

A Child-Centred Approach to an Intercultural Education

Child Migration and Integration Trends & Challenges

Friday, June 3rd

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Research Question

- Are the personal and cultural experiences of migrant children included in lessons and education?
- And, if so, how?
- What is the teachers' approach to education in a culturally diverse school?
- How do migrant children perceive and experience education?

- Work in progress – not a completed study

Data and Methodology – the Danish MiCREATE-team

- **Data** are from three schools
- **Participant observation:** altogether 38 days
- **38 lessons** (lesson plans)
(I examine how lessons, content, and knowledge construction processes are reported in the field notes)
- **77 individual art based interviews** with migrant children
- **10 focus group interviews**
(search words: teaching, teacher, school, education)

Lessons –

Subjects, Grades and Approaches to Learning, Theory

■ Lessons observed

- 9 lessons in grade 6
- 13 lessons in grade 10
- 17 lessons in reception class

■ Subjects observed

- German (1)
- Danish (11)
- Religious Education (2)
- History/Social Science (4)
- English (11)
- Math (7)
- Psychology (1)
- Art/Design (1)
- Physical Education (1)

■ Approaches to Learning

■ Teacher-centered/content-centered position.

Focus: Acquisition of skills.
Transmission of academic knowledge.

■ Child-centered/learning-centered position.

Focus: Connecting the personal-cultural knowledge of the children and the academic knowledge of the school. Include themes that appeal to the pre-understanding and experiences of the children.

. Baird/Northfield 1992, Vygotsky 1962, Paulsen 2013, Illeris 2004, Banks 2019, Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016

First Example

Analyses and Theory

EXAMPLE 1	DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meadow-school, reception class• Theme: Migrants having a job: Taxi drives, desk clerks, cleaners, warehouse operatives• Taking a teaching ressource/textbook as the starting point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The <i>intention</i> is to involve the experiences of the children• Monocultural regime• Infusion approach• Othering the children, their families, and their anchor points• Learning resistance is more than likely to occur

Banks 2009, Illeris 2004, Paulsen 2013, Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016

I only have time to
scrutinize this example

Second Example

Analyses and Theory

EXAMPLE 2	DISCUSSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elderflower-school, receptions class• Theme: History: Middle Ages in Denmark• The children produces a poster about a significant event from the same periode of time in their country of origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active involvement of the experiences and anchor points of the children• Multicultural regime?• Infusion approach or transformative approach?• Acceptance and/or othering?• Learning resistance?

Banks 2009, Illeris 2004, Paulsen 2013, Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016

Third Example

Analyses and Theory

EXAMPLE 3

- Belltown, 6th grade
- Theme: Christianity and Islam
- Salvation by faith alone vs. law religion
- Parables from the Bible

DISCUSSION

- Even though islam is included (this is not a requirement of the curriculum)The experiences and the lived religion of the children (anchor points) are not involved – the perspective is theological and dogmatic
- Monocultural regime
- Infusion approach
- Othering of Islam
- Learning resistance is more than likely to occur

Banks 2009, Illeris 2004, Paulsen 2013, Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016, McGuire 2008

How do migrant children talk about and perceive school and education?

The Interviews

- “Many (of the migrant children) point to the importance of learning Danish in a hurry, and the challenges related to learning a new language in fast pace. ‘Well, everybody speaks Danish in Denmark, so you have to ... if you want to understand each other’ says one of the boys (Child 92, male, AG2).”
(**National Report on Qualitative Research**, p. 13).
- **Findings from the interviews:**
- ”School” is an important anchor point for the migrant children and their families – education and further education is crucial to the migrant children
- They find that the Danish ”school” is better than ”school” in their countries of origin and ”school” in their transit countries. They are fond of the teachers
- It is very important to have friends at school
- They hardly talk about the content of the school subjects – but they stress that Danish, Math., and English are important school subjects

Pedagogical and Didactical Challenges

- Find new ways ... to involve the experiences, anchor points, and the personal-cultural knowledge of the the migrant children in the lessons/lesson plans/curriculum (a child-centered, learning orientated position)
- to make it possible for all children in the classroom to transcend and cross "ethnic boundaries ... and cultural borders" (Banks 2019:77) making meaning in an intercultural enviroment
- Reflect on the differences between monocultural, multicultural and intercultural approaches
- Urge the children to strenghten their relations with friends and teachers ... and to engage themselves in the content of the subjects and the knowledge construction-processes in the classrooms

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Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe