient motor skills are less physically active than others (Sigmundsson & Haga, 2000). We also know that obesity is a growing problem. These children and adolescents spend more time watching other children play than they spend playing themselves, and often spend school breaks on their own. Their lack of muscular coordination may actually cause a vicious circle in which they are impeded from taking part in play activities. Having strong motor skills is highly valued among children, especially among boys. It makes them popular with other children, and thus also has a positive effect on their self-image. Conversely, children with poor motor skills risk becoming unpopular and often become victims of bullying (Sigmundsson & Haga, 2000). In addition, links have been discovered between problems in motor development and other kinds of problems, such as social difficulties, a negative self-image, depression and nervousness, as well as concentration and learning problems. At school, anxiety, concentration problems and fatigue can result from a lack of physical activity.

Research has nevertheless only been able to demonstrate correspondences here, i.e. it does not clearly show the extent to which motor deficiencies are a cause of such problems, or whether we are to understand a lack of motor skills as a symptom of these problems in itself (ibid). Several inquiries present evidence that negative psychosocial traits that emerge in childhood and adolescence are likely to remain in adulthood, and that low self-esteem, expectations of rejection, and social withdrawal and passivity, frequently recur when the child has grown up (Warschburger, 2004 in Kokkvoll, 2007).

We argue that preventing physical and motor problems and obesity is clearly a crucial task for schools and teachers.

*“When a child is discovered to lag behind in motor skills, the best way to intervene is to provide and encourage training through play and other kinds of enjoyable physical activities. A wide range of incentives of this kind will accelerate development, while a lack of stimuli will hamper it”* (Sigmundsson & Haga, 2000, 17).

Furthermore, it is highly important to provide children with a broad variety of challenges and a multi-faceted range of incentives for movement. Similar advice is given by Ulset et al. (2007) in their work on growing obesity: The most important remedy may be to facilitate physical activity. Danish data show that prevention is especially important in the lowest years (37). The World Health Organization (WHO) is also concerned about the increasing weight of the population.

The WHO regards excessive weight and obesity as a global epidemic. According to the WHO, obesity is one of the most significant health problems in the world, and related ailments such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and other endocrine illnesses, different types of cancer and musculo-skeletal disorders account for 2–6% of the total health-related expenses of industrialised nations (Ulset et al., 2007, 34).

Research on Norwegian school children demonstrates a significant increase in the body weight of children. In Finnmark, cardiovascular diseases are more frequent in mortality statistics than in any other Norwegian region. An inquiry shows that no less than 70% of adolescents in Finnmark displayed conditions that can lead to cardiovascular ailments (Brox et al., 2002 in Kokkvoll, 2007). Even though our region offers ideal opportunities for a broad range of physical exercise, research shows that it scores poorly in terms of the frequency with which people make use of them.

Other research shows that children who are less physically active put on weight even if they do not ingest more calories than before (Directorate of Health and Social Affairs, 2000). An increase in physical activity is therefore highly important for stalling the obesity epidemic. Research on these issues is abundantly clear: There is “a strong independent risk factor for developing cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases in general and coronary cardiac illness and diabetes in particular” (Anderssen & Hjermann, 2000, 43). Physical activity can also reduce the risk of developing different kinds of cancer (Directorate of Health and Social Affairs, 2000, 15).

Recent research demonstrates that the physical activity standard recommended by the Norwegian authorities, of 60 minutes per day, is not sufficient. In an article in *The Lancet*, Dr Prof. Lars Bo Andersen recommends 90 minutes of high-intensity physical activity per day in order to achieve good health (VG, 2006).

Research demonstrates a greater difference between active and passive children. At present, some are very active and some very passive, while there used to be more pupils “in between” (Meen, 2000; Sigmundsson & Haga, 2000). It is therefore important for the school to activate these passive pupils. Many of them may also have other problems. Also, “children with motor problems, poor physical capacity and a high BMI often live in certain socio-economic conditions: these problems are more frequent in socio-economically weak families” (Sigmundsson & Haga, 2000, 17). In Olweus’ (1994) anti-bullying programme described below, the reader will be able to recognise conclusions from the research referred to above.

Olweus describes male victims of bullying in the following way:

*“as a group, the victims of bullying are considerably weaker than the average. The perpetrators, however, are often physically stronger than boys in general, and the victims in particular”* (ibid, 37).

However, it is not physical strength by itself which makes boys bullies, but a combination of “a tendency to react aggressively and physical strength. The corresponding features of the victim of bullying are, one could say, a combination of a tendency to react with anxiety and passivity, and physical weakness” (ibid, 38). Olweus demonstrates that physical strength makes children popular and that weakness to an equal degree makes them unpopular. Other research indicates, similarly, that children with good motor skills become popular playmates, while those who cannot fully control their body in different physical activities become less attractive as friends and playmates. Among girls, however, Olweus did not encounter the same correspondence in terms of physical strength. He concludes by arguing that “physical strength thus functions as a good form of protection against bullying” (ibid, 40). We would like to believe that it is not physical strength but motor skills that are the most important, and that this should, in turn, be seen in relation to several other factors working together in the individual’s environment in order to make some children into victims and some into bullies: a notion to which we will return later.

Thus, we regard preventive activities as important, and our views coincide with Olweus’ (1994, 63) view that:

*“A good way to counteract bullying is to create a well-equipped and attractive outdoor environment which stimulates positive activities. It is probable that some students bully more when they are bored – bullying becomes a way to make the environment more exciting.”*

What goes on at school will affect all the children, and if schools are capable of activating pupils during breaktimes they will have made an important step forward in the preventive work on different levels. If we wish to even out differences, we need to take action. We think this requires, among other things: a good outdoor environment and a considerable degree of physical activity during the day’s teaching.

The playgrounds designed for pupils who live further south are not very functional in the snowy winters of Finnmark and the arctic region in general. We need to create play environments suitable for snow, ice, cold air, strong winds and hard weather. If we manage to use pupils, teachers and parents as resources and let them participate in shaping the school’s play environment, we believe that the physical activity level of pu-

pils can be improved, which is a value or a goal in itself, and with all the possible secondary effects this may have on their health, learning capacities and well-being.

## What is good physical activity?

Eichberg’s model (in Duesund, 1995) distinguishes between three aspects of sport: the competitive, health-giving and sensory. In the last of these, a sense of self-orientation, an enjoyment of the present, of immediate pleasure, sensory experiences, and the attainment of knowledge are both the content and the goals of the activity. Tedious adult-led exercises designed to achieve health benefits, or to attain competitive success in the future, are not motivating enough, especially for children who lag behind. We mean that physical activity should be experienced as something fun and positive, as in play, and the child should ideally be “absorbed” in the activity, forgetting time and place, entering a “flow-like” experience. Positive experiences with activities in the here and now, as in playing, are central. The idea that children and adolescents should not train with an eye on achieving things in the future is as valid for those who aspire to become proficient in a sport as for older people who train in order to preserve or attain good health.

We argue that this sensory activity is desirable in order to reach all children, as it will provide the base for experience of mastering one’s body and offer positive experiences. In turn, this will lead to children opting to do what they feel they master and hence enjoy: in this case, physical activities. As a result, they practice and train more, learning to control their own bodies and their environment, and become less likely to put on weight because of their low degree of physical activity. In this way, they may form a positive self-image and attain more self-confidence etc. At the same time, they may come to strengthen this positive circle by generating plenty of physical energy, sleeping well and enjoying a well-functioning digestive system. They will both attain well-being and become well-equipped to prolong their physically active lifestyle.

Evidently, this can be seen as a simple remedy for complex problems. As we mentioned earlier, however, physical activity has been brought up as an important factor in preventing psychosocial problems and certain diseases.

Improved motor capacities or skills will develop as a result of the activities. By being physically active, children and adolescents will also learn to control their bodies and their movements in different situations. They will increase their capacity to become good at sports. Good health is a positive

side-effect in the long run too, if the activities are continued. This underlines the importance of physical proficiency and that the experiences are positive, since the individual should opt to be physically active in the future.

The fundamentals of a physically active lifestyle are, as we have argued, laid in childhood. The positive sense of physical proficiency is part of the child's holistic development and societal belonging.

Self-determination means activity and play without the organisation or interference of adults. Pupils choose their form of activity and play in accordance with their own wishes. They will then be able to find their own level, to challenge themselves, to remain in the present and in the experiential and sensory aspect of sport (cf. Eichberg's model). In order to obtain an increase in physical activity, especially among the pupils who are less active, a good environment is important.

### What constitutes a good physical playing environment?

A natural environment has a place for everyone and everyone can find something to do in it, on a level which suits them. There is no competition and nobody needs to withdraw in order to conceal a lack of skills. But if someone wants to compete, they can do so.

Variation is a key word when we talk about adapted play environments. A jungle gym will offer greater possibilities of variation than a ball game enclosure, which will mostly suit children who like football or other ball games and are good at them. These children are often active in their spare time too. Those who stress the gendered nature of playing environments point out that ball game areas are for boys and that a jungle gym is for girls (Limstrand, 2004). In a jungle gym there is also room for a greater diversity of skill levels among the children who use it (Schmidt, 2004; Dahle, 2004; Flemmen, 2003).

It is essential to a good playing environment that it offers excitement and challenges. This makes it necessary to think in terms of adapted education, ensuring that the playing environment is varied enough to give everyone the chance to learn and develop there, without forgetting those with more advanced motor skills.

If children are both capable of seeing the possibilities and allowed the time they need to play and experiment in such a natural or exciting environment, they will learn and attain knowledge and experiences, becoming able to use their body physically. This, however, requires initiative and requires that pupils feel motivated to engage in physical activities. Some of them will need encouragement from adults, who initiate

games or some other physical activity and invite the pupils to participate in it.

With a view to the overall context, a good playing environment is also an effect of social factors, where *everyone is secure*. We have to look at the overall environment.

### Holistic thinking

There are several different perspectives on the need for holistic thinking on the issue of the development and learning of children and adolescents. A holistic notion of development will include a child's physical development and the body (Duesund, 1995), not least in terms of the theoretical perspectives which have informed research on these issues. Below is a brief presentation of two such theories.

**Psychomotorics.** Psychomotorics focuses on all areas of human development: the physical, cognitive, motoric, emotional/motivational and social processes (Moser & Dudas 1996, 12). The concept of sensory motorics is also used. This is a holistic or interplay model which assumes that a person both affects, and is affected by, the social environment. This interchange, which happens on the neuro-physiological as well as the physical and social levels of the environment, can be explained by the three examples below:

- *“The social environment affects the individual processes, and will in turn be affected by these individual processes. Hence, there is a psychosocial interchange. An environment in which there is bullying and a social hierarchy will affect the feeling of safety and trust negatively.*
- *The physical environment affects the individual processes, and the environment will be affected by these in a psycho-physical interchange. A suitably challenging play environment will make the child search for experiences of proficiency.*
- *The neuronal activity (the brain) governs and is reciprocally affected by the psychomotoric activities: perception, cognition, emotion, action, movement, psycho-physiological interchange.”* (Moser and Dudas, 1996, 17. Our emphasis.)

The central goal of psychomotoric training, as well as daily physical activity at schools, is to develop the pupil's competence to deal successfully with him/herself, the physical and social environment, and the challenges faced in that environment. The aim is to stimulate the whole human being, to contribute to a holistic development of the pupil's personality (ibid).

**Activity theory.** According to the activity theory, children possess an innate motivation for physical activity. But why, then, do some become passive? This theory highlights the social and physical surroundings as central to the physical activity and development of children. It is based on the assumption that the causes of passivity are to be found in a number of different factors:

- cultural norms which define sitting still as good behaviour;
- unfavourable social circumstances which can make one insecure;
- unfavourable physical surroundings, such as for example the urban environment, traffic, the landscape;

The activity theory thus also brings out the role of external factors, not just for the physical and motoric development, but also for the development of the child's consciousness (Sigmundsson & Ingebrigtsen, 2006, 31). They further argue that activity is:

*“a mediated interplay between human consciousness and its surroundings (reality). Consequently, we should always be able to identify the tools of such mediation by analysing the interpenetration of our consciousness and its surroundings.”* (ibid, 23.)

According to Sigmundsson and Ingebrigtsen (2006) this theory is founded on a Marxist notion of the relationship between the human being and reality, and assumes that “human activities must always be mediated by tools”. By amplifying the concept of tool to include psychological tools, Vygotsky enables us to apply the activity theory to a wider range of analytical fields. His notion of psychological tools should, however, be further expanded to include the sensory and effect-inducing organs of the body. There are clear parallels to the notions of psychomotorics in his writings:

*“The human body forms part of the array of tools which mediate the interchange between the surroundings and consciousness. Thus, healthy physical development is a precondition for a satisfactory development of the consciousness. Physical activity stimulates this development.”* (ibid, 23.)

Activity theory can be used to gain an insight into psychological phenomena tied to the physical development of children – and then to identify the reasons for the increased passivity of children, as well as possible methods for stimulating higher activity rates. Sigmundsson and Ingebrigtsen (2006) underline the importance of:

1. Well-organised physical surroundings
2. Well-organised social surroundings

These are the areas which, according to the activity theory, are crucial to physical activity, and that we have dealt with in our project in Kvalsund, which we will soon present. Here,

we can also see similarities with Olweus, who also argued that “an attractive outdoor environment” was important for preventing bullying.

### Physical surroundings

*“To provide physical surroundings which are secure and varied, in terms of both the type and degree of physical challenges they provide, and where children are given the possibility to develop physically in a multifaceted way, is part of our responsibility for the upbringing of children which rests on our social institutions”* (Sigmundsson & Ingebrigtsen, 2006, 30).

These notions correspond to our ideas about the importance of the environment, good physical activity and the school's responsibility.

**Social surroundings.** In this context, it is important for parents to engage in physical activities with their children. In doing so, they may be instrumental in the creation of both a positive attitude to physical activity and a good physiological base for the child's ability to become proficient in it. Schools should provide an adapted education to those who do not quite cope, in order for everyone to be able to experience the highly important sense of competence. The authorities should provide safe public surroundings, which are exciting and challenging enough to stimulate all children to engage in physical activities (Sigmundsson & Ingebrigtsen, 2006).

Both the above theories suggest that physical, psychological and social phenomena are interconnected, and that work has to be done in different areas simultaneously. There is a need for holistic thinking, and to consider the basic needs of our children when we attempt to create well-being.

### Method

Three researchers (Johansen, Schjetne and Stokke) have initiated a process in collaboration with the Kvalsund community and Kvalsund School as part of the ArctiChildren II project. We wanted the AC project to be guided by holistic thinking and involved different actors (cf. the two articles of Johansen and Schjetne to get a fuller picture of the work). Stokke focused on physical activity, on making changes and improvements in the outdoor environment and PE teaching, and studied the consequences of these interventions and changes for the school and the pupils. The role of the investigator is meant to be “empowering”, to make the teachers and pupils trust their own capabilities. This is an example of change and learning through acting. This kind of action research or action learning

and its work on change should go on for several years. A process was started in January 2007 and went on for 4 months, too short to be called action research. The school takes one small step at a time. The project is continuous and the goal is to make changes in several areas in the years ahead.

Below, we will present the process at school in brief, some results and experiences after these 4 months. In this book you will find more examples of this work, in terms of both the process and the results.

At Kvalsund School, several of the Physical Education teachers wished to improve their teaching, and several teachers wished to make positive changes to the outdoor environment. They also wanted these activities to influence the social ambience. This became the starting point for the plan which led to the choices and goals that were made and that we wanted to evaluate:

1. To improve the outdoor environment in order to prepare it for the winter season and to present examples of the school's achievements.
2. To make pupils more physically active during breaktimes and in Physical Education classes.
3. What changes can be registered? Is there less bullying? Do pupils have a better time in class and in breaks? Is there an increase in physical activity and well-being?

**The start of the process.** The project leader (Stokke) discussed possibilities in the outdoor environment with several teachers of PE, and one teacher of Arts and Crafts, after which the teachers discussed and worked together. The pupils also participated. The headmaster expressed a positive attitude, which is very important for this kind of intervention.

A meeting with the parents was organised, in which the headmaster, the teachers and the researchers participated. Stokke provided information about the "outdoor project" and invited the parents to take part in voluntary work to create a play environment, which was put into effect one evening. The outcome will be presented in the "Results" section below.

**The collection of data.** Observation and conversations have been used as evidence here, in addition to different evaluation forms designed together with the school's staff. The teachers are continuing to observe and make notes in the lunch break, but some changes to the form have been made. The pupils were given two different forms, one for years 1–4, one for years 5–10, and a form each for parents and teachers has also been produced. The plan was to make the pupils answer questions in three stages, before the innovations, half-way through the project, and afterwards. We wished to see if any changes had happened.

The project leader has had regular discussions with teachers in order to get an impression of what the teachers observe in the process.

### School conditions before the activity

This year, both the headmaster and the inspector had only recently taken up their posts. In addition, the school, which employs 13 teachers in total, had five new teachers. The school has experienced major staff changes in the last seven years and has a comparatively young staff. It is a school with large age groups and 104 pupils, and it uses alternating year plans from the county authorities.

In terms of Physical Education, there were serious lacks of all kinds of equipment, and all the PE teachers displayed a great sense of resignation.

**The physical environment.** The gym hall was old, pink and worn out, with very bad acoustics. The room had only half a wall of bars, a very worn out rope system, two ruined rings hanging from the roof and a beam which was impossible to attach. On the other hand, the school had a good salt water swimming pool.

Materials such as balls, jump ropes, badminton rackets, hoops, etc. were very scarce.

**The social environment.** The pupils had to go outdoors in all the breaktimes as a punishment for vandalism indoors. The oldest were separated from the youngest, and these age groups needed to be in different zones of the school's outdoor area. In Physical Education, the school went against the Education Act by keeping boys and girls separate. Bullying was relatively frequent and some thought being outdoors was boring.

Because Olweus' anti-bullying programme was being implemented at the school, Olweus is central to the theory chapter.

What results did the work in Kvalsund achieve? Did the outdoor environment improve, was there more physical activity and were other changes observed?

## Results

**The playing environment.** In the article *Physical Activities in the Snow* we present the results of the changes made to the school's outdoor environment. Several snow installations were made, and more of the school's surroundings were used

than before. There were snow mounds, slopes for tobogganing and vast nature areas.

Here we present further information about what we did, and the evaluations made by the different agents in the process. We have selected a few answers that we believe are representative of our collected data.

**The physical education classes.** The school was provided with more equipment for its Physical Education classes, which resulted in more options for teaching the subject. Such a variation in teaching also suggests that there has been an improvement. This also made the pupils realise the importance of equipment in these classes too, and thus indirectly contributed to the subject becoming more prioritised. And most importantly, the teachers reported more positive and physically active pupils.

**More excursions and outdoor teaching.** In order to fulfil requirements in the general curriculum, parts of the teaching were moved outdoors, for example an alpine activity day in the new downhill complex, day trips on skis, outdoor Mathematics (an igloo) and, in the context of the Arts and Crafts teaching, an amphitheatre and sculptures were made.

**The teachers' lunch break notes.** The teachers said that fewer conflicts and less bullying were observed outside in the period when the physical environment was altered. All the teachers reported fewer conflicts, less bullying and more physical activity than before the intervention.

**The teachers' evaluation.** On asking the teachers whether there was indeed an increase in the physical activity level we received the following answers:

*"Already from day 1 I noticed a positive and good attitude among students. 'All of a sudden' they had something to do outside."*

*"The oldest were the most active in the construction process, while the youngest were the most active users."*

*"More active students in the breaks – I wish this had been started earlier."*

*"Everyone played with everyone else."*

Several teachers wrote that the quality of the play or activities was better:

*"The pupils were good at finding new things to do – they became more creative outdoors. They just keep going."*

*"I believe the play has become more positive and more challenging."*

One teacher wrote:

*"While most students join in, the oldest are somewhat more passive."*

### Well-being, conflicts and social relationships.

The questions we asked the teachers were: Are all the pupils involved? Is the environment more inclusive? Has bullying decreased? Is there more smiling, laughter and enjoyment? Is there a greater sense of well-being? We received plenty of statements which indicated that there had been improvements in the areas of inclusiveness, conflicts and well-being.

**Inclusiveness:**

*"Less exclusion – this is definitely the impression I have."*

*"There's less of 'I can't play with him/her' – they're all in it together."*

*"There's a greater sense of community among the pupils."*

**Fewer conflicts:**

*"There's less time for conflicts to arise now."*

*"As far as I've seen, there are very few conflicts happening indoors."*

*"There are fewer conflicts."*

**Increased well-being:**

*"There is more smiling, more activity and positivity"*

*"Yes, definitely – there have been plenty of happy kids engaged in very different activities."*

*"My impression is that the students are 'happier'."*

**Learning.** Next, to the question: In your opinion, has the project brought, for example, more learning, a better work effort, more motivated pupils, better concentration and similar improvements?

Several teachers answered that they spend less time on conflict management and that pupils are calmer in the classroom:

*"Few conflicts outdoors – the learning curve improves – I don't have to deal with conflicts."*

*"The pupils became quieter. Calmer in class."*

The other answers corroborate the feeling that the pupils are ready to learn, more motivated and focused:

*"The body is prepared for learning, the pupils have exhausted their need for physical energy – and are ready for something new."*

*"Better concentration and therefore better learning."*

The last thing mentioned was the improved relationship between teachers and pupils.

*"There is informal contact with the pupils outdoors, working with a spade – the pupils feel more confidence in the teachers."*

Only one teacher claimed not to be able to “see any big changes”, an answer which goes against those of the other teachers.

More positive comments from the teachers:

“The students were grateful – ‘now we have something to do.’”

“We should have done this earlier.”

“A 6th-year pupil said that ‘this is my best day at school ever.’”

Another question to the teachers: Have you experienced any changes as a teacher/employee from before the process to its middle stage? To the end? Below, describe any positive or negative changes that have resulted from the project. Below is a selection of the teachers' views on changes in the teaching situation, the working environment and teacher-parent relations

In the teaching situation:

“The pupils get to know you better as a teacher in informal situations – they feel safer in the classroom and are more receptive to teaching.”

“We spend less time solving conflicts afterwards.”

“Yes, they have been able to use their bodies and are more focused and motivated (+ calmer).”

In the school as a working environment:

“It is positive to do things together with pupils and colleagues.”

