

THE EMBODIMENT OF KNOWLEDGE FORMS AND LIFE MODES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

SKETCHES FOR A THEORY AND PRACTICE DIDACTICS

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Key words

Teacher education, knowledge forms, life modes, embodiment, theory and practice

INTRODUCTION

The question of relations between theory and practice are ancient and as tensions between knowledge forms they keep making philosophical and ethnographical grounds for wondering i.e. how knowledge is practiced, what counts as knowledge and how other practices of the relation are valued. Related to a prominent representative the teacher education illustrates different culturally embedded ways of understanding how study and work courses work emphasize different aspects of any education and generally manifests the philosophical and didactical questions of what, how, why and when to learn and teach. Looking closer at a teacher education, particular aspects show varieties of life modes studying, practicing, institutionalizing, and researching what 'being a teacher' is and how this is embodied as habits, routines, and intuitions. To map out a general picture of these configurations this paper presents an analytical model of *topos and logos* constructed to illustrate how students, lecturers and supervising teachers, schools, programs and educational literature perceives becoming a teacher in relation to different forms of knowledge, life modes, habits and theory and practice relations. This

analysis leads to conclude, that cultural life modes embody diverse knowledge forms that strive for the recognition of each other, and that their mutual independence is overseen. This gives rise to suggests that institutions, teachers, supervisors, and students from a meta-didactical perspective could overcome some of the misunderstandings that lead students to drop out and create tensions between placement and college, namely how one another practices and perceives the relations between theory and practice.

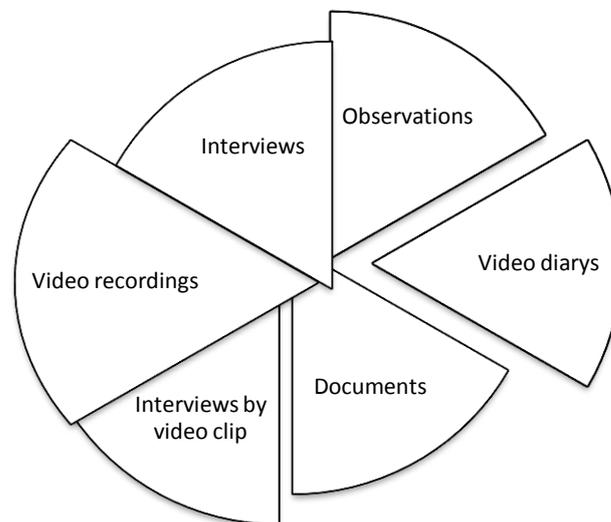
In a theoretical framework of Aristotle (1999), Højrup (2003) and Merleau-Ponty (2000, 2002) I analyze the qualitative data of two teacher students and their supervisors on how different knowledge forms are cultural embedded in life modes and how they are bodily anchored. As a part of my PHD dissertation *Theory and practice in teacher education – knowledge forms, culture and embodiment* (Knudsen 2012) this article focusses on:

- How knowledge forms are embodied and illustrate how different cultures structures the means, ends, causes and effects of a teacher education.
- The sketches of a theory and practice didactics that systemizes and illustrates how different sites, institutions, tasks and work call for different models of theory and practice.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis is based on a qualitative case study in six months of two graduating fourth year students, their two teachers, three supervisors, 60 pupils, students' reports and exams, local and national policy papers. The fieldwork was conducted at the two students' last placement period and in the course of writing their bachelor thesis including the informant's fellow students, teachers and supervisors and the pupils of the practice site. The two students ('Sille' and 'Tina'), their teachers and supervisors were interviewed, observed, videotaped, and the students recorded their own video diary and gave access to their assignments (Noyes 2004, Fog 2004, Rønholt 2003, Østerlund et al 2010). The design is a bricolage of methods (Simons 2009) that triangulates the qualitative methods and constructs a generalizable case study (Flyvbjerg 2006) for understanding rather than explaining the unique cases and hereby identifying cultural tensions between intended and practiced knowledge forms (Knudsen 2012).

