

# Shifting Subordination

Co-located interprofessional collaboration between  
teachers and social workers

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## Abstract

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The purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyse the practice processes involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration. The study took place in a resource school where social workers and teachers collaborate on an everyday basis around children who are both in receipt of special educational support and interventions from social services. The research question centres on the division of labour and the explicit notions and implicit assumptions that underpin it. Further, the organisational conditions that influence the division of labour, the process involved in the selection of pupils, and the processes of maintenance and development of professional identities in a close collaborative context are all examined.

The study is a qualitative case study of interprofessional collaboration. Through interviews with the teachers and social workers, and via participatory observation of their professional practice, empirical data has been generated. This has been used to examine processes of collaborative collaboration in accordance with a thematic analytical scheme.

A theoretical framework based on theories of the sociology of professions (Abbot, 1988; Evetts, 2006b) and drawing also on the work of Hasenfeld (2010a) on human service organisations and Lipsky (1980) on street level bureaucrats, in conjunction with Strauss' (1978) theory of negotiations, has been used in analysing the empirical data.

The results indicate that the intake process functions primarily to legitimise collaboration from an organisational and professional perspective. Further, the teachers and social workers create what are termed *common* and *separate grounds* for practice. The concept of *common grounds* describes the processes in which common collaborative relationships are created, such as, for example, the construction of interchangeability and a common practice ideology. *Separate grounds*, on the other hand, involves situations in which social workers and teachers are engaged in defining and specifying their profession-specific roles in the context of their everyday work. Another means of maintaining and reinforcing a profession-specific professional identity in co-located collaborative contexts is the use of the spatial design.

The results also point to three particular characteristics in the construction of co-located interprofessional collaboration. First, professionals are engaged in what can be termed a form of *shifting subordination* as a means of both legitimising and developing their professional identities. Shifting subordination is a strategy used to reduce and avoid professional conflict around roles and working tasks. Secondly, they are engaged in constructing a *shared professional identity* as a means to meet the organization's imperative of 'getting the job done'. Thirdly, there is the characteristic of *interdependence* which shapes the negotiation processes involved in the division of labour.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

Collaboration between different professional groups has been a phenomenon characteristic of public agencies in late modern society for a considerable period of time, and collaboration as an organisational form is particularly widespread in human service organisations. It has also been a subject of scientific inquiry and has been studied extensively from both organisational and professional perspectives (Hjelte, 2005; Hjortsjö, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Leathard, 2003a). Many are the horror stories of collapsed collaboration – for example major conflicts around professional status, legitimacy and fiscal accountability – as well as a proliferation of other stories of success, increased efficiency, effective service provision and mutual service-provider and service-user satisfaction (Glenny & Roaf, 2008; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Leathard, 2003a; Socialstyrelsen, 2007). Research is commonly characterised by questions in relation to what promotes or, rather, what advances or what can hinder collaboration (Huxham & Vangen 2005; San Martín-Rodríguez, Beaulieu, D'Amour & Ferrada-Videla, 2005). This thesis is not about seeking to find factors that either advance or hinder collaboration; rather it is about the collaborative relationship between two different professional groups. The point of departure is in questions that concern the professionals' division of labour when collaborating, how different working tasks are distributed, and what explicit notions and implicit assumptions underpin this distribution. In particular, focus is directed towards the maintenance and development of professional identities in a close collaborative context, professional legitimacy, and the ways in which organisational conditions influence the distribution and assumptions of responsibility for different working tasks. This thesis focuses on one particular form of collaboration – co-located interprofessional collaboration – where the empirical case is constituted by the collaboration between teachers and social workers in a resource school for children in receipt of both support from social services and special educational support.

## Collaboration in research

Collaboration is commonly motivated by arguments that can be attached to fundamental rationales. The first is the ambition of providing a higher quality of service which, by adopting a holistic approach to service provision, is both more efficient and more satisfactory for the service users (see Hjern, 2007; Witthinton, 2004). The argument is often put forward with reference to the development of a more fragmented and differentiated public service (see Grape, Blom & Johansson, 2006) and the notion that changes in society mean that people's problematic situations are more complex and that a wider span of professional knowledge is needed in order to understand the situation and to assess needs (see Socialstyrelsen, 2007). The other argument for collaboration is based on an ambition to gain fiscal benefits where, in times of financial pressure in society, collaboration is on the increase (see Rathgeb Smith, 2010).

Huxham and Vangen (2005) list a set of generic reasons for organisations to enter collaboration. For example, organisations may want to gain *access to resources* as they are unable to achieve their objective with their own resource allocation. They want to *share risks* as a means of insurance, i.e. in terms of spreading losses. Further, there is a need to develop *efficiency* by means of a better use of resources. An additional reason is to achieve a *co-ordinated* and *seamless* service-provision by, for example, creating a 'one stop' service for people with multiple service needs. Yet another argument for collaboration is that professionals *learn from each other*. For example, learning partnerships, whereby multi-professional groups visit each other with the aim of learning by seeing someone else's practice, may be regarded as particularly desirable. A further reason can be that there is a *moral imperative*; there is quite simply no other way. This often rests on a belief that issues that are of great concern for society, such as poverty, crime, child abuse, shortage of health provision, economic development and the environment, cannot be tackled by one organisation alone and that collaboration is therefore needed.

The structure of collaboration varies and researchers commonly use a multitude of descriptive terms which encapsulate a range of different collaborative models. Examples of descriptions of collaboration can range, for example, from cooperation, co-ordination, consultation and strategic alliances on the one hand, to fully merged services on the other (see Axelsson & Bihari Axelsson, 2007; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Whittington, 2004). In many of these examples, descriptions commonly focus on the interactive elements that can be identified in the practice of the organisations involved (see Meads & Ashcroft 2005;

Westrin, 1986). Hortwart and Morrison (2004) use five levels of integration to describe a variety of contexts for collaboration. These include *communication*: individuals from different disciplines talking together, *co-operation*: low key joint working on a case-by-case basis, *co-ordination*: more formalized joint working, but no sanctions for non-compliance, *coalition*: joint structures sacrificing some autonomy, and, finally, *integration*, where organizations merge to create a new joint identity.

Other attempts to describe collaboration point to the professionals involved and focus has been directed to the interaction between different professionals taking part in different formations of *interprofessional* collaboration on an individual level. This is commonly described as different types of teamwork, taking place, for example, in multiprofessional, interprofessional, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transprofessional and cross-professional teams (Leathard, 2003b; Thylefors, Persson & Hellström, 2005). The argument for working in teams is based on a belief that sharing knowledge and skills is a positive thing and can contribute to providing creative solutions to difficult problems (Payne, 2002, Thylefors, 2007;). However Payne, for example, points to the notion that, for some professionals, teamwork is about conflict and a fear of limits to their professional freedom. The two-sided picture about the merits of collaboration in different teams is summed up by Lowe and O'Hara (2000) who make the point that to work in different teams appears to both enhance the professionals' competence, as well as to challenge their perceptions around their professional identity. However, according to Thylefors (2007) the arguments about the advantage of interprofessional teams are generally based on logic and common sense, rather than on research-based knowledge.

When exploring the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration, both in the form of different types of teamwork, and in other organisational formations, researchers, as mentioned earlier, commonly try to isolate different factors which promote successful collaboration and to identify factors that inhibit or obstruct collaboration (Socialstyrelsen, 2007; SOU 2010:95). Huxham and Vangen (2005) argue that researchers stress similar factors that advance interprofessional collaboration such as setting clear and achievable goals, building trust, and developing effective communication. They list conditions that influence these three overarching factors such as the inclusion of stakeholders, partner selection, mutual trust, honesty and reliability, shared visions, mutual interdependency, open communication, appropriate distribution of power, political influence and appropriate governance and structure. In particular processes of negotiating aims

and actions are put forward as necessary elements in collaboration. Factors that appear to obstruct collaboration are, again according to Huxham and Vangen (2005), personal agendas and individual egos, poor managerial relationships, geographical distance and cultural differences. Axelsson and Bihar Axelsson (2007) identify similar reasons. However, they in particular name accountability for different budget areas, differences in information systems and databases, battles about ‘territory’, managers who want to guard certain areas of responsibility and professionals who protect their professional jurisdiction as factors that can have strongly inhibiting effects.

The issue of co-location when different professionals are collaborating is another aspect that has been in focus in research (Hjortsjö 2005; Kreitzer & Lafrance 2009) In particular, in the field of medicine, multi- or interprofessional teams are usually situated under the same roof, i.e. the hospital or medical clinic Baxter & Brumfitt; 2008; Hall, 2005). Whilst some researchers argue that co-location straight-forwardly enhances communication in collaboration, others conclude that this might not be the case and, instead, that co-location can reinforce professional boundaries in a negative way (White & Featherstone, 2005).

It may be reasonable to say that there exists a fairly substantial body of knowledge about collaboration between different professions and, specifically of interest for this thesis, on collaboration between social workers and other professionals (see Atkinson, Doherty, & Kinder, 2005; Bronstein, 2003; Edgley & Avis, 2007; Farmakopoulou, 2002; Forkby, 2001; Hallett, 1995; Hjortsjö, 2005). There are also a number of research reports that specifically concern interprofessional collaboration where schools and social services are involved, and which have focused on the broader contextual scope of collaboration (i.e. at a variety of different (non-co-located) organizational levels) and between a variety of different professionals involved (Beijer, 2004; Danermark, Germundsson & Englund, 2009; Franséhn, & Grundvall, 1998; Jacobsson, 2002; Sjöberg Backlund, 2002; Warin, 2007; Willumsen, 2006). However, there is less research about co-located interprofessional collaboration between teachers and social workers. By providing insights into processes of collaboration in a co-located context, in what is termed a ‘resource school’, this thesis can be seen as an attempt to begin to fill this knowledge gap and, in so doing, offer knowledge and insights that might be of value for practitioners, as well as for management in social and education services.

## Purpose of the dissertation

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to describe and analyse processes of interprofessional collaboration involving two professional groups, social workers and teachers, in a specific co-located collaborative setting, namely a resource school where children in receipt both of support from social services and special educational support are enrolled.

The research questions the thesis aims to answer are:

*What is the nature of the division of labour and what forms does it take in the resource school?* This primary research question will be answered through describing and critically scrutinising forms of collaborative practice in a particular example of co-located interprofessional collaboration. Questions are: What tasks and technologies are profession-specific, and commonly performed? What explicit notions and implicit assumptions underpin the distribution of working tasks between the two professions?

*How do the individual professionals maintain and develop professional identities?* Questions of interest are: What roles do the teachers' and social workers' different knowledge bases and professional practices play in the distribution of different working tasks? How, for example, do the teachers and social workers perceive and understand children's social and educational needs, and how does each professional group perceive that they can best help such children? What arguments are put forward to back up jurisdictional claims to particular working tasks? These questions are, in turn, linked to the roles of professional interests of legitimacy and status, and how this influences collaboration. What do the social workers and teachers do to legitimate their professional role? What arguments are advanced?

*In what way do organisational conditions influence how the different working tasks are accomplished?* What role do the working and organisational conditions and infrastructure have on professional practice?

*What organisational and professional interests can be seen in the intake process of deciding which pupils should be enrolled in the resource school?* How do the different professionals who represent the education and social services perceive the children/young people's problems and needs, and how are these needs expressed in order to enable a pupil to qualify for a place at the resource school? How do they reach a decision in terms of determining which children shall get a place? What are the arguments that are advanced?

It is at the outset important to make the formal organisational structures around the resource school explicit and to map out the collaborative landscape of the education and social services of the municipality in which the school is situated.

The empirical example in the thesis is that of co-located interprofessional collaboration between social workers and teachers, in a specific educational setting, namely a resource school, where children in need of support from social services and of special education are enrolled. A number of qualifications need to be made. First, the empirical example does not illustrate non-co-located collaboration, such as, for example, multi-professional teams who meet on a regular basis with the aim of collaborating around particular child or children or around preventative work. Secondly, the empirical example is not an instance of co-located collaboration between different professionals who represent the same organisation. An example of such would be pupil welfare teams, which often consist of social workers, school nurses, psychologists and special needs educators, all of whom represent and are employed by education services. Thirdly, the empirical example is not one of practice-collaboration between teachers, pupil welfare teams and social workers in social services offices, or in different institutions who collaborate around a specific child or young person where the need arises and/or in temporary or situation-dependent collaborative constellations.

However, even though this thesis focuses on one particular form of collaboration – co-located interprofessional collaboration – there are many aspects of processes that take place in the collaboration that can be viewed in more general terms, i.e. independently from the formal organisation around a particular collaborative structure. Thus the findings of this study can be of interest generally and of relevance for interprofessional collaboration that has different structures and which takes place in different settings. For example, issues that are prominent in the current study, such as professional legitimacy and status, negotiations concerning roles and goals, trust and commitment, and communication, may all have relevance for collaboration between different groups or professions even if this takes place in other constellations and within other structures.

## Significance of the study

The knowledge generated in this thesis also has the potential to make a contribution to a theoretical discussion about collaboration in general and,

specifically, in co-located interprofessional settings. Easen, Atkins and Dyson, (2000) argue that interprofessional collaboration generally is not adequately conceptualized in the sense that there would appear to be no clear, consistent and coherent idea of what constitutes ‘collaboration’ between different professionals, nor any comprehensive model of the factors that may be relevant to support successful collaboration. On the other hand, D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez and Beaulieu (2005), who reviewed literature on interprofessional collaboration, argue that there are substantive models of collaboration based on a strong theoretical background, either in organizational or organizational sociology theories, and on empirical data. Scott (1997), on the contrary, argues that studies about interprofessional and inter-agency collaboration in welfare agencies primarily claim that it is an interprofessional issue and therefore focus on differences in professional values, power and knowledge. As Scott makes clear, whilst these are important issues in collaboration, such research fails to recognize the significance of organizational structures, mandates and imperatives. In that sense the theoretical approach used in this thesis, which combine theories of professions and of organizations, can provide insights into factors that influence processes of collaboration from a structural, i.e. organizational, as well as an actor, i.e. professional, perspective.

As a consequence, this thesis can be positioned in a theoretical field which advocates a softening of the boundaries between organizational and professional theoretical approaches (see Montgomery & Oliver 2007; Scott, 2008; Svensson, 2010). The arguments are based on the fact that, in modern times, professions are preeminent actors in creating and practicing in organizations (Svensson 2010). Examples of research combining such theoretical frameworks are Hudson's (2007) research around interprofessional collaboration in primary health and social care, Liljegren's (2008) research around social workers' intra-professional boundary work and Järkenstig Berggren's (2010) work on the professional role of case managers in the area of psychiatric care.

The approach of bringing theories on organisations and professions to the forefront can contribute in advancing the theoretical base for the understanding of interprofessional collaboration. In particular, it may be possible to disentangle interdependent professional and organisational interests.

## Initiatives for collaboration

Collaboration between social services and education services has evolved over a long period of time and is characterized both by bottom-up initiatives by individual teachers, social workers, schools and social services offices, as well as top-down directives, locally in the form of management directives and organizational restructuring, and nationally as a result of legislative requirements for inter-service collaboration (see e.g. Easen et al., 2000; Forkby, 2005; Hjelte, 2005; Socialstyrelsen, 2007; SOU 2010:95; Whittington, 2004).

In particular, collaboration in the field of child welfare and child protection work in Sweden can be seen to be encouraged, as well as mandated, in the preambles and texts of a wealth of public policy documents and legislative requirements (Socialstyrelsen, 2007, 2006b). In 2002 the Government, in its legislative proposal (prop 2002/03:53) on the protection of children, concluded that children at risk were still falling between the cracks between service providers' areas of jurisdiction and, consequently, gave social services an overarching responsibility for the coordination of collaboration around such children. Their duties were made explicit in the Social Services Act 2001:453. Four years later in a national evaluation of the effects that the change in the legislation had brought about (Socialstyrelsen, 2006b), the results indicated that around ninety seven percent of social services collaborated with schools, with ninety one percent doing so with pre-schools. Another factor that was noted was the increase, since 2003, of more organisationally durable interprofessionally-collaborative joint service-providing enterprises. Of such initiatives, three forms were found to be particularly common; *resource schools* (involving collaboration between education, social services and recreational services for children and young people), *family centres* (involving collaboration between social services and healthcare departments for mothers/fathers and children and including open preschools) and, finally, what is known as *barnabus* ('the child's house'), child protection units which involve collaboration between social services, police and children's health care and crown prosecution services.

Internationally collaboration between social and education services is a well established phenomenon. England has perhaps gone further than any other country in developing an integrated service provision of education and social services. In recent years government legislation has paved the way for major changes in the ways in which social and education services work together. The introduction of the Children Act 2004 required local authorities to structure the provision of social and educational services in a way that would necessitate



collaboration between different agencies in providing adequate child protection. However the most noteworthy change introduced by the Act was the amalgamation of local authority Children Social Services and Education into one overarching organisation; Children Services (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). The challenge, as described by Glenny and Roaf (2008), involved a need to reconfigure what had previously been separate service providers into a single agency, as well as the ways in which collaboration could be developed from small-scale initiatives to large, overarching and organisationally-integrated services that could function effectively in practice both locally and nationally.

In other countries, such as Norway and Denmark, the development of inter-professional collaboration around children can also be noted. For example, in Norway the coordination of child care services has been in focus for the last twenty years and the integration of work carried out by these services has been regarded as meaning a better use of resources and the promotion of a greater degree of user participation (Willumsen, 2008). Indeed, the Norwegian Childcare Act states that social services are obliged to collaborate with other agencies. In Denmark the Government has introduced and invested substantial funding in what is called the “Child Reform” (Danish: *Børnets Reform*), a program of changes that is being implemented between 2010 – 2013. This program is a development of earlier reforms aimed at preventing children from suffering harm and the objective of the reform is to improve initiatives targeting disadvantaged children and young people. The policy advocates that services need to be de-bureaucratized and that collaboration between welfare services needs to be promoted (The Ministry of Social Affairs, Denmark 2010).

In the USA the “Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual” has, since the 1970s, provided federal guidelines on collaboration between different professionals involved in child welfare work (Goldman, Salus, Wolcott & Kennedy, 2003). The manual provides foundations on how to understand different roles and responsibilities for various practitioners involved in the prevention of child maltreatment, the assessment of risk and the structuring of interventions. On several occasions in the 1990s and again in 2006 changes were made which reflected a recognition of the complexities children and families was facing in society, and services were urged to collaborate in order to be able to meet these changing needs (DePanfilis, 2006). A ‘System of Care’ approach was promoted and has been used across the United States in various ways at both macro (policy and system change) and micro (service delivery) levels. The system involves service agencies working in an integrated manner in order to support children

and families with complex needs. The ‘System of Care’ approach enables cross-agency coordination of services regardless of where or how children and families get in contact with the system.

In Australia statutory child protection is a state and territory government responsibility and services vary greatly between the different territories. However collaboration between different agencies is generally a prerequisite for social and educational services that are directed specifically towards children (and their families) who are in need of protection, and other services aimed at a wider section of the population in a more preventative manner (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010). For example the government recently endorsed the *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020* whereby the focus has shifted from seeing ‘the protection of children’ as merely a response to abuse and neglect, to one of promoting the safety and general wellbeing of children. The national framework states that it involves a commitment to better linking together the many forms of support and service provision that exist, a commitment to avoiding duplication, and the coordination of planning and implementation and to provide a better sharing of information and to stimulate innovation (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

To summarize, over the last 15- 20 years it is possible to identify several countries where different policy and legal frameworks around child welfare work that involve the notion of interprofessional collaboration have been put in place. This of course does not mean that collaboration between education and social services has not previously been in place on a local and individual level. In one sense, all of these policy and legal initiatives, in one way or the other, promote integrated service provision involving different professionals and different organizations and where schools are perceived as important partners in the construction of collaborative practice. Another trend seems to be a general move from a more reactive approach to child protection to an approach characterized by the adoption of preventative measures in social service practice.

### The development of ‘home-based solution’ interventions

In tandem with the development of demands for interprofessional collaboration around children who have come to the attention of social services, a development of what can be termed ‘home-based solutions’ or ‘open’ interventions has occurred in Sweden. In these types of intervention the aim is to avoid a situation where the child who is at risk is taken into care. Instead,

social services direct their efforts to providing support for the child or young person and its family so as to enable the child/young person to continue living at home with her/his parents/carers (Forkby, 2005, Socialstyrelsen, 2006a). From bottom-up initiatives by different professionals involved with children, a substantial number of collaborative practices – including preventative initiatives – around children at specific risk of suffering harm have also been developed over the last ten to fifteen years (see e.g. Backlund, 2008; Forkby, 2007, 2005; Johansson-Juup & Österlund-Holmqvist 2008; Palm, 2008). Often, such initiatives have been supported by management and this has led to additional and more systematic top-down initiatives in the form of specific projects that have received funding to enhance and establish as permanent practice this type of collaboration (Forkby, 2005). The development of ‘open’ or ‘home-based solution’ interventions can be strongly linked to i) financial cutbacks in social services budgets, ii) an ideologically influenced frame of approach of adopting a child perspective in social work, and iii) an ecological, systemic, approach the aim of which is to work with all of the parties involved in a child’s life (Forkby, 2005; Socialstyrelsen, 2006c).

In an investigation (Socialstyrelsen, 2006b) of different ‘open’ interventions and ‘home-based solutions’, a distinct form of collaboration taking place between social services and education has been identified. This type of collaboration has been termed *school social interventions* and includes, for example, forms of collaboration that involve human resource enhancements in schools financed by social services and where particular teams have been tasked with focusing on collaboration between teachers, social workers and the pupil and its family. *Resource schools* have also been identified as belonging to the category of school social interventions. Thus, in this sense, it might be possible to view resource schools as representing ‘new’ arenas for interprofessional collaboration, as well as being viewed as part of a ‘home-based solution’ intervention.

The consequences of the development of a pressure to create collaborative and ‘home-based’ solutions form one aspect of the working conditions for the teachers and social workers in the resource school in focus in this thesis. Here professional practice takes place in a co-located collaborative setting where members of two separate organisations work side-by-side. Rathgeb Smith (2010), for example, claims that the pressure for increased inter-agency collaboration for human service organisations is likely to lead to a variety of strategies of organisational collaboration including the co-location of services and formal agreements to merge services, whilst, at the same time, retaining separate

organisations. The resources school service fits well with this description of a contemporary way of organising collaboration.

## Terminology

The issue of terminology is challenging within the field of child welfare generally, and is heightened when different terms are used in different countries to signify similar actions or phenomena. In this thesis I will use the term *social services* to describe municipally-based social work which in Sweden is commonly termed ‘the Individual and Family Services, Child Unit’ [IFO], and which is the service charged with promoting the wellbeing of children in need, children at risk of suffering harm and children in care. The term *social worker* will be used to describe someone who has a bachelor’s degree in Social Work, Social Science or any other undergraduate or advanced level education and who – in the context of the resource school – is employed to do social work.

The concept of *collaboration* is important in this thesis. There is a multiplicity of ways of describing collaboration. The concept is used synonymously with everything that has to do with working together, and can be used to describe a multitude of specific forms of collaboration, such as (as previously mentioned), co-operation, inter-agency work, inter-disciplinary work, multi-disciplinary work and so on (Boklund, 1995; Danemark, 2000; Leathard, 2003b; Socialstyrelsen, 2006b; Whittington, 2004). Some researchers argue that the prefixes ‘*multi*’ and ‘*inter*’ have different implications. Payne (2000), for example, argues that even though the different terms are used interchangeably, they have different implications. For example words with the prefix ‘*multi*’ imply several different professional groups working together. However this does not mean that such groups adapt their work with regard to aspects of the professional role, knowledge-base, skills or responsibilities of other groups of professionals. The concern is with collaboration or cooperation within their roles, rather than seeking to cross boundaries. He continues to point out that the prefix of ‘*inter*’ simply implies the willingness to an adaption of roles vis-à-vis knowledge, skills and responsibilities with regard to other professional groups or agencies.

Meads and Ashcroft (2005), who have conducted research within the area of health and social care collaboration, describe collaboration in the following way:

At its simplest collaboration is about working together. It therefore implies both difference (it is something less than complete integration or unification), and

commonality (there is some shared goal or activity which is the focus of collaboration (p. 15).

In this thesis I will use Meads and Ashcroft's 'simple' description of collaboration to describe all forms of 'working together' around children at risk of suffering harm and in need of special educational support. By adding the prefix of 'inter', i.e. *inter*professional collaboration, the implication is that the teachers and social workers are willing to adapt, in some way, their own roles with regard to those of the other professional group working at the school.

## Chapter Two

### Effects of collaboration for service users

The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of research relating to collaboration between social services and education.

There is an extensive body of research and evaluation reports, stemming in particular, from the fields of management science and health, about the phenomenon of collaboration (Axelsson & Bihari Axelsson, 2007; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Leathard, 2003a; Meads & Ashcroft, 2005). However a review of the literature on collaboration, which appears to be so rich in theory and diverse in its academic roots, does not lie within the scope of this thesis. Thus I have chosen to review research on collaboration around children and, in particular, on collaboration around children in need of support. The majority of research reports examine interprofessional collaboration around children in a variety of different organisational contexts and involve different degrees of interaction between the organisations and professionals involved. However, there seems to be a more limited body of research with a focus on co-located interprofessional collaboration around children in need of support. This limitation has led me to extend my search for research to the area of health, where I have focused on co-located interprofessional collaboration (although usually within the frame of intraorganisational settings).

I have chosen to present the findings from reviewing research around the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration from three separate perspectives; first, an *organisational factors* perspective, secondly an *individual professional factors* perspective (with the aim of encompassing factors based on professional qualifications) and, finally, a *process factors* perspective. This way of reviewing the research is inspired by Willumsen (2006), who found three dominant theoretical approaches when examining research around the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration. The first of these is a perspective that primarily contributes to the analyses of organisational factors such as the division of labour, information-flows, the degree of formalization, the distribution of resources, management and leadership and relationships to the state, market and

society. Secondly, there is a perspective that highlights individual and interpersonal factors, such as skills, competence, work experience and ethics. Finally, there is a theoretical perspective which examines the process of collaboration in addition to issues of conflict, power, trust and commitment. These, what Willumsen terms 'dynamic factors', are influenced by interpersonal as well as interorganisational forms, and are fused together in the mutually-interactive processes created in collaboration. Willumsen argues that, when either taking an organisational or an inter-personal approach, researchers need to use these dynamic factors as cross-cutting issues. These three perspectives have, in my view, merits in conceptualising factors that generally come across as being of importance when trying to understand the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration. Further, I will use the term *interprofessional collaboration* generically to encompass different research focusing on organisations and professionals who work together in different ways.

## Organisational factors in interprofessional collaboration

### Models

Different descriptive models based on the organisational and professional belonging of the collaborating parties and the degree and nature of interactions have been developed in research that has examined interprofessional collaboration (see e.g. Atkinson et al., 2005; Backlund, 2007; Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert & Klein, 1995; Danermark, et al., 2009; Gardner, 2004; Hansen, 1999; Hjelté, 2005; Hjortsjö, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Leathard, 2003b; Whittington, 2004; Wilumsen, 2006). These different descriptive models can be summarised into four categories; models of *interorganisational* collaboration, models of *intraorganisational* collaboration, models of *interprofessional* collaboration and models of *intraprofessional* collaboration. Further, they are not infrequently combined in different ways to capture the descriptive dimension of the context in which the collaboration takes place in regard to the types of organisations and types of professionals involved in the collaboration.

*Interorganisational* collaboration involves different agencies having interaction on a continuum ranging from having agreed to share information about each other's activities, to joint planning and, in its most advanced form, a seamlessly integrated service-provision (see Atkinson et al., 2005; Gardner, 2004). For example Gardner (2004) uses the following terms to describe the level and

nature of interactions between social services, health and education; the *planning relationship*, which is confined to agencies telling one another what they intend to do, *consultation*, which involves agencies asking each another for opinions, information or advice before finalising a plan, *collaboration*, which entails a degree of joint-working on plans, mutual adjustments and agreement on the extent and limits of each other's activities (but where operationally the agencies provide service independently), *bilateral planning*, which implies that there is an overlap in service provision and, finally, *joint planning*, which is the provision of a seamlessly integrated service.

*Intraorganisational collaboration* implies that different departments belonging to the same overarching organisation are involved in collaboration (see Smith, Carroll, & Ashford, 1995). For example in Sweden social services can be the overarching organisation for a children and families department, and a department for disability and elderly care (see e.g. Boklund, 1995).

*Interprofessional collaboration* describes a situation where different professions collaborate. This too forms a continuum of interaction ranging from, at one end, information-sharing – such as for example by telephone or via the exchanges of documents – to, on the other, working together interactively on an everyday basis (see e.g. Morrow & Jennings, 2005; Robinson, Anning & Frost, 2005).

*Intraprofessional* collaboration involves the working together of staff with the same professional degree – for example a social work qualification – but working in different capacities, around certain specific individuals, groups of people or issues. For example, social workers in a social assistance department can collaborate with social workers in children and family departments (see e.g. Gittell, & Weiss, 2004; Liljegren, 2008).

It is also possible to add a spatial dimension to the description of these different organisational and professional belongings, as well as recognising that they can be combined in different constellations.

First, there is a sharing of the *same locality in an interprofessional and intra-organisational setting*. This model of collaboration can be exemplified in research about how teachers and other professionals in schools – such as, for example, recreation instructors, special needs educators, school nurses, school social workers and school psychologists – collaborate with one another. Although they have different professional qualifications, they are nevertheless employed by and represent the same overarching school organisation and are located in the same



school building (see e.g. Backlund, 2007; Davidsson, 2002; Hansen, 1999; Hjelte, 2005). In the medical field this type of collaboration is well established and an extensive body of research exists (see e.g. Baxter & Brumfitt, 2008; Thylefors, Persson & Hellström, 2005).

Secondly, there is the form of *sharing the same locality in an interprofessional and inter-organisational setting*. Hjortsjö's (2005) thesis about family centres in Sweden serves as a good example of this model. The family centre studied consisted of a unit of social workers, preschool staff, midwives, paediatric nurses and administrative staff, all of whom, although practising in the same localities, were employed by their separate main organisations. Bing (2005), who conducted a survey of family centres in a particular area of Sweden, concludes that there are different forms of organising family centres; one whereby the different professionals collaborate on a co-located basis in an everyday setting, and another in which they collaborate on a co-located basis on specific days (for example twice a week). Yet another example of a co-located model of collaboration is Kreitzer and Lafrance's (2009) study of a centre that carried out work with Aboriginal families in Canada and which involved social workers and NGO workers.

One limitation in the use of the terms 'inter-/intra- professional' and 'inter-/intra- organisational' collaboration to describe different collaborative models is that they lack the potential to encompass collaboration with service users. Gardner (2004) has tried to disentangle some of the variety of collaborative models by looking at the involvement of the parents/carers as a means of grouping the models, and by looking at *children and families involved in the inter-agency project activities*, as well when they are *attending different forms of meetings* such as family group conferences and social network meetings. Consequently, whilst the use of the inter-/intra- professional and organisational collaboration terminology is useful for describing models of collaboration from a professional and an organisational perspective, it is inadequate when a service is examined from a service user's perspective.

To summarise, there is a variety of different models of collaboration ranging from information-sharing between different professions in different organisations around a specific case on a needs basis, all the way to models of interprofessional co-located collaboration in an everyday setting.

## Management

The management of collaboration can be explored on different levels, including, for example, at a national, regional and municipal level. A common result in the research that has been undertaken is that, irrespective of the level at which collaboration takes place, there is a necessity that the practical collaborative activity is anchored in the political and administrative management levels, and, further, that this involvement will always have an effect on the outcome (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Webb & Vulliamy, 2004). The explanation proposed for this linkage is attached to both regulations and resources (Atkinson et al., 2005; Danermark et al., 2009; Easen et al., 2000). The argument is based on the notion that if conflicts about how to operate around different regulations – both external in the case of legislation, but also internal, such as the interpretation of policy – occur, they can to a greater extent be solved on a political and administrative management level. Likewise, resources are usually controlled on the same level (Danermark et al., 2009; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001). Several researchers conclude that if the collaboration does not receive support at the political and administrative levels, then the risk is greater that such collaboration will fail (Danermark et al., 2009; Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003). However, other research suggests that there is an interdependence between commitment on different levels. For example, Atkinson et al. (2005) in their UK study of 30 multi-agency initiatives involving education, social services and health, concluded that multi-agency work could not be sustained by commitment to a strategic or operational level alone, and that ‘bottom-up’ as well as ‘top-down’ approaches were vital for sustaining collaboration.

Management on a strategic level may also contribute to a feeling of ownership of and accountability for the collaborative activity (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). For example, Webb and Wulliamy (2004) evaluated a three-year project which involved collaboration between police, education and social services around seven schools, the aim of which was to reduce school exclusions. The project had an advisory group in place which consisted of representatives from the respective stakeholding organizations. Webb and Wulliamy conclude that, over the duration of the project, the advisory group became a “talking shop” which dwindled into a core group who were directly involved in the practical work and that this curtailed the project’s potential to facilitate inter-agency cooperation and to disseminate project progress and outcomes within agencies. Instead, it seemed to become a local interest group. Webb and Wulliamy argue that without intervention on a management level, the projects they studied became ‘bottom-up’ innovations which only concerned the different local

schools. Consequently, the original stakeholders – in particular the police – lost interest to varying degrees meaning, in turn, that their continued contribution to the project was regarded as unrealistic.

Sometimes collaboration can be anchored on a political and an administrative management level, but not on an operational level. For example, in a study which explored three different authorities' ways of organising collaboration between schools and social services around children in care, the results indicated that whilst commitment to interprofessional collaboration could be evident at the political and management levels, similar commitment did not generally permeate down to the frontline staff (Harker, Dobel-Ober, Berridge & Sinclair, 2004). The reason given for the lack of interprofessional practice at an operational level was that, for example, the social workers and teachers were already burdened with a heavy workload and experienced conflict around what to prioritise.

Resources in the form of funding also emerge as a major challenge for collaboration (Atkinson et al., 2005; Bihari Axelsson & Axelsson, 2009; Danermark et al., 2009; Easen, et al., 2000; Smith & Mogro-Wilson, 2007). For example Danermark et al. (2009), who conducted an extensive evaluation of a national program for collaboration between schools, social services, police and child and youth psychiatry that involved approximately one hundred different projects, concluded that the support from political and administrative tiers was missing in a third of the projects. One of the consequences feared was that projects would have to close down whenever the external resources from the funding body of the national program were withdrawn.

Easen et al. (2000) in their study of collaboration of specific service in education, social work and health with statutory obligations to collaborate, concluded that resources (or the lack of) were seen as impacting on collaboration. They argue that the challenge was thus to channel the productivity of multi-professional initiatives at a strategic level, arguing that unless the political and administrative tiers are actively involved, then resources would be difficult to access. One way of overcoming conflict around funding and resources has been suggested by Atkins et al. (2005) who outline three specific strategies. The first of these is pooled budgets, where one or more agencies meet all the costs associated with staff from other agencies. The second is joint funding, where resources are provided by all those parties involved on an equal, or like-for-like basis. Finally they identify the use of additional sources of income to enhance collaboration,

such as, for example, external funding designated for specific collaborative initiatives.

In her study of interprofessional and inter-organisational collaboration between education and social work authorities in assessing the special educational needs for children under five, Farmakopoulou (1999) argues that the scarcity of resources was unanimously regarded as an obstacle to inter-agency collaboration. Indeed, she found that almost three quarters of her education and social work respondents reported this to be the root of conflicts between them. The reported problems of insufficient resources were not limited to insufficient material resources, for example for educational placements and equipment, but also involved insufficient numbers of administrative and professional staff. Consequently, the scarcity of staff resulted in less face-to-face contact, being late for or missing formal and informal multi-disciplinary meetings, records not being maintained, notifications of cases and reports not being submitted on time and, finally, the burnout of staff (Farmakopoulou, 1999). Willumsen (2006) in her study of leadership in collaboration in residential care, argues that managers viewed the provision of resources, i.e. for ensuring necessary professional expertise, one area they were accountable for.

To summarise, the literature seems to indicate that collaboration needs to be anchored on a top-down basis with the involvement and commitment of political and management levels, as well as on a bottom-up basis, where the professionals involved in carrying out the hands-on work with the children and families involved are committed to the activities. Indeed, the level of involvement in collaboration can contribute to a feeling of ownership which in turn influences levels of commitment. The issue of resources is an important factor and a major challenge that needs to be addressed in any form of collaboration.

## Structures

Structures around collaborative contexts can be regarded as an important factor which influences process of collaboration (Farmakopoulou, 1999; Gardner, 2004; Harker et al., 2004; Socialstyrelsen, 2007; Willumsen, 2006). Structures can, metaphorically, be understood as scaffolding the collaboration. Further, the poles in the scaffold that is constructed consist of different tools such as, for example, written agreements about aims involving accountability, the target group, finance, human resources and the different documentation of working

practices (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Socialstyrelsen, 2007). For instance, in England the integrated children system has extensive guidelines as to the manner in which an assessment might be carried out (Every Child Matters, 2003). Other tools used include, for example, the designation of a coordinator for the collaboration and, on an individual child level, the use of specific plans of action to structure collaboration with the aim of providing explicit guidelines as to which professional does what and the exact nature of individual accountability (Socialstyrelsen, 2007). Additional structuring tools can be different policy documents. For example Harker et al., (2004), who compared three different models used by three different local authorities in England in projects where the aim was to promote effective inter-organisational collaboration concerning children in care, came to the conclusion that backing up policy statements with supportive frameworks that translate principles into practice emerged as being of importance in inter-agency collaboration.

To summarise, the research demonstrates that different tools, such as written agreements, the translation of policy into practice, and designated coordinators all function as means of strengthening structures around collaboration.

## Purpose and aims

To have a clear purpose and aim is another factor that is mentioned as being vital for successful collaboration (Danermark et al., 2009; Gardner, 2004; Socialstyrelsen, 2007). One overarching aim, and indeed the purpose of many projects set up to collaborate around children, is to prevent situations where children ‘fall between the cracks’ and where the ambition is to provide a seamless service to children and families (Edgley & Avis, 2007; Hjortsjö, 2005; Socialstyrelsen, 2004; Warin, 2007). Other purposes are based on efficiency and financial gains which, not infrequently, will be linked to the current fiscal situation for the involved agencies. For example, Atkinson et al. (2005) suggest that a “fiscal precariousness” (p.12) was often present in the 30 multi-agency teams they looked at. Further, whilst on one level there was an acceptance that during times of financial constraint the service-provider often retreated to a more minimalistic role, at another level there was a perception that multi-agency work offered a more effective use of resources and served to reduce replication and overlapping.

Another issue of major importance in collaboration is to reach an agreement on the aim of the collaboration at a more practical level. Reaching agreement about

the aims and objectives of the inter-professional collaboration can, sometimes, be described as an exercise of negotiations (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). For example, in Atkinson et al.'s (2005) study competing individual and agency priorities were frequently cited as a challenge to multi-agency working. The interviewees described different priorities, tensions and differences in target groups. In particular views differed in terms of the prioritising of different government targets, as well as differences in the relative focus of preventative-versus crisis-oriented work. To reach common aims the interviewees claimed that there needed to be some sort of 'unifying' factor or some 'common ground', and the issue of a 'coming together of minds' was highlighted (Atkinson et al., 2005). To reach consensus about the aim of collaboration was described as being not simply a case of clarity or prescription, but a complex negotiation of the different roles and the creation of a context where agency- or individual-specific agendas were not in place, meaning that negotiations could take place about finding a way to get things done in ways that actually worked.

Webb and Vulliamy (2004), who looked at collaboration around disaffected youth in school settings, found that the degree of involvement in the collaborative activity influenced the perception of the aim. The closer interaction the professionals involved had with the young people, the more constraints there were in the collaboration (such as, for example, over roles and aims). Indeed, many conflicts were caused by potential overlaps in roles. For example, in the above-cited study, the social work-trained support worker, educational social workers, behaviour support teachers, educational psychologists, school nurse and community education tutors had more issues around aims and roles compared to the what they termed 'external agencies' (for example probation services and the police service) who were also stakeholders in the collaboration but did not have such intense day-to-day contact with the young people. The constraints, for example, could be that the educational social workers viewed their expertise as being specialist in nature and unrelated to that of other service-providers, and that they worked 'quite separately' from the others. Thus, if then a problem within their area of expertise occurred, they expected that the other professionals involved would refer the case to them and that, subsequently, they would work on 'their own' with that (Webb & Vulliamy, 2004).

To summarise, it may be possible to say that, although clear aims and objectives are often seen as necessary prerequisites for collaboration, there is a process of negating these and that different motives for collaborating – for example

financial benefits as well as for individual professional status and legitimacy – are embedded in the stakeholders’ organisations.

## Time and location

Both the time and the location available for interprofessional collaboration appear to be factors of significance for collaborative practice (Atkinson et al., 2005; Kreitzer & Lafrance, 2009). For example, Farmakopoulou (1999) concluded that, due to pressure of work, the professionals involved in the collaborative practice she studied devoted only a minimum amount of time to their collaborative relationship. Similarly, Easen et al. (2000), who researched collaborative experiences of working with children and their families in two areas of high social needs in England, concluded that effective, multi-professional collaboration required continuity of personnel over time, with a minimum period of time suggested as being at least three years.