“More working on issues that belong to the school as a community. All the teachers + parents work together for all the pupils.”

“In the evening – all the teachers did a few things for the school. We are one school, we have made adjustments to include all the pupils.”

Collaborating with parents?:

“We get to know the parents better. They feel they're being included in our activities.”

“The parents are able to see that things are happening. They felt positive and wanted to contribute. They developed a sense of ownership of the project: ‘what is happening with the snow fortresses we built?’”

Negative: “Too few parents participated.”

Most of the teachers answered the questionnaire and participated in an evaluation meeting, so we suggest that this mostly positive feedback is representative.

What do the parents say? Not all of them answered the questionnaires and participated in the evaluation meeting, so the following is not representative, but the comments can nevertheless contribute to the overall, but less definite, picture.

**The parents' evaluation.** At the time of the May registration there were more positive comments than at the first one in February. These positive changes can be summed up as follows. The child or adolescent: sleeps better, eats better, dresses better, gets out of bed easier, and wants to go to school.

The parents wrote:

“They no longer complain about going to school in the mornings.

When there is outdoor teaching they get up at 6.30 to get ready, very eager to go.”

“Suddenly he's wearing outdoor clothes when he leaves for school.”

“She goes to bed earlier in the evenings. She is more ‘tired’, but in a positive sense.”

The answers from parents also touch on different social and emotional effects. Their children or adolescents feel happier about going to school, enjoy a greater sense of well-being, show more positive attitudes, are more respected and experience less bullying.

“Enjoys being outdoors. Expresses more motivation in class. Also establishes a more positive contact with other pupils in the outdoor setting and the activities which take place there.”

The parents could also write down things their children said in this period:

“Today I had a great time at school. I like jumping rope. It's fun to be outdoors, there's so much to do.”

“It's fun to have something to do during breaktimes.”

“I like school a lot better now. I feel I'm more respected as a young person, and that the teachers give us young people more confidence at school.”

“There's less bullying.”

The parents were asked about whether they found the work on the school's outdoor environment and the focus on physical activity important. In May, all the parents answered that they thought it was very important. This is an important result as it shows that the parents regard physical activities, if not all, as very important.

**The pupils' evaluation.** The pupils are largely satisfied with their playmates, they feel that playing is fun and, generally, that they are good at it. The pupils' answers displayed no significant gender differences.

When pupils in years 8–10 were asked whether they were satisfied with the Physical Education teaching, 27 said they were very happy, and 18 said they were extremely happy: together, these categories constitute 71.42% of the pupils. Only two claimed to be very discontented while six said they were

discontented, a group which makes up a bare 12.69% of the pupils. Eleven pupils claimed they were only reasonably satisfied with the teaching. To sum up, the great majority of pupils in years 8–10 were very happy with their Physical Education teaching this winter and spring.

## Discussion

If we see the results from Kvalsund School in comparison with the evaluation performed by the HEMIL Center and other school projects referred to in the Norwegian journal *Kroppsoving* (Physical Education), many of the experiences appear to coincide:

1. There is an increase in physical activity;
2. The students more quickly reach a state of calm in the classroom;
3. They are more concentrated in class.

The evaluation by Samdal et al. (2006) shows that the reports of school administrations were of more focused students (70% in years 1–7, 50% in years 8–10), a better social environment (about 50%), less bullying (30%), a better social environment among teachers and students (40% in years 1–7, 30% in years 8–10). Only very few schools, 1%, concluded that a greater focus on physical activity and meals had harmed academic subjects.

In our data we find accounts of more focused pupils, factors which indicate more well-being, less bullying and conflicts, and that some teachers think that their relationship with pupils has improved. Our data, however, is not ample enough to calculate this statistically in terms of a percentage.

We have access to the experiences of Holte skole in Kristiansand, which improved conditions for sports and improved its outdoor environment, that is, the same idea and central intervention as Kvalsund, but with different measures. They made space for more Physical Education classes and improved the outdoor environment with ball pitches, “Tarzan trails”, skateboard ramps, climbing ropes and a badminton net. The conclusion from Kristiansand was that students learned more, had more fun at school and that there was less bullying. Teachers reported less bullying and pushing in breaks, and saw that the pupils became calmer in class when they had been active in the breaks. The pupils said that: Now that we have more to do outside, we feel we learn more and are more motivated (Dagblad, 2007).

When conditions have been created for self-governed activities, their success is as mentioned before, dependent on the individual's own initiative to participate. Those who lag behind in motor development, who do not have certain physical skills, or who are in poor physical shape, often opt not to

participate. This is a pity, since these are the pupils who need it the most. Teachers are present during the breaks in Kvalsund, but we are not sure to what extent they have actively tried to influence and encourage passive students. Reports say that there are few passive students and that “everyone participates.” Here, however, there is a clear possibility for improvement for next year.

The parents reported that the children slept better, ate more, dressed better and were eager to go to school. All these factors are fundamental to achieving good concentration and learning, and to enjoying the present and achieving a sense of well-being.

In Kvalsund, teacher reports claim that:

1. Pupils help each other, the oldest help the younger ones;
2. There are fewer conflicts outdoors;
3. There is less bullying.

This corresponded both with the findings at Holte skole and with the theories of Olweus, who has argued that a better outdoor environment which stimulates positive activities, preventing boredom and a lack of excitement, can prevent bullying. In the same way, psychomotorics and activity theory demonstrate an interplay between the individual, on one hand, and the social and physical environments on the other.

There is still great potential for improvement at Kvalsund School. The pupils were content, but this change demands new changes during the year. The playground should be dynamic, changing frequently. Some teachers suggested that there was little to do outdoors for the oldest pupils, an idea which corresponds to certain questionnaire answers from the oldest students.

The questionnaires, especially the ones for the teachers, contain leading questions which mention positive factors. This may have influenced the respondents to answer positively. We first asked the teachers to answer the questionnaires individually before we had a collective discussion about the questions. This was done to prevent any of the teachers' views from affecting the others' opinions.

The parents' answer ratio is low, and we assume that the more affluent families were the ones that answered. We assume that these families were the ones that took part in the evaluation meeting as well. As mentioned before, the children from these homes are also the most physically active. This may be a source of error, potentially leading to overly positive results.

We also have the potential for improvement in our data collection methods, and in the way we collect the questionnaires. A prompter in the school, a person who is responsible for collecting the evaluations and putting the questionnaires in the appropriate folder, is necessary.

Other research, as shown in the introduction, shows that motor skills are important for competing in play and developing a positive self-image. This factor must be included in the full picture, and interacts with other factors. It is important to keep this in mind, and to understand that not every problem has a simple solution.

This paper contains a relatively extensive theory chapter about the effects of physical activity. The chapter is included to show the reasons for our intervention at Kvalsund School, by showing the importance of physical activity. However, measuring the potential effects of physical activity on issues such as self-image and health is not possible during a period as short as four months. Even if our data gathering could have been more extensive, better and more systematic, the school will be able to interpret our results as suggesting that positive things have happened to pupils and school conditions in general. Such discoveries are likely to provide a source of motivation for further work, making it easier to move onward. This is an important first step in the action or intervention.

The pupils were asked to evaluate their own physical and motor skills, enabling us to compare our findings with Olweus' notion that physically weaker boys are more often bullied than the stronger ones. Other research (cf. the introduction) shows that motor competence is important for the child's capacity to participate in play, and for its development of a positive self-image. This factor forms part of a holistic picture and acts in conjunction with other factors. There were too few questions and respondents in order for us to reach broad statistical conclusions. We found, however, one pupil in this category who had a low self-image and did not feel well at school.

## Summary and conclusions

The school has managed to create an outdoor playing environment for the winter which is more varied and which stimulates physical activity among most pupils. It has focused more on Physical Education. It has purchased new equipment, and the teaching has become more varied, with more classes held outside. The changes made to the physical outdoor environment have resulted in more physical activity during break-times. The school has improved the conditions for physical activity in two ways:

1. It has reshaped the outdoor area to encourage and enable physical activity.
2. It has put greater emphasis on Physical Education, and on physical activity in other subjects as well.

By working on both these aspects at once there is a greater chance of activating those who are not likely to activate themselves.

As a result, changes have also been registered on the psychological and social levels: happier children, fewer conflicts, less bullying, and the pupils are better at playing together and helping each other. There have also been improvements in class, pupils become calm and quiet more quickly after the breaks, and are more concentrated in classes on theoretical subjects.

Our conclusion is that even if the measures taken are relatively few, and made with scarce economic resources, this school-based project has had a positive effect in many areas, for pupils, teachers and parents.

## Ideas for further work

Both parents and teachers want this work to be continued next year. One teacher writes that "It would most certainly be a positive thing to continue the project, and preferably with an earlier start next year". The pupils have not yet been asked, but we assume they would most likely agree that it would be a good idea to continue. The municipality has included the improvement of the playing environment as one of its development goals.

Among the ideas and experiences which resulted from the project, and that in our view should be considered in future work, we would like to mention the following. The work should be started earlier in order to work on the outdoor environment before the snow falls. Fixed structures (swings, seesaws) should be moved from the flat area, in order to make space for ice skating, football etc. It would be useful to create a "Tarzan trail" at the back, build a lean-to out of wood for outdoor teaching, and to make a climbing wall. When the snow falls, there are plans to construct an arena for skiing activities and an ice skating rink at the back. There is also the possibility of making even bigger and better snow structures.

Even greater use of the outdoor environment in teaching, and more outdoor equipment, are other issues that are being discussed.

Getting all the pupils involved in both the planning and work on such changes will be a clear challenge in the future. It has also become evident that getting more parents to become involved is an important part of the project's continuation.

One teacher writes that "I think the project may well continue, but we need to get people more engaged in the work. We need fixed hours when we work on the planning and construction of facilities. We need a leader/inspirer."

Establishing modes of cooperation with local sports clubs, the School Leisure System (SFO), and pre-primary schools are other possible ways to go.

In August 2007, an information meeting was held with all the teachers, in order to motivate them and the new teachers for the continued work on these issues. If the work is continued, it may have positive effects on both health and learning. We have to act and see what the next year will bring.

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## Outdoor Days as a Pedagogical Tool

Ylva Jannok Nutti



Jokkmokk. Photo: Timo Jokela

In the following chapter, I will show how the use of outdoor days in a particular school resulted in increased learning, where, among other things, knowledge of languages, culture and specific fields, as well as positive health-benefiting and psychosocial factors, play a part. This text is the result of conversations with the teachers Britt-Inger Baer, Hanne Sofie Brandsfjell, Elsy Labba, Katarina Spiik Skum and Margareta Åstot, and visits to the Sami school in Jokkmokk. In this chapter, the concrete work with outdoor days in the school is related to Sami education and the Sami language, based on being bilingual or multilingual, nature as a learning environment, outdoor teaching, and the concept of traditional knowledge.

### Visit to and participation in an outdoor day

On a beautiful sunny day in late winter I accompanied a few teachers and students from the Sami school during one of their outdoor days. Skiing was on the agenda and the students arrived with ski equipment and backpacks containing, among other things, hot drinks. The Wednesday in question was the first outdoor day of the semester, which is why some students and also parents had missed the information or forgotten to look on the calendar. In spite of this, the parents who had forgotten the outdoor equipment gladly ran

home to pick up what was needed. All of the students were very eager to get out into the woods, but before they set out, they all gathered in the classroom. The teachers went through the plan for the day and the central concepts for the day. Then in the woods everybody went skiing. One parent accompanied the group and acted as a ski instructor. Lunch was cooked over an open fire in the woods. After lunch, there was a period of free time and some students started skiing on a slope, while others played close to the fireplace. Before the school day ended, ski instruction continued on the slope and at the end of the day all of the students were daring to go down the slope.

The teachers have long used specific outdoor days as part of the school schedule, with the result that teaching takes place outdoors in the woods each Wednesday. However, they have chosen not to have outdoor days during the coldest part of the year, as it would probably not be very pleasant to be outside when the temperature is about minus 30°C. The idea of the outdoor days started at the Sami school a number of years ago when the teachers in year F-2 started to structure their teaching based on the inspiration of a language immersion model. The teachers then started to arrange fixed outdoor days in an attempt to create informal language environments to reinforce the Sami language. The Sami school is a multi-lingual school. Accordingly, the teaching in Jokkmokk is carried out in three languages: North Sami, Lule Sami and Swedish. The focus of today's outdoor day is skiing. That means ski school, as well as looking at current central Sami concepts. This outdoor day has stimulated the use of the Sami language, but over the years, the teachers have found that an outdoor day also covers learning of Sami traditional knowledge, as well as more traditional knowledge in school subjects. In addition, this day also includes other factors, such as values and value bases, independence and friendship, motor functions and so on.

### Sami education and the Sami language

According to Hylténstam et al. (1999), historically speaking, education for Sami children was carried out according to the interests of the majority of society up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was used as an instrument for society's assimilatory and segregational purposes. The role of the Sami language in teaching varied and it was always used to aid in conveying Swedish language, religion and culture. In this way, education did not support the use of the Sami language, which meant that Sami children lacked support in their development in the use of their mother tongue. This is something Balto also writes about: "Siden vi alltid skulle snakke norsk i timene, så utvikla ikke skolan morsmålsferdighetene våre." (We always had to speak Norwegian during classes, so the school did not develop our skills in our mother tongue.) (Balto, 2007, 430). Accordingly, education was a reason why the Sami children were prevented from profiting from the knowledge of their own culture and their own language (Kuokkanen, 2000).

The Sami school today is equivalent to a nine-year compulsory school, intended to give Sami children a Sami-orient-

tated education. The Sami school includes years 1–6, and can, following an agreement with local authorities, also include preschool classes and activities, and after-school recreation centres (Utbildningsväsendet, 2004). The goal of the teaching in the Sami school, according to the curriculum (Utbildningsdepartementet, 1998), is that students, having finished the Sami school, should be able to speak, read and write in

the Sami language. In addition, the intention of the latest curriculum (2007) of the Sami School Board is that students should be functionally bilingual. Being functionally bilingual is a central and important goal in the Sami municipalities and schools, but very difficult to achieve owing to the limited resources available today within and outside the nine-year compulsory school system (Bergland, 2001). The Sami language is one of the national minority languages in Sweden and the situation for the Sami language to be able to remain a living language in Sweden is very fragile (Teilus, 2007). Accordingly, there is a great need to actively support the preservation of the Sami language. Schools can be an efficient tool when revitalising a language, but in order for this to happen, it is necessary both that teachers have a good command of the language and that they also have extensive knowledge in language teaching (Todal, 2004). Furthermore, in order to succeed in revitalising a minority language, it is necessary that teaching, to a large degree, is done in the minority language.

Education in the Sami school in Jokkmokk was based on a bilingual immersion programme when outdoor days were instituted, where North Sami and Lule Sami are the bilingual immersion languages. A bilingual immersion programme means that two languages are used in the school, but the emphasis is on the bilingual immersion language or the second language (Centret för språkbud och flerspråkighet, 2007; Todal, 2004). Students in the Sami school have a language background which is richly varied. This is because they might have North Sami, Lule Sami, South Sami and/or Swedish (and/or another Nordic language) as their first language. This means that students are (or will be) bilingual or even multilingual, with the Sami language as their first or second language.

Teachers who teach in the bilingual immersion language are an important language model for the students and they should only use the bilingual immersion language in contact with their students. The reason for this is because it is important that the students get to listen to and use the language in different functions and situations (Centret för språkbud och flerspråkighet, 2007). During the outdoor day, the teachers have observed that: “Students who do not speak Sami in school can do so out in the woods.” The bilingual language programme is based on the assumption that language development most efficiently takes place in a meaningful situation involving communication (Centret för språkbud och flerspråkighet, 2007). In addition, the use of the Sami language is of vital importance in developing different subjects for students who have Sami as their first language (Bergland, 2001). The choice of teachers to try and focus on the Sami language, through the method of an outdoor day, obviously might mean advantages for both students with Sami as their first language and those who have it as a second language. An outdoor day

focusing on teach different Sami concepts involving skiing will probably be based on the learning of a second language. However, in order for the outdoor day to involve learning for students with Sami as their first language as well, the language needs to be used to communicate subject knowledge too. On a previous outdoor day the Sami language was also used when communicating subject knowledge, and spending time in the natural environment was the basis for learning.

### Nature as a learning environment

*During the autumn, the school went fishing during one outdoor day. Afterwards, the school used fish and fishing as a theme for some time.*

The starting point of the school's thematic work consisted of the outdoor days spent in the natural environment, where the practical experience was the basis for beginning theme work about fish and fishing. The outdoor environment and being outdoors can facilitate learning which comes from both practical and theoretical experiences. During this particular outdoor day the Sami language was also used when communicating subject knowledge. Dahlgren and Szczepanski (2004), spokesmen for outdoor teaching, have pointed out that all areas of knowledge and skills can be passed on outdoors, and that there are specific possibilities for integrating different school subjects. Dahlgren and Szczepanski's opinion that all subjects, skills or areas of knowledge could be learned outdoors is a bit exaggerated, given that, for example, if you are going to learn to write it is probably much more suitable to be inside the school, but that is not my focus in this article. There are opportunities for connecting pupils' learning in school with visits to the natural world, and also to connect school subjects with both nature and other activities. The work within school with fish and fishing as themes involved both natural science as a subject field with a focus on fish and also a more social science-orientated subject field with a focus on fish and fishing, past and present.

In Hirvonen's (2004) evaluation of the Sami school in Norway, following the reform 97<sup>[1]</sup>, many teachers state that Sami children and young people learn best by doing practical work outside the school building, through: “an outdoor school” (Hirvonen, 2004, 116). The essence of outdoor teaching is to

transfer learning to other contexts outside formal learning spaces (Dahlgren, 2007; Szczepanski, 2007).

Utsi Gaup (2006) has emphasised the Nomad school<sup>[2]</sup> from a perspective of outdoor teaching. Outdoor teaching is a concept which encompasses thematic and comprehensive subject fields of research and education, where learning, to a large extent, takes place in an outdoor environment. Outdoor teaching is intended to be a complement to traditional teaching, where experiences in the surrounding environment are the basis for learning (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2004). Utsi Gaup in her study points out how the landscape, so characterised by nature, was used for learning at the nomad school's summer school and field study courses. The summer schools and field study courses were visiting activities which were carried out in the reindeer herding areas. In their teaching, teachers connected nature studies with practical activities. Teaching outdoors is beneficial in terms of bringing theoretical and practical work together and it involves learning that is based on both experiences and places (Szczepanski, 2007). Sami traditional knowledge, based on reindeer herding and the natural environment, was the basis for learning in summer schools and field study courses. Sami traditional knowledge is knowledge which is gained and preserved for generations in local Sami communities (Jernsletten, 1997).

### Traditional knowledge and the school

Technological development and urbanisation have alienated people from daily contact with their physical environment, unlike earlier cultures of gatherers, hunters, fishermen and farmers where the physical environment was used as a learning environment (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 1997). The Sami have preserved a thousand-year-long tradition as hunters and gatherers among other things, through their reindeer-herding culture with gathering and fishing as important sidelines (Jernsletten, 1994). Their traditional knowledge about nature has developed over a long period of time, in accordance with humans' need to use the possibilities of nature for survival. Ruong (1982) emphasises that the rich terminology in use for natural conditions and terrain shows the importance of knowledge about ecological matters for people's lives in the arctic and sub-arctic regions.

Sami traditional knowledge encompasses practical and theoretical knowledge about how to use the natural environment, as well as an understanding of psychological conditions, spirituality, social relationships, cultural and social

<sup>2</sup> The Nomad school (now called the Sámi school) was instituted in 1913 and was previously the school for the children of the nomadic Sámi.



Jokkmokk. Photos: Timo Jokela

<sup>1</sup> The reform which resulted in the introduction of a Sámi curriculum for 10-year compulsory schooling. The Sámi curriculum is equal to the national one and is being used in six Norwegian municipalities within the Sámi management area for Sámi languages. The management area is made up of the municipalities of Kåfjord, Tana, Kautokeino, Karasjok, Porsanger and Nessby (Hirvonen, 2004).

institutions and forms of expression (Bergström, 2001). Historically it meant people's knowledge to enable them to use local natural resources for their daily needs and building up the supplies they needed (Sara, 2004). In addition, this concept includes things people had gathered, prepared and produced themselves, as well as goods and materials which they had traded with others and then completed themselves. Mostly, it meant knowledge about day-to-day living which was practised within the immediate neighbourhood. Things which were gathered were mainly found in the natural environment, and nature regulated people's work through the changing seasons. Accordingly, there is an in-depth traditional ecological knowledge within Sami culture.

Today, there are still ways of living and livelihoods which continue to use Sami traditional knowledge, but this knowledge has partly disappeared or is at risk of disappearing. However, this traditional knowledge needs to be preserved so that it can be transferred to other contexts (Bergland, 2001). Traditional knowledge should contribute towards: "equipping young people with a fundamental horizon of understanding, a certain base on which to form individuality, personal projects and a whole lifespan" (Bergström, 2001, 127). Traditional knowledge in school could mean that students feel that their own culture is made visible (Bergland, 2001; Jannok Nutti, 2007). The school in Sami local communities has to have its base in traditional knowledge and local culture. This would mean a central role for the knowledge held by older generations, relatives and local people (Bergland, 2001; Hirvonen, 2004). Education based on the students' own cultural background was the subject of an earlier research project by Johansson (1985). This project shows that when the basis for education is students' own cultural background it means both changed ways of working and also changed content in school work.

Hirvonen's evaluation (2004) also investigated teachers' opinions of Sami learning. Sami learning meant doing things in a practical way, and that theoretical knowledge had to be based on practical training. Jernsletten (1997) points out that knowledge, in earlier times, was transferred through actual work done alongside an older person who had this knowledge. Knowledge was transferred through observation, learning of skills and then systematising these in linguistic expressions, terms and professional concepts. Earlier research (Balto, 1997; Jannok Nutti, 2007; Nergård, 2005) presents learning which is based on participation. Children participated in various activities and social contexts through practical work. This was done by watching grown-ups carry out the work, and also by trying to carry out different tasks themselves. Creativity is a central starting point for learning within outdoor teaching; students can touch, feel and act in a physical environment

(Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2004). This is a view on knowledge and learning which corresponds to my own earlier research (Jannok Nutti, 2007), where Sami handicrafters and reindeer herders describe their view on knowledge and learning, and it can be summed up in the concepts of tradition and creativity.

Regarding learning, in the past, people were always completely dependent on learning by experience and through oral tradition (Szczepanski, 2007). The Sami view on learning is based on the Sami story-telling tradition (Jannok Nutti, 2007). Story-telling can take the form of both telling stories and adults giving instructions and explanations (Jannok Nutti, 2007). A reindeer herder (in Jannok Nutti, 2007) says that stories and descriptions about the surrounding natural environment are told continuously and repeatedly to the children as one part of the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. The reindeer herder says that he describes things and instructs the children as he carries out different tasks, or during the time they spend outside in the natural environment. He describes and shows different natural features in order for the children to become aware of nature and, in this way, learn how to act in the natural environment. The role of the adult in relation to the children's learning is central; this also applies to the teacher, according to Dahlgren and Szczepanski (2004). However, a more conscious attitude on the part of the teacher is needed in order for the outdoor day to result in the students learning. Learning during the outdoor day is based on a context where the subjects and themes of the school can be identified (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2004). This means that the teacher, for example, needs to know about different plant and animal systems as well as their life cycles, seasonal changes, and the traces of man's cultural activities and imprints (Szczepanski, 2007). The teacher has to be strongly aware of the goals of the practical activities outside so that the outdoor visit can lead to systematic, general knowledge for the students.

Todal (2007) has carried out a five-year language-motivating project in Elgå in the Engerdal municipality in Norway, where the goal was that children should learn to speak South Sami. As of the 1990s, interest in learning South Sami has increased and parents want their children to become bilingual. Being bilingual is also one of the goals of the Sami curriculum in Norway, but the school has experienced big problems in reaching this goal if the students do not have South Sami as their home language. The language-motivating project started with a group of children in preschool and continued in school. The project started out with South Sami content where the language was considered as part of the culture. The Sami content came to consist of Sami traditional activities, new modern Sami activities and other activities. The main focus of the language-motivating project in pre-primary school

came to be placed on conveying Sami traditional activities, for example throwing a lasso, picking blueberries, collecting lichen, boiling meat, learning about snow, studying hare tracks, learning about weather, carving out reindeer marks in birch bark, learning about tent sites, etc. In school, the subject content was determined by the Sami curriculum, but the school activities were often similar to activities in preschool. However, as students got older, less time was allocated to the Sami subject content. Central concepts in terms of activities in the school were active communication based on familiar situations, including preschool work, tasks related to the reindeer herding year, and contact with other South Sami. Accordingly, the language-motivating project had a clear structure in both preschool and school, mostly based on activities whose focal point was Sami traditional activities.

*It is important to be able to make a fire in Sami culture and when one spends time outside in the natural environment. Teachers report that students are responsible for making a fire. They go to the same place during the outdoor days and have made their own "árran"<sup>3</sup> there. As soon as they get there, the students want to collect wood for the fire and make the fire right away. The students have learnt to make a fire both together and on their own. The teachers also discuss where and how a fire should be made with the students.*

Making a fire involves practical knowledge and even traditional knowledge. Ryd (2005) has, in close cooperation with older Sami, documented different Sami methods of making a fire. Larsson-Lussi (in Ryd, 2005) says that older people are happy when a fire is burning as a fire means warmth and light. Rassa (in Ryd, 2005) describes how each family had their own *árran* and nobody would use another family's *árran*. This is also knowledge which the students gained during the outdoor day through conversations with the teachers. Besides the practical knowledge, the students have also noticed that there are different approaches in terms of where and how a fire should be made, and that how to make a fire accordingly also includes value considerations.

### Value bases

*Once when they were out in the woods they met some students from another school. The students from the other school were shouting and made a lot of noise in the woods. Later on, one of the students said: "They are really shouting, we do not behave that way in the woods!" The teachers say that they and the students would talk about how to behave in the woods, and not shout or hit and destroy trees and plants...*

The teachers convey a respect for nature. Nature itself and a sense of belonging to nature are central parts of Sami culture.

<sup>3</sup> Fireplace

Oskal (1999) emphasises that people should not try to dominate the world, but rather try to understand the world and be in harmony with it. Many Sami stories describe how to relate to nature, and the relationship between humans and nature. In an indirect way, stories teach children norms, values, good and bad models, and the kind of morals which adults want to transfer to the next generation (Balto, 1997). Stories contain good advice, morals, practical instructions or rules of living; accordingly, they have a fostering function (Nergård, 2005). The Sami story-telling tradition is marked by the importance of close social relationships and the relationship to nature (Nergård, 2006).

*The teachers say that during the outdoor day they always first walk past a natural spring in order to fetch water. One teacher says that this is important both so that the students know where water can be found and also so that they know how this was done in the past. Once when the main water supply was shut off in the community for a short period of time, the students said that this did not matter because they knew where to get water... The teacher also mentioned that they have now started a project with a water theme, to give the students an understanding of the natural lifecycle and the importance of protecting nature.*

One important aspect of outdoor teaching is creating an awareness of the relationship between humans and systems in nature, as well as making humans visible in the local and global lifecycle (Szczepanski, 2007). Teachers use water when trying to convey respect for nature and the importance of protecting nature in order to create sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development means that people's various needs are met without jeopardising the possibility of future generations meeting their needs. Sustainable development consists of three mutually dependent parts:

- Ecological sustainability, which means preserving the production capability of water, earth and ecological systems.
- Social sustainability, which means building a society where basic human needs are met.
- Economic sustainability, which means using human and material resources in sensible ways (Kungliga tekniska högskolan, 2007).

Furthermore sustainable development is also about promoting cultural sustainability, to make it possible for different cultural groups to sustain and develop their own cultures and languages. The concept of sustainable development can therefore be linked to concepts such as: "indigenous science, traditional knowledge, local knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge and traditional environmental knowledge" (Burgess, 1999, 12),

which are all concepts encompassing the knowledge indigenous people have. Accordingly, the outdoor day relates to the concept of sustainable development based on Sami traditional knowledge and value base concepts which also have links to humans. The outdoor day and outdoor visits to the natural environment have also proven to have a variety of health benefits and positive psychosocial functions for the students.

### Health benefits and positive psychosocial functions

*Students get physical exercise by walking, running, climbing and moving around in the woods, says one teacher.*

For the teachers, the outdoor day also involves the physical development of students, practising how to move around in the woods in hilly terrain. During the outdoor day where I was present, the focus was on skiing. If outdoor activities such as skiing are considered important by the school, they could lead to health benefits. Furthermore, placing an emphasis on outdoor activities such as skiing could provide the school with a health profile. Visits outdoors have positive effects on students' health, physical development, ability to concentrate and learning (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2004). Visits outdoors give students an outlet for their natural need to move around. The concept of outdoor teaching implicitly encourages a kind of learning which involves more physical activity (Szczepanski, 2007).

*Outside in the natural environment it is quiet and everybody has time to listen to the silence there...*

According to the WHO's definition, (in Szczepanski, 2007), health means the greatest possible physical, spiritual and social well-being of the individual in question. Physical health has to do with the mechanical functions of the body, i.e. how healthy our way of living is in terms of diet and exercise. Spiritual health involves our philosophy of life and presupposes time for reflection on different matters. Mental health means the ability to think clearly and coherently. Social health means the ability to maintain relationships with others.

*An outdoor day involves both being independent and helping each other. Independence could mean being able to make a fire or find the way to the campsite without the company of an adult. Over the past year, they have walked to the same place in the woods many times. The first few times, the teachers walked first and showed the children the way, but after a while, the students were allowed to go on their own. The teachers were initially a bit worried about letting them go ahead of the others alone; what if a child had got lost? In spite*

*of their worries, the teachers allowed the students to go on their own without a teacher. They did this to try and make the students independent. Today, all the students are very good at helping each other to find the way to the site.*

In her research, Balto (1997), states that the most central aspect of Sami upbringing was making the children independent. Learning to become independent, i.e. being able to manage on one's own, is the ideal of how a person should be. According to one parent who participated in the study:

*"Selvstendighet lærer man ikke i barnehagen...Der lærer ikke barna å tenke selv og opplegget i barnehagen kolliderer med ideen om at barn skal lære på egenhånd gjennom erfaringer, ikke ved å bli styrt hele tiden..." (Independence is not something you learn in the day care centre.... That is not the place where children learn to think for themselves, and the way things are organised in the day care centre contradicts the idea that children should learn on their own through experience, and not by being guided all the time...)* (Balto, 1997, 11-112.)

This parent maintained that children do not learn to be independent in pre-primary school and normal school. Balto compared this with learning in the extended family, where children had their own areas of responsibility and tasks to carry out on their own, according to simple instructions from the adults. The children learned from other adults or from each other (Hirvonen, 2004). I have previously written about the fact that the views of handicrafters and reindeer herders on learning were based on children having their own tasks which they could try to do on their own (Jannok Nutti, 2007). These tasks had to be carried out properly (see also Sara, 2004), but it did not matter if the children made mistakes when they were carrying out their tasks (see also Balto, 1997).

My earlier research (Jannok Nutti, 2007) shows that it is important for children to be out in the woods and learn to feel safe there. It is also important for them to learn to find their way out in the natural environment. Sami learning involves children both learning to manage different things on their own and learning from grown-ups or other children (Balto, 1997; Hirvonen, 2004; Jannok Nutti, 2007). The teachers in the Sami school linked the outdoor days with the Sami view on learning, where the students learned to find their way in the natural environment together. They are trained to become independent when working together. As I have also previously discussed (Jannok Nutti, 2007; 2006), nature is an important foundation for developing a culturally based education in mathematics in the Sami schools.

### Summary of reflections

The work involving outdoor days in a school resulted in increased learning where, among other things, knowledge about language, culture and other subjects, as well as health benefits and psychosocial factors, play a part. The outdoor day resulted in increased use of the Sami language, and its content also encompassed both Sami traditional knowledge and added knowledge in traditional subject areas. The outdoor day also conveyed sustainable development and various value base matters, including, among other things, respect for nature, were in focus. There were other health benefits in terms of physical health as well, with different activities involving movement. In addition to the psychosocial functions, the outdoor visits in the natural environment promote spiritual, mental and social health. The spiritual aspect is apparent because the outdoor day provides a window onto the Sami philosophy of life and gives students time for reflection. The mental and social aspects of outdoor days relate to how students are trained in how to become independent and how to cooperate with others. According to Utsi Gaup (2006), the natural landscape was previously used for learning in the nomad school's summer school and for field study courses. Outdoor days are an attempt to use nature for learning in the Sami school. This means that outdoor days function as a pedagogical tool for learning in school.

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## What is Role Adventure?

Heli Villanen

In my article I describe *role adventure methods*, in which adventure and drama education intertwine into an integrated whole. Role adventure opens interesting perspectives for teaching. School applications of role adventures have been developed at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School and Sevetijärvi School during the ArctiChildren II project. I refer to the school camps carried out mainly in classes 5–6 at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School.<sup>[1]</sup> In short, role adventure should have some elements of drama (a frame story, characters etc.) as well as elements of adventure (abseiling, canoeing etc) in order to be complete.

In the following chapters I examine the similarities and differences between adventure and drama education, and also describe role adventure as a combination of the two. In addition to that, I will compare pedagogic role adventure with playing in general. Towards the end of my article I discuss the significance of reflection in adventure and drama, as well as the value basis of especially adventure education. I conclude by evaluating the potential of role adventure for promoting well-being in the school.

I view adventure and drama activities as a process, the purpose of which is to increase well-being in a school class. According to Kolb (1984, 26) learning is best conceived of as a process, not in terms of outcomes. He also argues (ibid.) that when learning is conceived of as a holistic adaptive process,

<sup>1</sup> See further, *Spinning Drama and Adventure around the Well-Being* by Salmi, Kurri & Villanen in this publication, pp.



Adventure in the forest.  
Pupil of Korkalovaara Comprehensive school

it provides conceptual bridges across life situations. The basic philosophy of adventure and drama activities is encapsulated in the idea of supporting individuals' holistic growth and learning. But as Hakkarainen (1990, 116) points out, it is a human paradox that relationships with others are a priori to the relationship with oneself. In adventure and drama education there has to be an awareness of both the individual and social spheres of human development.

Allardt (1980) defines well-being as consisting of *having*, *loving* and *being*, and achieving these elements is attempted in the activities at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School by creating a community spirit in the learning environment and also by strengthening the pupils' identity. One way of enhancing community spirit is to increase positive interaction between home and school. Identity is strengthened by leading pupils through questions of belonging to their own culture and environment, which are constantly changing.

On a more detailed level the activities at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School approach psychosocial well-being from the perspectives of a *sense of security*, *interpersonal skills* and *boosting of confidence*. In this context, security means the psychological, physical and social levels of the concept. Interpersonal skills are practised by strengthening team spirit among the pupils and by learning to be considerate towards and respectful of others. Being respectful means almost the same as being tolerant, but as an educational objective, respect has a more positive tone to it than tolerance (Hamarus 2006, 185). The issue of respect is especially relevant in education of cultural and multicultural themes. According to my experience the most common aims of adventure assignments are to increase self-knowledge and boost self-confidence.

Adventure education includes new and special experiences, new insights and action, through which people learn and grow to understand themselves and their actions as members of a group, and they also familiarise themselves with their origins through a relationship with nature (Linnossuo 2007, 204). Drama<sup>[2]</sup> education, too, aims at improved interpersonal skills and self-discovery, but, in addition to that, the emphasis is on the development of the whole personality. The suitability of adventure and drama methods for promoting well-being depends on the way they are applied, as well as on the context of use. Pupils' age and special needs, among other things, have an influence on the way methods should be applied. The context of use includes the norms of the school and the institutional and cultural influences.

<sup>2</sup> Drama comprises theatre, therapy and teaching (Hiltunen & Konivuori 2005).

### Adventure and drama, basic components of role adventure

“The most important journey ultimately is the journey inwards” (Mortlock 1984, 57). Most often we come to highlight exploration of the outside world while thinking about a concept of adventure. In a school context we should pay attention to the exploration of the inner world of humans as well. According to Miles and Priest (1990) adventure education is an appropriately planned and implemented educational process, which includes safe risk-taking. They (ibid) also add that it is empowering, because individuals gain psychological strength by getting through challenging adventure assignments. Empowerment is understood as a psychological and social phenomenon results in the individual being ready to face larger challenges in his/her life than before. Instead of a risk, we



Abseiling at the School camp, August 2007.  
Photo: Ulpu Siponen

could rather speak about a thrill factor that awakens emotions and opens new channels to see one's identity.

Adventure education provides a balance to competitive subjects and offers pupils experience of trust and team work. In the adventure activities used in ArctiChildren projects one competes only with oneself. It also provides young people with a constructive way to test their limits. (Mortlock 1984, 52; Moore 1990, 375–376.) In adventure education, students process different feelings, such as their fears, and learn to manage them. The general objective is the growth of the individual; the finding and using of one's human potential. (Miles & Priest 1990.)

Adventure education methods engage people in a different way than traditional learning situations, making people see their strengths in a new light. What is essential is to find new, positive things about oneself. From an educational perspective, it is important to consider the direction of the change as well as ways to support growth, bearing individual needs in mind. There is no such thing as a single right result or outcome from adventurous activities. Changes at the individual level may be emotionally negative too. It is a pedagogic challenge for the teacher to work through the immediate experiences. According to Karpainen (2005, 54), there are two perspectives related to taking feelings into account: making use of positive feelings and working through repressive feelings. A conscious gathering of good experiences, says Karpainen (ibid.), creates a positive attitude towards learning. Working through negative feelings is, in turn, a prerequisite for a healthy evaluation and change of negative attitudes. Also according to Kolb (1984, 85), a major function of education is to instil positive attitudes towards learning and a thirst for knowledge, and to develop effective learning skills.

Drama is another concept of role adventure that is examined from the perspective of well-being. Drama pedagogy<sup>3</sup> is a combination of educational sciences, theatre and aesthetics, where the human being has the leading role. A human being only becomes really human through interaction with other people. (Teerijoki 2001, 209.) The dialogic idea of man thus seems justified in drama pedagogy as well. Drama is listening to the other – even when not using any words (Kettunen 2005, 275). Also in pedagogic drama it is not the end result but the process that is most important. The central goal of educational drama is first and foremost to increase understanding, both at an informational and emotional level (Pietilä & Kivimäki 2005, 6).

<sup>3</sup> Drama pedagogy as a subject is placed in the middle ground between art and education (Ostern, A.-L. 2001). The basic elements of drama are tension, metaphors, symbols and contrasts, which are created through roles, situations and sudden changes of perspective (Owens & Barber 1998, 11).

### Similarities and differences of methods

Drama education and adventure education techniques have in common the use of multiple senses and emphasis on the process itself. A drama includes a drama agreement, which the teacher makes with the group. This states the common rules either for a shorter or longer period, depending on the goals. Whether written or oral, the drama agreement ensures that every participant understands the difference between reality and fiction. (Owens & Barber 1998, 11–17.) As in drama techniques, an adventure also starts with an “adventure agreement”. Drama and adventure agreements are similar in that they both state the group's collective view on the rules, limits and values of action. The rules aim at ensuring the participants' safety in all respects. Agreements of this kind are useful, even if school teaching is always based on the general rules of the school. The adventure agreement, for example, emphasises the special themes of the school camps. This helps to focus on the right goals.

One of the differences between drama and adventure education is that adventure activities do not usually have a frame story. The action thus lacks a fictional framework. Even if adventure assignments do have a frame story, it does not play as important a role as in drama techniques. The story is the heart of a drama, whereas risks and challenges form the core of adventure methods (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of the basic concepts of drama and adventure.

Method	Drama	Adventure
Framework	Story/fiction	Challenge/risk
Setting	Scene/prop	Nature
Method	Character	Social role
Perspective	Indirect/distant	Direct/instant

The background to the adventure activities used at Korkkovaara Comprehensive School is the environmental psychological idea that positive experiences of nature are invigorating for people (Salonen 2005, 64). The natural environment is an essential setting for adventure education, whereas a drama setting is usually created by using scenes or props (Table 1).

In a drama you identify with a character, whereas in an adventure you live out a social role, which does not require the kind of creative efforts a drama requires. In the adventure activities a role means a social role from everyday life. These are the various roles that everybody has in their lives. The role of a group leader is one example of a social role. Assuming a role in a drama requires that one is safely led into the role

and one is able to identify with a fictitious character. Confusing experiences with drama techniques often result from the fact that people have not been safely guided into their roles (Owens & Barber 1998, 28–29). One result of adventure education is to become more aware of one's own position and social role in a particular group. Through this awareness it is possible to create changes in group dynamics. At the Korkkovaara Comprehensive School it was discovered that it would be good to rotate the different social roles during the adventure activities. This is done, for example, by giving as many pupils as possible a chance to try being in charge and taking responsibility in a group, for example.

Drama activities in a role adventure method are best described as a role play. Role play has been widely used for teaching social skills and emotional competence, as the following quote shows.

*“Improvised role-plays are a very powerful medium indeed for teaching a wide range of social and emotional competences, and have been used in a wide variety of projects... Through role-play students can, for example, practise answering ‘put-downs’, giving strong message, rehearsing solutions, expressing their feelings safely, and tackling prejudiced and racist behaviour. Role-play gives the opportunity to learn not only the words but the appropriate tone, body-language and facial expression to become more socially effective.” (Weare 2000, 127.)*

Drama is about creating roles. Through the role, one may examine oneself and one's behaviour, as the drama distances (table 1) the situations from oneself (Kettunen 2005, 276–277). According to Østern (2000), taking a role in drama means shifting a perspective from real life to fiction. Adventure education, on the other hand, deals with direct and genuine social roles that are closely related to a specific group, such as a class. The perspective on the situation is instant. The essential difference between drama and adventure education is the way in which the concept of a role is defined and used. While implementing a role adventure method the teacher ought to be aware of these differences in the joint approaches. Because role adventure is a combination of both drama and adventure education, it is also a combination of working with both created characters and social roles from everyday life. The perspective on the concept of a role can vary during the role adventure process depending on the nature of current assignments.

## Role adventure – diving into the frame story

Role adventure is a combination of adventure and drama as a role play<sup>[4]</sup>. Role play is not performing in the sense of a traditional drama as there is no audience for it. Role play thus comes close to the concept of process drama; in a role play the players act out their roles in a fictitious cultural and social environment. (Ericsson 2004, 16-23.)

A role adventure aims at increasing understanding of the chosen theme, whereas a typical role play aims at entertainment. Role adventure and role play differ from each other in terms of the frame story, among other things. In a role play, the frame story is usually fantasy, whereas in a role adventure it can be for example a truthful depiction of history. In other words, I could say that the meaning of the frame story is pedagogical in a role adventure whereas in a role play it is entertaining (Figure 1). While emphasising the educational dimension of the frame story it forms requirements for reflection based on the story. The role adventure at Sevettijärvi School, for example, dealt with the life of Saint Triphon of Pechenga in 16th-century Pechenga (Petsamo in Finnish).<sup>[5]</sup> At Korkalovaara Comprehensive School, the frame story led the pupils to the 16th-century Kemijoki River and its history. In both cases teachers aimed at teaching historical subjects along with promoting children's psychosocial well-being.

<sup>4</sup> Role-play is an umbrella concept for various forms of play, such as traditional board games, live action role-playing (LARP) and interactive computer games. (Mason, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Ulpu Siponen describes the role adventure of Sevettijärvi School in more detail in the article The Battle for the Holy Cup – A Role Adventure in late 16th-century Pechenga elsewhere in this book.

Pupils fishing during the role adventure at the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School's camp. May 2007. Photo: Arto Liiti



Elements of play in general can be found in both the adventure and drama methods. One dimension through which the pedagogical role adventure can be conceptualised is goal orientation (Figure 1). Usually an emphasis is placed on the fact that children's playing is not goal-orientated, in contrast with education (Hakkarainen 1990, 52). Children's free play is always motivated from the inside and it is generated on the children's initiative (Hakkarainen, 1990; Korhonen, 2005). Educational settings on the other hand are created in such a way that activities aim to achieve set goals. This has an effect on motivation, whether it is primarily internal or external. One difference between play and pedagogical activities lies in a teacher's role in a situation. This means for example the teacher's task of evaluating, directing and taking primary responsibility for the education. This does not mean that children do not have a part in these activities, but the main responsibility lies with the teacher.

