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.
CROSS-BORDER TRAINING MATERIAL FOR PROMOTING PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING THROUGH SCHOOL EDUCATION
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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.[1] The concrete work 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 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 Strengthening Cultural Identity through Environmental and Community Art in the Schools of Small Northern Villages. 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 Neighbourhood Programme and Finnish Ministry of Social and Health Affairs and was to plan a new project dealing with the psychosocial well-being of children and young people in the Barents region. The cross-border collaboration network of the ArctiChildren has been a remarkable step in developing the status of children and young people in the Barents region.

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 project has 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 for individuals and group, health promotion therefore goes beyond a healthy lifestyle to well-being (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, WHO 1986).
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 Onshore Experience, 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
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Berghskolan 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 implement the Equality of Treatment Act.

Måttsundsskolan is situated 20 kilometers south of Luost, 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 include working with the environment and nature.

The Sami School in Jokkmokk is situated in a small northern Swedish municipality. The school has approximately 40 pupils and 6 teachers. The pupils are organized 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 minority, which is a very demanding situation.

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 35 Sami pupils at the school, 26 Komi, 31 Barents and 5 pupils of other nationalities.

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 into mixed classes where 2 or 3 age groups are taught together. 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 kilometers south of Luost, Sweden, in the suburb of Bergnäset. 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.
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 Opptrappingsplan 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)1. 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) 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

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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-oriented 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-oriented. 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 second 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.

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 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 overlooked. 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.
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).

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. (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.)

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 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-Olsson 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 situations 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.)

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 & Rimpela (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 teaching and learning needs to be included in central educational 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 & Rimpela 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 & Rimpela 2002.)

Parenting and home-school collaboration

The first place to address child health issues is within the family. However, it is clear that the child's well-being and health are influenced by a wide range of factors that extend beyond the home. 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, protection 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 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.)
school activities, e.g. as volunteers or as members of the pub-
lic; 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 particu-
lar practices, challenges, and goals 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 & Chaskin 1989.) According to Gorari & Gotman (1992), home-school collaboration is an attitude, not sim-
ply 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” or “obliged-to” orientation from all in-
dividuals.

Encounter and dialogue between teacher-student relationship

The other people we encounter are probably the most mean-
ingful aspect of our lives. The uniqueness of interpersonal rela-
tionships 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 is the foundation for the concept “other” or “otherness”. It is something opposite myself, something different from myself, other to me. It dif-
fers from the way many other fields of science look at inter-
personal relationships from the outside, as it were, through the eyes of an objective observer: two people are seen en-
countering each other and doing and discussing this and that. The phenomenal 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 under-
stands the meaning of the concepts of encounter and dia-
logue in a limited sense—Martin Buber (1962a) emphasises that “genuine encounters and dialogue are, if anything, excep-
tional 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 im-
plementing his/her plan—for example, the basic educa-
tion curriculum—is bound to be in a unidirectional, 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 re-
lationships should be dialogical. (Laine 2001, 124–126.)

A dialogical encounter with the “other” is often facilitat-
ed 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; Värit 1994, 248.) Dialogue is active, voluntary, reciprocal and re-
flective. 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 understand-
ing. Dialogue is not just the participants turning talks to com-
municate; it also entails the participants gradually becoming aware of the thinking of not only the other but also of them-

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 affection. Warm and informal people may only notice and 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.
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 helpfulness 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, guilt, 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 Haguus 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.)

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 caring person we have to be open for its own contents. We cannot say this fellow needs care and here is a list I have to follow for that. (Noddings 2005.)

When we discuss teaching and learner-teacher 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. How the 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 psychological and educational work which 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 experiences of 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 authority is after all, found within themselves. (Heikkilä-Laakso & Heikkilä 1997, 147.)

We see in the concept of empowerment is the sense of inner power. The process of empowerment offers resources, opportunities and a means to develop the inner power and self-confidence of the individual. 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 helpfulness in the outlook on the future.

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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 (Kapari 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 (Välimaa & Danielson, 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 are 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. Opdeaker 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 mainly on an individual level. Also according to Karonen 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 (Väljärvi, 2002). According to Pulkkinnen (2002) this is a sign of problems in the social capital of schools.

Still, in the last ArcticChildren study (Ahonen, 2006) and the last HBSC study (Välimaa & 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.
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 Barents Region.

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 remarkable 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 Sami 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.

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 are two main 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 % (Karloven et al., 2003, 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 1-3. 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 unified comprehensive schools, where all the com-
pre-hospital education is given in one school building by one group of staff.

The Sami children do not have their own general curricu-

Hum. All compulsory schools 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 gen-

eral 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 school. For example, schools may have 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 in-

cluding the age of 11 years who attend school (pre-school class or compulsory school). Municipalities are required to pro-

vid child care 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 the same as in the comprehen-

sive schools, but there are a few differences in the curriculum. The main differences are in the following areas:

- Language studies: as part of their curriculum. There is no
classroom education for Sami teachers in Sweden, but the teachers

are usually Sami themselves and have regular teachers’ educa-

tion.

School system in Norway

One of the most important priorities of the Norwegian gov-

ernment is to invest in education and knowledge (Govern-

ment.no, 2007). Education for all is a basic principle of Nor-

wegian educational policy. Wherever they live in the country, 

all girls and boys must have an equal right to education, re-

gardless 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 gen-

eral education system can be divided into three parts: primary school grades 1-7 (“høgskole”), age 6-13; lower second-

ary school grades 8-10 (“ungdomsskole”), age 13-16; upper second-

ary 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 acquire education in the society of knowledge.
The Norwegian school system is inclusive; there must be room for all. Everyone is to be given the same opportuni-
ties to acquire education. (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 organ-

ized 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 dis-

tricts, and according to specific criteria elsewhere in Norway, this teaching is given in accordance with the special Sami cur-

riculum. For Sami pupils, this teaching is intended to build a sense of identity in the pupils’ own culture and to de-

velop the Sami language and identity, as well as equip-

ping Sami pupils to take an active part in the community and enabling them to acquire education that is in line with a general education that 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 respon-
sibility 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 pro-

grammes:

- Primary general education (as a rule, the standard duration is 4 years)
- Basic general education (the standard duration is 5 years)
Crystals of Schoolchildren’s Well-Being

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 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School subjects</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Additional Subjects</td>
<td>Literature, Home economics, Physical education, Compulsory additional subjects</td>
<td>Christian knowledge and religious and ethical education, 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</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Conclusions
The Barents Region is wide and multiethnic, which you can read more about in Eva Carlsdotter Schjetne’s article[1]. In this project, ArcticChildren 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 and Murmansk 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.

References


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 ArcticChildren 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, disability and ability. 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 a social group that can lead to personal relations, this does not automatically mean that these personal relationships exist, only the shared existence. The personal sphere risks being superimposed on the collective, which means that the notion of being is used as an object. Objectifying other human beings means attacking their possibilities of making choices of their own (Skjevhaug, 2002). This 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). Not acting according to this model of meetings appear to be a separate category in our existence, a dimension that we are so-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 take part, one often another, and they are always seen to be precisely as the particular Other, not as an object as 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 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 face-to-face meeting to be a face-to-face meeting with the Other as the kind of person s/he is really is, take her/him seriously and refrain from forcing something of my own or of my kind of Other upon her/him. Thus, the theory is that children experience in the educational situation may affect their identity development both positively and negatively. How can they then 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. 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. Something we all have in an unambiguous concept, and it may be described in many different ways and from several aspects. The word is derived from the Latin identity meaning, and is described as the same person from one day and one situation to the next.1

1 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 the social and the cultural, others that focus on logical 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, the individual’s identity should be contrasted with the group identity. There is a tension 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).

Cukrzentmihalyi (2003) describes it as the two pillars of happiness and thinking that the individual has to relate to the group identity. The individual has to take responsibility for a meeting to be a face-to-face meeting, 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 face-to-face meeting to be a face-to-face meeting with the Other as the kind of person s/he is really is, take her/him seriously and refrain from forcing something of my own or of my kind of Other upon her/him. Thus, the theory is that children experience in the educational situation may affect their identity development both positively and negatively. How can they then be viewed? And what connections are there between identity and psychosocial health?

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 exists as a natural part of every human action and relations, and consequently also in meetings. We must be aware of the double nature of the relations and live in the field of tension that this involves.1

1 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).
There are field reports indicating that pupils have become crueler to one another, a new manifestation of hardening atti-
tudes 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 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, enterprise and knowledge development, and the pupils’ working climate is just 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 43% of Swedish pupils have been bullied at least once during the school day. Many children’s psychosomatic problems are likely to be related to the working environment of their school (Kostenius & Öhrling, 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 communication (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2006).

Stress

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 (Claussen, Peterson and Berg, 2001; 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 and young people’s stress and mental health, also points to this downward spiral. 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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 silence can be very constructive and destructive. Silence sometimes is experienced as being peaceful and 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 (Abery and Bildtquist, 2003).