Co-located interprofessional collaboration in a day-to-day setting in the same locality implies an intensification of the professional relation between the different professionals involved (Hjortsjö, 2005; Hudson, 2002). For example, in her study of family centres, Hjortsjö (2005) concludes that the actors are tied to their respective ‘mother organizations’. Whilst at the same time the actors were professionally segregated, they were however personally integrated. She argues that in a co-located professional setting, boundaries appear to disappear between the staff in informal areas – such as for example in the lunch room – and that intimacy is thus created. This in turn, in the practices she studied, the boundaries between the different professions involved (for example paediatric nurses, paediatric doctors, psychologists pre-school staff, doctors and social workers) seemed less rigid and meant that it was easier to establish personal empathy between members of the different professional groups. However, by remaining with one foot in their mother organizations, the professionals were nevertheless able to ‘protect’ their professional identities.

Hudson (2002), in his study of social workers’ and nurses’ collaboration in same-locality health clinics, concluded that the inter-professional turf wars around who claims to do what seemed to occur in intra-professional groupings, as well as between the different professionals in the day-to-day setting of clinical practice (which in his case was between the nurses in the collaborative day-to-day setting and nurses in hospitals). Hudson (2007) also concludes, in another study, that there appears to be a greater mutual understanding of each other’s roles in

interprofessional practices that are co-located compared to those that not. As a consequence of this, Hudson (2007) claims, service delivery can be enhanced.

To summarise, time and continuity aspects of collaboration (with i.e. regard both to duration and staff change, the latter meaning that collaboration will often need to be re-negotiated) seem to have an influence on the ways in which collaboration is conducted. Further, time for informal person-to-person interaction in co-located interprofessional collaboration in day-to-day settings appears to promote closer professional interaction which, although good for the working climate, doesn't necessarily lead to improved service delivery.

### Information sharing and confidentiality

According to several researchers, questions concerning communication, information sharing and the value placed upon and the interpretation of confidentiality rules form a set of core issues for professionals working together in collaborative contexts (Frost, Robinson & Anning, 2005). For example Frost et al. (2005) exemplify how professionals are in conflict around how to use different agencies' databases. They describe, for instance, how a team funded by health authorities had access to the health services database, but not to the social services database and vice versa. This touches on what Harker et al. (2004) found in their study of interprofessional collaboration around children in care where the stakeholders used project funding to enhance the database system with the aim of being able to share information. One authority used the funding to enable the education department database to record more detailed information about the children, thus allowing monthly reports with the aim of monitoring attendance, exclusion rates and academic attainment. Both education and social services viewed the new data base as being of significant benefit to their ability to monitor and appropriately support such children. However, Harker et al. also found that a database is only as good as the data recorded, and they argue that the strength of the database will depend on convincing operational staff to utilize the system.

Huotari's (2003) study of interprofessional care in a psychiatric hospital involving collaboration between teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers, therapists and psychologists indicates that staff groups actively negotiate about what sort of information they should share. In his study Huotari describes how the staff negotiated about how much information the teachers should have access to. Indeed 'care negotiations' took place in which very serious matters



concerning the child, its family and the family network were discussed. Houtari describes how the psychiatrist were hesitant as to whether the teachers needed the information, or even wanted it, expressing the idea that limiting the teachers' participation in the care negotiations might be logical in the sense that it may take too much time away from teaching. At the same time, the psychiatrists also stated that there might be a professional power game involved in the desire to restrict the teachers' participation. According to Huotari (2003) the staff solved this situation by negotiating in such a way that they reframed the need for sharing information and, as a result, managed to approach a consensus about the nature and scope of the information that the teachers needed to have.

Atkinson et al. (2005) in their UK study of the 30 multi-agency initiatives involving education, social services and health, arrive at the conclusion that, in addition to poor communication between staff at the strategic and operational levels, there is also a perception of poor communication on a day-to-day basis between staff involved on the operational level. This, it was believed, constituted a major challenge in multi-agency collaboration. In particular, they found a perception among staff in the agencies they investigated that successful multi-agency collaboration was undermined by poor communication between government departments.

## Professional and individual factors in interprofessional collaboration

Issues of identity constitute important factors and several researchers identify ways in which inter-professional collaboration raises issues about jurisdiction. In particular it is suggested that because professionals asks themselves whether they should carry out certain tasks, or whether these should be carried out by the other professions involved, that this has an effect on their professional identity (Atkinson et al., 2005; Hudson, 2002; Farmakoluplou, 1999). In discussing these issues Farmakoluplou (1999), for example, uses the term *blurred professional boundaries* to describe the way in which the social workers and educational psychologists in her study expressed that roles could be 'smudged' and that they frequently had to ask themselves the question, 'is this an education task or is it a social work task?'

Similar findings were arrived at by Atkinson et al. (2005) who found that issues around roles and responsibility fell into three main areas; understanding the roles of others, conflict over areas of responsibility, and the need to move beyond

existing roles to work in new ways, or what they term *blurring the edges*. For example, the participants in the study reported that they needed a degree of reflection and self-criticism when collaborating with other professionals and, at the same time, this practice questioned their sense of identity normally gained by following their usual practices or procedures. Understanding others' roles was about having a clear understanding of what was expected of them and a need to understand the constraints other agencies and staff could be under so that expectations could be realistic. One consequence that was identified in the absence of clear roles and responsibilities was that, whilst it was easy to work on different agendas, and to assume that others might be responsible for certain tasks, there was also a risk that no one ended up completing them. One interesting finding was that some staff had developed into what Atkinson et al. term 'hybrid' professionals. These were the ones who had worked in a number of different agencies and were often keen to empathize with professionals from other agencies and who made specific efforts to understand their priorities.

Some researchers claim that, professionally, social workers are especially well suited to collaborate with others (Frost et al., 2005). In Frost et al.'s (2005) research, the focus was on community-based multi-agency teams working with young people with emotional and behavioural problems. In particular, there was a health-based team working with children injured in accidents, and a special needs nursery team. The focus of the research was to examine the role of the social worker and the researchers argue that social work is *the* collaborative profession. It is a profession that seeks to liaise, to mediate, and to negotiate between professionals, children and families and a group that sees this as a part of their professional identity. Some of the teams were co-located and, for example, a social worker could be employed by social services but placed in a medical team. Sometimes this caused problems and the social worker experienced being marginalised and excluded from being a fully accredited member of the team being excluded, for example, from participating in developing a working culture for the team (Frost, Robinson & Anning, 2005).

Other researchers describe the process of delineating roles and responsibilities using the term as 'turf wars' (Hudson, 2002). Hudson concludes that social workers and nurses in co-located collaborative contexts, such as in health and social care settings, express protectiveness towards their professional identity in the form of an identification with a body of knowledge and practice. For example, the social workers in Hudson's study claimed to "own" a holistic perspective, whilst the nurses were more concerned about narrower issues and,

according to the social workers, were looking for problems they could put right or stabilise, rather than attempting to take account of the patient's whole life situation. Another example from the same study is how the occupational therapists express an opinion that the social workers should be worried about the weakness of their professional identity, as the occupational therapists express that they could very well carry out most of the social workers' tasks. Hudson also found that there are greater expectations on interprofessional collaboration that include a sense in which previous separate ways of working are expected to change. For some practitioners, this can be experienced as a threat to their professional discretion, as well as an increase in accountability with regard to their performance. Another threat to professional discretion was experienced as deriving from the demands of the organization. For example, the social workers felt that the introduction of care management processes and procedures in the health teams curtailed their professional discretion.

However, in another study of a collaborative service involving a primary care trust, housing and social services in co-located frontline teams, Hudson (2007) found a reorientation of professional affinities. He argues that previous professional affinities can change. For example, he describes a district nurse who felt that she has more in common with a social worker than other nurses outside the team. Here Hudson argues that it is the team membership that provides the district nurse with her primary professional affinity.

The issue of status and power is evident in different collaborative contexts (Hudson, 2002, 2007; Huotari, 2003). For example Frost et al. (2005) in their research of multi-agency teams, conclude that it is often difficult in multi-disciplinary team work to disentangle issues relating to power and status, and those relating to personality. However the researchers could nevertheless perceive some emergent patterns, arguing that different professionals might experience different values with regard to status differences. For example, the psychologist in a health-based team did not experience any status differences in the team, whilst the social worker in the same team was pre-occupied with what she perceived was the way that some of the medical professionals (i.e. the consultants) over-valued their own status in the team. On the other hand, other social workers in similar teams would be seen being as unwilling to give higher status to a medical consultant. Frost et al. also argue that teams where members have a seconded status often face dilemmas in sustaining an inclusive team spirit, such as, for example, in a youth team where some members, such as social workers, were permanent and others, such as probation officers and nurses, were

seconded. The seconded professionals experienced having less status than the permanent members. Other teams were characterised by having core–peripheral membership relations such as, for example, where the majority of professionals were employed by health services and a smaller number by social services; in these cases the peripheral members had lower status. One factor emerging as important when a team had core–peripheral characteristics was that role-clarification was seen as very important.

In everyday collaboration there seems to be less of a status difference. Hudson (2007) indentified that three professional groups, doctors, nurses and social workers – together with support staff and the managers – inhabited an egalitarian culture and he argues that several factors could be used to account for this. These were, for example, the *selection of team members* who were committed to work in the team, the *parity of esteem*, where no one was seen as having seniority, and, finally, that all members were perceived as having a vital role to play.

## Process factors in interprofessional collaboration

Commitment and trust are described by several researchers as important characteristics in collaboration (Beijer, 2004; Frost et al., 2005; Harker et al., 2004; Hudson, 2007; Willumsen, 2006). From this body of research it is possible to conclude that a decisive factor for the way in which collaboration is likely to develop is whether the different professionals have actively sought employment in any particular collaborative setting. For example, Beijer (2004), in an evaluation research report about a resource school where education, child psychiatry and social services were the stakeholders, concludes that the staff had actively sought this employment and thus seemed to exhibit the clear ambition of wanting to solve conflicts that arose, such as, for example, by discussing things with other professionals and seeing such situations as learning experiences. Similar findings were arrived at by Hudson (2007) who found that the work ran more smoothly if staff members were self-selected and where individuals had joined the inter-disciplinary team by choice, as opposed to being assigned or coerced by a manager.

In their study of collaboration around looked after children Harker et al. (2004) state that concerns about the commitment to interprofessional practice were expressed. Further, the level of communication between individual schools and operational staff in social services was sometimes limited, meaning, consequently, that effective communication and liaison between social workers

and teachers was reduced. One explanation given was that the social services system did not afford sufficient specialisation in educational issues. Frost et al. (2005) have concluded that, whilst conflicts and contested definitions do exist, and that the challenge of collaboration is a difficult one, the professionals involved in the case they studied nevertheless expressed a pride and real commitment to collaboration. This, they argue, can – potentially – form the basis for effective collaboration or, to use their terminology, function as a form of ‘join–up practice’.

Commitment can also be related to what the stakeholders involved perceive is beneficial for them (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). For example Tett (2005), who studied inter-agency partnership and integrated community schools programs, the aims of which were to promote social inclusion amongst children and young people in Scotland, described that effective collaboration in a school setting seemed to stem from the perception that other partners had a capacity to add value to the school’s efforts. Although the schools welcomed collaboration with, for example, health education, if however they did not see the added value, the focus would rather be on finding funding for additional resources that would enable them to teach more effectively, rather than actually collaborating around what, in their view, were inadequate activities. Further, Tett (2005) also found that when there was a conflict between the target of raising achievement and the target of reducing exclusion, classroom teachers were more concerned that the resources given to reducing exclusion would impact negatively on the target of raising achievement. Thus she argues that, for these reasons, inter-agency collaboration may even be seen as a threat rather than a benefit, especially when core aspects of professionals’ expertise, in terms of professional competencies, may be questioned, such as for example where teachers in secondary schools felt that their subject specialism were sometimes affected detrimentally by having to collaborate with other agencies in keeping troublesome pupils in school.

Experience of collaboration also plays a role in developing a commitment (Frost et al. 2005). In their study of interprofessional collaboration between child welfare workers and substance abuse workers, Smith & Mogro-Wilson (2007) conclude that staff who could see greater advantages of collaboration and staff who were more confident in their knowledge in collaboration were more likely to collaborate with other agencies. They also found that in organisations where staff reported a higher level of work overload and emotional exhaustion, the likelihood of a willingness to collaborate was reduced. The question they pose is whether it was possible to interpret these results in a sense that members of staff

who experience an overload of work seek collaboration as a means of reducing such a burden, or whether it is the collaboration that brings about an overload of work and emotional exhaustion.

Building trust can also be seen as one important aspect of interprofessional collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Tett, 2004). For example, Willumsen (2006) in her study of collaboration around children and young people in residential care, concludes that the managers used various degrees of support when facilitating interactions between the professionals in the treatment home, the external actors and the young person and her/his family. By doing so, they developed reciprocal trust and commitment as a means of motivating not only staff, but also the external partners and the service-users. Tett (2005) reports similar findings in that trust gradually developed and success in one collaborative context promoted further collaboration. Further, persistence and patience were, over time, seen as important.

Webb and Vulliamy (2001) report that an important outcome when evaluating the inter-professional collaboration between education, health, police, social services and a probation unit was the considerable growth in respect for each other's work that derived from working alongside one another. This meant that the stakeholders in the inter-agency project who worked together – in this case the teachers and the social work trained support workers – developed a mutual trust. On the other hand, those who were not directly involved in day-to-day practice did not report the experience of developing trust in a similar way.

The opposite of being committed can be seen as the obstruction of collaboration. Jennings et al. (2005), who researched a sure-start program, concluded that, in the early stages, staff overtly and covertly obstructed collaboration by, for example, non-attendance at collaborative meetings, the continual levelling of complaints about the collaboration, and the questioning of its rationale.

Pay is an aspect of status for professionals and can be another factor that influences collaboration. For example Hjelte (2005), in his study of collaboration between school and childcare providers, found that salaries for the teachers were higher than for recreation instructors and that this was perceived as an indication that the teachers had a higher status and that their work was more highly valued. This in turn had consequences in practice.

Interdependence can be seen on different levels and degrees (Bronstein, 2003; Harker et al., 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Lawson, 2004). For example in a review of the literature on collaboration in social work, Bronstein (2003) concludes that the occurrence of and reliance on interaction amongst professionals means that each individual is dependent on the others in terms of goal-accomplishment. She argues that, to function interdependently, the professionals must have a clear understanding of the distinctions between their own and the other collaborating professionals' roles, and that they use them appropriately. For instance she gives as an example that integrative team work is characterized by a belief that the collaborative professionals are dependent on each others' abilities to be able to carry out their respective jobs. They cannot achieve the goal without each other. However, when it came to coordinated teamwork which was characterized by distinct professional roles, designated team leadership, non-consensual decision-making and little emphasis on the group process, a similar belief in having a high degree of interdependence upon one another seemed to be lacking (Bronstein, 2003).

Farmakopoulou (1999) concludes that reciprocal dependence facilitates inter-agency relations and argues that it is a necessary pre-condition for inter-organizational relations. She describes that the social workers and the educational psychologist in her study had several mutual benefits of the collaboration and, of interdependence. The social workers and educational psychologist were not just involved in exchange relationships, but also in forms of power/resource dependency interaction. For example, she points out that the pursuit of the resources from each other's departments was a common reason for disagreement and conflict. Harker et al. (2004) also conclude that the factors which influence interprofessional collaboration, such as for example commitment to joint working, joint roles and functions, common structures, information sharing, resources and leadership, all tend to be inextricably linked in a complex and interdependent manner.

## Effects for service users of collaboration

There appears to be a rather limited amount of research concerning collaboration around children at risk that demonstrates that effects are in any way beneficial. Indeed, research rather indicates that well-functioning collaboration around children at risk is difficult to establish and its outcomes are often uncertain (Egelund & Sundell, 2001; SOU: 2010:95; Stead, Lloyd & Kendrick, 2004). One explanation offered is that it might be difficult to isolate

collaboration as a factor influencing a positive development for service users (Socialstyrelsen, 2007).

However, some researchers have explored the experience service users express when organisations are collaborating around them. Willumsen (2006), for example, concludes that the collaboration in the residential care unit in her study meant that parents were involved to a higher degree. Her findings show that when the parents were allowed to play an active role in identifying the best solution it contributed to what she describes as the “reconstruction of parenthood” which, in turn, contributes to an enhanced ability to support the child (Willumsen, 2006, p. 49).

Farmakopoulou (1999) found that parents of children whom social workers and educational psychologists collaborated around held positive as well as negative views about the collaboration. On the positive side, they expressed that they experienced that the professionals made a holistic assessment, which they saw as beneficial. They looked at all the child’s needs, and avoided duplication. The parents also saw the advantage of joint visits, as they explained that it can be overwhelming to have different professional visits at different times and that each visit involved an intrusion into their privacy. The disadvantages were when the professionals in the multi-disciplinary team had different opinions about how to help the child. Here the problem experienced was that the parents did not know who to believe and how to react. Likewise, information-sharing between the professionals sometimes felt threatening for the parents because they were never sure about the limits of confidentiality and what information was shared between which professionals. They also sometimes experienced that the professionals formed allegiances between themselves. This was said to take form in the way that the professionals seemed to support each other about what they should talk about, how to talk about it, and what to criticise about the parents’ parenting skills. The parents expressed that they experienced such situations as highly unpleasant.

Sands (1994), in her ethnographic study of an inter-professional collaborative team who assessed children with disabilities and their communication with parents, concluded that the teams were not fully candid with the parents and that the team members simplified, diluted and excluded selected aspects of their assessment when meeting the parents. However, if the parents were themselves professionals, the team members would provide more technical information and fuller explanations of findings. Sands argues that the implications for social work



are that if separate interdisciplinary conferences are used as a means of criticising parents, the social workers should become aware of this, as well as assessing whether team members are either speaking over the heads of the families or simplifying things and, in that sense, withholding vital information.

Hudson (2007) examined six individual cases, all of whom received services from a team involving interprofessional collaborative practice and identified three factors that contributed to the appreciation of the service. First, *the speed* of delivery was high compared with previous experience of services that were not integrated. Secondly, there was a perception of *flexibility* in that there was a *willingness to work differently* as opposed to simply working more quickly. Further, most of the staff were perceived as being willing to “bend” traditional professional boundaries in order to solve problems. Finally there was felt to be a *creativity* which differed from the bending of traditional professional boundaries, but involved an opportunity to think in a fresh way, unencumbered by the legacy of ‘that this is how we do things’. This final factor was something that, additionally, was also identified by the staff themselves.

# Chapter Three

## Theoretical framework

This chapter provides a conceptual framework within which processes in interprofessional collaboration between teachers and social workers and can be understood. It begins with a brief discussion of the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions that collaboration is a phenomenon which is socially constructed, but also exists in a specific organisational reality (Bryman, 2004). This will be followed by an examination of the three central areas of theory that underpin the research undertaken in this thesis; theories about organisations, theories on professions, and, finally, theories on negotiation. Each area of theory is presented in general terms and thereafter the relevance of each for the current study is discussed. From this framework it is possible to gain an understanding of the interaction between structural conditions, individuals and their environment, the interrelatedness of professional interests, the role of negotiations and the organisational aspects of inter-professional collaboration.

The main theoretical assumption in this thesis is that the understanding of the context of collaboration plays a significant part in developing knowledge of interprofessional collaboration (Farmakopoulou, 1999; Hjelte, 2005; Hjortsjö, 2005; Leathard, 2003b; Stead, Lloyd & Kendrick, 2004). First, one contextually important aspect in this thesis is that the collaboration explored takes place within social welfare organisations. It is therefore the participating welfare organisations interests' in collaboration that need to be analysed. Theories about human services organisations consequently provide an important element in the theoretical framework and function as a tool to disentangle the organisational interests in collaboration (see Hasenfeld, 2010a). The second basic assumption is that different professional interests, such as professional status, legitimacy and remuneration, form a part of the context in which collaboration takes place (see Hudson, 2007). For example, communication can be influenced by the professionals' own interests in creating professional legitimacy by, in a collaborative context, claiming certain areas of knowledge. Whilst such stake-claiming might be said to be in the best interests of the child and its family, it is equally possible that it is the professional interests of the collaborating partners

that are more at stake. Theories of professions and the professional project (MacDonald, 1995) can therefore offer tools to understand some of the mechanisms of interprofessional collaboration. Thirdly, it is assumed that these professional and organisational interests need to be taken into account when analysing collaboration (Danermark, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Thus theories about negotiation can provide a valuable input in providing insights into understanding the necessary processes of decision-making that are embedded in any form of collaboration that takes place between groups with different interests and traditions.

## Human service organisations; organisation in a societal context

Organisations are an inevitable ubiquity and the dominant characteristic of modern society. Large numbers of different organisations are engaged in performing an enormous amount of diverse tasks (Scott, 2003). One common feature distinctive of such organisations is explained by Scott who makes the point that:

Most analysts have conceived of organizations as *social structures created by individuals to support the collaborative pursuits of specific goals* (Scott, 2003, p. 11).

Different schools of the study of organisations have developed and the field is extensive. By means of example, the Scientific Management developed by Fredrick W Taylor, the study of bureaucracy developed by Max Weber, the study of human relations represented by Elton Mayo, the study administration involving decision making, conflicts and technology associated with Herbert Simmons & James March, the institutional school with reference to Philip Selnick, and contingency theory with reference to Burns and Stalker (Perrow, 1986) can all be mentioned. No perspective can alone explain the structure and processes of organisations generally, and all have various strengths and limitations (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Scott, 2003). The perspective adopted in this thesis is based on theories of human services organisations (HSOs). Theories in this particular area of organisational theory are closely associated with delineating the distinctive qualities and structural modifications of mainstream management technologies to social agencies (Hasenfeld, 2010a) Concepts such as the client as “raw material”, “people processing”, “people changing” and “goal ambiguity” all provide different tools to analyse organisational work. Commonly, the inherent questions of workers’ moral responsibility in working with people form a

distinguishing feature of this theoretical perspective in the understanding of organisations (Hasenfeld, 2010a). The advantages of adopting an HSO perspective, as opposed to other organisational perspectives, is that it places an emphasis on the fact that the “raw material” of the organisation is the people for whom services are provided, and that the “processing” of and “outcomes” for the human raw material are dependent of the interaction between the workers employed within the organisation and the raw material. In other words, that the pupils and their families are active agents is one of the contextual factors to take into account when exploring the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration

The organisations in this study – social services and schools – are also examples of street-level bureaucracies, (which can themselves be defined as HSOs) which employ what are termed “street level bureaucrats”. In this sense I use the terms ‘human service organisations’ and ‘street-level bureaucracies’ interchangeably to describe organisations the characteristics which are that they (i) work with humans as their raw material and (ii) can be regarded as an organisation charged by the state authorities with the “delivery” of a service (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Lipsky, 1980). According to Lipsky (1980), a street-level bureaucracy is a public services agency that employs a significant number of street-level bureaucrats in the total workforce. Further, a street-level bureaucrat can be defined as a public service worker who interacts directly with citizens in the course of employment, and who has substantial discretion in the execution of the work. In Lipsky’s world, the typical street-level bureaucrat could be a teacher, social worker, police officer, social insurance officer or indeed a judge. Lipsky argues that all street-level bureaucrats share the common experience of analytically similar working conditions. As the providers of resources and public services they are therefore also the focus of political controversy.

The reason for using the concept of the ‘street level bureaucrat’ in this thesis is that it can offer some understanding of the common professional and organisational features shared by the groups who form the focus of collaboration. Even though each category of professional (i.e. social worker and teacher) has different aims, objectives, perspectives and professional value systems, there is nevertheless much that they share in common and which is captured in Lipsky’s notion of the ‘street-level bureaucrat’. One example of shared working conditions for social workers and teachers can be illustrated in that their practice is subject to government scrutiny. Recently, a report from Skolverket (2007) concluded that children in need of special educational support are not receiving the help they are entitled to and, according to the report, there

seems to be a substantial gap between the assessment of need, and having the requisite knowledge about the forms of support that should be delivered. A similar criticism has been advanced with regard to social services in a report from the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen, 2010). The lack of identifying children at risk and the failure of protecting them if identified forms a major criticism.

Another shared work condition for the teachers and social workers can be exemplified in that street-level bureaucrats are frequently torn by demands from service recipients and citizens' groups who seek service improvements and greater responsiveness, and from governments who seek improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Although street-level bureaucrats are invariably low paid, nevertheless, as well as their sheer number, their salaries comprise a significant proportion of the government's expenditure. These organisational conditions are valid for street-level bureaucrats in social services as well as for teachers; both professional groups, despite their university degrees, are relatively poorly paid compared, for example, with engineers in either the public or the private sector. Furthermore, both professional groups are very much in the frontline with regard to public, media and governmental scrutiny.

## Organisational legitimacy

A particular feature of HSOs is that their legitimacy is dependent on how they are experienced by the surrounding society. Institutional rules reflect the outcome of negotiations among interested groups with differential access and control of power (Hasenfeld, 2000). The structure of any given HSO is determined not by the technology of what the organisation is tasked with achieving, i.e. its remit, but by the rules emanating from the institutional environment, or put another way, by the constraints imposed by jurisdictional boundaries and resource availability (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Hasenfeld (2000) explains that institutional rules become embedded in organisational forms and are taken for granted. In that way it is possible to understand that collaboration between education and social services can be perceived as being an institutional rule in that collaboration is a taken-for-granted part of practice and is imbedded in the two organisations. The question, in such a case, is not *whether* social services and schools should collaborate around children in need of support, but rather *how* that should be achieved effectively and successfully. This normative approach towards collaboration can be understood in that during the last 20 years the demand for collaborative practices – top-down as well as bottom-up –

has increased and a process of taking collaboration for granted without questioning its rationale is clearly evident (Glenny & Roaf, 2008). Schools and social services are institutions that are the subjects of a strong public opinion, political focus and governmental scrutiny, and this is reflected in the institutional rules within which they operate. Mayer and Rowan (1977) explain such processes in terms of the concept of *institutionalisation* which involves process by which different aspects of work carried out in organisations become rule-like social thought and action.

For example, in Sweden, collaboration has been a dominant political ideal for a considerable time and providers of social and education services are, by statute, encouraged to collaborate around children who are regarded as in some way being in need (SOU2010:95). Even though collaboration of the sort envisaged in statute might be uncharted and indeed uncomfortable territory – due not least to the fact that there is a strong element of self-survival incorporated into organisations – they are forced to uphold institutional rules due to the need to assert legitimacy and to access and maintain the supply of resources. Thus, in this sense, schools and social services become forced into collaboration in different forms as a means of asserting their legitimacy.

## Moral work

Another distinctive attribute of human service organisations that has been mentioned previously is that *people* form the *raw material* that is used by the organisation (Hasenfeld, 2010a, 2000). As Hasenfeld explains, the term “raw material” by no means implies that people who are being “worked on” are inanimate or without human qualities, or indeed that the workers who serve them are without compassion. Rather, the term is used as a metaphor for the *work* done with people by the street-level bureaucrats. Thus, as Hasenfeld makes clear, a necessary ingredient, and indeed counterbalance in an approach that regards people as *raw material*, is the recognition that the work that is carried out is a form of *moral work*. Using the provision of education as an example of the relationship between *raw material* and *moral work*, Hasenfeld explains that:

[b]y designating children as students, the school certifies that they are raw material for the teachers to work on so that they become educated (Hasenfeld, 2010a, p 11).

Further, Hasenfeld sees this process as one of transformation and argues that it is in fact this specific *transformation process* to which people are subjected that

defines them as the *raw material*. This forms the key difference between human services than other bureaucracies and, according to Hasenfeld, is deeply anchored in a moral context in that, when providing service, the organisation and the street-level bureaucrat make a judgement about the client's moral worth.

The three core activities in a human service organization are structured to *process, sustain or change* people who come under its jurisdiction. First, the notion of *processing* is one of the core activities vis-à-vis people who come under an HSOs jurisdiction. It is a transformatory practice to which people are subjected and which defines them as the 'raw material' that the particular organisation is working with (being, for example, a pupil in need of special educational support, someone who is homeless, a substance abuser e.t.c.). When processing, which generally includes an assessment of needs with the aim of deciding whether or not the individual is able to get access to services, a moral judgement in the form of an often explicit articulation of a user's *social worth* plays a significant role. Social worth can be understood as a value judgement and statement about an individual's social worth. For example, in the context of a hospital emergency room, social worth can be related to age, with people who are young being treated before those who are old. Related to the concept of social worth are the interlinked notions of *deservingness* and *attributes of responsibility*. Returning to the emergency room scenario, Roth (as cited in Hasenfeld 2010a, p13) argues that staff may differentiate in their consideration of the correct priorities of care between someone who has a serious injury – but which has been caused by excessive alcohol intake – and someone whose injury is less serious, but which has been caused in a manner that is not self-inflicted.

Secondly, *people changing* activity means, literally, that the organisation or the street-level bureaucrats that populate them, have the task of creating conditions which can promote 'change' in the client's situation (Hasenfeld, 2010a). Examples of these organisations can be schools, where the aim is to develop knowledge and wellbeing and certain aspects of hospital care. Another example is the work carried out by social services where, for instance, a client can access services at a family centre where the aim might be a positive change in parenting skills, or various substance abuse initiatives whereby the client can get help to change patterns of addiction. Thirdly, the core activities of the organisations which have *people sustaining* in focus involve attempts to maintain the level of wellbeing in, for example, the provision of accommodation for people with learning difficulties and homes for the elderly. In the case of this thesis, the resource school can be viewed as an organisation using technologies which have

a focus on people changing. Having said this, the intake process conducted with the purpose of assessing candidates and, subsequently, the selection of which pupils to be offered a place, provides a good example of *people processing*.

Additional concepts that have a bearing on moral values in the processing of people in Hasenfeld's model (2010b) are *amenability to change* and the *rationing of resources*. *Amenability to change* relates to the desired end result and is an assessment to which a very high moral value is attached. For example, assumptions about the amenability to change influence the degree to which the organisation commits itself to bringing about a change in the client's circumstances. If the school believes, for example, that pupils in need of special educational support can attain the curriculum goals, they will provide sufficient teachers to make that possible. If, on the other hand, they don't think so, they might hesitate to provide additional resources. Oakes (as cited in Hasenfeld, 2010a, p.99) gives the example of students being tracked into vocational (as opposed to academic) paths as being assumed to lack intellectual capacity which makes the school less inclined to invest academic resources in them. Judgments about amenability to change are often linked to the *rationing of resources*. Invariably in HSOs the demand for resources exceeds availability, resulting necessarily in some system of rationing (Hasenfeld, 2010b, 2000; Lipsky, 1980). The rationing of resources involves the twin questions of *which* user should have priority in receiving certain services, and, once this decision has been taken, another concerning the appropriate allocation of resources to clients. Such resources could be money, time or indeed expertise. When dealing with the allocation of resources, an HSO is required to develop a criteria- or principle-based system in order to legitimate the distribution of a finite commodity. Often, such systems have to be operationalized by frontline workers who have to consider whether to adopt a first-come-first served approach, or, alternatively, to differentiate between users with competing needs on the basis of a moral value judgment in the sense that the user with the greatest needs is served first. Another moral value question involves the manner in which the service is delivered. Questions that have to be addressed include, for example, who has the right to provide different services to users, and what qualifications they should have (Hasenfeld, 2000).

Moral work is present in the typification of users via diagnoses, treatment and the inference of causality. According to (Hasenfeld, 2010a) these are all aspects of the moral work of socially constructed categories that reflect the jurisdictional claims of the particular professions employed in HSOs. Schemas of typification are used to categorize and classify people in order to justify and legitimate their



positioning within a particular jurisdiction. Once a category, which is a social construct, is created, it is invariably the case that street level bureaucrats are readily able to identify people who fit into that category. As a consequence, the categorization processes has an impact in shaping the identities of the users/service recipients (Lipsky, 1980). In an educational context, this process of categorising operates so as to define particular pupils as ‘special’ in the sense that they may have ‘special needs’ or are placed in ‘special classes’, and taught by ‘special teachers’ (Hjörne & Säljö, 2004).

Another attribute of HSOs is the *choice of technology* that the organisation can exercise. The technology used by an HSO needs to be socially approved and sanctioned (Hasenfeld, 2010a). Hasenfeld uses the concept of *practice ideologies* to explain that human services organizations tend to use technologies that are sanctioned by the institutional environment. The indeterminacy of technologies is a particular characteristic of HSOs. The merits of different technologies are not always apparent and there can often be competing claims about the advantages of one technology over another. Difficulties in agreeing about the merits of particular technologies leaves it open to frontline workers to have different opinions about what is ‘good for the user’. Often, a lack of knowledge about what is needed to change human attributes – be they physical, economic or psychological – makes it difficult to agree about what is best. As a consequence, significant room for manoeuvre and implementational flexibility is created. Hasenfeld argues that the indeterminacy of technologies provides HSOs with considerable discretion in decisions made for working with and/or providing services to different users, and in having the right to define what really is ‘best for the client’.

Another feature that is distinctive to a human services organization, and which sets it apart from other types of organizations, is the user’s ability to react to and participate in the technology of the service provision. Hasenfeld (2010a) uses the concept *service trajectory* to describe this relation, and identifies two important interrelated features; *contingencies* and *client compliance*.

Hasenfeld uses the term *contingencies* to describe those occasions when neither the reactions of the user, nor the responses of the worker are fully controllable. Such contingencies are particularly common in cases where there is a multiplicity of problems and when these problems involve extensive social and professional networks. In situations characterised by inter-personal and organisational complexity, Hasenfeld suggests that:

[t]he primary aim for the staff is to manage the contingencies to control the service trajectory and minimize unanticipated consequences [and] diagnosis [thus becomes] a key mechanism to control service trajectory, because it provides the staff with a defined course of action (Hasenfeld, 2010a, p. 19).

*Client compliance* is the term used by Hasenfeld (2010a) to describe the way that HSOs need to ensure that clients can be controlled so that their reactions do not neutralize the effects of the technology. Indeed, the control of the client's reactions is to be regarded as a crucial factor in *processing* and plays a significant role in the process of selecting clients who are viewed as amenable to the service technology, and as Hasenfeld express it, "cooling out" those who are not legitimate persons to benefit from the service technology. Another way of understanding the selection process is determined by *client compliance* in what Hasenfeld describes as "tracking" the client into different service trajectories (Hasenfeld, 2010a). By way of example, he explains how teachers can 'track' students into different streams of study; i.e. academic, vocational or general studies. By performing this act of tracking, teachers are able to obtain a form of *client compliance* in that they can exercise control over the students in the sense that they can "homogenise" their classroom and, in so doing, reinforce their own expectations of teaching and expected learning outcomes.

## The characteristics of professions

Professionals play an important role in Western society and, over the last century, have increased enormously in number (Saks, 1995). However, parallel to their growth, the challenges to the proper domains, motives and even expertise of professions are also increasing. The work undertaken by individual professionals is ever-increasingly being subjected to scrutiny and accountability, whilst the trustworthiness, competency and discretion of professional work is continually challenged (Evetts, 2006a; Frost, 2001). Today it seems that people are prepared to question the expertise of the professional to a greater degree than ever before, which demands that professionals need to be able to develop a vocabulary with which to formulate the core and central aspects of their activity. In collaborative settings, where the picture of who does what and why is often blurred, this increased demand for accountability and legitimacy leads to the incorporation of a tension that restricts the freedom of manoeuvre for professionals from different fields. For example, in the current thesis, whilst it is possible to identify boundaries between social work and teaching quite clearly in traditional settings, it might be less clear when they are in the field of "children at

risk and in need of educational support”. In such a context the roles of the different professionals operating within these boundaries are more difficult to define and are subject to a degree of tension.

There are different theoretical approaches to the definition of professions and professionalism. The ‘trait’ approach attempts to define the traits and characteristics of professionals in the form of lists of skills, training, organisational structures, ethics, accreditation, competency testing, altruism, service provision etc. (Frost 2001; Macdonald, 1995; Saks, 1995). The functionalistic approach, on the other hand, examines the role of professions/professionalism in society (Evetts, 2006b). A third approach is the power approach which acts as critique of the ‘trait’ and ‘functionalist’ approaches (Evetts, 2006b). According to Johnson (as cited in Frost, 2001, p. 8) the ‘power approach’ questions the assertion made by the trait approach that an ideal type of professional actually exists. As regards the functionalist approach, the critique here is that it assumes that society has a functional unity with shared common interests regardless of inequalities such as class, ethnicity and other social divisions. Instead, the power approach provides an analysis of professionalism based on a struggle among different occupational groups for position, status and dominance.

Abbott (1988), who can be seen as adopting a power approach, argues that professions are social constructs which, depending on the context, comprise a grouping of individuals engaged in common activities and who might or might not be recognised as a profession. Abbott (1988) has developed a series of theories about how professions as social groups create space and make claims to knowledge on certain issues and in certain domains. He defines professions loosely as,

...exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases (Abbott, 1988, p.8).

Evetts (2006a) however, offers a less exclusive definition of what it means to be a professional:

In general, however, it no longer seems important to draw a hard definitional line between profession and other (expert) occupations (Evetts, 2006a, p135).

## Professions and boundary work

Abbott (1988, 1995) in his study of a psychiatric hospital in Manteno, USA, discovered a serious disjunction between social work as a 'turf' of work and social work as an identified credential. In drawing attention to this discrepancy, he points out that social work, as an area of professional work, did not exist as such at the time of its inception and that, in order to define itself and to establish legitimacy and exclusivity, it was necessary to construct boundaries. In general terms, processes of boundary creation take place, initially, in the context of specific tasks and in local areas of work such as, for example, prison work, hospital work and voluntary work. It is thus within these delineated fields that different professions begin to develop. Abbott argues that it is through the challenging of boundaries and their subsequent reconstruction and re-delineation that professions change. Indeed, it is through conflicts about boundaries that professional domains emerge and that the distinct identities of professional bodies are formed. As Abbott (1995) puts it,

[r]ather, the function of social work, like those of other professions, emerged from a continuous process of conflict and change (Abbott, 1995p.552).

Boundaries can be regarded as analogous to a means of social control since borders, once constructed, are maintained and policed (Gieryn, 1999). Whilst the policing of boundaries is a defensively-oriented form of work, professions, according to Abbott, also behave offensively. Indeed, Abbott has argued that the world of professions constitutes a gigantic and never-ceasing turf war. The turf that is fought over involves, in addition to status, clients, resources, legitimacy and, most importantly, jurisdiction. Jurisdiction signifies the exclusive right or monopoly of legitimate activity within a particular field. He describes how each profession 'stakes out' and maintains its own territory by defining the boundaries that must be defended *vis-à-vis* other competing professions. According to Abbott, professions expand their territory by making claims on adjacent turf. He argues that professions need to actively manoeuvre in relation to other professions and that, as a consequence, a profession can be characterised as being collectively being involved in a series of skirmishes and indeed full-scale battles over domain boundaries and the mapping of jurisdictions. These battles can be fought in three arenas, a) the legal system, through legislation and administrative structures, such as for example the government's proposal to give teachers statutory rights to assign grades, b) the public area, which involves the use of the media or, for example, how unions construct professional images which are used to put pressure on the legal system, and c) in the workplace area,

which is more informal and involves negotiations through actions and traditions (Abbott, 1988, 1995). In the case of the resource school that is the focus of this thesis, it is possible to say that the jurisdictional boundary work takes place in the workplace where teachers and social workers are engaged in establishing their specific professional jurisdictions.

Abbott (1988) suggests that there is a fundamental contradiction between the somewhat formal arenas for claiming jurisdiction – the public and the legal domains – and the informal arena of the workplace. He uses the concept of *workplace assimilation* to explain the way in which workers carry out tasks that are not necessarily associated with the job descriptions that embody the more formal professional boundaries and which, according to Abbot, have only a vague relation to reality. Teachers, in an ordinary school, can, for example, talk with a pupil about complex social problems although, formally, this is something that lies within the jurisdiction of the school psychologist or the school social worker. Whilst the organisational division of labour may in most professional settings be formalised in job descriptions, it is however, according to Abbott, the *actual* division of labour that is established through negotiation and traditions that encompasses situation-specific rules of professional jurisdiction. These divisions of labour tend to endure in the short-term – for a number of months or years – and are highly sensitive to changes in the organisation. Hence, the division of labour needs to be re-negotiated, with, according to Abbott, the result that jurisdictional change is needed in order to accommodate organisational imperatives.

He continues to argue that boundaries between professionals' areas of jurisdiction tend to disappear in worksites, particularly overworked worksites. The result of this forms a knowledge-transfer which, as previously mentioned, Abbot terms *workplace assimilation*. He illustrates the underlying reasons for workplace assimilation in saying that the complexity of professional life has the effect that the division of work becomes highly practical. For example, if a professional lacks the requisite competence or skills, organisational interests demand that someone else, who might or might not be officially competent to do the work, carries out these tasks. Equally, if there is too much professional work to be done, then a non-professional member of staff may be required to carry out such tasks. Thus, in a small workplace, the division of labour is difficult to achieve in such a way that it supports ideal interprofessional differentiation. At the other end of the spectrum, in large workplaces, differentiation tends to lead to an overlap between professional jurisdictions.

Abbott argues that even where the public division of jurisdiction appears to be appropriate, reciprocal assimilation is necessary for effective functioning. The demands to 'get the job done' thus undermine jurisdictional boundaries.

