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ABSTRACT

In 1994, Norway implemented large-scale educational reforms that altered the face of education in that country. An overview of these changes in upper-secondary education is presented in this paper. The report describes how international competition created a sense of urgency, prompting the government to rush in with wholesale education changes. Some of these reforms altered the curriculum so that all students, those in academic tracks and those in vocational tracks, followed the same basic courses in the first year. Evaluations of these curriculum reforms in uppersecondary education are discussed, along with the notion of the school as a learning organization, the problem of changing cultures in a school, and teachers' and students' attitudes toward these changes. Since much of the reform centered on Pupils' Responsibility for their Own Learning (PROL), a detailed discussion of this process is offered, which includes feedback on what teachers and pupils say about PROL and the pupil as a cooperative partner. Results of these evaluations indicate that teachers must expose students to different ways of teaching so that students can choose which style they like best. Such an approach may circumvent the "culture of resistance" that has arisen toward these reform strategies. (RJM)

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REFORM OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NORWAY: FROM IMPLEMENTATION TO ADOPTION OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM PLANNING

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REFORM OF UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NORWAY: FROM IMPLEMENTATION TO ADOPTION OF PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM PLANNING

1. Educational reforms in the 90's in Norway

In this paper I will present one of several educational reforms implemented in the 90's. The universities and colleges went through a major reform in 1993, primary and lower secondary schools started their reforms this autumn. Between these, we find the reform I will tell you about - Reform-94 - as it is called after the year when its implementation began. This reform can be regarded as the most important Norwegian reform on this scale in this century and the final stage in a long development in our educational system, with theoretical and academic education in the old gymnasium going back to the latin schools in the middle ages and vocational education integrated in the same schools, with similar rights to a three year education. All these reforms must be understood as a part of a long history of educational reforms in Norway, but their specific form can't be understood without first looking at the international scene (Rust 1985).

1.1. International background for educational reforms

This international background can be looked upon as a pool of ideas passing through international organisations like the OECD, and then going to the different ministries at the national level. As a specific example of this "diffusion" of ideas we can look at the OECD-evaluation of the educational policy in Norway published in English in 1988 and in Norwegian the following year (KUD 1989). This evaluation can be regarded as the point of "take-off" for educational reforms in Norway in the 90's. In the ensuing political debate of this evaluation we find one main shared concern: How can Norway face international competition (the unemployment rate was very high at this time) and what do we have to do with our educational system to become better off? This kind of debate was something like an international "craze" at the time, traceable to the Reagan-administration's *kampfschrift* "A Nation at Risk" in 1984. The message in many of those debates was that we need more competition in the educational system, both between pupils, teachers and the schools. Mismanagement of resources and inefficiency was declared to be *the* problem in education, as in the rest of the public sector. In one "white paper" it was claimed that the misuse of resources in the public sector in Norway could amount to 20 billion crowns (Norman 1991) and in the educational system to more than 4 billion crowns. With this background, it was no surprise that educational leaders rushed to take up proven ideas from the private enterprise; what is called the new "managerialism" in educational administration (Elliott 1996). When we look back at these international developments, and the educational policy debate in Norway, we would expect waves of reforms stretching back from traditions of reform pedagogy and progressivism in Norwegian educational thinking (Aasen 1995). When we look at the new reforms in the 90's, we can of course see some of these international influences, but as important, are the main ideas contained in these Norwegian traditions of educational thinking, such as self-directed and active learning for pupils, knowledge being more than the ability to remember from textbooks etc. But still, it is possible to say that the new reforms are more than a bit of new wine in old bottles. It can be said that these reforms break with those of earlier periods. This difference is clear when their implementation is studied (Carlgrén & Kallós 1997).

1.2. New strategies for the implementations of reforms

Teachers in Norway have complained about the short deadlines for implementing the reform. Usually we have had several years of "white papers" and debates before a new reform was finally implemented. Now, the "idea"-phase of this reform was finished in just 2-3 years. This is one of the most transparent parts of the new reform strategy, where being in a hurry is regarded as a sign of efficient and competent leadership. The then minister of education was fond of saying that the reform needed "momentum", meaning that the swiftness would reduce the time available for

resistance to mobilize. He might be right, but we can now see some of the problems with such a strategy. In the classroom, teachers have had to adopt new ideas and adapt them to their way of thinking and doing things. This is a slow learning process, requiring time to test new ideas. I will return to this implementation problem when looking at some of my data from the reform evaluation (Darling-Hammond 1996, Dalin 1994).

2. Reform of Upper Secondary Education: Reform-94 as curriculum reform

The reform of Upper Secondary Education (Reform-94) is said to be three reforms in one; a *structural* reform implying a better coordination between academic and vocational education, a reform giving new *rights* to the pupils (all pupils have the right to a three year course) and a *curriculum* reform where both students in the academic and vocational tracks follow the same basic courses in the first year. In this presentation, I will concentrate on the curriculum aspect of the reform.