Figure 1) 'Methodological bricolage design



THEORY AND PRACTICE IS A GAP BETWEEN FORMS OF RELATIONS

The problem of theory and practice is classic theme in philosophy and not the least in teacher education research. Schön (1987), Grossmann (2008), Korthagen & Kessels (1999) and Hammerness (2006) analyzes empirical how coherence between coursework and practice work can bridge this so called gap. But neither perspective relates the philosophical, cultural and subjective experienced perspectives of how the knowledge forms of the teacher education program are cultural embedded and bodily anchored as students exchange between placement and college practicing varieties of knowledge forms and being accustomed to the changing intentionality of practice work and coursework. A Danish research project, *Bridging the gap between theory and practice* (2013) has shown that teacher students and professional teachers perceive theory and practice in a countless different ways – not necessarily distinct. The observations show that theory is seen not just as books, models or abstractions but also as tools, perspectives and methods. Practice is likewise not simply seen as teaching, doing or handling but as well as culture, habits and technique. This also implies, that students and teachers often perceive theory and practice as close related but related in very different ways. So, in line with Carr (2006) and Jorgensen (2005) the *Bridging the gap* (2013) research project has concluded that the gap is not as much between theory and practice as it is between models of theory and practice. I will return to a clarification of these models later but first confront the complexity of the empirical problem in Danish teacher education.

THE TEACHER EDUCATION'S PROBLEMATIQUE

As in other countries the teacher education in Denmark is designed for students all together to obtain two goals; to be a professional teacher and to be qualified for studying a master's degree. These goals and orientations constitute what I call *the teacher educations problematique* because they articulate two different ways of perceiving the relations between theory and practice from either a professional *hands-on* perspective or an academic *eyes-on* point of view. Reforms of Danish teacher education speak of the same as an increasing academisation since 1966 has been observed when the teacher education for the first time viewed as a study. Later came subject specialization and in 1996 students had to write a Bachelor thesis to end their studies. In 2006 the teacher education colleges was merged and organized at seven university colleges educating students, and students given a relatively wide access to studying at master's level at the university (Knudsen 2012).

The last fifty years of Danish and European teacher education demonstrates how academisation and professionalization varies in forms when academisation is increased by the Bologna process (EHEA 2012) but is up against a strong tradition of ideas of professionalization more closely connected to practice mainly held by the teachers union, some philosophers and researchers (EHEA 2012, Danmarks Lærerforening 2002, Biesta 2007, Schön 1987, Lave 2002).

When asking teacher students and teachers the professional and academic goals are often looked at as mutual exclusive. In their view the teacher education should primarily qualify students for becoming teachers for children in schools, and hence academic content, goals or strategies seem strange, irrelevant or even distracting (Knudsen 2012). Politicians and lectures at teacher colleges do not view the professional and academic goals as mutual exclusive but tend to be more positive towards the academic reforms and critical of students becoming teachers by apprenticeship.

In more detail the teacher education's problematique can be viewed as three related elements:

- The teacher education oriented both at professional practice and studying a master degree, which denotes a tension between different intentions of means and ends of becoming a teacher.
- The teacher education is structured by an exchange between study and work courses which make the students shift their perspective in the changes of cultural practice.
- The teacher education understands itself as bridge between theory and practice, which incarnates an imagination of knowledge forms and their relations.

All in all the teacher education's problematique illustrates an insoluble but identifying problem of tensions between intentions, cultures, and theory and practice relations. To come closer to how these identifying parts are related a philosophical perspective on theory and practice is presented along with an ethnological and phenomenological take on how these knowledge forms are cultural embedded and embodied in the teacher education.

THE TOPOS AND LOGOS MODEL

The overall theoretical framework of Aristotle (1999), Højrup (2003) and Merleau-Ponty (2000, 2002) is ambiguous (Knudsen 2011, Fotí 1998) but conjoins as Aristotle's knowledge forms are viewed as bodily dispositions, *hexis*, (Eikeland 2008) that Højrup's cultural theory of life modes is developed out of (Højrup 2003) and that Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body describes how knowledge is interwoven with cultural milieus (Zahavi & Gallagher 2008).