Abbot also points out that different possible settlements can be achieved when jurisdictional disputes occur. These are *to claim full jurisdiction*, the *subordination of one by another*, an *advisory jurisdiction* and the *division of labour*. The first of these, the claim of *full jurisdiction*, usually involves a withdrawal on the part of the other professional group. A full jurisdictional claim is often made in public and is based on the profession's abstract knowledge to define and resolve a certain set of problems and, in general, a claim for full jurisdiction needs to be made collectively by a specific group. Abbott claims that every profession strives for a heartland of work where they should have absolute and legally-established control. This having been said, it is not the most common way of settling jurisdictional disputes. A more common and familiar way of solving disputes is the *subordination of one under the other*. Sometimes this 'subordination' is simply intellectual; the dominant profession retains intellectual and cognitive control of the jurisdiction thus allowing practical jurisdiction to be shared more widely. Nursing provides the classic example. Whilst Miss Nightingale envisioned an independent profession as an administrative and custodial equal to the medical profession, the result in fact became the subordination of nursing under medicine. Subordination is an explicit settlement and, according to Abbott, a complex workplace cannot function without extensive assimilation between subordinate and dominant professions.

A third solution is to allow one profession to *advise the other*. For example, many school social workers have a consultative role towards the teaching profession. This approach allows the professions to divide their jurisdiction, not according to content of work, but according to the nature and needs of the client. Abbot terms this cognitive jurisdiction. For example, a school social worker and a school nurse can work with the same pupils, the nurse taking care of pupils who have problems related to being unhealthy, whilst the social worker deals with problems related to family/peer relations. At the same time though, the school social worker offers consultation to the school nurse in doing counselling. Different jurisdictional battles are, according to Abbot, most likely to take place at the outer edges of an organisation's recognised professional jurisdiction. Occasionally, this means that a contest of jurisdiction can remain unresolved over a longer period of time. However, such drawn-out battles are often followed by a division of jurisdiction into functionally-interdependent but

structurally equal parts. This Abbott terms a settlement by *division of labour* as opposed to subordination. Abbott argues that it is rare that two groups may hold full and equal areas of jurisdiction in a particular task area. Instead, in such a situation, he proposes that midway in between subordination and the division of labour is what he describes, and has been previously mentioned, as cognitive jurisdiction.

Abbott (1988) suggests that, in the future, researchers in the field of professions should stop studying single professions and instead begin to study workplaces. In particular he makes the point that we need histories of jurisdiction. This statement can, in some ways, be seen serving as a point of departure for this thesis. By exploring claims of jurisdiction made by the teachers and social workers in the resource school, the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration can be decomposed, scrutinised and understood.

An additional and arguably opposing perspective to that of viewing professional boundary work as a 'turf war' is that espoused in the concept of *shared professional identities* (Evetts, 2006b). This she explains in the following way:

This shared professional identity is associated with a sense of common experiences, understanding and expertise, shared ways of perceiving problems and possible solutions (Evetts, 2006b, p. 518).

Evetts suggests that a common professional identity is produced and reproduced by professional socialisation by means of a mutual and similar educational background, professional training and work experience, the membership of professional associations and in societies where professionals develop and maintain a shared work culture. The collegiality involved in such work relations results in a mutual desire to support the practice conducted, collective responsibility for the management of the work undertaken, and the development of professional autonomy and discretion. In such a sense it is possible to say that teachers and social workers are closer to one another as professional groups compared, for example, to accountancy and social work, and, in a close environment, may develop a shared professional identity.

## Discretion

The concept of discretion is, in this thesis, used in an attempt to link structural conditions and individual decision-making. Discretion will thus be used as a means of analysing the individual understanding and decision-making in the

context in which collaboration takes place, related to structural restrictions and opportunities, such as policy, guidelines, regulations and legislation.

According to the *Chambers Dictionary*, discretion involves the “liberty or power of deciding according to one’s own judgement or discernment”. Ronald Dworkin (1977), Professor of Jurisprudence (the philosophy of law) at Oxford University argues, however, that, in practical terms,

... discretion is at home in only one sort of context: when someone is in general charged with making decisions subject to standards set by a particularly authority (Dworkin, 1977, p31).

Discretion is thus never an abstract or disembodied exercise of judgement or discernment, but is always contextualised in the sense that it is embedded within a framework of constraints. Lipsky (1980) discusses the role and function of discretion when used by street-level bureaucrats in human service organisations, pointing out that,

[t]he essence of street-level bureaucracies is that they require people to make decisions about people (Lipsky, 1980, p. 161).

Further, he suggests that street-level bureaucrats have discretion simply because we (society) don’t want machines to do the job. Handler (1992) argues that discretion is ubiquitous and, as a basic common denominator, he writes that it,

... involves the existence of choice, as contrasted with decision dictated by rules (Handler, 1992, p 276).

Coble Vinzant and Crothers (1998) argue that discretion is a fundamental necessity if line-level public employees are to carry out their working tasks successfully and efficiently. They also conclude, like Lipsky, that discretion can be used appropriately and inappropriately. The concept of discretion is thus neither good nor bad; rather, it is neutral concept which needs to be defined situationally (Coble Vinzant & Crothers, 1998; Evans & Harris, 2004; Hawkins, 2001; Schierenbeck, 2003). Discretion is thus never an abstract or disembodied exercise of judgement or discernment, but is always contextualised in the sense that it is embedded within a framework of constraints. Dworkin (1977) for example, uses the metaphor of a doughnut to explain how judgement and discernment are enclosed by outer boundaries that cannot be transgressed. Discretion, he explains, is,



...like the hole in a doughnut [and] does not exist except as an area left open by a surrounding belt of restriction (Dworking, 1977,p.31).

Evans and Harris (2004), with reference to Lipsky, point to the centrality of discretion in the work of street level bureaucracies. They argue that Lipsky's analysis of the conditions within which street level bureaucracies operate are central as a means of understanding the individuals who work within them. Thus they point out that Lipsky managed not only to demonstrate that managers are limited in controlling street level bureaucrats, but also that the workers are left to deal with the dilemma of discrepancies between policy and shortage of resources. In particular they make the point that,

[a]s a consequence in their day-to-day work, street level bureaucrat has to work out practical versions of public policy that often look quite unlike official pronouncement (Evans & Harris, 2004, p. 876).

In their analysis of discretion in social work organisations, Evans and Harris emphasise the importance of recognizing the political dimension underpinning and influencing the exercise of discretion. They argue that whilst discretion is often necessary for practitioners to do their job, freedom of movement to deal with uncertainty is crucial. Thus discretion will also involve bargaining about who is accountable and takes responsibility.

One aspect highlighted by Coble, Vinzant and Crothers (1998) is that there might be a multitude of different choices available in any given situation and that, as a consequence, the nature of discretion for a street-level worker often involves making choices from among a number of alternatives. No single factor forces selection of one particular alternative from all those that are potentially available and, rather, it is the judgment of the individual frontline worker in exercising choice as opposed to some more mechanistic process that explains why one particular alternative is selected. They describe that discretion manifests itself in two distinct dimensions. This is a *process discretion*, i.e. the means or the 'how' a goal is achieved, as well as an *outcome discretion*, which is the ends or the goal that should be achieved.

Taylor and Kelly (2006) claim that, in the UK today, it is possible to identify three elements of discretion. The first of these is *rule discretion*. Here decision-making is bounded by legal, fiscal or organisational restraints. Rules might, for example, be set out in statutes or in the ordinances of the organisation, or they might emanate from directives issued by government. *Value discretion* may be determined by notions of fairness or justice, possibly involving professional

codes of ethics or organisational codes of conduct. There is an expectation that professionals can be trusted to abide by established and normative professional practice and will be expected to exercise her or his judgement based on training, knowledge and experience. Finally, there is *task discretion* which is the actual ability to carry out prescribed tasks, such as working with clients or responding to requests for information. This might be influenced by greater managerial scrutiny in the pursuit of targets, although tasks can often be complex and multifaceted, thus requiring discretionary actions at a street-level which cannot be easily be monitored.

## Negotiation: getting things done

According to Strauss (1978), negotiation is:

[t]he possible means for getting things accomplished. It is used to get done the thing that an actor (person, group, organization, nation and so on) wishes to get done, includes making things work or making them continuing working (Strauss, 1978,p 11).

Collaboration entails that organisations and professionals have a specific task to accomplish (Socialstyrelsen, 2007). Theories about negotiation are relevant to use to explore how, in collaborative practices, agreements are reached and decisions are made. The framework of the Negotiated Order Theory developed by Anselm Strauss provides a useful point of departure when analysing interprofessional collaboration. According to Strauss (1978), to approach a social phenomenon from the perspective of Negotiated Order Theory, both the structural context and the negotiation context must be explored since, as he makes clear, “large structural considerations need to be linked explicitly with a more microscopic analysis of negotiation process” (preface xi, Strauss, 1978).

Strauss (1978) makes the point that all social order is a form of negotiated order. In making this assertion, he uses the term ‘social order’ in a very loose sense as referring to the “larger lineaments of groups, organisations, nations, societies and international orders that yield the structural conditions under which negotiations of particular kind are, or are not, forced on actors”. The nature of the particular social order in this study in which negotiations take place (and which itself is a product of negotiations) is a context characterised by institutional and professional boundary crossings. Negotiations are complex processes and objects of scrutiny that necessarily include factors such as ‘by whom’, ‘with whom’ and ‘over what issues’.

Alternative methods of 'getting things done' include coercion, manipulation, persuasion and similar such strategies. Strauss argues that, previously, most research has either focused on substantive areas of negotiation, such as specific negotiations between countries, trade unions etc., or if a more general approach has been adopted, a relatively narrow, rationalistic, efficiency perspective has been in focus. Johansson (1997) argues that negotiation is about power and strategies and suggests that Strauss' usage of the concept of negotiation is both too wide and too narrow. Johansson's argument is that Strauss' concept is too wide in the sense it includes 'implicit' negotiations, the outcomes of which are 'tacit agreements' or understandings. He is critical of the use of negotiation as an explanatory tool for interactions that might be very brief, made without verbal exchange, or that have any other obvious manifestations, but where, at the same time, the parties are perfectly aware of the negotiation taken place and the actors regard this as some sort of worked-out agreement. This usage of the concept of negotiation is too wide because, according to Johansson, anything in everyday life could be embraced by it. For example, Johansson makes the point that helping someone on the bus with their pram, even if you are not just next in the queue, could, using Strauss' model, be regarded as a form of negotiation. On the other hand, Johansson argues that Strauss' concept is too narrow in the sense that negotiation is just one means among many other modes of getting things done. Thus, from Johansson's perspective, Strauss fails to explain how you can separate negotiation from other modes such as, for example, manipulation and coercion. Instead, Johansson (1997) would rather see negotiations as a particular kind of social relation in social life that, in essence, form a transition period in which the conditions for change and patterns in the relations are decided.

In exploring negotiation between professionals in everyday collaboration, Strauss' wider concept of implicit forms of negotiation can be of relevance, although it is necessary here to also take account of Johansson's criticisms. The process of implicit negotiations appears to be of relevance in everyday collaboration in that, according to Strauss (1978), the important consideration about implicit negotiations is that life in groups, organisations and societies is not possible without tacit agreements and that more or less implicit negotiations are a necessary prerequisite in the lead up to arriving at tacit agreements. To make his point more clearly, Strauss gives as an example from a hospice where patients are waiting to die in the tranquillity of the hospice environment. Here, the staff and the patients never talk openly about them dying. Strauss refers to this mutual pretence as a type of "silent bargain" (Strauss, 1978).

A social order without negotiations is, according to Strauss, inconceivable. Indeed, even a society based on dictatorship is reliant, to some degree at least he argues, on negotiation. When organisations work together to get things done, agreement about what, how, when, where and how much, all need to be settled. Social order materialises through a process of negotiation and must be continually reinstated and reconstituted in order to assert itself and be recognised as an existing and stable organisational structure (Strauss, 1978). Here Strauss draws a distinction between agreement and negotiations. He argues that negotiations will always imply some tension or disparity between parties since, without such tension or disparity, there would be no need to negotiate since an agreement would already be in place. For example, people can agree about, or do something without negotiation; ‘I would like to buy your car for \$10,000 dollars’, ‘OK, fine’, is a form of agreement. However, even the simplest of agreements have an in-built scope for negotiations since it is always possible for one or more of the parties to change or alter the agreement in some substantive way.

When organisations are built from scratch Strauss asks about the roles that negotiation plays during the construction and maintenance of cooperative structures. Such negotiations, according to Strauss, are phenomena that are ubiquitous in complex societies. He points to the fact that one of the characteristics of negotiations is that, whilst the parties may share *some* common aims, not *all* of the aims will be commonly held. If, though, the parties share sufficient common aims they might be able – and indeed want – to build a durable construction. If not, then the collaborative structure that has been created is unlikely to have a great longevity. For example, in collaboration in welfare organisations, one commonly articulated and explicit aim is to deliver better quality services and, not infrequently, it is a commonly held view that one means of achieving improved quality standards is via collaboration. Another aspect of negotiation is to define instances of stake differentials, as well as those situations where the investments of stakeholders achieve a greater degree of parity.

Power is an ever-present element in any analysis of negotiation as a form of social interaction (Johansson, 1997). Power is an inherently complex concept and, in the context of negotiations, power is relational and all relations are the product of and embedded in the operation of power (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981). Johansson (1997) uses the concept of power in a relational sense and in a resources context. In a negotiation of the type that forms one of the central areas of focus for this thesis, a party can exercise power in terms of the resources

(symbolic and material) that are related to the organisation which she/he represents, and/or as a result of the power (more symbolic than material) that relates to her/his professional status. Bacharach and Lawler (1981) discuss power in terms of the relational dependency of two or more parties. There are two dimensions to this notion of relational dependency; *alternatives* and *commitment*. The number of alternatives that are available to reach goals that have been constructed by the parties via negotiation, and the value that is attached to attaining these goals, will both have a substantial impact on the negotiation process.

# Chapter Four

## Research design and methods

In this section the framework and the research design of the thesis are presented. It commences with a brief description of the use of a qualitative approach. Thereafter, the selection process is explained, followed by sections on the use of interviews and observations as research methods. Some attention is also given to the advantages of the design and to design limitations. This section ends with a discussion on research ethics.

### A qualitative approach to research

This thesis adopts a qualitative approach to the design of the research and the collection and analysis of the data. The focus is on seeking to understand the *phenomenon* of co-located interprofessional collaboration as opposed to looking for the *causes* of interprofessional collaboration. It is a characteristic of qualitative research that the researcher uses words and focuses on meaning. The researcher relies on inductive logic and, compared with quantitative research which relies on the use of numbers and is predominantly concerned with behaviour and generally uses hypothesis-testing/deductive methods, qualitative research seeks understanding of particular phenomena without the ambition of generalising results (Brannen, 2007). Although this distinction, according to Brannen, is simplified and reductive, it nevertheless serves to offer some understanding underpinning the choice of methods used in this thesis. To choose a qualitative approach towards research is to choose depth at the expense of breadth (Patton, 2002). Brannen (2007) points out that ontological and epistemological assumptions and theoretical considerations are relevant to the choice of method. My own ontological point of departure is that social entities are social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2004). In this sense, collaboration is not a predetermined 'given'. Thus the research design needs to be able to capture and shed light on the intricacies in the processes that take place in collaboration, rather than attempting to focus on any fixed entity of collaboration per se.

However, it is necessary to appreciate that any culture or cultural practice has a reality – for example poverty or structural oppression – which influences both the processes in which meanings are created and the specific conditions which people live in and with. My point of departure is thus that collaboration as a phenomenon is socially constructed but also exists in specific organisational realities. In that way my epistemological stance is influenced by Berger and Luckman's (1966) concept of the social construction of reality and the notion of realism. Interprofessional collaboration is embedded in organisational structures which form objective basic conditions for the study of the phenomenon of processes in interprofessional collaboration. Put another way, and as Sahlin (2002) expresses it, my point of departure is an example of 'provisional realism' which is an approach whereby, temporarily at least, the researcher treats a phenomenon as objectively existing. In the current case, this 'reality' is the organisational boundaries that surround the workplace for the teachers and social workers who are employed at the resource school. The social services and education organisations are treated as unproblematic categories.

## Research design

In creating a research design to examine complex phenomena and the interrelations within them, it is necessary to make a range of different decisions as a means of addressing the research questions that are constructed (Brannen, 2007; Kvale, 1996). Yin (1994), for example, states that:

A research design is what you can call an action plan for getting here to there, where here may be defined as an initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusion (answers) about these questions. (Yin, 1994, p. 19).

When, as a researcher, such questions are asked, it is necessary to be aware that the problem is approached with a series of preconceptions and pre-understandings about the nature of the issues in focus. One important aspect is the need to be conscious of one's own preconceptions (Gilje & Grimen, 1992). One of my preconceptions about the 'problem' – collaboration – was that it usually requires negotiations about how you interpret the aim and roles when collaborating and that one's professional belonging and previous experience of collaboration influence the understanding of that negotiation process. A second preconception was that, on different levels, organisational conditions influence collaboration between professionals. These preconceptions are rooted in research about collaboration and it is a theoretical framework that I have

encountered previously both in reading and as a result of personal experience of collaborative work with other professions. In particular, I worked several years as a social worker in a social services office with child protection and child welfare, as well as also having practiced as a social worker in a hospital with a case load of child protection cases. These posts involved extensive collaboration with other professionals.

### A qualitative case study

To best capture the phenomenon of interprofessional collaboration, a case study method was chosen. The case in this thesis is *processes in interprofessional collaboration*. The rationale behind this choice was that a case study seeks to describe in depth, and in detail, a particular situation or phenomenon (rather than doing so in numbers and in a context-independent manner). A case approach is thus to be preferred when ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions are posed (Flyvbjerg, 2007; Patton 2002; Yin, 1994). By choosing to carry out a case study, questions such as how professionals perceive collaboration, what they do, and why, can all be addressed. It is common in case studies to employ different methods to capture people’s lived experiences (Patton, 2002). Thus, in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the social context in which the collaboration is embedded, the methods chosen in this case study are participatory observation and interviews. Whilst participatory observation can provide insights into how collaboration can be expressed in practice, interviews provide a method than can access the insights of participant actors as a means of capturing the understanding of how professionals perceive and understand collaboration (Bryman, 2004; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002).

There are, according to Flyvbjerg (2007), misunderstandings and criticisms of the case study approach. A conventional view is that a case study cannot be of value in and of itself and needs to be linked to a hypothetico–deductive model of explanation. This entails that a case study can only generate knowledge which is used in the formulation of hypothesis. Flyvbjerg however argues that this is not the case and claims that the argument that a case study only produces context-dependent knowledge which is less valuable than general context-independent knowledge is fallacious. Instead, he argues that context-dependent knowledge is necessary, from a learning perspective, in that it permits people to be able to develop from rule-bound beginners to experts. A further criticism or misunderstanding is that one cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case



and that a case study cannot therefore contribute to scientific development. This assumption too, Flyvbjerg (2007) claims, is incorrect, arguing that:

[f]ormal generalisation is often overvalued as a source for scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated (Flyvbjerg, 2007, p. 395).

Gobo (2007) suggests that generalisation in qualitative research concerns general structures rather than single social practices, and claims that is the reason why, for example, Goffman's findings of social embarrassment, deference and demeanour, and Whyte's findings on social organisations and leadership, have always been considered generalizable. Thus Gobo suggests that:

...ethnographers does not generalise one case or event that, as Max Weber pointed out, cannot recur but its main structural aspects that can be noticed in other cases or events of the same kind or class (Gobo, 2007, p.423).

In this sense, the findings generated in the current study can offer theoretical insights into the nature of social structures of interprofessional collaboration in co-located settings, as well as, with some probability, in situations of non co-located collaboration.

## Selection of the resource school

The selection of the example in which the 'case' of *processes in interprofessional collaboration* can be illustrated has important relevance to any claims made about the generalisability of the results. Whilst a strategic selection of the example might enhance the representative elements of the case, a typical case might not necessarily provide the richest information (Flyvbjerg, 2007). In the current study, a strategic choice with the aim of finding an arena for *processes in co-located interprofessional collaboration between social services and education* was made and I decided to adhere to the following initial criteria as a means of identifying a suitable example:

It is recognised explicitly that the process of providing educational/social support is viewed as involving collaboration between social services and education services.

Teachers and social workers work together in a co-located setting.

The target group of pupils is defined as being in receipt of intervention-based assistance from social services.

After considering these criteria, the arena for the case of processes in co-located interprofessional collaboration was identified in so-called 'resource schools'. The number available within a reasonable distance was few and the first resource school that was approached agreed to participate in the study.

## Presentation of the resource school

The resource school which forms the example of the case where *processes of interprofessional collaboration* have been studied is a joint venture that involves shared responsibility on the part of the respective departments of education and social services in a medium-sized town in western Sweden. The school started in 2000 as a project initiated by the local authority, who demanded that the town's social services and education departments should develop a system of collaboration as a means of providing pupils whom the ordinary school system had difficulties accommodating with an appropriate education, and as a means of finding an alternative solution to institutional care, a so called 'home-based solution' intervention. In 2003 the project status of the school changed and it was incorporated into the local authority's school system on a permanent basis.

Organisationally, although jointly financed by social services and education, the resource school is incorporated within the special educational support unit of the education services department. The special education support unit is an independent organisation within the education department and is responsible for children aged between 0-16 who attend pre-schools, schools, special schools and day child care operated by the local authority.

The members of the resource school staff participate in staff meetings with the special educational support unit once a month, as well as participating in continuing education and other staff activities. Sometimes they also take part in continuing education provided for social services case social workers which, for example, could involve training in particular methods of working with young people such as ART (aggression replacement training).

The positions in the resource school consist of five teaching and five social work posts. The group of teachers consists of two qualified secondary school teachers, a special needs teacher and a recreational pedagogue. The group of social workers consists of those with recognised qualifications (two social pedagogues and one social worker) as well as two behavioural science graduates and one

unqualified member of staff who has a background in industry and has worked on a voluntary basis with young people for many years.<sup>1</sup>

The resource school has ten places. The head teachers at the pupils' own 'home schools' (which is the term I use for the schools that the pupils attended prior to – and indeed concurrent with – their enrolment in the resource school) have to make an application for a place for the specific pupil at the resource school. The target group for the resource school is pupils with difficult psycho-social situations and who need a different school form over a period of time long enough to enable them to subsequently return to their 'home school'. Return is usually conditional upon improvements being made, for example, in attendance, ability to concentrate during lessons, study techniques, motivation, knowledge of core subjects, greater self-awareness, an understanding of the social and emotional situation, the development of skills to handle conflicts and demands, and, importantly, the ability to interact with others on an individual and group basis.

The pupils and their families can read in a brochure about the resource school that it offers education in small groups with a large number of available staff. The overall aim of the school is presented as being 'to increase the pupil's knowledge, skills and social competence so that the pupil can return to her/his home school in an ordinary class situation and, whenever possible, to obtain a passing grade in Swedish, maths and English' (my translation of the brochure document, 2005).<sup>2</sup> When a child is granted a place at the school, the parents have to sign a contract in which they agree to work with the school on family issues. This can involve attending regular meetings, which often take place at least once every fortnight. Parents are also required to maintain daily contact with the teachers. Finally, parents must also agree that social services, school services and, if necessary, the child psychiatry services, can collaborate freely (an agreement which is necessary in order to surmount the otherwise difficult issues related to confidentiality).

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<sup>1</sup> It is at this point highly important to note that focus of the study is not on the professional background of the individuals, but rather on the fact that the two groups are *employed* by the municipality to carry out *teaching* and *social work tasks* respectively. As Evetts (2006a) makes clear, "to most researchers in the field it no longer seems important to draw a hard and fast line between professions and occupations, but, instead to regard both as similar social forms that share many common characteristics" (p. 134).

<sup>2</sup> The relevant document is not in the reference list, due to confidentiality.

## Data collection methods

### Obtaining access to the resource school

The process of gaining access to the resource school started in late spring, 2004. Contact was made over phone and, during that initial period of contact, I posed the question as to whether the staff at the school would be interested in participating in a research project with a focus on collaboration. We agreed that I would send written information about the project and that thereafter they would seek permission from the two senior managers of the municipality's social services department and special educational support unit. A letter outlining the scope, purpose and aims of the project was duly sent.

After the summer, the resource school was contacted again and it was at this time I was informed that the managers for the two departments involved had agreed to give permission for the research to be carried out, under the important proviso that the staff at the school were willing to be involved. I deemed it necessary to obtain the initial agreement of senior management since taking part in the research would involve that the staff having to give up time working with the pupils in order to participate in the interviews. Further, the sanctioning of the project provided an indication to the staff that management was positive to their participation. Furthermore, the staff also had to sacrifice time to introduce me to the pupils and their families, and, of course, to provide me with the opportunities to participate in activities when I was carrying out the participatory observations. I was also conscious about the difficulties that can sometimes arise in gaining access to a particular field site – such as school classrooms – to do observations since traditionally this is viewed as the exclusive domain of teachers (MacLure, 2003).

I visited the resource school in September 2004 and informed the staff about the project, handed out written material including details about confidentiality and the opportunity afforded to each member of staff to terminate their participation in the research project. The information also explained that the study involved individual interviews and participant observations, and that these would take place over the course of a calendar year, starting in January 2005. The staff had time to consider the information they had received and, when I contacted the school manager a month later, all of the staff had agreed to participate. I visited the school on three occasions in the autumn, the purpose being to get to know the environment and to become familiar with the staff and pupils. Another

purpose was to initiate contact and create personal relationships with the staff so that, hopefully, they would feel more at ease talking with me about collaboration in the forthcoming interviews.

## Interviews and observations

The data collection methods used in this thesis have been determined in relation to and guided by the aim and research questions in accordance with established scientific practice (Kvale, 1996). I decided to combine interviews and participatory observation as the different data collection methods are complementary. Whilst interviews can capture how people experience and understand their world (Kvale, 1996; Rapely, 2004), participant observations were deemed to be appropriate due to the method’s merits in enabling me, in concrete actions, to capture in field notes the ways in which the teachers and social workers conduct their practise together. When interviewing the staff one specific aim was to find out things which I felt I could not directly observe, such as perceptions, thoughts and intentions (Patton, 2002).

### *Interviews*

During 2005/2006 I conducted in-depth interviews with all of the staff and carried out a series of participatory observations over a period of two terms. During this time, I visited the school at least once a week and, most often, twice or more, as well as attending management meetings, staff meetings and collaborative strategy meetings.

Interviews	Phone interviews	Observation of practice in school	Observation of staff meetings	Observation of interorganisational meetings (intake process)
12 (all staff+ two staff twice)	2 (with manger and politician)	22	4	6

Table 1. Overview of the case study in the resource school. Interviews and observations were conducted between January 2005 and February 2006

The majority of the interviews were conducted in the spring of 2005, before the observations. In the interviews my aim was to identify activities and areas of practice where collaboration was more pronounced. I used a pre-determined

focus in the observations, something that many researchers find preferable since it provides the opportunity to return to the site of the field work at a later point in time to ask follow-up questions (Delamont, 2004). If that had not been a possibility, a wider focus for observations would have been preferable (Delamont, 2004). I did indeed return after the participatory observations and carried out two additional interviews, one with one of the social workers and another with one of the teachers, the aim being to clarify some issues, specifically around the practice carried out with regard to the pupils attendance at the home school.

The intention in the choice of using a semi-structured format for the interviews was to ask questions in such a manner that would encourage the staff to produce “thick descriptions” whereby they answered in an elaborated and detailed manner about how they understood their everyday activities at work. The use of a semi-structured format allowed me, when conducting the interviews, to concentrate on listening and to ask follow-up questions. An interview guide in the form of a list of issues or questions was prepared to ensure that essentially the same types of information were obtained from all of the interviewees. The guide provided a series of themes which the interviewee was free to explore in the interview. The themes were interrelated and, as such, did not necessarily need to be covered in any particular order, a strategy recommended by Patton (2002) when conducting interviews using an interview guide. The advantages of using an interview guide are that it increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes the data collection fairly systematic for each participant interviewed. However, the weaknesses, according to Patton (2002), are that important salient topics might inadvertently be omitted due to a pre-structuring of themes. Patton also suggests that the interviewer’s flexibility in sequencing the themes and wording the questions can result in substantially different answers. Thus, whilst the richness of individual answers might be enhanced, the potential for comparability of responses might be reduced.

The interviews were recorded using an Mp3 player and each interview took approximately an hour to an hour-and-a-half to complete. A majority of the interviews were conducted in a room in the school used for talking with pupils and families. Some took place in a room upstairs near the rooms used for lessons.

All of the interviewees had previous knowledge of the research questions, and I had asked them, some weeks prior to the interview, to prepare for the interview

by recording (either in writing, if they so wished, or by making mental notes) *what* they did at work, *why* they did this, *how* they did it, and *with whom* it was done. The reason for this was to help the interviewee to start to think about what she or he actually did at work. The interview focused on practical work and how the interviewee perceived the collaboration that was taking place at the school.

The interview guide had two parts with different themes in each part. The first part concerned the overarching theme, the *actual work* at the resource school, and included questions such as, ‘can you tell me what you do, how, why and with whom?’. Themes included; the purpose and goals of the work, interpretations of the legitimacy of task division, decision-making, and perceptions of collaboration. The second part focused on professional thinking. Themes were linked to frames of practical and theoretical understanding and perceptions of concepts, such as the classroom, children in need, school failure, families in need etc.

One of the strengths – which may also be a complication or indeed limitation in using interviews as a method – is that, since I have previous experiences of doing social work, this gave me substantial ability to strike up a rapport with the participant social workers, and promoted the opportunity to gain more in-depth information as we spoke. At the same time, however, using a kind of common ‘professional’ language may reduce the information in that we might not have fully explored the meaning of certain colloquial terms such as, for example, the meaning of social needs. This might bring with it the limitation of ‘glossing over’ what might have been important insights. Aware of this potential problem, I nevertheless still found that the information given by the social workers to have depth and clarity.

The same thing – although in an opposite way – can be said regarding the interviews with the teachers. The notion that we did not share a similar professional language meant that I had to remember to ask them to explain things as if to someone who is not in the business of teaching children. The strength can be that I received more detailed answers which provided more in-depth information, whilst the drawback can be that all of the potential meaning did not get through due to lack of collegial knowledge about the content and meaning of certain terms and not perhaps picking up on certain nuances and ‘teacher speak’. For example Aili (2007) provides the example of a teacher using

the term “sitting in a meeting” and, depending on the tone in which this is said, can either mean ‘a waste of time’ or actually taking an active part in the meeting.

I experienced that the participants felt at ease and expressed themselves clearly about how they experienced work and were very willing to share their thoughts with me. I noticed that I became a better listener as the interviews progressed and the follow up questions became more focused on the themes in the guide. In that sense the interview guide enabled me to ensure that the interviews were more systematic and comprehensive, in line with Patton’s (2002) and Kvale’s (1996) advice when conducting interviews with the support of an interview guide, by delimiting issues that might crop up.

A majority of the interviewed staff (seven) had previous experiences of interprofessional collaborative contexts within the school system prior to working at the resource school. This had, for the most part, been focused around children in need of special educational support. A majority had been ‘headhunted’, by a manager who had been involved in the initial starting up of the resource school and who had encouraged them to apply for posts there. Table 2 provides details of the staff employed at the school, the length and type of professional experience previous of collaboration, and whether or not they had been actively recruited. The minority of the staff was female (three) and majority male (seven). Of the five teaching positions one was held by a social worker.

Position	Education	Years working in total	In resources school	Previous experience of collaboration	Asked to apply
T	Special needs teacher	21	5	Yes	Yes
T	Special needs teacher	30	4	No	No
T	Recreational Pedagogue	16	5	Yes	Yes
T	Teacher qualification	25	5	Yes	Yes
T	Degree in Social Work	4	2	No	Yes
SW	Degree in Social Work	4	2	No	No
SW	Degree in social and behavioural studies	8	5	Yes	Yes
SW	Degree in Social Work	15	2	Yes	Yes
SW	Vocational education	30	1	Yes	Yes
SW	Degree in social and behavioural studies	15	6	Yes	Yes

Table 2. T= teachers, SW= social worker



### *Participant Observations*

Delamont (2004) claims that *participant observation*, *ethnography* and *fieldwork*, all of which are part of a wider qualitative research paradigm, demand of the researcher that she spends long periods watching people, talking to them about what they do think and say. The purpose is to try to understand how they understand their world. In her discussion of participant observation techniques Delamont concludes that participant observation is often used to cover a mixture of observation and interviewing where the interviewing often takes the form of informal conversation. This was also highly characteristic of the current study. Indeed it was the norm that I engaged in conversations with the staff, and for that matter the pupils, on a regular basis.

The extent of participation is a continuum which varies from full participation to taking on the role of spectator (Patton, 2002). The form of participant observations I endeavoured to use at the resource school was what Delmont (2007) describes as a situation where the researcher does not participate for real, i.e. where the researcher does not, for example, teach in a classroom or conduct therapeutic work with the young people and their families. The purpose of participating is to be present, and although nothing stops the researcher from participating in the actual provision of services, it is certainly not a requirement. When observing interorganisational meetings, I adopted a non-interactive style of observation, with the exception of asking certain clarifying questions. Whilst taking part in the work at the resource school the interaction with the staff and pupils was more intensive and I participated in different activities. However at no time did I take responsibility for any of the teaching or any of the social work activities.

In my field notes from the first planned observations I can read that I felt uncomfortable and thought, with sincerity, that observation was really not a method which could help me answering any of the research questions I had constructed. It felt as if I was swimming in a sea of information, and that the amount and complexity of what I was witnessing was overwhelming me. I believe now that this initial experience was a realisation of how difficult participatory observation is as a research method. You yourself are the instrument. This means thus that you should be reliable when making observations and it is up to you to determine the steps to take in order to ensure the desired reliability. Patton (2002) suggests that human beings are, by nature, unreliable observers and therefore there is a need to practice in order to become more reliable. He continues this line of reasoning by arguing that, even if you

have sight, taste, hearing, smell and touch, these faculties do not equip the individual with the skills necessary to be a competent observer. On the contrary, participant observation as a method necessitates disciplined training and meticulous preparation.

This type of preparation, in my case, involved the design of an observation scheme, decisions about how to record descriptively, to practice in becoming disciplined in making field notes, learning how to know how to separate detail from trivia, and, even more challenging, developing the ability to be able to *see* the detail without being overwhelmed by everything else that was simultaneously taking place (Patton, 2002). By designing an observation guide, I tried to avoid recording too much trivia in the field notes. Despite this ambition I found, in the early stages, that it was difficult to evaluate information and to distinguish between what could be judged as being of interest and of value in helping me address the research questions, that which might prove to be of less value, and that which was trivial. For example, in the beginning, my ambition was to write up all of the conversations that were taking place around me in situ in the room that I found myself in. However, after some weeks, I realised that I needed to quickly decide which conversations – depending on the subject – I should focus on and became much more prepared to direct a more intense focus to those that would be potentially valuable and to ignore those that were likely to be less so.

The participatory observations took place over a period of time stretching from August to December 2005. The observations were conducted on a total of twenty two occasions from between approximately 8.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. The observations took place more frequently in the beginning of the period, for example twice a week and then, towards the end of the period, less often, usually just once a week. I made a decision on what themes to follow from the observation scheme in advance of the day of observation. On some days the school activity might, for example, be a swimming lesson, and on such an occasion my focus might have been on non-verbal communication and task-structuring etc.

The areas explored in the observation guide were as follows:

The setting: The *physical environment*, for example what the classroom looked like and how it was organised, for example how it is furnished. The *social environment*, concerned how the staff behaved towards each other, and how they interacted, in what circumstances and localities. The *pattern of decision-making* related to who decided about what and when. For example, I was interested in finding out how

the working tasks were distributed and decided about, and whether such decisions are made overtly or covertly. I was also interested in how such decisions are communicated with other members of staff. Finally *Informal interaction and unplanned activities* was a theme focusing on what happens in the breaks between the scheduled activities or, in other words, the type of spontaneous activities that took place.

The language: *Verbal communication*, such as conversations and discussions that took place in formal and informal settings was an important theme. For example I wanted to discover what theoretically-oriented explanations were offered to explain/understand the pupils and from whom among the staff group these ideas originated. Other questions concerned how the pupils' different problems were to be addressed and what sorts of solutions were suggested. Finally, I was also interested in the types of belief system-ideologies that appeared to drive the work forward and the types of influences that were in operation in the different collaborating agencies. Here an important question concerned whose interpretation was endowed with the greatest legitimacy. *Non verbal communication* was another theme and included, for example, gaining attention or communicating by gesticulating. I was also cognisant of the facial expressions and paralanguage of staff. Finally, *physical communication*, such as hugging as means of expressing sympathy and support, touching as means of calming, and holding as a means of the physical restraint of pupils was also an important theme.

Observing what doesn't happen: The focus here was on instances where collaboration between staff did not take place, although it might have been reasonable to expect that it would. Such a situation could, for example, have been the planning of activities that involved social workers and teachers, but where only one of these professional groups actually planned the intended activity.

I kept the observation guide to hand during the periods of observation and consulted it on numerous occasions during the series of participant observations. This enabled me to maintain my focus on the theme for the day, especially since other competing and/or ancillary themes could emerge at any time. I had not decided the number of participatory observation beforehand and during the end of the period a feeling of not obtaining 'new' information occurred and I decided to terminate the observations. However, I returned back to conduct two additional interviews with the aim of clarifying some questions that had arisen

after going through field notes, in particular regarding division of labour around the home school contacts.

Observing the interorganisational meetings between education and social services in which the intake of new pupils was discussed demanded a different form of observation scheme. The aim here was to capture how different professionals expressed and perceived the needs of the pupil applicants, and how, in each individual case, the pupil's needs could be met by the resource school. I listed possible topics such as school attendance, knowledge in different subjects, home situation, behaviour, relations, and previous support. I followed the intake process throughout the spring of 2005. Representatives from resource school and social services met with four different area teams, each team comprising a head teacher, school nurse, speech therapist, subject teachers, special needs educator and a school social worker. I attended three of the four area meetings. I also attended three inter-organisational meetings when the steering group for the resource school met. Present at these three meetings were the manager of the special educational support unit, the manager from social services, the manager for child social services, and the staff representing the resource school. I did not however observe the process when pupils returned to their home school on a permanent basis (that is to say when the needs which trigger the placement were assessed as no longer pertaining). This was due, quite simply, to the fact that during the period of my study no such changeovers took place. However it would have been of great interest to follow such a transition, since it too, in the context of the resource school, is a part of the processes involved in this particular form of co-located interprofessional collaboration.

The observation of the meetings that were part of the intake process and the participant observations in the resource school can be categorised as 'overt', in that the people involved knew that I was there undertaking an observation (Patton, 2002). In the resource school, however, there were occasions when sometimes a visitor (for example another social worker or teacher) might arrive. On those few occasions I did not introduce myself as being there to observe. Normally this was explained by the pupils or the staff.

### *Field notes*

Patton points out that when conducting observations,

...aside from getting along in the setting the fundamental work of the observer is taking field notes (Patton. 2002, p.302).

There are many different ways of taking field notes, and there are a series of issues – such as the kind of writing material you want to use, the time, the place that the notes are taken and indeed how the notes are to be stored – that need to be addressed (Delamont, 2004; Patton, 2002). The material I used was a small notebook which could fit easily into my back pocket, and a laptop computer. The notebook was used in such a way that I would sometimes record an event when I felt it was important. This could be a particular expression used by one of the staff, something that someone said or did, or it could be one of my own contemporaneous reflections. My note-taking was more extensive in the first few observations, which according to Silverman (2006), is the greatest danger in that the novice observer, as he puts it, attempts to report ‘everything’ in their notes. On the other hand I gradually became more focused in reporting on the theme I had chosen for that particular day, and, at the same time, tried to keep my mind open for unexpected information which I thought might form useful data in exploring the research questions. I usually withdrew to a quieter place – for example a sofa in a bigger room or an armchair in a smaller room – to write up and embellish my notes. At the end of each day I created a more descriptive account of what I had seen based on the contemporaneous notes I had taken using my laptop. I had specifically asked to have the opportunity to remain at the resource school for a couple of hours after the end of the observations, often from 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm. I found, however, that time was invariably insufficient to enable me to record everything I wanted, so I also often brought the material home with me and recorded additional field notes later on in the evening.

However, I soon realised that this was not a good approach. Memory fades remarkably quickly and after approximately four observation sessions, I decided to try to record directly using the laptop. I asked the staff if I could use the laptop as an open diary in the sense that it stood in the room used for talking with pupils and their families during the day. I said that anyone among the resource school staff could read the field notes if they wanted to. I kept two documents, one open for the staff to read, and one containing my reflections, which was not open for the staff. The reason was that I wanted to feel free to write what I wanted without feeling restricted in terms of thinking about how the staff might perceive what I wrote. To my knowledge the staff only read the notes on a few isolated occasions. This form of recording worked well when the observations took place at the school. When the participant observations took place outside school, however, I used the notebook and recorded on the laptop at the resource school on our return.

## Analysis of data

Patton's (2002) 'Halcom's Iron Laws of evaluation research' state that:

Analysis finally makes it clear what would have been most important to study, only if we had known beforehand (Patton, 2002, p. 431).

This, in my case, became a reality when faced with what I experienced as an overwhelming amount of empirical data to understand. This experience is, I have discovered, not at all uncommon and, as Patton frames it,

[t]he challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amount of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002 p.432).

It has been my ambition, in the process of analysing the data, to strive to develop concepts in a continuous dialogue with the empirical material (Becker, 1998) and, while doing so, realising both that some areas might have needed some more in-depth exploration while others fell outside the scope enquiry. For example, the relation between the social workers and the case social workers in the social services office immediately caught my interest. However interesting these situations were, this particular type of collaborative relationship was outside the framework of the thesis and therefore had to be left out. As Patton (2002) makes clear, had I beforehand known what I subsequently found out, the design would have been somewhat different. Thus it is conceivable that I might have chosen to direct my focus on exploring this particular collaborative relationship.

The approach towards analysing the empirical data has been inspired by what Patton (2002) describes as thematic analysis and which involves the recognition of patterns. According to Patton, there is no hard and fast distinction between themes and patterns, although he writes that themes usually take a more categorical or topical form, whilst patterns usually relate to a descriptive finding. For example, in this thesis a pattern would be how the design of the timetable is described, whilst a theme would be the interchangeability of staff in relation to the timetable design.

When processing the raw information the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thereafter, the next step involved developing some manageable coding system to enable the search for patterns of recognition by identifying descriptive findings. This was done by marking different sections of

transcripts highlighting different things that the informants had said. The coding was created using an abductive approach in the sense of being guided both by theoretical concepts and the ambition to discover patterns without reference to the theoretical framework used in the thesis (Dey, 2004; Patton, 2002). The codes which emerged from the interview material and the observations consisted of 10 primary (head) themes. These were: *perceptions on pupils and change*, *perceptions on aims*, *perception on responsibility*, *perceptions on discretion*, *perceptions on parents and change*, *perceptions on collaboration*, *practical teaching*, *practical social work*, *contact with outside agencies* and *work conditions*.

One question is of course how I have interpreted the beliefs and behaviour, which guided the construction of the coding system. In adopting a hermeneutically-oriented approach, I have endeavoured to enhance my understanding by, as Patton (2002) suggests, relating parts to wholes, and wholes to parts. The process of trying to grasp the meaning of the teachers' and social workers' statements and behaviours involved interpretations, based, first, on intuition when trying – from the informant's perspective – to gauge what had been said or done and then, secondly, trying to interpret that as closely as I could in terms of the informant's real-life experience. These steps were also, simultaneously, carried out within a frame of theoretical knowledge that guided the interpretations. In this process questions such as 'what does this mean?' and 'what does it tell me about interprofessional collaboration?' have been constantly in focus. In trying out and testing other alternative interpretations of the meaning, the coding system was slowly developed.

Secondly, after having created a classification system by coding the material, a process of reducing the material by assigning different codes from each individual interview and a process of searching for recurring patterns and the labelling of themes took place. This was carried out, for example, by putting all of the codes related to social work and pedagogical work together. This thus enabled me to distinguish what the staff at the resource school described as being social work and teaching practice and which I later labelled as the theme "professional identity" and which is described in Chapters Eight and Nine. I have used individual voices in the data quoted as a means of illustrating the themes that emerged.

The limitation of creating themes built on professional practice, perceptions on a collective level and the use of such a small sample as in this case study, reduces or rather extinguishes the individual and personal aspects of the practice.

However my focus was on professions as a group. Thus the individuals are viewed as professionals who represent particular roles, particular professional backgrounds and particular areas of knowledge. This, together with the choice of theoretical framework, determined the way in which I worked with the empirical data and, for that matter, how it is presented in this thesis. Alternatively, if the focus had been on individual and personal factors, it might have been justified to adopt a more psychologically-oriented theoretical framework and have presented the data in a way that highlighted individual differences rather than commonalities at a professional and group level. The field notes were read through and coded in similar ways as the interview material.

Finally, I analysed the themes I found in stage two of the analytic process using an abductive approach (Dey, 2004). In that sense this third level of analysis can be described as a process of relating themes to a theory, as well as finding theories that were suited to understanding a theme. For example, the focus on spatial design and its influence on interprofessional collaboration can serve as an example of when a theme was first constructed and theory was subsequently sought to understand the empirical findings, whilst the other themes, for example professional identity, technologies and collaborative relationship, were developed in dialogue with theoretical concepts and the empirical material.

## Trustworthiness

When judging the trustworthiness of research Kvale (1996) suggests that it is possible to use analytical generalisation in that the researcher uses a reasoned judgement about the extent to which one study can be used as a pointer to what might occur in similar situations. By discussing the results of this study and linking these to other research results, my ambition is to enhance the trustworthiness of the presentation of processes in co-located interprofessional collaboration.

Further, Kvale (1996) suggests that one way of enhancing the trustworthiness of a study is to be as transparent as possible in accounting for the choice of methods, how the research has been conducted and how the analytical process have been carried out. Thus I have at all times tried to adhere to the validity criteria of transparency in attempting to be as explicit as possible about how the different stages in the research process – from the research design to the presentation of the findings – have been conducted.



Validity by communication is, according to Kvale (1996), another criterion to be used when judging the trustworthiness of the results in research. However, he stresses the point that the researcher needs to ask the question about who communicates with whom, and who is a legitimate partner in such a dialogue. In the current study I have – in addition to having thesis drafts scrutinised in different scientific seminars – chosen to communicate findings with the staff in the resource school on two separate occasions.

On the first occasion, which lasted for approximately one and a half hours, I presented material that was descriptive in nature of how the practical tasks undertaken were divided at the school and which I had categorised as ‘belonging’ respectively to the teachers and the social workers. The social workers and teachers discussed and generally recognized the different tasks, as well as pointing out different ways of modifying the description I presented. This enabled me to further nuance the interpretations made of what I had observed. On the second visit the presentation was, in contrast to the first, characterized by a more theoretical approach and discussion around my theoretical analysis took place.

In conducting this communication my judgment is that my analyses of the empirical data can be perceived to be ‘near to’ the experienced ‘reality’ of the informants whilst, at the same time, the dialogue supported a re-assessment of previous interpretations, guided by a theoretical approach, as well as enforcing earlier interpretations.

## A word on language

Whilst this thesis has been written in English, the language of the obtained data is of course Swedish. All of the analytical stages took place in the Swedish language medium and indeed, when writing the drafts of the chapters of this thesis, extracts from the empirical material were included in their original Swedish form. It was at this stage, once I was finally happy with my analysis of the content of the participants’ utterances and the meaning of my field notes, that I translated them into English. Although having lived and worked professionally in the UK for a number of years, my English is good, I nevertheless wanted to ensure that meanings in the translations had not glided away from the original words. Thus, for this reason, I asked a native-speaking colleague to check over my translations. This, not infrequently, resulted in

semantic discussions and changes to the way in which the extracts from the empirical material were formulated.

## Ethical considerations

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that, as a researcher, you are often in direct contact with people (Laine, 2001) and, consequently, this has certain ethical implications. The primary contact has been with the professionals and pupils at the resource school. Formally, the staff members have been informed about the objects of the research and their informed consent was obtained by asking them to sign a consent form. The process of gaining consent has been guided by the general ethical principles in the social sciences issued by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). All of the staff members were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. They were also informed about confidentiality, the intended future use of the data, and the fact that it would only be used for research purposes.

Although these principles guided the research, the staff members were additionally informed that there might not be *total* confidentiality since, because it is a small staff group and they are very familiar with their individual ways of working and how, as individuals, they think and understand certain issues, they might recognise what had been said or done in any eventual report based on the data. Further, sensitive issues could arise since my prime interest was in investigating collaboration between the staff and this necessarily entailed a focus on their relationships with one another as colleagues. When I planned the design, I sometimes asked myself whether this was ethical, especially if, for example, case issues around collaboration might become infected and that the staff might not want to continue working together. It might have been less sensitive, for example, to talk about pupils' motivation, pupils' difficulties, and the pedagogical and social methods of working with the pupils. However, considering that these people are professionals and, as such, should be regarded as competent in deciding how to deal with any sensitive issues which might arise, it seemed thus feasible and appropriate to conduct the research along the lines of the research questions that were formulated.

The parents and the pupils were informed verbally about the research by the staff members at the resource school. They were told about the purpose of the study, and that it involved me taking part in the everyday activities in the school

over a period of two semesters. They were also told that the researcher might be given personal and confidential information about the pupil and her/his family. Written information was also provided which contained material about the purpose, the principles of confidentiality in research, and the possibility for each individual to say that they did not want the researcher to conduct observations when their child was present, or to access information about their child. In the written material that was distributed, as well in the oral information given by staff, it was stressed that the research was not primarily focused on the pupils, but on the staff and how they collaborated. I discussed with the staff different ways of obtaining written consent from the parents and the pupils. It was the staff members' suggestion that they should be the ones who informed parents and pupils about the research and who administered the consent forms. We agreed that the parents could decide whether the pupils should be given the opportunity to sign a consent form, depending on their age. One parent said that his son should not be given the opportunity, as he would always do the opposite to what adults might want. Thus, whenever this particular pupil was involved, I always took special consideration in asking if I could participate in activities in such a way that I could ascertain that a verbal consent had been obtained. All of the parents signed the written consent form, as did nine of the pupils.

All transcribed material has been saved on discs which have been stored in a secure place and all field notes have been stored in a secure place in accordance with the national guidelines of research ethics. The sound files have been erased.

## Chapter Five

### Collaboration and the professions involved – social workers and teachers

In this chapter, as a means of positioning this thesis in the contextual field of social services organisations and the social work profession, a brief overview of the development of the profession will be presented. In particular, one aspect of the social work profession will be singled out for specific examination; the development of social work with children and families. This is followed by a section describing a number of relevant aspects of the teaching profession, with specific focus on the changes in professional teaching practice from teaching particular pupils to a more inclusive perspective of teaching all pupils in the school system.

#### The social work profession and its tradition

As with all professions, social work has its own specific history and different descriptions of the nature of social work can be found in the development of the profession that we today recognize. In particular, the nature of the practice of social work is, Harris (2008) suggests, highly contingent on the socio-cultural context in which it has developed:

...consideration of social work's history suggests that it is a contingent activity, conditioned by and dependent upon the context from which it emerges and in which it engages (Harris, 2008, p.662).

One commonly held position is that the social work profession can be traced to the later part of the nineteenth century as, many scholars argue, it had its roots in charity work in the middle part of that century (MacDonald, Harris & Wintersteen, 2003; Mizrahi & Clark, 2007; Petterson, 2001). Others pinpoint the history of social work as beginning with influential people in USA such as, for example, Mary Richmond (1861-1928) who promoted case work, or Jane Adams (1860-1935) who is recognised as one of the founders of so-called community work (Meeuwisse & Swärd, 2000). Higher education is also highlighted as

providing important landmarks for the development of the profession. Driven by the wish to offer education to ‘charity workers’, around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, schools of social work started, for example, in Europe, primarily in England and The Netherlands. The first higher education for social workers in Sweden was introduced in 1921 with the founding of the Institute for Social, Political and Municipal Education and Research in Stockholm (Kendall, 2000).

Others, such as Andrew Abbot (1995), who is a theorist of occupations and professions, argue from a historical perspective that social work is grounded in other traditions and that the crucial formative years of social work were long before the oft-claimed period of 1910 to 1920. Abbot claims that social work first materialized when different occupations concerned with similar tasks – e.g. everything conceivable concerning social reform from alcohol to education, and from lunacy treatment to vocational training and probation work – merged into a single occupation, namely social work. In his analysis of the emergence of the profession, Abbot distinguishes between social work as identified credentials and social work as a *turf of work*. Instead of emphasizing a professional function, which traditionally has been identified by profession-specific traits, Abbot argues that we need to look at what it is that professionals actually do. In his research, he came to the conclusion that the jurisdiction of social work was not one with predefined boundaries, initially set out in a series of originating processes of functional differentiations, but, rather that it was gained as a result of contested, turf-driven struggles. By means of examples, Abbot shows how probation, kindergartens and home economics, all of which were identifiable areas of social work at the 1884 National Conference of Social Work, had, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries all but disappeared from the professional turf. Abbott’s arguments are of particular interest since they indicate that social work itself is rather fluid and that, as a result of processes of conflict and change, its professional tasks are inherently dynamic.

However the origin of social work is defined, the contemporary debate appears to centre on whether there is a core professional task for social worker in society. This will be explored in the following section.

## Social workers’ professional identities – common, core and local diversity

A number of scholars claim that social work is a profession with an internationally common core which can be described in different ways and that

the social purposes in such descriptions are often very similar in that they relate to the provision of services to people who experience social problems and involve the provision of help as a means of achieving change (Bartlett, 1970; Germain & Gitterman, 1980; Harris, 2008; Hugman, 2009; Meuwisse & Swärd, 2000; Payne, 2002). An often proposed common core is that social work addresses similar social problems of poverty and social exclusion, issues related to the elderly, children at risk and families in distress (Hokenstad et al., 1992; Weiss & Welbourne, 2007). Further, at an individual level, social workers themselves appear to espouse similar values, such as human dignity, self-determination, non-discrimination, equality and social justice (Banks, 2008; Welbourne & Weiss, 2007). One unifying organisation of the social work profession is the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW), founded in 1950. Now, at the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the IFSW definition of social work reads as follows:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (ISFW 2008).

At the same time, it is argued that the context of the professional project of social work, i.e. gaining professional legitimacy and status as a collective pursuit, has significant implications for the profile of social work in different societies (Dellgran & Höjer, 2005b; MacDonald et al., 2003). Consequently, it is possible to say that, even though there might be a common core in social work, it is equally a diverse professional field depending on the national and local context.

The national context surrounding social work in Sweden is characterised by an integrated element of welfare state activities and responsibilities and most of the social work is carried out by social workers with a professional degree in social work. The majority are women (approximately eighty percent) and approximately ninety percent are public employees, of whom eight percent work in central government and eighty two percent are employed by local and regional government organisations (Dellgran & Höjer, 2005b). In Sweden social workers with a professional degree usually work in different designated fields such as child welfare and child protection, hospital social work, school social work, work with the elderly, disability assessment work, probation, alcohol and substance abuse work, therapy and counselling work, generic social work education and research, social assistance and detached youth/field work (SSR, 2006). For

example, in a 2001 survey of 1000 qualified social workers, it was found that more than thirty percent worked directly with children, twenty three percent of whom were working within the child welfare (more than half with child protection or family support) and seven percent working with school social work, primarily within the primary or secondary school levels (Dellgran & Höjer, 2005b).

## Autonomy and power

A normative characteristic of professions is autonomy, which can be described as the quality of being independent and self-directing, having the discretion to make decisions on an individual level, and depending on the organizational context, the right to determine work activity on the basis of professional judgment (Freidson, 2001). Professional autonomy is also linked to a formal recognition by the state to hold jurisdiction to carry out certain working tasks. The relation between the state and social work as a profession differs from country to country, often depending on the way in which the welfare system is organised (Lorenz, 2006; MacDonald et al. 2003). In Europe there is considerable variation between countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Norway and the U.K., where social workers are employees of different state agencies, and others, such as the Netherlands and Germany, where employers are predominantly non-governmental (Lorenz, 2006). Nevertheless, even in examples where welfare workers are employed in the voluntary sector, the state exercises considerable control since service provision is largely financed by state resources (Lorenz, 2006).

Another area of national variation relates, for example, to the extent to which the state is involved in legitimising the professional status of social workers. For example, in Sweden there is no legal prohibition against individuals who do not possess social work training or a certificate issued by a professional body, from calling themselves social workers or working in a domain characteristic of the profession (Johnsson, Laanemets & Svensson, 2008). The same is the case, for example, in Australia and India. In the U.K., however, social workers need to be included in the national register in order to be able to gain employment as a social worker (Weiss & Wellbourne, 2007). Similar regulations can be found in the USA, in the form of a licensure examination which measures knowledge, skills, and abilities related to the job or profession to which the license grants entry (Association of Social Work Boards, 2010).

To have professional autonomy can also be seen as closely linked to the perception of a professional identity of social work, on an individual and collective level. According to Frost (2008) professional identity has to do with a construction that encompasses external factors such as practice context, skills, attributes and a body of knowledge that is dictated by policy and law and interpreted by training and experience. It also involves an internal subjective understanding which has to do with self concept and ethical issues of 'who' the professional sees themselves as being, and how these things 'fit together' with working practices (Frost, 2008). To be able to exercise discretion to 'decide for yourself how to practice' is an element of professional autonomy which influences the image of a profession-specific identity. For example, on a collective level Frost (2008) concludes that the construction of a European identity of social work is multi-faceted and diverse across the continent, reflecting a wide range of variation. Heggen (2008) explains that, on an individual level, a profession-specific identity is linked to personal identities, and is wider than a formal description of the profession and a rather more or less conscious perception of 'me' as a professional practitioner.

### Working together with others

Irrespective of the national organisational context in which social work is embedded, one area common to child welfare social workers is the propensity, in their day-to-day practice, to find themselves in contact with other professionals from a range of different domains. This, as some claim, is in fact an important characteristic of a social work professional identity (Adams, 2005). Thus, for many social workers, boundary crossing with other professionals is likely to be a part of their own professional domain (Adams, 2005). However, boundary crossing can present a challenge to autonomy and to discretionary power, and – at macro and micro levels – it can either reduce or enhance the professional status (Adams, 2005; Hjortsjö, 2005). Adams (2005) claims that working within and across professional boundaries is more important for social workers than for other professionals. However, working across boundaries often demands collaboration with other professionals and, due to the frequency with which this takes place in the provision of social services, some researchers (e.g. Payne, 2002) argue that it is a specialty in which social workers have developed high levels of competence. Consequently, it is not surprising that interprofessional collaboration is common in many different spheres of social service provision for children and families. As Weinstein and Leiba (2004) point out, collaboration



with other professionals and services becomes an essential prerequisite for the successful delivery of services. Glaser (2001) points to one implication of collaboration in the following way:

Our strength lies in the use of that wide array of theories and knowledge bases to address human needs, be they individual, group, or societal. We succeed because of our ability to traverse those traditional disciplinary boundaries. This ability to cross boundaries has always been an area where we shine, but also produces one of our greatest vulnerabilities, dating back to Flexner's time (Glaser, 2001, p.197).

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Glaser (2001) claims that, traditionally, social workers have been the synthesizers of many helping professionals. This has involved difficulties in delineating the profession's own knowledge-base and has long been viewed as a professional deficit by others. In Sweden, a move to delineate the knowledge-base as a means of professional enhancement, can be found within the individual and family care sections (IFO) of social services. Over the last twenty years there has been an increased specialisation (Bergmark & Lundström, 2007; Lundgren, Blom, Morén & Perlinski, 2009). One interpretation of this development is to see this as one step in the work of claiming professional power and status in regard to other agencies, to the public and, in particular, in relation to other professions. Work with children and families is, for example, one specialisation within IFO which is sometimes also divided into assessment and support teams. Lundgren et al. (2009) also state that this specialisation leads to increased demands on collaboration with other agencies.

## Social work with children and families

In this section, the aim is to focus on social work aimed at children and young people of a sort that is relevant for the practice of the social workers employed at the resource school which forms the focus of this study. This presentation is selective and the social work practice is, in reality, of course much more differentiated and varied than is perhaps presented here. Indeed, a social worker working in what, ostensibly, might seem to be a similar setting might view the practice described here as intrinsically different. Much of such differences are likely to stem from factors relating to the target group, the aims of the organisation and the policies that steer it. I will not, for example, describe the

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<sup>3</sup> The American doctor Abraham Flexner, who studied the profession stated in 1915 that social work was not to be seen as a profession in the same way as for example the medical profession, but that social workers were "professional in spirit" (in Dellgran & Höjer 2000, p.35)

more specialist-focused methods in working with crisis intervention regarding children who have experienced traumas, e.g. sexual abuse or post-traumatic stress as a result of exposure to warfare or other forms of violence (Payne, 1997). Further, there are areas of preventative social work in the form of different forms of community work aimed at children and young people which are not covered in this section, and neither is work aimed at child protection included. Rather the focus is on social work interventions targeting the relational aspects between children and their families (see e.g. Cree & Wallace, 2005).

However a brief note on the area of child protection issues will be included as this forms an important component of social work practice with children and young people. To make assessments and take decisions, particularly when it comes to child protection issues, is one important element of professional autonomy (Khoo, 2004; Socialstyrelsen, 2006b.) In addition to having expertise in assessing children's needs and risks to children's satisfactory development, a further dimension of decision-making is that, when social workers are involved in professional judgments regarding the adequacy of interventions for children, the legislation in Sweden states that each municipality is responsible for social services and, further, that the tasks to be carried out are the responsibility of a social welfare committee appointed by the municipal political board (Social Services Act, 2001). Usually the authority to make such decisions is delegated downwards and social workers are left to use their professional discretion when deciding about voluntary-based interventions such as, for example, granting family support interventions.

However, when it comes to more serious cases of child protection, such as, for example, seeking a legal order for the removal of a child against the parent's wishes, the final decision in general lies with the committee. In practice this means that a group of appointed politicians has the ultimate responsibility to make decisions such as whether to apply to the county administrative court for a care order for a young person. A general practice is that the social worker presents the reasons for such an order to the social welfare committee and suggests that a care order should be applied for. However, on odd occasions, the committee might query the professional judgment and order the social worker to try for more voluntary interventions before it is are willing to submit an application to the county court (Khoo, 2004).

When it comes to the types of knowledge social workers draw on whilst working with children and young people, different approaches are used. Payne (1997), for

example, argues that social workers and clients construct social work together within the context of the specific agencies within which they operate. In that sense what social workers and clients do is formed by expectations about what society thinks they should do. Furthermore, they contribute to this expectation, to some extent at least, in their own thoughts, perceptions and actions. Conversely it is claimed that the role and purpose of social work is not clear-cut and is usually contested (Dominelli, 2002). Dominelli divides the different answers about the role and purpose of social work into three types; therapeutic helping approaches, maintenance approaches and emancipatory approaches. The therapeutic approach, according to Domenelli, is best exemplified by counselling, in that the client is assisted by the counsellor to better understand her-/himself and her/his relations with others. The aim here is to find a more effective way of dealing with the situation. The maintenance approach is characterised by ensuring that people can cope or deal adequately with their life situation. The social worker does not adopt a therapeutic helping role and the interventions are pragmatic and involve giving advice about, for example, how and where to apply for resources. Social workers who adopt an emancipatory approach work to promote change for the individual. The work is characterised by efforts designed to empower the people they work with by helping them to understand their situation by, for example, looking at their personal situation and at that of others in similar circumstances, and is aimed at encouraging people to acquire knowledge and skills for taking control over their own lives.

In the construction of social work one issue of importance which is highlighted in research is the difference in how social workers view children's needs (Sundell, Egelund, Andrée Löfholm & Kaunitz, 2008) For example, in vignette studies it has been shown that there are differences, individually and regionally, in the ways that social workers value the seriousness in the cases sketched out in the scenarios that they are presented with – e.g. whether they should open a child protection investigation, and the types of intervention that would be appropriate (Sundell et al., 2008).

Moving to the question of technologies, when examining social work conducted with families and children it is possible to see that there are various methods and models of practice. In the 1950s the case method, the basis of which was developed by Mary Richmond in the US during the 1920s (Levin, 2000) was introduced. Simplified, its theoretical base is premised on the assumption that problems and ways of dealing with them stem from experiences in childhood and its focus is on the individual and not on the structures surrounding the

individual. The case method did not, according to Levin (2000), gain any significant stronghold in child welfare work, although it became widely used in medical social work.

During the 1970s social work generally started to focus on working with groups and, gradually, with the whole family of the child/children (Levin, 2002). One important theorist was Gregory Bateson who developed theories of communication and systemic theory as a basis for working with people diagnosed with schizophrenia (Levin, 2002). Different psychotherapists from the USA and England were consulted, and what was termed *family work* evolved into the primary theory social workers drew upon in treating the whole family (instead of individual members). This systemic theoretical approach became increasingly common in social work during the 1980s and this approach is still very much in vogue (Börjesson, 2008).

Another strand of family work can be traced in the work of Barnby Skå which started in the 1950s in Sweden and involved children and families living together in a separate community. The treatment was organised on a democratic value basis and chastisement and punishment were actively opposed. This approach was coupled with an active involvement in society, the aim of which was to change the situation for disadvantaged people. The underlying theoretical base was that the family in treatment was a carrier of the problems in society, and the theory opposed the biological perspective which put the problem within the individual (Levin, 2000). The founders of this movement, Skå and Gustav Johnsson, argued that social work should not just be focused on traditional interventions, which at that time focused on social conditions such as housing, income and employment, but instead that 'poor' people should also have access to psychotherapy which – almost invariably – was only available to the better off. The treatment consequently involved psychotherapy, together with working for change of the social situation. At the same time the ideological stance was that it would be a danger to simply focus on inner emotional feelings because then society's social problems would be 'psychologically removed'. The stance adopted instead was that social workers should be political, as well as making use of psychology in practical social work (Levin, 2000).

A third theoretical strand in work with children and families is termed *psychosocial case work* and its roots lie in psychoanalytical theory (Payne, 1997). However, Woods and Hollis (as cited in Payne, 1997 p.79) claim that psychoanalytical theory was adapted to focus more on the present than on the exploration of the

past. Psychosocial case work involves a specific social work practice whereby the social worker works with the child, its family social situation, and the psychological situation (Payne, 1997). Howe (2002) argues that, when using a psychosocial approach, social workers conduct thorough in-depth assessments of the children and their families, their relationships, and their sociocultural environment. This approach of psychosocial case work is still an important theoretical base which generally influences social work with children and families, although there now appears to be the development of an emphasis on different *cognitive behavioural* programs, rather than on therapeutic counselling. For example, in a national survey in Sweden of the different interventions used by social services in child welfare, ninety different methods were reported. By far the most common of these were different cognitive behavioural programs, some of which, such as Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and Community Parent Education Program (COPE), are widely recognised internationally (Socialstyrelsen, 2009). The adoption of a cognitive-behavioural theoretical perspective is, in contrast to a psychodynamic perspective, anchored in the underlying idea that we can only study and influence the behaviour we see and, as a consequence, interventions are focused on cognitive changes linked to behaviour (Levin, 2000).

This development might be possible to understand in that it coincides with the development of evidence based practice (EBP). Here evaluation is usually an integral part of cognitive behavioural programs which fit with the criteria of EBP. There is however some academic debate as to whether or not it is possible to make broad and uncritical assumptions about the scientific trustworthiness of EBP (Bergmark & Lundström, 2006). Different comparative evaluation reports concerning traditional interventions and cognitive behavioural programs have been conducted. For example, in an evaluation report comparing traditional interventions for young people – such as placement in institutions, counselling and family therapy – with specific cognitive behavioural program interventions (multi systemic therapy), the result indicated that the approaches were equally effective, although the cognitive behavioural program involved a higher cost for the municipality (Andrée Löfholm, Olsson, Sundell & Hansson, 2009).

## Power in social work with children and families

Järvinen (2002) proposes that social work is not always about help and assistance; it can also be about oppression and control. Specifically, in child welfare work, there are often implicit threats. Whilst a relation might on the

surface be characterised by a working alliance of voluntary participation, the parents may nevertheless be aware of the institutional power the social workers as representatives of state authority (Järvinen, 2002). However, this power is generally linked to the organisational power the social worker can access and, generally, the social work profession is an organisationally-dependent profession (i.e. that social workers are dependent on the institutional power that is bestowed upon them) (Lundström & Sunesson, 2000).

Power can be expressed by taking, or not taking, action, depending on how social workers deploy their professional discretion in making decisions (Lipsky, 1980). Sometimes deciding not to take action – or to take action which, from the child's perspective, might not be in their interests – can exacerbate the negative situation for the child (Brandon, Belderson, Warren, Gardner, Howe & Dodsworth, 2005; Sundell et al., 2008). In some serious cases there has been a need to challenge social workers professionals' opinions or judgments as a means of safeguarding the child (Brandon et al., 2005). These situations can sometimes be highlighted in the media and create discussions about the failure of social services and society's responsibility towards protecting children from harm. For example, the case of Michael, who was beaten to death by his stepfather in the early 1990s in Sweden, and a series of similar cases where small children died due to physical abuse in the home, functioned as the catalyst for government to enact several measures to improve the quality of the child care system (SOU 2009:68). In that regard it is possible to see that social work with children and families, and the discretion social workers hold, are linked to accountability which, in various situations, can become a political issue. The introduction of evidenced based practice, as previously mentioned, can also be seen as a way of creating transparency in practice, thus making it possible to ascertain whether the decision-making processes are based on the best available knowledge from science and practice-based experience (SOU 2008:18). In that sense it might be possible for the social worker to exercise power by relying on the argument that the suggested intervention is based on scientific knowledge which is the best indicator of the efficiency of interventions. Nevertheless, the value of the evaluation of a particular method might be open to discussion.

## The teaching profession and its traditions

In this section, in addition to a brief overview, different aspects of the teaching profession and professional traditions will be singled out for specific examination. This is because there is an ambition to focus on aspects of

relevance for interprofessional collaboration among compulsory school teachers, rather than providing a historical account of professional development in education which, in the framing of the aim of this study, is neither possible nor desirable. One aspect that has been chosen for specific focus, and which is of relevance for understanding co-located interprofessional collaboration between teachers and social workers, involves the change in professional focus from teaching particular pupils to a more inclusive perspective of teaching all pupils in the school system. The choice of this aspect is based on the notion that knowledge about this will bring greater depth to the understanding of the historical context within which the teachers in the resource school conduct their practice.

A second aspect which is focused upon concerns the teaching profession in terms of autonomy, power and discretion. The reason underpinning this choice is that such knowledge can illustrate a number of features of the work situation for teachers generally, and thus serve as background to an understanding of the more specific work situation for the teachers in the resource school. Finally, the aspect of teachers' practice in relation to the perceptions of the social, as well as the knowledge acquisition dimensions of the teachers' professional task, will also be in focus. This aspect of teachers' professionalism will, it is hoped, provide some common understanding of how teachers view their role in supporting pupils' socialisation into society. This is a particularly relevant factor when working with pupils in need of special educational support.

## Teaching the individual pupil

Historically, a teacher is someone who facilitates pupils' learning process, which in turn are processes that could take place in a range of different settings including independent schools, streamed schools and in other more privileged school situations, both co-educational, and in single-sex settings (Hargreaves, 1994). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a system of comprehensive education was established which developed in tandem with societal and social advances in all of the Nordic countries. A comprehensive school system in Nordic terms refers to a unified school system where all pupils, irrespective of academic or economic background, are enrolled in the same age-based school (Carlgrén, Klette, Mýrdal, Schnack & Simola, 2006). This model implies that theoretical and practical education and training should, in principle, offer all pupils similar structural possibilities for learning in terms of teacher competence, class size, learning materials and other means of structural support (Carlgrén et al., 2006).

The introduction of a comprehensive education also meant that the first compulsory curriculum was introduced and that teachers were expected to teach increasingly mixed-ability classes. The strategies developed to meet these demands on the part of the teaching profession were to develop more individualised teaching methods (Carlgren et al., 2006). During the 1960s and 1970s classroom research with a focus on the analysis of classroom practices was introduced. This body of research results indicated that initiation–response–evaluation/follow up (IREF) patterns became common. Such patterns involved teachers’ own talking taking up around two thirds of all classroom time and, according to Carlgren et al. (2006), it seemed that this tradition would never end. However, over the last twenty years, it seems that teaching classes as single homogenous units has given way to an approach based more on teaching the individual pupil (Carlgren et al., 2006). Other research results support this contention in that there is an indication that classroom teaching, together with group work, are the teaching forms that have declined most noticeably since the 1990s. On a parallel basis, focus on individual student organised work has also increased (Granström, 2003). In the 1980s classroom teaching comprised fifty percent of all educational activities. In 2000 the figure was forty four percent. In the 1980s the figure for individual student organised work was twenty eight percent, and in 2000 forty one percent. Group work in the 1980s was twenty four percent whilst in 2000 it was twelve percent. Today, according to Granström (2003), teaching in Sweden is characterised by the intermixing of all three forms of teaching, i.e. classroom teaching, group work and individual work.

## Teachers’ professional identities

Teachers and their organisations usually describe what they do using terms such as *professional work* and *qualified work* (Hargreaves, 1994). However, as Hargreaves points out, the core of the work is highly practical and certain tasks have to be carried out. It doesn’t mean that teaching is hard work in the same category as low grade manual work, but all the same teaching is a job with a set of practical tasks and human relationships often characterised by rigid structures. The usual picture of what a teacher does is based on the experience most people have of what their own teachers did. The picture may be that teachers teach in a classroom with age-segregated groups of pupils, that they ask questions about things to which they already know the answer, give instructions, provide guidelines, maintain order, go through teaching materials, assign grades and



correct wrong answers (Carlgren, & Marton, 2004; Granström, 2007; Hargreaves, 1994; Lindqvist, 2004).

This picture can sometimes reduce the complexity of what the teaching profession involves (Hultman, 2001). Increasingly, teachers' working contexts are characterised by a variety of other diverse tasks, such as parents' meetings, teachers' own collegial meetings, collaborative meetings across subject boundaries and, of course, planning and preparation at home (Carlgren & Klette, 2008; Hultman, 2001). Such tasks are however not that visible and therefore not immediately evident in the eye of the public who often regard time not spent in the classroom as teachers' free time. Gannerud (2001) categorises the nature of the teaching profession as involving four dimensions: the *pedagogic-didactic*, the *social*, the *emotional* and the *administrative dimension*. The *pedagogic-didactic* dimension involves, for example, the teaching of subject content, work procedures, and the planning of the teaching. The *social* dimension covers tasks that involve relationships to colleagues, pupils and parents. The *emotional* dimension is where trust and collaboration between the teacher and other actors are created. The fourth and final dimension, the *administrative* dimension, is about administrative and organisational issues. Gannerud (2001) argues that these dimensions are most often interwoven in practice.

Aili and Brante (2007), who use Abbot's (1988) model system of professions to examine teachers' use of a formalised system of knowledge, argue that teachers' work can be categorised in three different ways. The first category is *qualifying work*, which gives teachers opportunities to analyse, solve problems, handle divergent cases, plan teaching in the long and short term and carry out discretionary work, such as making decisions about specific circumstances, or doing work that produces knowledge that can be used in future situations. The second category is *non-qualifying teacher work* and consists of such things that do not require teachers to use a formalised system of knowledge, such as, for example, facilitating transfers and reporting absences from school. Transfers relate to moves from different classrooms, work rooms and other amenities, which of course could not be done by anyone other than the actual teacher. Non-qualifying tasks can still be qualifying work if, for example, the teacher is thinking of how to improve her/his practice when in their own home, analysing a problem or reflecting on a possible cause of action. Thirdly, the category of *semi-professional qualifying work* has elements of discretionary work, such as ad hoc discussions about pupil's development with the pupils themselves and/or their parents. These sessions are often prepared for by analysing the individual child's

learning and development and could, for example, concern, amongst other things, classroom behaviour. Some semi-qualifying work, such as handling pupil conflicts, can be very challenging work. The way of categorising semi-professional qualifying work could be challenged as some might argue that this kind of social interaction situation work is also within the jurisdiction of teachers. So, in this sense, the categorisation might limit the opportunities for viewing teaching as a profession. Wedin (2007) and Frelin (2010), both of whom studied workplace practice for teachers, argue that relational practices are an underestimated dimension of the teacher's professionalism.

### Autonomy and power

From a professionalism perspective, autonomy is a necessity for developing specific competences and creating a legitimacy that can be transformed into status and where different kinds of advantages can attach to a profession (Freidson, 2001). Some researchers argue that teachers have a high degree of autonomy when it comes to the teaching that takes place in the classroom (i.e. the core of their work) more than in influencing the regulation around, for example, curriculum development (Colnerud & Granström, 2002). Having said this, the range of choices might not always be unlimited, and, commonly, are restricted by policy constraints, institutional norms and legal requirements (Håkansson, 2004). According to Colnerud and Granström (2002) the teacher, on an individual level, is always in a position to make choices about the actions that she or he takes in the classroom, and, whilst they might not always perceive that such options exist, they are nevertheless always there. Hargreaves (1994) also points out that teachers use a discretionary judgment when working with pupils. He identifies ways in which policy impacts directly on the confines for and scope of discretion. By way of example, he shows how changes in educational policy in England and Wales in the 1990s have functioned so as to reduce professional autonomy by reducing the opportunities for choice and the exercise of discretion:

Policy makers tend to treat teachers rather like naughty children; in need of firm guidelines, strict requirements and few short sharp evaluative shocks to keep them up to the mark (Hargreaves, 1994 p. xiv).

Hargreaves describes similar processes of change in the USA, but in terms of treating – and training – the teachers as if they were recovering alcoholics by subjecting them to step-by-step programs of effective instructions. His

conclusion is that these measures are disrespectful and fail to show regard for teachers' professionalism. However, in Sweden in the 1980s the teaching profession has been shown to have undergone a process of re-professionalization. This can be compared with previous decades when, instead of applying knowledge-based research and theory, teachers were expected to make almost exclusive use of concrete guidelines relating to how to do the job (Carlgren & Marton, 2004). In contrast to England and the USA, teachers in Sweden were given more responsibility for planning and development in conjunction with a policy of decentralising educational management from state to municipal control. Thus, compared to many other countries with educational systems characterised by the intricate and detailed control of curriculum realisation strategies and teaching practices, teachers in Sweden enjoy much greater professional discretion. However, from another perspective, the work of teachers is, nevertheless, being subjected to increasing control whilst the scope of discretion is shrinking. Today, as a result of the process of goal and result steering, the work of individual teachers and schools is constantly audited by means of different knowledge evaluation systems, national testing in a number of core educational subjects, and local goal achievement requirements (Carlgren & Klette, 2008; Carlgren & Marton, 2004; Sjöberg, 2011). However, Parding's (2007) research about Swedish teachers' discretion shows that teachers express the experience of having significant discretion when practicing teaching and, further, that they see this as of central importance in being able to practice their profession.

Further, it is possible to consider that, with autonomy in exercising discretion, comes a position of power. Håkansson (2004), using Foucault's theories to analyse power in the work of teachers, argues that teachers discipline pupil behaviour whenever the behaviour deviates from the set order of the classroom. This is justified on the basis that allowing even minor acts of deviance could open the floodgates that could ultimately spell disorder for the entire system. Håkansson argues that it is not about a particular teacher's own malice, but, rather, an act of maintaining the normative system in school. By means of explanation, Håkansson offers, as an example, pupils who chew gum or wear caps in the classroom. Such behaviour hardly influences in any major way the possibility for schools to carry out their task. Nevertheless, in many schools, such behaviour results in the imposition of punitive sanctions on offending pupils. Samuelsson (2008), when exploring pupil disorder and classroom management in a grade seven class (13-year-old pupils), concludes that teachers invest considerable time informing about and establishing conformity with

regard to the rules that regulate life in school. These include, for example, rules around time, the use of space, school materials, language use and the interaction between teachers and pupils.

Another aspect of autonomy is whether the profession is protected by law or whether others claim jurisdiction over the teaching of children. From a strict legal perspective, compared with other professions in human service organisations, such as for example doctors and nurses, the teaching profession is not protected by a licence issued by the state (Colnerud & Granström, 2002). From policymakers the argument is that it is sufficient that the person holds a teacher education degree issued by an institute of higher education. However exceptions can and are made if no qualified teacher applies for the post or if other special circumstances mean that a specific unqualified applicant is particularly suited for the post (Education Act). In a recent proposal for a new Education Act it has nevertheless been proposed that only qualified teachers should be able to be employed on a permanent basis and be able to award grades (SOU2008).

## The social and academic dimensions of teaching

In Sweden there is a division in teaching between two aspects of the teacher's professional remit; the social and the academic dimensions of teaching. Whilst the social aspect usually involves the notion of care, the academic aspect involves knowledge acquisition (Aspelin & Persson, 2009). Working with the social aspects of the pupil's learning seems to be described in varying ways in the literature about the teaching profession. Terms such as the 'socio-emotional aspect' of the teacher's role, the 'social fostering' task of teaching, the relational dimension and relational work are all used (Frelin, 2010; Gannerud & Rönnerman, 2007; Håkansson, 2004). Max van Manen (as cited in Aspelin and Svensson 2009, p. 92) uses the term 'pedagogical tact' when describing the social dimension of the teacher's task that focuses on the relation between the child or young person and the teacher. Aspelin and Person (2009) use van Manen's concept of 'pedagogical tact' to describe the social and academic dimensions of the teacher's task. They claim that knowledge in the subject, skills in teaching, planning and the evaluation of teaching are all important competencies, although the concept of 'pedagogical tact' involves expanding these skills with aspects of concern and care for the children, ethical responsibility and an ability to adopt a child perspective. They liken the relation between the pupil and the teacher to the relation between a child and its parents, the difference being that the relation

between the teacher and the child is in the context of an institution and related to education.

Ranagården (2009), in her study of teachers' professionalism, found that the teachers she studied had different opinions about what the 'social' element meant, although there seemed to be an agreement that it could be anything which was not linked to the acquisition of academic knowledge. When talking about the 'social' dimension, the teachers in Ranagården's study seemed to make a distinction between the pupil's 'social context' (which involved information about the pupil's socio-economic background, such as where the family lived and the parents' occupations) and the pupil's 'social development' (which focused on attitudes, values, social interaction in the classroom and other social relations).

Wedin (2007) in her research about the teachers' knowledge creation in everyday work, concludes that there is a social dimension to all of the teacher's tasks. For example, she highlights 'reading' knowledge as an essential skill to be able to carry out the profession. This entails the ability to 'read' how the pupils are feeling, to 'sense' the type of atmosphere that is prevailing and to 'assess on the spot' whether there is a need to rearrange the lesson plan. Further, she writes about 'relational' knowledge, which is used to create and uphold relations by, for example, using general chit chat, trying to be personal and not playing a role, to use jokes and to listen. Additionally, a form of 'caring' knowledge is suggested. This could be demonstrated by putting out a jug of water after physical education lessons for thirsty pupils. More learning-related forms of knowledge include what Wedin terms 'tactical didactic' knowledge, which is about pedagogical 'tricks' that teachers develop as a means of inducing peace and quiet in rowdy situations. For example revision at the beginning of a lesson might bring disharmonious pupils back to the subject. Similarly, short term planning might allow greater opportunities for improvisation.

Some voices express the view that, due to processes of democratization and individualization in school, a more negotiation-oriented character of teachers' work practices and a more culturally diverse society, there appears to be an increased demand on the social dimension of the teacher's task (Tallberg Broman, 2006). The teacher comes across a 'negotiating adult' who, together with colleagues, pupils and their parents, delineates what their practice should involve. As Tallberg Broman suggests, there needs to be a discussion about the teacher's legitimacy and competence in dealing with these issues.

However, a recent development in Sweden, driven by political interests, stresses the need for a focus on knowledge attainment and that, for a long time schools have been focusing to an undesirably great extent on relations and democratic values to the detriment of pupils' subject knowledge. Different national and international surveys such as, for example, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), provide support for this line of reasoning in that results show that Swedish students are falling behind in attainment in key subject areas (Skolverket, 2009b). Others, however, criticize this focus on measuring knowledge development and argue that the Swedish school system is in good shape although, as in all public agencies, improvement is needed.

Grading and assessment are also important aspects of teachers' professional knowledge. The fairness of grading often causes public debate (Korp, 2006). The power associated with grading works from two sides; one in relation to the pupils and another in relation to the performance of the teachers. During the 1980s a new 'assessment paradigm' developed. Here the focus on grading and ranking was broadened to also encompass the support of individuals' learning (Korp, 2006). Assessment is another area of power for teachers. As Korp makes clear, it is just as much about power over people's identity and self-worth as it is about their future opportunities. Equally, on a structural level, power over what perspectives and experiences should be valued in the society is also exercised. The teachers are squeezed between the formal expectation of assessing pupils' knowledge and the educational/political requirement of being successful in having pupils who do well on national tests and in international comparisons and who obtain good grades at the end of compulsory school. The outcome of grading is frequently scrutinised by the audit authorities both locally and nationally (Skolverket, 2009b). Consequently, the quality of teaching is often related to the measures of goal attainment.

## Special education

The notion of children who need special educational support has been a question for the school system since 1842 when compulsory schooling was first introduced in Sweden. The perspective on children who are in need of special support can, between 1842–1955, be seen as being characterised by a practice that all pupils who deviated from the norms of goal attainment in regard to subject knowledge development or behaviour were to be moved to special facilities where the conditions were adapted to better meet their needs and

abilities (Groth, 2007). Today the same questions are often discussed in terms of the concepts inclusion and exclusion. The concepts are based on ideology-driven arguments and it is currently politically correct to talk about an inclusive school (Karlsson, 2007). The concept of inclusion is on a continuum and, according to Nilholm (2007), there is a weaker form of inclusion which means that the pupils are not excluded from school, even if they are not fully included either. Often such pupils are placed in what can be termed remedial groups within the confines of the school buildings/area, but nevertheless separated from the traditional classroom. However, the physical position of the resource school that is focused on in this thesis illustrates a strong form of exclusion in that the school building is totally separated from any traditional school environment.

The pupil welfare system in schools has usually been responsible for providing special educational support and is also often active in the practice of assessing individual pupils' educational needs. A pupil welfare team usually includes a school nurse (and sometimes also a school social worker) a school doctor, a school psychologist and, importantly, a special needs educator who is a member of a profession that has its roots in teaching (Backlund, 2007). The special needs educator is a 'new' profession which was introduced in the 1990s and has replaced the old traditional special teachers, the ambition being that the special needs educator would be able to act on a more overarching level in that they could be consulted by teachers in how to approach and understand specific pupils' educational needs, as well as being operational on a school development level (Lassbo, 2010). This consultative role can be linked to the notion that the teachers are expected to have the skills to work with all pupils on the basis of pupils' needs in respect of subject knowledge acquisition, as well as from the perspective of pupils' participation in the social environment in school. In a study of a pupil welfare team, Backlund (2007) concluded that support to teachers is often provided on a consultative basis and the teachers are expected to manage in the classroom since the pupil welfare specialist either lacks the resources or is not expected to work directly with pupils on an individual basis. However, other research demonstrates that special needs educators, to a high degree, work on an individual basis with pupils with special educational needs (Lassbo, 2010).

One common intervention is that the teachers create an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The teacher needs to assess the child's development with regard to educational attainment and the curriculum's goals, and to formulate interventions in how to support the pupil according to her/his educational needs (Asp-Onsjö,

2006). This is experienced by some teachers as a fairly demanding task. For example, in a national survey (Skolverket, 2009a) involving 1,688 teachers, a third experienced that they did not have sufficient competence to be able to identify and support students in need of special support. This might indicate that the teachers need consultation in assessing the needs of pupils.

To summarise, the aim of this chapter has been to contextualise the research question that primarily concerns how the teachers and social workers maintain and develop professional identities. The description of some aspects of the social work and teaching professions serves as a background to the analysis of the practice of the two respective groups and the division of labour that takes place in the resource school. It also sheds light on the implications of the distribution of the various working tasks. Some similarities regarding the characteristics of the two sets of professional practice can be noticed, namely they have a relatively high degree of autonomy, with limited protection by licensing. Professional autonomy involves the degree of independence a profession has and its right to self-regulation (Freidson 2001). Teachers' and social workers' professional autonomy appears to involve the right to make decisions which enable them to act according to their own judgment when performing working tasks. This means that they can exercise discretion (within the constraints of the Education Act and the Social Services Act) on an individual level (Hasenfeld 2010a; Lipsky 1980). Another similarity is that they are organization-dependent professionals who, in their employment, can draw on the power endowed in the organization in relations with the children and their families.

However both professions are in some ways unprotected, in that they do not have legally-issued professional licenses. In theory the employer can hire unqualified teachers and social workers to conduct the working tasks that the two professions claim respective jurisdiction over. The relevance of this unprotected professional condition in a co-located interprofessional context is that they can carry out each other's profession-specific working task, compared, for example, to a case of collaboration between say a medical doctor and a social worker, where medical doctor's license per se defines some of the working task to be carried out.

In this sense it is possible to say that the similarities in the professional autonomy of teachers and that of the social workers, creates a power balance between the two professions; neither has a higher status than the other. They have similar discretion in deciding how to practice which, in a collaborative



context, opens up for negotiations about the distribution of working tasks. Neither, from a legal perspective on jurisdiction, are they excluded from carrying out each other's profession-specific working tasks.

## Chapter Six

### The intake process: pupil processing

The aim of this chapter is to explore co-located interprofessional collaboration by means of examining organisational and professional interests in the intake process in which children and young people are selected for admission to the resource school. The chapter will begin with a brief description of the background of how the resource school was set up. Thereafter a number of approaches relating to practice with children and young people in need, with, in particular, regard to 'special educational needs' and 'social needs', will be presented. It is necessary to describe these approaches in addressing and catering for 'needs' in order to be able to understand the context surrounding the reasons given for a child initially being considered for a place at the resource school.

Thereafter, the nature of the process of selection in which representatives from education and social services are involved will be described. Next, the chapter explores the discussion of criteria and policy around the intake process. Then follows a third section which describes how professionals who represent the education and social services perceive the children's/young people's problems and needs. Finally, the arguments that underpin and legitimate the decision on which children shall get a place at the resource school that are advanced in the selection/rejection process of decisions are described and analysed.

The empirical data drawn on in this chapter are primarily the observations of inter-organisational meetings, telephone interviews with the politician and the senior education manager who initiated the project, and local documents relating to the resource school.

### The local organisational context and background

The background to the establishment of the resource school was, as mentioned briefly in Chapter Four, that the local council, in the late 1990s, had begun to experience an increase in the number of children with multifaceted problematic situations that involved the input of a range of social agencies. The problems

related to these children were of concern to the social and education services departments in the municipality. In a local document dated 2000 it can be noted that referrals to social services had, since 1996, increased by some eighty percent. Although the reasons given in the document as to why more children seemed to experience difficult situations in their homes varied, one common and recurring factor appeared to be that such children had a combination of a problematic school situation *and* a problematic social situation. As a consequence of the multifaceted nature of these problems, single agencies – i.e. social services, schools, child psychiatry – were never able to solve these problems on their own. Hence collaboration emerged as an important agenda. Initially it was decided to start two resource schools. These were later amalgamated after a few years.<sup>4</sup>

One important aspect of planning the design of these resource schools, which was highlighted by the educational support unit manager in a telephone interview, was that, in accordance with the Education Act, the education department had the responsibility to support pupils within the traditional school system. Normally the educational support unit would not propose the physical exclusion or removal from a pupil's existing school. Hence the establishment of a resource school was seen as a solution whereby the pupil would be removed – but to *another* educational environment. This, the manager said, was necessary in the light of the fact that education outside of the traditional school system might enable the pupil to stay with her or his family instead of being taken into care. With this as background, the educational support unit manager stressed that one important principle in the design of the resource school was that placing the pupil there had to be closely linked with a practice that involved the pupil still having interaction with their regular school (which hereafter is referred to as the pupil's 'home school'). Further, the pupil should remain on the home school's enrolment list and the important and overriding goal must be that the pupil should be able to return to her/his home school as soon as possible.

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<sup>4</sup> This information is taken from a formal evaluation report about the resource school from 2002. Due to confidentiality the report is not mentioned in the reference list.

## Special educational and social needs

### Special educational needs

Formally, the regulations as to which child or young person should receive special educational support in the form of attending the resource school, state that the assessment shall be based on *that particular child's special educational needs*.<sup>5</sup> These formal rules form one aspect of the context in which the discussion between different professionals representing the education services involved in the selection process may be understood.

However, there is generally no hard and fast definition of what '*special educational needs*' entails. This is something that the staff groups involved in the selection process quite clearly appear to notice when they have to define whether a particular child's educational needs can be judged as '*special*'. According to Keil, Miller and Cobb (2006) the term 'special educational needs' has a variety of meanings and often there can be confusion with the term 'disability'. Indeed, Keil et al. (2006) claim that 'disability' and 'special needs' are frequently used interchangeably with no clear rationale. 'Disability' is often portrayed as an aspect of special educational needs that is different to behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. Thomas and Loxley (2001) have identified what they describe as "a blanket ascription of 'need'" in relation to pupils' difficulties in school. They question the taken-for-granted assumptions of 'help' in what they see as a mantra of meeting needs in contemporary special educational protocols. Instead, they argue, that with help of the constructs of academic and professional psychology, 'needs' have silently been transmuted from what in reality might be perceived as the school's need for order, calm, routine and predictability, to the child's supposed need for stability, nurture, security and so on.

Emanuelsson, Persson and Rosenqvist, (2001) identify two perspectives on how special educational needs can be understood; the *categorical perspective* and the *relational perspective*. The categorical perspective's ontology of special needs refers to special characteristics of the individual and the approach is to differentiate and categorise. The understanding of special educational competence is characterised by giving additional support directly related to diagnosed difficulties amongst

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<sup>5</sup> This information is taken from a document on the policy of admission to the resources school 2005. Due to confidentiality the policy is not mentioned in the reference list.

pupils. The reason given for providing special education is that there are pupils *with* difficulties. In other words, these ‘difficulties’ are innate and bound to the individual (Emanuelsson et al., 2001).

The *relational perspective* views special needs as a social construction and the approach here is to unify the pupils with others. The contribution to research provided by this approach is to problematise and deconstruct the field and to establish special education as a field within the social sciences. Support is provided by integrated/inclusive activities. Special educational competence is characterised by initiatives aimed at differentiating instructions and content in the classroom. Pupils *in* difficulties are given as the reason for special educational needs (Emanuelsson et al., 2001). Emanuelsson and colleagues (2001) argue further that in Sweden the tradition of special education derives from the categorical perspective and that this perspective is currently dominant, even though national directives and policy documents promote the relational perspective. For example, different studies of individual educational plans (Isaksson, Lindqvist & Bergström, 2007; Skolverket 2007) indicate that schools often express that the problems lie within the pupil.

### Social needs; staying with parents or placement in a foster family

When discussing children’s needs within the remit of social services jurisdiction, the term is usually closely linked to the concept of ‘children who are suffering harm and need protection’ or who are ‘at risk of suffering harm’. Assessments thus need to be made of the types of intervention that can be appropriate in the reduction of the risk of harm and the promotion of social development (Sundell & Egelund, 2001). A focus on the protection of the child is one important aspect of the context within which the discussion between social and education services as to which particular child or young person should receive the intervention of enrolment in the resource school takes place. Thus, by means of illustration, there might be situations whereby the education services assess that a pupil’s *educational* needs could be best met by a placement at the resource school, whilst the social services cannot see that the *social* needs are of a kind that an intervention within the remit a ‘home-based solution’, i.e. as a alternative to placement intervention, is needed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See discussion about ‘home based solutions’ in the Introduction.

According to Sundell and Egelund (2001) there is no explicit scientific base for defining the circumstances/situation of a child who is at risk of harm, nor is there any statutory definition of circumstances/situations that can be viewed as harmful to children. However, the government has specifically emphasised that there ought to be a professional consensus as to the types of situation that can have a negative influence on the conditions under which children and young people grow up. These negative influences are specified in terms of four types of harm; physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and failure to thrive (Socialstyrelsen, 2007).

A number of core concepts are taken into consideration when social services assess the appropriateness and type of intervention for any specific child. These include 'children's rights', the question as to 'what is best for the child' and 'children's needs'. These concepts are not always clear and what they mean varies depending on the nature of the context (Andersson & Hollander, 1996). For example, there is, not infrequently, a conflict between the child's right to live with her/his parents and the child's need for protection from harm from her/his parents. These two rights are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. These conflicting views on what is best for the child place exacting demands on and challenges for child care practice. As a consequence Wiklund (2006) argues that interventions are often guided by the social service department's own particular preference.

It appears that two perspectives are often advanced in the discussions that centre around on the type of intervention that might be most appropriate. These are the so-called 'needs' and 'relational' perspectives (Andersson & Hollander, 1996). The perspectives have their roots in a psychoanalytically-influenced body of theory that places an emphasis on previous experiences of separation and abuse. The *needs perspective*, entails that the child's needs are viewed as being best catered for by a predictable and caring care-giver – often foster parents and foster families – and that this guarantee of stability and predictability should be seen as overriding the child's need for a maintaining a relationship with her/his biological parents.

The *relational perspective* places a strong emphasis on the importance of the child's relationship with its biological roots and, according to Andersson and Hollander (1996), is a common approach in Sweden. The relational perspective can be equated with the endeavours of social services in keeping the child at 'home' with her/his parents, which is often regarded as being in the best interests of the

child. By putting in place extensive interventions, the child's development is promoted. The resource school that provides the empirical example in this thesis illustrates an approach based on the relational perspective in that social services strive to keep the child at home and attempt to provide an intervention which supports such an ambition.

To summarise, the context surrounding the discussion about which child or young person should be offered a place at the resource school appears to be that neither education nor social services have a clear and defined criterion about what the term 'needs' involves. This means that the responsibility is left to the professionals involved to agree upon the constitution of 'needs' for each child. This decision-making process involves a more extensive responsibility for the staff representing education, in that the interventions or support given have a more serious impact on the children in that they are excluded from their home schools. For social services, in contrast, the support may have a less serious impact for the child and its family in that the child will continue to live at home. It is possible to say that on a continuum of interventions from social services and support from education, a placement at the resource school can, in some ways, be seen as being placed at opposite ends in that it involves that the child or young person is removed from a familiar context (their home school) which is a 'worst-case' scenario for education, *and* is allowed to remain in a familiar context (to live with their family) which is a 'best-case' scenario for social services.

## The intake process

Formally, as described in policy documents, it is the head teacher(s) at the pupil's home school who makes the application for a place at the resource school.<sup>7</sup> When making such applications the sole criterion is that the home school is able to demonstrate that they have tried different solutions aimed at accommodating the pupil, but that these strategies have failed and that it has not been possible to find a satisfactory solution. Additionally, the social worker can suggest that a child is selected to be a pupil at the resource school as a part of a wider so-called 'home based solution' that would enable the child or young person to remain living at home with her or his parents. In addition to these basic criteria, the home school also needs to supply, in the written application, an assessment of the child's educational needs and the child's individual educational plan

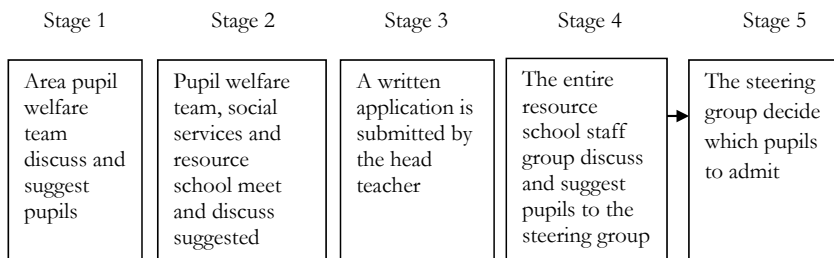
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<sup>7</sup> This information is taken from policy of admission to the resources school 2005. Due to confidentiality the policy is not mentioned in the reference list.

[*ätgärdsprogram*] that has been produced and maintained by the school. An assessment of the child’s social needs is also required, although, during my observations, it transpired that it was unclear whether it is the case social worker from social services department or the school social worker who was responsible for this assessment. The social assessment should include a description of previous interventions and initiatives initiated by the school.

Thereafter, as far as I could determine, no further guidelines had been formulated as to the relative values that should be placed on the different assessments. Value judgements, such as whether a high degree of absence or truancy should be given greater weight than difficulties in subject learning, or whether the child is at risk of being physically abused at home, are examples of the sorts of dilemmas inherent in a process of prioritising that, for those involved, can be extremely demanding. I will now go on to describe some of the themes of concern that characterise the discussions in the meetings about which pupils to admit. I have categorised these as the *criteria for placement*, the *descriptions of needs* and the *base for arguments* for choosing a particular pupil. The different meetings that take place are a part of the formal procedures in the intake process of a pupil. The discussions in the meetings are informal and are neither documented nor accounted for. However, before exploring these themes, I will first provide a description of the intake process. The process is comprised of five separate stages as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A flow map of the intake process



In *Stage One* the council’s four local area pupil welfare teams decide whether there are any pupils currently attending schools in their respective areas who could be considered for a place at the resource school. This initial stage is *not* included in the study. In *Stage Two* a representative from the resource school, together with a middle-ranking manager from the social services, meet with the



school area pupil welfare teams, one area team at a time. An average meeting of this sort might involve between twelve and fifteen professionals (often including teachers, head teachers, the school nurse, a speech therapist, the school social worker and the special needs educator). Sixteen pupils were discussed during the meetings with the area teams that were included for observation as part of this study. Thereafter, in *Stage Three* the schools submit individual written applications for a place for their pupils at the resource school. The discussion of the sixteen candidates for admission resulted in the formal submission of four written applications. In *Stage Four* the staff group at the resource school discuss and rank the applications for each vacant place that is available. Finally, in *Stage Five*, the steering group, consisting of the senior manager for Social Services, the senior manager for the Special Educational Needs Unit, a middle manager from Social Services in the municipality, and the representative for the resource school, meet to take a final decision on which pupil(s) should be offered a place.

## Talk about the selection process

Of all different issues discussed during the meetings between staff from the three different parties involved in the intake process (schools, social services and the resource school) the actual *process* of selection appeared to be the topic that took up most of the time. A significant amount of time was devoted to discussing how to organise the selection process and what it should involve. The staff in the different groupings appeared to be in agreement that there were no strict criteria about what actually constitutes the educational and social needs that the eventual decisions to offer any particular child a place at the resource school should be based upon. Many of those involved in the meetings spoke of the need to establish routines for determining both how the selection process should be organised and how the different criteria should be classified. For example, one school psychologist explained that:

We need to establish routines so that selection is not dependent on an individual person's preferences.

It is possible, linked to the organizational interest of demonstrating effective collaboration, to make the interpretation that the talk about criteria is about protecting the pupils and their families from arbitrariness based on individual professionals' interests. The stricter the criteria, the less room there is for manoeuvre by professionals based on other motives or other needs than the pupil's own, and those of its family. Alternatively, it is possible to understand the

call for clearer criteria as a tool for enhancing effective collaboration which would be in the interests of both education and social services. Simply put, stricter criteria might serve to minimize differences of opinion of how to interpret them. For example, Huxham and Vangen (2005) from their research around collaboration, conclude that agreement on substantive outcomes usually promotes collaboration rather than causing disruptions. Linking that to the situations in the resource school, the fewer conflicts about what constitutes legitimate reasons for selecting a particular pupil, the smoother the collaboration might progress and the better opportunities there might be for effective inter-organisational collaboration.

## Descriptions of the pupils

Not surprisingly, the lack of clarity surrounding these criteria for educational and social needs leads to in-depth discussions during the multi-professional meetings that take place in *Stage Two* of the selection process. Four different topics emerged as common in the discussions; *behaviour and skills*, *attitude*, *intellectual abilities* and the *parent's willingness to cooperate* with the resource school.

First, the topic of describing the pupil's behaviour mainly centres on a number of specific school/behavioural issues which often include the following; whether or not the pupil is frequently involved fights or demonstrates aggression to others; whether she/he is prone to aggressive outbursts or displays introvert behaviour; whether there is a lack of self confidence; whether there has been violent conduct towards staff, or instances of self-harm or similar behaviour. When a pupil's social skills were described, these were often expressed in the terms of a 'lack'. For example, one pupil was said to lack social skills when, she/he was with other pupils in the playground or in unsupervised activities and teaching staff noticed that there were problems in his interaction with other pupils. This type of discussion featured more prominently when younger children were being discussed. Descriptions common to this group could be that the child lacked empathy in play, was unable to decode social messages and to respond appropriately when, for example, another pupil was sad or distressed.

For the older pupils, social skills were more discussed in terms of their role in relation to peers, that they had a need to adopt a confrontational image and to be seen as the 'bad' one, or the self-imposed pressure of always being coolest in school. One girl was described as frequently kicking peers when she was angry, whilst a boy was described as having poor self-confidence and self-esteem,

which caused him to use violence when he felt pressured. According to the head teacher, this nine-year old was a particularly rewarding victim for other children to tease. To describe pupils in this manner is not exclusive for the intake process at the resource school and accords well with other research results that concern pupils in need of special educational support, such as, for example, in Hjärne and Säljö's (2004) study of pupil welfare teams in Sweden where a focus on pupils' behaviour or lack of social skills is foregrounded. Indeed, the descriptions of pupils offered places during the intake process suggests rather that these kinds of descriptions may be a part of a common discourse of how children in need of support are described.

Secondly the pupil's attitude to school in general was another frequent topic of discussion. Accounts of such attitudes were often discussed in relation to the parents' attitudes to school. Not infrequently, the histories of families who had several children with difficulties in school were described in generational terms. For example, in one discussion, one of the speech therapists made the remark that this situation was:

scary, having a fourth generation who has problems at school.

The pupil's attitude towards the staff and the school was often summarised as that the neither the pupil nor her/his family properly valued the knowledge that could be gained from school, and, further, that neither child nor parent could see the point of spending time in school trying to learn, since it would not have any effect on the pupil's life anyway. Cultural explanations for this kind of attitude were often advanced in the sense of the family lacking a tradition of educational success. This explanation was given for children born in Sweden as well as those who had received their Swedish citizenship after their family had been granted refugee status.

The pupils' attitude towards their peers was often described as 'unhelpful'. Other commonly-made remarks included cases of verbal bullying, confrontational attitudes to other pupils, and 'picking on' other pupils who were 'weaker' either physically or intellectually.

The third topic, pupils' intellectual skills with regard to subject knowledge acquisition, came across as being more parsimoniously described. For example, the discussion around a twelve-year-old boy, although described as not coping in and/or failing to attend the woodwork and home economics lessons, did not involve any kind of assessment or appraisal of educational needs. A twelve-year-

old girl was described as having literacy difficulties and the impression given was that the staff representing the school all had extensive knowledge about this girl and that the perceived problems around her had developed over a number of years. For example, the special needs educator suggested that maybe the girl should be in a special school for children with intellectual disabilities, without in fact expanding on what learning difficulties she might actually have had. Instead, the same pupil's sexualised behaviour was described at length and as being of much more of a problem than her inability to learn subjects. She seemed to be a pupil whom none of the attending professionals really knew how to deal with. For example, it was said that this pupil often used sexualised and sexually insulting language and, according to the school nurse involved in the discussion, dressed inappropriately. The discussion about this particular pupil concluded with a general agreement that it should be proposed to her parents that the best option would be placement in a school for pupils with learning difficulties.

In some sense the discussions can illustrate what sometimes seemed to be a sense of confusion as to what, exactly, constituted educational needs, as the information around particular pupils, such as in the example provided above, appeared quite limited with regard to specifically expressed difficulties with subject knowledge acquisition. Instead the girl's behaviour appeared to be predominantly more in focus. One way of interpreting this is that the education services staff wanted to highlight the most problematic aspects of the girl's situation so that she would be offered a place at the resource school.

Fourthly, the issue of the parents' willingness to be involved in and work with the resource school was discussed in relation to all of the pupils. One complication was that not all parents had been informed that the pupil welfare team were going to discuss an application in the meeting with social services (*Stage Two*). This fact would often lead to one of the teachers trying to second-guess the parents' reaction if the suggestion were to be made that their child should change school. Another related issue was whether the parents were amenable to change. In some cases the parents were informed and were willing to cooperate. It should be noted that it is not possible from the empirical material to ascertain how many parents were actually informed about the fact that the process of consideration of a placement at the resource school had actually begun. In one particular instance, a pupil was discussed in a meeting and it was clear from the outset that the parents would definitely not take part in the family work. This, according to the school staff, was a foregone conclusion. They recounted how the parents had expressed that they hated social services,

who, on two previous occasions, had applied (unsuccessfully) to take all of the family's children into care. Whilst the school staff representing the education services were adamant that the child in question needed the placement at the resource school, the staff representatives from the resource school could not see how the parents would want to collaborate with them since this would mean that they (the family) would have to also agree to work with the social services case worker.

To understand the selection process as involving a set of criteria that lacked clarity, and the time spent describing the pupil's needs, the concept of discretion can be of value. According to Handler (1992) discretion involves the existence of choice and is a significant characteristic of professional status. The fact that the selection criteria are so wide and open-ended creates a very broad framework within which discretion is operational in the determining of which pupil should get one of the limited places available. This wide-ranging discretion probably enables the professionals involved from social services and education to experience that their professional input is valuable. This in turn creates legitimacy for the collaboration internally within both the education and social services departments respectively. The professionals can experience that there is a choice instead of a dictate from above. This, in turn, can help to enhance the commitment and effectiveness of the collaboration. For example Bell (2005) arrived at a similar conclusion, making the point that it is important that staff involved in interprofessional and inter-organisational collaboration experience that their professional competence is taken into account since, if this does not happen, the collaboration might create more problems than benefits.

These lengthy discussions can also be seen as giving staff an opportunity to talk about pupils across professional boundaries without having to feel restricted by confidentiality rules. Indeed, it may be possible to understand that, in some ways, *Stage Two* of the intake process enabled the professionals who were involved with and responsible for the pupil welfare in the council, to informally talk and discuss individual pupils with the social services without the restriction of confidentiality regulations. This opportunity strengthens the legitimacy of collaboration, as the staff experienced benefits from these opportunities to talk across professional boundaries. For example Frost, Robinson and Anning (2005), when researching multi-agency team work around children, conclude that issues around confidentiality and information-sharing formed what they term one of the 'fault lines' in collaboration, and that opportunities to overcome such issues could be seen as promoting collaboration.

## Arguments put forward for prioritizing

The discussions around motives for choosing a particular pupil were characterised by two main arguments. These are based on what I call *being forced to choose* arguments and the *construction of legitimate reasons*. The first of these centres on the necessity of making a decision due to the lack of other options. Quite simply, there do not seem to be any other viable alternatives for the pupil in question. The other argument is about finding legitimate reasons that would fit the interests of the organisation when advocating for a particular child's selection.

The characteristics of the *being forced to choose* argument can, from the perspective of the education services, be described in the sense that the staff can see no other way; the pupil needs to be transferred from the home school, no matter what the reason. The different categories of staff in schools would often express how they would do everything possible to keep the pupil in her/his home school, but, due to the difficulties around the child, this was not possible. For example, in one case, the argument advanced in favour of a pupil being offered a place made by the home school social worker was that:

We have to stop the social inheritance for this girl; she should not have to go through what her brother did in this school.

The girl's family had had contact with the social services over a long period of time and older siblings had previously had problems in the school. It seems that they felt they had no choice other than to move the pupil from the home school, even though the school might well have been able to meet her educational needs.

Another version was the need to be moved away from the bad influence of fellow pupils at the home school. In one case this was expressed by a teacher who explained why a move was necessary:

He is like a little weasel. He is easily influenced by peers, and needs to be moved.

In this case the teacher continued her argument, saying that the pupil's self-esteem was so low that he was easily tricked into mischief, so it would not be in his interests to remain in his home school environment.

The manager of the educational support unit would sometimes articulate arguments based on the urgency of moving particular pupils. She stated, for example, that it was particularly important to discuss two specific pupils, since she received calls about them nearly every day. This can be understood as an

argument for moving pupils whom the home school might experience as being the most troublesome. In this way, via the manager of the educational support unit, the views of the schools' head teachers appear to find articulation.

One possible consequence of using the arguments based on *being forced to choose* advanced by the education staff is that representatives of the social services may perceive that the school was not fulfilling their responsibility to offer adequate schooling to these pupils, as the motive is ambiguous and characterised by urgency rather than legitimate reasons.

When education staff advanced arguments based on the *construction of legitimate reasons*, the arguments were characterised in terms of the need for the pupil, for example, to be educated in a small group. In one specific case, a home school teacher put the argument forward that a pupil, to be able to concentrate, needs to be with only a few other people and that this was something that the resource school could offer. Other versions would be that a particular pupil needed more teacher-time spent on explaining certain subjects.

Interestingly, the arguments formed as legitimate reasons linked to educational needs were not as prominent as the *'forced to choose'* argument. Perspectives such as 'we cannot do anything other than to move this pupil' and 'we are forced to this due to the pupil's social situation in school' were more frequently articulated. This might indicate that the education services perceive that, when collaborating and negotiating with social services around prioritizing needs, rather than using more specific special education terminology, they need to use a language which is characterised by a sense of urgency and they appear to need to project a view that the pupil's needs are more anchored in their social, rather than their educational situation.

The arguments put forward by social services in the intake process were mainly characterised by the *construction of legitimate reasons*. They generally based their arguments on the legitimate reason that social services had the duty to protect children from suffering harm and for keeping them within their home environment. The observations reveal that social services choose to prioritise those children who are closest to being taken into care and, in discussions, would argue that a placement at the resource school would enable them to work with a home-based solution intervention rather than having to take the child or young person into care.

When, at the end of the observed intake process, the steering group discussed which pupil to choose, as only one place was available, it looked as if the words of social services weighed more heavily in that they managed to negotiate so that the resource school agreed to admit two pupils rather than one. It became quite clear that in order to be involved in collaboration with education services about these children, social services, in the final analysis, counted on being able to get a place if needed when it came to children who were either already in care or where a care order was regarded as imminent. For example, in my observations, when the steering group were to make the final decision as to which pupil to select, the discussion was based around two specific pupils. For one of them, everyone could agree that the resource school would be the best intervention from both a social services and a school perspective. However, social services argued that they needed to provide a place for one more pupil since they had already made a care order application for this pupil, but which, in this instance, the court had turned it down. They planned to return to court with a new care order application, and, if this were to be successful, they wanted to be able to offer a place at the resource school as part of the care plan. The manager for social services expressed explicitly that:

We are confident that the resource school will solve this problem of lack of places if it is necessary.

This line of argument was advanced in spite of the fact that staff representatives from the resource school had expressed doubts about being able to meet this particular pupil's needs due to the parents' expressed unwillingness to collaborate. Finally, it was agreed that two places would be made available; one for the pupil suggested by the education services and the resource school staff, and the other for the pupil whom social services wanted to have admitted if they were to be successful with the care order.

From the resource school perspective, i.e. arguments based on being *forced to choose*, the fact that the number of places was restricted was a primary factor. A typical example of being forced into making a choice became evident in the fourth observation where one of the teachers expressed the idea that:

If we have to choose, I'd take the girl first and the boy second, but can we suggest two?

The staff expressed the idea that, due to economic restraints, they were forced to make selections in relation to number of pupils. Opinions expressed were, for example, that:



We can say 'yes' to two of them, but we need to first think about this from an economic starting point.

It was also possible to detect the formulation of strategic arguments in preparation for negotiations in the final stage of the intake process, when the managers from education and social services were involved. One of the staff, a teacher, said for example, that:

It might be wise to say we can take two, but have our own internal ranking of who is number one and who is number two.

The above discussion indicates that the teachers and social workers in the resource school are likely to try to safeguard their own shared interests rather than to see things from the organisational interests of the education and social services departments. It may be, since they are co-located, that they have a closer interaction and a feeling of having shared working conditions. Indeed, it may be that this is prioritised over the interests of their 'home organisations' in the municipality's social and education services. For example, Hudson (2007) in his study of interprofessional teams concludes that professionals in co-located collaboration become close to each other in their day-to-day work, which may indicate that co-located collaboration in the resource school, even though the different professionals represent separate organizations, produces a common 'resource school' perspective and approach.

The resource school staff also *constructed legitimate reasons* based on factual accounts for *not* selecting a particular pupil. They would, for example, assess the pupil's needs in such a way that the resource school would not have the competence to adequately meet them. One example of such an argument was evident in the following observation:

We must be able to argue that the pupil is too difficult for us.

Another example would be that the physical distance between the resource school and the home school would cause concern. For example, a teacher said that:

The home school is too close to our school. The pupil will be going back there all the time.

From a professional perspective, the importance of whether, and if so, how, the pupil would 'fit the group' – i.e. whether the pupil would interact well with other pupils at the school without too many problems – was a concern that was often

raised. Teachers and social workers gave examples of previous knowledge they had gained about a pupil's behaviour in school. Such information, the resource school staff said, was often gained in informal settings. For example, when they visited different home schools, a home school teacher might informally discuss a pupil as being a candidate for a place at the resource school.

Sometimes a professional interest in working with a particular form of behaviour or problem was expressed in the selection discussions:

I think it would be interesting to work with that specific problem [sexualised behaviour] a bit dynamic.

However arguments based on the opportunity of being successful were also expressed:

The problem that this child has would suit the way that we are working. We probably have the best chances of success with pupil X.

Other more strategic arguments were also formulated, the aim being, it would appear, to legitimise the resource school in the wider school catchment area. For example, that all of the schools in the area should feel that they had an opportunity to use the resource school was an argument that was expressed. This factor was brought to the surface when, for example, one of the teachers wondered whether:

The needs of the schools would be the overriding principle in deciding which pupil to suggest for a place instead of an educational and social needs discussion.

The previous applications of different schools and whether or not these had been successful were also discussed. It is possible that the teachers and social workers felt a sense of responsibility for achieving a kind of 'fairness' between the schools in having access to the special educational resource provided by the resource school. In so doing, this can be seen as a strategy in legitimatising its existence.

To conclude, different interests and reasons lay behind the choice of pupils for places at the resource school. The arguments advanced in the intake process by staff representing education, social service and the resources school varied with regard to organisational and professional interests, and to the child's educational and social needs.

## Pupil processing

The intake process can also be understood by using the concept of ‘people processing’ proposed by Hasenfeld (2010a). Generally, in human service organisations, people processing involves an assessment of the raw material which, in this case, is the pupils. It involves making an assessment the aim of which is to decide whether the individual is able to get access to services or not. In this study the examination of the intake process showed that different interests emerged from a professional, as well as an organisational perspective.

From a professional perspective, the fact that the formal criteria for enrolment are broadly formulated and open to interpretation based on the ways in which different professionals perceive the child’s social and educational needs strengthens the parties’ professional status. To have discretion, as suggested by Lipsky (1980), is a trait which legitimizes professional status. Thus, in this sense, the intake process promotes professional autonomy and legitimacy. This, in turn, can be viewed as legitimising the collaboration between social services and education in that the staff groups involved feel appreciated and valued. The opposite could have been a situation where a small group of say, two representatives from education and social services, had made a decision based on the suggestions of the head teachers in each school and the case social workers. In such a situation the opportunity to talk across professional boundaries without restrictions relating to confidentiality would have been lost.

From an organisational perspective the professionals involved in the intake process are engaged in what Hasenfeld (2010a) terms the ‘rationing of resources’. This involves the use of discretion in the allocation of resources to clients. The resource school is confronted by organisational demands, in that, irrespective of need and the number of deserving cases, there are not enough places available. When adopting such a perspective it is organisational, rather than professional interests that set the agenda. The staff are also faced with the dilemma of choosing the ‘right’ pupils – and not the ‘too difficult’ pupils – as a means of ensuring success and thus cementing the legitimacy of the collaboration. The pupils need to be amenable to change, using Hasenfeld’s term, so that the collaborative work is perceived as successful. Equally, the pupils cannot be too ‘easy’ to work with, in that both the home schools’ teachers and social services case workers need to experience that the resource school is able to offer support to the more ‘troublesome’ children or young people.

Another aspect of using wide discretion in selecting pupils to be admitted to the resource school, and which can be perceived as being problematic, is that the process of the rationing of resources lacks transparency. This lack of transparency creates a tricky situation in terms of accountability and, as a consequence, it is difficult for pupils and families to know who to turn to with a case of complaint.

The organisations involved in collaboration thus have a substantial degree of discretionary power in deciding who will and who won't be selected as a recipient of the services. Handler (1992) talks about discretionary power as being located at different levels. This type of power of the rationing of services he would term a *second face power* that symbolises the power to decide who will benefit from service and who will be excluded. In the case of the resource school, this could be evidenced by the diffuse criteria that are used in the adjudication process. By having an intake process which gives wide discretion in the assessment and selection of pupils, collaboration is legitimised from an organisational and professional perspective. However, the lack of transparency in the selection process gives the organisations power over service users and indeed the wider society. Handler also talks in terms of a power dimension which is linked to the ways in which hegemonic patterns in society shape or determine what the client wants. The discretion used in the intake process can, in such a sense, also be seen as discretion exercised at a societal level.

The societal dimension of discretion can be understood by linking it to the current political and ideological educational debate centred on inclusion and exclusion. Put simply, inclusion means staying within the ordinary school system, whilst exclusion means being placed outside. If schools had unlimited resources, then no children would have to be excluded from school and placed in a resource school.

To summarise, the process of selecting the children and young people to collaborate around is complex and ambiguous. Many factors and interests need to be considered in order to enable an understanding of why a particular child is selected and thus becomes someone whom education and social services departments collaborate around. The lack of any clearly articulated selection criteria, in combination with the professional discretion inherent in street level bureaucracies, can be understood as endowing a sense of legitimacy to interprofessional and interorganisational collaboration. Because the number of places available is limited, the intake process, as much as it functions to assess

the special educational and social needs of the child, also functions as a tool to legitimise the collaboration with regard to professional and organisational interests. This becomes especially clear when the cost of the staff time devoted to deciding which children to offer places is related to the number of pupils actually served. In some ways it could be said that the value of the intake process is more in terms of legitimising interorganisational collaboration than selecting the specific individuals to collaborate around. The intake process can also be understood as an arena which offers an opportunity to informally discuss pupils and, in so doing, professionals are able to formulate how they perceive children's needs from an educational and a social perspective.

## Chapter Seven

### Doing common grounds

The aim of this chapter is to explore co-located interprofessional collaboration by means of examining the nature of the division of labour at the resource school and the forms that it takes. The chapter is based on both staff members' descriptions and my own observations. The aim is to identify and map out the tasks and technologies that are commonly performed. The analysis is influenced by structure technology research, which examines the process of how the association between structure and technology develops in human service organisations, and how technology assumes a dependent role in its relationship with structure (Glisson, 2001; Hasenfeld, 2010a). Structure technology research focuses on showing what human service workers do in their efforts to effect clients (i.e. technology) and is related to the nature and patterns of relationships that exist among the workers and their co-workers (i.e. structures). From this point of departure three aspects form the base in the construction of what I term the *common grounds* for interprofessional collaborative practice that have emerged from the data. These aspects are i) the aspect of 'structuring collaboration', ii) the aspect of 'collaborative technologies' and iii) the aspect of 'constructing collaborative relations'.

The chapter begins with a description of the work carried out with the pupils in relation to the aspect of *structuring collaborative work*. This involves certain areas of planning, timetable design and formalised meetings. Thereafter follows a section describing the *collaborative technologies* used, which take the form, variously, of group constellations, time-allocation, ongoing planning and re-planning and informal meetings. Finally, the characteristic of the *collaborative relations* between the teachers and the social worker is identified as an agreement about the 'social behaviour objective' of the resource school.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of how interprofessional collaboration can be understood from a theoretical perspective with reference to negotiation (Strauss, 1978) which is used to reveal and illuminate the ways in which professional boundary work is carried out.

