

KNOWING IN PRACTICE

The use of dialogue as a pedagogical method in integration work

Abstract

This study analyses dialogue as an aspect of professional knowledge when integration workers are orienting newly arrived immigrants about Swedish society and everyday life in an integration activity called civic orientation. The data consists of interviews with integration workers and observations of classes in Sweden. The results show that using dialogue involves knowing how to mobilise a contextual foundation for mediating between different experience-based meanings and how to re-contextualise information, which requires skilful handling of various knowledge sources. To bridge between standardised information and contextually relevant meanings is central in integration processes and here, dialogue could support future integration work.

Keywords

professional knowledge • dialogue • meaning making • integration work • civic orientation

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1 Introduction

Integration work is a constantly changing professional domain, not the least because its task is closely connected to societal changes, such as increased migration and changed patterns of movements across borders. Recent studies show that social welfare work is constantly facing new contexts and forms of diversity that requires new knowledge to manage, for example, different kinds of boundaries, belongings and to meet emergent needs (Dominelli 2010; Reish & Jani 2012; Harington & Beddoe 2014). Türegün (2013) argues that work relating to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers is a new field of practice where traditional ways of organising and carrying out work are being challenged. But can it be argued that integration work practice is developing into a new field of practice? The position taken in this study suggests that it is. Even though integration work practice is a highly skilled activity calling for an extensive knowledge base, we need to understand what constitutes the knowledge base of integration work and how this can be applied to the dilemmas regularly encountered in everyday practice at the workplace.

One example of such a developing field of practice in the Swedish context is civic orientation, which is a 60-hour group activity held in the immigrants' native language. The activity is aimed at providing extensive access to information and orientation on how Swedish society is organised and affects everyday life on a practical level. The regulation (SFS 2010:1138) stipulates that the activity is to be carried out in a dialogic form and is to provide a foundation for subsequent

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acquisition of knowledge. Until 2007, civic orientation was included in the education system as part of the Swedish language education for immigrants. However, the new regulation in 2010 implied an explicit demand on the staff to accomplish dialogue in interaction with the immigrants focussing on the immigrants' own understanding and processes of integration.

In general, the work with civic orientation is a part-time activity funded by the municipality, where the integration workers have other primary occupations. The integration workers themselves have migrated to Sweden, not all of them have formal pedagogical education. However, the ministry of integration in Sweden emphasises that the specific knowledge required for the task goes beyond formal education and indicates cultural ability to work responsibly, both in relation to the performance and intentions of the activity.

At a general level, the knowledge requirements of the staff working with civic orientation concern language and pedagogical expertise. Though, the emphasis on dialogue in the regulation indirectly also implies that specific knowledge of processing information between different cultural contexts is required. It also requires an ability to make information intelligible, relevant and meaningful to immigrants with different backgrounds, level of education, age and so on. In the case of civic orientation, professional dialogue has a specific purpose: to both inform and develop an understanding of various issues and what they mean in the new country. The way in which the integration workers use dialogue, therefore, has some consequences for the immigrants' perception and understanding of the world in a new context.

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Our aim in this study is to explore what knowledge is involved when the integration workers engage in the kind of interactions, which, in this study, is called professional dialogue. We approach dialogue as conversations where various understandings of a specific issue are identified and processed in interaction between intersecting contexts (Linell 1998). We argue that in order to explore what constitutes the integration workers' specialised (professional) knowledge, one need to focus on their use of dialogue in everyday work. Therefore, we are focussing on the integration workers' performance of work at an integration unit in a mid-sized Swedish municipality. Our ambition is to contribute knowledge that can be relevant in the field of international migration and integration and for future organisation and performance of integration work.

2 Perspectives on professional knowledge and learning

There are many perspectives on research of competence and professional knowledge in cultural contexts. While some studies have focussed on individual's knowledge (Xiao & Chen 2009), others have emphasised the perspective of macrostructures where societal communication on cultural competence is focussed (Phipps 2014). Teräs & Lasonen (2013) and Lasonen (2010), on the other hand, mean that intercultural competence is reciprocal and embedded and intertwined in actions, such as preparing, reflecting, guiding and responding. Intercultural competence is thereby seen as integral to expertise and professional identity (Lasonen 2010). This is tantamount to Martin & Nakayama (2015) who argue that professional knowledge and intercultural competence only can be revealed and understood if one is emphasising the dynamic, historically and contextually situated aspects of activities.