We can be forced into silence for various reasons, for example through oppression, ignorance and/or somebody else exer-

See further Forsman, A., Bullying at School

A Threat to Pupils Health, Learning and Development in this publication.

The double nature of silence in connection to well-being

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 time lack, 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 (Abery, 2004) to be in 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 to continue 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, for example by raising blood pressure and a pulse rate as well as an increase in stress hormones (Babich et al., 2001; Englund, 2000). According to Paschier-Vermeer and Passchier (2000), high sound levels will be precisely one of our chief public health problems

Babich et al., 2001; Englund, 2000)
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; Kostennius & Öhrling, in press). We suggest that instead of focusing on factors which are problem-orientated, we should focus on 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). Anttonen (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”. Kostennius and Öhrling (2008) suggest that adults keep asking questions and listening to 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 this case we thought 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’?

References
Well-Being among Children – Some Perspectives from a Swedish Viewpoint
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 ... 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 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 might find it difficult to disregard those concerns, which are closely connected with existence, leaving them entirely to the adult. When the child has to act as a professional educator, worrying that the child's body is not the same as the adult's, the child 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 authorship is displayed, whose demonstration is connected with the elusive nature of what is 'within', caused by its comparison with the experience of ordinary people. By way of digression from the current matter, we might note that one of the reasons for an adult's lack of complete awareness of how adults make 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 should be noted, in particular, that the child clings in some sense to the idea that anything can happen. The adult, on the other hand, is often the last person to participate in the spontaneous expressions 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.

Focusing more specifically on the child's experience of growing up by the child's attitude to their body, we notice that the child's 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 because they are 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 become so strong that the child is unable to understand which upsets them most, for both the 'owner' of the body and for those around them. It is important to emphasise, however, that, unlike the adult, the child’s body is an independent and free entity, one 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 manner, 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 detached from 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.

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It is very significant that the child would not put up with boredom, unless which the child would not put up with, a clear indication that the adult was not satisfied. It has been said that the adult was content with accepting the boredom, which would not be the case if the child was conditioned to avoid it. The child would not put up with boredom, unless which the adult was satisfied with accepting it.

The child is learning to distinguish between their feelings and to separate the various contents of their life. It is this process that serves as a basis for a programme of developing the child's finer feelings (their éducation 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 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 affects, 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.

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 time onwards, social pedagogy, including social pedagogy for children and children's education, was developed concurrently in all of its qualitative conditions: as an area of research activity, as an academic subject and as a branch of practical pedagogy. It is mentioned, however, that scholars specialising in the history of social pedagogy maintain that its evolution can be traced back to the earliest philosophical and classic traditions, including those of the ancient Greeks, which were developed in 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, from the 17th century up to the 19th century, from the 19th century up to the 20th century, from the 20th century up to the 21st century, and from the 21st century up to the present day. The term 'social pedagogy' was introduced in 1844 by K. H. Mager, but it was to the work of A. Diesterweg that gained universal acceptance in the theory of education. In K. H. 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 term 'social pedagogy' was introduced in 1844 by K. H. Mager, but it was to the work of A. Diesterweg that gained universal acceptance in the theory of education.
A representative of the first trend, or approach, Natorp, one of the founding “fathers” of the Marburg School of philoso-
phy, 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, yes, 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 pedagogy, according to Kant, 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 and professional conditions of social life” were defined by Natorp as a thematic line, while of predetermining the area of 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 ap-
proach, or trend, M. Kollenhauer, wrote that social pedagogy had to deal “not with the transfer or communication of cul-
tural 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 resolving such problems as, say, that of child homelessness, it was necessary to create a third “edu-
cational environment”, that of state support schemes. Even today, there is no such thing as a universally accepted defi nition of social pedagogy, in which predetermined the area of development of social pedagogy, because of a number of widely, influential defi nitions recently given by Russian scholars. In the opinion of Semenov (1986), social pedagogy is a disci-
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It is natural that in different countries one finds different approaches to the defi nition of social pedagogy’s status as an academic discipline, to the understanding of its object and field of study. The outstanding representatives of the one trend employed in social pedagogy, the essence of its key notions and categories are given different defi nitions in different cul-
tures, depending on a variety of different cultural and his-
torical traditions and on the differences in the level of social development. However, the essence of this research fi eld itself is largely determined by those common elements that inevi-
tably make themselves felt as one turns to the social and peda-
gogical 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 social pedagogy 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 anal-

A.I. Arnoldov gives the following defi nition:

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

A.1. Arnoldov gives the following defi nition:

“For the purpose of an adequate defi nition of general pedagogy end, at the same time, as an independent research fi eld 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, 13.)

Treating education as part of socialisation and social edu-
cation as one of the fi ve types of education, alongside family, religious, corrective and dissocial education, A.V. Mudrik pro-

It should be emphasised that social pedagogy has objective grounded not only as a theory and as a research fi eld but also as a form of practice. As a branch of practical activity, social peda-
gogy aims at “harmonising the interaction (or relationships) between the individual and society” (Bochovskaya, 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.

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 ArchiChildren is a good example.

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 harmo-

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 fi eld of activity of modern social pedagogy is 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 knowl-

egative influences on the institutions of education, public health, social welfare, culture, science and the arts. Social pedag-
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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, 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:

- the 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 an assessment of family structure, the specific features of their parents’ lifestyles, “social scenarios” and overall social and professional orientations;
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;
- 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, 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, low-income privileged 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 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 into a 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 interrelations which 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 stages 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 ArcticChildren II project provides enough room for new research objectives to be set and achieved.

References


Literature

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, 197, 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, 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 as a potential 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 get along with others in their own natural 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 element in helping them manage stressful situations. Since socially skilled children also experience being sought after in their environment they are more likely to be in a social position confirmed in new contexts (ibid). 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 anti-social behaviour. For example, displaying anger, a demanding attitude, threats, etc. may give a child the impression that such negative behaviour is likely to get 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 a sense of control over their own lives, and that it helped them cope with their situation in terms of their own particular circumstances. Negative behaviour is a sense of control over 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. 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.

**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 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 a sense of control over their own lives, and that it helped them cope with their situation in terms of their own particular circumstances. 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 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 & Colbjörnsen, 1999), and were thus deemed to be isolated and loneliness, since nobody else wanted to spend time with them. In a similar Norwegian study, 1.5% of 14-year-olds were never selected when pupils were asked who they spent time with in the classroom, and 16% were omitted when they were asked 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 the contemporary knowledge about the likely consequences of deficiencies in social skills, the rewards for addressing such problems, competence, are crucial in helping children manage stressful situations. Since socially skilled children also experience being sought after in their environment they are more likely to be in a social position confirmed in new contexts (ibid). 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 anti-social behaviour. For example, displaying anger, a demanding attitude, threats, etc. may give a child the impression that such 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.

**Possible reasons for social competence deficiencies**

The development of social skills should be understood in terms of the interaction 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 behaviour, 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. Elliott 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 pupils as unambiguously behaving, when a child’s impulsivity, conflictive disposition, anguish and low self-esteem make other children refuse to be with the child.

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 differentially. A closely related notion is the “school code” described by the Swedish pedagogical theorist Gerhard Arfwedson (1964), 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 environment.

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, the pupils as an arena to learn from, the class as a learning group, the class as a learning arena was also in the foreground in Otto L. Fuglestad’s research (ibid.), which showed that the social learning of students to a great extent happens in the classroom. While, formally, pupils have little room for self-determination, an arena in which pupils made others do what they wanted to do, and thus 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 groups can both foster 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 ‘pupil’s 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 of the ‘pupil’s collective’ suggests 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 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.

**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 whether this work is to be done. Many schools rely on well established routines and work to evaluate and revise their plans and strategies in order to make further progress. Experiences from ArctiChildren 1 in Finnmark showed that different schools and local authorities had sharply differing starting points for the future work on these issues. One important
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 (Elliott & 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 skills.

One of the best known programmes, frequently used in Scandinavia, is Dan Oweus’ anti-bullying method (Oweus, 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 preparations and, in a wider sense, to plan on advice and assistance services when following it.

In Norway, Kari Lamer (2002) has designed the programme “You, me and us too” in order to promote social competence among children in primary school. It consists of a theatrical 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 to very different local conditions. So, in Lamer’s programme, national standards are under way, but no results are available at this point. The programme, however, has been recommended by www.forebygging.no (18.12.07), an internet base which provides knowledge about drug abuse prevention and health work.

Schools making their own plans

If this alternative is chosen, comprehensive planning is essential. While the existence of study plans for different subjects as well as the national 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, and whether or not there is a reluctance to prioritise social competence training, and perhaps to some extent also to a lack of competence among school employees. Reports from Akermark’s study (2000) in the same direction. It had been decided to use the Olweus programme it had little influence on their plans on how to implement it (Forssman, 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 in the school as an organisation and be defined as a collective concern, relevant to the school community. A curriculum programme will have a wide impact if it is not only intended for the group of children the problems they address are 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 competence is, however, only possible if there is 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 and implemented, it is of the greatest importance 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, social cooperation and social interaction in the school 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 them 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 introduced, the parents were invited to a meeting in which the overall 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 relationship 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 need schools need to make its attitudes and values very clear in relation to bullying, and to 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 cooperation with parents that it is aware, and sensitive, of these attitudes and ideas, while making its own standpoint 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 which circums-stances, 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
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.

