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Response-able Pedagogy as an Approach to Quality in Teaching

Abstract (300 words)

In the Danish QUINT sub-project Connected Classroom Nordic (CCN), we focus on students' and the teacher's initiatives within the use and understanding of technologies and the materials in the classroom.

The aim of the paper is to explore and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of studying quality from a student perspective. *By following the students' explanations of quality in a situation we discuss whether subject specific pedagogies and general didactics combined with posthuman approach conceptualize quality in teaching.*

The paper introduce how quality may be conceptualized in posthuman terms and applying this to empirical vignettes from video-ethnography of teaching in Danish and Mathematics to examine how response-able pedagogies offer operable standards for determining qualities of (socially just) teaching. The conference paper explores ways of describing teaching quality by bridging approaches of subject specific pedagogy and general didactics with the approach of posthuman philosophy which works from and with ontologies of becoming, process, relationality and performativity. The paper also examines to what extent the posthuman philosophical approach allows inquiry into quality from perspectives of student engagement and the interaction between students, teachers, subject matter from Danish and Mathematics, learning media and educational technologies. Hence, the paper contributes to the QUINT ambition of researching and conceptualizing instructional practices and repertoires in Nordic classrooms by inquiring into quality as an emergent phenomenon, and by including the perspective of the students.

The empirical basis for this student perspective is the longitudinal, video-based ethnography of teaching Danish and Mathematics from the CCN-project, which forms the basis of both analysis and discussion. The analytical strategy involves exploring the qualities in a fundamental sense and based on rich descriptions of technology-rich classroom practices. It draws on intellectual traditions that suggest that studies of human-technology interaction benefit from not having a priori definitions of the character of these interactions but should 'follow the actors'.

Theoretical background

Our didactic analysis includes a concept of teaching, understood as introduction to a content as well as teaching methods and material selected with the purpose of leading the student´s to a content understanding (Gruschka, 2016). To understand the student´s actions in the classroom, we look at students' adaptation strategies. For example, when students do not involve in or disconnect from learning activities the reason might be that the adaptation and conformity that school and teaching require is too difficult to cope (Imsen, 2006). Finally, we understand learning as situated and linked to participation in social practice

communities and that the student's project in classroom are recognized as relevant and meaningful (Lave & Wenger, 2011; Hetmar, 2019).

Inspired by feminist new materialist theory (e.g. Barad 2007; Haraway 1997, 2016), this study explores the possibilities of a shift from human-centric quality debates to educational practices that we refer to as *response-able pedagogies*. Based on a relational ontology that insists upon attending to the material as enmeshed with the discursive and human, this approach challenges quality as something only humans are responsible for. We build on Bozalek and Zembylas' (2017) understanding of response-able pedagogies as practices that incorporate a relational ontology into teaching and learning activities (p. 62). *Response-ability* (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1997, 2016; Despret, 2004, 2016) refers to the capacity to respond*;* of rendering each other capable of response. This is an affirmative approach to quality. Response-able pedagogies are made possible through the relational practices of *attentiveness*, *curiosity*, *responsibility*, and *being rendered capable* (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). Attentiveness involves the ability to pay due attention. Curiosity is necessary to enable students to flourish and grow through the risk of opening up to encounters with the unexpected. Responsibility is located in multidirectional relationships including nonhuman partners. Rendering each other capable enlarges the competency of everyone and everything involved.

Methodology

The material is classroom studies by two researchers present at the time in four consecutive lessons in each of the subjects Danish (Language art/L1), Mathematics and Social Science. The video recordings focus on two focus students and their work in detail with and use of all devices at hand, i.e., paper and pen, work on pc, mobile phone etc., and the cameras focus to follow the students' communication and engagement in the classroom with classmates, the teacher and the teachers' projector, white and blackboard etc. Other recordings collect the whole class-perspective and the teacher's projector screen and board in detail. The video observation is carried out in the same class through three years, grade 7-9th.

The paper describes the analysis of two case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2010) of situations and processes in the classroom based on observation and selection of key events and interviews with the students involved in chosen situation in focus-group interview (build as stimulated recall-settings). Case studies make allow diverse types of empirical data to be involved (Yin, 2018; Flyvbjerg 2010). The analysis is carried out as phenomenological descriptions through micro studies of activities, i.e., communication, gestures and engagement in a multimodal perspective to observe and describe.

In our study we have a strong empirical focus on the interaction between students and teacher or/and students and subject/technology. The two case-analyses are explorations of the relations between the students' experiences, their narratives about the situations, their intentions and doings in the situations while interviewed in a stimulated recall-interview about the filmed situation (cases), and the researchers' observations from the situations (video observation). In two situations, we examine quality seen as relational processes and creation of content, where actors, including technology, play different roles. In writing the padlet, (the L1-lesson) the students form an assignment and assess that the activity has quality. In the presentation, we will identify and unfold deeper rhythms and structure that are important for students' understanding of quality in teaching.

The comparison between researcher-chosen key events and the students' arguments and interest in the later focus group interview about the same events form the exploration of whether the students actually describe response-able pedagogies and whether it is made possible through the relational practices of

attentiveness, *curiosity*, *responsibility*, and *being rendered capable* (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017) as mentioned above.

CASE A – Danish class

Case A is from a Danish class and is about students' reflection on what is happening organizing a digital task. The teacher wants the students to put in themes on the padlet related to a novel. But the students can't flag up the teams in the learning technology, and a situation arises where students and teacher help each other to cope with the connection with questions and themes on the screen. Afterward, the students comment on the specific situation and note they are much more a part of "the subject" - when they write themselves, they became a part of what happened on the shared screen.

Case B – Mathematics class

Case B is from a mathematics class where the absent teacher has given the students written instructions on their learning management system to read some theory in their digital textbook and solve the appertaining exercises. The entire class is stuck at an exercise where they must determine the acute angles of a right-angled triangle with two known sides.

Preliminary findings

Case A deals with how students, teachers and subject activities are embedded in technology. The assumption is that quality for some student is the opposite of being passive participants in activities facilitated by the teacher. Instead, they see active participation in and mastering and digital forming of the task solution as an attractive project. Because students' practices in the everyday classroom are deeply embedded in digital technologies, they are at the same time both objects and subjects, which is important for or perhaps even has potential to change the digital rhythms that support the teacher's ability and responsibility for teaching. That is, the teacher gets a handshake from the students because they understand that he in the situation is not capable of handling both technology and a joint literature conversation. Further, the students are not victims to e.g. digital instrumentalism insofar they are able to "get more involved". Other cases from the CCN-material show the exact opposite: those same digital technologies are barriers that increases complexity and creates leg spans. Digitality and quality in teaching must be measured in pragmatic and context sensible ways (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005; Dakers, 2014).

Relevance to QUINT ambitions

In the presentation, we will examine how students' relationships and technology practices can be characterized to nuance our understanding of quality in teaching (case B). The study furthers our understanding of student perspectives in relation to teaching qualities in relation to didactics and techno-practices in every day digital classroom.

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