While some scholars (Liddicot 2009) argue that intercultural communication involves 'engagement with a conceptually different construction of experience' (p. 130). Others (Rathje 2007; Teräs & Lasonen 2013) argue that the concept 'intercultural communication' does not untangle the complexity of professional knowledge involved in intercultural encounters, a claim that we support. A common way to define professional knowledge is related to professions that have managed to establish a specific knowledge domain for dealing with their specified tasks. Such a view is related to the idea of occupational closure, which, according to Payne (2001: 135), builds upon a 'shaky base' in relation to practical activities, such as integration work. Instead of treating professional knowledge as given, Goodwin (1994) and Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that it is produced and reproduced in and through the everyday activities of the practice. In the present study, there is no research-based professional knowledge to fall back upon; instead, the experience-based personal knowledge of the integration workers will eventually emerge into professionalism. Or, as Höghielm (2005) argues:

Professional skills and professional knowledge is to act out in a way where you know what you do, and you do it on purpose after reflection and practice. One can speak of a conscious experience - an experience in action and thought associations. An experienced professional 'knows' what to do. He or she has mastered their subject matter and execution of the task to such a degree that he or she cannot always describe what is happening with words alone. (p. 9)

What is highlighted in Höghielm's argument is that professional knowledge is connected to both facts and principles, being familiar

with various subjects and to human action. On a general level, professional knowledge is a prerequisite for competent action that is acknowledged by others, which also means that knowledge is the ability to participate in a specific activity (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991). This view implies that learning is seen as interactional, emerging between people when they engage in social practice. A particularly interesting feature in the integration workers' work concerns the significance between learning and making information intelligible and meaningful to the immigrants. For example, what the social insurance system (Försäkringskassan) in Sweden may mean to each individual in everyday life cannot be presupposed. Thus, a process of transferring information between different contexts involves both tensions and crossing boundaries.

Boundary crossing (Akkerman & Bakker 2011) is crucial in civic orientation and refers to when integration workers in classroom move between different social worlds (cultural and social systems) in order to make information intelligible for immigrants with different backgrounds and belongings. In such situations, dialogue is important for bridging between different perspectives. When integration workers are bridging between different systems, they can also take help from artifacts (for example, policy, regulations, textual material and PowerPoint presentations) that can work as boundary objects. In Star and Griesemer's (1989) definition, boundary objects are described as:

... objects which both inhabit several intersecting social worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them... [They are] both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use. (p. 393)

Through their plasticity of meaning, boundary objects translate concepts, viewpoints and values across contexts. In this study, context is understood as 'a social world constituted in relation with persons acting' (Lave 1993: 5), implying that structure and experience generate one another. In summary, this implies that knowing how to handle boundary objects becomes a vital aspect of the integration workers' interpretational work. Or, besides knowledge *about* various subjects related to integration work, the integration workers must know *how* to process information by means of dialogue, using *what* they know about two specific cultures to bring the activity forward by making judgments of action that benefit the purpose of an occasion. Knowing what to do and how, is related to complex sets of assumptions and contingencies outside the formal prescriptions of action (Suchman 1987). Making relevant judgments and decisions largely rely on professional knowledge and skills and are 'exercised in the very activity' (Dunne 1993: 74).

The view on knowledge and learning in this study turns the practice into what Mäkitalo and Säljö (2002: 59) call an 'institutionalized knowledge producing activity' where dialogue is a means of the work performed. In adopting this approach, we concur with a number of studies in different domains that illustrate how knowledge is locally organised and linked to the specific concerns of the everyday activities of work (Mäkitalo 2012; Winman, Säljö & Rystedt 2012). The approach used in these studies pinpoints the relationship between social and material aspects of activity indicating that in order to understand what locally relevant knowledge emerges in activity, we need to scrutinise both the integration workers' ways of reasoning and their use of dialogue in routine work.