To enable the reader to consider the fabric of work at the resource school in which inter-professional work is examined, the following brief description serves to set the scene:

An ordinary week in school for the nine pupils and the ten members of staff can look like this: school starts 9.00 am on Monday and finishes at 12 in the afternoon. For the rest of the week school starts at 9.00 am and finishes at 2 pm. Usually the mornings are spent working with theoretical subjects such as maths, English or Swedish, followed by lunch and then practical subjects, such as physical education, domestic and consumer science, arts or woodwork. One day a week is spent outdoors, maybe at the school's cottage or fishing in the lake, and Friday afternoons are spent swimming or watching films. Other social activities can be included in the schedule depending on individual pupil's needs, such as, for example horse-riding. The schedule is highly individualised and the week looks different for each pupil. Most of them also do school work at their local home-schools too. For the younger ones (up till 12 years-old) they go to leisure-time centres at the end of the school day at the resource school (often by school taxi) at their local home-school every day. Different meetings with the pupil's parents, other agencies for example social services, child psychiatry or the home school staff are occurring on a regular basis during the weeks, as well as special social talks with the pupils.

## Structuring collaboration

### Planning and responsibility

Planning activities carried out in the resource school are generally regarded as one of the key tasks and an important part of how the work is structured. It is possible to identify two forms of planning that take place; one is when the staff plan for several weeks in advance whilst the other is the 'run-of-the-mill' organising for the immediate days ahead and which takes usually take place on Monday afternoons. The 'run-of-the-mill' planning generally includes things such as 'who should do what' – irrespective of previous planning – when unexpected circumstances arise. Such unexpected circumstances could, for example, be the result of staff leave, sickness (including the staff members' own and their children sickness) or indeed important meetings that are called at short notice and which require the attendance of the staff (e.g. a pupil might have committed a crime and a member of staff might be needed to attend a police interview with the pupil).

When it comes to planning an overall picture emerges that involves a difference between planning and actually carrying out the work that is planned. Emma [SW]<sup>8</sup> states this in the following manner with regard to planning weeks ahead:

The teachers are responsible for how the lessons are planned and conducted. That's the teacher's main responsibility. I can be there to provide support, but I have no responsibility and I do not plan the teaching.

Kim [T] expresses the division in similar terms:

In theory it is we teachers who do the planning, but in actually carrying things out, then one of the social workers can be involved.

When it comes to do social activities, for example the use of a small cottage nearby situated on one of the hills surrounding the town, similar descriptions are provided. Activities here can include overnight sleepovers, the focus of which is on developing social skills such as independence and responsibility. Normally it is the social workers who are responsible for the planning and the teachers who are expected to carry out the work.

However, planning social activities does not exclusively belong to the social workers; it depends on the content and aim of the outing. For example, building a place to camp could, in addition to social interaction, also include target areas such as maths and science as well.

This division between being responsible for the actual task that the individual herself has planned, as opposed to actually carrying it out, seems to work as a mechanism that enables the staff to work with tasks which might, on the surface, not be specific for their profession. One consequence of this division between responsibility and carrying out the work appears to be that the staff need to communicate and negotiate what is actually involved in carrying out the work in such a manner that, when it comes to teaching, the pupil gains knowledge from the lesson, and, with regard to the social element, that the social changes they are working towards for each individual pupil are facilitated. One consequence of this communication is that teachers and social workers also develop a greater understanding of, and acquaintanceship with, each other's professional knowledge.

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<sup>8</sup> In the presentation of the interview and observation data SW denotes social worker whilst T denotes teacher.



The other form of planning, the ‘run-of-the-mill’ kind, involves the staff being prepared to replace each other, not only in the event of unforeseen situations, such as illness, but also due to the frequent necessity of having different meetings with other agencies. David [T] expresses this phenomenon in the following way:

We decide this at the Monday meetings, who should do what. We decide on it in our discussions. If it’s about teaching, then the responsibility shifts to someone who can fix this bit. Naturally if there is someone who is responsible for certain social activities, then we teachers have to take over certain activities because the social workers might be tied up in a meeting with parents or whatever.

One common perception among the social workers was that, not infrequently, one of them – who might, for example, have planned to prepare in advance for a meeting with parents or had intended to have time to plan, reflect and analyse a pupil’s situation with one of the other social workers – would be required to deputise in a teaching situation. Max [SW] expressed feelings about this in an interview in the followings way:

The question was, who would be with the children? Our daily activities had precedence and sometimes I say that I am not really employed for this, but staff who came from the world of schools seemed to think it was obvious that you should work with a bit of this and a bit of that, and it did not matter who did what as long as it was done.

Max’s [SW] reference to that this practice of replacing each other when necessary seemed to be unquestioned by the teachers working at the resource school. This may be an indication that this type of situation might be quite common in the traditional school system. Max’s expressions can also be interpreted in the sense that, as far as he is concerned, that professional belonging is less important and that anyone can do anything.

At same time, during my observations, some of the staff expressed that it was not much of a problem to cover for each other on a temporary basis, as long as it did not happen too frequently. This is illustrative of the fact that the staff members demonstrate a flexibility in terms of the tasks they carry out, which, in any small-scale school or educational setting where there is only a limited number of staff, may be a necessity. Consequently, it is possible to interpret Max’s more negative approach towards replacing each other – and my interpretation of staff demonstrating flexibility – in such a way that the willingness to replace absent colleagues varies from one situation to another, and

that the staff delineate their professional jurisdiction depending on the nature of the context in which they find themselves. The phenomenon of replacing each other has a further dimension and was described as collaboration by Bernt [T]:

You are loyal and share the burden of work which means filling in for each other; that's collaboration.

This phenomenon of replacing, and what I choose to term *interchangeability*, involves the notion that that staff can replace each other on the basis of organisational imperatives of upholding the planned activities of the school. Thus there is an expectation that staff are able and willing to carry out non-profession specific working tasks. Two factors can be identified as being significant sources for this phenomenon of *interchangeability*. One is that the resource school involves an extensive professional network around each child, which in itself involves attendance at different formal and informal meetings, meaning that it might not always be possible to properly plan ahead. The other factor is that the school activity of having a timetable with specific time-delineated lessons constitutes a situation where the teacher who is *timetabled* to be in a particular place at a particular time – and engaged in a particular activity – needs to be *replaced*. This notion is further enhanced in the commonly-held conception that pupils at the resource school do not have the skills to study on their own, which might, in a traditional school, have been a solution. The allocation of staff resources means that they are always involved in activities with the pupils in ‘controlling’ or ‘supporting’ the pupils’ behaviour. In so doing they are also ensuring that the school day runs smoothly.

One way of understanding *interchangeability* in the resource school can be that it allows the teachers and social workers to distribute and accomplish certain tasks without too many conflicts around professional roles. Disagreements or different conceptions about professional roles are, according to a number of researchers, common sources for conflict. In turn conflicts are perceived as negative for interprofessional collaboration (Atkinson et al., 2005; Hudson, 2002). It may be possible to understand the phenomenon of interchangeability using Abbot's (1988) concept of subordination, which serves as a method of resolving jurisdictional disputes. Specifically, the teachers and social workers appear to divide the working tasks at the resource school by means holding different forms of cognitive and practical jurisdiction. By doing so they can minimize conflict around roles in practical terms – i.e. who does what working tasks – and negotiate and agree that they can all carry out non-profession-specific working tasks if it is necessary and if such work runs smoothly.

From an organizational perspective, Abbott's (1988) concept of workplace assimilation can also be valuable in developing an understanding of the organization's interest in a smoothly-running and effective practice. Specifically, Abbott makes the point that organizations need to get the job done and, in collaborative contexts, reciprocal assimilation between professionals is necessary for effective functioning. Abbott uses the concept of workplace assimilation to explain that it is an illusion that professionals are always occupied with working tasks that are associated with job descriptions and that are embodied within formal professional boundaries. Rather, he argues, professionals' division of labour is something that is negotiated. This can mean that a professional group may carry out non-profession-specific tasks due to the organisational imperatives of getting the job done. Consequently, as a result of reciprocal assimilation, professional boundaries of jurisdiction may disappear over time.

However, it is also possible to regard *interchangeability* as a mechanism for agreeing how different tasks shall be distributed, without the disappearance of jurisdictional boundaries. The professionals' interests of legitimating their profession are promoted, so long as the profession has cognitive jurisdiction over certain specifically-identified working tasks. One conclusion is that *interchangeability* both serves to legitimize the professionals profession-specific identify, and, from an organizational perspective, the resource school itself. From the professional interest, cognitive jurisdiction, in terms of the planning of and maintaining responsibility for certain tasks, allows the profession to claim jurisdiction of a task. For example, the teachers can claim jurisdiction for teaching even though social workers may actually carry out the teaching. A similar case for the social workers would be the planning of social activities. From the organization's perspective the work gets done effectively.

## Timetable design

An individual timetable for each pupil appears as being the main structuring tool for the activities at the resource school. The rationale for the individual timetables can be understood as being related to an underlying value that each individual pupil's educational needs are met with a focus on subject knowledge acquisition by adopting individualised timetables, and which the pupil's home schools have previously been assessed as not having the necessary resources for. Consequently, the resource school's legitimacy and status within the education service might be seen as depending on their success in individualising the teaching in such a way that all of the enrolled pupils attain the required academic

goals. The individual adaptation of the pupils' timetables is illustrated by these field notes:

One morning I asked what the pupils were doing that day and the answer was that one of the boys, had not arrived – he was at home sleeping, the parent had phoned and said he doesn't want to get up – so two of the other boys had wood craft with two of the teachers, one boy was at his home school with one of the teachers, one girl was on her own with her home school on a school outing, two of the girls had lessons with one of the teachers, one other boy was at the home school with one of the social workers.

When the timetable is individualised for each pupil the scope for change is extensive and each member of staff – either teacher or social worker – can in reality revise the content and/or the time slots as they see fit. This flexibility places demands on the staff in the sense that they need to have confidence in and trust each others' judgements. Sometimes, in relation to discussions concerning the composition of a timetable, teachers and social workers would be required to argue the case that their action in changing the timetable represented the most effective and appropriate use of the time and resources available. The following instance of a discussion – observed during a staff meeting the focus of which was on achieving the right balance between lessons in particular subjects and the need for ample free-time activities – serves as a good example of this:

In the team meeting one of the teachers had to defend the fact that two of the pupils had shorter breaks so that they could end the school day earlier. The teacher who questioned this raised the voice and made it clear that the pupils should follow the agreed schedule, the teacher who was in favour of shorter breaks became quieter and changed the subject.

This example illustrates the way in which staff are dependent on each other's ways of organising the timetables for individual pupils; the school is small and if some pupils see that other pupils are allowed to finish earlier they too might demand the same opportunities. Other arguments advanced by teachers were that in traditional schools most pupils usually follow the timetable and there is little or no discussion about when to start, when to finish or where to be. Consequently the teachers' and the social workers' opportunities to construct a highly individualised and flexible timetable involves discussion and negotiation on a day-to-day basis. A parallel interpretation can be that, in general, timetables are always constricted by a collective structure, the aim of which is to facilitate a sense of order and continuity. Thus deviations, in the form of individual

timetables for individual pupils, although potentially beneficial, can be difficult to achieve.

Closely linked to the issue of the length of time of lessons is the issue of space. The staff at the school have to negotiate and agree about where the teaching or social activity shall take place. Should, for example, a lesson or social activity take place in the school itself or at the school's cottage? The discussions between the teachers and social workers in the resource school about these factors are negotiated with the aim of reaching an agreement relating to the rationale behind the content and length time of the direct day-to-day work with each individual pupil.

On other occasions the teachers and the social workers would negotiate about using the time designated for subject teaching to instead talk with pupils about social issues. For example, one of the social workers might be seen expressing the view that the pupil felt bad and perhaps needed to talk about this as a means of achieving a level of calm or feeling of wellbeing sufficient for her/him to be able to sit in a classroom and learn. The teacher's perception, on the other hand, might be that structure helps to deal with the emotional state of the pupil and the maintaining of a planned structure can be understood as a tool to control or contain emotions. However, the notion of a pupil's emotional state seemed often to be an overriding factor in explaining why a subject lesson could be changed. This is illustrated in field notes in the following way:

Tom [SW] says that X [pupil] doesn't seem right. We need to sit down a talk with X. David [T] says that its maths next, and that he has prepared for this. Tom says 'but how can he concentrate when he feels bad?'. They agreed to change the lesson and the social worker talked with the pupil.

In planning the timetable the pupils' needs are often in focus. However the nature of these needs sometimes seems to change depending on which members of the staff group are available to support the pupil. The staff group as a whole might perhaps agree that it would be necessary – due to the pupils' needs – to have a staff member who could support the pupil, for example, during lessons at the home school. However, when it comes to planning which member of staff should be involved, a stumbling block might, for example, be the realisation that nobody had the space to do this. Such a situation could instigate a process of defining – and redefining – the need of the pupil in the sense of the extent to which the pupil could cope without a staff member's presence. Often the teachers and social workers agreed about the needs when they realised – due to

practical constraints – that they could not carry through the initial proposal about how to implement the schedule. Thus the needs have to become redefined in such a way that they fitted with the available resources. This is illustrated in the following field observation:

David [T], Eva [SW] and Anna [T] are sitting closest to me. Eva [SW] suddenly says that she has double-booked herself on Thursday and that she is supposed to be working both at X school with X [pupil] for a music lesson, but that she has also called a meeting with the head teacher and home school contact teacher for Y [pupil]. They sit and think about how this can be solved. They arrive at a solution that involves Eva [SW] following X to the music lesson, leaving X there alone, but then returning to pick up X at 14.00. It seems relatively easy for them to arrive at this solution. It took about 10 minutes and involved different proposals and thoughts.

The result here is that staff have to negotiate with each other in such a way that an acceptable agreement about the how to formulate a change in the pupil's educational or social needs is linked to the planned activity. This situation of negotiating how to change the pupil's needs – as a result of organisational necessities – can be seen as an example of when the client's needs are defined in terms of the distribution of staff resources in such a way that it best serves the interests of the organisation, rather than the individuals it serves.

## Formalised meetings

Different forms of formalised meetings can be regarded as an important factor in determining how the work at the resource school is structured. These formalised meetings consist, primarily, of the Personal Development Dialogue (PPD) (*utvecklingssamtal*) meetings twice a term, meetings involving the creation of the Individual Educational Plan (*åtgärdsprogram*) for each pupil, and meetings with other agencies such as child psychiatry units, staff from the pupils' home schools and social service case workers. In preparing these meetings a formalised process of a conducting a shared assessment appears to take place.

It emerged that a common perception among the teachers and the social workers was that there is a need to present a picture of unity towards outside parties – that is to say parents, staff from other agencies – and this process demands communication about the purpose of the meeting, how to describe the pupil's progress, how to present the pupil's needs and the actions that should be proposed. The creation of this 'united front' can be understood as a collective

assessment of the child's needs. Consequently, the resource school staff need to link this to their common area of competence in order to strengthen the legitimacy of their collaborative practice. In this sense they strive to attribute a pupil's positive development to the fact that she/he attends the resource school and what that involves, rather than to the effects of separate interventions of either social work or teaching. Eva [SW] expresses the need to create a unified picture, as I note in my field notes, in the following way:

We need to prepare ourselves in advance of a meeting with the head teacher for a home school. We need to go through how we are thinking about pupil X's school situation so that we are in agreement about what to say.

The value of presenting a united picture of a pupil's situation contributes to the legitimacy of the resource school staff as being experts in working with this particular group of pupils. Alternatively, if the staff were to present an ambivalent and fragmented picture, external third parties – for example the parents or staff at the home schools – might query the legitimacy of the work conducted at the resource school. Quite simply the staff might risk being perceived as 'not knowing' what they are doing, which might be the case if outside agencies receive conflicting messages. This phenomenon puts substantial pressure on the individual teachers and social workers at the resource school to strive to reach a degree of unity in how they present their work to outside agencies. Indeed, if they were to deviate from this picture of a 'united front' they might be perceived by their colleagues and management as lacking in commitment and loyalty to collaboration.

There seems to be a discrepancy between what the social workers can contribute with in assessing a pupil's progress compared to that which the teacher can contribute. Whilst social workers can express the notion that they cannot comment on subject knowledge acquisition, teachers can and do, they say, contribute to the assessment of social development. Emma [SW] illustrates this notion in the following way:

There is a difference if a social worker comes up with a suggestion about teaching, than if a teacher has an idea about a social issue. I think that a teacher's words weigh a little heavier or have a greater force of impact if a suggestion comes that way. I feel that it is a little more difficult the other way. Why that is, I don't really know, but I have that feeling. A teacher seems to have the right to have ideas and thoughts about how the social plan should be carried out or what planning should be made whilst a social worker can find it more difficult to get acceptance for ideas on the theoretical [educational, author's note] level.

However, Eva [SW] explains that social development in an IEP can be worked with by the social worker without the involvement of the teacher, even though input from the teachers would be desirable:

We all do the IEP work, you discuss things back and forth. I could probably do that independently with more focus on social needs and development, but it is better if you are having a conversation with the teachers. You can discuss with the teacher because he sees things in the lesson, for example that X is sometimes very difficult to motivate and in periods refuses to work, to do what I say and I think that maybe X has low self-esteem when it comes to learning theoretical subjects, that [Pupil X] doesn't know what to do and becomes very insecure. The teacher can see the same thing when I am not there and we can discuss that together and agree and then write it down.

This is illustrative of the sense that the social workers see the value of the input from the teacher. Even though Eva [SW] says that the social worker could carry out the task of assessing the social development independently, the assessment is regarded as being of better quality if both professions are involved. In that sense the social workers invite the teachers to discuss social development, whilst the social workers nevertheless expresses the view that they cannot really comment on the assessment of subject knowledge in the sense that such competence falls outside of their professional domain. Consequently the teachers are perceived by the social workers to be more willing to contribute thoughts on social behaviour and development than the social workers are on subject knowledge development.

When it comes to subject knowledge acquisition, such as for example in the core subjects of maths, Swedish and English, the discussions about presenting a unified picture come across as rather different. In my observations I noticed that the teachers seem to have less of a need to sit down and discuss such issues with the social workers in advance of a formal meeting and appear to prepare by talking more informally with each other. The social workers on the other hand tend to come across as wanting to prepare by sitting down together prior to more formal meetings. Whilst the social workers appear to be more used to a tradition of collectively analysing the situation and preparing for meetings with clients, the teachers, on the other hand, appear to be more used to preparing on a continuous or indeed even ad hoc basis in the everyday flow of activities.

Personal development dialogue (PDD) meetings, which involve the parents and the pupil, are often prepared in the much the same way as the IEP meeting. Here, however, the focus is more on supporting the pupil in her/his progress



made towards subject goal attainment. This is thus a meeting where implementation is in focus and where practical strategies relating to the acquisition of subject knowledge are discussed. David [I] explains this difference in the following way:

The teachers usually take more of this in the PDDs. They are about what needs to be done to reach the goals in the different subjects.

The teachers appear to want to keep the PDD meetings to a minimum, and regard their role as supporting the parents' participation in the specific meeting with the social workers. It appears that the teachers tend to reduce the formalized meetings which have a focus on subject knowledge acquisition. David illustrates this in the following way:

I feel that you don't really want to upset the process of parental talks by booking a load of extra meetings about pupils' individual development plans. There's enough meetings as it is for the parents to go to.

In this sense it seems that the teachers are playing down the importance of subject knowledge acquisition in favour of the social work that is carried out and which is focused on the parents. Alternatively, they demonstrate an awareness of the amount of time spent in meetings that a resource school placement demands of parents.

## Core technologies in collaboration

The teachers and social workers have consensually constructed a mode of working together in the resource school where three core technologies can be identified. The first is working with a *small group and in close social interaction*. The staff have wide discretion in deciding how many pupils should take part in different types of activities, for how long, and in which particular physical location. Secondly there is the technology of working with *ongoing re-planning* and which requires *intensive communication* during the entire day. Thirdly, the staff members work with *informal meetings with other agencies*. Such meetings offer an opportunity to share information regarding the pupil's situation in a more general way, as well as functioning as a means of legitimising the work of the resource school with regard to the education system generally in the municipality.

## Group size and close interaction

The teachers and social workers describe the “small group” as a prerequisite for creating learning opportunities for the pupils and as a tool for being able to assess and address each child’s individual, educational and social development needs. One consequence of the choice of this technology seems to be that the teachers and social workers work closely together. This form of working resembles integrative collaboration and is characterised by a belief that the professionals involved are dependent on each other (Bronstein, 2003). Consequently, one conclusion that can be drawn is that the technology of working with small groups creates a professional interdependence. A ‘small group’ can be two or three pupils and two or three staff. Often the staff work together and the ratio is more or less always one member of staff per pupil. Bernt [I] describes working with a small group in the following way:

You can get closer to the pupil due to the fact that we are not so many, you are forced to do that. We have different age groups different school grades and maybe you force yourself to see each child’s needs in a different light.

The staff can also be seen as having chosen to work with the technology of using close interaction as a means of facilitating pupils’ social development and subject knowledge acquisition. This technology fits well with working with small groups. For example, time spent in the school’s cottage offers learning opportunities when working with woodcraft or staying overnight as part of a theme day. Such opportunities provide long spells of adult-adult and adult-pupil social interaction which, according to the teachers and the social workers, facilitates processes of social learning. This perspective was summed up by David [I] in the following way:

It comes naturally what are good social interaction situations; that’s why we are two adults with the pupils.

To have agreed to work with small groups and with close interaction to facilitate social development and subject knowledge acquisition is one of the characteristics of working practices that involve the teachers and social workers working together.

## Ongoing re-planning and intensive communication

The teachers and social workers can constantly be seen to be sharing information about the behaviour of the pupils. This takes place on an ad hoc

basis – when needed – and often intensively in particular locations such as the resource school’s kitchen and staffroom. It appears to be a technology that involves a constant re-evaluation of the planning of lessons and social activities in relation to the pupils’ behaviour. This I term the ‘*ongoing re-planning and intensive communication*’, the purpose of which can be understood as the conveyance, sharing and analysis of information. Many of my field notes express this ad hoc phenomenon of *ongoing re-planning and intensive communication*. Here is one example:

Around three o’clock nearly all of the staff begin to come in to the kitchen. The intensity increases significantly. They go through the day. Eva [SW] has been with X to the home school. She says that it has been a testing visit. She describes in detail how she has experienced it as demanding. X was loud, acting out and ignored the teachers. Eva gets things off her chest by describing in detail what happened. She is backed up by Emma [SW] and Anna [T] who talk about the what they need to change. Eva needs to confront X about his behaviour much more.

When engaged in social activities the teachers and social workers frequently withdraw to re-evaluate what they have decided, and, not infrequently, to revise their plans and plan again or ‘re-plan’. Field notes from an observation at the cottage in the forest illustrate this rather well:

Kim [T] and Olle [SW] move off to one side and start to chop wood. I can hear how they talk about X. They say that X is difficult to motivate. They discuss how to deal with this. They decide to change the planning for the day by suggesting to X that they play cards.

It is reasonable to understand that this ongoing re-planning and intensive communication form two technologies used to keep the pupils in the school and to offer opportunities for learning. By being able to change that which has been planned, the teachers and social workers have the opportunity to be more sensitive to the responses they get from the pupils and to assess the situation in order to meet the pupils’ educational and social needs. This ongoing re-planning and intensive communication is similar to what Forkby (2005) discovered in a study of a similar resource school, and his use of the concept of hypersensitivity to explain the practice among the staff. Hypersensitivity includes tracking and reporting the pupils’ behaviour and actions to each other during the day as well as a continuous monitoring and analysis of the pupils’ behaviour. The phenomenon of ongoing re-planning and intensive communication can also be linked to the findings of Hjelte (2005) who researched collaboration between teachers and child care workers. In particular he makes the point that the

meaning of the communication between staff members is constructed during communication rather than having been decided on beforehand. This is an idea that can offer some explanation for the way in which the staff members in the resource school do not simply share information, but how they are also engaged in constructing meaning. Such constructions can advance the analysis of the situation which, in turn, can later guide the nature of the action that needs to be taken. Consequently, they are engaged in processes of re-negotiating what has been planned and together agreeing on new and different courses of action.

### Informal meetings

The technology of using informal meetings and contacts is often preceded and characterised by a need for the resource schools staff to exchange information, or the need to gain information about pupil's situations at home or at the home school. In some sense the information exchanges with the parents or other agency staff are added to the flow of information exchange between the teachers and social workers during their intensive communication. Thus it influences the interpretations and analyses of the pupils' behaviour and the decisions and actions of the staff. For example, the staff can have daily telephone contact with the parents and usually the information imparted is about the pupil's behaviour in school, both when it is interpreted as being good and when it is problematic. Bernt [T] described the contact with parents in the following way:

I speak with the parents every day. I can give them information about what has happened today. X was sad in the morning but we went to the woodcraft class and he was happy and then we went to maths class and he did the times four multiplication tables and that was good then he started to behave in an unruly way. You can get a explicit detailed picture of the day. I spend an awful lot of time talking with parents, which in a way is some form of social work.

Tom [SW] describes the contact with the parents in the following way:

I phone them every day after school and tell them how the school day has been, they get to know how it's been in school, and socially – positive and negative – it is not softened and the day's reality is conveyed.

One form of informal meeting can be termed *emergency ad hoc informal meetings* with parents and involves the parents coming to the school at short notice. The members of staff take a decision that they should call the parents and ask them to come to the school. Before this decision is taken the staff members need to agree about this 'emergency' action, even though such events are not at all

infrequent. This type of situation can look something like this as described in my field notes:

It is quite a commotion in the house, hear loud voices. Kim [T] is on the phone and talks with the mother of Pupil X. I can hear that Kim asks her to come to the school. Kim tells her that they experience not being able to get any contact with X. Currently X is out in the garden hitting bushes. X comes in and becomes very loud and screams, banging doors. Other staff appear and stand in the vicinity. Emma [SW] takes over from Bernt [T] who has been the one confronting X about the behaviour. The parents have arrived.

Due to the resource school policy of contacting the parents (by phone) if they experience that they cannot control the pupil, the teachers and social workers need to make a judgment about the right time to phone the parents. The staff at the school seem to have different views about this; some believe that it is wrong to call the parents and that they should be able to contain the situation and help the pupil concerned. Others believe that parental input is necessary. As an example I have in my field notes noted the following situation:

Olle [SW] explains to me that they have a policy to phone the parents if they feel they cannot handle the child in school. He says that they have different opinions about this in the staff group but after long discussions agreed that they will do so. Olle says some staff want to wait longer because they feel sorry for the parents other want to phone early as they feel the activity in the building is at danger.

Bernt [T] express the following view:

We are here to cope with such situations. We can't just send a pupil home. That's wrong.

The motivation given by Bernt can be understood as a perception, quite simply, that these types of situations are the reason why the pupils are at the school in the first place and that they, the staff, have the competencies needed to do deal with this. The other perception, illustrated by the policy of calling the parents and expecting them to help to solve the situation or to take the child with them home, can be understood as being illustrative of the normal practice in the traditional school system. It is also possible to interpret this technology of involving the parents to solve situations where the pupil is difficult in its behaviour as being used in one of two ways. One way is that the technology serves to maintain an orderly atmosphere in the school whilst another is that it is based on a perception that the parents are resourceful and can actively participate in their child's development.

Other examples of emergency ad hoc meetings are when the parents contact the staff and need urgent help. The teachers and social workers have to decide together how to respond to each situation in terms of whether or not they think that the parents call for help lies within the remit of the resource school. Although this is fairly unusual, it nevertheless happens frequently enough to be regarded as part of a collaborative decision-making process. Bernt [T] formulates one such experience like this:

We had to do an emergency call, me and Emma [SW], the parent phoned and said, X was hitting her. We rushed over to their flat and X had a belt which she was hitting the parent over the chest with. The parent was bleeding and we had to push the pupil down. That is how it is sometimes.

Ad hoc informal meetings can also involve information-exchanges with other professionals in the municipality who are working in the field of social and educational support. These meetings give the members of staff in the resource school an opportunity to share information about specific pupils, as well as to gain information about activities which are of interest for the pupils outside of school hours. For example, Tim [home school teacher] who was responsible for the contact with the resource school, regularly turned up for morning coffee around 8 a.m. before the pupils had arrived and sometimes other education and/or social services staff also would appear. In field notes this information exchange was recorded in the following way:

One morning staff from the local youth support team was there [Nick] and a home school teacher [Tim]. Information about the forthcoming school disco for the whole town was exchanged.

A couple of days later the home school teacher (Tim) was there again and in the field notes this was recorded:

Tim appears in the morning and the resource school staff asked about the disco last night. Tim answered that it was quiet, there was only one kid who was really drunk. A guy who came from (name of place, a rural area outside of the town). Tim said that there were about 300 school kids (13- 16 years old) at the disco.

Another aspect of informal meetings is that staff from other agencies gain an insight into the work of the resource school. This can help to legitimize the school and its practice to outsiders. In field notes this is recorded when the home school teacher (Tim) is visiting one morning:

Tim says that in schools there can be envy over the fact that at the resource school they have so much resources for so few pupils. He normally says to those with such opinions that they are welcome to visit the resource school and see for themselves. The pupils there are extremely demanding and they (the teachers at the ordinary schools) don't know what they are talking about.

Informal visits from outside can serve to counterbalance rumours about what the work in resource school might involve and can clarify the actual activities that take place. For example, the above instance can be interpreted in the sense that there might be an opinion among teaching colleagues in home schools that working with small groups or with individual pupils, having opportunities for stimulating social activities and, particularly, a shorter school day, implies that the teachers and social workers have an easy time of things. The information-sharing in staff common room seems to offer an opportunity of allowing outside professionals – for example home school teachers or youth workers – to get a feel of what the staff in the resource are actually doing and, by allowing this, the resource school can additionally be characterized by an openness and a welcoming atmosphere. There is however, at the same time, the risk attendant in giving the impression that they have so little to do that they have time to sit and chat with visitors. To have an open staff room can thus be understood both as legitimating the work, as well as having a potentially detrimental effect on their reputation and about their work.

## Interprofessional collaborative relationship characteristics

Meads and Ashcroft (2005) describe how collaborative relationships depend on task and context. One contextual characteristic of collaboration in a co-located setting can be understood in terms of being without a choice and having to collaborate. In essence, the way in which the support for the children or young person is organised at the resource school means that social workers and teachers work together in a co-located or 'everyday' context. This means that they have little room for manoeuvre in terms of opting not to collaborate. Indeed, any such reluctance has the potential to create severe difficulties for everyone else in the staff group. Ultimately, the only option, in the event of a reluctance to cooperate, is to find alternative employment. This can be compared, for example, to collaboration in different teams or between different organisations whereby a professional can simply decide not to attend meetings,

not to make phone calls and, basically, to avoid or obstruct collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

To reach consensus about the collaborative tasks is generally recognised as a stumbling block in research about collaboration and the discussion about the aim – or goals, objectives, purpose, no matter what it is called – always comes up as something that takes time and needs to be agreed upon (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Weinstein & Leiba, 2004). When it comes to the perception of the tasks in the resource school the social workers and the teachers have negotiated common collaborative working tasks, which I term the *social behavioural objective*. This involves an agreement that they should work to change a pupil's behaviour based on a value that the pupil's social development and social wellbeing are both prerequisites for the successful acquisition of subject knowledge.

The teachers and the social workers can be perceived as doing a similar professional job and fulfilling similar working tasks. This mirrors other research in that this perception is usually present in merged collaborative work and the professionals' work is characteristic of integration in the provision of public services, i.e. that it doesn't matter which professional worker the service-user actually meets (Boklund, 1995; Westrin, 1986). Nevertheless, beneath the surface the patterns, forms and manifestations of the interprofessional collaboration that take place in the resource school reveal how the teachers and the social workers have developed strategies of collaboration based on perceptions and understandings of how, in working with the pupils, their own specific professional understanding of the two working tasks should be accomplished. By examining the teachers' and social workers' core beliefs – i.e. examining how they operate from professional and knowledge-specific perspectives (see Frost et al., 2005) – a number of slight differences in their approach towards the working task of the *social behavioural objective* emerge.

### The social behaviour objective

The social workers' professional practice is underpinned by the core beliefs that changing the social behaviour of the pupil needs the involvement of parents, that work with a focus on changing behaviour needs to be done systematically with both short and long term goals, and that the adults in the resource school need to act as good role models. The core beliefs that underpin the teachers' practice are however different. In particular, a change in the pupil's behaviour is, to a much higher degree, linked to a positive adult role model. It is possible to



interpret this difference in approach in terms of saying that the teachers adopt a more parental role that is related to the task of socializing the child. This, in a sense, is characterized by a wish to compensate for the shortcomings of the parents. The social workers, on the other hand, in addition to the role model ideal, can also be seen as using an approach that is more pedagogical and that entails the use of using different models of practice that involve the active engagement of the parents and the systematic planning of how to change the pupil's social behaviour.

For example, the teachers in the resource school express a wish to function as role models who are, as they say, 'normal' in their behaviour. One underlying reason might be that, by doing so, they can compensate for the failing parent. David's [I] words illustrate a perception that adults as good role models can positively change pupils' behaviour:

The reason why we go out and do things is that if we are out and do something other than just school work the pupils will, hopefully, get more chances to get access to 'normal' adults with whom they can have normal conversations and so on. They get to see examples of good, positive interaction between adults and can themselves participate in such interaction. There's lots to gain just from that. The pupils need to learn how to behave socially. Normal things such as waiting for their turn, sitting still, not shouting at the woman in the shop. Clearing away things from the table after they have eaten. Yes, just general good behaviour.

This is interesting in that this perception differs from much of the research concerning teachers' views on pupils in need of special support which indicates that teachers usually ascribe the pupil's problems in terms of the pupil's own shortcomings (Emanuelsson et al., 2001; Isaksson et al., 2007).

On the other hand, even though they might feel that the parents are failing their children, the teachers also express a belief that the pupil's best interest is to live at home, preferably with both parents. Kim [I] describes the objective of the resource school in the following way:

You have to be able to see the big picture for each family. That's the idea we have had from the beginning. That you don't separate the child from its family and send it to a treatment home but instead you can meet them [the family] at an earlier stage so things don't have to go so far.

The social workers' perception of the aim is expressed by a core belief that they need to work with the parents in order to be able to help the pupils to change their behaviour, and that the pupil's social behaviour and emotional feelings are

inherently linked. This, in many ways, is self-evident and is a perspective that is usually characteristic of social work practice (Payne, 1997). However, the underlying reason for supporting the change of the behaviour of the pupil can also be understood from a different and more critical perspective. From this perspective, the understanding can be that the social workers' task is to mould the pupils into a manageable 'raw material' so that they can fit into the school system and, as a result, gain the opportunity to learn. Alternatively, the underlying reason, from a more general socializing perspective, could be that the pupils learn how to behave in the public sphere, and in this way, the children and young people who attend the resource school can develop a social competence which will help them to cope in society in the future.

The social workers also express a core belief that the parents need to be involved in the work with their child's social behaviour in the sense that the pupil also needs to have access to good role models at home, as well as at the resource school. Thus the parents are expected to change their own social behaviour to facilitate this need. This can be interpreted in the sense that the social workers view the parents as active partners in the work done that is aimed at improving pupils' social behaviour. One consequence of this approach is that the social workers perceive parents as equally responsible for the change of the pupil's social behaviour as the pupil her/himself. Tom's [SW] words depict this rather well:

Upbringing is a big thing, but if you break it down into its different components then there are many fundamentals that need to work. But sometimes they aren't in place. For example that you have to behave properly. Only speak when the other person has finished saying what they want to say: 'You don't just butt in. You eat in a proper and pleasant manner. You clear away after you. You rinse the plate and put it in the dishwasher'. Such basic behaviour is not a given for all of the pupils. So we work in exactly the same way in getting the pupils to do these things both at school and in the home. So the social bit is a kind of school for the parents too.

When it comes to affecting a change in the social behaviour of the pupil, the social workers describe a similar focus as the teachers in that the pupils need practice appropriate social behaviour in the form, for example, of taking turns, clearing the table at meal times, being pleasant to others, sitting still, interacting socially with other people in everyday situations (such as when shopping) as well as changing a social behaviour characterized (previously) by non-attendance at school. Olle [SW] is quite clear about this:

Our main aim is to change the pupils' behaviour, it can be about to be able to sit still, how to use the language, anger management, to be able to concentrate. It is individual from pupil to pupil. Some have not been troublesome in school at all, but the problem is that they have not been to school for a year and half. That is a social goal for us. To get them to come and to adjust the work so that they will continue to come every day.

The social workers also emphasize that their task is to work with emotional development. This, for example, could be that the pupil should learn how to handle aggression and to express feelings. Kaj [SW] explains this in the following way:

The emotional bit; that's what we work with. We work with why Pupil X has had an outburst or can't sit still. It is important for them to be able to talk to us about it.

This social worker appears to perceive that the pupil's social behaviour and emotional feelings are inherently linked. Consequently, the social workers may experience that it is their responsibility to address such aspects by talking about them and in this way being able to change the pupil's behaviour.

## Social development as a prerequisite for the acquisition of subject knowledge

The teachers and social workers stress that social wellbeing, which includes psychological as well as physical wellbeing, is a vital prerequisite for the pupil's ability to learn subject content. They argue that the pupil needs to function socially in order to be able to learn and, to function socially, they need to change their behaviour. This perception may be based in a core belief that social and cognitive learning cannot be separated. Bernt [T] encapsulates this view neatly when he says:

You cannot split the social and the cognitive. In learning for me the social is superior. The cognitive subject learning – even if you know the multiplication and all grammatical conjunctions of English verbs or whatever – it doesn't matter. You need to function socially anyhow.

However, whilst the teachers have more of a focus on opportunities of learning the skills of social interaction, the social workers have an additional focus on emotional learning. Bernt [T] expresses the teachers' point of departure in the following way:

School and teaching are a means of getting there – functioning socially. So that is why we work so much with the social bit though reprimands, punctuality, taking responsibility. And there are a lot of other social behaviour things that we do outside the school. Such as when we are up in the hills or being with other people at the swimming pool. We do these things together, but it of course depends from one occasion to another how much of the responsibility that the teachers take.

One consequence of this underlying core belief, expressed by the teachers that social and cognitive learning cannot be separated, might be the recognition that, compared to pupils in traditional schools, the pupils in the resource school have certain social shortcomings. This implies that the teachers need to be sensitive to the social aspect of the pupil's situation to a much greater degree than when practicing in a traditional school.

The social workers' core professional belief in how they perceive pupils' learning is very similar to that of the teachers. The difference, however, is that the social workers tend to see the pupils' difficulties in learning as being more closely linked to their emotions. Quite simply, it is suggested, pupils have more difficulties in concentrating in lessons and acquiring subject knowledge if they have social problems. Eva [SW] puts it like this:

You cannot learn anything if your head is spinning with other thoughts, it is difficult to control your own thoughts. In addition, learning things such as how to manage frustration, how to develop patience and how to encourage empathy are all perceived as important aspects of learning.

Olle [SW] expresses how hard it is to train an emotion-driven social skill in a social activity such as fishing:

Talk about frustration-training. Sitting fishing for two hours and the bloody float never moves at all.

The teachers and social workers also point to the link between the pupil's physical wellbeing and inner feelings, and this is perceived as a factor of importance for learning. Outdoor activities – e.g. fishing or working with woodcrafts – promotes a kind of wellbeing which, in turn, promotes learning. Kim [T] describes this in the following way:

Experiences out in the Nature are calming. They create harmony and gradually the pupils like being outside. It often has a calming effect. The pupils think that it is fun being at the cottage. We do a bit of woodwork, light a fire in the stove and all get together to cook food on a Primus stove. I think that hearing the sounds of

Nature has a calming effect. Researchers who look into the development of the brain and stuff like that think that people feel better for being outside.

The teachers and social workers believe that the experience of being outdoors gives the pupils an inner peace and helps them to focus on learning. They appear to agree that outdoor experiential learning influences the ability to teach school subjects, which can be understood as being based on what can be termed a nature-based discourse which stresses the general salutogenic and wholesome effects of nature on pupils or humankind generally (Niemi, 2010). Consequently, they organise the timetable in such a way that pupils are given the opportunity to be outdoors, for example fishing or out in the forest.

To summarise, the common perception of the teachers and social workers is that the pupils' behaviour, social development and wellbeing all form the preconditions upon which the capacity for formalised learning is determined. Although the meaning of what the 'social needs' aspects of the pupils' situation involve might vary, the teachers and the social workers make the link to social behaviour. Whilst the social workers, for example, also add the dimension of emotions influencing the learning to the notion of 'social needs' and the parent's involvement, the teachers place more of an emphasis on the importance of themselves as being good role models.

## Common grounds: A negotiated social order

The construction of common grounds demonstrates the involvement of a number of processes salient in interprofessional collaboration and which enables that the organisational imperative that the pupils should successfully attain the knowledge goals and can continue to live at home and in a safe environment can be achieved. Using Strauss' concept of a negotiated social order, the staff have negotiated a social order of collaboration. Strauss (1978) argues that negotiations are a means of getting things accomplished and that one way of clarifying the complex process of negotiations is by asking the questions 'by whom' and 'with whom' – in this case the social workers and the teachers – as well as 'over what issues'. Here the issues that the teachers and social workers have negotiated about are multiple.

The first of these I term *the issue about how the pupil's situation is going to change*. Based on their core beliefs, the two professional groups have agreed that the way forward is to work with the social behaviour of the child or young person, i.e. the *social behaviour objective*.

The second issue, about *how children learn*, involves an agreement that social and psychological wellbeing is a prerequisite for the pupil's subject knowledge acquisition. Consequently, the staff share a consensual perspective in viewing the young people's learning as linked to behavioural issues and psychological wellbeing. An alternative could have been that the teaching profession might have dogmatically asserted that that learning a subject – and getting passing grades – comes first, and that this was a precondition for social development learning and future improvement. Alternatively, the social workers could, for example, have maintained that the family therapeutic relationships needed to be developed before any aspect of social behavioural learning or learning of subjects could take place.