I will return to analyze the empirical data in this framework but first add on and clarify how distinctions between theory and practice models are understood philosophically and ethnographically. Jorgensen (2005) has from a philosophical point of view constructed four models of the relations between theory and practice that has been my outset in understanding the term of bridging gaps between theory and practice in a theoretical and an empirical analysis.

- The dichotomy model views theory and practice as mutual exclusive in a descriptive dualism and since this model were not found in empirical data that speaks of a form of education very dedicated to find some sort of relation.
- The polarity model does not exclude theory from practice and as characterized by testing hypothesis' creating non-predictable meetings of theory and practice with the intentions of making recommendations for action.
- The fusion model is also focused on recommendations but from a distinct normative point of view as it refuses to separate theory from practice because that could either turn into instrumentalism or activism, and instead the fusion model focusses on how to make a better life.
- The dialectical model is separable from the other models by not having an ontological but epistemological outset as theory and practice are seen as distinctive but also constantly relational. This paper is identified with the latter model with the intentions of arguing for the importance of seeing the relationships between all four models.

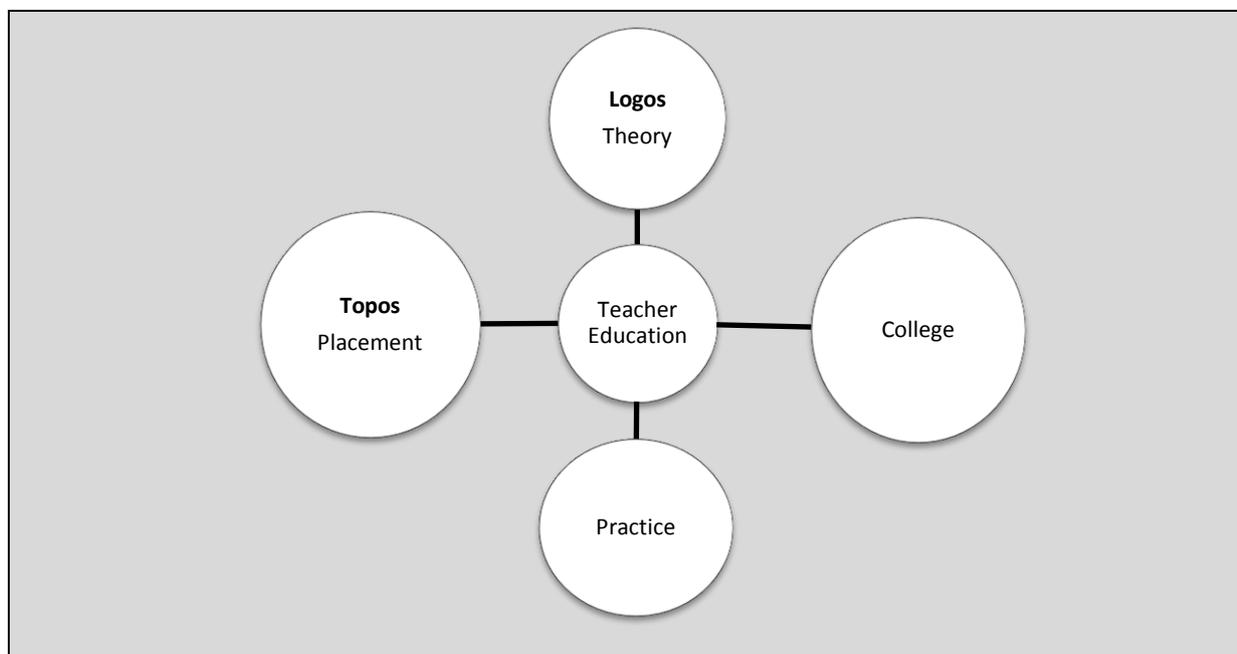
Figure 2) Theory and practice relations

Relations	Boundaries	Ontology	Methodology	Models
Dichotomy	Hard boundaries	Dualism	Descriptive	T P
Polarity	Soft boundaries	Polarity	Descriptive	T<--->P
Fusion	No boundaries	Holism	Normative	(T+P)
Dialectics	Exchanging boundaries	Epistemology	Descriptive and normative	T->-<-P