2.1. Why Reform-94?

This reform of the Norwegian school system can be regarded as the final stage in a long development towards equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, social and ethnic background. With a core curriculum for the whole school system, based upon principal objectives and guidelines for both primary and secondary education, all teachers in Norway should in principle have the same aims for their teaching (KUV 1993). The core curriculum forms the basis for a specified curricula in upper secondary school subjects. When we look into these curricula, we find two distinct characteristics; *attainment targets* and *focal points*. All subject curricula are structured by attainment targets, and find a parallel in the *management by objectives*, which is one of the basic principles in the implementation of the reform. These attainment targets were also the basis for teachers' planning their subjects and for pupil assessment. The focal points are something more like the traditional curriculum with their subject themes, and giving teachers more concrete ideas about the content of their teaching.

2.2. The curriculum reform between progressivism and restoration

In connection with these subject curricula, the Department issued some booklets with guidelines for each subject and for some special domains like assessment, project work, differentiation etc. One of these booklets, "The Guide" (NCER 1994), is of special interest because it is written for pupils, and the idea is to give them some advice and guidelines on how to become active students taking responsibility for their own learning. When we look at the overall curriculum we find many ideas going back to progressivism in education earlier in the century, like pupils taking responsibility for their own learning, being motivated by interest and curiosity and not by external rewards like marks and exams. When compared with curriculum policies in the 70th's and 80th's, we can also find some more conservative or even restorative ideas, especially the belief in the curriculum as a strict "steering instrument" entailing to "management by objectives". Therefore, we can see a tendency to control teachers by making a greater demand on them to report about their planning with their pupils, about their assessment practice etc. This new reporting demands have been a source of conflict between the teacher unions and the government.

3. Some results from research into evaluation

I have been evaluating Reform-94 since the autumn 1994 as one of seven evaluation teams. We have been commissioned by the Ministry of Education. Our contract has been renewable on a yearly basis, with the Ministry specifying any questions they find important for their implementation of the reform, this indicating that we are doing some sort of process evaluation. This evaluation project is the most extensive and intensive evaluation project ever done in

education in Norway. Final reports are to be delivered in december 1998, with a more conclusive evaluation of how the implementation process have done so far.

3.1. Evaluation research as policy research

This large evaluation project working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education can also be regarded as policy research, because the evaluation teams by documenting the implementation process, will have some influence on the policy behind the reform. Some of our results so far, have led to discussions and even strong disagreements about how to deal with documented implementation problems. We can see how some of the actors in the reform have selected some of our results as ammunition for their discussions. It is difficult remain neutral researchers in such a politically charged milieu, especially when as evaluators we are supposed to "put values" on the data collected. Evaluation theory has proposed different solutions to this dilemma (Guba & Lincoln 1994, McLaughlin 1987). I am trying to do some sort of theory based evaluation, but my experience so far, tell me that it isn't so easy to have principles in such a busy and political environment (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris 1996).

3.2. My research program: What have I done?

Since the autumn 1994 I have been working in close cooperation with 3-5 teachers from upper secondary schools. They have interviewed teachers and pupils in ten different schools on several occasions each year. I have devised all the interview guides, gaining important correctives from teachers in the "field". A massive amount of data have been collected in a survey of 440 teachers and 1472 pupils in all. The principals and some of the inspectors in these schools have also been interviewed by myself and some of my colleagues. We are now in the process of collecting data based upon observations in the classroom. All this data have been necessary to answer the questions from the Ministry, the results have been published in annual reports. In later years the evaluation teams have also published collections of articles together. This winter my team and another team are preparing an extensive survey in cooperation with The National Bureau of Statistics involving 1500 teachers and 4000 pupils

3.3. Curriculum in the classroom: No news from the reform front?

Is it possible to select some main results from this massive amount of qualitative and quantitative data? There are few surprises if we compare our results with what we know from the international literature on reform implementation, and school and curriculum development. In a way, I would say we have confirmed, the stated research line; hence the heading, *no news from the reform front*. This conclusion is of course a little too heavy-handed, we can pick out many interesting results, giving reformers something to think about. A deeper analysis, will I am sure, yield more complex and theoretical results. In this presentation I will give you a mix of some interesting details (what I find interesting when seen against the background of aims and intentions in the reform) and what a more thorough analysis might come up with.