2.1 The work with civic orientation and meaning making

In focussing on the integration workers' meaning-making activities, the use of language and categories becomes vital aspects of knowing. Categories are historical, used in institutionalised acting and thinking (Douglas 1986) and made relevant within particular practices (Mäkitalo & Säljö 2002). Even though there are tools and artifacts provided specifically for civic orientation, the meaning and functions of categories may vary among the participating immigrants. Understanding the meaning of categories depends on the integration workers' sense-making of the relationship between categories. If tensions emerge between participants with divergent opinions or perspectives, dialogue is one way of crossing boundaries. Such work is fundamental for bridging between different practices. Consequently, the integration workers' work involves several crucial aspects, such as collecting, transforming and categorising information to create incipient points of entry and presenting relevant illustrations that the immigrants can draw on. Such codifying (cf. Goodwin 1994) and representation of categories and classifications becomes central to the integration workers' organisation of activity in order to not only share information with the participating immigrants, but also for supporting collaborative sense-making between them. How the integration workers understand and deal with these kinds of meaning-making challenges will be highlighted in this study.

3 The study

The data for this study are derived from 115 hours of observations, field notes and 10 interviews with integration workers at an integration-unit in Sweden. The observations were carried out by each of the authors separately and took place on 2–4 days a week, 3–4 hours each time. The observations had different foci and the purpose of the initial part was to understand the overall expectations, norms, purposes and procedures already in place that adhered to the organisation and coordination of work (Agar 1986). This initial part included five sessions of civic orientation, in total about 20 hours. The aim was to document and analyse the pre-established patterns concerning 'objects, purposes, goals, values and procedures already in place' (Linell 1998: 187) that constitute elements of the historically and locally shared knowledge that the integration workers consider relevant to align themselves to. Field notes were produced directed at the environment, the participants, the overall activities, actions and times. The integration workers' preparation of classes, the classes themselves, discussions between the integration workers, documentation work, administration and team meetings were included in the observations.

After the initial period of the fieldwork, we followed one integration worker throughout an entire course of civic orientation, to gain insight about how different activities were interrelated and what interventions were established parts of the integration workers' regular work. Attention was directed towards how the integration workers navigated between information and tasks, how information was transferred into talk in the civic orientation class and how this information, in turn, was understood as consequential for the needs of the newly arrived immigrants. The observation includes informal interviews with the integration workers both in and about various situations to discover what was going on, the purpose and outcomes of and the relationships between different activities. Field notes were produced in close conjunction with the activities with a structure of direct observations, direct interpretations, analytical memos and

personal memos. Extra focus was put on what resources were used, interactional behaviour including body movement, gestures, intonation and eye contact.

The interviews with the integration workers lasted for about 1 hour each and were tape-recorded. Our intention was to get an impression of the integration workers' own understanding about what happens in classroom situations, what they perceive as challenging and in what way it is challenging. Attention was directed to issues of diversity and equality and how the integration workers perceived and coped with the professional demand to establish dialogue-based situations.

3.1 Data analysis

We used the field notes to obtain a general understanding of the overall workflow and ways in which the integration workers' knowledge functioned as a link between activities. Our analysis of the field notes and observations focussed on how pieces of information from texts and PowerPoint slides were made intelligible in the integration workers' interactions with the newly arrived immigrants, for example, how chunks of text were transformed into verbal statements that were addressed to the class members. Our interest was to identify how the different learning materials were integrated into the activities when the integration workers construed and juxtaposed crucial information concerning the immigrants' new country. More specifically, the analytical focus was to identify recurrent patterns of interaction and to describe how the integration workers interacted with the immigrants and what kinds of knowledge integration workers need to contribute in order to make sense of past and future activities in civic orientation.