The third issue, *the involvement of the parents*, involves an agreement that the teachers can compensate for the parents' lack of parental skills by offering the pupils opportunities of being exposed to different and more positive role models. Whilst the social workers can work with parental skills as a social work-specific task (which will be elaborated more on in Chapter Eight) this is in addition to the broader dimension of exposing the pupil to good role models.

The final issue, about *how to organise the work*, involves an agreement about using a structure of planning, timetable design, and formal and informal meetings. It also involves an agreement as to what types of technology to use as a means of changing – in Hasenfeld's (2010a) terms – the raw material, which here is the pupil and her/his family. At the resource school this technology takes the form of intensive communication, interchangeability and ad hoc meetings.

## Power and professional interdependence

The teachers and social workers in the resource school are dependent on each other in order to accomplish the objectives of the school; that the pupils should successfully attain the knowledge goals and can continue to live at home and in a safe environment. This mirrors Bronstein's (2003) findings and her conclusion that, to function interdependently, professionals have to have a clear understanding of the distinction between their own role and that of the other professions with whom they work. Bronstein (2003) further points out that such 'role understandings' need to be used appropriately, which leads me to the topic of power in the collaborative relation between the teachers and social workers in the resource school. Bacharach and Lawler (1981) explain power in terms of the relational dependency of two or more parties and argue that there are always two

dimensions inherent within the notion of relational dependency; *alternatives* and *commitment*.

Bacharach and Lawler (1981) argue that there are always a number of *alternatives* that are available to reach goals that have been constructed by parties via negotiation. Further, the value that is attached to attaining the goals will have substantial impact on the negotiation process. In negotiating a social order in the resource school the alternative available is the existence of choice, which Handler (1992) suggests is the discretion involved when street level bureaucrats carry out their work. However, the existence of choice exists within the confines of the standards set by the governing legislation, which in this case is the Education Act, the Social Services Act and other related regulatory documents (such as the National Curriculum). Consequently, the teachers and the social workers use their discretion in their negotiation of a social order which encompasses traditional institutional boundaries found in schools, such as, for example, in the form of the use of a timetable to organize the day, and the teaching of subjects in specific classrooms. It appears that they have opted to create a resource school which does not differ vastly from a traditional school.

The other dimension of relational dependency in the form of *commitment* can be used as a tool of power if, for example, one of the teachers or social workers should demonstrate that they are not committed to the idea of negotiating the structure of the work undertaken (such as for example in relation to the timetable design or agreeing to present a united picture to outside agencies). Likewise the interprofessional collaboration could be compromised if one of the members of staff were to strongly oppose the idea, for example, of interchangeability as a technology used at the school. One conclusion to draw is that each member of the staff holds power over the process of negotiating a social order in that each and any action involving change also involves a re-negotiation of the social order. If the staff group was to challenge the pattern of the structure, technology or collaborative relationship characteristic, then the collaboration might either develop or damage the practice at the school. At stake therefore is the legitimacy, as well as for the quality, of the work carried out. One consequence may be that they might refrain from constructing an effective and functional collaborative social order in favour of a practice that might not necessarily be in the best interests of the pupil and her/his family, but which is in the interests of the professionals involved. For example research shows that reaching a common ground on different issues in collaboration around children

and families involves, despite divergent concerns, the use of consensus-based decision making and compliance with majority decisions (Tida 2005).



## Chapter Eight

### Doing separate grounds in interprofessional collaboration – the social workers

The aim of this chapter and Chapter Nine is to describe and analyse how the individual professionals claim and maintain jurisdiction of profession-specific working tasks. I will focus on four areas; *work practice*, the demarcation of *spatiality*, *professional knowledge*, and workers' *professional identity*. These areas have been derived from the analyses of the empirical data where different patterns have been elicited in relation to questions asked about what social workers/teachers do in their work at the resource school, how they perceive what they do, their perception of the role they have, and how they maintain and develop their professional identity.

The construction of the areas described has, to some degree, been influenced, although not predetermined, by concepts derived from theories about professions. Specifically, the theories used in these analyses have not concerned the 'trait tradition', that is to say different attributes associated with being a professional, but are more firmly rooted in the 'action tradition', i.e. theories about what professionals do and how they perceive of themselves in the performance of professional functions. This involves examining claims of jurisdiction and processes of boundary work (Abbott, 1988; Gieryn, 1999; MacDonald, 1995).

In the analyses that have been carried out, the social workers' and the teachers' perceptions of their working tasks in the context of collaboration with each other have been 'bounced off' each other with the aim of eliciting understandings and insights about the processes of interprofessional collaboration. The aims of this strategy are to provide a way of disentangling the different aspects of interprofessional collaboration that mesh together in co-located day-to-day activities, and to concretise what is profession-specific for social workers and teachers working in a co-located collaborative context. The focus has been on eliciting the professional roles of the social workers and teachers studied *in relation to the counterpart profession* – i.e. the teachers and social

workers – and *not* in relation to either social work in its broader forms, *or* for that matter, the professional practice of teaching in general. However, when relevant, references to the teaching or social work profession in general may be used to make an explicit point. The empirical data drawn on in this chapter are derived primarily from the interviews. Having said this, the section focusing on spatial design relies to a greater degree on field observations.

## Social work practice

When the social workers talk about their working tasks and what they do in the co-located context of the resource school, different forms of ‘talking’ emerge as a central activity. The forms that emerge are variously what I term *emergency talk*, *ad hoc talk*, as well as *formalised talk* and *structured therapeutic talk*, both of which also include *preparatory talk*. Although these different forms of talking generally take place at the resource school some, but by no means all, are also conducted by the teachers. For example, ad hoc talk is conducted by teachers and social workers as a more generally supportive activity aimed at pupils and parents. Similarly, the teachers and the social workers are also involved in emergency talk.

Characteristic	With who	Functions	Legitimising aspect of activity for the social workers
Emergency talk	Pupil, parents	Stops potentially dangerous situations for the pupil and the parents, teachers and social workers	To be competent to act in emergency situation in a school setting is a professional trait for social workers – share this ‘talking’ with the teachers
Ad hoc talk	Pupils, parents, staff from other agencies teachers in resource school	Supportive in everyday practice, sharing information, making informal decisions	A means to get the day to run smoothly – share this ‘talking’ with the teachers – legitimise the resource school internally and externally
Formalised talk	External agency staff, teachers in resource school Pupils/parents	To share information and jointly plan the work to be done	Promote social work profession-specific competence working in school context – share this ‘talking’ with the teachers
Structured therapeutic talk	Pupils and parents	A means to change social situation to the better	Gives legitimacy to the presence of social workers
Preparatory talk	Internal between the social workers	To analyse situations, construct a professional knowledge base	Claim jurisdiction of being competent at talking about social issues strengthens the professional status internally and externally

Table 3. Different forms of talking

Three forms of talking emerge as central technologies in the social workers' practice and serve to delineate the social workers' profession-specific practice in relation to the teachers' practice. The first and more prevalent form is what I term *structured therapeutic talk*. The word *structured* suggests a regime involving specific time intervals, length and content. The word *therapeutic* signifies oral interaction the aim of which is to change the social situation of the pupils and her/his family. Next, *preparatory talk*, although it can be as embedded in the process of structured therapeutic talk, is a form of focused interaction that I choose to describe separately since it takes place in different sessions. Finally, a third form is termed *formalised talk* and also appears to be significant in delineating professional boundaries with the teachers.

### Structured therapeutic talk

The structured therapeutic talk appears to have a fundamental role to play when it comes legitimising the social work profession in the resource school in regard to the practice of the teachers. To describe talking in terms of a structure, i.e. talk that takes place at a specific time of day, with recurring regularity (e.g. every second week) and of a predefined duration (usually an hour), constitutes a process of making social work practice explicit. The cloaking of such talk within clear structural boundaries has a function of ensuring professional legitimacy, i.e. preventing it from being regarded – by the other group – as ambiguous, haphazard and diffuse.

The social workers have the discretion to make the decisions about the structuring and the structure of the talk. The teachers are not involved in this. The social workers decide how often they are to meet with the parents, as well as how they allow the parents to have input in determining the frequency of meetings. The descriptions that Max [SW] and Emma [SW] provide about the regularity of structured therapeutic talk with parents serve to illustrate how the frequency and duration of such meetings might vary:

[Max] I decide when we meet and every third week was the norm for a while.

[Emma] One hour that is how long we meet every week, or one and a half hours. That's when we talk about particular things.

The social workers also describe that the structured therapeutic talk with the pupils – which, importantly, is scheduled within the timetable – is ‘special’ and different from the ordinary contact that they have with the pupils on a daily basis. Emma [SW] emphasises this when she says:

We have set aside time every third week, it can be more often if there is a need. I have the talks together with another social worker, we do this together, with the same pupil. The time is usually about half an hour, we can do it shorter or longer.

Whilst talking is a general technology used by social workers (see Adams 2005; Bergmark & Lundström, 2000; Svensson, Johnsson, Laanemets 2008) there is, according to Abbott (1988), a difference between general and organisationally specific descriptions of a profession. In such a sense the social workers in the resource school claim the jurisdiction of having a specific professional knowledge-base about *how* to talk with the pupils and their parents and the *type* of structure needed to create conditions so that talk can be used as an effective tool for changing social situations. This jurisdictional claim can also be understood in terms of serving the purpose of delineating the social workers’ way of talking and of distinguishing, in a clear manner, the difference between the social workers’ talking and the teachers’ talking with pupils and parents. For example the structure around ad hoc talking – which takes place on a daily basis and is guided by the parents and pupils’ needs depending on the random occurrence of different situations – can be perceived as similar for the teachers and the social workers.

However, Max [SW] points to a possible conflict between, on the one hand, structured therapeutic talk with parents and the pupil, and, on the other, the social workers’ everyday practice which involves interaction with the pupils at the school. The social workers are expected to facilitate and organise other activities in addition to the structured therapeutic talks. Max expresses such ideas in the following way:

It is very difficult to first be in a conflict with a pupil and then ten minutes later you are to sit with the same pupil in a meeting talking. You get emotionally wrongly involved like that. It is a classical transference. I don’t want to be too involved in the person in a close way just before the talking, because you lose some ideas. You lose the sharpness in interpreting the situation because you are too involved. It is very difficult.

One interpretation can be that Max is expressing concerns that the structured therapeutic talk might lose some of its significance for their profession if it is

experienced as being too mixed up with the tasks more generally associated with the practice of general support of the social aspects of the pupil's school situation. The social work technology of structured therapeutic talk risks being undermined and perceived by the teachers – and maybe even by the social workers themselves – as a less exclusive part of the social work profession.

### Parental and pupil participation in structured therapeutic talk

The purpose of – and indeed the social workers' interests in conducting structured therapeutic talk with the parents and the pupils – seems to be based on dual interests. First, the talk is perceived as a means of helping parents to change socially difficult situations to the better and as a way of promoting parenting skills that can contribute to the pupil's social development. Secondly this type of talk legitimises the social workers' role in the resource school with regard to the work done by the teachers. In this sense the social workers are, through the practice of structured therapeutic talk, able to safeguard their role as social workers working with the parents and the pupil.

The dual interests, of helping and legitimising the social work role, imply a wish to safeguard participation. Hence, the social workers need to encourage participation to ensure that the parents – and indeed the pupils – will return again and again to the structured therapeutic talking sessions. If, for example, parents or pupils were to refuse to attend such sessions, then the legitimacy of this form of practice could be questioned, which, in the longer term, might lead to the undermining of the professional status of the social workers.

The social workers use different technologies to safeguard participation. For example, the offering of opportunities for parents to talk about themselves and their needs, and allowing them to decide for themselves what to raise and what topics to discuss (underpinned by the notion that people generally like talking about themselves and that, in itself can motivate participation) appears to be used as a way of safeguarding participation in structured therapeutic talk. One consequence of using this technology is that the social workers need to demonstrate competence in addressing a wide range of social issues. For example, by letting the parents choose what to talk about, a broad range of problems can be addressed. Max [SW] expands on the continuum of severity of problems in one of the interviews:

It can be anything from talking about being happy and in love with a new boyfriend, wanting advice on how to practically get their child to take a shower, to wanting to talk about their own experience of sexual abuse or their child's experience of abuse.

Additionally, the practice of the social workers in regard to facilitating social change can also be perceived as underpinned by a theoretical knowledge that change is dependent on the individual's participation and involvement in becoming aware of the situation and, thus, being able to find solutions for themselves. By involving the parents in making decisions about the content of the talk, the social workers' underlying attitude can be that changed social situations for parents are beneficial for the pupils' own opportunities for positive development in school.

Further, the social workers invite the parents to participate in the decision making process as to whether the young person her/himself should be present during the session. This can be seen as being based on a belief held by the social workers that the parents' engagement will be enhanced if they feel that the talking is meaningful and when the opportunity to develop a sense of control over the talk is presented. Thus, by having the power to decide whether their child should be present or not, the social workers might hope to promote a willingness to participate in the overall process of change on the part of the parents. Olle [SW] frames the nature of this decision-making process in the following way:

We decide with the parents if the pupils should be present, for example that we want to discuss the pupil's behaviour at home and his or her relationship with younger siblings.

One aspect of talking with the parents that the social workers point to in the interviews is that the parents must have agreed to take an active part in the child's placement in the resource school. Thus whilst the structured therapeutic talk can be perceived as based on a voluntary agreement, at the same time the parents are more or less under an obligation to take part. Consequently they might be less willing to take part in less traditional therapeutic methods, as Max [SW] for example points out:

We use talking, we don't use drama or role playing, you know, there are limits in what the parents will put up with. We sit and talk and they [parents] think that is enough and they don't want to do other stuff, they will not do that under the umbrella of a school setting. Or at least I don't think so anyway.

In safeguarding the parents' participation in the structured therapeutic talk, the social workers are demonstrating an awareness of the fact that they need to carefully select the type of technologies that they use. Consequently, one conclusion to draw is that the social workers choose a technology that fits in a school context.

When it comes to talking with the pupils, the social workers seem to be more instrumental in making decisions about frequency and content. For example, the structured therapeutic talk with the pupils is incorporated in the pupils' timetables. One way of understanding this is that the social workers in the school context expect the pupil to take part in the talks in the same way that she/he is expected to participate in lessons. The pupils get the message that they are required to participate, and that it is the social workers who, in reality, have the biggest say in determining the topics to address and the content of the talk. Eva [SW] provides an example of this when she says that:

Our thoughts around this time is that the pupils shall feel it is their own time. They shall have the opportunity to talk about, in principle, anything, and it doesn't need to be about problems, it can also be about things that go well, things that are fun, something that the pupil feels that she or he wants to raise. But sometimes we will bring up things, for example if there has been a conflict.

The social workers are clear about the fact that, on occasion and when necessary, they will raise more weighty issues if they think that it is important to do so. This might indicate that they perceive that the pupils are not likely to have the same power as the parents to terminate the contact. Thus they can decide whether they will confront them with certain issues. This, however, is not to say that they don't need to take into account the possibility that pupils might withdraw from participation if their behaviour is confronted in a manner that they perceive as unjust. In my field notes I can read, for example read that:

Emma [SW] says that she does not want to be too hard, that she experiences that her relation to X is not strong enough for her to be too critical of her behaviour in school. At the same time she can't, when having a talk with a pupil pretend that there is nothing wrong.

Emma's [SW] perspective might lead to the understanding that the social workers need to consider their relationship with the pupils and make an assessment as to whether they can confront certain issues without taking the risk that the pupil might obstruct or refuse to cooperate in the talk. The social workers need to have the skills to assess how to talk about social issues in order

to facilitate change, as well to safeguard continued participation in the structured therapeutic talk.

## Participation and confidentiality

To share information with the teachers about the content in the structured therapeutic talk is closely linked to the issue of confidentiality. This may have an influence on the willingness of pupils and parents to participate. Here the social workers are faced with a dilemma. Whilst on the one hand they need to safeguard the participation in the therapeutic talk – for example if the pupils and parents perceive that they cannot trust that the social workers will not disclose whatever they talk about to the teachers or other professionals, they might withdraw participation – at the same time the teachers might expect to be informed about vital aspects of the social dimension in the pupil's situation. Thus at stake here are ethical dilemmas that arise in relation to two separate relationships; the trust invested in co-located collaboration with other professional colleagues, and the trust invested in the relation with the 'client' pupils. Such dilemmas are made topical by both Emma [SW] and Eva [SW] who describe these predicaments in the following ways:

[Emma] It can be that the pupil already has spoken about it and then says 'I don't want you to tell anybody else'. Of course the social worker is in a dilemma; what shall I do?

[Eva] Sure we can also let things go. You don't perhaps talk about everything in detail but instead it can be that you bring up that which you think is of importance for the others to know.

By making an assessment as to the type of information that might be relevant to share with the teachers, the social workers need to consider how the teachers' perceive them as collaborative colleagues. Specifically, the risk is that, sometimes, the teachers may have the perception that they are being unfairly kept in the dark if they are not provided with all relevant information. When this happens the collaborative relationship might be affected. The corollary is the risk that the pupil might stop talking about sensitive issues if she/he becomes aware that the social worker is not keeping confidential information to themselves. Thus in deciding if, what and to whom they discuss what the pupil has told them, the social workers claim jurisdiction of this particular work task. This type of ethical dilemma (i.e. in deciding what information to share, considering the trust invested in relations with, for example, collaborating colleagues and with the



client) is a common feature in inter-professional collaboration and confidentiality issues are often seen as a key factor to be solved if collaboration is to be successful (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

## Preparatory talks

The social workers perceive preparatory talk as an important part of the structured therapeutic talk. They claim not just to hold jurisdiction over talking about social issues within the structure of the therapeutic talk, but also that within that structure the talking is linked to a process of preparing for the talk. Abbott (1988) argues that the ability of a profession to sustain jurisdiction lies in part in the power and prestige of its academic knowledge which, for modern professions, encompasses the values of rationality, logic and science. The logic in including preparation within the structured therapeutic talk can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the exclusiveness of this particular technology of social work practice in that, like the talk itself, it excludes the teachers' participation. Alternatively, the teachers could have been invited to participate in the preparatory talk and, thereby, have gained an opportunity to learn more about the social work knowledge-base. However not extending such an invitation strengthens the social workers 'ownership' of this working task.

The careful preparation in advance of therapeutic talking, in particular when conducted with parents, involves the discussion of a range of different aspects of the situation. Emma [SW] illustrates this in the following way:

We sit down and map out the social network, all the relations and try to analyse what is going on. That is important.

The preparation comes across as more thorough when it comes to talking with the parents since it always takes place in advance of such a session. However when it comes to the pupils, the social workers seem to consider whether or not such preparation is necessary and, in some instances, decide not to have any advance discussions. This is highlighted in the interview with Eva [SW] who explains that:

If we want to raise something specific with the pupil, we decide this in talking with each other anytime, or we might not talk about it beforehand.

In talking with the pupils, the social workers use their discretion in deciding what issues to raise – and which to leave dormant. Often this is done in a more ad hoc

manner than planned talks with parents. This appears to depend on the fact that they have frequent contact with the pupils and, also, that it might not be possible to find time for planning immediately in advance of the time designated for the talk. Further, it might be necessary to have 'up-to-date' knowledge about the pupil's day-to-day situation to make this type of talk more relevant, meaning that little or no time for planning is available. If they sit down and plan issues they need to raise several days in advance, the content might subsequently become irrelevant for the pupil, who may be much more inclined, as young people almost invariably are, to talk about the present.

The form for prior planning of the talks with the pupils might, in that sense, be perceived by the teachers as being less serious and a bit 'off-hand'. Indeed, it can be perceived that the social workers, in a spare moment or simply spontaneously, decide on what to discuss with the pupils. One interpretation of this is that the social workers can afford to do so since the structured therapeutic talk with the pupils can be perceived by the teachers as more legitimate in the sense that it is a part of the schedule, than, say, talking with the parents. Consequently, the social workers may not need to be so explicit in demonstrating the whole process in the structured therapeutic talk, i.e. preparing the talk and ensuring that it takes place at a particular time-slot and for a particular duration, with regard to the pupils as with regard to the parents.

### Formal talk with other agencies

The final aspect of the social workers' use of the technology of talking concerns the formal interaction with staff from other agencies where the pupil's family situation forms the topic of discussion. It appears that the teachers and social workers have clear lines of demarcation about who should speak to which staff in other agencies. Emma [SW] discusses these issues in one of the interviews:

I take the bits if it's necessary to have contact with social services, if it is necessary to write something, then I do that too.

The task delineation where it is the social workers who talk with staff from other agencies concerned with social issues (e.g. child psychiatry) illustrate an underlying value position that similar social welfare professionals can better communicate with and understand one another. Although on occasion a teacher might attend a meeting with, for example, child psychiatry, this is perhaps not the norm. Olle [SW] explains that:

If there is no social worker who can take the meeting that day a teacher can do it.  
But we try to have a social worker who is responsible for the meeting.

Different researchers point to the importance of communication, professional knowledge and language in collaboration (Danermark, 2000; Davis & Sims, 2004; Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003). Willumsen (2006), in her research on co-located inter-professional collaboration in residential child care, concludes that one aspect of professionals' contributions to collaboration is what she terms 'problem perception'. This, she explains, includes codes related to professional knowledge, views and experience. Since contact with other agencies is determined by professional belonging, this means that it is easier to achieve consensus when formulating common problem perceptions. This can in turn lead to a more effective collaboration. Equally, another important reason is that, by means of this division, the social workers delineate the boundaries of who does what and, consequently, strengthen their status by claiming jurisdiction over particular tasks. Having said this, the social workers also perceive that they are confident that the teachers can represent the resource school at a meeting with other agencies, such as child psychiatry or social services if, for practical reasons, it is not possible for a social worker to attend.

To summarise, the social workers at the resource school are engaged in boundary work which serves to legitimise their professional practice and means that they stake out a professional turf. Different approaches are adopted in doing this. First, they claim jurisdiction of talking in a special way with the pupils and their parents by constructing structured therapeutic talk as a profession-specific working task. Secondly, and something which appears as more problematic, is an awareness that they need to make sure that the other tasks required in the resource school, such as for example helping the teachers in the classroom, does not interfere with the time spent on structured therapeutic talk. Finally, they claim jurisdiction of talking with other social welfare professionals, such as social services case workers and child psychiatry workers.

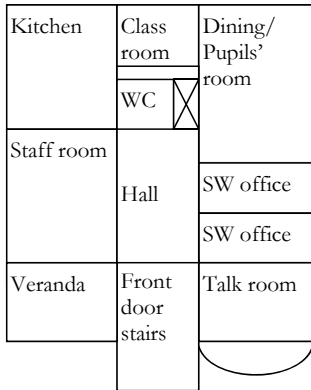
## The use of the spatial design

This section will deal with the infrastructure of the resource school and the social workers' use of spatial design, as a special aspect of the demarcation of profession-specific social work activities in the context of co-located interprofessional collaboration. In the spatial design of the resource school there

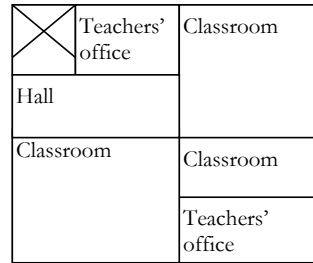
are a total of twelve rooms (excluding the hall and entrances). Of these rooms, six are primarily used by the teachers and three are primarily used by the social workers. The social workers mainly use the rooms in the downstairs sections of the building. The teachers, in their turn, confine their activities to five rooms upstairs that are used as classrooms and offices, and to one small classroom downstairs. Three rooms downstairs are used jointly by both groups. These are the kitchen, the staff room and the combined dining/pupils' room.

Figure. 2. The spatial layout of the resource school

Floor 1



Floor 2



The spatial design of the resource school gives the distinct impression of a separation of practices; school is upstairs and social work is downstairs. Indeed, there may well have been good logical reasons for dividing the spatial resources in the way that has been done. De Jong (1995), however, argues that even if there may be logical reasons for placing certain groups in a certain spatial locations, the symbolic significance of such a division cannot – and should not – be underestimated. Transferring this notion to the resource school, the spatial design, which separates the teachers in their upstairs arena and the social workers who remain downstairs, on the ground floor, can be seen as functioning as a means of separating the two respective practices of the two professional groups. One conclusion to draw is that this spatial design facilitates professional separation even though the collaboration is co-located.

### A room to talk about social issues

The social workers have claimed exclusive use of a particular room, the ‘talk room’ on the ground floor of the building, for social work specific activities. The teachers rarely enter this room, except when specifically invited in by one of the social workers. According to Billquist (1999) and De Jong (1995) it is possible to understand power in relations in human service organisations by looking at the interaction between the spatial design and the work carried out. By focusing on the spatial design at the resource school the social workers stake a claim to this particular physical space as a means of supporting activities that strengthen their own profession.

The social workers use the ‘talk room’ for the purpose of talking with the pupils, the pupils’ families, and with other professionals from different agencies – for example the case worker from social services – and with teachers from the pupils’ home schools. The ‘talk room’ can be used with the pupils either in a planned way or as and when the need arises. Emma [SW] describes this in the following way:

Sometimes I have asked the pupil: ‘would you like to come into the talking room and sit down a for a bit, I can see that you maybe want to talk’. I have said that now and again and to some pupils. I might even have said, ‘OK, now we’re going into the talk room and sit down and talk, because now we need to do this’.

To use a particular room to talk with pupils and parents – where it is possible to close the door and which is situated near the social workers’ offices – is also an aspect of the fact that what is talked about here is not information that should be

accessible to everyone working at the resource school. If that had been the case, the social workers might well have opted to sit and talk about such matters in the downstairs staffroom. The demarcation has the purpose of safeguarding that some aspects of the pupil's situation are not to be verbalised in a way so that anyone else – be the other staff, pupils or guests – can overhear what is being said.

The 'talk room' also offers the social workers a 'place of their own' when preparing structured therapeutic talk with the parents. In my field notes I have written that:

I look and find Max [SW] and Emma [SW] in the 'talk room'. It's two pm and they tell me they are talking about strategies, preparing for a family meeting later on that afternoon. They tell me that they use this room for preparation because it has a flip chart and this is where they will meet the family.

The spatial design is also indicative of the degree of importance that is attached to the activity, and, as De Jong (1995) describes, the more centrally located the room, the greater the importance that is attached to the activities that take place there. Thus, considering the location of where the social workers carry out structured therapeutic talk, this might indicate that this is an important activity. It takes place in a bay-windowed room which is central in the building in the sense that it is the first room you see as a visitor when entering the resource school. Importantly, therapeutic talk always takes place in this particular room.

The bay-windowed room is visible from the outside and is probably the nicest room in the building. The room is separated from the next floor where teaching takes place and, by separating teaching and structured therapeutic talk, the two profession-specific technologies are also distinguished and kept separate. One conclusion to draw is that the 'talk room' is important as a means to demarcate that the activity going on in the room is highly associated with social work. This can serve to strengthen the profession-specific practice of social work in the co-located collaboration with the teachers in the resource school.

Davidson (2002), whose research concerns the integration between school and pre-school, argues that the spatial location can either support or hinder interaction and integration in the sense of e.g. aiming to amalgamate two different professional groups with different pedagogical traditions into a single group that can work together. Drawing on this argument and when looking at the resource school, spatial design can be viewed as either hindering integration or as strengthening professional *identities*. For example, the social workers and

teachers could have decided to share rooms on the two stories of the building as a deliberate means of facilitating social interaction. There would be nothing, for example, to prevent a classroom to be used for structured therapeutic talking, or the ‘talk’ room for lessons. However, had this been the case, demarcation through the use of different spatial areas might not have been possible in the same way as it is now, and the social workers would have lost the opportunity to be able to distinguish particular rooms as belonging exclusively to their profession-specific practice.

Thus, one conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of the spatial design of the building is that the physical separation between social workers and teachers provides zones that are profession-specific and which signify the social control of profession-specific activities. Thus the spatial design can be seen as a physical reflection of the different territories or turfs of the two professional groups.

## The identification of a body of knowledge

This section will deal with the social workers’ perception of a knowledge base that underpins their practice and impacts on the distribution of working tasks. Abbott for example (1988) makes clear that the practice of most professions is tied directly to a system of knowledge that formalizes the skills used when working. In this section I will attempt to identify aspects of a knowledge base for the profession-specific working tasks accomplished by the social workers in the resource school. The analysis is based on the empirical data gathered primarily through interviews and, to a lesser extent, from my field observations.

## Understanding the client’s reality

The social workers underscore the importance of each person’s own truth and understanding of their own world. They emphasise a recognition of the fact that they try to see the situation from the pupil’s or the family’s perspective, and try not to make judgements based solely on how they perceive the situation to be. In other words, they appear to adopt an approach to social work that is based on social constructivism and which stresses that we cannot know an objective reality apart from our own, and that we cannot judge other people’s perceptions of their own reality (Payne, 1997). Kaj [SW], for example, says that:

We have to ask ourselves how would a girl of fourteen experience her mother leaving her and going on holiday with her new boyfriend for a week in Spain. We

need to ask ourselves how would the mother experience having the opportunity of receiving an expenses-paid holiday with her new boyfriend, we cannot judge that.

In being understanding and non-judgemental, the social workers perceive that they can gain the trust of the pupil and her/his parents which, they claim, is necessary as a means of promoting social change. As Max [SW] explains:

We need to see the world from the families' point of view, or the pupil's point of view to be able to understand. If they can describe their conception of the world they can change. They need to trust us to do so.

The social workers express that they have knowledge of the importance of social interaction between the child and its parents. They also believe that teachers and social workers understand interaction between parents and children differently and, in particular, their view is that the teachers think like lay persons. Max [SW] describes one of these differences in the following way:

For example we have a situation where the child has not been in school for a year, the pupil has been at home with the parent nearly every day. The teachers suggested a longer school day and I asked if that was because they assessed that the child's capacity to be in school for longer had improved. They said no. Sometimes my impression is that the teachers want to have the pupil longer in school to give the parent some respite. Which means that we (all staff) need to be in an agreement that the solution is to give respite to the parent and not that the child's needs are to be longer in school. I believe that we cannot give the child a longer school day because we feel sorry for the parent. From a psychological perspective it is not a good solution because they are getting even more separated from each other and I believe they need to be together to develop their relationship, not to be apart. I think this is so common to think like that. I think we social workers and teachers think differently.

One way of interpreting this statement is that Max is clearly stating that whilst the social workers possess professional knowledge about psychology, social interaction and relations, the teachers tend to reason and act from a more 'common sense' frame of reference.

The social workers also express that they believe that previous experiences in childhood are something that can affect both the parents and the pupil, and that this is a rather common thought in society. In particular they say that they tend to meet fairly frequently accounts of parents' previous experiences of the failure to get help from the schools their children have attended. Thus the social workers are put in a situation whereby the organisation within which they are



working – the education services – is subject to systematic and often vehement criticism. Olle [SW] illustrates this in the following way:

For a year and a half we talked, and the most of this talking has involved the parent describing how badly the ordinary school has treated them. The parents had to get rid of all the grievances before they could start working with their own issues. It has not been easy.

Consequently the social workers are put under pressure to navigate between being perceived as disloyal towards the school organisation, and not taking the parents' criticisms seriously. They might even be seen as actually supporting criticisms of the school and the school welfare systems when allowing the parents to dwell on previous experiences and, in so doing, implicitly positioning themselves in a more positive light. This involves running the risk of undermining their professional status with regard to the education services. Alternatively, they might risk being perceived by the parents as siding with the school authorities, with the attendant risk that the parents will not want to participate in talking. This situation highlights a dilemma whereby loyalty to the employing organisation is in focus. Here it is plausible to think that the social workers are likely to be less open about the content of the structured therapeutic talk, particularly if it contains severe criticisms of the education system. Consequently, the social workers are faced with withholding something that might be viewed as important information by the teachers, even though their reason for withholding it may be in order to protect the collaborative relation by not wanting to be seen as entertaining criticisms of educational practice.

Sometimes the work with the parents is underpinned by practical things that the parents need to do. The social workers appear to experience this as a productive technology, although there is also the perception that it might minimise the complexity of the work they do. If there is too much of a focus on practical issues in the time spent with the parents there is a risk, as the social workers see it, that the teachers might view social work practices as rather basic and lacking the complexity and sophistication of professional work. Max [SW] illustrates this in the following way:

I reviewed some case notes and discovered that we had spoken with a father for about six months about the same issue and nothing had happened. We then gave the father some small tasks to do between each session and finally it happened. He seemed to understand better, this method is good because what we are doing becomes more visible. But the teachers probably think that was simple and nothing special.

This perception on the part of the social workers that the teachers might think that the work is not so difficult arises when the work they do appears transparent, practically-oriented and easy to understand. The social worker may perceive a link between the status of the profession and the apparent complexity of the task to be accomplished. This perception can reflect a need to defend the knowledge-base used as professional and scientific, and not one that is commonsensical or simple. This is a perception that can function to promote a higher professional status. Abbott (1988) for example points out that a profession's abstract scientific base is gained through higher education and is one of the prerequisites for maintaining professional jurisdiction.

### Professional learning by talking

The social workers describe that they learn by talking with each other and that communication is a vital tool for developing knowledge for their practise of social work. This reflects a technology which is generally used to create knowledge in social work as a means of becoming a better practitioner, and is commonly referred to as reflective practice (Fook, Ryan & Hawkins, 2000; Payne, 2002). Eva [SW] expresses this in the following way:

It is not self-explanatory. It is much more self-explanatory in teaching. There you follow a plan and you learn how to read and you learn multiplication but the social element is in my view not as self-explanatory. So you need to talk with each other to understand what social work is.

This form of a collaborative creation of professional knowledge can be interpreted in the way that it promotes professional dependency; social workers need other social workers to create professional knowledge.

External supervision is frequently mentioned by the social workers as one important form of talking with colleges about things that take place in a more reflective way.<sup>9</sup> This is a view that can stem from the notion that supervision is usually generally viewed as an important characteristic of the social work profession. For example, different surveys indicate that approximately eighty percent of all social workers receive external supervision (Dellgran & Höjer, 2005a). Bradley and Höjer (2009), in their study of supervision in England and Sweden, found supervision to be a technology that can provide social workers with the opportunity to develop knowledge of how to use their discretion to

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<sup>9</sup> The whole staff group usually received external supervision, but it had just finished when the study started, due to an expressed wish to change supervisor, and did not commence again during the period of the study.

further strengthen their professional status and legitimacy. In this sense external supervision in the resource school signifies a vital attribute to the characteristic of the social work profession and as representing opportunities for professional knowledge development for the social workers. Eva [SW] expresses the benefits of external supervision in the following way:

There is also a limit to how far you can collegially solve problems. But at the end of the day when you have turned things inside out and covered all of the possibilities, it can be good if someone from outside can have a look at things with a fresh pair of eyes.

However the social workers' recognition of supervision as an important tool for learning is one that they perceive is not at all that familiar to the teachers and, perhaps as a consequence, the social workers appear to make out that the teachers are less experienced in receiving the sort of external supervision that includes a self-critical aspect. Max [SW] highlights his perception of teachers' experiences of supervision in following words:

I think that people who work in school and who have worked there for some time are not used to things like supervision. Dealing with strong emotions which has to do with yourself and your action and to reflect on issues around violence and conflicts.

Thus it is possible to understand that the social workers experience a need to negotiate with the teachers about the importance of the activity since they perceive that the teachers are not as familiar with the 'taken-for-granted' value of supervision and that what is at stake is an important trait which provides the social workers with professional legitimacy. Equally, and from an organisational perspective, it might be possible to link the value of external supervision as a means of providing legitimacy to the resource school as a unit. For example Höjer, Beijer and Wissö (2007) found that social work organisations gain legitimacy by being able to offer external supervision and, by doing so, the organisation can attract well-educated, ambitious and professional staff.

## The pupil's emotional state as a prerequisite for learning

The perception of the social workers is that that expectations about the pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge differ between the two professional groups. The social workers' perception is firmly rooted in the notion that the pupil's

emotional state is the primary determinant for learning. Emma [SW] frames this notion in the following words:

It seems to me that those of us who have an education with more of a social background don't think that the theory bit is less important, but we do think that, well the child must have a platform to stand on to be able to gain the benefit of theoretical teaching. If you don't feel that that good about yourself, it can be hard to sit there and take it all in. It's easy to be unfocused, lack concentration and find things difficult. Whilst I can sometimes feel that our teachers sometimes think differently – of course they should have lessons and we're having a theoretical lesson now no matter how the child feels, we need to get on with it – I can sometimes feel differently and that there are tensions between us. That we think differently.

This is one example of where the different knowledge-bases of the teachers and social workers diverge and can be a possible source of conflict. The social workers appear to link the pupil's ability to learn with her/his emotional state and hold a general belief that if a pupil experiences difficulties, it is rooted in their emotional state and – implicitly – that teacher has not taken this into consideration when planning and executing the lesson.

Another way of viewing this type of dilemma could be that the teachers have been unable to generate sufficient motivation and/or been able to present the lesson content in a way that is meaningful for the pupil. However, to be able to make such an interpretation, the social worker would need to have a knowledge-base that includes an understanding of how children learn, the function of motivation and the factors that need to be taken into account in instructional design. Since such knowledge is lacking, they instead seem to rely on a more 'common sense' approach, believing that if a child in a socially problematic situation finds the lessons too difficult, the reason must in some way be due to the emotional state of the child.

The social workers also describe a sense of uncertainty as to the *type* of learning that they perceive as important for the pupil. Emma [SW] expresses this in the following way:

What is it that is most important for the pupil? Is it managing to achieve a certain goal in a theoretical subject or is it being able to reach goals – or part-goals – in working with self-esteem?

They describe that these two aspects of the pupils' development – pedagogical aspects and social work aspects – are not always easy to separate and that it is not always a clear-cut case in terms of knowing which is most important.

The social workers can also be seen as expressing a view that there is a general tradition in the school system to focus on deficiencies in the pupils' knowledge and skills in relation to goal achievement, and that this is a source of frustration and discomfort for pupils. In their view, such conflicts are not conducive to pupils' overall learning. Olle [SW] expresses these concerns in the following way:

Why sit there and work all the time with things that obviously don't work? You choose something which isn't working or something that the kid isn't good at, and then just try and stuff in as much as is possible according to the curriculum. Because they have a curriculum. And so they don't have anything else. So what happens then? Confrontation. Confrontation. And in the end you get acting out and it all kicks off and a desk gets thrown around and a door slammed. And everyone says get the pupil out of here.

This argument expressed by the social workers could be understood as based in either a lack of cognisance of curriculum requirements – a knowledge-base that is fundamental for teachers and a remit that provides schools with legitimacy as societal institutions – or as a lack of understanding of the nature of the task teachers have of equipping children and young people with knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, the social workers describe the acquisition of social skills as contextual and process-driven, meaning that, while a pupil might be able to control her/his anger in one situation, this might not be the case in another. This can be contrasted, they say, for example, with learning a particular sort of maths which 'stays' as knowledge in a different way. This perception is illustrative of a view that the teacher's instructional task is, to a greater extent, dependent on a linear and accumulative process in that learning is about adding new knowledge to pre-existing knowledge and, by doing this, the child can attain higher levels of competence. Eva's [SW] statement illustrates a perception that processes of learning differ fundamentally in this respect:

The social depends on the circumstances round about. The home situation, everything that's happening around that means that things change. That can mean several steps back while a pedagogue is working with one thing, other things build up elsewhere. And there can be development. So the pupil can take a break in their acquisition of knowledge. And if you take a break then you can start again where you left off. So it's a little bit different.

The description given by the social workers in the resource school that social work is about processes and is context-dependent reflects well-established approaches in social work practice (Payne, 2002). The term ‘process’ in social work practice refers to the complexity and connectedness in the sense that social workers do not see separate events but focus rather on the connections between them (Payne, 2002). In the case of the resource school, the social workers seem to highlight the connectedness between context and behaviour and how the interaction between people and/or artefacts affects the ways in which the young people behave.

The social workers also seem to demonstrate a view on how children learn which, from the teachers’ standpoint, might be perceived as reductive and over-simplified. The perception by the social workers that subject knowledge acquisition should be less about process and more about content might be an illustration of a lack of awareness of the complexity of learning processes in which experiences of process and context are important cognitive dimensions (Frelin, 2010).

## The social workers’ professional identity

Professional identity, in a co-located collaborative context, concerns the way in which a professional group perceives their statutes and roles in a working environment that is also populated by another professional group. Using the definition of professional identity developed by Heggen (2008), which he argues is constructed and re-constructed through practice and involves the production of a self-perception of one’s own professional role in the workplace in relation to other professionals, the social workers perception of their professional role and status account has been analysed. However, for a professional identity to take shape and to be shared there needs to be a consensus as to professional roles, values and behaviours that demonstrate these characteristics in practice (Ibarra, 1999). This too has also influenced the analysis of the social workers’ perceptions of their role and status with regard to their practice. The shared characteristics in the professional practice in the resource school that emerge from scrutiny of the data can be characterised by four themes; *commitment to work in a school context and help with everything, preparedness to make independent decisions, having good working conditions, and accepting a lower rate of pay.*

## Someone who is committed and helps with everything

The social workers describe that one important aspect of working in the resource school is that it is necessary to demonstrate commitment to work in a school setting. This can be understood as practising outside traditional social work domains such as, for example, in a treatment home or a social services office. Emma [SW] puts voice to this idea in the following way:

We social workers have to be interested in the school's world. Otherwise you might not work here. You might prefer to work in a treatment home or something like that where there are more social workers.