3.4. The school as a learning organization

In my evaluation, I have tried to find out what is happening with the new curriculum, both at the level of the classroom and at the level of the school. Both theoretically and practically, we found it important to have this differentiation of levels. We have found examples of very much involvement with the reform and the new curriculum on the school level has not reached the classroom door, and the opposite, teachers engaged in taking ideas from the curriculum have found little support from the school leadership. The problem of getting the new school curriculum, as an organisation for learning, through the classroom door, can be discussed through the lens of the school as an organisation. The literature on organisational development indicates that schools are not among the organisations most suited for rapid change (Cohen & Ball 1990, Dalin 1995). As an old institution in society, schools have over generations developed traditions, role relationships and working habits based upon principles long forgotten ("the hidden curriculum"). Looking at the core activity in schools, the teaching-learning relationship in the classroom,

researchers unanimously tell us that little has changed since the beginning of the century (Cuban 1984, Ekholm 1997).

Against such a background, the Norwegian curriculum reforms must be considered very ambitious. The structure has changed, pupils have got new rights, but will these changes have any influence on the teaching-learning relationship in the classroom? As an example of the problems of change, I will discuss just one aspect of the new curriculum. I have already mentioned the leaflet given to all pupils "The Guide", where modern learning psychology in a constructivist form is introduced to the pupils and they are given some advice on how to be active and responsible learners, or as the catchword in Norway has phrased it, "the pupils responsibility for their own learning" is to be encouraged (Bjørger 1991). Have those ideas had any influence on teacher planning, as they are based upon pupils gaining an important role in the planning process? We have found that less than 30% of the teachers try to do some planning together with their pupils, and that the majority don't see any reason for doing more than *informing* their pupils about their plans, and a small minority don't do that either. The majority argue experience tells them that their pupils are not interested in "wasting" time on planning subjects such as mathematics or vocational English, that they trust their teachers will do a good job. In the interviews the great majority of the pupils seem to agree with their teachers, and they add: We are preparing for our exams and can't use time on such activities. But in some group interviews, after some hesitation, we got more complex answers. They thought of themselves as more responsible, adult people taking a more active role, but their experience in the school told them this would not work; therefore they took a pragmatic stance; schools are for exams and not for some lofty ideals. The schools and the teachers in the different subjects seem to communicate this message to their pupils. "The Guide" is therefore little used after a short introduction at the start of the school year. This pattern have changed very little in the three years after the introduction of the new curriculum. But, we can see some schools and some teachers struggling with the challenge to get pupils more actively involved in the curriculum process, from planning to evaluation. A modest change can be seen, especially in schools where the leadership have the intention of changing teachers attitudes to the new curriculum and they also have some knowledge of how to bring about such organisational development. It might then be possible to speak about these schools as learning organisations (Dodgeson 1993).

3.5 *The problem of changing cultures*

What we are talking about here is something deeper than organisational development. We are dealing with the problem of changing a culture, both a school culture, a teacher culture and a pupil culture (Hargreaves 1994). These cultures are involved in other societal cultures and run deep into the personalities of the persons formed by these cultures and who are remaking the culture. The problem of curriculum change therefore implies more than taking new ideas and methods from the curriculum and implementing them in classrooms. A living curriculum is more than "bits of information" you can take account of and use when you have "learned" the new information, as some of the reform implementers on the state and local level seem to think. As an example of this complexity, we can look at the difficulty of involving pupils in the curriculum process. In both surveys a majority of pupils and teachers say they agree with the principle of pupil involvement in the planning process, and as I said above about the interviews, both groups found it very difficult to live up to this ideal in the real life in the classroom. Why this split between ideal and reality, between what they could achieve personally and what they found possible in the schools they worked in? We can look upon these results as an example of "the divided selves" most peoples experience in modern institutions, between what they personally believe in, ideas they have learned to cherish, their ideal selves, and the roles they find themselves in. Many people live with this split, and manage to find some practical way of living with it. As we can see, pupils in this age group have developed a consciousness about the split and seem to adapt to it. If you accept the split and adapt to it, your institutional life will be guided by institutionally defined norms and practice. In our example, this means that the new challenge of *making* pupils into active users of the curriculum, must not be seen as an idealistic proposal without the necessary institutional roots.

We found some teachers and pupils who hadn't so easily adapted to institutional norms. When they believed in the new ideals for pupil involvement, they would have liked to do something about it. A few teachers managed on their own, a step by step introduction of the new principles in their classrooms, but most teachers had great difficulty because of pupil resistance and gave up, feeling rather disappointed because of their pupil's lack of interest and their colleagues smugness. On the pupil side we found a similar dynamic. The "true believers" among the pupils were comparatively few, but they still believed it would be possible to break the mould in the classroom, and knowing that they were few, decided to let their viewpoints be known. They deplored their teachers for not trying to implement new ideas, but were on the other side, conscious of how difficult it would be because most of the pupils didn't bother, or even tried to disturb teachers somewhat timid introduction of these ideas in the classroom, with complaints and mocking behaviour.