In the views of some Aristotelians the teacher education's problematique is a plain gap between theory and practice as in *epistêmê* and *phrónêsis* (Flyvbjerg 2001, Toulmin 1996). Eikeland (2008) argues on the other hand that the Aristotelian knowledge forms are closely related as familiar parts and hence understand the Aristotelian theory of knowledge forms to as a *gnosology* i.e. an embodied *hexis* rather than an epistemology that identifies *epistêmê* with science. Hence are the relations between academisation and professionalization far more complex than just distinctions between theory and practice since these ways of knowing are interrelated and in Eikelands work suggests a wider differentiation between forms of knowledge.

This focus on knowledge forms as *hexis* also implies that the question of theory and practice is viewed ethnographically to emphasize that theory and practice is part of both placement and college but in different cultural settings that structure and embody diverse knowledge forms (Knudsen 2012). This point can be illustrated by the analytical model of *topos and logos* which views the relations of knowledge forms as situated, and guides the methodological work and the empirical analysis of how theory and practice are viewed as part both of placement and college.

Figure 3): The topos and logos model



The model illustrates two fundamental structures and that these parameters are related: Students shift between placement sites and the teaching site (topos), and that the teacher education distinguishes between theory and practice (logos): Both places teach both knowledge forms and do this in what Aristotle (1999) and Eikeland (2008) nuances by distinguishing between six different but related knowledge forms – all made of theory and practice:

- *Epistêmê*/thêorêsis (to observe and make trials)
- Thêoria/praxis₁ (to analyze and systemize empirical data in a comprised form)
- Phrônêsis/praxis₂ (to deliberate about means to make ethical and political choices)
- Khrêsis (to use tools, models, materials)
- Páthos (to receive, be an audience and one's own subjective)
- Poíêsis/téchnê (to make a product in accordance with plans and theories)

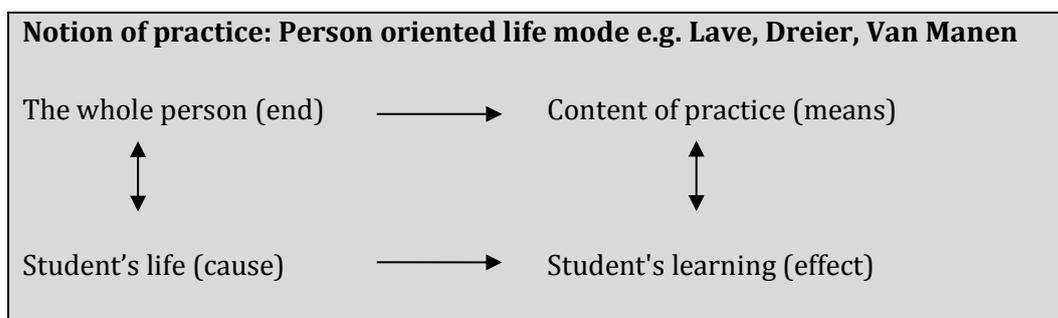
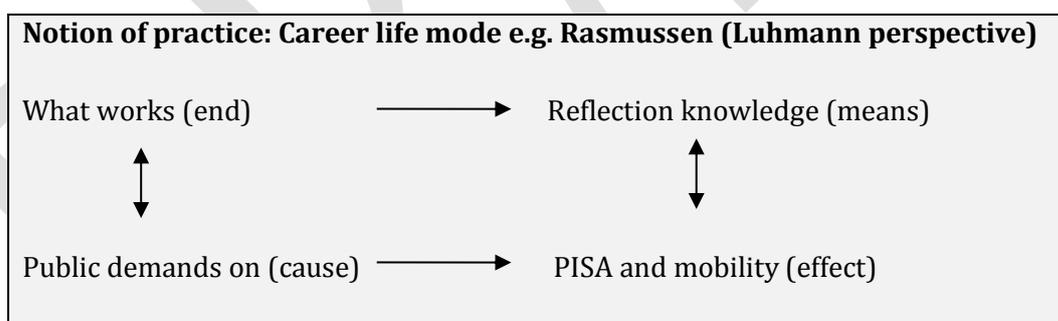
The Aristotelian knowledge forms have inspired the Danish ethnologist Thomas Højrup (2002) to argue for structural culture theory called *life mode analysis*. As the knowledge forms are different but related, so the life modes too signify ways of knowing but in an ethnological sense of how different cultures relates to each other in the pursuit of acknowledgement. All life modes have dissimilar forms