The degree of role identification varies, depending on whether the principles of drama education or those of adventure education are emphasised in role adventure. The more the role adventure aims to influence pupils' personality development, the greater is the emphasis on role identification (Figure 1). Children's play in itself can also lead to deep identification with the role, which means that a child repeats the same character all over again. Deep identification with the role does not mean simple imitation, but rather an empathising with the emotional realm of the character (Korhonen 2005, 33).

Role adventure could be further developed in the direction of the story paths developed by Pietilä & Kivimäki (2005). They make use of traditional knowledge, exercising in nature

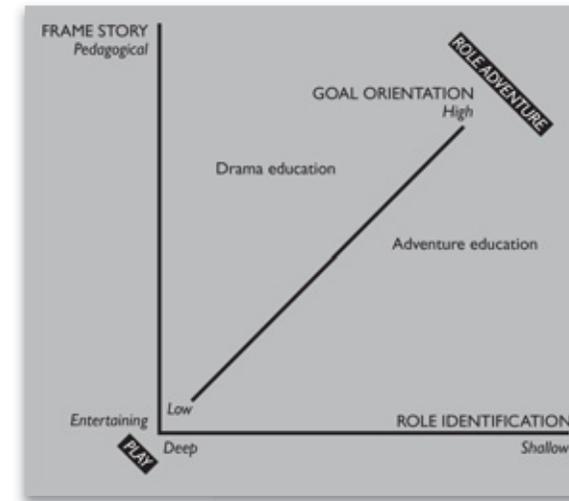


Figure 1. The meaning of the frame story, degree of role identification and goal orientation in relation to a role adventure.

and forest teaching by using story paths, which lend themselves well to the programmes of kindergartens and schools. According to Pietilä & Kivimäki (ibid.), a forest is the most appropriate learning environment, and drama is suitable for integrating different subjects. On the story paths, adults use their characters to build a world of drama for the children to enter. The task of the children is to solve a problem based on the frame story, which could deal for example issues of trust and friendship. The adventure element in a story path could be for example canoeing or hiking. According to my experience adventure elements can promote children's emotional relationship with nature and give them a new insight into their identity.

## Outcomes of role adventure

It takes time to bring about the processes of change that promote well-being. To examine these processes during or right after the school camp, for example, does not necessarily give a truthful picture of the depth and direction of the change. As with the Korkalovaara school camps, the post-camp evaluation has only been suggestive, yet valuable for further development of this work. Changes in well-being are brought about by a combination of different elements. Role adventure activities may be one element, perhaps just the factor that gets the change process started. The pragmatic, practice-oriented character of adventure activities becomes apparent, for ex-

ample, in the following thoughts on the effectiveness of these activities:

*With adventure activities, it is not always possible to foresee the end result. Surprises and changes in action are always possible. The key is to recognise and share feelings caused by some events. Often participants gain insights from the adventure experiences and their impact only afterwards. Immediate effects are mainly related to changes observed in the general atmosphere and team spirit. On a personal level, people observe their own role in the group and their active or passive participation. (Linnossuo 2007, 204)*

Reflection is an essential part of adventure and drama pedagogy at all stages. Different phenomena are given meanings and interpretations, which makes the experience more understandable. It should be noted that a positive experience does not necessarily lead to high-quality learning, which is rather the result of well-organised time for reflection (Karpinen 2005, 50). After the school camps at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School the pupils were given an assignment with a map (Appendix 1). They were to add personally significant events and places to the map. In addition to that, I selected ten pupils for a theme interview after School Camp II.<sup>[6]</sup> The selection criteria for the interviews were a) negative feelings expressed in the pupil's map assignment, b) refusal to participate in adventure activities at the camp, or c) being a new pupil in the class. The map offered a good basis for evaluation discussions and also made it possible to continue working through various issues and to bring new topics for discussion to the evaluation situation. Here is one excerpt from the theme interview relating the emotional effect of the adventure activity:

Interviewer: How did it feel to climb down the rock?

Pupil: It felt bad as I was the last to climb down so I was kind of under a terrible stress. About halfway down I thought, hey, this is fun, I could almost do this again. On the ground I looked up and thought, did I really climb down that... NO! It felt a bit like that.

Prior to the school camp at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School, the pupils were asked to think of ways of being considerate towards their classmates. Being considerate towards and respectful of others was set as a conscious goal during

<sup>6</sup> Half of the interviewees were boys, the other half girls. One interview took about 15 minutes, and the interviews were recorded at school during the lessons. The interview had a thematic outline so that the same themes were discussed with each interviewee. There were some differences in the phrasing and order of the questions. The themes covered were the major feelings and thoughts after the camp; experiences of the various activity points; the pupil's view on the camp goals and their attainment; thoughts on the usefulness of the camp; defining the concepts of courage and compassion; telling an example of how to encourage a friend; seeing new sides in one's classmates; and the wishes for the next similar camp.

School Camp II. The next excerpt from the theme interview will provide a glimpse of the assignment where pupils had a chance to practise being considerate and respectful of others.

Interviewer/I: What did you think about the assignment Farm negotiation? (Farm negotiation aims at constructing two similar farms between two student groups without seeing each others product and just negotiating while construction. The assignment was done at the forest and miniature models of farms were made of sticks, cones, moss etc.)

Pupil/P: Well, yes, it was quite fun, but then it didn't quite work out with the other group. They were building a Lapp kota hut and a wall out of an old worn-out moped, and we were building a house.

I: How should you have negotiated so that it would have worked?

P: The negotiators on the other side could have done something else than just say "well" and go back.

I: How did the situation end?

P: Both had their own thing, and it led to a pine cone fight!

I: Well, if you had this Farm negotiation again, what would you do differently?

P: We'd build bigger walls.

I: Does that build up team spirit?

P: No, it doesn't, but it would be team work in your own group.

The mission of school is to develop pupils' value emotions. The awe-inspiring silence of nature and a deep encounter with another human being are important value experiences. (Launonen & Pulkkinen 2004, 18.) Value experiences have their place in both drama and adventure education. Responding to others with respect is sensitivity. With sensitivity, people achieve a genuine interdependence and find the opportunity to explore their own set of values (Kiiski 1998, 113). In the theme interview after School Camp II I asked the pupils to tell in their own words how they understood the words courage and compassion. The aim of this reflection was to have these issues connected with adventure activities transferred to the realm of normal school work and the pupils' everyday lives.

All ten interviewees connected the word courage to doing something. Pupils thought courage is the boldness to do, to try, or to face scary and difficult things. During School Camp II the interviewees had felt courageous, either during climbing down the rock or while orienteering. One pupil described courage like this: "in rock climbing you need courage... the faster you go, the more courageous you are". The pupils did not discuss whether refusing assignments was courageous in their opinion. They perceived courage in a very concrete way, closely linked to doing things. The themes of courage and

having the courage to do or pass something could also be considered from a more psychological perspective in the evaluation discussion. Courage to form and justify own opinions and values are examples that could bring more depth to the evaluation discussion.

Five of the interviewees thought it was too difficult to describe the concept of compassion. The other five described compassion as sharing sad thoughts or a willingness to help a friend. One of the interviewees also connected compassion with the sharing of positive feelings. By this the pupil referred to sharing someone's feelings of success. One interviewee was not able to describe the concept of compassion, but he thought the word sorry comes close to it.

After the school camps at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School teachers used immediate feedback discussion, map assignment and theme interview to support transfer of learning. Feedback on both school camps was also gathered from the pupils' parents. The parents were asked to evaluate their child's experiences and fill in a questionnaire (Appendix 2). The feedback discussions were also carried out in the final celebrations of the camps at the school. The following are excerpts from parental feedback:

*On an adventure camp you learn many things that are not so easy to learn in a classroom, such as woodcraft, social skills, creating a feeling of togetherness. Girls have fewer "cliques", in the biggest group they are with everyone (good!), with boys, too. It is also easier for the parents to get to know other parents.*

*"Team spirit in the class has improved says the child, it is nicer to be at school."*



Building up a farm at the School Camp, August 2007.  
Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

## The potential of role adventure in promoting well-being

In the best-case scenario, role adventure leads to an increased understanding and actualisation of an individual's human potential. In other words, we may speak of an individual's psychological empowerment. This refers, among other things, to better management of emotions, self-expression and self-confidence. The real encounter between the children's world and a pedagogical method is one of the strengths of the role adventure.

The value of adventure education lies in the authenticity of the experiences and seeing personal strengths in a new light. Working with characters adds a new dimension to adventure education from the realm of drama education. Role adventure as a method can be organised in a variety of ways. The decisions on the methods depend on, among other things, the subject of learning as well as the group's special needs, age and previous experience with drama and adventure activities. On the whole, if new methods are to become more widespread in the school world, both continuing professional education for teachers and the teacher training system need to respond to this matter. The combination of adventure and drama education has potential from the perspective of life-long learning as well.

Role adventure has features from role play and playing in general. Identification with a character provides an opportunity to examine one's inner self and the themes of the drama from a distance. In adventure education, pupils act in real social roles, and this may shake up the usual role distribution in a group. The role is a perspective that can be used in a variety

of ways in teaching that promotes well-being. The role adventures at Korkalovaara and Sevettijärvi schools dealt with several themes, such as identity, security and interpersonal skills. From the perspective of well-being, it would also be good to add the issue of children's participation, for example, to the role adventure. In promoting well-being, it is important to aim at supporting children's identity and empowering children with the skills and confidence that are required in a healthy life.

Role adventure offers safe situations in which the challenges of adventure and drama can be faced. Those challenges awaken emotions that fuel empowerment. As part of a well-planned and long-term educational process, role adventure variations have the potential to increase pupils' psychosocial well-being. One specific feature of the role adventure method is the location of activities in the Arctic natural environment. It is important to recognise this leaning towards outdoor and environmental education in the further development of the method.



Having a good spirit during the role adventure. May 2007.  
Photo: Arto Liiti

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## Strengthening Cultural Identity through Environmental and Community Art in the Schools of Small Northern Villages

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The “Culture and Identity” section of the project was implemented in the school communities of three small villages, namely in Sevettijärvi, Jokkmokk and Lovozero. The goal was to strengthen the cultural identity of the village school pupils through environmental and community art. The aim was that through the activities the pupils would understand the present through art and be able to imagine the future. A community-based approach was adopted as one of the key approaches for this work. Pupils, teachers, parents and other members of the village community were all invited to join in planning and organising the schoolyard workshops. Artistic work was used to provide the pupils with tools for creating social constructions of their own lifeworld.

- Sevettijärvi School is situated in northernmost Finnish Lapland, in the municipality of Inari. The school has 18 pupils, who are all Skolt Sami. Sevettijärvi village has about 250 inhabitants.  
- Activities: Snow Sculpture 23.–27.2.2007, Orientation Day 31.5.2007 and Environmental Art 13.–25.8.2007
- Jokkmokk Sami School is situated in the village of Jokkmokk in the northernmost part of Sweden. The village is the municipal centre with about 2,500 inhabitants. The Sami School has about 30 pupils.  
- Activities: Snow Sculpture 26.–28.3.2007 and Environmental Art 19.–21.9.2007
- Lovozero Secondary School is situated in the village of Lovozero, on the Kola Peninsula near Murmansk in Russia. The school has about 250 pupils, and the village about 2,500 inhabitants.  
- Activities: Environmental Art 25.–27.9.2007

### From stories to snow animals – Snow sculpture experiences in Sevettijärvi and Jokkmokk

In northern regions, snow is a splendid, free and almost inexhaustible plastic material. Snow can be used in various ways in wintry constructions, in art and in everyday schoolwork as well. More detailed instructions on working with snow are available in the winter art publications by the University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design. Snow sculpture as an artistic process was used in a wintry schoolyard in Sevettijärvi and Jokkmokk. Work at Sevettijärvi School began by linking the themes with the animal stories of the Skolt Sami culture. Teachers told the pupils about the holy animals and animal figures living in the Skolt stories, including a bear, a fox, a swan, a salmon, a cat and a dog as well as the mythical figure Myandash, who is a combination of a deer and a human being. The animal figures were first worked on by sketching them during art lessons. Based on the sketches, three-dimensional models were then made out of playdough. Snow moulds were filled during the “Snow Day” held on a Saturday. The whole village was invited to the event.

Two teachers from Jokkmokk Sami School visited Sevettijärvi during the Snow Sculpture Workshop. This helped them to initiate similar work at their own school. At Jokkmokk too, the themes were animal figures, based on the animal stories of the Jokkmokk Sami. Even the animals were about the same as at Sevettijärvi: bear, fox, swan, hare, fish, willow grouse and dog. The topic was first worked on based on the stories, and the pupils then made models out of clay. After this, the pupils filled up the snow moulds.



For snow moulds you need: Water-resistant or agricultural plywood sized 240 x 120 cm, 4 sheets  
For support material, 50 x 50 mm or 50 x 70 mm wood stakes, 50 metres  
Screws/nails  
Firm tightening straps, 4 pieces  
The sheets are divided into parts.

Snow sculpture is very much team work. There were three to five pupils working on each slab in the actual carving phase. The teachers also actively participated in the carving. The carving itself, from a cube to a complete sculpture, took about one and a half working days in both schools. On the first day the figure of the statue became clearly visible, and the second day was used for some finishing touches. At the end of the second working day both schools had an opening ceremony for the exhibition, with parents as invited guests. In Severtijärvi the guests also included pupils from their twin school in Neiden, Norway, as well as a few foreign tourists. In Jokkmokk parental participation and reactions were seen as essential criteria for success at the Snow Sculpture Workshop. Through art it was possible to get closer to the parents, which

led to a joyful, warm meeting at the school. This is confirmed by the joint feedback from the teachers of Jokkmokk School. All the teachers were asked to give feedback in written form after the workshop.

*“Parents were invited to the exhibition opening, which included a PowerPoint presentation of the stages of snow sculpting. This was followed by drinks and waffles, and then we went out to have a closer look at the sculptures. All were happy, and snow sculpting turned out to be a very positive experience for all those involved. We can warmly recommend this.” (Teachers at Jokkmokk)*

The teachers of Jokkmokk thought the snow sculpture event was seen as an activity empowering the whole school community and improving relations between teachers and parents. They think it is important that there are gatherings at school because of something the pupils themselves have accomplished.

*“All teachers thought the parents had a very positive attitude towards the snow sculpture event. It is important to gather around a positive thing; the children proudly presented the sculptures to their parents.” (Teachers at Jokkmokk)*

The presence of the University of Lapland instructors provided a significant extra resource for organising the activities, which is good to be aware of. Even after just one experience, and with all the moulds ready, however, it is fairly simple to do snow sculpting in any setting, as long as there is snow there. The teachers at Severtijärvi School are going to continue with snow sculpture on their own at their school, and at Jokkmokk they are also planning sculpting projects for next winter. Snow sculpting was seen as a challenging but rewarding working method.



Jokkmokk, spring 2007. Photos: Timo Jokela, Maria Huhmarniemi

## Environmental and community art in strengthening cultural identity

The starting point was to develop the existing methods of environmental and community art to suit these schools. Environmental art in art education provides an opportunity for increased appreciation of one's place and immediate surroundings. This is realised, for example, through practising environmental sensitivity and by doing environmental analyses. Local pupils worked in their own school environment using natural materials available in that place, which, at the same time, showed respect and support for the traditional relationship with nature. The aim was also to emphasise the positive characteristics of community art, such as an appreciation of one's school community and a sense of togetherness. From the individual perspective, the significant thing about community art may be practising negotiation skills and decision making, or listening to others and becoming heard, all leading to a sense of empowerment. In principle, pupils were given as much say on the coming activities as possible, from ideas to realisation.

### In Severtijärvi

The common theme running through the work in Severtijärvi was the Skolt Sami culture, especially the present-day Skolt culture from the pupils' perspective. The goal was to



Severtijärvi 2007. Photo: Ulpu Siponen

strengthen the pupils' cultural identity through environmental and community art and to deepen their relationship with their home village. A joint brainstorming session was kicked off by walking a certain route around the school, equipped with pen and paper for writing down potential themes, places and materials.

After this, the pupils' ideas were gathered together for all to see. The ideas were presented in groups, divided into potential themes, materials and places. Each group came to the front of the classroom in turn and presented their ideas to the others. Based on a vote, three ideas were selected to be realised as team work. The pupils divided into three groups, choosing the group with the idea they liked best. The themes of the works all dealt with the Skolt culture, some of them concretely, some symbolically. The largest group chose the Skolt dwelling places as their theme. The second group handled the solidarity of the Skolt culture, but also its seclusion. The third group expressed their view on multiculturalism and love beyond boundaries. The groups worked rather independently and enthusiastically from this point on. Each group thought the nicest place for constructing the works would be the pub-



Severtijärvi 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

lic beach near the school, and each group used the same natural materials: twigs, cones, grass, sticks, moss, sand, stones, etc. The third group also hoped that their work, the Heart, would act as a gateway to the exhibition area on the beach.

The pupils eagerly started working by collecting materials and refining their ideas for their works. Some pupils were sawing trees while others were taking the timber to the beach, where the actual work would take place. Willow, willow bark, string, wire and wooden sticks were used for fastening. Wood could also be drilled to get holes for sticks or thread. At this stage attention was also paid to occupational safety, responsibility for tools and tidiness of the environment. The pupils presented their plans to the others and received comments from the instructors, and then it was time to start constructing the actual sculptures. The importance of team work was emphasised during the whole process. All the pupils were asked to give feedback in a written form after the workshop.

The pupils seemed to have a clear vision of what should still be done and how. One primary school girl in the dwelling place group describes her work as follows:

*“It was difficult and sometimes you didn’t know who was supposed to do what, but we soon reached a consensus. I was making a lean-to shelter together with a few others. I thought it was beautiful, good and great. I also made a fireplace with the same people. Our work describes the Skolt Sami culture by telling about the way they lived. When the work was finished it was great and splendid, at least in my opinion.”*

Another pupil (primary school boy) also thought working in the dwelling place group went well:

*“Our group worked quite well even if we sometimes had disagreements. I did a granary with xxx and xxx, and then I did a sauna with xxx and xxx. Skolt Sami, don’t know much about that. I think the end result was good, all the buildings were quite good. I think it was nice, it was nice to be constructing them for those two weeks. Feedback: we should do more constructing.”*

A lower secondary school pupil (girl) in the twig heart group describes her work in her essay as follows:

*“We used willow and birch as material and wire and string for tying. We decorated the work with pine cones, grass, horsetails, flowers, etc. The work is called Twig Heart. The work shows that there are many different cultures and multicultural love in Sevettijärvi. Different colours in the work describe the different cultures. With the heart we heartily welcome people to Sevettijärvi. (even if we didn’t like them :))”*

Another lower secondary school girl describes her work in quite a positive tone as well:

*“Twig Heart was actually quite impressive and I’m almost proud that I had a chance to be making it, too. Twig Heart and all the other works as well we made on the beach and I think it was a great place especially for our heart.”*

The third group, “Cone Village”, needed quite a lot of guidance, and the members were not especially keen to use their initiative. Nevertheless, even they describe their work in quite a positive way. The following citation comes from feedback by a lower secondary school pupil:

*“I was raking up cones and involved in planning. I was shovelling, too, etc. Our group worked almost perfectly. We got this topic, Skolt Sami culture, to show in the work. Our completed work was of course the best but they were all really great. ... Our work was called Cone Village. It tells about the unity of the Sevetti inhabitants, until over time people keep moving away, just like pines wash away into water. The Lapp ‘kota’ hut represents the fact that people used to live in them. THANKYOU ”*

The environmental works of art were completed on Wednesday of the second working week. Each work was given an explanatory sign telling the name and idea of the work. One group made a signpost for the exhibition area to stand along the main road. A group of primary school pupils built a fire art work to be burned during the Saturday night celebration.

On Saturday at the end of the second week there was a pilgrimage celebration in honour of St Triphon of Pechenga organised by the Orthodox Church, where Toini Sanila, Principal of Sevettijärvi School, gave an excellent speech about environmental art, encouraging the audience to go and see the exhibition on the beach. The exhibition area was entered through the Twig Heart, which raised a laugh in many. After the guests had arrived on the beach, the principal asked one pupil from each group to introduce their work. The pupils seemed very content with and proud of their works. It felt as if they thought it was important that the audience had come to see the works of art and was interested in them. Some parents also came to personally thank the instructors for working with the children.

### In Jokkmokk

The aim of the project was to strengthen cultural identity and collaboration as well as increase the well-being of pupils in Jokkmokk Sami School through environmental and commu-

nity art. None of the teachers at Jokkmokk Sami School had prior experience of making environmental art. The start of the project was thus especially challenging. The teachers’ starting point was the idea that it would be nice if, when arriving at the schoolyard, visitors were to notice they were entering a new world, a Sami school. This idea would go nicely with environmental art works related to the Sami culture. Safety and daily activities were also to be taken into account when making environmental art in a school setting. The works were not to disturb playing or moving about in the yard. The teachers wanted to have a high-quality and good-looking end result. They did not want to do anything that looked too rough or sketchy, because Sami handicrafts are always very neat. The planning stage of the project included a dialogue on the theme of the environmental works of art. The theme became the Sami symbols in their various forms. After evaluating the feasibility of the ideas and checking the availability of materials, the selection of materials came to include willow, birch, pine cones, berries, twigs, stones and leaves.