On the other side of the spectrum, we find another group of pupils lacking confidence in the school and new curriculum ideas. They were especially suspicious when they were introduced to "The Guide", looking upon it as another example of school hypocrisy. Some of those pupils had a long history of school failure, and therefore saw no reason on their part for being involved in school activities. The more the teacher did without demanding their participation, the better. But this resistance can't be explained only by pointing to school failure. We have to take into account a special subculture among pupils, where they have made a life-style out of playing "cool", openly showing their tiredness about the school and its activities (Willis 1979). In some classes these pupils, normally few in each class, were able to set the tone among the pupils. In such classes most teachers will have big problems doing anything besides ordinary classroom work, which is based on an established tradition, and with a negotiated order with little interference into the activity of pupils (Hargreaves 1978). Changing this negotiated order requires teachers knowing how to handle such a pupil culture and possessing some of the personal qualities necessary to break old habits and remake the balance between different groups of pupils (Slee 1994).

4. Pupils responsibility for their own learning in the classroom - "pupil exercises" passing the time?

In earlier research we concluded that the vast majority of teachers and pupils support "Pupils responsibility for their own learning" (PROL) as an important principle in the reform of the teaching plan. But, we also found that many teachers had difficulties when it came to putting principles into practice. In the same question of support for the principle, gaining a response of 2/3, only 40% supported its possible materialisation in PROL, pupil participation in the planning of teaching. The same was roughly the case when pupils were asked. Well under half of the pupils (less than 30%) say that they normally participate in the planning of teaching. The proportion of teachers who say they have tried to develop learning goals for pupils is even less, under 20%.

We have in the three year period asked the pupils when and how they use the *Guide*. Most were introduced to the *Guide* at the start, but thereafter it was little used. We didn't find large differences in its use between autumn 1994 and spring 1996. The same was the case with the way lesson plans were used. The dominant pattern continues to be teachers in the three foundation subjects examined (English, mathematics, natural sciences) who use the set book as the anchor for the lesson plan, and it is the main elements in the lesson plan which steer how the book is used. There are few teachers, who to any great extent, can be said to have tried to develop learning goals together with their pupils, and those that have tried, assert that pupils after initial curiosity desire a more traditional set-up where the teacher, with the course book as support, decides the goals and where pupils can say something about how the goals are to be reached.

Our conclusion in the part report no.2 spring 1995 still seems valid: Teachers and pupils support the principle, but in practice they desire a much more limited participation on the side of the pupil. Does this mean that ideal and reality stand so far from each other that they have lost contact, and that curriculum documents become fine words without any significance for the

everyday situation, as some teachers asserted in their evaluation of the general(core) curriculum in spring 1995?

The answer is not so simple. In the rest of the paper, I will attempt to show that PROL is significant and that many teachers are actually interested in arriving at an understanding of the principle. The challenge for them is to get a pupil group, with different attitudes and backgrounds, to participate in the development of a new practice. By looking in more detail at the connection between the statistical results from the questionnaires and what the teachers and pupils have said in interviews, we will get a sharper picture with which to make different interpretations than those presented in the results summed up above. In the following two sections I shall cross analyse our material to yield such nuances. I will begin with what the teachers and pupils say of the principle, using the term that most people now use, 'pupils responsibility for their own learning' (PROL).

"Are there higher qualities of attention which can interpenetrate our ordinary thoughts, feelings, and actions? Can we gain authority in relation to our attention? Only a person who can choose when to pay what quality of attention is really self-directed. And only a person whose attention can interpenetrate and relate the realms of purpose, plan, act, and effect, can reliably produce quality work." (Torbert, 1978, p109)

4.1 PROL in the classroom - what do teachers and pupils say?

In both questionnaires, to teachers in spring 1995 and to pupils one year later, there is a great deal of support behind the principle, between 2/3 and 3/4. Is this an example of both teachers and pupils 'double accounting', and that such principles aren't to be taken seriously in the everyday situation? I will make my comments on the basis of what I wrote of the teacher's opinions in the school year 1994/95. (Monsen, 1995) In a large majority of the interviews it was asserted that most pupils weren't interested in the principle and that those who taught the pupils for only a few hours per week couldn't use such valuable teaching time in the involvement of pupils in the planning and carrying out of teaching.

In group interviews in spring and early summer 1996 we confronted teachers and pupils with these points of view. We wanted to see if they maintained the same views when more colleagues were present as participants and at the same to gain a more representative picture of opinions among maths and English teachers at this point in time. We shall look at some typical statements, first from the pupils and thereafter from the teachers. The answers reproduced below are to what they think of PROL as a principle.

It is only a good thing. An extra teacher and more independence and consciousness of responsibility. I think a person can develop themselves much more quickly in this fashion.

The principle is good enough. We have chosen to stay on at school and must take responsibility ourselves if we want to learn anything.

To take responsibility for my own learning is not so easy. I believe that the most important thing is that the teacher should do as much as they can to get us to learn what we are meant to learn.