From the initial individual analysis of the interviews, themes were abstracted from narratives about the integration workers' performance and dilemmas in everyday work. These parts were transcribed for deeper analysis in group with specific focus on how the integration workers accounted for challenges involved when making use of dialogue. To understand how joint interactions were accomplished, we scrutinised the categorical work employed in both preparing for and performing the activity. To shape our analysis, two questions were projected onto the data: what turns into resources in the use of dialogue and how are the resources used in dialogue? The bridging work between different domains, experiences, expectations and so on stood out as salient features in the narratives about everyday work. Thoughts and reflections about identified patterns and categories were summarised and connected to the theoretical perspectives of knowledge and learning. In line with the theoretical assumptions of the importance of institutional culture, the analysis emphasises the similarities in the integration workers' narratives rather than differences between them. As a final step, the analyses were linked to the analysis of the field notes and observations of interactional patterns, allowing a shaped analysis of the integration workers' knowledge in practice.

4 Results

Our results highlight three aspects of the use of dialogue in civic orientation. First, dialogue is understood as a pedagogical method that is used to meet individuals where they are. Second, artifacts are described as tools that are used in dialogue to bridge the gap between different contexts. Finally, through dialogue, the immigrants' understanding of artifacts, opinions and experiences is used to bridge the gap between different systems of norms and values.

4.1 Dialogue as a pedagogical method

Although, dialogue is a prerequisite for the activity referred to in the legislation, it is not something that automatically occurs when people meet. On the contrary, dialogue takes both effort and knowledge to perform or be a part of.

Our interviews show that the integration workers regard dialogue as a complex activity that involves active listening, respect for different opinions and engagement. In an interview, one of the integration workers says that:

It's really important that we constantly talk to each other in the classroom, that we have a dialogue concerning each topic (in civic orientation). It is not just important that I have informed the class about something, it is even more important that the participants (the immigrants) have understood what the issues I'm talking about mean to them. Therefore they themselves must ask questions, talk to each other, and be prepared to provide answers.

This utterance shows that dialogue is used to stimulate patterns of interaction in which the immigrants are encouraged to talk to each other. One example from our observations illustrates how the integration workers actively encourage the immigrants to talk to each other about what the possibility to choose schools for their children means to them. In this particular case, the integration worker started by informing the class about various regulations and then asked the immigrants to discuss in groups of four or five what the regulations meant for them as parents and what they thought about them from a broader societal perspective. After 5 minutes, each group presented their discussions. One group had discussed the possibility of remaining in the same apartment, but still choosing the best school for their children. Another group had discussed how the free choice opened up for Swedish people to move their children from schools with many immigrant children, which complicated every attempt to achieve integration. The integration worker picked up both perspectives and asked the group to discuss consequences for individual and collective responsibility and opportunity.

The dialogic exchange takes place within the context of the relational engagement created by the integration worker. By creating situations where the immigrants can ask questions and bring their opinions and experiences into the conversation, the integration workers are distributing the task and positioning the immigrants as active participants in the meaning-making process. These processes are initiated and given direction by means of the professional dialogue in terms of questions, support, affirmations and interests and so on. The aim is not consensus and, as shown above, the integration workers make use of dialogue to motivate the immigrants to provide personal examples to make the information intelligible and various understandings possible. Such use of dialogue also involves knowing when to take a step back and entrust the conversation to the immigrants. What is at stake here is the aim to support the immigrants' orientation in the Swedish society and their responses provide resources for the integration worker to know how to proceed with the dialogic process. In the example above, dialogue is used to stress the boundaries between individual and collective responsibilities and opportunities, which are recognised as relevant by both the immigrants and the integration worker. Thus, the unfolding of the activity makes evident the situatedness of the integration workers' knowledge.

The interviews indicate that making use of dialogue in civic orientation implies considering the immigrants' previous experiences

of education and authorities. The immigrants' experiences of educational settings are often *asymmetric* relationships between teacher and students and to encourage participation in a mutual activity, such aspects play a central role for the integration workers' organisation of dialogue. In addition, the integration workers explain that many of the immigrants have experienced severe difficulties and been exposed to strict regimes and traumatic situations that have led to a lack of confidence in societal authorities. Thus, the understanding of the immigrants' experiences and feasible anticipations plays a crucial role for the integration workers' knowledge of how to bridge the gap between the goals of civic orientation and the immigrants' previous experiences. Dialogue thereby becomes a tool to develop interaction patterns in educational settings that are new to some of the immigrants. The context- and situation-specific knowledge involved in such bridging work is argued by Lasonen (2010) to be crucial elements of intercultural expertise. Thus, the manners in which dialogue is used to stimulate a sense of belonging in the classroom are fundamental for increasing the ability of everyone to participate. In an interview, these social dimensions of dialogue are by one integration worker directed as:

Trust means that they (the immigrants) feel that they may ask questions and that there is a freedom to speak. That's important. But sometimes I have to drag them (change the culture in the classroom) to the point where they feel that they can ask questions, say what they want, and reveal their beliefs and feelings.