Jokkmokk, autumn 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela

The works by the 6 to 12-year-old pupils of the Sami school comprised elements of the natural and built environment that were important to them. They wanted to create a Sami atmosphere in the schoolyard with different structures and symbols. The teachers would have liked to have some kind of a large construction in the schoolyard for the children to go in and out of. Finally it was decided to design and make large reindeer antlers, two reindeer and a Lapp ‘kota’ hut from willow. Stones and leaves, moss and berries, as well as branches and cones, were used to build a large solar symbol on a slope. Stones, leaves, branches and berries were used to make the Sami flag. Some of the works were partially permanent, some totally degradable. The pupils enthusiastically worked on their works for three days. In the end there was an opening ceremony that attracted many visitors, mostly parents of the pupils. The project gained excellent visibility in the media. There was already a story about the event in the local newspaper (Kuriren) on the opening day of the exhibition, which added to the solemnity of the occasion and the sense of pride in the young artists and their teachers. The following is a summary of the pupils’ opinions compiled by the teachers at Jokkmokk Sami School:

*“The pupils were asked to give feedback on the environmental art project; 8 students answered in writing, the younger ones gave their comments in discussion. The pupils of Year 5 and 6 thought the best thing was to see how beautiful the schoolyard had become, and to realise how much you can do with natural materials. The pupils liked the actual construction phase best. Almost a third of the pupils liked everything that was done. It was difficult for the pupils to understand how Jokkmokk appeared in their works; it was easier to see the influence of the Sami culture. Working with environmental art was quite a positive experience on the whole, and all were keen to be involved. The pupils also expressed their desire to do ice and snow sculptures in winter.”*

The Jokkmokk teachers also collectively wrote about their own observations of the implementation of the project. The work did not properly start until the University of Lapland students arrived. The teachers did not know what material should have been acquired in advance. Now they feel they know a lot more and will be able to make environmental art from natural materials independently in the future. The working week had felt very intensive. The use of willow as a material for the statues was considered technically difficult; the teachers felt they needed more technical guidance to familiarise themselves with the method.

The teachers thought the works of art were really good; the pupils, teachers and parents were all happy. As proof of this, the pupils have taken care of the works in their schoolyard and

they stayed intact until snowfall. The pupils were very proud of their works, eagerly waiting for the next project with snow and ice sculpture. The most important result for the school was certainly the intense enthusiasm and uplift brought about by doing things together and succeeding in it.

### In Lovozero

The objective of the Lovozero School project was to introduce the pupils to working with environmental art and community-based art education. The school had no prior experience of working with environmental art; even making three-dimensional art in general seemed to be unfamiliar to the pupils. That is why the focus was on learning the methods in a very practical way. The starting point was, first and foremost, to do things together without a performance to be assessed, yet progressing towards a clear goal. At Lovozero School they were not accustomed to working outdoors either. Thus there was a sense of great bewilderment at first as the work was started in the schoolyard with nothing but a pile of twigs as material...

With all this as the starting point, it felt quite challenging for the instructors to start working in an unfamiliar environment, in a foreign language and using methods totally unfamiliar to the pupils. The teachers participating in the project were first met in the spring, when the idea was first introduced. The second meeting was during the actual working week. One day was used for giving instructions to the teachers, throwing ideas and planning. Elements from the local culture were chosen as the overarching theme. The teachers were, however, not able to develop their ideas into feasible art works so it was suggested they make willow reindeer as there

was plenty of willow growing around the school. The suggestion was unanimously accepted, but otherwise there seemed to be doubts as to the success of the project.

The environmental art workshop had about 60 pupils participating from Year 7 and 8, as well as eight teachers. The pupils divided into eight groups, with one teacher per group. Professor Timo Jokela gave a lecture on environmental art, with pictures demonstrating how the willow statues could be realised. The pupils had a chance to sketch the reindeer figures before the work started the following morning.

Both teachers and pupils cautiously followed the instructions. The first need was to get some willow, so the teachers sent the boys of their groups to get some. With the instructors' assistance, the frames of the reindeer started to find their shape and the pupils started to work in a more collaborative way. Very soon the pupils noticed there was a lot of work to be done in each group, so they organised their work by having some get the willow and some cut and chop branches while others attached the parts to the frame of the work. As the day progressed, the work found its rhythm and a pleasant atmosphere filled the schoolyard.

On the second day, only the afternoon had been promised for work with this project. As the instructors arrived, the pupils were already happily bringing their reindeer statues from the school building. (The statues were kept in the school entrance hall overnight, to the instructors' slight astonishment.) The pupils started to put the finishing touches to their statues by weaving thin willow twigs onto the surface layers. Some statues were still very incomplete, requiring the instructors to help quite a lot. The statues remained slightly unfinished, however, as the time reserved for the work was shortened by the principal's decision, based on the coldness of the weather. So the reindeer were quickly gathered together in front of the school, where they were inspected and photographed. As a big surprise to the instructors, the statues were then brought into the school entrance hall, one was taken to the nearby daycare



Lovozero, autumn 2007. Photo: Heidi Hänninen

centre, and one was donated to a man that had lost his reindeer. Not one single reindeer remained as an environmental work of art in the schoolyard. In this respect, the turn of events was totally different from the plans. Some other works have since been given away as well, with just one statue remaining in the school. The reindeer statues thus worked, quite surprisingly, as a concrete connecting factor for the whole village, perhaps even as a kind of "cultural message". The comments of both teachers and pupils showed that working with environmental art had triggered many ideas and propositions, such as suggestions for decorating the whole village with willow statues. The lecture presentations also raised a lot of interest in snow sculpture.

Judging by the feedback, the teachers truly appreciated getting a chance to work with their pupils in an informal situation. Cutting willow was considered to be a bad thing by some teachers; they did not want to destroy living nature<sup>[1]</sup> like this. They also thought they had learned a lot about the use of natural materials in artistic work. All teachers said they were content with their own work during the workshop.

With a few exceptions, the pupils had a positive attitude towards the environmental art workshop. Most of the positive comments in the pupils' feedback had to do with the fact that they had a chance to work together as a team with other pupils. Obviously, it was also nice not to have normal lessons. There were only a few negative comments in the pupil feedback, most of them relating to the tools disappearing after the first day. Cutting trees was also mentioned as a negative experience a couple of times. The pupils said they had learned something new about using natural materials and hoped to be able to do something like this in the future as well.

### Concluding comments

The environmental art workshops have been a charming experience. After one has been given a chance to follow the incorporation of artistic and community-based working methods into different schools and cultures, one can only marvel at the power of art. Art has turned out to be an extremely powerful tool for working with cultural identity in this context. The limitlessness of the language of art enables experimenting with these kinds of interventions, and perhaps even a deeper implanting into a variety of soils. Target-oriented, well-instructed and planned activity makes space for pupils to rest in the joy of making art together with others. The three

<sup>1</sup>We thought the use of willow was no problem as willow is such a rapidly renewable material. It seems the Finnish instructors and the local teachers have different ideas on the relationship with nature, which needs to be examined in more detail.

schools described in this article are all located in a peripheral region in a small, close village community. The activities were carried out in a different way in each school, but the experiences of both pupils and teachers were very similar. There were some question marks in all of the schools as to the start of the project, as well as uncertainty about the methods and targets of planning. Written feedback obtained from all three schools at the end of the project can be interpreted as including comments about empowering experiences for both individuals and the community. The proven methods of the University of Lapland and its Faculty of Art Education, as well as the experiences of the instructors, turned out to be valuable. Support, guidance or encouragement given just at the right moment led to a successful result, which was at times rather surprising but always generously rewarding.



Sevettijärvi, spring 2007. Photo: Timo Jokela



Sevettijärvi, spring 2007. Photo: Ulpu Sipilén

## Excursions into Nature, the Immediate Environment and Empathy – Examples of Integrating Instruction in Biology, Geography and Art at the Lower-secondary Level of the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School

Minna Lilja and Anneli Lilleberg

In this article we introduce eight thematic instructional modules, the contents of which are based on the Finnish curricula for biology, geography and art. The modules are described in the order in which the particular issues discussed come up in the curricula of these subjects. This integrated whole serves as a learning path of sorts for the year classes 7–9, complementing and integrating the respective curricula for the three subjects<sup>[1]</sup>. Instead of individual performance, we wanted to emphasise the importance of cooperation, in addition to providing an opportunity for the development of empathy, self-knowledge and tolerance, as well as the recognition and acknowledgement of various emotions. Our objective was, furthermore, to deepen and expand the pupils' personal relationships with the environment, along with their sense of their own possibilities for impact. Contents of the studies were place-specific and topical. This article aims to describe the general methods of the integration art, biology and geography and to inspire development of new integrations.

### The diversity of conditions on earth

Objectives: Understanding the natural and geographical conditions prevailing on the Earth and the impact of the same on the cultural and social environment. Revitalising the value base of the youth and developing tolerance.

We initiated the instructional modules with a seventh-year geography lesson by reflecting with the pupils on what kind of perception they have of the Earth and the various regions of the globe. The pupils drew a mind map of the world, which enabled us to see how difficult it is for a teenager to grasp the various parts of the Earth and their locations. One of the continents the pupils remembered poorly was South America. In order to better grasp the differences in altitude and natural conditions of the various parts of the world, we drew and coloured a map of the continent, which we had initially examined, followed by making a three-dimensional scale model of the continent out of cellulose mass (Image 1).

<sup>1</sup>See Further Huhmarniemi, Lilja & Lilleberg in this book, pp.

The relief-type model clearly demonstrated the differences in altitude. The aim was to assist pupils in grasping things geographically and understanding the causes and effects of various phenomena, in addition to making the reading of maps easier. In connection with our examination of the scale model, we also discussed how different conditions affect people. As interaction increases in the globalising world, knowing foreign cultures and peoples is becoming increasingly important.

At an art lesson, we thought about the lives of teenagers around the world. We familiarised ourselves with the everyday lives of children and teenagers who work for a living. We read stories about, for instance, a Pakistani boy named Iqbal, the Thai Sawai and the Brazilian Pablo. The pupils drew an imaginary story about an encounter with a working teenager in the form of a strip cartoon or imagined themselves as a working child in Finland where the conditions would be different from our current reality. The following is a cartoon script by three girls:

*On holiday in Thailand, Sanna meets a little girl who is in a terrible hurry and accidentally bumps into her.*

*The girl: Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't notice you because I'm in such a hurry. (The girl starts to pick up fruit that fell onto the ground.)*

*Sanna: Your load looks really heavy. Where are you in such a hurry to get to? Could I help?*

*The girl: No, I don't need any help. It's just that I'm in such a hurry to get these fruits to my boss on the other side of town.*

*Sanna: Oh, you're working. How long is your day? You're so young and everything. Why do you have to work?*

*The girl: I'm lucky that I only have to work 16 hours a day, and then I can go and rest on the street and get some food. I make money for my family, who live pretty far away from here. I see them twice a month, when I go to take them the money. Where do you live and work?*

*Sanna: I live in Finland. We don't have to work. We go to school. My longest school day is 8 hours, and even that feels too long.*

*The girl thinks: And that's your biggest problem...?*

In making a strip cartoon script, pupils are able to identify with a teenager who is living in very different conditions. In addition, the pupils familiarized themselves with ceramic traditions in South America and designed animal reliefs in the Peruvian style as a gift to their own strip cartoon character.

### The natural surroundings of the school

**Objectives:** Reflecting on the significance of environmental experience for a person's well-being. Getting to know the natural history of one's immediate environment. Demonstrating the interaction between man and nature through an artistic process.

At an art lesson, pupils wrote down their thoughts about two different landscapes and reflected on what a landscape is and how they experience it. Some of the pupils experienced the urban landscape as being *cold and grey*, a modern cultural landscape that depressed them. For some, the feelings were conflicted: "I get two kinds of feelings. [It's] an awesome, big city with impressive buildings. I get a little sad when I see how much people destroy nature just for their own benefit." The picture of a rural landscape brought up memories for many pupils and caused primarily positive emotions: "A nice place. Lots of green trees and other plants that make me happy. It creates a warm, summery feeling."

We continued our examination of the environment outdoors in the immediate environment of our school, which also includes signs of the latest Ice Age. The geography teacher first explained the theory related to the Ice Age in the classroom, after which we set out equipped with compasses to study the grooved surface of the glaciated rocks in the schoolyard, indicating the direction the ice sheet had travelled. Instructed by the art teacher, we copied the surface structure of one of the largest glaciated rocks with the frottage technique (Image 2). By simplifying and altering the drawings and the patterns in them, the pupils employed the sun dyeing technique to produce textile paintings, which we then hung up outside as a work of environmental art. The piece also included verbal messages to passers-by. According to the pupils, the message of the canvas entitled *Arvostusta* ("Respect") was: "Respect your friends and other pupils and teachers; i.e. no more bullying." The purpose was to get people to appreciate each other more.

The teachers also noticed the canvases, and we received positive feedback on the work:

*The brilliant colours of the canvases give a good feeling combined with nature as it is getting ready for the summer. The slow-paced*



Image 1. Sculpting and painting the relief.  
Photo: Minna Lilja



Image 2. Drawing the frottage. Photo: Minna Lilja

*fluttering of the fabrics is a nice sight when I sit at my computer. The space outside does them more justice than the interior of the school that has so many other things going on. I hope they do not get torn.*

### Relationship forest

**Objectives:** Reflection on the significance of forests. Acknowledging the impact of human activities. Practising emotional skills and respecting diversity.

With regard to instruction in biology, we familiarised ourselves with the forest as a habitat and the tree species typical of the area. We listened to a radio play based on Jean Giono's novel *The Man Who Planted Trees* (1953), the basic idea of which is that an individual can have a concrete effect on his or her environment. The main character of the play planted trees in previously very barren and deprived land, and in the course of decades, a lush forest grew on the site. As a result of the growing forest, water also returned to the area. People took an interest in the area and repopulated it. The forest is so important to people that we do not always remember or understand it. We went on to draw studies of various species of trees and discuss the different characters of the different trees. The pupils thought that, for example, the spruce seems sad and depressed and the rowan light and happy. We also reflected on the different personality traits of people and the effect of emotions on our behaviour.

We continued discussing the topic in an art lesson. Each pupil designed his/her own tree creature and chose a per-

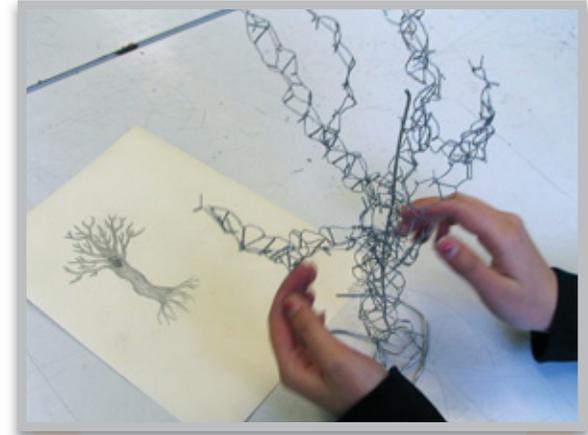


Image 3. Tree creature (Henna Ronkainen). Photo: Anneli Lilleberg

sonality for it. We first made a drawing of the tree, based on which we then built the tree out of chicken wire and papier-mâché (Image 3). We formed a forest out of the trees, describing the relationships of the trees to each other. Two of the pupils combined their tree creatures as friends, and one of them described the work as follows: "My tree creature is nice and calm and likes to be in the company of others. It does not like to be alone. It is friendly and helps others, it leaves nobody alone. It likes a big group of friends. It does not get angry easily." When we discussed the relationships between the tree creatures, we were also able to discuss human relationships and the emotions involved in a safe manner. The discussion of relationship between trees made it easier to discuss relationship among people.

### My responsibility for the environment

**Objectives:** Putting oneself in the position of another and looking for a new perspective, in addition to reflecting on the possibilities of an individual to impact on his or her own environment and the environment on a global level.

In a geography lesson we applied the thinking hats technique developed by Edward DeBono for promoting creative thinking (DeBono 1990). The pupils "tried on" different points of view in studying natural resources and energy sources. We discussed energy conservation, littering and spoiling as well as recycling in groups from the points of view of the red, green and black hat. The black hat brought up the negative sides,

risks and dangers suggested by various things; the red hat users reacted emotionally without needing to make arguments for their perceptions; and those wearing the green hat looked for new ideas and ways to examine different issues.

Thoughts expressed by the pupils:

Black hat: "People are too dependent on energy consumption, which is why energy conservation is difficult." "Many people are too indifferent about energy conservation."

Red hat: "If you make a mess at school, you start to feel smelly and dirty."

Green hat: "Every time you take 100 grams of trash to the garbage disposal machine, you get 10 cents back."

In art instruction the teenagers collected recyclable material from their homes and the school. They made sculptures and relief-type poster collages from the material. Our objective was to challenge the entire school community to come together and think about the unnecessary things in their lives and realise that everyone can do a lot of good or bad by their small choices, both on the local and the global level. A trust in your own potential to exert an influence is an essential factor of well-being. Students learn how to treat nature in a balanced way, which is also meaningful and important for well-being.

### The world of sounds

Objectives: Comparing sound experiences and studying the effect of various sounds on the well-being of people. Paying attention to one's own voice control and that of others.

In a geography lesson pupils counted traffic in pairs on the streets of their home town. When analysing the results, we reflected on the environmental impact of traffic and examined the significance of traffic noise and various other kinds of sounds for the well-being of a person. The pupils described the kinds of sounds they considered pleasant and unpleasant. They also thought about whether gender or age influences the way in which sounds are experienced. In addition to mental images, it is good to measure sound volumes with a decibel meter. In this way, we can compare the difference between the experienced and actual noise level. Do we, for example, experience the volume of traffic noise and the boom of rapids differently, even though their volume can be practically the same?

In the shouting storm exercise, we divided the class into three groups. Each group in turn could experience the volume of noise as they stood still with their eyes closed while



Image 4. Sound being (Teemu Tuominen)

the other two groups ran among them shouting as loudly as they could. We also measured the volume of shouting with a decibel meter. The loudest group exceeded 90 dB. The pupils' sensations of the shouting storms were strong:

*When we shouted, it was nice. But when the others shouted, it felt like war or the end of the world. (Boy, age 14.) It felt a little scary to stand there with my eyes closed and with a terrible noise coming from behind me. It felt like they were running over me. (Girl, age 14.)*

In art instruction we continued the discussion on the topic by talking about the ways in which people use their voices. The tone of voice tells us, for example, whether a person is angry or in a good mood. Sometimes the voice tells us more than the words. After the discussion the pupils were instructed to describe a sound as a being. They were given the choice of depicting either a natural sound or a sound related to emotional expression. The pupils' paintings depicted, for example, the boom of rapids and the crackling of fire. One eighth-year pupil described silence in her painting: "The girl without a mouth dances/skips late at night somewhere by the edge of a forest." A boy of the same age described his painting as follows: "My sound being is white and has a big head. It depicts shouting." (Image 4)



Image 5. A cone person . Photo: Markku Lilleberg

### Dream world

Objectives: The importance of sleep and dreams for our well-being. Processing dreams by means of artistic expression.

In a biology lesson on brain activity, we were immersed in the concepts having to do with sleep and dreaming, in addition to examining the attitudes different cultures have taken towards dreams. We also pondered on the kinds of things that can appear in nightmares and good dreams. The pupils studied their own sleep rhythm and reflected on the effect of the same on their well-being. The pupils kept a sleep diary for a week, in which they wrote down the times they went to bed and woke up in addition to any dreams they had. By analysing the notes we were able to observe the effect that sleeping habits have on our general level of alertness. We thought about the causes of insomnia and how we can avoid them. The pupils felt that an inability to fall asleep can be caused by, for instance, drinking coffee or other stimulating beverages in the evening or by suspenseful television programmes or computer games. We came to the conclusion that there are things we cannot affect ourselves, but we can try to bravely talk about them with a reliable friend or adult.

In the art class, dreams were turned into surrealist works of art. Because surrealism literally means something above reality, it is often tied to the world of dreams. Based on the various dreams the pupils had had, we produced video animations as group efforts, with different dream characters and stories mixing with each other. An alternative for this was to implement the work as a painting or a shadow pantomime show. The purpose was to also show the videos to others, but the



Image 6. Mind map of the home town. (Anni Kuusimäki)

pupils felt that the stories about their dreams were so personal that they only wanted to show them to their own group.

### Environmental literacy and the changing nature

Objectives: Observing the change processes occurring in the natural environment of one's home region. Increasing cooperation and practising mutual trust. Environmental art as an expression of the relationship with nature.

In a geography class we studied basic information on minerals, types of stone, the bedrock and soil, as well as the Ice Age and the formations caused by it. We sculpted a relief out of clay, depicting the natural formations caused by the Ice Age. Because clay is a pleasant material to work by hand, the pupils were very concentrated on the work. We also watched a documentary about the works of environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy and his views on the changing of the environment over time. The documentary is about how an artist reflects on himself through the environment. (Riedelsheimer 2001.)

We selected a nearby natural spot that was considered important and meaningful, the Ounasvaara hill, where the pupils could reflect on their own relationship with the environment. The pupils travelled along a trail marked on the area, along which we had planned activity sites. The exercises had to do with the geology of the area. The Ounasvaara surroundings entail signs of the Earth's past, such as ancient seashore rocks. The pupils imagined themselves on the ancient seashore that had once been there and, in their minds, compared the

soundscapes of then and now. We concentrated on listening to the sounds of the environment and wrote down the kinds of sounds we heard, in addition to measuring the volume of the sounds with a decibel meter.

On the nature trail we also practised taking responsibility and trust with the aid of a game called *blindfolded camera*. In the game, one partner was blindfolded and the other acted as cameraman. The cameraman chose a scenic spot and was responsible for taking the blindfolded partner safely to the spot. The blindfolded pupil was, so to speak, the camera that was turned on by the cameraman momentarily taking the blindfold off. After this, the partner acting as the camera described in a few words the scene that he or she remembered. The pupils wrote these descriptions down. With this game we also reflected on the mood and pleasantness of the scenes.

At the end point of the trail, pupils produced a piece of environmental art about the encounter between man and nature as group work (Image 5). The groups built an experience path out of the elements of the nature. Each group member made their own path, which intersected with the other paths to form the collective work. The alternative was for the group to come up with their own idea. The pieces of environmental art reflected the man–nature relationship and expressed a deepened sense of unity with nature. One pupil group described their piece as follows: “Man is part of nature. There are no separate paths, but they are combined, because we feel that nature belongs to everybody.”

### From aerial image to details

Objectives: Expanding and deepening one's own relationship with the environment; reflecting on the self in relation to the social environment by means of visual arts. Learning the possibilities for environmental activism.

In a geography class the pupils drew a mind map of their home town (Image 6), describing their own relationship with the area by means of colours. Purple symbolised a very negative, blue a negative, yellow a neutral, orange a positive and red a very positive relationship with the place or route in question.