As to be expected, the majority of pupils take a positive attitude when they are asked about the principle, in a similar manner to the teachers. But, there are a group of pupils who are more in line with the last statement. They think in a more concrete manner based upon their experiences and they are soon sceptical, or should we say more realistic? What we can at least say is that teachers are wrong when they say that pupils *aren't* interested in having more responsibility for their learning. The pupils believe that PROL is a natural part of becoming more grown up with the move from secondary to upper secondary education. The collision between ideal and reality arises when we ask pupils about their *experiences* with PROL. The answers then are totally different. As a move in the direction of how this is experienced in practice, we shall take another answer to the question above.

The principle in itself is very fine, but I don't think it always works. Only a minority work as hard as it is necessary. I think the move to upper secondary education is too abrupt. Only a few manage this.

It is worth noting that this pupil implicitly confirms what other pupils have said, namely that it is expected that they should take more responsibility. Here there is a glimpse of pupils sharing a view as to what PROL entails; it means to take responsibility for one's own homework. There is nothing wrong in pupils regarding homework *as a part of* what responsibility learning is. What is lacking from such a view is that if we follow the line from modern educational psychology and the *Guide*, then pupil participation must also include their taking part in defining the goals for learning. Almost none of the pupils think in such a manner when they were asked about PROL as a principle.

What then do pupils tell of their experiences from the classroom? The answers are more divided. There are still as many as nearly half who say, in one way or another, that PROL is practiced in their classes. Two typical answers in this group indicate that it involves taking more responsibility for their own learning of what is in the set books and discussed by the class.

No, we have to work a lot with the subjects ourselves. I get a lot of the teaching, but to understand everything I have to work a lot myself. Sometimes teachers remind us that we have PROL, but we are clear that it is our responsibility, so nothing more needs to be said.

As the school year progresses more and more responsibility is put on our shoulders. Neither do we get replacement teachers any longer, and we must manage ourselves if the teacher is away. Then we follow the lesson plan and manage ourselves. We must also take responsibility for the teaching material - it is not always the case that the teacher says exactly what we are to read for the next lesson. We have to make sure that we have learnt what we need.

There is an interesting difference between these two answers. The first matches the traditional view of the pupil following up the teacher's expectations of them. In the second answer we see an *enlarged* pupil role with more and more demanding tasks. Here, it is expected that pupils use the class's lesson plan to define a work plan and follow this irrespective of the teacher's presence or absence. If this should be characterised as a difference in nuances, or a difference in categories because we are dealing with such a different pupil role that we can make a new category of it, is something which we can for the moment leave unanswered. If it is more than a difference in nuance, then in my opinion, we see the traces of a new pupil (and teacher) role under development and the content of Reform-94 has influenced this. This pupil (and most of the others we interviewed) still doesn't accept the more fundamental assumptions, the development of the lesson plan and the formulation of own learning goals as part of a work plan, but such a development is brewing in some classes.

The schools and teachers face big challenges if such a new pupil and teacher role is to become a reality. It is still the case that in the majority of classes, pupils say that they haven't the experiences of the pupil in the last answer, as is clear in two other typical answers.

Not in English at least. Here the teachers check if we have done the work. Many now think English is boring and more or less give up, and then it is more or less the same with responsibility as well.

Only a very few take responsibility. Much time has been used on two pupils who have since dropped out, so we others haven't been looked after so well. I don't think the teachers should concern themselves with them so much when they show so little responsibility, and the other pupils haven't had the chance to learn any responsibility. In the beginning teachers said a bit about it being our responsibility to learn, but they have understood that it is impossible in this class, so now we are treated like junior school kids. We are going on a theatre trip to Oslo and those who are under 18 years of age aren't allowed to go on their own. Many pupils reacted by saying that they are responsible themselves, but they haven't understood that they have shown that they aren't, so they show how irresponsible they are. Only a minority can be bothered to do anything.

In the first answer, responsibility deals with if the pupils are checked for doing their daily homework or not. The pupil also has an explanation as to why teachers (in this pupil's opinion)

are forced to 'check', pupils more or less give up. If this can be blamed on English being boring, or more fundamental reasons, is something I shall return to later. In the second answer the situation is more complicated. The pupil plainly believes that they haven't *learnt* to take responsibility because so much time has been used on two (probably weak) pupils. But, there is another moment of interest, '... a minority can be bothered.' There is much that indicates that the second pupil is onto something central. Responsibility has to be learnt, and it must be connected to concrete tasks. With time a comprehensive literature has developed on co-operative learning, which documents the significance of gradual and systematic learning of cooperation is to be achieved (Strother 1990, Hjertaker, 1984). It is hardly different with PROL.