of cultural practice (here practice is not understood in relation to theory), where means, ends, causes and effects are perceived contrarily which Højrup (2003) uses to distinguish between four life modes:

- 1) *The self-employed life mode* views work and free time as merged together so that all activities are interdependent means and ends in a coordinated 'day's pursuit' (in Danish *dagsværk*)
- 2) *Wage earner life mode* perceives work as a mean or sold time where others set the goals in contrast to free time, where the good and self-guided life can be lived.
- 3) *Career life mode* sees work and career as opportunities for development and a challenge, and all other activities including free time as means to obtain that.
- 4) *The person oriented life mode* understands personal relations in close communities of practice as goals and other activities as means for that.

The life mode analysis contributes to understand the teacher education's problematique e.g. how the relations between *topos* and *logos* can be viewed in the case of how different educational literature understands the means, ends, causes and effects of a teacher education. A cultural analysis of the literature underlines how diverse forms of practice is supported by different researches and positions that students, teachers, supervisors and other researches, politicians and institutions feel acknowledged or threaten by. At a glance it looks like this:

Figure 4) Practice form analysis



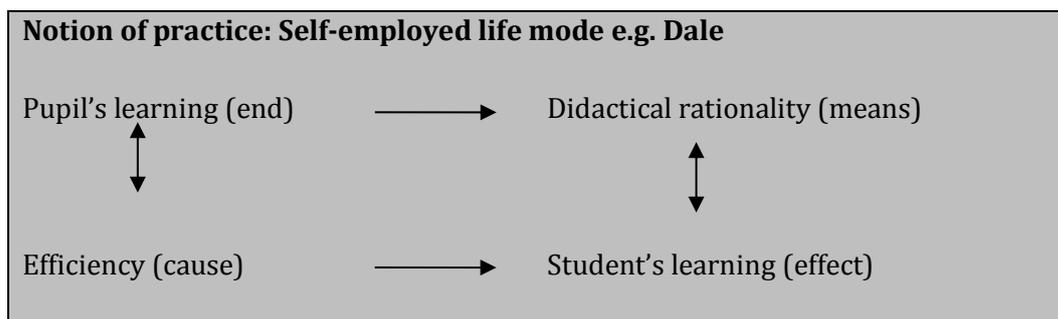
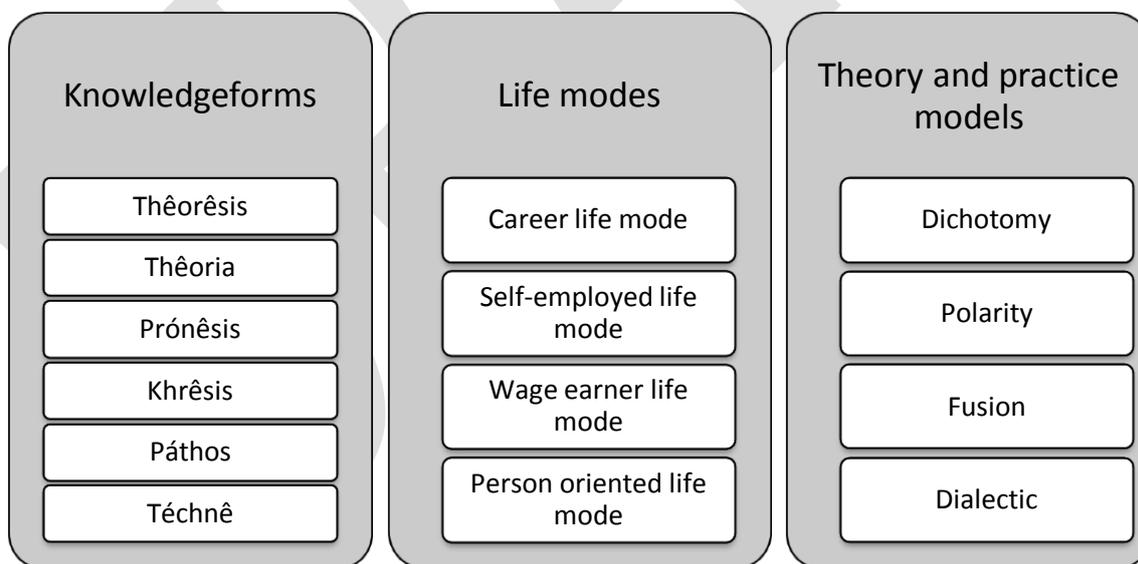