The utterance indicates that it takes time and effort to develop a sense of trust where everyone feels that they have the right to their own thoughts and opinions. Thus, there is a relationship between the integration workers' understanding of their task and their respect for individual conditions, which is an approach similar to what Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) refer to as inclusive.

The examples above stress the interactional aspects of dialogue and also that the immigrants respond to the content from their own cultural and knowledge perspectives (which also involves feelings, opinions, needs, etc.). These social and reciprocal characteristics of the dialogic activity, which are acknowledged in intercultural interactions (Teräs & Lasonen 2013), imply that civic orientation becomes a generative social practice (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991) where the immigrants are involved and are mutually responsible for the development of the activity. This corresponds to Säljö (2005) who argues that, as well as expressing knowledge, knowledge is also developed by being a part of social activities and is found in the changing relationships between individuals and activities. Dialogue can, therefore, be seen as a tool for the integration workers for establishing an arena for reflection. As we can see during our observations, the integration workers regularly use uptakes and comments to process the activity further and thereby the intersection and negotiation of different thoughts, values, experiences and opinions turn into a prerequisite for the activity. That is also a way where all individuals are being engaged in a social practice where all immigrants' individual knowledge and experiences become what Säljö (2005) calls 'intellectual resources for the collective development'.

4.2 Bridging practices

In civic orientation, the textbooks and PowerPoint slides are standardised forms (cf. Star & Griesemer 1989) as they become

tools of communication and stabilisation across topics. Subjects and values in the course material are examples where experiences and knowledge among the immigrants are used by the integration workers to develop a common platform for understanding Swedish society.

4.3 Artifacts as bridging tools

The integration workers need to establish links between different practices to enable the immigrants to share experiences in discussions. One integration worker argues in an interview that Swedish legislation becomes central in such a process:

...and break with the thoughts about the old system; that we no longer are in Somalia or Iraq or Afghanistan. We are in Sweden, and because of the law we can exchange experiences and knowledge with each other.

In this utterance, Swedish law is used as a tool to develop a common situation by showing how it can be understood in the situation at hand. The integration workers use the law as an opportunity for dialogue about norms and values. Such use of the law is similar to how course material, for example, PowerPoint slides, textbooks and schedules are used. Thorn (2003: 57) means that 'artifacts take their character from activity', and how they are used becomes consequential for the development of intercultural communication. According to our observations, tools, such as PowerPoint slides and so on function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer 1989) as they work as means, not goals, which are used to transform not only the understanding, but also work as an outcome that even transforms the procedures and routines *in situ* as they invoke dialogue among the participants.

Our observations show that before each session, the integration workers sorted out and structured information from the course material. Such knowing how to adapt the information to make it locally meaningful to the situation at hand, is characteristic to the integration workers' work and involves what Fitch & Desai (2012) call cultural sensitivity. Even though the course material is the same across different groups, the meaning of information changes in a new context. The layer of context becomes interactionally significant in intercultural communication (Liddicoat 2009) and implies for the integration workers that the organisation of a learning situation involves re-contextualisation of the information to function as a means in dialogue. This means they need to take into account the relationship between the pre-made course material, the immigrants' needs, the organisation of a session and the engagement in the activity, that is, the dialogic process.

4.4 Using similarities, differences and tensions as bridging tools

The integration workers themselves say they encourage the immigrants to draw attention to the context they are coming from. One integration worker says in an interview:

I remind them that they also come from a structure, a society that in fact was functioning, like everything else. It's important to emphasize to the individuals that, 'you are not here for me to teach you about how nice the terms of references are in Swedish society, but you've brought things that are important to you, and now it's up to us to find similarities'.