The challenging question that remains after the answer from the two last pupils (and many others), is: that so many answers indicate that subjects such as English (and mathematics and other general subjects in vocational courses) are so little interesting, *so boring*, can be explained by pupils not succeeding in these subjects and that they don't therefore see any reason in becoming involved with them, or is it the case that the subjects *become* boring because they are given so few possibilities to influence their own learning situation? To answer this question we must look at the how engaged and responsible pupils are in other subjects. My material is limited to English, mathematics and natural sciences, but from material drawn from the other evaluating groups can be relevant here. But my material shows, if nothing else, that in some classes something has happened in relation to widening the pupils responsibility and that pupils react positively towards this.

We shall look a little more closely at which experiences teachers and pupils have by focusing on the pupils, not just in their being responsible for learning material in relation to the work plan, but also as co-operating partner with the teacher in relation to planning, the development of learning goals and the evaluation of achieved results (Hansén 1998, Zimmerman 1994, Nelson 1991).

4. 2. *The pupil as cooperative partner*

In the questionnaire the majority of of pupils assert that they *would like* a greater opportunity to decide, that they are interested in participating in the planning of the teaching. (Monsen, 1997). The majority of teachers make the opposite assertion, that the majority of pupils *aren't* interested and that they (i.e. the pupils) are of the opinion that it is the teachers who should decide. Are these results an example that teachers and pupils talk at cross purposes and live in different realities?

I would argue that these 'results' from the questionnaire must be followed up and interpreted in relation to more detailed questions in interviews/conversations. It might then be the case that the classic opposition between the generations, shows itself to be something else. It doesn't look like the majority of teachers have changed their view on the possibility of drawing pupils more into the planning of teaching. In 1996, as in 1995, teachers assert in interviews that pupils show little interest in gaining more influence over information about the lesson plan, about saying what they mean about the date for exams and the nature of how they are taught. The lesson plan as a whole is regarded by them as the teacher's responsibility. Some typical answers (from a group interview of mathematics teachers spring 1996) to a question on how they evaluate pupil ability to take part in the planning of teaching explains the teachers understanding and standpoint. The question took as its starting point the assertion from part report 2 spring 1995 that pupils were only to a limited extent involved in planning and that teachers mean that pupils lack the ability to fully participate in planning. The intention of using these assertions was precisely to give teachers who had made these assertions (and their colleagues who now took part in the interview) the opportunity of modifying their points of view on the basis of new experiences.

O: The pupils are involved gradually, asked how they would like, blackboard teaching or independent work. They aren't involved in the planning itself.

R: I haven't been able to get them to participate actively. It is something I have had to work with at home in the evenings.

O: There are as many meanings in a class as there are pupils.

N: I don't think it is just the pupil's background abilities, but also their attitudes which are the problem. We have experienced pupils who are clever and enjoy the subject, they can make their own plans and work independently. But, it is very difficult if they aren't interested. They fall by the wayside.

R: How much teaching time shall we allocate for such?

O: Yes, it is the cleverest who have the ability, not the others. Quotation from another: "It is a good reform, but not for our pupils".

N: Yes, it is a big problem.

Most of the group interviews supported this view of the pupil's role in planning. Even though the course plan with supporting documents create the opportunity for more active pupil participation, the majority of teachers haven't changed their opinions since the reform was implemented. The reasons given by most of them can be found in his answer. They are now, as then: a) The pupils *don't want* to participate, b) pupil *opinions* are too different, c) the pupils have negative *opinions* to an active participation (don't want responsibility), d) only the *cleverest* pupils have the ability, the other *fall by the wayside*. It is possible to look more closely at these reasons and evaluate how they match other research and on how on the level of principles, it is important to take seriously teachers experiences of and with *their* pupils before a clear meaning is formed on what teachers *ought* to do (Gray & Chanoff 1986).

On the other hand, what can help us move on is to look at some of the answers we received which show that some teachers have possibilities where others see problems. These teachers can perhaps tell us what can be done to follow up expectations from the Ministry of education. With a couple of answers from the same questions, we have in my opinion a foundation for further discussion with the majority of teachers who up until now have regarded the expectation of active pupil participation as too great a challenge.

A: Pupil ability is too limited. It is a mistake to use time in exerting pressure upon pupils in this area. Many of them have enough with the subjects. Agree with the conclusion in the statement.

B: Agree.

C: It is dependent on the class. Teachers make the lesson plan, pupils decide the method of working and some goals. I believe in a development towards greater student participation in planning, but there will always be a big difference from pupil to pupil.

This answer illustrates the normal situation at most schools. Teachers evaluate differently their experiences with the same pupils. Teacher C has taken up the challenge and the pupils have made progress towards joint responsibility for planning, even if this teacher also notes that there can be differences between classes and between pupils. What makes teacher C take up the challenge from the Ministry of education while teachers A and B at the same school mean that pupils don't have the ability and that it is a mistaken use of time? The point isn't to place C in a better light than A and B, but to find out why this difference in evaluation arises and what must happen for A and B to learn of C's experiences. I shall use an example to show that it is possible to get pupils to take part in the planning of teaching and thus to take responsibility for their own learning. This English teacher is answering a question (asked in June 1996) where they were asked to consider the assertion that pupils desire traditional teacher-steered teaching.