The pupils wrote down a commentary on the events and moods related to the places. In their texts the pupils named places in which they felt comfortable, but also places they considered unsafe or unpleasant. A girl in the ninth year described her mind map as follows:

*My home is red; I'm comfortable there and can rest there. My best friends' houses are red because they are places where I've experienced*

*all kinds of nice things and had fun with my friends. Navid's house is red: there I've got to know immigrant friends and experienced all kinds of nice and original things I could not have experienced somewhere else. A boy in the same class said about his map: At the summer cottage it's sometimes fun when the weather is good, and sometimes boring as heck. I've been to Thailand a couple of times, and I'm going again soon. It's really nice there. You can get away from everyday life.*

The internationalisation of the home town is evident in both examples. Immigrant friends have had a positive influence on the girl's world view. As remote a place as Thailand is naturally related to the boy's home town description via an air connection. On the map, the air route to Thailand has been coloured blue, which leads us to conclude that the flight to the resort is not nice. The summer cottage and school both have several colours, which indicates that both fun and boring things happen at both places.

From the personal mental images the pupils moved on to examine satellite and aerial images of their home town. Because aerial images are photographs taken at a certain moment, the pupils were able to observe the true characteristics of the area. We studied the aerial images with stereo goggles, giving us a three-dimensional view of the area's altitudes. We also looked at other maps of the area. Pupils used adjectives to describe their own environment. They then photographed their environment with “new eyes.” The objects of photography included the pleasant and unpleasant views selected by the teenagers and their parents, the selection criteria for which they had explained. The pupils reflected on the mood in the photographs in groups and wrote down the descriptions:



Image 7. Self-portrait (Elina Rauhala)

*Shopping centre construction site: I'm imagining myself at the location. What comes to my mind is that I'd hear knocks and bangs and the different kinds of buzzing sounds of all the machinery. The place looks disgustingly modernising, and I don't like the fact that more and more buildings are being developed in Rovaniemi and places are changing. On the other hand, I also think that I can't wait for the shopping centre to open, so that I can go to the opening. (Girl, age 15.)* Kemijoki River: *If I were there, standing on the riverside with my friend, I'd feel calm and happy. I'd smell the scent of a cool autumn morning in the air. I'd hear the tiny waves hitting the little rocks on the shore and making little splashing sounds. (Girl, age 15.)*

In art instruction the pupils were introduced to expressive art and the works of artist Heikki Marila, which are based on various kinds of maps. Based on an aerial image, we made an expressive map painting that depicted the pupil's own strong feelings about their home town. The pupils drew a picture of the nicest place in their home town, a place in which they spend plenty of time. We also applied the expressive painting technique to a symbolic self-portrait (Image 7). The alternative for the self-portrait was to build a “self-room” in the style of spatial art by means of coloured films and lights. The objective was to depict one's own relationship with the social environment. With regard to the self-portrait, the pupils wrote descriptions of themselves: what am I like in relation to friends, family and hobbies, and what things do I appreciate? These descriptions can reveal some quite personal things about the life of a teenager. When necessary, the teenager can be instructed to discuss things with, for example, a pupil welfare professional.

We continued the discussion on the topic in the geography class, in that pupils chose a flaw in their environment and suggested an improvement. The pupils' improvement ideas had to do with leisure activity facilities and making the environment more attractive. We presented some of the plans made by the pupils to the people in charge of regional planning in the municipality and asked them for feedback in order for the teenagers to learn the means of societal advocacy.

### Time and space for pupils' experiences

Integration demands time and flexibility. Teachers have to have possibilities to study curriculum of the other subjects. In this case the art teacher participated geography lessons and geography was included to art. The fact that art is an optional school subject made it necessary to have some overlapping in

teaching. It was new also for students to have two teachers in a classroom and in outdoor environments.

During the thematic modules, the pupils worked independently and in groups. In group work the pupils were encouraged to discuss their experiences in a more open manner. Some of the pupils felt they were able to reflect on things important to them that they had also thought about before. Such things included, for example, the impact of man's actions on the environment. The pupils also had the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with their social environment and the impact of the same on their well-being. The discussions also highlighted issues that the pupils, in their own words, had not even thought of thinking about before.

As a conclusion to the ninth-year instructional module related to the environment, the pupils wrote a commentary about the home town exploration, in which they reflected on their personal experiences and feelings about project work. We put together an exhibition of the texts and artworks produced during the project. The exhibition room included a notebook in which visitors could write comments about the content of the exhibition. In a mother tongue lesson the pupils had the opportunity to write about the subject *My dearest home region* or *How the environment affects my well-being*.

We asked our pupils whether their relationship with the environment had changed in the course of the instructional modules. More than half of them felt that it had changed. A girl in the ninth year described her environmental relationship as follows:

*The environment is perhaps a bit more important to me now than before. I have begun to respect nature more, and I sometimes like to go out into nature to think. It calms me. Nature has also impressed me. Before, the environment was just there, but now I have learned to look a bit beyond the surface. The environment is so old that it makes me feel small. At the same time, it is very interesting, and I get the urge to study it and get to know it better.*

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## Physical Activities In The Snow: Practical Ideas

Rita Jonassen and Anne Stokke

In this article we present practical examples of what has been done at Kvalsund school as part of the ArctiChildren II project. Our goal was to make the pupils more active physically, to see if our efforts would result in an increase in their activity, and to see if they would have an effect on their psychosocial well-being. The project started in January 2007 and continued until April in the same year. In the first part of the article, we give examples of the planning process and how we have been working. Then we give examples of snow installations that we made, and tried to make, with a brief description of the designs and the necessary equipment. Further on, we present a few considerations from outdoor teaching in different subjects and activity days.

The work addressed several different areas of concern.

1. An attempt was made to change the physical environment in order to increase activity during breaks and after school. The results were that:
  - a. the pupils worked independently;
  - b. parents, teachers and the municipal authority contributed and made snow installations.
2. Some teaching has been moved outdoors, such as:
  - a. Arts and crafts, mathematics, physical education, food and health.

Other activities have also been arranged outdoors, for example:

- b. Activity days;
- c. Outdoor treks, a skiing day on the downhill slope, a picnic in the sun.

### The process - planning the outdoor area

The teacher and the project leader held a meeting in which they decided to do something about the outdoor environment. The school had a few fixed play structures which the pupils can use, but they were covered in snow during the winter.

The teachers laid down a few conditions for our work. It was desirable, they concluded, to make use of the entire school area, which features wide, open, flat surfaces and slopes, bordering on vast natural areas. In addition, it was important to create conditions for activities in which many pupils could participate at once, and installations which should not be overly difficult and demanding to make. Everything to



Pupils in the schoolyard. Photo: Rita Jonassen

be constructed behind the school building ideally ought to be freely accessible to the entire school, to all grades.

When deciding that the school should be part of the ArctiChildren II project, the form tutors of each class had a meeting with their classes. The project was introduced at the meetings and the teachers explained why the school wanted to participate. The teachers explained that they believed that the outdoor area was boring, that it did not encourage activities and that the pupils therefore remained inactive for a large part of the day. The pupils agreed with this description, and expressed a desire for more activity. It did not matter much to them what we did, as long as we did something. "Anything would be better than just hanging around the entrance," they said. They did not want the planning to take very long, and wanted to go out while the weather was still nice and there was snow.

They themselves proposed that we schedule an outdoor day in order to see what could be done about the outdoor area. They wanted to bring skis, toboggans, reindeer pelts and food for the occasion. The rest was to be improvised. The first outdoor day was therefore a kind of test of what we could do. At this point, only the pupils in years 8–10 were involved. The teachers proposed that we build a bobsleigh course. The pupils agreed that this was a good idea, and we started working on it at once. Others built ski jumps, some made a tobogganing slope and some a fireplace. These activities set everyone to work in one way or another. The other students joined us during the breaks to find out what we were doing, bringing

ideas for other things we could make, and they expressed a wish to participate.

The following day we carried out an evaluation among the pupils from years 8–10, which made it clear that we needed to make a plan for the outdoor area, since many people had ideas about what could be accomplished. The pupils were split up into groups and drew up proposals for activities. Some only wrote down parts of activities. Then we gathered together in a large group and selected the activities that the most pupils had proposed or agreed with. The ideas were presented to the pupils in the other years, who also arranged meetings to discuss what they wanted to contribute and the degree to which they wanted to participate. They added their proposals, which were also written down.

The next step was to split up the area so that the different year groups were made responsible for their own part. The pupils from years 1–4, for example, wanted to make figures that they could paint. The pupils from years 5–7 wanted to make an igloo, figures and a “bottle run”. The pupils in years

8–10 wanted to manage an area with a lean-to and a fireplace. All the year groups wanted to make play structures to play in. They wanted to climb and balance, to slide on toboggans, reindeer pelts, or just their behinds. All of them wanted to dig holes in the snow mound behind the school.

### Proposals for snow installations

The pupils opted to make different kinds of snow slides. One consisted of a high snow mound that was glazed on one side, where we placed a rope which they could use to enter the snow castle at the top. The ice coating made them have to work extra hard to get to the top. Inside, there was a hidden castle, from which the slides were used as exits. This installation became a great success; many pupils could use it at the same time, and mixed age groups could play in it simultaneously. Many pupils said that we should build a climbing wall, and we decided to make one out of snow.

### Implementation

The pupils worked with activities such as digging caves during breaktimes. This was an activity that they could do on their own. They used their creativity and worked together as a group. This is an activity where they can go back and forth. We will come back to it later on in this article. Pupils and teachers worked together. During teaching hours, the teachers spent time outdoors with the pupils, making an igloo, sculptures, going on trekking excursions and boiling soup.

Parents also participated. We arranged a collective work effort to which the parents were invited in order to help shape the area, based on the sketch and the pupils' wishes. The parents met bringing shovels and a positive attitude with them, and one of them brought a tractor with a rotary snowplough, which made our work easier. The local authorities contributed a fire engine to help us glaze the installations. This was important, as it made the installations last longer.

Although the snow mounds in our case were shovelled together with the help of a tractor, it is certainly possible to make them just using shovels. The rope was tied to a plank and anchored firmly in the mound before we glazed it, ensuring that it stayed where it was so that it would provide a safe climb up to the castle. The mound stood firm for a long time as it was compact enough to withstand temperature changes. Eventually, the wind reshaped the castle in different ways, creating alternative entrances and exits, which made for extra activities and, not least, creativity among the pupils. We think that such possibilities are very positive, and make this structure stand out in relation to more static, ready-made playground structures.

### The snow mound with a climbing wall and slides

In the second snow mound the front was made as steep as possible and short planks were stuck in it to provide a climbing wall. There were three separate slides at the back of the mound, with different curves and bumps. These slides were also glazed by the municipality's fire engine, making the students go down with greater speed. The pieces of wood that constituted the “roof” were about 40 cm long. The climbing side was also glazed in order for the plank stumps to be firmly

attached, and also to make the installation withstand changes in temperature better.

These snow structures could be put to use quite quickly, and many pupils could be active in them at the same time. The oldest pupils helped the youngest in these inclusive snow mounds, which provided quite a complete range of physical stimuli, encouraging and challenging the pupils build up their strength and coordination. Many pupils experienced this as both exciting and challenging.

### Two snow mounds for balance practice

The two mounds for balance practice were placed 3–4 metres from each other. A board was inserted into each side of both mounds and a rope was hung just above it. It was important for the plank to be fixed firmly into the mound so that it would not fall off when used. The same applied to the rope. This was a good place for balance training.

We received help from the fire engine of the municipal authority with the glazing, although this can also be done with an ordinary garden hose. It was a positive factor that several sectors of the municipality were involved in the work. The project team collaborated well with different municipal departments, and this is an example of how that can happen. Now that we have tried this, we can see that the pupils will be able to work together with parents and teachers next year too. We also found that we can start building at an earlier stage next year, as most preparations can begin when the first snow falls. For example, it is possible to start icing flat surfaces in cold periods.



The snow castle



The outdoor area



Climbing rope. Photo: Rita Jonassen



Balance



The climbing wall, parents at work. Photo: Rita Jonassen



A cave with a flag and A cave with a terrace on top.  
Photos: Rita Jonassen

### The outdoor environment - digging caves

The pupils wished to create a space where they could take shelter from the wind and weather. While some of them wanted a place where they could withdraw during breaktimes, others just wanted to dig. Behind the school there is a slope with tightly packed snow. This area was used frequently in all the breaks, and the students had their fill of cave digging.

The pupils started with a private cave that they then expanded by joining pairs of caves together. Then they dug tunnels from cave to cave (an activity where imagination and creativity flourished). The pupils worked together across age groups. This was an activity that engaged them for a long time. Some made cosy shelters for themselves in the caves. Other pupils assembled big mounds of snow and then dug their own caves. They collected different tools to make “flag poles” and other decorations. An activity like this does not require expensive and advanced equipment, a spade and a bit of creativity will go a long way! The school purchased a series of reasonably sturdy plastic shovels.

All our activities have taken snow, ice, water and wind as their starting point. Naturally, these materials and elements are easily accessible in the Arctic areas. It is useful for pupils to learn that many things can be made with the natural elements which constantly surround them. When working with snow and ice, there are no stock answers on how to do it. These activities can therefore be very good for pupils who do not get to display their creative capacities successfully in the classroom. The activities are likely to create a sense of community with others, whether pupils choose to build together with other pupils or alone. The caves remained intact for sev-

eral weeks, and whenever the wind filled the entrances with snow the pupils were quick to open them again.

This kind of activity will provide pupils with opportunities for physical activity over a long period. It requires some physical strength, but good cooperation is equally important, offering a pleasant experience of togetherness when pupils sit down together in a cave they have just dug out, being aware that their own initiative, hard work and creative design were crucial to the result. Also, digging a snow cave is a Norwegian cultural tradition which can usefully be transmitted in this way; children have always done this. This experience also gives the pupils an introduction to how to make bivouacs or snow caves if they are ever surprised by harsh weather on an excursion.

### Outdoor amphitheatre

We originally planned an outdoor amphitheatre to be used during the day and in the evening, where students could perform songs, dance and drama and hold recitals, and where teachers could lead classroom activities. Reindeer skins to sit on could easily be acquired. In the evenings it would be possible to create a beautiful environment there, with different kinds of light: the aurora borealis, candles, torches and bonfires. A teacher started working on this idea with pupils from one class, but it became apparent that it was too much to deal with for one single teacher. This, and other circumstances, made us put this project “on ice” for the time being.



Sculptures. Photos: Rita Jonassen

### Outdoor teaching - examples from art and crafts

Figures can be made from both hard and loosely packed snow. Powder snow needs to be packed in plastic bags, for example, to make it harden. The snow was packed into sacks that were tied up and left outdoors overnight, and the next morning it was ready for use.

The day after, the pupils were able to unpack the snow and make their sculptures. We also cut out figures directly from snow blocks. The pupils used a normal hand saw for cutting them out. Then they decided what figure they would make. Many of them opted to make different animals standing on a pedestal.

These sculptures could be used to decorate the schoolyard. The blocks can be cut out so as to make figures for active use as well. The pupils in the lowest years were particularly eager to make these, as they like to be able to play with/use what they have produced, not just enjoy it visually. Several pupils made horses they could sit on. Only the pupils' imagination can put limits on what they can create. Again, this activity does not require much expensive equipment. A handsaw, different knives, digging tools and scoops for carving out the blocks are more than enough. Cardboard boxes and plastic bags are needed to make loosely packed snow more compact. The figures can be painted and decorated with watercolours or confectioner's colouring mixed with water, and can be water-glazed.

### Teaching mathematics outdoors

Blocks of hard snow were cut or sawed into blocks with a regular handsaw. These blocks were to be used to build an igloo. The blocks need to be of roughly the same size, and will benefit from being hardened on their own for a while, making them solid building blocks. Then the blocks were placed in a ring and we started to pile them on top of each other. The ring should not be larger than 3 metres in diameter. The blocks are cut with a top surface that slants slightly inwards, and it is important to pile the blocks on top of each other with the partitions in the middle of the block on top. Igloos are built in a rising spiral which inclines toward the interior. The pupils made different mathematical calculations in relation to this work.

Correctly constructed, an igloo will not cave in because the blocks keep each other in place. When building the roof it may be a good idea to support it from the inside with skiing poles. The final blocks must be put in place from the inside. The entrance was made with two big blocks which pointed vertically outwards, with a solid block for the ceiling. Then the entrance was widened with a cavity dug as a way in below the igloo, which would also function as a cold spot. Finally, all the cracks were filled with loose snow and the inside was smoothed out by hand, in order to remove protuberances that could melt and drip when many people were inside.



Pupils and a teacher build a snow igloo. Photo: Rita Jonassen

### Physical education outside

Different activities have taken place in the Physical Education classes, including:

- Football games in loose snow;
- Tobogganing excursions and sliding down the bobsleigh run which the pupils made ;
- Ski activities: cross-country, ski jumping, downhill and mini-skis;
- Different games and relays in the snow where normal forms of exercise are moved outdoors (push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, etc.);
- Snow bathing. The pupils were allowed to go outside to roll around in the snow and then jump into the swimming pool: this was a wonderful experience.

We concluded that having Physical Education exercises outdoors inspired the students to continue their activities during breaktimes. All the constructions were used in the way they wished, and they continued building and digging on their own initiative. Students in the middle years went outdoors to make soup from reindeer meat and vegetables. They also grilled hot dogs and bread rolls on sticks. They learned to make fires and took the initiative to light a fire during the lunch break as well.

### Activity days – picnic in the sun

The whole school gathered to see the sun show itself again. Different activities were arranged, such as tobogganing, football matches, singing games and skiing activities. Wheat buns and hot chocolate were served. A new downhill complex has just opened not far from the school. An excursion to go there was organised as part of the ArctiChildren II project, underlining the importance of making use of the school's immediate surroundings. The students were able to practise on a mini slope next to the school before going, in order to prepare for the "big slope". The pupils had a good day at the downhill slope and did not want to go back to school. They understood that not everyone is capable of doing everything, which makes them eager to try new things.

### Conclusion

In a short time span, with sparse economic resources and relatively little planning, changes have been made at the school which have led to an increase in physical activity, and happier pupils and teachers. There was less noise among the students, and the teachers were able to resume teaching more quickly after the breaks. We therefore conclude that this was a successful project that the school wishes to continue in the next school year.

Sketches by Gunhild Steffensen Johansen at Kvalsund school.



A good time around the fire. Photo: Rita Jonassen

## Spinning Drama and Adventure around the Well-Being

Eero Salmi, Pasi Kurri and Heli Villanen

In this article we<sup>[1]</sup> describe two role adventure -based teaching activities at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School, culminating in school camps in the vicinity of Rovaniemi. The models of these camps can be applied in a varying extent to deepen pupils' knowledge of their home region and to support their psychosocial well-being.

School Camp I	It was organised during the spring of 2007. This period ended with a role adventure camp in May.	A preparatory period with pupils was three months.
School Camp II	It took place right at the beginning of the autumn term 2007.	A preparatory period with pupils was about two weeks.

Korkalovaara Comprehensive School is situated in Rovaniemi, about two kilometres from the city centre. The school has all the classes from Year 1 to Year 9. In the school year 2007–08 there were 617 pupils in the school. Two classes with a total of 46 pupils participated in the adventure camps. At the first camp, the pupils were from Year 5, at the second from Year 6.

The participating classes had already had some prior exposure to the outdoor education which is in our point of view a prior context to the adventure education. The pupils had been on many outdoor excursions. They had been berry picking, fishing and hiking, and studied biology and geography, among other things, in an outdoor setting. In some years we took one day a week for a nature excursion and realised the pupils enjoyed them. The excursions deepened the pupils' interest in nature, built up their team spirit and improved their physical condition. According to our experience it may well be said that learning was more profound in the natural environment. We feel that early autumn is the best time for organising excursions. This is the time to lay a foundation for a good team spirit in the class, and it is easier for even new pupils to become full members of the group.

<sup>1</sup>“We” refers to the main authors of this article, school teachers Eero Salmi and Pasi Kurri from the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School. Heli Villanen has contributed to this article by analysing pupils' feedback and writing the concluding comments together with teachers.

### School camp objectives

The school camps aimed at promoting children's growth, development and well-being in a holistic way, as well as at developing and strengthening their interpersonal skills. School Camps I and II focused on different goals. Camp I was based on drama oriented *role adventure* with a long and thorough preparatory period. The goals of the role adventure were to have the pupils learn to work in groups, to accept diversity and to see how valuable each member of the group was. A role adventure requires commitment to a long process and taking it to completion. Camp II approached psychosocial well-being from the perspectives of the pupils' sense of security, collaborative skills and boosting of self-confidence. Camp II consisted mostly of a variety of adventure assignments. It could have been a continuation of the role adventure method if there would have been more time to work with the framework and build up characters. The level of adventure assignments ranged from psychological to physically demanding. The pupils' parents were also involved especially in the Camp I, which increased interaction between home and school as well as between families.

During School Camp I the pupils learned about the past of their own region and their roots through a role adventure. First they learned about the 17<sup>th</sup> century through stories and drawings. Story was made by the art student *Hanna Immonen* from the University of Lapland. It was based on the historical review of the era and region. According to the story pupils made some drawings. After that we looked for more detailed information by visiting the Provincial Museum of Lapland. The pupils familiarised themselves with the life of that era by making objects and clothes that people needed at that time. Finally, they had a role adventure at the school camp.

Teaching in Finland is regulated by the framework of the national curriculum by the National Board of Education and by each school's own curriculum. While planning our adventure camps we discussed the pupils' psychosocial needs and our possibilities to meet them. We aimed at holistic teaching by integrating different subjects into a whole, but the main

content for the role adventure was found in the objectives for history in Year 5 and 6. Art, handicraft, physical education and mother tongue were also integrated into the theme. Thematic entities are a challenge when planning instruction. With the methods of role adventure it was possible to deal with the thematic entities of growth as a human being, cultural identity and responsibility for the well-being of the environment and its sustainable future.

### Countdown for school camp I

Time travel to the past was launched by gathering in a circle. We read a story related to the history of Rovaniemi (made by Hanna Immonen), after which we talked about people in that time, their lives, occupations, beliefs and everyday lives. After this the pupils thought about who they could be as a person of that time. They created a character for themselves. In choosing a character, the pupils had to think who they were, what they did for a living and what they thought about life in general. Then they discussed their characters in pairs.

The pairs then drew each other's body contours on paper and cut the characters out. They coloured their characters with bottle paint. We encouraged the pupils to highlight the typical traits of the character as much as possible. The characters were then introduced to others, creating an entire village community with its different members. We concluded by discussing the day's work.