Coping successfully

While this is not the place for a comprehensive definition of what this idea implies, it is nonetheless very important to stress the central importance of experiencing one’s own competence 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 pejoratively, 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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Social Competence and Coping Successfully

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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, hälsofrämjande, 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 fundamental democratic values and that everybody working in a school should promote respect for every human being’s own value” (Lp0 p. 3). It says further, “Care for the individual human being’s well-being and development should characterise the activities” (Lp0 p. 3) and, “health and lifestyle issues should also be attended to” (Lp0 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 (Rasmussen, 1994). The challenge is not merely to assume a child perspective in order to allow the children to speak, but also to actually use their experiences and expressed needs. According to Hallström (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. Hallström (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 child’s willingness and desire to learn will be stimulated, and the individual pupil 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 Hallidén’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 (Kroksmark, 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 learning processes that may take a longer time, but which are placed in contexts 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 forms of 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 usually 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. 14). “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 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 and in 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
INVITE
Make an arena possible where there is room for all the children. “Listen to me and see me.”

SHOW RESPECT...for the children’s need for respect, “Did you hear me?”

INVOLVE
Work side by side. Share power and control, “Care about me”

HAVE TRUST in the children’s need for and co-determination “Trust me”

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 “must be” might be called health promotion. 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 perspectives. It 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 school- children’s lived experience of health and illness 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 the next to talk in a conversation? 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 is about developing an understanding of where people respect one another’s stories, they not only pay attention but also meet the child halfway, thus increasing their mutual understanding.

INVOLVE
Work side by side. Share power and control, “Care about me”

HAVE TRUST in the children’s need for and co-determination “Trust me”

Piece 3 – involve. It is not by chance that participation and co-determination are on the agenda in schools. All-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 is a challenge. By allowing the classroom work to be governed by a democratic attitude with successively increasing responsibility and ability, 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.

INVOLVE
Work side by side. Share power and control, “Care about me”

HAVE TRUST in the children’s need for and co-determination “Trust me”

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 as well be used by the children. Security and trust are intimately linked. According to Mayerhoff (1971), trust is an important aspect of caring about others. Being able to truly 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 – is invited 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.
- 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.

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 requests on that. 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. Of course, it is also important that the teacher in the health promotion pays attention to them and listen to them. When the school day must not be so static and that for so many 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 others 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 who 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 have to be predetermined and controlled by the adults, which means the individual will not be able to exert any influence. This 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 – is invited on seeing and hearing
Logbook. One of the many preconditions that are required is that the children have time and opportunity to develop their learning as well as their social skills. It is important to provide feedback and positive confirmation of the children's everyday life at school. This feedback is most effective when it is given in a group. The children can give one another something that they value and find positive. Nominating heroes of the day is a group activity that promotes the children's self-image and encourages 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 their free time. The heroes are given 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!

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 gained credit and encouragement that they had not felt before. It says in the curriculum, “in collaboration with homes, schools should promote the pupils’ development into responsible people” (Lpo 94, §). It is important to learn that what is good and fine in 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 successively 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.

Supporter of the week. Another variety of Heroes of the Day is Supporter of the Week. The nominations are made every 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 their free time. The heroes are given a warm round of applause by the class. Nominating Heroes of the Day is a very simple and hearty kind of encourage-ment and, in addition, totally free!
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 the feelings that already exist, and by expressing opinions 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 be taken. Such a meeting 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 make the goodness that already exists more clear. 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, Orrick 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 “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 ... the 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.
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 be easily combined with other relaxing activities such as listening to reading aloud, drawing a little 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 Öhrling (2008), can increase health and well-being in children.

The massage can be given sitting in a massage row, with everyone massaging the person in front of them, or a massage circle where everybody can both give and receive a massage. There 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 to 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 as 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 care of children’s well-being is that the children are the ones who know best what makes them feel good. 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 desire to have someone telling me, being able to feel the text while the description was 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 teacher. The children wanted the book 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

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**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 take part in some way, for example, by including the children in planning and reflecting on their objectives. Regular, timetabled Individual Work (IW) sessions are a good method for training the pupils in planning...
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 precautions for managing their school work 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.

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 our plan we indicate the importance of 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.E. Kosténius and Öhling 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 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 school day 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

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 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. 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 (Fonagas, 2005). Gill and Eriksson’s study of reports to the recently established Ombudsmen 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-Axelson & Thylefors, 1999; Thylefors, 1999), in religious organisations and in sports (Friends, 2007). If schools are mirrors of

A threat to pupils’ Health, Learning and Development

Arne Forsman
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. The perpetrator may use physical, psychological, or verbal aggression, often repeated or passive through silence, pretending the victim does not exist. The concept of bullying is vague because there are many 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 no consensus in the field about what bullying is, how to define it, and how to measure it. The effects and consequences of bullying can be severe and long-lasting, affecting the victim’s mental and physical health, social relationships, and educational attainment. The perpetrator may also experience negative consequences, such as guilt, shame, and a lack of empathy. The concept of bullying is complex and requires a multifaceted approach to understanding and preventing it.

What is bullying?

The concept of bullying is vague because there are many different definitions of bullying. Some definitions are very restrictive, while others are as generally worded as “bullying is when somebody is badly treated” (Staff, 1997, 13). There is still no consensus in the field about what bullying is, how to define it, and how to measure it. The effects and consequences of bullying can be severe and long-lasting, affecting the victim’s mental and physical health, social relationships, and educational attainment. The perpetrator may also experience negative consequences, such as guilt, shame, and a lack of empathy. The concept of bullying is complex and requires a multifaceted approach to understanding and preventing it.

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 schools, where bullying was studied, showed that bullying was most common among 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. Pettersson’s (1997) research into preschool children’s way of relating to one another identified children lacking in their empathic ability. Both Hägglund (1996) and Bliding (2002) applied a socio-cultural perspective in their research. Wrethander and Bliding (2002) focus on a wider social whole in order to better understand the bullying at school.
social life of schools. Mencel and Wiktorowka (2002) investi-
gated how students view bullying in the environment and found that bullying is a widespread phenomenon among students. The findings showed that bullying is a tool used to regulate the social order in schools. The use of bullying is a common practice in the educational setting.

Documents

The activities of schools are regulated by a number of conven-
tions, laws, and ordinances. The implementation of Childen’s Rights is guaranteed in all EU countries. According to the European Convention on Human Rights, children have the right to education and protection from violence. The Education Act (SFS, 1990) states that the state is responsible for providing the necessary conditions for education and primary school education. The Education Act (SFS, 1992) states that the state is responsible for ensuring the right to education and to protect against violence. The Education Act (SFS, 1997) regulates what is permitted and prohibited in the activities of schools. The Education Act (SFS, 1999) states that the state is responsible for ensuring the right to education and to protect against violence.

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Research in the Arctic Children 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 (Brntsofbyggande 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 inter- vene even if they thought that they ought to help the bull- lied person (Olsson, 1999). 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 (Hasdahl, 2002), the perpetrator was often a bitter and rancorous “lost soul” or had a like-minded, or estranged friend. It is interesting to note, however, that in spite of thefts and dam- age 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 Deprivation (Pervin & John, 1997). More than every fourth pupil thought that the teach- ers 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 with- out 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-bul- liing work had started yielding results.

Summary

History, research and daily living conditions in the school show the urgent need for more reliable intentions from politi- cians, heads of schools, parents and pupils to create sustain- able 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 indi- vidual schools’ documents for preventing and taking mea- sures 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 ostra- cism 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 bully- ing 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 ef- fects 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 tak- ing 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 prop- erly 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.

References


Bullying at School

Crystals of Schoolchildren’s Well-Being

Health Promotion and Social Dimension in Education – Theory Meets Practice

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) 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. 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.

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 “Re-
lection” 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 the next lesson, giving the pupils time to make comments on and respond to her reflections and questions in the re-
lective 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 fol-
lowes 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 op-
portunity to start practising writing a reflective journal.

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.

The pupils’ and the teacher’s experiences of the meetings

Learning from the other

The pupils and the teacher learned from the Other[1] in the meetings in the classroom (see Figure 2). This course provided opportunities for learning from each other in different relation-
ships, for example between pupil and pupil, between pu-
pl and teacher, between pupil and visitor and between teach-
er 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?”
- “Can you imagine 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!”

Karen, in pupils’ reflective journals

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 les-
son, 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.

This pupil 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 disabili-
ties” (Linda, reflective journal).
- “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:

- “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 . . . it is interesting, curious and clever girls. Could it be better?” (Karen, in pupils’ reflective journals).

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):

- “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 example the pupils’ reflective journals show 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

1 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 Levinas (1969).

