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**DIDACTIZATION AND  
POETIZATION.  
OR:  
WHAT IS OPEN SCHOOL?  
FOUR INTERPRETATIONS AND  
CONSEQUENCES**

# ABSTRACT

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School reform in Denmark in 2014. General foci on (not exclusive)

- Learning ('læringsmålstyring'); learning objectives, learning driven teaching, learning agreements
- Physical activities ('bevægelse i undervisningen'); learning through movement
- Supporting lessons ('Understøttende undervisning'); activation of lessons and content
- Open School ('Åben Skole'); school partnerships with local communities, cultural institutions, businesses, music-schools, public youth-clubs
  - Parallel to 'Skapande Skola' (Sweden) and 'Den Kulturelle Skolesekken' (Norway)
  - Invites to new sets of learning, keeping school and teaching subjects and calls for means to collaborate
  - Open School is somehow below the academic radar and enjoys mainly the attention of practitioners and politicians.

# PROBLEMS OF OPEN SCHOOL ARE RECOGNIZED BUT UNCHALLENGED

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Local Government Denmark ('Kommunernes Landsforening') asks:

"Do we have sufficient knowledge about what concrete partnerships we can establish? Do we have the sufficient knowledge about what partnerships could expand and strengthen the learning spaces of the pupils? Is it the subjects learning objectives we wish to focus on in the partnerships? Is it the diverse development of the pupils?" (KL, marts 2015. my translation)

- No official evaluation of Open School as a part of the reform is yet carried out.
- No research (to my knowledge) on Open School is yet carried out – but it's on its way 😊.

# METHODOLOGY

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## Documents studies

- State policy papers; law on public school ('Folkeskolen')
- State and local municipal reports, official publications, evaluations of school partnerships before the reform
- Ministries homepages, municipalities, institutions and NGO's

## Cases (fieldwork)

- Copenhagen (562.000): budget 4 millions
- Næstved (40.000 inhabitants incl. rural areas) : No budget
- 28 hours of observations and talks with selected participants

## Interviews and observation

### *Case 1: Copenhagen*

- In Nikolaj Kunsthal (gallery / art museum) with Diana Gerlach, house-artists Camilla Berner, Gitte Broeng and a 7th grade class, their teachers from Korsager Skole (observations and talks with selected participants: 3 hours).
- At Christianshavns Skole (public school) with visits from house artist from Nikolaj Kunsthal Rikke Houd in a 8th grad class with teachers (observations and talks with selected participants: 4 hours).
- At Dansk Arkitektur Center (gallery / architect museum) with the guide Michael and a 1st grade class and the teachers from Bellahøj skole (observations and talks with selected participants: 3 hours).
- At Den Classenske Legatskole (public school) with visit from Zerum Teater / Helena Berglund in a 4th grade class with their teachers (observations and talks with selected participants: 3 hours).

### *Case 2: Næstved*

- At Herlufsholm Idrætscenter (sportsclub) with Herlufsholm Idrætsforening and four 7th grade classes and their teachers from Sjølundskolen (public school) (observations and talks with selected participants: 4 hours).
- At Karrebæk Skole (public school) and six different classes from 0. to 6th grade, their teachers and pedagogues incl volunteers from Karrebæk Idrætsforening (sportsclub) and two instructors from DBU (soccer) (observations and talks with selected participants: 4 hours).
- At Sjølundskolen (public school) and two 7th grade classes and instructors from Herlufholms Idrætsforening (sportsclub) Kit (observations and talks with selected participants: 3 hours).
- At Sjølundskolen with gym teacher Brian (Interview 1 hour)
- At Herlufholms Idrætsforening (sportsclub) med instructors Kit and Henrik (Interview 2 hours).
- At Karrebæk Idrætsforening (sportsclub) with cheif instructor Louis Kristensen (Interview 1 hour).

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Thomas Højrup (2003) structural culture analysis

Lifemode analysis:

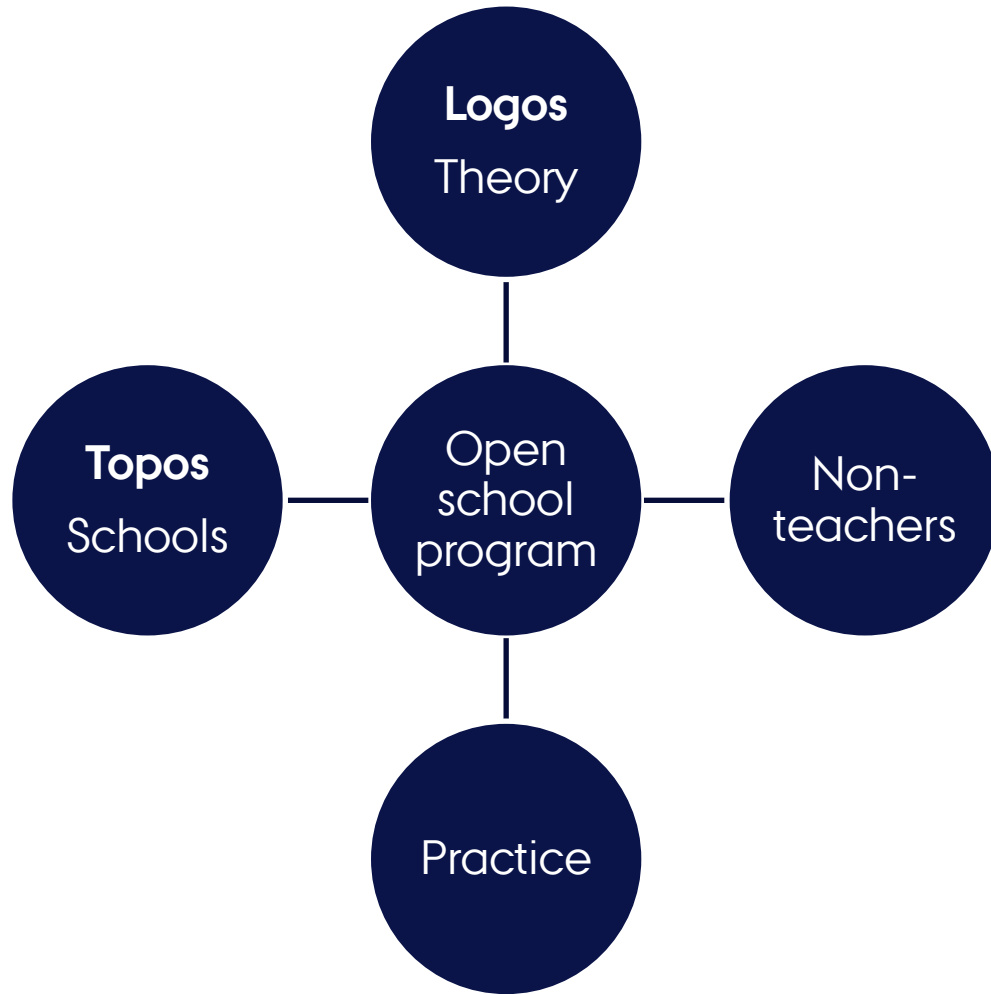
- Career lifemode: Freetime -> work
- Wage-earner lifemode: Work -> freetime
- Independent lifemode: Work=Freetime
- Person-oriented lifemode: Welfare in work and freetime

Praksisbegrebsanalyse:

Ends	-	Means
Causes	-	Effects

Estelle R. Jorgensen (2005):

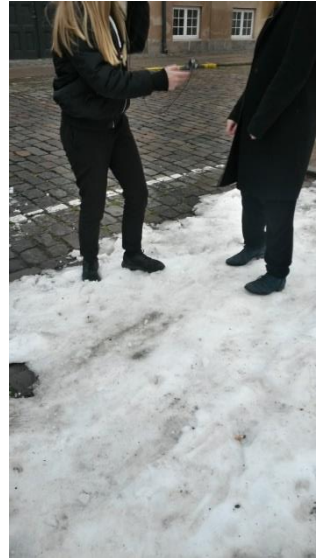
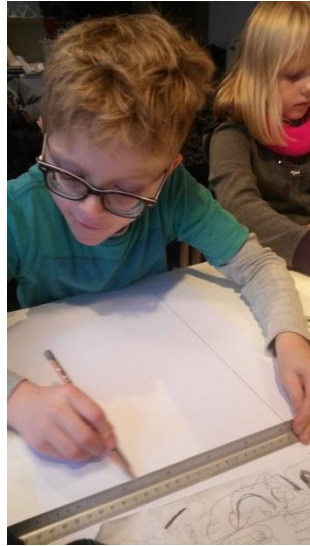
Relations	Boudaries	Ontology	Metodology	Models
Dichotomy	Hard boundaries	Dualism	Descriptiv	T   P
Polarity	Soft boundaries	Polarity	Descriptiv	T<--->P
Fusion	No boundaries	Holism	Normativ	(T+P)
Dialectics	Exchanging boundaries	Epistemology	Descriptiv and normativ	T->-<-P





# ANALYSIS: FOUR INTERPRETATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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Ministry of culture in an presentation of Open School to museums:

**"The purpose is to make art and culture a part of childrens everyday-life from an early age. Art and culture are sensitive ways to recognition and insight and therefore provides another experience than bookish learning.** The art and culture does not demand a specific content-language but speaks to us through the senses and emotions and is hereby accessible to everybody. When children meet art and culture they can be led to relate equally to each others points of view in a situation where there are no immediate final answers and they have to start talking from a basis of their own experiences. They can engage in dialogue and reflections in a formative community where they can contribute on equal footings. When children and teenagers actively test and try different artistic ways of expression they can get to know new sides of themselves, find more ways to experiences of success, and discover that it takes an effort and that you have to collaborate with respect of each others point of departure to create shared results. **The art and culture plays a central role at forming our community and hence relevant to the public school ('Folkeskolen'), that according to the purpose object clause ('formålsparagraffen') "should prepare the pupils to participation, responsibility, rights, and duties in a society of freedom and democracy. The schools actions should be shaped by intellectual freedom, equality and democracy."**" (My translation and underlining).

## 1st interpretation: Objects clause in Open School i.e. Ministry of culture:

- Independent lifemode: School = Life
- Dialectical theory- and practice relation: Sensing <-> experiencing <-> debating
- Bildung: Formation, democracy, recognition

## The qualitative fieldwork:

- Nikolaj Kunsthal: To become yourself
- Zerum Teater: To act out yourself in dialogue
- Copenhagen Municipality, leader of the department of Open School, Claus Poulsen: experience, identity, authenticity



Ministry of Education on their homepage on the definition of Open School:

**”The partnerships must add: The pupils learn more, the pupils get a wider knowledge of the society and the life of private associations. The surrounding society must be involved in the schoolday in a way that support the pupils learning and wellbeing.** The Open School must contribute to a variation in the schoolday and the differentiation of the lessons to accommodate and challenge the subject-level of every single pupil. A Open School partnership adds values to both single subject lessons and supporting lessons (‘Understøttende undervisning’). **The partnership are subject to give the greatest possible quality and effect on the pupils learning, wellbeing and motivation. Learning-activities in the Open School are inclined to be based on the objects clause (‘Folkeskolens formål’) and the subjects learning objectives.** The partnerships between the school and the local community must strengthen the local cohesiveness. It should also contribute to pupils acquaintance with the life of the private associations and the possibilities there. **The partnerships ought to be planned in order to support the common learning objectives.** The pedagogical learning centres’ job is to open the schools towards the surrounding society and to use the local resources in the lessons. Making partnerships is stated in the law. The municipal’s or municipal supported music schools and public youthclubs have similar obligations to collaborate with the public schools. The demands to collaborate are mutual.”

## 2<sup>nd</sup> interpretation: Learning objectives in Open School i.e. Ministry of Education

- Wage-earner life mode: Open School -> (wide but primarily) specific learning content
- Polarity of theory and practice: Knowledge, skills, learning effects, quality
- Læring: open school as means for learning objectives.

### The qualitative fieldwork:

- At Sjølund School with Kit, HG sportsclub  
Næstved: activities based on learning objectives
- Chef for center for uddannelse i Næstved,  
Lars Nedergaard: the open school  
playmaker translates activities into learning objectives.



Head of Danish Association for Public Administrators for Children and Culture ('Børne- og kulturchefforeningen' / BKF) in a online article on what Open School means and entails:

"With the schoolreform we have a new concept in the public school: The open school. The **Open School is a focus on the local opportunities outside the school. It is therefore important at every single school, in the municipal administration and in the government to understand that the open school cannot be reduced to one single format or simply be put in a timeschedule.** It is a new way of involving the local potentials in the lessons and the childrens learning. It is important to state, that not all pupils will learn and benefit from making partnerships with the greatest private associations. Every single school needs carefully to consider what partnerships they wish to make in order to meet the challenges of their particular group of pupils. **BKF is believes that partnerships not should be controlled centrally with selected players. This is obviously a job for the local municipal administration to balance the expectations in furture partnerships and to assist the mutual experience of succes. At BKF we look forward to the manifold array of new and challenging partnerships and learning-courses. Because we know that the *gold is in the neighbourhood* as we already in 2010 wrote in a publication".**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> interpretation: Local cohesiveness of Open School i.e. BKF

- Person-oriented lifemode: Close bonds between players, welfare of local cohesiveness
- Fusion of theory and practice: Ethical objectives.
- Competence: the usage of knowledge

#### The qualitative fieldwork:

- Karrebæksminde Idrætsforening (sportsclub): creating a attractive and sustainable local community
- Interview with special-consultant Ole Hansen at Næstved Kommune: The municipality is striving for integration of local cohesiveness by including cultural institutions and private associations in schools.