We continued the preparatory period by focusing on the frame story, which ended in a conflict situation between the characters created by our pupils.

“It was the year 1550. Spring had arrived again, even in the remotest North, the land of polar night. Smoke was rising into the clear spring sky from the chimneys of the Ylikylä village houses near Rovaniemi. The houses were getting ready for the annual salmon fishing trip... Matti and Lasse Arvinpoika still had no fisherman's luck. Lasse managed to break yet another net, and one of the oars broke. With no fish, the brothers started to get anxious. Where would they get dried salmon for the winter, or money for the market, if they got no fish? Lasse was cursing Aslak the Sami, whom he considered a witch... he doubted that even Aslak's magic powers could bring about this kind of bad luck. Aslak himself was totally unaware of the brothers' bad luck and suspicions. He got plenty of fish. To give thanks for his fisherman's luck, Aslak decided to visit *seita*, a wooden sacrificial statue, before going home. At dusk, he returned to the woods and noticed right away that the statue was badly twisted. What on earth had happened? It looked as if the statue had been smashed up.” (Hanna Immonen)

The pupils pondered on the conflict both alone and in small groups, after which they held a village meeting. There they



Characters in classroom. Photo: Eero Salmi

tried to find a solution to the problem from the standpoint of their character. The important thing was that everyone had a chance to present their own proposal for resolving the crisis. After the meeting the pupils prepared a *drama* presenting their solutions for restoring peace in the village community. After the presentations we all discussed what the best solution to the problem might be. This ensured a final decision the whole community was happy with.

The pupils continued working on their characters by making a character role card. Then they made a streamer with colours and symbols depicting their character. The streamers were then gathered together to form a circle so that the pupils could see they were symbolically part of a larger whole. Each part was different but equally important. If just one part was missing, the circle could not be complete. We finished again by discussing the day's work.

The preparatory period included a variety of activities all serving the role adventure held in May.

Handicraft	During the spring the pupils designed and made a sword, shield, dagger and clothing accessories related to the 17th century.
Visit to the Provincial Museum of Lapland	We familiarised ourselves with objects related to the history of Rovaniemi and with people's lives along the river Kemijoki as they were settling the area. Our special focus was the old settlement of Ylikylä.
Parental Participation	Successful adventure periods required co-operation with parents. They had to be informed about the camp content and equipment in time as teaching was to take place mostly outdoors. We also organised a parent-child activity night at the school.



Collective circle. Photo: Eero Salmi

We invited the parents to the activity evening, where, together with their children, they prepared some props needed for the camp. This turned out to be an excellent way of getting to know the parents, and the parents also got to know other parents while working together. Activity night took about two hours and it was held at the school facilities. The whole families were invited so that as many as possible could join the event. The activity evening encouraged us to rethink the parent-teacher meetings held by schools in general – could they be more action-oriented and involve all family members including both parents and a pupils?

Activities lead to the adaptation to the place and situation

1. Icebreaker games and trust exercises
2. Making of *seita*, a wooden sacrificial statue
3. Activity sites: fishing, cooking, making bows and arrows, making tin charms
4. Role Adventure in the woods

We started with some icebreaker games and trust exercises. Then we dived into the frame story by putting on the clothing accessories made in the preparatory period. At Adventure Camp I we emphasised that the pupils were living as themselves in the 17th century setting. Pupils took on functional roles related to the social status of the imaginary community, such as the role of a hunter, fisherman or mother. They identified shallowly with the character they had made in the preparatory period. We emphasised that the pupils should only identify with the frame story on a general level. The deep



Activity night. Photo: Eero Salmi

identification with character is not necessary in a role adventure as a pedagogical tool. By the frame story we mean the story of Hanna Immonen and it was supported by the information acquired from the museum. The whole preparatory period was planned to tune us in for the actual camp. It was a kind of time travel to the past.

We discussed the lives and daily duties in former times with the pupils. After this they chose one of the four activity sites (duration about two hours), where life at that time was simulated.

Fishing	The goal was to catch fish that would then be cooked on the campfire for all to eat. Ahti, the sprite of the sea, was not too generous, however, so the catch was rather modest. Luckily we had prepared for this with some extra fish, so all had a chance to have a bite in the evening.
Cooking	The pupils prepared roasted fish with turnips and potatoes baked in foil for the whole village.
Bows and Arrows	The pupils who had not made a bow and arrows during the preparatory period made them now.
Tin Charms	The pupils designed and carved a wooden mould that they used for casting a tin charm.

At the end of the day we gave the pupils a surprise adventure assignment in the forest. We had earlier placed some “enemies”, i.e. balloons, a few hundred metres into the woods. At dusk we summoned the villagers and explained that *totto* fires were burning as a sign of an approaching enemy. We set off in classes as quietly as possible to meet the enemy, ready for battle. So we advanced silently towards the enemy in the gloom of the spring night. When we arrived in the forest we



Tin charm making. Photo: Arto Liiti



Fight. Photo: Arto Liiti

told the villagers that a scout had found a group of twenty enemies (the balloons), which had to be destroyed and the proof (what was left of the balloons) taken to a teacher. The villagers engaged in a fierce battle in the woods, returning to the camp as victors, where we had a feedback discussion. We discussed “how people feel when something is threatening them”, “what could have been done differently in this threatening situation and why someone wants to attack”. We came to the conclusion that in a situation like this there is not necessarily one single correct solution. Each individual may see the same situation in a totally different way.

#### Activity outline of the second day of camp

1. Drawing the village and its surroundings
2. Preparing a play related to the era (shown to parents and relatives at an evening party)
3. Treasure hunt.

We started the game of treasure hunt by telling the pupils that the enemy had left some stolen treasures in the forest. We had prepared some clues in advance and placed them out in the woods. Following the instructions, the pupils advanced towards the hidden treasure (a bag of sweets). A frame story served in this occasion as a motivation for a play, which had elements of both improvised drama and adventure. We emphasized a nature of playing in this assignment because there were not character developing nor adventure challenges in a traditional way. Also the role of the teacher and goal orientation in this activity was more like in a freetime play. After the game we had a thorough discussion so that each pupil had a chance to share their experiences and feelings.

We invited the parents, grandparents, big brothers and sisters of the pupils to attend a potluck party to celebrate the end of the camp. The pupils showed what we had done during the camp, and they also performed a short play they had prepared earlier that day. While enjoying the delicious food, everyone experienced the meaning of co-operation in a concrete way. Getting together like this provided a brilliant opportunity for teachers and parents to interact. The parents also had a better chance to get to know other parents.

We gathered written feedback from the pupils right after the camp. We asked them to evaluate what had been good and bad about the camp and its preparatory period. In addition to that, they told what they would have done differently. Of all answers, 34 (n=36) stated positive camp experiences. The positive features of the camp most often mentioned included leisure time, adventure assignments, i.e. treasure hunt and “battle”, activity sites (tin charm making, fishing and cooking) and the final celebration. Almost half of the respondents described the camp as fun, good or nice, without specifying the positive elements in detail. Negative feedback mainly included comments about the weather and sleeping in tents. There were individual negative comments about the wake-up time being too early, about the presence of the parallel class or about disappointment in games. Here are a few thoughts on the adventure assignments by some Year 5 pupils:

“It was fun at the camp, for example when we made bows and arrows. On the first night we met our enemies and took class b by surprise.” (Boy)

“It was fun to creep in the forest and go fishing. A bad thing was that all my things got wet on the first day.” (Boy)

“Good: to have an adventure in the woods, nice chats with the boys.” (Girl)

“It was exciting to be at that role adventure camp. Camping was really great, even though the weather wasn't exactly perfect! And to be prowling to get the enemy, that was the nicest game there, I just wish they'd had more of those balloons!” (Girl)

## School camp II

Together with the pupils, we chose encouraging and respecting others as the themes for the second school camp. The pupils wrote down their expectations and feelings before the camp. They pondered how they could personally contribute to reaching the common goal. This also enabled us to find out about the hopes and fears the pupils had before the camp. We tried to take them into account while planning the camp. The pupils formed separate groups for boys and girls in the class and chose a leader for themselves. The leader was in charge of the group's moves and communication with the instructors.

#### Activity outline of the first day of camp

1. Warm-up: creating a cheer for each group, face painting, games of knot and tag
2. Activity sites: abseiling, trust-sensitivity exercise, skill or entering and first aid
3. Wrap-up of the activity sites exercise and a walk back to the lodging

The start of the camp was very important as it set the general atmosphere for the whole camp. After warming up with icebreaker games, all groups (tribes) chose one member as their artistic leader. Each group designed their own symbol, which was then painted on the faces of the tribesmen and women by the artistic leader. After this warm-up the groups headed for the various activity sites. We told the pupils which way to go round and gave the group leader a map. Each group had about two hours per activity site. The time included doing the actual assignments, discussing afterwards (reflection) and walking to the next site.

**Abseiling.** The pupils climbed down about a 15-metre rock with a rope. For safety reasons, we had asked an adventure instructor to assist us with the camp. Abseiling required thorough safety procedures, and the pupils could see how a professional took the smallest details into account to ensure a safe descent.

Not all pupils dared to climb down the rock, but even they were winners. We discussed how important it is to know one's limits. We emphasised that courage also means courage



Tribesmen. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

to refuse to do something, even if others encourage you to do it. A pupil who did not climb down the rock got immediate positive feedback from the instructor. A pupil who did climb down defeated his/her fear. After this abseiling experience it was important to make sure each pupil felt like a winner. Feeling of success, learning from the own personality and learning to appreciate the support of other group members were the most highlighted objects of this adventure assignment.

**Trust-sensitivity exercise.** This activity site included several exercises. The first was a Blind's Path. Half of the pupils made a path and the other half walked through it blindfolded. The exercise was based on a story about fireflies that blindfolded half of the pupils, whereas the other half went off to get help. Those who stayed gradually became blind – that is, the teacher covered their eyes with a scarf. Those who had made the path led their blindfolded friends along the path, acting as their guardian angels. The pupils thought it was exciting, yet safe, to walk without seeing, as they trusted their friends to protect them.

“The Blind's Path was fun because you just couldn't know where you were. Co-operation was excellent, and we got a lot of encouragement too. It felt safe because you knew your pal wouldn't let you down.” (Boy)

After the Blind's Path the task was to find an interesting natural object or place. The pupils made up a story from it, and presented it to the others. They observed nature and were really creative while developing these presentations. We then continued our trek with a silent walk in the beautiful nature,



Blindpath. Photo: Heli Villanen

stopping to listen to the sounds. It was challenging for some pupils just to be quiet as many city children are so used to living in a noisy environment with a hectic rhythm of life.

“The path was exciting, because you had to be really quiet, you were not allowed to talk.” (Boy)

After the whole round the pupils shared about their feelings during the exercises. They told how they felt about the assignments and what it was like to co-operate while doing them. It became evident that the pupils really appreciated acting as a guide on the Blind's Path. It was a significant experience for them to have the responsibility and be worthy of trust.

**Skill orienteering and first aid drama.** We organised the skill orienteering exercise by using a fan-shaped orienteering route. We placed seven activity sites in the woods, each with a small exercise. It was not enough to know how to do orienteering or to be able to run, you also needed different skills at different activity sites. In the first aid drama we first practised the basic first aid skills in pairs, like different types of bandages, resuscitation and making a sling. As a victim, one had to trust the other to help. After this the groups dramatised an accident situation and presented it to the others. To wrap up, we gathered together to talk through the day's experiences, ending with a “crawling exercise” and tribal cheers.

Activity outline for the second day of camp

1. Joint exercises for building up team spirit (tribal cheers and face painting)



Basket climbing. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

2. Activity sites: basket climbing, farm negotiation and environmental art from willow
3. Sharing the common camp experience: immediate reflection, group and individual empowerment

**Basket climbing.** An Adventure Instructor was in charge of the basket climbing exercise. Some pupils acted as security guards, some climbed the basket tower, and some gave baskets to the person climbing. The baskets were plastic bottle hampers that were stacked to create a swaying tower. This exercise required careful safety precautions and appropriate equipment. We had a thrilling time in a safe way. One pupil, for example, managed to stack 32 baskets before the tower collapsed. Thrill-factor is one element of adventure activity, but the more profound objective is to open up one's emotions and offer new perspectives to see oneself as courageous



Farm negotiation. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

**Farm negotiation.** At this activity site the groups worked in pairs. The task was to build a miniature model of an old-time farm using natural materials. We first discussed what farms with their courtyard used to look like. The groups then spread out so widely that no other group was in sight. The pupils were given five minutes to gather natural materials and design their farm. Then we asked one member from each group to come to the negotiation site. The pupils discussed and negotiated how to get the farms to look similar. After the negotiation the building continued until the next negotiation. The work progressed in cycles of negotiation. Many pupils liked this exercise and they would have liked to have continued working even longer. The exercise was quite edifying as one often had to compromise one's ideas for the sake of the common good. It was really important to talk through this exercise afterwards as the pupils' tempers flared at times during the exercise. The negotiation invoked even aggressive feelings when one could not implement one's ideas. It was

good to discuss the moments of success and failure, and the basis for them.

**Environmental art.** We made an environmental work of art from willow. The assignment offered a different kind of challenge and some pupils rated this activity site especially rewarding. It served as a respite and counterbalance to the adventure assignments. The environmental work of art was mainly done as team work, which refined negotiation skills, among other things. This exercise also gave an opportunity to pause for a moment and reflect on the events of the whole camp.

**Adventure camp wrap-up.** After the activities of the second day we gathered on the playing field. We discussed how the pupils felt at the end of the camp. The tribes then shouted their tribal cheers one more time. We announced that everyone had got through the assignments, so they were

all winners. We also emphasised that successful team work requires co-operating with others, taking others into account and trusting them to do their part. Each group was given a bag of sweets as a reward for their success. We met once more in groups, each group forming a circle with the adults in the middle. They invited one member of the group beside them and told some positive things they had observed about him/her during the camp. He/she in turn invited the next pupil so that each got a turn in the middle of the circle. It is encouraging to receive a pat on the back, and when it focuses on concrete matters it really makes a difference.

In adventure education, reflection is essential for the pupils' growth. On the very first school day after the camp the pupils filled in a map evaluation (see the Villanen's article elsewhere in this book for more details). After examining the map and filling in the evaluation form, the pupils wrote an essay describing their experiences and emotions in more detail, adding a grade (scale 4-10) for the camp if they so wished. Adventure Camp II got an average grade of 9. The pupils thus had a chance to go through their camp experience, reflecting on the main objectives of encouragement, trust and taking others into account. The following are excerpts from the pupils' essays:

*“Abseiling: The feeling wasn't the best possible because I didn't climb down, I then regretted that I didn't do it. Encouragement was good, because you got it all the time. Safety... well I suppose it was... Feeling: It was nice just to hang around. Co-operation OK” (Boy)*

*“Abseiling was absolutely the best thing that happened at the camp. I felt I overcame myself as first I didn't dare to do it, but in the end I went down and on the ground the people receiving me were laughing and asking if my face was red or white. I first thought “it must be totally easy”, but my confidence blew off as soon as I got to the edge of the rock. It was also precious to come up and see Liisa waiting for me. A real friend is the best thing you can hope for! I knew it would be totally safe to climb down, but I was still scared to death.” (Girl)*

The pupil feedback gave us a lot of information on the activities and arrangements of the camp in general. We also got a general picture of how the camp objectives had been reached. The feedback is useful when planning future camps. It also reveals whether there are issues that require further discussion with a pupil in private.

We asked parents with a questionnaire: “how the pupils had felt about the adventure camps according to their parents, and how the camps had affected co-operation between home

and school”. We also asked “whether adventure education had an effect on studying in general in parent's opinion”. In addition to that, the parents had a chance to write down any other comments they might have. Their feedback was mainly positive, encouraging us to continue developing adventure education. The parents thought the activity evening together with their children had been very important. After both camps we organised a final celebration, to which the pupils, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters were all invited. We made a compilation of photographs for the occasion and told about the goals and implementation of adventure education. The celebration gave us a good opportunity to thank the parents for the successful collaboration and to give the pupils Diplomas (appendix 1) in recognition of their participation.



Support. Photo: Heli Villanen

## Concluding comments

Adventure and drama education inspired both pupils and teachers at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School. The pupils had many experiences that might not have been possible to achieve in a classroom. The feedback from pupils and parents alike was almost exclusively positive. The assignments reported in this article can be used in the future as building blocks for an integrated entity, or just as separate assignments for one lesson.

Role adventure brings new content to teaching. Identification with a frame story invokes feelings. Reflection on experiences produces meanings and a deep understanding of the themes being studied. Adventure assignments not only create positive feelings but also offer a channel for letting out negative feelings in a safe and constructive way. For many pupils, emotional experiences strengthen motivation for normal school work as well.

While planning the role adventure periods, the goal was to have the parents become interested in their children's school work and to get them involved in preparing for the camps. The idea was to improve collaboration between teachers and parents. The activity evening and final celebration of the school camps fulfilled this goal. The parental feedback encouraged us to think of new ways to bring parents and children together.

It is important to reflect and analyse the basic elements, concepts and background philosophies of drama and adventure education to understand and be able to develop role adventure method further. There are several possibilities for implementations, but role adventure works well in connection with history teaching, for example. Role adventure can also be used to support psychosocial well-being, as it awakens emotions and offers perspectives to reflect own identity. Issues of security, learning to be encouraging and respecting others are issues that are easily integrated into the role adventure method. Also the issue of respect is important while implementing sensitive methods such as drama or adventure. These methods, and combination of the two as a role adventure, places pupils into the different light that in a regular school work. Every participant are exposed to explore new strength and potential of own identity. The creativity of drama methods and emotional impact of adventure assignments are powerful channels to promote psychosocial well-being.

## The Battle for the Holy Cup – a Role Adventure in late 16th-century Pechenga

Ulpu Siponen

We implemented a role adventure project based on 16<sup>th</sup>-century history at the Sevettijärvi School in the Sevettijärvi village of the municipality of Inari. The main objective of the role adventure project was to support the psychosocial well-being of pupils of Skolt Sami origin by validating their Skolt Sami cultural identity. The aim was also to enhance the pupils' emotional and cooperation skills in addition to reinforcing their trust in each other. This was achieved by means of experiential instruction on the history of the Skolt Sami people and the Orthodox Church, which was implemented by means of, for example, role play.

### A two-week adventure project

The work done during the entire two-week project culminated in a 24-hour role adventure arranged at the end of the second week. The purpose was to assume the role of either an ordinary Skolt Sami person, a Pechenga Monastery monk or a Finnish guerrilla, and remain in character and live for a day in a Skolt Sami summer dwelling doing typical chores for the period. The role adventure was planned to take place the week before the village's Orthodox pilgrimage event in order for the church festival and the adventure to form a whole in which the two parts complement each other.

The pupils prepared for the role play by studying the life of Skolt Sami people in 16th-century Pechenga (Petsamo in Finnish) and participating in drama and role play exercises. They were familiarised with life in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Pechenga by means of a visit by Saint Triphon of Pechenga, in addition to church ceremonies, traditional games and activity site work supervised by the teachers. All fifteen of our pupils in the year classes 1–9 participated in the role adventure project. The project was implemented during the first two weeks of school in August 2007, with the events taking turns with the environmental art project that was implemented at the same time.

All pupils were at least partially of Skolt Sami origin, and nearly all of them belonged to the Orthodox faith. We also had two visiting Skolt Sami children participating. All the teachers of the school participated in carrying out this instructional experiment that was implemented there for the

very first time. The planning work for the project had already begun the previous spring term and it took about 3–4 weeks.

The contents of the role adventure project supported the implementation of the curriculum in several ways. Project learning is a good way to integrate various school subjects into a meaningful whole. The content of this course fits in well with religion studies in both the Orthodox and the Lutheran faith as well as with studies in history, mother tongue and crafts. The traditional games included also partially complement physical education instruction. Particular emphasis was placed on cross-curricular themes, which are meant to make school instruction more integrated and increase interaction with the environment. The objectives of the cross-curricular themes related to growing as a person and cultural identity were considered especially important.

### Preparing for the role play adventure

The project was launched with a visit and interview with a priest who played the role of the monk Triphon. The interview started the dramatic process and oriented the pupils towards the upcoming role play. In the interview, which was based on several sources, St Triphon told his life story, about his work in Pechenga and about the establishing and activities of the Pechenga Monastery. He finished his visit by bringing today's people a message of love and peace. The pupils had been given the interview questions, and at the end of the session they were also allowed to ask their own questions. The interview situation was not only instructional but also fun, because St Triphon had, as it were, come back to visit from heaven, which inspired the pupils to ask good questions. After that, the pupils were given a general explanation about what was going to happen during the two-week project.

The pupils rehearsed the church ceremonies included in the adventure in advance. In the role adventure, the pupil playing St Triphon was to ordain a novice as a monk according to the old ceremony, in addition to baptising a few villagers as members of the Orthodox Church. At the very beginning of the project, after the visit by St Triphon, the local priest, with our pupils as assistants, gave a demonstration of both the ordination and the baptism at the village church.

In order to learn more about the life of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Skolt Sami people the concept of seasonal migration was introduced to our pupils by touring four activity sites that were named after the four seasons. Each activity site had an instructor who explained the chores and lifestyle of the season in question and showed the pupils pictures or old artefacts, such as handicrafts or fishing equipment. Each activity site also included an exercise for the pupils. We also familiarised the pupils with traditional games that the Skolt Sami used to engage in, especially in the winter camps. Every morning of the project started with a traditional game.

The pupils prepared for their roles in the coming role adventure in several ways. The purpose of drama exercises was to create a safe environment for creativity, to improve the pupils' improvisation skills and to help them assume their own characters. We did warm-up, trust and improvisation exercises that are available in drama literature.

The pupils were divided into villagers, monks and guerrillas, among them also the characters of St Triphon of Pechenga and the guerrilla leader Pekka Vesainen. As a tool for character development, we used a role card – a ready-made form on which the pupils filled in basic information about their character as well as aspects having to do with the character's personality, personal preferences, emotions and wishes. After this, each pupil was also given an individual role description prepared by a teacher. The description combined the aspects mentioned in the pupil's role card as well as text written by the teacher on the character's attitude towards other characters and the things and values important to the character. The purpose of the pupil's own role card was to get the pupil to commit to his or her character, whereas the role description by the teacher was meant to steer the character's actions in the desired direction during the upcoming role adventure.