By bringing up similarities, the integration worker is trying to illustrate that there are connections between the two cultures. As before, individuals' experiences are used as resources. The similarities function as points of reference that make it easier to reflect upon subjects and jointly handle differences between systems. For example, to help immigrants' understand what the Swedish social insurance agency (Försäkringskassan) is, one integration worker expresses in an interview:

If we are talking about parents, the Koran says that the father should pay the mother as long as she is breastfeeding. And it is the Social Insurance Agency that pays the maternity leave. Such things can be compared.

This exemplifies how the integration workers use their cultural knowledge to find similarities and invoke vital differences. The outcome is a broader understanding of the topic. Using tensions and differences is characteristic in intercultural communication (Teräs & Lasonen 2013) and to create a common proficiency presumes that everyone understands and respects that there are relationships between opinions as well as between subjects highlighted both in the Swedish society and in the Koran. Abstract mental distinctions are integrated into the subject and become a bridge between action and thinking. This means that when the interpretation of the subject changes as in the example of the social insurance agency above, so do the cognitive and communicative conditions for the immigrants (Lave & Wenger 1991; Hutchins 1995). Part of the integration workers' knowledge is to understand that thinking alone is not determining action, but becomes a part of the dialogue.

4.5 Bridging gaps

In civic orientation, different facts and values are brought up and considered in meaning-making processes. One example from our observations is when the topic concerned how the economic system in Sweden is based on that both men and women mutually contributing to the family's income by paid work. The following week, the topic was care of the elderly in Sweden and the main issue was that the care is primarily a governmental responsibility. One of the immigrants asked if people in Sweden did not like their elderly relatives and asked why they did not take care of them themselves. The integration worker explained: (a) that this was a way to ensure that everyone got the help and support they needed, (b) that all elderly people could still have their individual freedom and finally, (c) that it is impossible to take care of an elderly relative in your own household when both men and women work.

Afterwards, the integration worker said he felt pleased with the explanation at the time it took place, but was unsure of how it would be perceived. However, the explanation started a discussion within the group and after a while, one of the men said (interpreted by the integration worker during the ongoing activity):

So what you mean is that if my wife starts work, our elderly relatives must be given away to a care center where they are unknown, where no one speaks their language, no one knows their religion or culture, where they cannot bond with their grandchildren, and where we will lose our connection to each other?

This question started a loud discussion during which the integration worker was quite passive. The final joint conclusion was that even

though women's rights and financial responsibilities are highly valuable, the mutual responsibility within the family and the act of taking care of each other in vulnerable situations are a clear necessity that takes precedence over everything else.

The case illustrates that the content of a session cannot be completely comprehensive on its own. As long as aspects of the content are used in partly similar and also partly different situations, there has to be openings for processes of meaning-making to develop a mutual understanding of the topics and categories that characterise the content. Dialogue here is not only an interaction between the immigrants, but also between their contributions. The plasticity of categories and presumptions that follow is, as the integration worker says 'a fragile path to balance on'. Such plasticity is a prerequisite for civic orientation based on dialogue that is respectful towards different norm systems and enables the bridging between and change of both situations and knowledge.

There is a 'dynamic relationship between knowledge as indefinite and unfolding on the one hand, and the need to stabilize knowledge to secure responsible use on the other' (Nerland & Jensen 2012: 116). Knowing how information is systematised is, therefore, a part of working as an integration worker. Awareness of this fact is of significant importance since organising information determines the ability to accomplish civic orientation with predetermined purposes. As Bowker & Star (2000) and Winman, Säljö & Rystedt (2012) state, every system of categories, terminologies and values is based on some form of plasticity that, to some extent, predetermines what is relevant, possible and necessary. In this particular case, this assumption becomes apparent as the relationship between the integration workers' knowledge and the immigrants' understanding of women's financial independence and care of the elderly is reflexive enough to satisfy the immigrants. This means that the conceptual distinctions are integrated into the course material and the content itself and that they are linked to human reasoning and acting.