Figure 1. Excerpt from Jenny’s “Double logs” (Translation from Swedish)

Figure 2. The students and the teacher meet one of the guests
Karen stated that the knowledge gained from this course through meetings with both the visitors and the pupils would influence her teaching 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) emphasised.

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 these meetings had changed their way of knowing. They also thought that they had acquired deeper knowledge. One pupil wrote:

“When I read your reflections, I could see myself as a teacher with other eyes. I borrowed your glasses… I enjoyed 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)

This pupil stated that she already had some knowledge of the subjects dealt with by the visitors in the classroom. However, she could state that the new 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 a more profound way. She might have assumed that the deeper learning in this case might have to do with the pupil learning in an emotional way. The pupils 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).

These meetings probably had an impact on the pupils’ own lives, since they made associations with their own lives and experiences based on the guest stories. One of the guest stories, that of the disabled man, told them that he had been in an accident because he had been too drunk and walked into the middle of the road when he tried to escape from something. 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 when 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. 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 learned 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).

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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 in a more profound way if we are aware of the body and have associations with other people, the surroundings and the events in our lives. 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.

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” (Sara, reflective journal).

“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 pupil. 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 what we are good at, 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 well with the curriculum for pre-school 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 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 the experiences in these meetings and 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 (Ep 96; Ep 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 towards 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 Kostentius and Ohrting (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…Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain.” (Lévinas, 1969, 51.)

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 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.

References


Figure 3: Students learning from each other in the classroom.
School Disadaptation of Children and Teenagers: Problems and Ways of Handling Them

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).

The notion of disadaptation and school disadaptation: main approaches to the analysis

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 (Belcheva 2008, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, concept name</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. R.M. Baevsky (1979), N.K. Smirnov (1981). S.B. Semichev (1981). Concept of “pre-disease”, somatic-oriented approach</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.

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.

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.

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 environment 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.

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 psychological 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 bear and overcome 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-psychological 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 manifestations 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 (4th 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 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).
Endogenous

1) Intrinsic: a child takes on psycho-physiological features from their parents which influence their development and future life in one way or another.

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.

3) Problems arising in early childhood, caused by a variety of factors, which require considerable care for a child (postnatal 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.

4) Personal psychological problems (easy to influence, lack of self-control, weak will, aggression, easily tired)

5) Capacity for personal integration (self-esteem, level of pretension etc.)

Exogenous

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; influ...ency 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, libribry of children, 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 the 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) 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 problems (self-assurance, arrogance, absence of adequate communication skills etc.)

5) Negative social environment (casual acquaintances, groups of neighbours 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.

Table 2. Factors of school disadaptation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In society</th>
<th>At school</th>
<th>In the family</th>
<th>In groups (with friends)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deviations</td>
<td>Poor progress</td>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>Conflicts, Distrust, anxiety, pessimism, boredom, inactivity, unfriendliness etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactivity</td>
<td>Delinquent behaviour etc.</td>
<td>Refusal to go to school</td>
<td>Restraint</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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 fragmented 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 (Vostrokmonov, 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 (Mardabaeva, 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 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; 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-physic 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 correctly way);
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.

References


Literature

Health Promotion and Social Dimension in Education – Theory Meets Practice

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.

The familial dimension of children’s well-being

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 as a Factor in Improving the Psychosocial Well-Being of Children

Tatiana Tegaleva and Elena Shovina

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

Evening party at school
Interaction between the family and the school

The basic idea in defining the opportunities and specific characteristic of interaction between the family and the school in improving the psychosocial health of children is that of preserving the specific characteristics of this phenomenon as a socio-pedagogical process characterised by the simultaneous existence of a number of subjects of interaction, the independence 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 and the family’s ability to improve a child’s psychosocial health is determined by the functions and 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 include professionally trained staff (teachers, psychologists, medical workers, social workers 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 development of a family. Interaction increases the possibilities of the school and the family and contributes to building conditions for more efficient work aimed at improving the psychosocial well-being 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 opportunities and possibilities of the school and the family in improving the psychosocial health of children. 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:

1. The natural development of children is the primary focus:
   - The school's opportunities include professionally trained staff (teachers, psychologists, medical workers, social workers 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 development of a family. Interaction increases the possibilities of the school and the family and contributes to building conditions for more efficient work aimed at improving the psychosocial well-being 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 opportunities and possibilities of the school and the family in improving the psychosocial health of children. 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:

2. The aims of the school and the family in improving the psychosocial well-being of children and teenagers are designated as secondary (the basis for mental and physical health);
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 involvement and readiness to engage in constructive cooperation. 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 focus 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 adaptation of a child (refusal to study and to learn, inability to cope with academic subjects, conflicts with class mates and teachers etc.);
- 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-teacher; 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, consultations, 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 are formed. Parents and school teachers come into contact with each other (the school). The child is only a passive object. In the third stage, evidence of the consistent influence of the school on a child who is at this stage an object. Studies of the readiness of school specialists and parents to work on improving psychological conditions of 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 the multi-professional group; increasing the psycho-pedagogical awareness of parents; timely diagnosis of children’s problems; helping the family to understand and work 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. Specific requirements in the training stage is the introduction of knowledge based on integration of various sciences – medicine, psychology, pedagogy, etc. 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 well-being of children.
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.

References


Literature


Ways of Coping with Stress — Practicum for Children

Svetlana Okruzhnova

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 training 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am easily annoyed and offended</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I can’t stand falling behind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If anyone judges me or criticises me I get angry but do not show my feelings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am impatient when I have to stand in a queue</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I can take on more responsibility though I know I will feel uncomfortable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It is difficult for me to ask for help when I need it</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In any case, whatever the test result is, no one should panic or get upset. Forewarned is forearmed, as the saying goes. 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 mobilisation 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

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- 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.
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 these can encourage you and make you think: are things that bad? And they might prevent someone from doing something rash. I suggest we 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 put an arrow on their heart. The game proceeds 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”.

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 reactions (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. Participants 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 sun 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.

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?

References


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 of 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 "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. 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 sense 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. 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.

References


Kambell, R. (1995) How to give a child the real love. ST. PETERSBURG.
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. Jakobsen);
- 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 principles 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of salary</th>
<th>Daily and weekly timetable</th>
<th>Comfortable workplace</th>
<th>Relationships in the community and with colleagues</th>
<th>Technical and methodological means</th>
<th>System of control used at school</th>
<th>System of distribution of bonuses, allowances, rises in wages</th>
<th>Possibility of using privileges, continuing education</th>
<th>Level of work-load, volume of non-prestigious uninteresting work</th>
<th>Influence of job on health</th>
<th>Level of risk of losing their job and becoming unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Internal factors

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

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 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?

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?

References

Literature
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; Stordal, 1996; Berry & Sam, 1997; Berry 1997; Eidheim & Stordal, 1998; Kværnmo, 1999. A considerable amount of this research has been carried out from an arctic perspective.

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. 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 Sevenjärvi 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 Eevens 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 Eevens share their historical territory across the border, and across the Finnish border in the north as well (Antonson, 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. 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.
In culture/ethnicity discourse, the essentialist focus is on individualism. 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 there is no difference in the suicide rate between young Sami and the majority population. A strong national identity among young Sami people, while their local community 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. Kven people are seen as having a cultural context. Bilingual young people identify themselves equally strongly with both Sami and Norwegian ethno-cultural identity, and there is 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 (Erikson, 1968). The psychodynamic tradition focuses on interpersonal aspects as well as intrapersonal aspects from birth onwards. The different stages developed through early childhood are seen as a lifelong process (Stern, 1985). Erikson’s (2008) epigenetic life cycle, often referred to in works about ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Kvennø, 1999), is in the same tradition. All stages are equally important, however the importance of “basic trust” developed during the first year is of special interest. Freud’s (1916) work in the same tradition shows how individuals, when their moral coping strategies fail, turn to self-defence mechanisms for protecting their ego and self-respect.3

In cognitive theories, identity is linked to organisation of self-relevant information and in social learning theory identity is a question of mastering strategies and the focus of control. Together with social psychology theories those concepts contribute to the understanding of the socialisation and acculturation processes. “Mirrors and Masks - The Search for Identity” (Szasz, 1959) 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 behavioural problems. Bicultural and bilingual competence is associated with good mental health/psychosocial well-being among young Norwegian and Sami boys, while a strong 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. Kven people are seen as having a cultural context. Bilingual young people identify themselves equally strongly with both Sami and Norwegian ethno-cultural identity, and there is 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 are seen as a lifelong process (Stern, 1985). Erikson’s (2008) epigenetic life cycle, often referred to in works about ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Kvennø, 1999), is in the same tradition. All stages are equally important, however the importance of “basic trust” developed during the first year is of special interest. Freud’s (1916) work in the same tradition shows how individuals, when their moral coping strategies fail, turn to self-defence mechanisms for protecting their ego and self-respect.3

1 Stress of an Emergency Self (6-10 months of age); Stress of Core Self (2-6 months); Stress of Subjective Self (7-15 months); Stress of Core Self (5 months on)

3 Immature, psychotic or neurotic defence mechanisms like denial, projection, passive aggression, intellectualisation, reaction formation and disorganisation or mature defence mechanisms like humour, altruism, sublimation.