The role descriptions also served to ensure that the teacher playing the shaman could direct the course of the adventure. As an example, the role descriptions stated that the characters should ask the shaman for advice in difficult situations.

The role descriptions also included the desired plot, which is to say the culmination of the entire adventure, the battle for the holy cup of Triphon. The role descriptions of the guerrillas hinted of the coveted cup, whereas Triphon was instructed to take good care of the cup. The villagers were advised to protect Triphon in all situations. The descriptions also suggested conflicts between the villagers as well as between the old and new religion in order to encourage interesting events and situations during the adventure. The purpose was that the role descriptions would make pupils plan their actions during the role adventure in advance with regard to, for example, the division of chores and responsibilities between family or group members.

Role introductions were made by character family and group (Skolt families, guerrillas, monks). Each family or group of characters drew a picture of themselves and wrote down a few key words with which they introduced themselves to the others. Others also had the possibility to ask questions. This made the members of the families of characters more familiar to each other.

Making the role costumes and props was also part of getting into character. We sewed shirts and robes and made bows and arrows in cooperation with the parents and pupils at a parents' meeting. This enabled the students to showcase their particular skills and strengths, in addition to getting the parents involved in the process.



Photos: Ulpu Siponen



Photos: Ulpu Siponen

## The 24-hour role play adventure

The whole role adventure project with the preparations entailed culminated in the actual role adventure. The adventure, particularly the part where pupils were in character, was close to live action role playing or *larping*. Because the adventure also included scripted portions, however, it was not pure *larping*, which is why we are calling it a role adventure. Our role adventure lasted roughly twenty-four hours, approximately half of which was made up of the pupils actually being in character. During the adventure our pupils assumed their characters and lived in a summer dwelling built on a lakeshore doing typical chores for the historical period and being drawn into an adventure, that is to say a battle for the holy cup of Triphon. The battle was realised by means of collaboration and problem-solving exercises.

The role adventure day began with the participants putting on their role costumes and assuming their respective roles. Each group introduced themselves to each other and, with a name game, learned everyone's character names. After this, the participants moved to the village church – i.e. 'the monastery' – where the cantor assisted the pupils in carrying out the ordination of the monk and baptism of the villagers. The pupils had ready-made ceremony outlines to help their progress. For the baptism, the group moved in procession to the lake. Due to the cold and rainy weather, the baptism was not carried out according to the old tradition by walking into and submerging in the water but symbolically by sprinkling water on the heads of those baptised. The radio station Lapin radio taped the event and interviewed the pupils. We had rehearsed this part in advance, and it was a particular success because everyone knew their own places and duties.

After the church ceremonies we moved on to the lakeside summer dwelling of the villagers located on a headland near the school. The previous day we had put up most of the traditional huts in which the pupils stayed by family of characters, with the monks staying as visitors in the huts and the guerrillas in their own tent. We had scheduled a few hours for the pupils to live in character in the village. We had planned that the role character families could, for example, fish, pick berries, hunt imaginary wild reindeer, find vegetable roots, dry hay, work grass into insulation for shoes, do handicrafts and cook food.

However, the rain that had started first thing in the morning got the pupils wet and put a damper on the mood, so the pupils were not keen on picking up the chores. One key person who was supposed to supervise the chores in the role of a grandmother unexpectedly had to cancel her attendance, which also added confusion to the situation. We therefore mainly tried cleaning fish and cooking porridge. Some also played a traditional trial of strength game. Some pupils, however, took off their wet role costumes at an early stage. This made it challenging to move forward in the programme, and at some point we considered putting a stop to the role adventure. Fortunately, the teachers were quite convincing in their roles and were able to carry the part of the adventure that was set aside for living in character in the village until we were able to move on to the adventure exercises.

We had prepared a plot for the role adventure in advance with the aid of role descriptions, which turned out to save the day. St Triphon of Pechenga had with him a valuable cup that the guerrilla leader Pekka Vesainen had got wind of and wanted to steal. The shaman living in the village signalled the

guerrilla leader about the right time to make the attack because the shaman did not like St Triphon, who had brought a new religion to the area. That was when the guerrillas attacked Triphon and tried to steal the cup. Some of the villagers came to Triphon's defence, which resulted in a quick wrestling match. The shaman, however, was 'afraid' that there could be bloodshed and demanded that the parties resolve the conflict by means of "traditional" trials of strength.

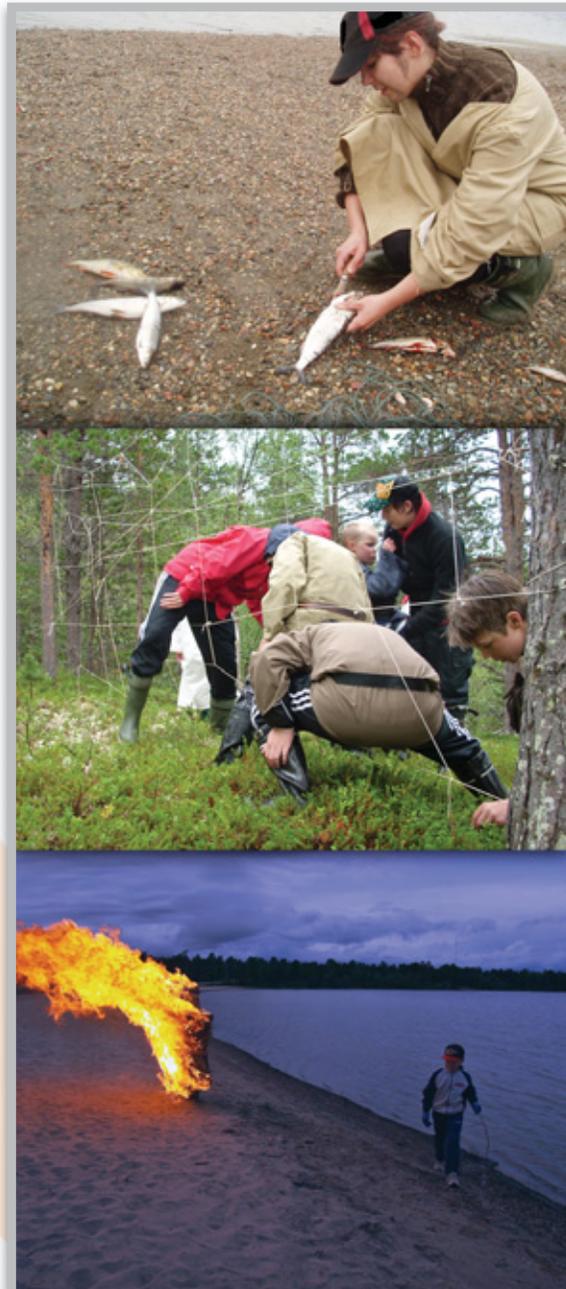
The adults had prepared cooperation and problem-solving exercises to be performed outdoors, and the guerrillas faced the monks and villagers in a competition to complete them. The group that finished the exercises with the best results was to have the cup. The adventure exercises got even the wet pupils excited, and the mood was soon lifted. The adventure exercises included the balance and group exercise *bog tussocks*, a *reindeer lasso* throwing competition, the *fishing net* exercise where pupils had to pass through a net, the *moose fence*, where pupils had to climb over a "fence" by using a piece of wood, as well as the cooperation exercise entitled *lifting the reindeer out of a hole* and the grand finale, *finding Triphon's cup blindfolded*.

At one point we also received Karelian refugees as visitors who asked the villagers for help. Finally, we sat down by a campfire and Triphon made his pre-prepared speech. Quite unexpectedly, the cup, which the villagers had won, was given to the losing group. Triphon's speech ended the hostilities with a peaceful solution, emphasising reconciliation and forgiveness. The holy cup became a symbol of generosity, reconciliation, peace and hope.

This concluded the role play section, and, deviating from the original plan, the rest of the evening and the night were spent at the school, where we officially shed our roles, had traditional Skolt foods and played traditional games. The seine fishing we had planned was put off until the St Triphon church festival in the hopes of better weather. The debriefing of the role adventure was done at the school the following morning.

### Evaluating the role play adventure project

It is good to debrief and analyse a role play adventure project in several ways. Debriefing deepens learning and ensures that everyone's feelings and experiences are heard (Aalto, 2000). Talking about one's feelings and listening to others enables pupils to name emotions and express their own experiences and opinions, in addition to enhancing their empathy and evaluation skills. Through sharing and acceptance, everyone's self-esteem is reinforced and the sense of security in the group



Photos: Senja Valo

is improved. Pupils are also given the opportunity to evaluate their own actions and possibly learn alternative ways to act.

At the beginning of the debriefing session, the pupils were divided into character family groups and drew a map of the role play adventure area, writing down the names of the principal sites of action. Each pupil then wrote down in their own coloured pen which kinds of emotions they had experienced at each site. We had already written down emotion words on the chalkboard, describing both positive and negative emotions, to assist the pupils. Finally, everyone told the group in as many words as they wanted about what they had written down. The week after the role adventure the pupils filled in a feedback form in which they evaluated their own learning throughout the entire project. Parents were also sent a questionnaire. It would have been useful to discuss and analyse the events even further by means of small-group theme discussions, for example, or writing assignments if we had had time for that. We decided to arrange an evening meeting for pupils and parents at a later date, during which we would show photographs of the various stages of the role adventure project, giving everyone involved one more opportunity to share their experiences and reflect on what was learned.

The following sections give an overview of the views on the project expressed in the feedback forms by the pupils, teachers and parents. The teachers filled in a form that was partially the same as that of the pupils, and we also held a feedback discussion among the teachers.

### Fun but wet

The pupils' experiences of the role adventure project were varied. They experienced different emotions and evaluated the project with both positive and negative adjectives. The foremost and most pleasant memory for them was the actual role play and, particularly, the adventure exercises included. They also enjoyed the drama exercises and making the costumes and props. Among other terms, the pupils described the project with the words *nice*, *inspiring*, *fun*, *memorable*, *original*, *real*, *exciting*, *warm* and *historical*, but also with *tiresome*, *boring*, *wet*, *strange* and *cold*. More than half of the adjectives used were positive or neutral. The unpleasant experiences of wetness, being tired and the cold apparently referred to the actual role adventure – it rained all day. A few parents also wished that these kinds of events no longer be held on rainy days. The several cases of cold during the second project week were a source of chagrin for the pupils and even threatened the very implementation of the role adventure.

### Learning by doing works

*"You don't have to sit in a classroom or read books to learn! The children were excited all the time. Action left a mark in their minds and hearts! What you do yourself you don't easily forget"*  
(Parent 3)

The students and the teachers and parents alike rated learning by doing as an important lesson learned from the project. Action helped pupils to learn things that would otherwise have remained buried in books. The teachers reflected that an uninterrupted project learning process ensures that the guiding idea behind what is being learned is not broken at any point, which is why pupils tend to remember it better. The pupils mentioned that any kind of instruction that diverges from traditional classroom work is nicer. Action represents a more holistic way to learn.

### More knowledge and appreciation

*"Life was harder then than it is now. People had to do everything themselves: food and clothes, etc. It was important to help others then, and that's something we could all bear in mind today too!"*  
(Pupil, age 11)

The pupils thought they had learned many things. They felt they had learned the most about how the Skolt Sami people lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and who St Triphon of Pechenga was. For example, one pupil made a comment to the effect that the pupil had previously only known Triphon by name but could now tell others a lot about his life and work. Through personal experience, the pupils were able to appreciate the fact that life was not easier in the past. People had to do everything themselves, and they had to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. This influenced the pupils in that they began to appreciate being able to live in today's world. On the other hand, they can learn from the past about, for example, the importance of helping others.

## Solidarity, love for one's neighbour and self-knowledge

"It [cooperation] went well even with the little ones. I got to know the little ones a bit" (Pupil, age 15).

"Complaining helps no one, but it ruins everyone else's fun too, so just join in at full speed" (Pupil, age 14).

The cooperation exercises challenged the pupils' cooperation skills, particularly when pupils of different ages were working together. The significance of encouragement and assistance was mentioned in the feedback by the pupils. By cooperating, they learned to know the other pupils better, thus improving solidarity within the group. The older pupils also mentioned that the solidarity in the school had improved. Also some parents were happy about increased feeling of integrity in the school.

At its best, the drama approach can help participants learn something from their own characters. Identifying with a character very different from oneself can help pupils appreciate diversity. One of the finest comments was the mention by an 11-year-old that the pupil in question learned a lot from the role character about the importance of loving and helping your neighbour.

A couple of pupils had realised the importance of a positive attitude: complaining is of no use. Reflecting on one's own learning and observing others probably also enhanced the pupils' self-knowledge. One pupil learned to stay calm, another to behave well, a third to share joy; one pupil reflected on religious aspects, apparently inspired by the character of St Triphon. The pupils probably also learned a great many other things as well, but analysing changes within themselves and the group must have been difficult.

## Role play is challenging

"Identifying with the character was very easy. The good mood helped me get into character" (Pupil, age 8).

"[Identifying with the character] was affected negatively by: My character was a man, an old man, a MONK MAN" (Pupil, age 14).

The role adventure project culminated in the role play. This was new to the pupils, and the teachers were also just learning the ropes. We have produced several school plays at our school, and students have participated enthusiastically, but we had never tried a more free-form role play or live action role

playing before. Getting into character was therefore important but challenging. I had planned that after the initial character definition we would try the role play before the actual role adventure, but the schedule did not allow this and the preliminary role work mainly remained on the level of written and oral introductions of the characters to the group. The plan was also that the pupils would plan their own actions during the role adventure in advance. This kind of planning would be advisable in similar projects because it affects the pupils' ability to identify with their characters and makes the practicalities of the work at the adventure scene easier. The pupils may decide in advance, for example, whether they are going to fish or do handicrafts when the role play begins.

The amount of character development we did was enough for some of our pupils, but some wrote that their own role did not suit them and that it was difficult to identify with their character. To a degree, this seemed to arise from the fact that the character was so far removed from the pupil's sphere of experiences. For a 14-year-old girl, a 75-year-old monk must indeed be a very distant character. On the other hand, one objective was precisely for the pupils to try to identify with very different characters, which would develop their empathy skills. For some, a tightly knit group with a shared goal helped to identify with the characters. The primary-level pupils said they were able to identify with their characters better than the lower-secondary level pupils. For the younger pupils, using imagination is more common and identifying with role characters apparently more natural and acceptable than for pupils undergoing puberty who are constantly observing themselves critically and are careful not to make a fool of themselves in front of others.

It is important that all adults participating in a role adventure play their roles intensively at the same time as they supervise the pupils. With their example, the adults help to create the mood of the role-playing world and support the pupils' role play. For the supervising teacher, the role play is quite demanding. If the objective is that all pupils go deeply into character, the supervisor must also remain in character at all times and direct the situations only from within his or her role. I myself acted as the supervisor and director in the role of the shaman. I had constructed the pupils' character descriptions in such a way that the shaman would be an influential person in the village community. However, the supervisor must be prepared for the fact that the role play may also take a different direction than the desired one. The supervisor must be able to decide whether to let the scenes play out on their own or to intervene. In larping, there are usually no pre-defined goals, but a role adventure is, at least for the part of the frame story, pre-planned and can entail various learning objectives. In our case, the pupils and I had agreed on

a signal that would mean that the supervisor is temporarily leaving the role of the shaman and giving instruction as herself, a teacher. In such a case, the pupils were given no choice but to follow the instructions. Should the role adventure not play out according to plan, however, the events can eventually be turned into a positive learning experience by means of appropriate debriefing.

If the level of identification with the characters is not meant to be very deep, it can be agreed in advance that the supervising teacher directs the scenes despite being in costume. Then the entire role adventure can comprise a few pre-prepared situations, such as the church scene and the adventure exercises. This could be a good solution in situations in which it is not possible to develop the characters thoroughly or the concept of role play is new to the pupils. Even with a large group, directed scenes probably provide a more workable solution than a larping-style role playing adventure that requires role identification and commitment from all participants. With our own group, we also observed that directed situations worked best. However, I do believe that, with practice and

enthusiasm, pure larping could also work in schools and give the pupils great adventure and learning experiences.

## Sharing the planning and responsibility

In the teachers' feedback discussion, we observed that cooperation and the sharing of responsibility are crucial in such a long project. They affect the level of commitment and the way in which many details fall into place. By sharing the responsibility, the workload of an individual teacher becomes lighter and everyone gets the opportunity to present their ideas. Parents also need to be sufficiently informed about the events in order for them to be able to participate. Parents may also have knowledge and skills that prove useful in the implementation of various aspects. In our experience, it was beneficial to involve the parents in the project through the making of role costumes and props. The parents also received a letter informing them about the events and inviting them to attend. It would have been good to call one or two additional informa-



Photo: Ulpu Siponen

tive meetings, as it seemed the parents needed a bit more encouragement to participate. For working parents, it is difficult to attend daytime activities, but they may well be happy to participate in, for example, possible closing festivities for a role adventure. The pupils may be given more responsibility in the preparations, such as supervising the traditional games, drama exercises or the activity sites. In future, this kind of events could be arranged in a smaller scale, too. That could be also a good way to start practising this kind of pedagogical method that requires learning from all parties.



Photos: Ulpu Siponen

## The role adventure project in a nutshell

Project aspect	Content
St Triphon of Pechenga and Pechenga Monastery	A dramatised interview with St Triphon of Pechenga.
Church ceremonies	Demonstrations of the ordination of a monk and baptism at the church.
Traditional games	Traditional Skolt Sami games as school morning assembly events.
Lifestyle: Seasonal migration	Activity site work with the theme of living according to the four seasons in the 16th century. Various exercises and activities.
Historical period	A brief introduction of the period of the 25-Year War between Sweden and Russia.
Costumes and props	Making the costumes together with the parents of pupils.
Drama exercises and developing one's own character	Preparing for drama work by means of games as well as improvisation and trust exercises. Role card: Defining the pupil's character Role descriptions: A description and storyline drawn by the teacher for each character. Role introductions to the group and the hot seat technique, i.e. character interviews. Learning the character names. Planning one's own activities during the role adventure.
The role adventure	Church ceremonies at "the monastery": the ordination of a monk and baptism. Getting into character by doing chores related to the historical period and season of the year at the campsite. Adventurous and competitive problem-solving exercises that determine the outcome of the story: are the guerrillas able to steal the cup from Triphon? Seine fishing. Evening gathering.
Debriefing and evaluation	Drawing a map of the area and writing down one's emotions. Thematic discussion. Questionnaires to pupils, parents and teachers.

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## Appendix I



# Diploma



Pupil of the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School

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participated successfully in the adventure camps from 14 to 16 May 2007  
at Koivikkoniemi and 6 to 7 september 2007 at Lehtojärvi.

During the historical Role Adventure she showed creativity and skill with handicrafts.

With her teachers she identified with the local historical frame story of Kemijoki valley in the 16th Century.

During the adventure camp at Lehtojärvi she showed the ability to  
engage in team work and to complete challenging adventure exercises.

26.9.2007 Rovaniemi

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Teacher, Pasi Kurri    Project Manager, Eiri Sohlman

# Appendix 2

## ADVENTURE CAMP EVALUATION 10.9.2007

PLEASE EVALUATE EACH ACTIVITY SEPARATELY.  
YOU MAY ALSO DRAW A CIRCLE (O) ON THE MAP ON SOME OTHER PLACES THAT WERE SIGNIFICANT TO YOU. FOR EXAMPLE: YOU HAD A GREAT TEAM SPIRIT, YOU ENCOURAGED YOUR FRIENDS OR GOT ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THEM, OR YOU FELT YOU COULD TRUST THEM.

PUT A CROSS (X) IN EACH SCALE ON THE PLACE WHERE YOU THINK IT FITS BEST.  
Example: My feelings during the orienteering assignment  
☺ ----x----- ☹

### EVALUATE YOUR EXPERIENCES

**ABSEILING**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**ORIENTEERING**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**FIRST AID**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

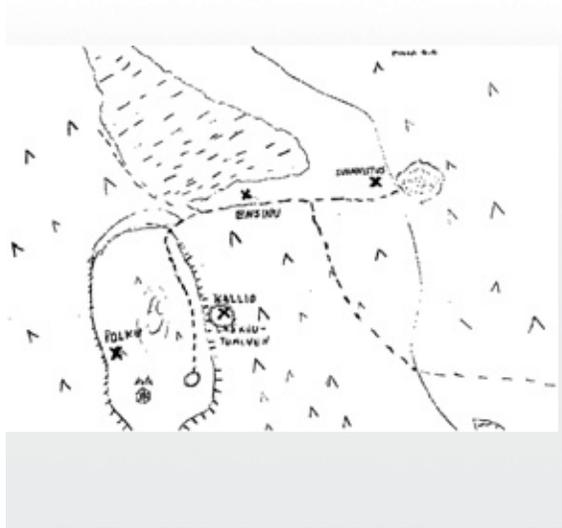
**THE BLIND'S PATH**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**BASKET CLIMBING**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**WILLOW CONSTRUCTIONS**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**FARM NEGOTIATION**  
FEELING ☺ ----- ☹  
(Tribal) CO-OPERATION + -----  
ENCOURAGEMENT + -----  
(Received from others)  
SAFETY + -----

**ESSAY WRITING:**  
GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWERS IN THE MAP ASSIGNMENT. GO THROUGH EACH ANSWER AND TELL ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES. YOU MAY ALSO TELL ABOUT OTHER THINGS THAT HAPPENED DURING THE CAMP THAT STICK IN YOUR MIND.



# Appendix 3

19.9.2007

## Parent Questionnaire

Please return in an envelope by 21<sup>st</sup> September 2007.

1. In your opinion, what did the pupil think of the Lehtojärvi Adventure Camp?

☺ ----- ☹

2. In your opinion, what did the pupil think of the Koivikkoniemi Adventure Camp?

☺ ----- ☹

3. What kind of an effect do you think the camps have had on collaboration between school and home?

A. Koivikkoniemi ☺ ----- ☹

B. Lehtojärvi ☺ ----- ☹

Wishes and ideas for further collaboration between school and home:

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4. In your opinion, how have the adventure camps influenced the pupil's school work?

☺ ----- ☹

OTHER COMMENTS:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANSWERS. HAVE A NICE AUTUMN!