To take responsibility for your own learning is a process - it must go step by step. In the VKI courses (2.year) they are better at taking responsibility. On the foundation course teachers must steer the pupils quite a bit in the start, but PROL comes about with time as long as the teaching is varied and independent exercises are set. Most pupils want order and structure in the start - so one must loosen things up as the year progresses.

This statement provides some of the answer to the question above. The pupil's planning must go step by step. It is dependent on the teacher varying the teaching so that pupils can experience how it is possible to choose between different ways of teaching. That within such choices they can be given independent tasks. When it is phrased in such terms, shared responsibility seems very simple. This teacher and other examples didn't experience it as so very problematic. We know that the majority of teachers of teachers see this as so problematic that they don't bother trying. Some of those that do, receive confirmation of their opinions that pupils don't want shared responsibility. How do pupils view the situation, what do they say about their possibilities for participating in the planning of teaching? It is a big step from an expressed *desire* to sharing and

what they believe is possible based upon their own experiences. When questioned if they have taken part in the planning of teaching, most of them answer that they haven't, as in the two examples below, from May 1996.

The situation as regards co-operation in English is quite poor. Lesson plans for two months are given out. In the beginning of the year we were asked if we wanted to take part, but we haven't seen any sign of this.

We aren't included in decision making; the teacher makes all the decisions. It does occur that we make some objections now and then, but we haven't discussed any method about this.

These and many similar answers confirm what we know from the teacher interviews, only a few pupils experience that they are included in planning, even if asked in the beginning, they saw nothing of it later. What is necessary to *make* this invitation into a reality? And, as the last pupil notes, there can be talk of methods for co-operation. It is a question of moving beyond a stage with ambiguous signals.

We are working on the American way of living, and we will select material and what we are going to write about. We co-operate with the teacher and reach agreement about what we are going to do.

Maybe there is not so great a difference in practice between what this pupil experiences and a number of other pupils who assert that it is teachers with their plans who decide. Like most teachers, this teacher has made their lesson plan where one topic is the American way of living. The difference appears to be that this teacher gives his pupils greater choice within the set teaching goals and topics. This results in this pupil having a positive experience of shared decision making. It presupposes that the student to begin with has a positive view of the subject and of the teacher. As we have noted several times, a not insignificant number of pupils taking vocational courses have quite big problems with general subjects such as English and mathematics, either because of interest for the subject or because they lack the abilities necessary to encourage participation in the subject, something which planning of courses assumes. Teachers can choose to ignore these things and instead focus on those willing to be involved, or as we have seen above, they can regard the situation as so difficult that they don't think it can be carried out.

To give a picture of the challenges faced by teachers, we will reproduce a group interview about natural science courses from spring 1996, where questions focus upon their participation in planning.

Interviewer: Are you involved in planning?

Pupil 1: We have been given a plan.

(Int. notes: There was disagreement if it was after Christmas or for the whole year)

Pupil 2: Have no idea. (Int: Why?) Don't remember. I take what ever happens as it happens.

Pupil 1: There wasn't any discussion of the plan when we got it.

Pupil 3: The tests are piling up.

Int.: Have you had any say in this?

Pupil 1 and 3: Not really. We must accept what is decided.

Pupil 1: We must expect this when we go to upper secondary school, they say.

Int.: Do you feel you have the abilities necessary to take part in the planning?

Pupil 1: Don't know.

Int.: What do you believe you will have had the ability to participate in?

Pupil 3: Don't know.

(Interviewer's comment: I asked a bit about methods, but they showed no interest in discussing them.)

Int.: Would you have shown any interest if you had been asked to discuss the plans?

Pupil 1: Some might have been interested, perhaps.

Pupil 2: Few - more if a discussion had started.

(Interviewer's comment: After a small discussion, most believed they would have been interested if they had been drawn into discussion.)

The question is if the teachers are capable of getting pupils to take part in discussions if the conditions are as difficult as this interview reveals. Here, there is little indication of involvement and interest. But, even these pupils who in this and most of the other questions distanced themselves from the interview's intention, that they should have a meaning about the subject and

the teacher's actions, admitted in the end after learning that the subject didn't involve them, that they might take part if they were forced. This indicates that in pupil culture there are groups, who for different reasons, feel the need to distance themselves from the school and its demands. It is easy to interpret this resistance as indifference and a refusal of demands made in subjects. Many teachers experience these pupils in such a way, drawing the conclusion that it isn't worth using time on trying to draw them into discussions they aren't interested in. They are of the opinion that it is easier for all parties that the school through teachers and lesson plans make demands to the pupils as a group, so that it remains up to each pupil to decide what of the school's offer they will use, and that this will be PROL in practice. As a consequence, this might indicate that pupils who are interested in the subject don't have to take part in discussions, where some pupils gain the opportunity of demonstrating their indifference. Such can have a demoralising effect on the class and the interest in the subject, which despite everything, exists for the majority of pupils. Many teachers hope to avoid the situation outlined above, where a lot of time was used to get two pupils to participate in the classroom activities. It is not therefore difficult to understand why many teachers choose such a solution, even though they are fully aware that demands for pupil participation exist.