Culture and ethnic identity

Culture and ethnic identity are interrelated concepts. Culture and ethnic identity are seen as a lifelong process (Stern, 1985). Erikson’s (2008) epigenetic life cycle, often referred to in works about ethnic identity (e.g. Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Kvennø, 1999), is in the same tradition. All stages are equally important, however the importance of “basic trust” developed during the first year is of special interest. Freud’s (1916) work in the same tradition shows how individuals, when their moral coping strategies fail, turn to self-defence mechanisms for protecting their ego and self-respect.3

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In humanistic and existential theories, self-worth and self-actualisation are central concepts. Environmental psychology theories have been developed over the last few decades (Pekarsky et al., 1983, Lappèrg Haage, 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.4

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"Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of society" (Tylor 1871:1; in Krooher and Klukholin 1952). The historical dimension in later definitions like that of Norwegian anthropologist A.M. Klaussen (1992) points out how culture is passed on from generation to generation. For the indigenous people as well as the Kven and majority culture, children are socialised in one system, migration and storytelling interrelate with primary industries and are thus embedded in their daily life. As this is to a large extent tacit knowledge (cf. Polanyi) 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 with a group or category among other categories on the same level."

In the Sami core area, young people, in particular those engaged in reindeer husbandry, have a strong Sami identity, and while those in the local communities have a weaker Sami identity, and vice versa in terms of Norwegian identity. Recent research in Finnmark and the northern Norwegian region (Kvennø 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 behavioural problems. Bicultural and bilingual competence is associated with good mental health/psychosocial well-being among young Norwegian and Sami boys, while a strong 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 the 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 the child care authorities, health care, school development and language policies over the last few decades, these studies point towards positive results for 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.
Husserl’s (6) 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, dependent 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, private yet profound social 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 social structures 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 cosmopolitan, at home in this global cultural context. Mobility and possibilities of following up individual projects are highly valued at the cost of less commitment and networks which are elusive and changing fast. These elites spend their lives in metropolitan international societies, in which Baumann describes as “gated communities”, guarded in order to keep out people that do not seem to belong there. Therefore, although there are no weak or dependent 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 metropolitan challenge national, and not least local, political power and living conditions for the populations in the north. An open question about the extent to which those organisations are influenced through recruitment by the elite systems and networks which are elusive and changing fast. For the future, the extent to which the local society is able to influence the globalisation process and develop more sustainable forms of development will be crucial.

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 and social interaction between the local people and the municipality and institutions are important predictors of quality of life. In our Finnmark project municipality, part of the ArcticChildren project on psychosocial well-being, cultural 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. At the start of 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 cultural and identity formation, the education system plays an important role in developing and securing cultural competence through socialisation, acclimatization and building knowledge for every child through childhood and adolescence. School projects theoretically founded in the identity theories presented above have been initiated 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 interrelationships 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 ArcticChildren project. Not the least important factor is formulating 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 municipal 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 administrations. Understanding environmental and place identity provide a theoretical base and theme for cooperation between professionals, municipal functions and local people in the further development of the community and handling environmental challenges. The education system has an important role in this work, as the curriculum has objectives linked to local environmental, historical and ecological conditions. Fami- lies through all the generations have an important role and the project has a great impact on matters with a community context and on living conditions – psychosocial well-being.

Culture, Ethnic Identity and Psychosocial Well-Being in the Barents Region a — holistic approach

8 See AC-cultural projects in local culture – Ahonen et al, jokela and also Siponen in this book

7 Ref Norwegian school projects, See Stokke and Jonassen in this book

Phenomenology - the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the individual – the first-person point of view (Smith, 2007)
References


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. ... 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 situations, contex- tuality 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 interpreta- tions 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 re- lated 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 disassociated 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 activi- ties 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 learn- ing 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 or- ganization of affect: affective traits, moods and emotions. Affective traits, such as trait-anxiety, are predispositions to ex- perience 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. 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). Lin- nenbrink and Pintrich (2002) have developed the achieve-
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.

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, Reinskainen (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. Kvaaman (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 (Karaesik & 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 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-fulfillment. Positive classroom 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(1), 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 students 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.

1 See Heli Villanen’s article on role adventure in this book.
References


Pupils at the School Camp. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi.
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 marvelous 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.

The question is 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.

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 premise 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.1 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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1 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.
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 (Ernstübung) 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 relations of reflexive modernity are, according to Lash, more and more often formed outside the institutions. (Lash 1995, 280–281.)

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., 218).

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 it is also mentioned within the sphere of sociology, consumption, lifestyle or tribe communities – cannot deliver on the promise of security (ibid., 238).

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 no longer seen as fixed or final but as means of communication in various discourses. These constructions can themselves be transformed, 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 such as does not exist but that it is a product of repetition realised through others, in Butler’s own words, “[my] 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 nationalism, 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 emphasizes dialogue and interaction – and, indeed, contemporary art does entail plenty of discussion. An example of this is the Tote 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 utilized 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, 49), 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 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.)

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 into 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 socioculturalis) 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, 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. (Räsänen, 2006, 20; Efl and 2002; see also Sava, 1998.)

How do we write about community-based art education building – what do you see when you look 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 window, there are works of art – permanent, temporary, in various media and for various purposes. In exhibitions and festivals, on the other hand, the viewer is introduced to various aspects of community-based art education – the window to the world of art through community-based art education. These can be seen in the form of atlases, exhibitions, video works, audiovisual material and interaction with various school groups in Finnish Lapland, Sweden, Estonia, Mexico and Arizona. The steps take you into 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.

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tions or festivities are a showcase for the school and its activi-
ties in the community and at the same time facilitate the
involvement of the community.

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 landscape and increase the usability of the schoolyard,
and costumes for a cooperatively created role-playing adven-
ture, village festivals or stories relating to the socio-cultural
environment acting as the foundation and the sense of
community serving as the base 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 necessarily to find usability, but rather in the commu-
nication and encountering, the mediation of meanings that is
facilitated by the project, including the making of the works
and, later on, the actual finished piece.

The doors – 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 a
means to foster the realisation of our existential finitude with an eye on different
perspectives, contexts and the concrete conditions. Seder-
holm suggests art education could teach other methods for
arranging with change and ways to convey meaningful messages of
information from fragmented pieces of knowledge. For ex-
ample, conversational arts produce interactive ways to act and
guide us towards solving problems through dialogue. Art as a
mediating tool is essential to guide us through the "lived world" with
pragmatist thinking; knowledge in itself is not significant if it is not used for anything. (Seder-
holm 2006, 54–55.)

The particular potential of visual arts educators in art edu-
cation is to guide students in using and engaging with these tools
techniques and skills relating to the visual form from which
meanings are constructed. An essential challenge for skills in-
struction 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 aspect of visual arts instruction. She suggests that art education must take multi-sensory experiences as its starting point, combin-
ing visual as well as other sensory aspects, and also the touching of
materials. (Laitinen 2003, 144, 189.) This chal-

The report published by the Centre for Occupational Safety states that the visual arts can offer opportunities for developing occupational safety through the point of view of, among other issues, experiencing joy at work, coping with sometimes related to work, coping with uncertain promoting mental

growth and taking equality perspectives into consideration

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

In my article I have examined the dialogical and performa-
tive forms of art, the concept of community, socio-cultural
animations, and experiential artistic learning, and in the point of
view of community-based art education. To conclude, I will
focus on the relationship of community-based art education with
the Sami community. To say that there is a "schematic building that keeps it standing and protect it. The walls can be leaned on, and, when necessary, they can 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 signifi-
cance of creativity, health and well-being. For example, the project entitled "Oulun hyvinvointikunnan uudistaminen"
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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. Kuilakoski (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 OPEPPO, 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 Puikkonen (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 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 environmentalism, 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. (Billand, 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...
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, art, 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, art, and art, this ever-changing situation is also a fruitful starting point for performative art activities, emphasises Hiltunen, 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 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 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 as separate; they are often simultaneously both creators and recipients (Luyi 1995b).

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 (2005) 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 cities, regions 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 many meanings of environment

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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 perceived as a societal forum for exercising societal power. 

According to Neperud (1995), it is precisely this understanding of the 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 the environment as a meeting place for social, economic and political interests, and also as a forum for presenting environmental and multicultural perspectives on 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 and multicultural art educators there are when they are engaged in place-making in multicultural, multietnic and post-colonial situations.

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, 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 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 environmental art and educational environments by Neperud (1995) and Artefacts (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, 84–85) brings up an interesting concept, liiken hiihko, 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, in the best case, create a framework for the longed-for interaction between school, home and the surrounding community.

The Northern schoolyard as a lived-in place

Many environmental educators and artists see the schoolyard as a lived-in place. The schoolyard is a place where all the levels are manifested: 1) the physical environment, such as the schoolyard with its facilities and places of activity, 2) the immediate network related to that environment, such as the school or classroom communities, playmates, etc., 3) the social structure, such as the group experiences in school, 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). 