The case above illustrates a gap that has to be bridged between domains and values, general definitions of categories, values, topics and local circumstances. From such a point of view, there is an inseparable relationship between the content and the aims of the course and the process of making sense in and of the contiguous activities in civic orientation. This social sense-making presumes that the immigrants express how they understand the categories and topics that constitute the civic orientation. This can be compared with what Nes & Moen (2010: 389) refer to as various knowledge resources that, from different perspectives, negotiate 'local universality', which does not necessarily imply shared understandings.

5 Conclusion

Our point of departure is that integration work is developing into a new field of practice and that we need to understand what constitutes its knowledge base. As outlined in the framework of this case study, the formal expectations of the Swedish integration workers' pedagogical skills (SFS 2010:1138) are based on a generic approach to knowledge. Though, our study reveals that such approach does not alone cover all aspects of the integration workers, on the contrary, as shown in the result, various dimensions of knowledge were identified that are important for integration workers.

We found that the skilful conduct of dialogue depended on the integration workers' knowledge in and about the responsibility as well as the heterogeneity and contingencies that characterised the situations that were brought to their attention. Thus, such conduct

involves the integration workers' prior understanding of situations based on their personal cultural competence (experience) and expectations of their work. What we can see from our results is that the integration workers' prior understanding becomes a resource in organising the activity and brings perspective to the judgments that are made *in situ*, nevertheless for how they prepared for unpredicted situations.

As shown in the result, the integration workers' preparations in the form of gathering information, codifying categories and classifications to frame and introduce various topics in relevant manners are just a first step of a sequential procedure. The dialogue is thereafter moved forward by various questions, comments, encouragements and understandings, which enable to take action orienting and adapting to the contingency of the situation. Such actions reveal the contextual, historical and developmental character (Teräs & Lasonen 2013) of the integration workers' professional knowledge. That is also tantamount to Martin & Nakayama (2015), who are emphasising that intercultural competence is dynamic, historically and contextually situated. Thus, the professional dialogue enacted implicate that their prior knowledge, that is, their knowing *that*, is intertwined with knowing *how* information is processed by continuously *contextualising* and *re-contextualising* categories. Drawing on Duguid (2005), who argues that knowing *how* is a prerequisite for knowing *that*, we can see in the result that the interpretational work of bridging different systems of norms and values presupposes knowing how to contextualise and re-contextualise meaning. Such bridging work constitutes vital aspects of the integration workers' professional knowledge involved in the use of dialogue.

The professional dialogue is, to a large extent, dependent upon artifacts with a stabilising function between topics, different groups and between integration workers. But one needs to have in mind that the stabilising functions are sometimes fragile. Just as shown previously when one participant drew the conclusion that working women cause lonely elderly people. In this case, the PowerPoints, to some extent, caused problems as the upheld information were too narrow contextualised, which means that the relation between different topics became unclear and left ahead. So, although the content within different topics might be correct, the information on the Power Points as well, and the orientation appears to be properly performed, one can never know in advance what interpretations that will be made. As seen, resources are no more than potential until they are used (Feldman & Orlikowski 2011), and it is the integration workers' knowledge of how to apply the information upheld in the artifacts in a way that it becomes intelligible, that makes standardised forms a resource in work. The tightrope walk of both maintaining structure and making use of information in a dialogic form presumes intricate organising skills. Nevertheless, artifacts, such as PowerPoint, become tools for structuring work and mediating institutional concerns.

In the example of when the free school choice was discussed, we can see the integration worker's knowledge manifested in the organisation and mobilisation of a 'dialogic' contextual foundation. The integration worker's contextualisation of the situation is revealed in the distribution of the task and positioning of the immigrants to make inquiries and relate the topic to individual and societal perspectives. The different understandings, based on diverse perspectives, were linked to the course material and became a resource for the integration worker for further exploration of the topic and its meaning in relation to the immigrants trajectories. The way the integration worker attended to the situation shows that the course material was used as a tool to bridge gaps between different understandings to

civic aspects of rights and obligations and facilitated meaning-making processes and understanding of new situations in Sweden. The conduct of the activity was effective in transforming the immigrants' position as recipients and aliens in relation to Swedish culture and welfare system to a position of participation by developing learning trajectories based on their own experiences. Yet, the immigrants' different understandings were needed for the integration worker to know how to continue the activity in a relevant way. From this point of view, differences are not only used as resources in the activity, they also become prerequisites for meaning-making (DePalma 2009). Consequently, professional knowledge involves the ability to listen, recognise and adapt explanations to the cultural as well as the individual experiences articulated in the learning group at hand.