We see something of the same in the cross-section of the pupil group. In principle, those whose answers to the questionnaire we have already examined, mean that they have the ability and *ought* to have the opportunity exert more influence on the teaching plans, but in practice they experience how many of co-pupils do little to live up to such expectations. This is why in pupil interviews and perhaps also in group interviews in particular we see the expression of negative experiences and therefore don't have anything against teachers steering everything.

Some pupils experience this as a lack of trust towards them as responsible people and as a result stick to the principles specified in the course plan, but they are in a clear minority. The majority choose, like teachers, a pragmatic course of action and choose the solution which gives them the best route to exams. Such an analysis gives a possible explanation as to why so many teachers choose to put less emphasis on pupil participation in the planning of teaching, as it might take place in the classroom.

Does this mean that pupils don't really work with learning goals, that teaching carries on as before with lessons divided according to chapters in the set book and that learning goals for the individual pupil don't exist or play no significant role?

Despite these repeated calls for reform aimed at students, young people themselves occupy, at best, a miniscule part of the literature on the process of changing and reforming education. Indeed, the almost exclusive interest of this literature is in describing what adults do to make kinds of changes in the educational system that will promote and nurture desired changes in students (Corbett and Wilson, 1995, p12)

If my analysis of different pupil groups in relation to active participation in the class hits its mark, we will be able to form a different understanding of why so many teachers believe it is difficult to follow up the curriculum expectations of developing the learning environment. Before advances can be made in relation to this pupil group, we must acknowledge that there exist and are other totally different demands to psychological insight and methodological approach, which can change their fundamentally sceptical attitude and resistance to what the school stands for. Reform-94 represents important and demanding principles when it comes to cooperation between teachers and pupils. When teachers argue that it is difficult to involve pupils in constructive cooperation, this can be blamed on the fact that in many classes there will be several pupils who show little interest in such a cooperation, and then not just because they haven't *learnt* what a constructive co-operation is, but also because they don't believe it will have any positive consequences for them.

Can the teacher manage to change such attitudes in the pupil group? This will be dependent on how deeply these pupils mistrust the theoretical subjects in the school. Most of us have come across or heard of teachers who in an engaging manner create trust even in the most difficult children, but for the greatest majority of teachers their everyday existence in the classroom can

with several such pupils, take on the appearance of a continual fight to gain attention for standards in different subjects, and for pupils to regard such subjects as important and worthwhile the effort. Under such conditions, the ideal of co-operation and shared planning can easily be experienced as nothing more than plans on paper. Then, new challenges to develop the teaching environment together with pupils will have little meaning when the daily chore is to try and get parts of the pupil group to do a minimum of work in the subjects (Berman 1995).

The size of the problem with pupils who passively or actively resist school goals, who don't have a wish to steer or be steered by school goals, is something I have said is difficult to say anything certain about. This is not a clearly delimitable group with distinct characteristics. As we have noted, it is easy to mix them with pupils who have problems with the subjects or personal problems, but who just the same struggle with demands made in the subjects. Part of the problem is also that pupils who to begin with want to do as best they can with such difficulties, can end up in that part of the pupil culture who define themselves in opposition in relation to the school's goals, because the school hasn't managed to adequately meet the perhaps few pupils who form the nucleus of this culture of opposition. We are in other words talking not of a stable situation with pupils who can be placed in one or the other pupil groups, but a few simple characteristics assigning some to the category 'clever' or 'weak' in the respective subject (Furlong 1991).

In classes with a potential for such a culture of resistance, constellations between pupils change depending on what teachers and the school do to create a situation which makes goal-directed school work natural and taken for granted for the vast majority of the pupils in the classroom. Many teachers hold the belief that they can achieve the best results by adhering to already existing and clearly defined ways of working, where the teacher formulates the goals and plans, and where pupils keep their side of the work contract. Most teachers would like to be democratic, but when they experience that discussions about teaching give few results and are a source of frustration among pupils, then they see little point in trying to meet expectations, which in their opinion, give poor opportunities for working with standards laid down in the curriculum. This experience can explain why we find a marked difference between teacher support for principles in the curriculum, where PROL is important, and what they believe it is possible to achieve in their own classes.

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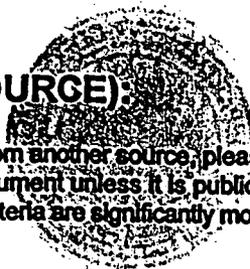
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