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Karjalainen (2006, 84–85) brings up an interesting concept, liiken hiihko, 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, in the best case, create a framework for the longed-for interaction between school, home and the surrounding community.

The Northern schoolyard as a lived-in place

Many environmental educators and artists see the schoolyard as a lived-in place. The schoolyard is a place where all the levels are manifested: 1) the physical environment, such as the schoolyard with its facilities and places of activity, 2) the immediate network related to that environment, such as the school or classroom communities, playmates, etc., 3) the social structure, such as the group experiences in school, 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). 

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 environmental and multicultural perspectives on 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 and multicultural art educators there are when they are engaged in place-making in multicultural, multietnic and post-colonial situations.
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 handcraft as the embodiment of Sami art and courses on tradition-based handcraft 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 take part in 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 handcraft in relation to cultural identity and the post-colonialist situation have been explored by Gutorm (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 situational 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 close 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 multilingual communities, the school building with its dormitories represents a new realm 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 in rural and/or small communities is a major question when making 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 (Jokela 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 Markketa Kytät (2006), based on the definitions by James Gibson. According to Kytät, affordances – that is, what kind of possibilities a place offers for an activity – not only depend on the place itself and its physical framework but are also socioconstructive phenomenon, a culturally determined choice of the actors.

The basis for the schoolyard activities of the Arctic Children II project is the view of the close relationship of the northern villages, 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).
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, 148–119).

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 artistic 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. Personal experience and autobiographical aspects gain emphasis. The expressive nature of work and the individual experience 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 B**: Activities through which the pupil creates new, personally significant meanings and symbols. Socially displaced people, immigrants or the young people of troubled neighbourhoods. This is the activity they call place-making.
- **Square C**: Activities through which the group or community produces new community-based meanings and symbols resulting from their own culture. Alongside physical action, the focus is on mutual understanding, intersubjective communication and interrelation 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.
- **Square D**: Activities where a group or community produces new community-based meanings and symbols resulting from their own culture. Alongside physical action, the focus is on mutual understanding, intersubjective communication and interrelation 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.

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, out-of-school and self-reliant 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 town council 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, during which the participants 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., 2006e) and in winter art (Huhmanriemi et al., 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b) produced by the University of Lapland and the 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 relation to the village community, 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 environment. It is exactly the richness and depth of these beliefs and environmental stories that is a typical feature of the Sami culture (Huuskoenen, 2004, Aarjon, 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 into 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. Sevenettijärvi 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 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.

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**In northern schoolyards: Sevettijärvi, Jokkmokk and Lovozero**

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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 art experiences applicable to the special northern circumstances and sociocultural setting. The schoolyard projects carried out within the ArchiChildren project in the schools of Sevenjärvi (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 is a platform for working outdoors both in winter and autumn. The methods and starting points of environmental education were new and unfamiliar to the teachers.

Place- and community-specific art, which has 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; and as a showcase for the school’s view of learning and for its community merit; 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.

References


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 Konkalaavaara 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[1] 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 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).

1The modules were designed and implemented by Minna Lilja (biology and geography teacher) and Anneli Lilleberg (art teacher).

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 Pursula (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...
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 curriculum 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 supports psychological well-being. According to ecologist Joseph 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-geographer Kirsti 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 look beyond the fear caused by environmental problems and rediscover nature as a source of vitality and joy, feeling solidarity towards the environment. Haila (2006, 4–16). 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.)

The multi-sensory observation of the environment is emphasised in art instruction, and they also emerge in an examination of scientific phenomena. Efl and dispersons 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. "Ducks, humans, slimy, beautiful waterways make you a lot calmer." (girl, age 15)

Several themes included in our instructional modules involved instruction reflecting on their own relationship to 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. "Ducks, humans, slimy, beautiful waterways make you a lot calmer." (girl, age 15). Through instructional modules implemented outdoors and in an examination of scientific phenomena, 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.

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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
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 (Wahlinström 1997, 1). In the silence of nature, which is neither emptiness nor soundlessness, one can hear calming sounds that are overwhelmed 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. The world of sounds has a decisive impact on the psychological well-being of a person and a place. The unique character of a place influences the feelings and thoughts of the people (Kankkunen 1997, 28). The world of sounds is 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 place influences the feelings and thoughts of the people (Kankkunen 1997, 28).

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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 place influences the feelings and thoughts of the people (Kankkunen 1997, 28).

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 (Bocckel 2007; Jokela 1997; Erzen 2005; Savva, Trimmis & Zachariou 2004, 250). Concentration, physical labour and corporality make the compilation of environmental art a more profound and integrating experience (Hiltunen 2007, 68–75; Jokela, 2005). The participants have been observed to become more uninhibited and interactive. The participants have become empowered, they have understood themselves as a part of the ecosystem, and they have formed a relationship with nature and with themselves as part of it. (Savva, Trimmis & 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 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 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, 208)

Thematic Integration of Biology, Geography and Art Instruction in Support of Youth Well-Being

Outdoor Experiences, Art and Identity – Theory Meets Practice
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 of something 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 ambiguous 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 space 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.)

Thematic Integration of Biology, Geography and Art Instruction in Support of Youth Well-Being

8 Environmental artists, such as Andy Goldsworthy and Nils-Udo, visualise nature experiences and the relationship to the environment. In the instructional modules we discussed the environment for other regions and the people living in them. (Castelli 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. (Koikonen 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).

In connection with the Natural Surroundings of the Nearby Area 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 arguementative 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 for other regions and the people living in them. (Castelli 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. (Koikonen 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 security, identity, 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 environment 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 rooms 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.

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References


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 education, instruction and school culture. School theme days, for example, facilitate the development of new forms of collaboration that... the sense of community instead of individual performance represent significant trends in instruction from the point of view of...
Living at 70º 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 (Moen, 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 physical activities. Motor coordination skills are 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 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 may lead to poor health in adulthood, and that low self-esteem, expectations of rejection, and social withdrawal and passivity, frequently recur when the child has grown up (Wasshurnger, 2004 in Kokkoli, 2007). Problems related to poor motor skills and obesity is a clearly a 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 motor activities. Among the 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 Uset et al. (2000) who points out that providing children with motor activities that are not only focused on the objectives of a specific sport, but also on experiences of self-mastery and engagement, is of significant importance. The guidelines for giving physical activity can also be calibrated according to the child's age and stage in development and also the environmental situation, such as in a class with a specific physical challenge or in a class with children with physical disabilities (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.

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 disease, diabetes, and some forms of cancer are affecting people in many parts of the world. These conditions can have serious consequences, different types of cancer and musculo-skeletal disorders account for 2–6% of the total health-related expenses of industrialized nations (Uset 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 (Brom et al., 2002 in Kokkoli, 2007). Even though our region offers a very active lifestyle, and broad areas that can functionally control their body in different physical activities become less attractive as friends and playmates. Among girls, however, Olweus did not encounter the same kind 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:

“...and an 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 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 regular physical activity and training facilities 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 pupils 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 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 movement, physical self-confidence and self-esteem, and the attainment of knowledge are both the content and the goals of the activity. Tired 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. Where this is claimed should be “absorbed” in the activity. Not 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 be involved, and that what they do with their bodies in sport 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 is a base for the adult to add the knowledge that they feel and monitor, and 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 the weight pounds through skillless physical inactivity. 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 physical activity is not just a matter of developing an active lifestyle, but also involves the development of physical fitness, and the health gains are seen as an outcome of the activity itself.
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 challenged and to find an appropriate 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. The environment needs to provide a sense of security and freedom 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. There are, however, no completely new skills that need to be withdrawn in order to conceal a lack of skills. If someone wants to compete, they can do so.

Holistic thinking

There are several different perspectives on the need for holistic thinking on the issue of the development and learning of children. 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, societal and social processes (Moen of budas, 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 interplay, which happens on the neuro-physiological as well as the physical and social level 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 physical interchange. A physically active child who is being bullied 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 suitable 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 activity: 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 experience a positive satisfaction 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 forms of passive 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 interpretation of our consciousness and its surroundings.”

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, Vygenky 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-creating. 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 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 complete the compulsory education, and pupils 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 ArcticChildren 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 pupils and the school. The role of the investigator is meant to be “empowering”, to make the teachers and pupils trust their own possibilities. This is an example of change and learning through acting. This kind of action research or action learning

Crystals of Schoolchildren’s Well-Being

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and its work on change should go on for several years. A process 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 in 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 pupils answered in the “Questions” section on the first page of the book. 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 for each for parents and teachers. 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 Olveus’ anti-bullying programme was being implemented at the school, Olveus is central to the theory and context.

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 Activi-
ties 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 various other possibilities.

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 pro-
vided 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 impor-
tance 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 fulfi l 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 activi-
ties was better:

“The pupils were good at fi nding new things to do – they became more creative outdoors. They just keep going.”

“I believe the play has become more positive and more challeng-
ing.”

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One teacher wrote:

“While most students join in, the oldest are somewhat more pas-
sive.”

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 ‘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 con fl ict to arise now.”

“As far as I’ve seen, there are very few conflicts happening indoors.”

“Then fewer conflicts.”

Increased well-being:

“There is more smiling, more activity and positivity.”

“Definitely – there has 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 ef-
fort, 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 class-
rooms:

“Few con fl icts outdoors – the learning curve improves – I don’t have to deal with con fl icts.”

“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 guide – the pupils feel more confident 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 you 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.”

“They’ve been able to use their bodies and are more focused and motivated (+ calmer).”

In the school as a working environment:

“It is easier 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 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 fences we built?’”

“Negative: ‘the 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.

The parents’ evaluation.

At the time of the May registration, the pupils were asked to answer a questionnaire by post. 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.

The parents wrote:

“They no longer complain about going to school in the mornings. When there is outdoor teaching they get up at 6.10 to get ready, very eager to go.”

“Suddenly he’s wearing outdoor clothes when he leaves for school.”

“The pupils (at least outdoors in the evenings) is the most ‘unforced’, 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 experienced as such, are more focused and motivated (+ calmer).

“It’s fun to be outdoors. Expresses more motivation in class. Also establishes more personal 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 breaktime.”

“I like school a lot better now. I feel I’m more respected as a young person at school and that the teachers give us young people more confidence at school.”

“Then’s less bullying.”

The parents were asked 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.

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 methods. 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 (Dagbladet, 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 do not 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 actually 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, were more active and 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 corresponds both with the findings at Holte skole and with the theories of Wolvs, who has argued that a better outdoor environment which stimulates positive activities, prevents the 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 questionnaire, 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 questionnaire individually before we had a collective discussion about the problems and the questions. This was done to prevent any of the teachers’ views from affecting the others’ opinions.

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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.

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 breaks. 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 given greater emphasis to 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.

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Lov om grunnskolen og den videregående oppdragelse. [The Norwegian law on primary and secondary education]. (Opplæringsloven).

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 planning and construction of facilities. We need a leader/inspirer.

Establishing modes of cooperation with local sports clubs, the School Leisure System (SFU), and pre-primary schools are other possible ways to go.


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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 Astot, 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, Late 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 Hyltenstam 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 20th 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: “Vi elsket vårt land, vi elsket vårt språk, vi elsket vår kultur.” (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 oriens-
focusing on teaching 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. After-wards, 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 subject schools. 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 teach a language, 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-oriented subject field with a focus on fish and fishing, past and present.

In Hirvonen’s (2004) evaluation of the Sami school in Norw- way, following the reform 97,98, 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 & Szczepanski, 1997). Utvi Gaus (2006) has emphasised the Nomad school11 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). Utvi Gaus 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 school 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 being outdoors, was the basis for learning in summer schools and field study courses. Sami traditional knowledge is knowledge which is gained and preserved for genera-tions in local Sami communities (Jersrelaten, 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 (Jerulesren, 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 environ-ment, as well as an understanding of psychological con-ditions, spirituality, social relationships, cultural and social

| Ensuring 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 (Trulsh, 2007). Accordingly, there is a great need to actively support the preservation of the Sami language. Schools can be an efficient tool when it comes to teaching a language, hence in former schools, it is necessary both that teachers have a good command of the language and that they also have extensive knowledge in how to teach a foreign language. Bilingual teaching (Todal, 2004), needs 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, where Sami is spoken in the classroom, where the teachers are Sami, but also where the students are Sami. This means that students are (or will be) bilingual or even multilingual, with the Sami language being the most important. 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 the students. Therefore, it is important that the students get to listen to and use the language in different functions and situations (Centret for språkbad 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 for språkbad och flerspråkighet, 2007). In addition, the use of the Sami language is of vital importance in developing different subject fields for students who have Sami as their first language and those who have it as their second language. An outdoor day involving communication is knowledge which is gained and preserved for generations in local Sami communities (Jernsletten, 1997).

1The 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 Sami management area for Sami languages. The management area is made up of the municipalities of Kåfjord, Tana, Karasjok, Porsanger and Sør-Varanger (Hirvonen, 2004).
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 down for a long period of time, the students asked why this did not matter because they knew where to get water. The teacher also mentioned that they had now started a project with a water theme, to give the students an understanding of the natural lifecycle and the importance of protecting nature.

Accordingly, there is a need for sustainable development that 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 languages and their cultures. 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).

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 students are learning about the importance of protecting nature and various needs are met without jeopardising the possibility of future generations meeting their needs. Sustainable development consists of three mutually dependent parts:

- Economic sustainability, which means building a society where basic human needs are met.
- Economic sustainability, which means using human and material resources in sensible ways.

3 Fireplace

Outdoor Days as a Pedagogical Tool

The Sami story-telling tradition is marked by the importance of close social relationships and the relationship to nature (Nergård, 2006).

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which are all concepts encompassing the knowledge indig- enous 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 ben- efits 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, it 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 (Szczepan- ski, 2007).

Outside in the natural environment it is quiet and everyday has time to listen to the silence…

According to the WHO’s definition, (in Szczepanski, 2007), health means the greatest possible physical, mental and so- cial-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 and working is. Mental 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. Inde- pendence 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 find the way to the site.

In her research, Balto (1997), states that the most central aspect of Sami upbringing was making the children inde- pendent. 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:

“Self-reliance means more than in the hicking. [sic…] These children do not have to walk or talk with adults all the time. If you are lost, you can find your way alone. [sic…]” (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 be being guided all the time…) (Balto, 1997, 11-12.)

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 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 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). 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 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 mathematis 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 bene- fits and psychosocial factors, play a part. The outdoor day re- sulted 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 mat- ters, including, among other things, respect for nature, were in focus. There were also 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 be- come independent and how to cooperate with others. Accord- ing 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 na- tural learning in the Sami school. This means that outdoor days function as a pedagogical tool for learning in school.

References


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 Sevet-tijärvi School during the ArctiChildren II project. I refer to the school camps carried out mainly in classes 5–6 at Korkalovaara Comprehensive School[1] 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 and drama 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, 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 being, living 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 the 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 (Linnosuo 2007, 204). Drama 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.

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1 See further, Spinning Drama and Adventure around the Well-Being by Salmi, Kurri & Villanen in this publication, pp.

2 Drama comprises theatre, therapy and teaching (Hiltunen & Konivuori 2005).

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What is Role Adventure?

Heli Villanen

Adventure in the forest, Pupil of Korkalovaara Comprehensive school
Adventures and drama, basic components of role adventure

“The most important journey ultimately is the journey inwards” (Morlock 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 resulting in the individual being ready to face larger challenges in his/her life than before. Instead of a risk, we could rather speak about a skill 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 ArcticChildren projects one competes not only with others but also with oneself. It also provides the common rules with a constructive way to test their limits. (Morlock 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.)

Drama 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. What is essential is to instil positive attitudes towards learning and a thirst for knowledge, and to develop effective learning skills.

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, practice answering ‘put-downs’, giving strong message, restating solutions, expressing their feelings safely, and tackling prejudiced and racist behaviour. Role-play gives the opportunity to learn not only the words but also the tone, body language and facial expression to become more socially effective.” (Weare 2000, 127.)

Drama and adventure education methods 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.

What is Role Adventure?

Abseiling at the School camp, August 2007. Photo: Ulpu Siponen

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 sets 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 differences 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 often refers to the special themes of the school camps. This helps to focus on the right goals.

Drama and adventure education methods share a way of working with the background to the adventure activities used at Korkeavuori Comprehensive School is the environmental psychological idea that positive experiences of nature are instruc-tive 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 everyone 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 focuse 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 Korkeavuori Comprehensive School it was discovered that it would be good to rotate the various 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.

What is Role Adventure?

Abseiling at the School camp, August 2007. Photo: Ulpa Siponen
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 (Hakkakainen 1998, 52). Children’s free play is always motivated from the inside and it is generated on the children’s initiative (Hakkakainen, 1990; Korhonen, 2005).

Sandwiched: The outdoor experience and role adventure 

The selected interviewees danced and acted in the first scene as characters created from the frame story and were placed in the wild nature of the Kemijoki River. The role adventure that is linked to the frame story has a child as the protagonist. A role adventure aims at increasing understanding of the chosen theme, whereas a typical role play aims at entertain ment. 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 Sevettsijärvi School, for example, dealt with the life of Saint Triphon of Pechenga in 16th-century Pechenga (Petsamo in Finnish). 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.

Role adventure is a combination of adventure and drama as a role play. 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, 14–23.).

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Role adventure – diving into the frame story

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 example, 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...
Outdoor Experiences, Art and Identity – Theory Meets Practice

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.

Interviewee 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 other’s product and just negotiating while construction. The assignment was done at the forest and miniature models of farms were made of wood, sticks, cones, moss etc.)