In the example above, the integration worker only addressed the categorised information indirectly by invoking particular institutional concerns. Such conduct points to the anticipated aspects of the activity embracing both face-to-face interactions and formal expectations (cf. Mäkitalo 2003). A different situation is handled in the example where elderly care in Sweden was presented. A gap occurred as the immigrants questioned the category and responded to from another cultural tradition. Thus, depending on the contextualisation of the situation, our result makes it evident that categorised information is handled in diverse ways by the integration workers. In this case, the question demanded further explanation and for the activity to continue, the integration worker re-contextualised the category by drawing on individual rights and obligations and linking to topics they had been elaborating the week before. Individual rights and obligations as well as previous joint experiences were used as boundary object that invoked further discussions that contributed new meanings to the institutional category.

The different understandings comprised various focal aspects of elderly care and the integration worker's decision about how to translate the interests of the intersecting perspectives and understandings not only shaped the activity, but also the content of the topic. As argued by Keller and Keller (1993), new sequences of work will always constitute new events that are unique in terms of knowledge, actions and outcome. Although elderly care was approached from diverse traditions, the category was open enough for totally different ways of understanding the consequences of the Swedish system, which were equally relevant to people. The conduct of the dialogue made visible the open-ended feature of the meaning-making and the integration worker's choice to maintain heterogeneity in the process. Such performing presumes knowing the context in which dialogue is used.

The categorised information that is used in artifacts or by an integration worker might hold different significance to the individuals in the group, implying that the contingency of the dialogue is coupled with the plasticity of categories and conceding that they can be used and understood in various ways. Such indexical plasticity of categories (for further discussion, see Winman 2012) means that we cannot know every individual understanding of a category in advance and that is not the intention. Conducting this kind of process becomes a focal point in civic orientation and emphasises the difference between giving information to a group of people and navigating an orientation activity. The open-ended nature of categories and the interactionally significant layers of context involved in accomplishing understanding (Liddicoat 2009) highlights central aspects of practice and subsequently, relevant knowledge to the work of the integration workers.

The extensive amount of knowledge among the integration workers is poorly supported by formal education. Instead, it is the integration workers' professional knowledge that enables them to mediate the meaning of information contained in PowerPoint slides and textual material and to transform the information into contextually situated significance. And it is in this gap-bridging process from one situation to another that knowledge is developed over time and across different activities. The integration workers' professional knowledge is mirrored when the dialogue is used to mediate experience-based meaning in and about situations. However, as shown in the results, the integration workers have extended their knowledge from those situations to understanding the significance of the meanings in other situations. This professional knowledge only becomes visible in the borderland between the textually mediated meaning and the activity to which attention is directed. By locating the integration workers' professional knowledge as relationally embedded within the community and the institutional setting, we recognise the ongoing constituting of practice. To further develop the integration workers, professional knowledge domain, we maintain that there is a need for organised structures for learning and sharing knowledge that link past experiences to present and future actions. Thereby, individual experiences could be shared and one can learn with and from each other. By scrutinising and making patterns of knowledge and learning visible, this becomes a way to develop aggregated knowledge about integration work, not least in formal education settings and 'the continuance of professional practice' (Mäkitalo 2012: 75).

Promoting processes of education will most likely benefit the development of a professional culture and professional identity within the field of civic orientation. For the design of higher education, this might imply a need to organise future education so that it also meets the needs of practicing professionals in order to shape further learning. For professionals and students to develop knowledge to communicate across social and cultural contexts (Fitch & Desai 2012), the educational sector is challenged to develop curricula and make these kinds of intercultural competences explicit learning outcomes in courses. Such organisation of education assumes a certain acquaintance with various practices and their contexts and a continuous discussion of challenges and problems encountered during everyday work under current standards of practice (Florian 2012).

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