Figure 4 illustrates how different notions of practice i.e. perceptions of ends, means, causes, and effects in educational literature can be seen as different life modes. Moreover, as these life modes signifies cultures striving for acknowledgement they also tend to give more attention to some knowledge forms and theory and practice models than others. This underlines the philosophical point that 'theory and knowledge' is paradigmatic and situated, and the ethnological point that life modes are not simply describing culture at an individual but also at an institutional level. In Hjørup's (2003) structural culture theory even state and society forms are also possible to analyze in terms of life modes and their relations.

Figure 5) Relations of analytical notions



Theoretical configurations of specific life modes (Hjørup 2003), knowledge forms (Eikeland 2008) and models of theory and practice (Jorgensen 2005) are in principal possible to observe in any combination as illustrated in figure 5.

As shown, the case analysis' demonstrates how different educational research literature can be distinguished as diverse life mode cultures. When the focus in the methodological bricolage in figure 2 is slightly turned relations to other part of the research field can illustrate how life modes in the case of different positions i.e. students, teachers, supervisors (at placement) and local teacher colleges tend to put more weight on particular knowledge forms and theory and practice models in particular patterns. These configurations are not only policy texts, literature, or expressed exclusively any language form but bodily manifested as students, teachers, supervisors, placement and college sites incarnate particular forms of practice in cultural settings with a lived intentionality and particular sense of meaning as a pre-reflective fundament of habits, rituals, and routines in their forms of practice.

THE EMBODIMENT OF KNOWLEDGE FORMS AND LIFE MODES

The empirical results point at a cultural diversity as a gap between what counts as knowledge, how this is manifested, and a peculiar reluctance towards bridging this. Suggestions on how to move beyond gap in a theory and practice didactics follows. Initially the configurations of life modes, knowledge forms and theory and practice models are drawn up.

From observations, video recordings and interviews the teachers at the teacher education college tend to express and incarnate a career life mode as they consequently focus on student's reflections in terms of a progression towards professional development and increasing abstraction. In line with this the analysis also finds a relatively strong orientation towards the student's ability's to obtain the knowledge forms of *epistêmê/thêorêsis* (to observe and make trials). In the understanding of Merleau-Ponty's notions of style as a way of living (Merleau-Ponty 2002) teachers phenomenologically speaking, incarnate this focus in guidance sessions and oral exam as they keep asking and make student's reflect on their observations of themselves as objects detached from their personal life in view from nowhere. Hence a particular milieu of what counts as knowledge is created by and creates the observed teachers who view the relations between theory and practice dialectical in line with policy papers on teacher education in Denmark. This is manifested by their repeating analytical focus on students knowledge form of *thêoria/praxis₁* (to analyze and systemize empirical data in a comprised form) as they are held accountable by the teachers in guidance, written papers and oral presentations of their analysis of lesson plans, teaching experiences with the use of didactical theory.

