When inequality fades – about PPR's work in a disadvantaged school district

By Sarah Kirkegaard Jensen and Thomas Szulevicz

This article examines how inequality is articulated, interpreted and addressed in educational psychology practice (EP practice) through collaboration between educational psychologists and a public school in a socio-economically disadvantaged rural area. The article analyses inequality as a situated and dynamic phenomenon in EP practice. It argues that inequality has historically been a central yet often implicit concern within EP practice and school psychology, and that in contemporary EP practice, inequality is both pervasive and at risk of fading from view within institutional collaboration processes. Empirically, the article analyses how inequality is shifted from situated, contextual, and structural conditions towards individualised understandings of problems; how professional perspectives contribute to this shift; and how local and organisational conditions shape the possibilities for the work of educational psychologists in EP practice. The article concludes by discussing implications for future EP practice and research, emphasising the need to more explicitly engage with inequality as a shared professional responsibility.

Situated inequality – about working to create relevant participation opportunities for all children

By Maja Røn-Larsen and Charlotte Højholt

Drawing on the 'Participation and situated inequality in children's institutions' research project, this article develops a conceptual framework for understanding inequality as situated and linked to children's unequal access to possibilities of participation in their institutional everyday lives. The concept of situated inequality represents a particular approach to inequality by shifting the research focus towards conflicts in institutional contexts, rather than towards children's social backgrounds or individual dispositions. A central aim of the article is to clarify and further develop the concept of participation, which is currently used in many different and at times contradictory ways across practice, policy and research. We seek

to develop the substance of the concept of participation in order to characterise different possibilities of participation and link these to institutional conditions and conflicts. This provides analytical tools to understand how and why children have unequal access to necessary social resources in their everyday lives within institutional settings, and to develop relevant conditions for participation for all children.

"The Black Hole" – unequal participation conditions for young people in a marginalised urban area

By Gry Tybjerg and Rebekka Sylvest-Berg

The article examines how interconnected political, historical, area-local, and school-institutional conflicts shape young people's everyday lives at a school in a marginalised urban area. It challenges the assumption that unequal conditions for participation in school can be understood solely or, in isolation, as something young people 'bring with them' into school. Through analyses of empirical conflict situations in the everyday life of the school, we demonstrate how inequality unfolds as socially situated and dynamically shifting, and how possibilities for working to transcend inequality arise when teachers critically explore shared conflicts and collaborate with students to address them in inclusive and flexible ways, thereby co-creating new opportunities for participation within their shared everyday practice.

General pedagogical teacher professionalism in working with participation opportunities in school

By Tilde Lykke Mardahl-Hansen and Gry Tybjerg

Although inclusion in schools is a political goal, it remains unclear how we should understand and create the conditions for teachers' work in developing students' possibilities for participation in inclusive teaching practices. This article investigates the challenges that teachers face in working with participation and how we can develop a language for general pedagogical teacher professionalism. Based on analyses of young people's perspectives and teachers' professional conditions, we discuss how teachers' general pedagogical collaboration in developing possibilities for participation within school communities can be understood, with a focus on the development of teaching practices.

Inequality of culture and ethnicity in PPR/ There can also be DIFFERENCES, i.e. two families from Syria may well do things differently – understandings and meanings of cultural, ethnic and socio-material differences in PPR's collaboration with ethnic minority children and families

By Jasaman Najafpour and Sarah Kirkegaard Jensen

During the 1990s and 2000s, the integration of ethnic minorities in Denmark became a politically contentious issue. In particular, the academic outcomes and socialisation of pupils with ethnic minority backgrounds were problematised within the educational system. More broadly, the positioning, opportunities for participation, and school achievement of ethnic minority pupils have been the subject of numerous research studies and analyses. However, the positioning and scope for action available to educational psychologists in educational psychology practice in their collaboration with ethnic minority families appear to be limited and largely unexplored. This article is based on the Master's thesis *Conceptualisations of ethnic minority children in educational psychology practice* (Najafpour, 2024). In the present article, Potter and Wetherell's discursive analytical framework is employed to examine the understandings and taken-for-granted assumptions that the participating educational psychologists draw upon when making sense of the complexities involved in working together with ethnic minority families in educational psychology practice, as well as how unequal structural, linguistic, economic, and material conditions are implicated in these dynamics.

Educators, teachers and other professionals' views on children and young people in vulnerable positions

By Morten Ejrnæs

This article examines how professionals such as educators and social workers assess the prospects of children and young people in vulnerable situations. Based on seven vignette studies conducted between 1999 and 2023, the findings reveal three key patterns:

Wide disagreement: Professionals often differ significantly in their judgments about risks, causes, and appropriate interventions – even within the same profession.

Risk overestimation: There is a strong tendency to overrate the likelihood that children will develop serious problems if their parents face social challenges. These biases can lead to stigmatisation and ineffective preventive measures.

False consensus: Many professionals assume that most colleagues share their views, even when they belong to a minority position.

Improving knowledge about actual risk levels and encouraging open discussion of professional disagreements can help prevent biased decisions and promote holistic, empathetic approaches in social and educational work.

"I'm very structured and such... Is it because I'm doing something wrong??" – about young people's psychiatric interpretations of the difficult things in life

By Julie J. Bertelsen and Joachim Meier

In this article, we examine how an increased societal focus on psychiatric diagnoses shapes young people's understanding of their own and others' emotions and behaviour. Drawing on the prevalence inflation hypothesis, as well as a qualitative interview study, we demonstrate the following: (1) that diagnoses have become a widespread way for young people to understand themselves; (2) that diagnoses in practice carry a broad and often blurred linguistic meaning; and (3) that young people use diagnostic language to explain why they perceive themselves as negatively different from others. Based on these findings, we conclude by pointing to three central practical implications: the need for greater awareness of the potential side effects of sharing information about psychiatric diagnoses; the need to cultivate alternative languages for understanding the difficulties of youth; and finally, the need to normalise non-pathological challenges that inevitably accompany adolescence.