## Observations at Zerum Theatre (by Gry Eising and Sarah Tingleff):

"The pupils were asked to solve two tasks: 1) write a short dramatical text and 2) enact the drama by using dolls. As one groupe decides to start with enacting a teacher corrects them and are told to write the dramatical text first. **The Zerum Theatre instructors became angry with the teachers, because he interferred with the pupils artistic process.**

## Observations at DAC

At DAC a 1st grade class had drawn sketches of a facade at Christianshavn, Copenhagen, and back at DAC they were making corrections. The pupils had great difficulties accepting flaws. **The instructor Michael tried to limit and even to withdraw the eraseras he repeted, that even flaws and awkward lines are a substantial part of an architects job. Unfortunatly the pupils insist on drawing correct so hard he has to give in. But he tried to use the workforms of the architect;** the processes and products as a point of departure for the session and hereby made the differences between schoolwork and architectwork clear.



## 4rd interpretation: production and poetization of Open School i.e. Zerum and DAC

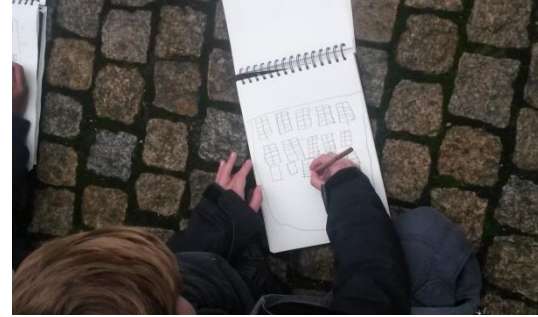
Independent lifemode: School = Life

Dialectical and polarity theory and practice relation: Search for understanding and for effects.

Creativity: Imagination, product-based, materialized

Poetization:

- 'School' originally means 'free time from production'
- Open School is a paradox: A merge of opposites – use it!
- Non-teachers are *didactized*. Activities brought to be teachable.
- Schools, teachers and pupils are *poetized*: Teaching brought to be producing.



# FOUR INTERPRETATIONS AT A GLANCE

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## Objects clause

- Independent lifemode
- Dialectical theory-practice
- Bildung

## Learning objectives

- Wage-earner lifemode
- Polarity theory-practice
- Learning

## Local cohesiveness

- Person-oriented lifemode
- Fusion theory-practice
- Competence

## Production and poetization

- Independent lifemode
- Dialectical theory and practice
- Creativity

# POTENTIALS FOR FURTHER INTERPRETATIONS

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- Dansk Industrigår aktivt ind i relationen "skole og erhvervsliv" ved at invitere til virksomhedsbesøg,
- Ungdomsskoleforeningen indgår i forskningsprojektet SoL om læringsmuligheder i Understøttende Undervisning og Åben Skole i samarbejde med CeFU,
- Københavns Kommune har indkøbt et større antal undervisningstilbud, som lærere kan booke gratis fra portalen "Åben skole",
- Fredensborg Kommune udvikler en landsdækkende portal "Skolen i virkeligheden" for eksterne læringstilbud,
- Danske Musik- og Kulturskoleledere med støttemidler fra Undervisningsministeriet opretter portalen "Skolemix" med folkeskolelæreres, musik- og kulturskolelæreres videoer om undervisningsforløb,
- Nationalt netværk af Skoletjenester kan præsentere skole, lærere og eksterne aktører videndeling, sparring og undersøgelser i forbindelse med Åben Skole,
- Landsnetværket af folkekirkelige skoletjenester varetager i de lokale kirker undervisningsopgaver sammen med lærerne på skolernes præmisser,
- DGI tilbyder både foreningsudvikling og partnerskabsudvikling samt oversigt over foreninger og deres eksterne læringstilbud,
- Dansk Skoleidræt har en oversigt over idrætsforeninger som skoler kan indgå partnerskaber med herunder et særligt tiltag om junioridrætsledere og
- DBU der har velafprøvede læringstilbud som "Ud af pomfritten" klar til skoler og SFO'er samt Foreningen Skole og Forældre, der serverer et overblik over tiltaget Åben Skole i den nye skolereform.

# CONCLUSIONS

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- Partnerships used to be contracted bottom-up wise, but the school reforms installed a top-down structure. Bottom-up structures still exist and the school reform has confused what partnerships are about; why, how and with whom.
- Open school being interpreted in multiple ways as a part of a fundamental debate about educational notions of; bildung, learning, competence and creativity.
- Knowledge on Open School is mainly developed by practitioners and politicians, and there is a minimum or actual lack of research on this topic.
- All partners need a language of interpretations of Open School that includes educational notions of objects, learning, competence and creativity plus theory and practice relations.

# REFERENCES

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# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Please contact me at: [lada@edu.au.dk](mailto:lada@edu.au.dk)

Find out more at: <http://www.dpu.dk/om/lada>



En videnskabsmand er en mand, der ved noget om noget, som resten af verden er uvidende om, og er uvidende om det, som hele verden ved.

ALBERT EINSTEIN



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