In contrast to this relatively coherent picture of teacher's life modes, knowledge forms and theory and practice models, the patterns drawn by the two observed students in the case study is internally more diverse. This is not plainly expressed when they are observed preparing their lessons plan at college but comes to show when the environment shifts as the placement period takes off and their different supervisors at two very different schools guides the students for seven weeks. As a consequence of this intertwining that Merleau-Ponty (2000) calls the 'interbodiment' between one student and her supervisors the configurations of life modes, knowledge forms and theory and practice models are presented together.

In her last placement period fourth year student 'Sille' is supervised by 'Jesper' in a small town at a little school with approximately 200 pupils going from 1st to 6th grade. All teachers, students and every other personal at the school eat their lunch together as they talk about pupils, siblings, and parents as they apparently are familiar to many of the people here at lunch. Hence problems seems solved relatively fast as experiences, telephone numbers shifts hands and plans for involvement are made across the table in a sentiment of routines of trust and efficiency. Inspired by Edward Casey (2009) this environment of close personal relations intentionally points at certain acts and meanings and hereby sets a particular stage for how 'Sille' and 'Jesper' conducts and talks about teaching, what they feel is important/unimportant and how to act accordingly. In terms of life modes they both incarnate a personal orientated life mode which is seen especially in the relations to the pupils characterized by warmth, care, trust and less focus on teacher's authority or how pupils in each lesson efficient reaches the goals set as these goals often seem blurred and many times shifts during class. The knowledge forms most apparent in this placement period and guidance practice is *phrónêsis/praxis₂* (to deliberate about means to make ethical and political choices) and *páthos* (to receive, be an audience and one's own subjective) as 'Sille' and 'Jesper' focus on the teacher's sensibility and hereby ability receive the pupils feedback and to talk to pupils, parents and colleagues in the process of making sound decisions on what means to use in the pursuit of a teacher virtue and the contribution to the good life of the pupils. What was observed was partial an intention of obtaining these overall goals but also a practice of fuzziness as both 'Sille' and 'Jesper' had difficulties of reaching all pupils or even making it clear what they expected or wanted the pupils to do as a consequence of their unauthoritative and sensible style as teachers. This sensibility fundamentals how 'Sille' and 'Jesper' views what counts as preferable knowledge for a teacher and hence the relations between theory and practice i.e. a non-separable fusion of knowing and doing. This was most noticeable in the character of their loose lesson plans and constant focus on changing means and ends in dialogue with the pupils.

In a somewhat significant contrast, 'Sille's' fourth year fellow student 'Tina' went through a placement period at a much larger city school with approximately 900 pupils where she received supervision by 'Anne-Marie' and 'Loa'. The city school was divided into six quarters where halls and corridors made smaller local milieus for pupils and teachers together to develop, but in spite of this division of quarters the school had an atmosphere of being big: Big classes, a big corps of teachers, and a big level of outcome ambitions. 'Tina' and her supervisors 'Anne-Marie' and 'Loa' had a few quarrels about how well a teacher should be prepared, but in comparison to the practice of 'Sille' and Jesper', they were all more in agreement than they probably were able to see themselves. Their common focus on school efficiency, explicit learning goals, and reflections on every means but also their quarrels supports the idea of them incarnating the self-employed life mode where all teaching activities are interdependent means and ends in a coordinated strategy for optimizing the school's outcome i.e. pupils learning. In terms of knowledge forms all six forms (Eikeland 2008) were recognizable but especially *chrêsis* (to use tools, models, materials) and *poïésis/téchnê* (to make a product in accordance with plans and theories) stood out in the acts of teaching, guidance, and talk with colleagues as more important. Merleau-Ponty (2000) makes us notice how the city school's atmosphere is an intertwining of teachers' and students' focus on learning outcome. In this perspective they embody a notion of a polarity in their sense of a theory and practice relation as neither a theoretical idea nor a practice based sense of learning was their actual outset but rather resembled a hypothesis testing or trial and error strategy. This was most often observed when her supervisors instructed 'Tina' i.e. in entering to get an ownership of the classroom, in a strategic use of the blackboard, communication with parents, and her tolerance and sanctions towards obstructing pupils.

In comparison of the above three patterns many overlapping observations were made along with other data that transcended the theoretical framework such as the students' psychological development or the pupils' reactions/outcome of the students' placement. Anyhow, striking contrasts between the intended knowledge forms and theory and practice models of the college vs. the placement, and hence between the students, teachers and supervisors can be summed up in three headlines:

- 1) The college was teaching the non-situated dialectics between the teacher's sensibility and tasks.
- 2) 'Sille' was attentive to and guided to a focus on the teacher's values.
- 3) 'Tina' was focused and instructed in the teacher's functions and what works.

Each headline covers particular configurations of how knowledge forms are embodied in a cultural structure of life modes and specific theory and practice relations are perceived as natural. The

relationship between placement and college is particularly noticeable by the fact, that only the students travel physically but hence also mentally, and culturally from one site to the other as teacher and supervisors don't engage much in a common corporation. Grossmann's (2008) and Hammerness' (2006) research on the coherence between study and course work only focusses on the experience of coherence from teachers point of view, which ommissions to take in the perspectives of both teachers, supervisors, and the students' whose job is to navigate, negotiate and combine mutual excluding perspectives on what counts as knowledge (Knudsen and Laursen 2011). Inspired by Højrup (2002) the relationship of these three parties are striving for each other recognition and acknowledgement and hence are in fact mutually dependent even though they demonstrate little or no understanding of the perspectives of what a teacher else should be like.

This tension leaves us with a peculiar sense of a potential to view the relationships between knowledge forms, life modes, and theory and practice models from a meta-didactical perspective, and to end this paper I shall try to make sketches of what a theory and practice didactics could look like.

SKETCHES OF A THEORY AND PRACTICE DIDACTICS

In a glimpse didactics as taught in Danish teacher education is mainly inspired by Jean Piaget and cognitivist tradition where didactics are perceived as a well-planned progressing courses of guidance, teaching, problem solving or testing with specific attention to the relations between the different phases, elements, conditions, means and ends of the course (Hiim and Hippe 1997). It is well-known that the Piagean tradition has been challenged by a Vygotsky inspired view on how and what learners learn underlining how cultural frames and conditions including the materiality of the spaces, furniture, tools and the routines, habits, and personal experiences of the participants structures the learning processes in any given setting (Lave 2002).

This rather blunt picture of didactical traditions can illustrate the point where a theory and practice didactics begins, viz. where the dialectical topos and logos model helps us argue in a meta-didactical perspective that the Piagean and Vygotskean traditions have distinct potentials but are none the less mutual dependent in their complementary aspects on didactics. Likewise the four models of theory and practice. What is complicated is that even though the four models are mutual dependent from a dialectical meta-perspective that eo ipso reminds us to be alert as that same perspective presupposes an epistemological outset for the relations between theory and practice in contrast to ontological outsets of the dichotomy, polarity fusion models. On the other hand this alert does not rule out that

educational institutions, teachers, students or supervisors could reflect on: 1) how does theory relate to practice in this particular setting? 2) What are the intentions and how are these experienced? 3) What is being explained and what is missed out in the use of this model? 4) How could the supplement of other models bring this particular setting closer to its intended goals? The aim of such a meta-perspective on theory and practice is not to neglect any model but to acknowledge the potentials in each, and to encourage educational institutions, teachers, students and supervisors to openly reflect and discuss how, what and why any given course, guidance or task presupposes certain relations between theory and practice in order to face risks of misinterpretations and mistrust by acknowledging the versatility of knowledge forms and life modes that each model incarnates and supports.

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