Pupil P: Well, it was quite fun, but then it didn’t quite work out with the other group. They were building a Uppa kind but and a wall out of an old worn-out mop, and we were building a house.

I: How should you have negotiated so that it would have worked?

P: The negotiations on the other side could have done something else than just say “well, this is my own farm.”

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. It is essential to take care of these experiences in the theme interview after School Camp II as the reflection was added 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 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. One interviewee was not able to describe the concept of compassion, but he thought the word sorry comes close to it. 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.

The potential of role adventure in promoting well-being

In the best-case scenario, role adventure leads to an increased understanding and actualization 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 child’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 organized 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 adventure 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. These challenges awaken emotions that fuel empowerment. As part of a well-planned and long-term educational process, role adventure has 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.

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References


References


References


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. 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 Sevettijärvi 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.
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:

“The 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.”

Still, 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 making up cones and involved in planting. I was swarming, too. Our group worked almost perfectly. We got this topic, Skolt Sámi culture, to show in the work. Our completed works were of course the best they were all really great. . . . Our work was called Cone Village. It tells about the unity of the Sámi inhabitant and their people. It is made from cones and was made up of cones and leaves.”

The environmental works of art were completed on Wednesday of the second working week. Each group 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 community arts. None of the teachers at Jokkmokk Sami School had prior experience of making environmental art. The project was therefore quite challenging, and some teachers were not sure about its merit. The teachers’ starting point was the idea that it would be nice if, when arriving at the schoolyard, visitors noted that 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, pine cones, birch, twigs, stones and leaves.

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 of 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 described her work as follows:

“It was difficult and sometimes you didn’t know what you were supposed to do, 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 described the Skolt Sámi culture, telling about how 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 then I did a sunni with XXX and XXX. Skolt Sámi, 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, horsetail, flowers, etc. The work is called Twig Heart. The work shows that there are many different cultures and multicultural love in Sevettijärvi. Different cultures in the work describe the different cultures. With the heart we heartily welcome people to Sevettijärvi (even if we didn’t like them :))”

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, but the teachers felt that 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 the teachers felt they needed more technical guidance to familiarise themselves with the method.

The works by the 6-12-year-old pupils of the Sami school were collected and exhibited in the schoolyard. The parents of the 6-12-year-old pupils also helped to create a constructed environment that were important to them. They wanted to create a Sami atmosphere in the schoolyard with different structures and arrangements. All the groups hoped that their works would 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 willows, as well as branches, cones and stones, 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 were 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.

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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, 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 nearly day care 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 sculptures.

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 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 one work that was to be realised. 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 art 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 limitation of the language of art enables experimenting with this kind 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

1We 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.

Outdoor Experiences, Art and Identity – Practical Exercises

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.
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\(^1\). 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).

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 food looks really heavy. Where are you in such a hurry to get it? 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. My longest school day is 8 hours, and even that feels too long. The girl thinks: And that’s your biggest problem…?

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\(^1\)See Further Huhmarniemi, Lilja & Lilleberg in this book, pp.
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 drying 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 Ansioitu (“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 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.

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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 personality 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 spooling 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,
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. 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 suspicious 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 pupils felt that the stories about their dreams were so personal that they only wanted to show them to their own group.

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 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)

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 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 geography of the area. The Ounasvaara surrounding hills entail signs of the Earth’s past, such as ancient seashore rocks. The pupils imagined themselves on the ancient seaside 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. 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 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.

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 elsewhere. 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 hell. I’ve been to Thalând 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.

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Physical Activities In The Snow: Practical Ideas

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 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 toboggan-sledding 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

Pupils in the schoolyard. Photo: Rita Jonassen

Rita Jonassen and Anne Stokke
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 we 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.

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.

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.

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 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 to adapt the activities in such a way that they can be performed in both schools and in the nature. This way, children can be encouraged to try new things and develop new skills.

The pupils started to build small caves and then expanded them by digging tunnels. They also created shelters and sculptures using the snow. 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.

**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 do with one single teacher. This, and other circumstances, made us put this project “on ice” for the time being.

**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 sculpures 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 would 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 hand saw, 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 protruberances that could melt and drip when many people were inside.
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 organized as part of the ArcticChildren 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.
In this article we 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 Camps

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.

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 frame story 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 17th 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 we aimed at holistic teaching by integrating different subjects into a whole, but the main

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1 “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.

Spinning Drama and Adventure around the Well-Being

Eero Salmi, Pasi Kurri and Heli Villanen

Outdoor Experiences, Art and Identity – Practical Exercises
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.

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...” At this point Mari and Totti Arvopalo still had no fisherman’s luck. Mari managed to hook yet another net, and one of the oak’s brake. With no fish, the brothers started to get excited. Where would they get dried salmon for the winter, or money for the market, if they got no fish? Mari was cursing Aalti the Sami, whom he considered a witch... he doubted that even Aalti’s magic powers could bring about this kind of bad luck. Aalti himself was totally unaware of the brothers’ had luck and suspicions. He got plenty of fish. To give thanks for his fisherman’s luck, Aalti decided to visit vesisu 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 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.

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 pupil?

Activities lead to the adaptation to the place and situation

1. Icebreaker games and trust exercises
2. Making of vesisu, 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 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. Alas, the spirit of the sea, was not too generous, however, so the catch was rather modest.

**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 at dusk we summoned the villagers and explained that at dusk we summoned the villagers and explained that at dusk we summoned the villagers and explained that there 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 ideversly towards the enemy in the glooms of the spring night. When we arrived in the forest we
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)
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 cooperate 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)
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 hamperers 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 12 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 and 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 saying ‘well done’ was 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.

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.
We implemented a role adventure project based on 16th-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 16th-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 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 16th-century Skolt Sami people, the concept of seasonal migration was introduced to our pupils by touring four activity sites that represented different aspects of their life. 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, i.e. 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 character family’s meeting. This enabled the students to showcase their particular skills and strengths, in addition to getting the parents involved in the process.

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.

The Battle for the Holy Cup

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 of 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 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 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
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 questionaire. It would have been useful to discuss and analyse the events even further by means of small-group theoretical discussions, for example, or writing assignments if we had had enough time for that. We decided to arrange an evening meeting for pupils and parents at a later date, during which we would show photos depicting 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 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’ rules 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 ‘jumping over’, a mini-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 de-brief and analyse a role play adventure project in several ways. De-briefing 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 is appreciated.

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.

### More knowledge and appreciation

More knowledge and appreciation

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 unstructured approach to teaching helps students to learn what they want to learn and gives everyone involved one more opportunity to share their experiences and reflect on what was learned.

**Fun but wet**

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### 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 unstructured approach to teaching helps students to learn what they want to learn and gives everyone involved one more opportunity to share their experiences and reflect on what was learned.

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: 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 16th century and who St Triphon 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.

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 descriptions 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 in a 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.
The role adventure project in a nutshell

The role adventure project: “Battle for the holy cup” Role adventure preparation and a 24-hour role adventure. The theme was the life of the Skolt Sami in the 16th century and the period of the 25-Year War between Sweden and Russia. The role adventure included a battle between the guerrillas and the Skolt villagers for the possession of the Pechenga Monastery cup brought by St Triphon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project aspect</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St Triphon of Pechenga and Pechenga Monastery</td>
<td>A dramatised interview with St Triphon of Pechenga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church ceremonies</td>
<td>Demonstrations of the ordination of a monk and baptism at the church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional games</td>
<td>Traditional Skolt Sami games as school morning assembly events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle: Seasonal migration</td>
<td>Activity site work with the theme of living according to the four seasons in the 16th century. Various exercises and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical period</td>
<td>A brief introduction of the period of the 25-Year War between Sweden and Russia.</td>
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<td>Costumes and props</td>
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<td>Drama exercises and developing one’s own character</td>
<td>Preparing for drama work by means of games as well as improvisation and trust exercises.</td>
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<td>Role card</td>
<td>Defining the pupil’s character</td>
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<td>Role descriptions</td>
<td>A description and storyline drawn by the teacher for each character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning the character names</td>
<td>Planning one’s own activities during the role adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church ceremonies at “the monastery”</td>
<td>“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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing and evaluation</td>
<td>Drawing a map of the area and writing down one’s emotions. Thematic discussion. Questionnaire to pupils, parents and teachers.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

References and literature

Drama practices

Sinivuo, P. & Sinivuo, T. 2000. Eurooppa qoqquires. Ora korres-

Orthodox religion and Pechenga


The history of the Skolt Sami

A list of Skolt Sami literature: http://www.saunalahti.fi/aa-
musun/koj/tarjoutu.htm

The Battle for the Holy Cup
Pupil of the Korkalovaara Comprehensive School

participated successfully in the adventure camps from 14 to 16 May 2007
at Koivikkonsiemmi 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

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

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 +----------------------------- -

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


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:

   ________________________________________________________________

4. In your opinion, how have the adventure camps influenced the pupil’s school work?
   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

   OTHER COMMENTS:

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

   ________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ANSWERS. HAVE A NICE AUTUMN!