

The Creative Transformation of Practices and Theories: democratic principles for learning and knowledge sharing

Eva Hansson, preschool teacher and project leader
Claudia Gillberg, senior lecturer and course developer (Action Research in Preschool), Sweden
Claudia.gillberg@lnu.se
evahan@edu.gislaved.se

What's there to share?

- Meeting between two representatives of two different organisations: preschool and university
- A course in Action Research that relies heavily on contributions from the students (= participation)
- Theoretical and practical knowledge as overlapping necessities
- Getting to know each other's organisational realities

Challenges to new ways of knowledge building

- The idea of AR as a challenge to traditional ways of thinking about 'knowledge'
- The individual participants' coming to terms with new ways of knowledge building
- The facilitating aspects of the course work, e.g. by way of distance-learning platforms such as FirstClass
- An AR course as an organisational challenge within HE with its norms and directives on how to run a "proper" academic course

Learning Processes and Actions as Markers for Transformation

- Concrete Actions in various preschools are subject to pedagogic documentation, which requires systematic data collection and meticulous recordings of data
- Actions require attention to various learning processes for groups, individuals, children, parents, managements, and AR teacher alike
- Actions, when recorded meticulously, as catalytic driving force leading to sometimes very visible organisational changes (see examples)

The essential necessity of reflection

- Knowledge-based actions are not possible without a huge amount of reflection in various practices
- Reflection as a shared knowledge building process in learning platforms and in the course work (AR teacher = facilitator rather than a traditional university teacher)
- Reflection requires much participation from all students, and teacher, alike. Participation remains, however, one of the most difficult aspects to achieve

Democratic Principles of Creative Knowledge Sharing

- The course in AR corresponds with concrete needs voiced by practitioners
- Aspects of power and the positionality of preschool teachers within their organisations are deeply considered
- Grading is not an option, as it is the process that it subject to evaluation, which is undertaken together
- Creativity is required in order to offer new ways of learning without overstepping HE rules and directives to an extent that would render the course impossible

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- Creative new ways of learning and knowledge sharing have to be initiated in the various participants' own practices and organisations
- Participation as a problem of facilitation (how to render participation easier for all people concerned: ethical issues!)
- Ethics as a fundamental part of democratic, creative knowledge sharing

Some concluding points

- The course in AR afforded some practitioners the degree of reflection that they had been missing in their day-to-day practices
- The practitioners could all report back that transformation was beginning to become visible during the one year of the AR course
- The AR course holder has managed to negotiate new conditions for course work and a continued course (2nd year) with those in charge within the university
- Change is possible but takes far more time and resources than is easily accepted by managements or deans alike