This statement is illustrative of the notion that you need to be willing to practice in an institutional school context which is not dominated by social work practice and values that in a context of social work practice might be taken for granted. Further, as an individual professional, as well as a group, there may be a constant need to legitimise your practice. This may in turn mean that it may not be possible to be relaxed in the notion of being a 'legitimate' profession in the workplace you find yourself in. This idea may also be reasonably linked to a spatial dimension; even though social services are joint stakeholders with the education department, the social workers' legitimacy in the resource school may nevertheless be reduced by practicing in a building that closely resembles a school (there are lots of classrooms with whiteboards and books) and which by tradition is closely linked to the teaching profession.

Another dimension of practice in an institutional context that is not dominated by social work practice is the perception on the part of the social workers that they are expected to help out in different ways. This role is by no means unproblematic. The social workers at the resource school seem to perceive that their role is both to be responsible for the conduct of social work with the pupils and their parents, as well as being expected to do *whatever else* is needed. There are a number of working tasks that the social workers do at the resource school which are not that easy to exclusively associate with social work. For example, sitting beside a pupil during lessons, arranging social activities or preparing before and tidying up after meal times can be associated with the duties of many different categories staff, such as, for example, teaching assistants or ancillary staff, or indeed other professional groups to be found in school such as recreational pedagogues. Max [SW] sums up the social workers' perception of their collective self-image when talking about their role in the resource school in the following way:

You have a main responsibility for talks with parents and with pupils, but you also have to do a little bit of everything else. This other stuff can be getting the breakfast ready, clearing the breakfast stuff away, sitting in on a lesson, doing free-time activities, driving the car, making calls, buying stuff, doing individual activities with pupils, dealing with conflicts. The list can be never-ending of things that you can offer to do. There's no end to it if I were to be honest.

The social workers can also be seen expressing the notion that their role is to be responsible for the pupils' future. The reason given is that they can help the pupils to get an education and, as a result, the pupil can continue living at home. Consequently, the social workers claim the jurisdiction of being the facilitators that enable the child to get an education and to live at home. Interestingly, this is not something that they refer to as responsibility that is 'shared' with the teachers.

To claim to hold the jurisdiction over this responsibility, that is to say enhancing social development so that the pupils can acquire knowledge and attain passing grades in core subjects, can be understood in the sense that the teachers are dependent upon the social workers' success in their practice in order to be able to successfully accomplish their working task of teaching. The social workers first need to 'change', using Hasenfeld's (2010a) terminology, the 'raw material' before the teachers can commence their own activity of 'people changing'. Kaj [SW] thinks that that this is the most important role the social workers have when she says that:

The pupils need help so that they can get an education and cope later on. THIS is what we on the social side do.

However, as the social workers point out, if they fail in helping the pupil to stay on in school and get an education there is no other option for social services other than to place the child in out-of-home care which, they seem to perceive, would be indicative of a failure on their part. At the same time there is also an acknowledgement that, sometimes, this solution is actually in the best interests of the child and can sometimes best meet the child's needs. Olle [SW] illustrates this view when he says:

If we don't manage to fix it so that the pupils manage to cope with school, then they can't live at home and they'll have to be placed outside the home.

The social workers further explain that it is necessary to demonstrate commitment to the belief that working in a school context enables them to practice successfully with children who might previously have been placed in



care had it not been for the current policy of trying to treat all children and young people 'at home' in so-called home-based solutions. The social workers are expected, without the organisational support that a social work institutional context might provide, to successfully carry out social work in the resource school. However, this is not always unproblematic and they sometimes describe a feeling of frustration in not being able to find the right means or practice in the school context for doing social work. This, for example, could be manifested in the question of whether or how to enforce sanctions on pupils who consistently break rules or behave in ways that are inappropriate. This difference, they say, is particularly noticeable with regard to the older pupils. Emma [SW] expresses her frustration over this 'problem' when she says that:

I can be really frustrated when a pupil behaves badly and we have nothing to set against this. I think this is one of the most difficult bits. You want to be strong. To put a stop and say 'this is where the boundary is'. For example in a treatment institution you can use confinement but here you don't have that opportunity. You need the parents' help to a greater degree. Whilst in an institution you have more structure and straightforward consequences. It is more difficult here.

The frustration Emma expresses about not being able to deliver sanctions or consequences if a pupil behaves in a way that is unacceptable, can be understood in the terms of the lack of organisational power (Järvinen, 2002). The nature of organisational power is different when practicing in a school context then in an institutional care context. For example in traditional institutional treatment settings, social workers generally have the discretionary power to decide about sanctions with regard to the children and their families. This means, for example, that they can make autonomous decisions about when the child or young person can leave the institution to visit parents, take part in external activities or go out on trips etc. (Willumsen & Hallberg, 2003).

### Someone who takes independent decisions and works good hours but has lower pay

The social workers perceive themselves as professionals who can make their own decisions, at least on an individual level, with regard to the pupils, parents and staff at other agencies. The social workers' decision-making is something that other colleagues, according to the social workers, accept unquestioningly. The social workers exercise discretion which, according to Coble Vinzant and Crothers (1998), is absolutely essential if street level bureaucrats are to carry out their working tasks successfully and efficiently. Quite simply, if the social

workers had to refer with other social workers or with the teachers, the work would have been difficult to carry out smoothly. Eva [SW] illustrates this when she says that the social workers can make decisions in a broad range of situations:

Contact with parents, that's something I decide about on my own. If I feel that I need to call them more frequently in a particular situation or just spread out the contact a little. If something has happened I can decide to phone the parents. But of course if it happens often then you would talk with a colleague before you phone. To get a sense of confirmation that I am doing the right thing. However, I could just as easily go and make the call myself if I wanted to. When it comes to meetings I decide for myself if I think that there is a need for a meeting with one of the case workers [from the social services department] for example. Then I just ring her/him up and ask, 'can we have a meeting about this?' I don't need to ask anybody else about it. Also if I have a lesson and it gets a bit chaotic and rowdy, then I can say 'now we're changing and we are doing this instead'.

When asked if there would be any decision she could make which might cause her colleagues concern, Emma [SW] says:

Maybe if I decided to send a pupil home then maybe someone might think, was this necessary? But at the same time I think that we work so tightly together that when difficult situations do arise we are, in some way, all in agreement about how things should be. So, if I had perhaps sent a pupil home and couldn't really motivate it, then there would have been someone who would have reacted or questioned me, or at least I think so. But if I had been able to explain and motivate it, how it happened, it would have helped.

Being able to motivate decisions plays an important role in how trust is developed. If the social workers, as Emma explains, can motivate their decisions, both the teachers as well as other social work colleagues seem to accept the decision. This can be understood as a sign of a trust in the judgement of one's colleagues.

To make decisions that have a higher level of impact, for example if a pupil should be removed, either for a period of time or permanently, from the resource school, there is a belief that these kinds of decisions should be taken at a management level. Kaj [SW] expresses such a view in the following way:

It is the manager for the central support unit in the education services who is responsible for the resource school and decides if a pupil can be moved. We as staff can say what we think, but we cannot take the decision.

Consequently, the social workers express that they have discretion to decide for themselves, but also that there are boundaries around the responsibility they have when it comes to higher-stakes decision-making.

One issue that is raised as being sensitive is that the social workers have a feeling that salaries differ, and that the resource school teachers are better paid than they are. One aspect of this perception of differences on the part of the social workers might be that, if they perceive that the teachers are being paid more, this can impinge on their professional self-perception in terms of their status and the professional legitimacy of their work. For example Meads and Ashcroft (2005) argue that pay is a key indicator of recognition and status and if pay affects collaboration it can be a serious threat in achieving common aims. Tom [SW] expresses a feeling that there is a salary differential in the following way:

I like working so that the pupil can return to their home school, that is the importance of the work, and whether this is achieved by the teachers or the social workers is irrelevant. But it's cheaper if it can be done by a social worker.

When scrutinising the salary documents for the resource school it appears that there are indeed significant salary differentials and that the majority of the teachers earn between 100-200 Euros per month more than the social workers (Salary document, 2005)<sup>10</sup>. However, it should be added that it is not possible to ascertain whether these differences depend on professional status or whether other factors, such as for example the employees' ages, gender and amount of years in service have a stronger determining influence. The teachers have, generally, a longer period in municipal service. Nevertheless it is still possible to make the interpretation that the value of the contribution of the social work profession in the resource school – and thus its status – is strongly related to the question of pay.

Equally, the social workers link working hours to professional status in regard both to other social workers in other areas of practice, and the teachers in the resource school. To have the same working hours as the teachers comes across as being perceived as important by the social workers. Linking this to how they make references to the working hours in institutional care, which almost invariably include working evenings and weekends, makes it possible to interpret their perceptions as being privileged in having 'school hours' and that this might thus provide them with higher status within the professional field. Eva [SW] puts it like this:

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<sup>10</sup> The salary document is not in the reference list due to confidentiality.

To have a chance to work as a social worker and be able to work daytime during school hours is quite unique and a pleasant way of working in my view. Often when you work as a social worker you might have to work evenings, weekends and nights.

One important issue is that the hours are the same for social workers and teachers. Kaj [SW] illustrates this when he says that:

I am not prepared to work later in the afternoons and during school holidays because we should have the same hours. We are, after all, colleagues.

So, in the event of any changes to working hours, it is not only that such changes would have an impact on the social workers' private lives; they might also be appraised as a threat towards the professional image of being social workers with a high status in relation to the profession in general, as well as in regard to the teachers in the resource school.

## The social workers' profession-specific practice

Abbott (1988) argues that claiming workplace jurisdiction involves, as previously mentioned, a claim for a monopoly of a legitimate activity within a particular field, in this case the field of social work practices in the co-located collaboration taking place at the resource school. The term 'social work specifics' is used to describe some of the more poignant jurisdictional claims to the right to conduct specific working tasks made by the social workers. The profession-specific working tasks that have emerged in the analyses of the social workers' practice are *talking about social issues in a specific way* and *holding the power of confidentiality of such talks*. These two social work specifics can contribute to understanding the role of the distribution of working tasks in processes of developing and maintaining social work professional identities and how the role of the social workers is legitimised in the resource school.

### Holding jurisdiction for talking about social issues in a specific way

The social workers in the resource school claim to hold the jurisdiction of talking about social issues in a specific way by means of the previously mentioned devices of *structured therapeutic talk*, *preparatory talk* and *formalised talk*. This, in some ways, is a fairly natural practice for a social worker. Talking, as previously mentioned, is generally viewed as a primary trait for social work (Svensson, Johnsson & Laanemets, 2008). It can, for example, be talking in the

form of counselling, investigative talking and therapeutic talking in the frame of various approaches such as, for example, cognitive behavioural, psychodynamic or therapeutic methodologies (Bergmark & Lundström, 2000; Dominelli, 2002). Either way, the interesting issue is not what the talking in itself involves but, rather, the type of activity that talking about social issues within a specific structure represents.

To claim the jurisdiction of talking about social issues in a specific way represents a core technology for the social workers in the resource school. It delineates their professional turf and establishes the legitimacy of their profession in the context of the co-located collaboration (see Abbott, 1988). To choose a core technology with the aim of delineating claimed turf requires that the professional group is in a position of having the discretionary power to enable this to happen.

It is possible to identify three factors that make it possible for the social workers to choose the core technologies of talking about social issues in the format of *structured therapeutic talk*, *preparatory talk* and *formalised talk*. First, there is no general consensus as to what technologies are optimal in doing social work in a co-located setting such as a resource school. Furthermore, there are no strict guidelines developed on an organisational level with regard to the types of technology/technologies that should be focused on. This leaves it open for the social workers to decide themselves upon the most appropriate technology. The reasons for this can be found in that that one characteristics of human service organisations is the indeterminacy of the technologies available for use (Hasenfeld, 2010a). The indeterminacy of technologies basically means that, since the merits of a particular technology may not generally be apparent, competing claims about the advantages of one technology over another occur. This in turn leaves it open to street level bureaucrats to hold different opinions about what is 'good for the user' and, in that sense, it becomes impossible to claim that particular core technologies are either right or wrong. Thus the social workers in the resource school are left to decide what technology they want to use, independently of any need to consult, for example, with the teachers or for that matter with other social workers.

Secondly, another reason linked to the indeterminacy of technology in a human service organisation is that the social workers can exercise discretion in determining the content of the talking and, in doing so, can practice in such a way that they can ensure the participation of the pupils and their families. The

social workers in the resource school refrain from using any specific talking technology, such as, for example, motivational talk, solution-focused therapy, counselling etc. (Payne, 1997). By keeping the talk technology eclectic, dialogues can have a different focal content and, for example, can focus on diverse areas such as parental skills that can promote pupils' knowledge development, relations within the pupil's family network or the pupil's dreams and aspirations. This can be linked to Lipsky's (1980) point that street level bureaucrats in human service organisations possess a discretion in making decisions about people and that such discretion is a necessity for being able to achieve the goals of the work, which in this case can include safeguarding continued parental participation in the talk.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the focus, the social workers can, importantly, control the content of the talking and, by doing so, can choose when for example to confront parental behaviour without risking that that parents withdraw their participation. Consequently, the social work specific of talking in a particular way about social issues can be seen as serving to legitimise the profession in the resource school by giving the social workers leeway to practice in such a manner that can best deliver results.

They also have the discretion as to the topics that can be raised in the formalised talk. Thus, being in control of the content can promote 'problem understanding' and can legitimise their professional domain within the co-located collaboration.

Thirdly, discretion is always in relation to some kind of framework of constraint (Dworkin, 1977). The constraint, in the current case, can be found in the institutional norms that pertain both in the social services and education organisations. Having said this it might, arguably, have been difficult not to have chosen talking as a core technology in that, as previously mentioned, it is a common technology used in social work generally, as well as a common technology used by school social workers (Backlund, 2007). Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that one factor that can promote collaboration is where the institutional norms of the collaborating organisations do not differ too greatly from one another.

Thus, in the sense of choosing a technology which resembles the teachers' technology of teaching school subjects, the social workers can be understood as using "a similar institutional language" in their practice as that used by the counterpart profession. The technology of *structured therapeutic talk* accords well with the resource school's emergent institutional norms, in that activities take

place in specific rooms, at specific times and for specific periods of duration. For example, the structures of structured therapeutic talking can be compared with teaching, which, in similar terms, needs to be planned and take place in a particular room (a classroom) at particular times, with a particular frequency and for a particular duration. Glisson (1992) specifically points to the fact that there is a link between what human service workers do in their efforts to affect clients – i.e. the technologies they choose – and the relationship that exists amongst the workers which, in this case, is a form of co-located collaboration. Quite simply, they have found a technology which can be sanctioned both by other social work colleagues, the teachers, and the school itself as an institution.

As Hasenfeld, (2010a) explains, human service organizations tend to use technologies that are sanctioned by the institutional environment. In this sense, neither social services nor the education department would be opposed to the social workers using the technologies of *structured therapeutic talk*, *preparatory talk* and *formalised talk* in the co-located collaborative context of the resource school. Consequently by adopting technologies which fit with pre-established institutional expectations, the social workers in the resource school have adopted a profession-specific practice which can contribute to function as a legitimising process for their profession, both with regard to the other professional group in the co-located context, but also organisationally.

## The power of confidentiality

To balance professional interests of transparency in co-located collaboration with confidentiality in regard to the pupils and parents is a specific working task of the social workers. To maintain confidentiality in structured therapeutic talk can be seen as oppositional to demands of transparency of practice. Transparency is commonly viewed as a factor that promotes trust between professionals and is often put forward as an aspect of particular importance when it comes to collaborative practice (Adams, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). For example, Huxham and Vangen (2005) argue that by demonstrating measures of transparency in what the professional practice involves, the ‘other’ partner can gain insights into the counterpart’s professional practice and that this consequently increases the value placed on the input in the collaborative relationship.

Confidentiality can, in this sense, be understood as a professionally negotiable issue in that the social workers have a discretion as to the insights which they

feel are legitimate for the teachers to have. Often there can be sensitive social issues involving the pupil and their parents and this means that the social worker has to decide, from one situation to another, how to address such problems from a practice point of view. The 'ownership' of talk that is subject to issues of confidentiality means that the social workers can be seen as enhancing their professional status in that confidentiality is closely associated with social work in general. Many descriptions of social work highlight confidentiality as a core trait of social work (Briskman, 2005; Payne, 2002). It also involves being in control of information. Having this kind of power within their jurisdiction means that the social workers can also be seen as holding power in the interprofessional relationship with the teachers in that it is they – the social workers – who have the discretion to decide what information to share with or withhold from the teachers.

One constraint that impinges on the social workers' discretion in deciding what information to share with the teachers is, of course, the parents and the pupils' perception of the social workers' ability to keep sensitive information confidential. This, as previously discussed, can affect their willingness to participate. If the parents and pupils were to refuse to take part in the formalised and planned talking, as a result, for example, of losing faith in the social worker's ability not to disclose sensitive details about their lives, then the legitimacy of the social workers' chosen technology of *structured therapeutic talk* might be threatened. This could of course affect the perception of the status of the social workers' professional position in the school. The risk the social workers might face is that, if talking doesn't work or yield tangible results such as, for example, the continued collaboration of disillusioned parents or pupils, that their professional presence in resource school might be questioned. From such a perspective, having the discretion as to what information to share from therapeutic talking is vital for the maintenance of the social workers' professional legitimacy.



## Chapter Nine

### Doing separate grounds in interprofessional collaboration - the teachers

In describing and analysing how the teachers claim and maintain the jurisdiction of working tasks that form a part of what can be seen as the teachers' profession-specific practice in the resource school I will focus on four areas; the *teachers' practice*, the *demarcation of spatiality*, *teachers' professional knowledge* and, finally, the *teachers' professional identity*.

#### The teachers' practice

Three areas of working tasks have been identified as being central in describing the practice of the teachers in the resource school; *responsibility for the pupil's educational outcomes*, *creating conducive conditions for a learning environment* and *collaboration with the home schools' teachers*.

Responsibility	Function	Legitimising aspects
Educational outcomes	Establish profession-specific working tasks, strengthening teachers' professional identity	Good educational outcomes give legitimacy vis-à-vis education department and society as a whole
Creation of conducive conditions for learning by adopting different didactic approaches e.g. offering multiple task choices, creating own learning material, using of social workers in the classroom	Promotes pupils' educational attainment, accomplishes participation of pupils in lessons	Pupils reaching the academic goal attainment gives legitimacy towards the home schools, the pupils, their parents and social services
Collaboration with the pupils' home school teachers	Facilitates the pupils return to home school, and strengthens teachers' professional identity	Creates legitimacy towards the home schools. Creates legitimacy in relation to individual feeling of teacher identity

Table 4. Teacher's responsibilities

I will now go through each of these aspects of the teachers' practice.

## Responsibility for educational outcomes

When the teachers describe what they do the responsibility and accountability for the pupil's educational outcomes comes across as central. This perception, quite naturally, can be related to the teaching profession in general, i.e. being responsible for children's learning and goal attainment as an ingrained element in teachers' perceptions of the purpose and outcomes of teaching (Gannerud & Rönnerman, 2007). Educational outcomes, as stated in the national curriculum, include both academic attainment as well as the development of social and democratic values (Skolverket, 2009). However, the teachers in the resource school can be seen to perhaps under-emphasise the democratic or what can also be termed the *social* aspect (in the sense of what Ranagården (2009) calls 'social development' and where the focus is on attitudes, values, social interaction in the classroom and other social relations) of their professional object and, instead, focus more on the *academic* aspect. Consequently, the teachers can be seen as holding jurisdiction of being accountable for the academic aspect of the pupils' educational outcomes. Kim [T] points to this when she says that:

The role of the teacher means that you have responsibility for actually teaching the subjects. The acquisition of knowledge in the subjects. That's our formal responsibility.

One dimension of the responsibility for educational outcomes that emerges as being important is grading and assessment. This working task is portrayed as difficult and contentious as it both serves as a measure of teachers' individual competence, as well as legitimising the resource school vis-à-vis the home schools. As David [T] explains:

You have to be careful so that you don't use other criteria than what they do in the ordinary schools. That's something I think you have to be careful about. You can't be too kind because then the pupil will get problems when they return to the ordinary school. And the ordinary school will see that we have not done our job.

The emphasis on being responsible for educational outcomes and that the teachers are being measured in terms of their success in enabling pupils to attain academic goals can be understood with reference to the use of educational attainment as an established method of ascertaining the quality of schools (Skolverket, 2008). Consequently, from a organisational perspective, the teachers' jurisdiction of being accountable for the pupils' academic outcomes implies that it can be easier to blame the teachers for poor practice if the pupil fails to reach knowledge goals than, for example, if the pupil fails to make

progress in her/his social development. It is thus reasonable to think that, in the longer run, if the pupils fail to reach the educational goals, this might undermine the teachers' legitimacy in the co-located collaborative context of the resource school.

### Creating conducive conditions for academic learning

The teachers' descriptions of creating a learning environment that is conducive for the educational development the resource school pupils comes across as being a central professional responsibility. However it may be more of a challenge in relation to the nature of the previous experiences of the pupils, which, invariably, have been of finding school work problematic, troublesome, difficult, and of lacking opportunities to demonstrate success. An unchallengeable assumption would be that the resource school pupils' willingness to take part in school activities and teacher-constructed learning opportunities is going to be far less than for the average pupil in an ordinary school. However, this characteristic nevertheless seems to have a significant influence in the creation of the teacher's professional practice in that they have to ensure the participation of the pupils in the lessons. To accomplish this they make use of different technologies. For example, when the teachers talk about teaching, an agreement emerges in that a common core for all teaching in the resource school is the challenge to provide educational opportunities that the pupils find stimulating, interesting and meaningful. Bernt [T] describes this challenge by explaining that the pupils usually show few signs of having an instrumental approach to learning:

They lack the approach which is present when pupils have got the 'school code', the code to know that you need to learn because the teachers want this, not just because it's fun.

Different approaches with the aim of encouraging learning emerge when the teachers talk about what they do. They say that they try to motivate pupils by giving examples of good work that she or he has already produced. David [T] explains that if he shows a pupil previous work which has been assessed as being good, this will encourage the pupil to want to continue working with the next task in the same subject. He expresses this in the following way:

This is an example of project work done by a pupil which is quite good. What he has left in the Swedish subject is to do a more extensive project and to present

this project work. I showed the pupil the first project work earlier today as an attempt to motivate him to get started with the next one.

Because they work with a mixed-age group ranging from 8 to 16 years of age, the teachers in resource school are thus faced with the need to demonstrate skills in decision-making in relation to the instruction that is appropriate for each particular pupil. This involves not only academic content, but, from a motivational perspective, content that is appropriate in terms of the student's age and interests. For example, some of the teachers use games as a means of creating an appealing learning environment. This practice of teaching can be illustrated by my observations of one of many such instances noted in my field observations:

We sit by the round table and play a game with letters. It is me and three pupils in their teens and two staff, one teacher and one social worker. Then we had a break and we and played a maths game a, sort of bingo with dice. The pupils seem to be used to this form of teaching.

The teachers' practice might involve, to some degree at least, a risk in that the older pupils may perhaps perceive the experience as childish and will not find the teaching meaningful. Games might be more associated with teaching in lower grades and are not used as much in higher grades, unless, maybe, in the form of interactive computer games (see Skolverket, 2011). Consequently, the challenge the teachers face involves having to carefully assess teaching methods in terms of both age-appropriateness as well as ability.

The teachers also describe how they try to motivate the pupils by offering them a choice of different tasks to work with. This can be seen in another example from my field notes:

Three of the pupils come into the combined dining/pupils' room. It is cold outside. A teacher says to one of the pupils: my proposal is that you work with maths'. The pupil protests. The teacher then says 'then you can work with reading'. 'Reading?' the pupil says in a loud voice. The teachers give the same choice to the other two pupils. One of them protests but one says, 'let's go upstairs and work'. They follow.

Offering different tasks can be seen from two perspectives. First, the teachers can be seen as taking responsibility for the subject knowledge acquisition in the sense that the pupil can only choose to do specific subjects, as in the above case. Alternatively, the teachers could have opted to offer a choice of watching a film or going out for a social activity. However, to be able to give this choice, the

teacher needs to be able to demonstrate skills in being aware of and handling a number of pupils' individual needs in relation to a curricula subject. The teacher in the above case needed to be the one who had planned the teaching in the two subjects offered (maths and Swedish), or at least be very aware of all three pupils' educational needs in these subjects. The risk, otherwise, might have been that the level is pitched either too high or too low. Secondly, the offering of different tasks can be viewed from the perspective of safeguarding participation. By offering the pupils a choice, they may experience a degree of self-determination which is an aspect of developing autonomy and responsibility for one's actions. This is a central dimension of child development, and, by providing this opportunity, the teachers may be supporting the likelihood of the pupils' continued willingness to participate in lessons. The technology of offering a choice is therefore not dissimilar to Wedin's (2007) study of teachers' knowledge. Here she develops the term "reading knowledge", which is the ability to change the lesson plan on the spot as a result of 'reading' pupils' emotions and behaviour.

Generally, the teachers appear to adopt an encouraging tone when talking to the pupils about the possibility of succeeding with the tasks that are set in class. This was particularly noticeable when the tasks had been designed in such a manner that it was fairly obvious that the pupils should be able to succeed in achieving the anticipated goals. From my field notes I have made the following observation:

My impression is that when we had lessons doing charades, a lot of the exercises were characterised as involving tasks so that the pupil could succeed in what they were doing. I never heard any criticism which, thinking of it, I haven't heard during the lessons I have observed.

Thus it is easy to visualise that the teachers are treading a fine line between being credible in their encouragement, and being perceived by the pupils as simply giving an appraisal for the sake of it. This dilemma might be exacerbated in the light of the need to correctly pitch the tasks, taking into consideration the nature of the pupils' previous experiences of failures in school, and/or the risk that the pupils might find the lessons meaningless and respond by misbehaving.

In the classroom the teachers also draw on the help of social workers. However, the teachers and social workers often adopt different positions when involved in teaching situations. Not infrequently the teacher will stand at the front of the class and the social worker will sit beside the pupil, the purpose being as I

understand it both to assist in the subject learning, and with social behaviour. In my field notes I can read that:

When observing teaching in the classrooms, there has often been one teacher and one of two pupils present. When the social workers are involved they often sit beside one of the two pupils, helping with some exercise. The teacher tends to move around more in the classroom.

The position of the social worker in the classroom can be understood as being similar to that of being an assistant to the teachers since it often appears to involve sitting beside a particular pupil, helping them with school work and not taking any responsibility for the instruction. The arrangement can be seen as replicating a classroom situation in a traditional school, although on a much smaller scale. It is also possible to see that the teachers might be dependent on the social workers' input in supporting their efforts of creating a learning environment which can stimulate academic learning by working with the pupil's social behaviour.

Overall, the different approaches used in taking responsibility for the academic outcomes by creating encouraging conditions for learning (for example the previously mentioned use of examples of good work, the use of games, offering different task to chose between, adopting an encouraging tone in assessing pupils' achievements, and the use the social worker as supporting the pupil in classroom) can all be seen as examples of different teaching technologies the teachers claim to hold jurisdiction over. It is possible to understand the nature of the aim as being twofold. One part involves adopting an individualised approach to learning as a means of promoting knowledge acquisition/learning for each pupil. The other part involves safeguarding the pupils' participation in the lessons, which, itself functions as a means of legitimising the teachers' practice. If the pupils are seen to be not participating in the lessons, the teachers' practice can be questioned by the social workers and indeed the stakeholding organisations – i.e. the education and social services – in a similar sense to the way that the social workers' practice can be questioned if the pupils or their parents refuse to participate in the structured therapeutic talk.

The resource school teachers' collaboration with the teachers at the pupils' home schools can be seen as being characterised by two aspects. First, from a pupil perspective, there is an advantage in the pupil returning back to the home school as soon as possible as a means of ensuring that she/he does not miss out on aspects of knowledge that the other pupils in the home class have gained during

the period spent at the resource school. Secondly, the resource school teachers' own professional identity – as being an effective teacher, and measured by the pupil's return to the home school – is also in issue.

A pupil's transition back to her/his home school is perceived as being facilitated if, the resource school teachers claim, they can relate their own planning of instruction to the home school teachers' planned instruction. This is said to ensure that the knowledge acquisition and educational attainment in relation to curricula and syllabi of each individual pupil is safeguarded and that nothing is 'left out'. Bernt [T] illustrates this in the following way:

In that type of situation, transfer back to the home school, then it's very important that there is a common understanding between the teachers. There's loads you have to do with those teachers all the time. You have to try and follow what's going on in their class. For its very easy in this situation that you like don't keep yourself updated. That the pupils at the resource school fall behind teaching-wise. So you have to try and follow what they do in the pupil's home school class.

They explain that they think being present for periods of time in the pupil's home school environment is vital. Kim [T] gives expression to such views in the following way:

It makes this job much more fun, to have this contact with the home schools. I believe that is the foundation and if you cast a critical eye on what we do, I believe this is an activity where we should do more. To collaborate with the home school.

The teachers also say that they gain a lot professionally from spending time in lessons with pupils in their home school. They explain that they learn by observing how the other teachers work and how they solve problems, as well as getting an inside view as to the types of everyday problems teachers in general are facing. Bernt [T] express this in the following way:

Professionally I can gain knowledge for what problems the schools generally face and you can learn a lot from capable teachers. What they do in different situations.

The teachers also highlight that, by being physically present at the pupils' home schools – which they say can be several schools during any particular week – they also have a function as being a representative for the resource school. They believe that, informally, they are demonstrating to the other teachers in the pupils' home schools what they are about. Bernt [T] expresses this in the following words:

I believe you give credit to the resource school by doing a good job and creating a good impression and showing loyalty towards the [school]. That's why I sometimes can cross the border and act if I see a teacher standing there alone with 34 pupils and the lesson is about a free choice of subject. The teacher asks if I can take one group. And of course I do that. I could say that it is not my job, but I believe in doing it.

This can be understood as that there are two underlying interests in choosing a technology which involves pupils participating in home school lessons, and that the resource school teachers should be involved in home school classroom teaching as much as possible. First, this enables the teachers to spend time in an environment which can be seen as offering them an opportunity to be with other teachers and which thus enhances their professional identity and belonging. Equally, when looking at the teacher's collaboration with the teachers in the home school it is possible to imagine that the resource school teachers have a wish to give legitimacy to their practice in regard to the home school teachers, as well as legitimising the resource school as a 'proper school' in the eyes of the other teachers. Secondly it can be viewed as a technology which enhances the pupils' learning opportunities, as well as facilitating and advancing pupils' transitions back to their home schools.

## Demarcation and the use of the spatial design

This section will deal with the teachers' use of the spatial layout of the building and the way in which it can be seen as an aspect of the demarcation of profession-specific teachers' activities in the context of co-located interprofessional collaboration. In the spatial design of the resource school, three rooms upstairs function as classrooms.<sup>11</sup> The teachers describe how, primarily, they teach theoretical subjects such as mathematics, Swedish and English in these three upstairs rooms. They describe that they are comfortable using a traditional classroom design since it resembles the format used in 'ordinary' schools, and that this is what the pupils are used to. The classrooms are furnished with work-stations which consist of a chair, a desk and attached shelving. Two of the classrooms are fairly spacious and light, whilst one is smaller, and not as airy as the other rooms. There are windows in all and each has a whiteboard on one of the walls.

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<sup>11</sup> See map on page 164



## Different classroom design

It appears that due to the original layout of the resource school as a residence for high-ranking community officials, the teachers need to be innovative in terms of the choice of rooms to use for teaching the different subjects. Several of the teachers comment on the unsuitability of these teaching environments with regard, for example, to domestic and consumer science, physical education, sport and metalwork. David [T], illustrates this when he says that:

Kim [T] has created a little area just off the kitchen where they can do technical stuff, welding and so on. It's not really that great, but it will do.

The teachers can be seen to highlight the interplay between suitable spatial designs for teaching and the potential for learning. They also seem very aware of the adaptations they have had to make in order to teach the technical subjects. Such conditions, they say, are not in any sense perfect, but nevertheless they have to suffice. One way of interpreting this is that the professional practice is dependent on the physical environment, which can be seen in different research studies on the function of school buildings. For example Björklid (2005), in her systematic review of knowledge development and spatial design during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, concluded that there has been an increasing focus on building schools in such a way that the design supports pupils' learning.

The teachers say that they sometimes decide that the teaching should take place in the combined downstairs dining/pupils' room. It is the biggest room in the building and is light, spacious and has several windows on different walls. The furnishings consist of a sofa arrangement with a low table, a big dining table and a round table with space for four or five chairs. They explain that they usually plan to use the room in advance but also that sometimes it is an ad hoc decision depending on the teaching situation. Kim [T] explains:

You can always go down [to the combined dinner/pupil room], sometimes one pupil has to go down as the teaching is not working. However we need to be enough staff to do that.

The use of the room on an ad hoc basis seems to imply that the teachers decide to use different teaching methods depending on how they appraise the pupils' willingness or ability to do individual work, which often means, in reality, sitting and focusing on a particular subject. When they perceive that a pupil is not willing to do individual work, they switch to continuing lessons somewhere else in the school, thus using the spatial opportunity that the building provides.

The downstairs room can also be seen a space to where the pupils try and retreat when deciding not to attend the lessons, and the social workers role can also be seen as involving a responsibility for keeping an eye on this room. Eva [SW] describes this when she says that:

The absolute worst alternative for this pupil is going away from here. And we normally try and do all we can to keep her here, but yesterday was a different situation. If you don't go up and have a lesson and instead just lie around on the sofa, then it's not OK. Then I have to talk to her. She can't just sit there in peace doing nothing. And if she leaves then there's nothing we can do.

In this sense the room can be seen as being used as place for what De Jong (1995) terms 'interval space'. Thus it functions in the same way that the corridors do in other schools and which the pupils use when they have no space of their own. The social workers can, in that sense, be seen as having to police this space with the aim of supporting the pupils' participation in the lessons upstairs in the classrooms. Consequently, the teachers can be seen as having a collaborative partner working within their jurisdiction of ensuring attendance at lessons, even though the social workers are not directly involved in the teaching.

### **Borrowing classrooms from other schools and public areas**

The teachers describe that they are dependent on borrowing specialist classrooms from a nearby traditional school as their building is not purpose-built as a school, especially when it comes to facilities designed for craft and sports. They also use public places, primarily a playing field, for outdoor physical education and sports. These spatial circumstances can be seen as influencing the professional practice in two aspects; first, in that the teachers' professional identity can be enhanced by them taking the opportunity to visit a traditional school and, secondly, in that their practice is influenced in terms of being dependent on the social workers' practice in focusing on the pupils' social behaviour.

Being outside the school means that, on a regular basis, the teachers have to deal with the pupils' behaviour in public arenas. Dealing with the pupils' behaviour in public, which may for example be characterized by acting out anger and displaying aggression, becomes a part of their teaching practice. From my field notes I am reminded of the following situation:

Three pupils of different ages (nine to thirteen) are going to have a sports lesson outside. One teacher and one social worker are present. We walk for about 600-700 meters to a sports field and the lesson is about running. The older boys say to a younger one that he will get beaten up when older because he irritates people by teasing them all the time. I can notice that the older pupils are really irritated by the younger pupil's behaviour. He runs around, shouts and tries to hit them and throws stones. The social worker takes the pupil's hand and calms him down. I notice that the teachers are the ones who are giving instructions about the running exercise and that the social worker stays tight by the younger pupil.

The division of work implies that the social worker is responsible for the social behaviour of the pupils and that the teachers are responsible for the subject knowledge acquisition; it is they who give instructions about the sports and the exercises that are in focus.

The other aspect of having to use classrooms outside the resource school is that the teachers get to visit different schools with a legitimate reason. Whilst this is for the benefit of the teaching that is to take place, it is additionally also possible to see that the teachers gain something else as well. The teachers explain that they often try to use the staffroom of the nearby school that they visit for their coffee break when teaching there. In my field notes I can read that:

Kim [T] says that he is going to leave a little earlier to go and have a coffee in the staffroom. He says that it's nice to meet other teachers. David does the same when we go back to the resource school.

Bernt [T] expresses a similar idea when he says:

I liked going to the schools' staffrooms when working in the home schools. It is very nice to be able to catch up with old colleagues and to get a feel for what's going out there.

This can be seen as indicative that the spatial design of a workplace can influence the feeling the teachers might have concerning their profession and, by being able to visit the 'headquarters' for another group of teachers – the staffroom – the resource school teachers are offered an opportunity to experience a wider sense of professional belonging. To go into the teachers' staffroom and drink coffee seems, to the resource school teachers, to be entirely legitimate behaviour.

## Teaching in an untraditional school

From the perspective of the spatial design of classrooms inside the resource school it is possible to identify a way in which it resembles a traditional school in many aspects, whilst also differing in other ways. As De Jong (1995) points out, schools have been designed in a similar way since the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of *one teacher and a group of children in a room* and the spatial design in the resource school clearly resembles a traditional school in this aspect; a teacher and a group – or a single pupil – spending time together in a room. Moreover, the upstairs classrooms are fairly traditional in their layout, despite the fact that they are designed for fewer pupils. The upstairs classrooms also strongly replicate a traditional school design in that, not infrequently, a visitor to the buildings of an ordinary school does not enter the classroom directly but, instead, needs to walk ‘deeper’ into the building to get access to where the teaching takes place. The same conditions count for entering the resource school; entrance to what can be called the ‘school area’ is made by walking up a flight of stairs.

However, being located in a residential-type building, together with the use of a combined pupil/dining room, indicates to the visitor that this is not any ordinary school. The combined dining/pupil room can be seen as highlighting the spatial design difference between the resource school and the spatial layout generally encountered in a traditional school.

The combined dining/pupil room can be viewed as resembling the type of dining/living room, with sofas and round tables and a spatial design that reflects that found in various institutional care contexts. Forkby (2005), who studied home-based care in a case study of a school similar to the resource school, described the spatial design as characterised by a cosy home environment which symbolises recreation and safety whilst, at the same time, also gives the impression of a design common to institutional treatment homes. He also found that different rooms in the school symbolised different forms of social interaction, with the allocated activity of what the room is used for defining what is regarded as legitimate or illegitimate behaviour within its confines. Whilst Forkby’s focus was on the pupils’ behaviour, the same reasoning can also be applied for understanding legitimate/illegitimate behaviour for the teachers. The teachers regularly used the combined dining/pupil rooms for teaching which involved a focus on social interaction, and one way of interpreting this is that it is not legitimate to use the room for individual pupil work focused more specifically on subject knowledge acquisition in a traditional manner where whiteboards and textbooks are used.

Instead, it is possible to understand the teachers' use of the combined pupil/dining room and its spatial dimensions for teaching, as a reflection of the constraints and constrictions of the 'traditional' classroom design that they have chosen to replicate in the upstairs rooms of the resource school. The combined pupil/dining room offers the teachers an area to carry out teaching outside a traditional classroom context. Drawing on Davidsson's (2004) argument that the design and furnishings of classrooms promote different kinds of learning, the teachers in the resource school use the spatial opportunities to create a learning environment which – on occasion – they believe to be more conducive to the pupils' particular educational needs. It is possible to trace an underlying value that a non-traditional classroom design might be more conducive to learning and social interaction. Such a perspective accords well with the results from a study of pupils in a remedial class placed within a traditional school, where the spatial design was characterised by being similar to a cosy home environment (Karlsson, 2007). Consequently, following De Jong's (1995) theory about the more important an activity, the more centrally it is placed, the location of the combined dining/pupil room implies that its use to promote close social interaction and to offer a different teaching environment is valued as an important resource by the teachers.

The use of different classrooms also highlights the division of responsibility for the pupils' social behaviour, and the teaching inside in the classrooms, as well as outside the resource school, (specifically when using the nearby public sports field). This can be understood as a division of jurisdiction. Looking at the supportive role the social workers seem to have in the classroom, i.e. by sitting beside the pupil, this would imply that they are primarily concerned with the pupils' behaviour, which becomes even more explicit when they have lessons outside the resource school. The social workers can be seen as holding jurisdiction of being responsible for the pupils' social behaviour as the teachers would otherwise be expected to demonstrate skills in approaching, and in some circumstances controlling, fairly difficult behaviour which, usually, is not included in the general working demands placed on teachers.

One consequence of this division of responsibility is that the teachers can be seen as focusing less on the social dimension of teaching with regard to social development in the form of changes in attitudes, values and patterns of social interaction (see Ranagården, 2009), and more on the knowledge acquisition dimension. One conclusion to draw is that if the teachers place less of an emphasis on the social dimension of their professional task, and instead focus to

a much greater degree on the knowledge acquisition dimension, they also create a more interdependent professional role in the sense that they become dependent on the social workers' input in terms of ensuring that the entirety of their professional task – knowledge acquisition and the social dimension – are accomplished. One interpretation of why this is happening can be that the social dimension of the teacher's professional objective might generally be based on a knowledge of how to meet the requirements of what could be called the organisation's ordinary 'raw material' (i.e. the pupils) whose individual social needs are broadly within the range of what might be expected in ordinary circumstances. In this sense whilst the teachers can be seen as holding jurisdiction of working with the knowledge acquisition dimension of their professional practice, when it comes to the social dimension, the picture is somewhat blurred. Put another way, the focus is on academic aspects of educational outcomes, and not on the social aspect which, instead, is implicitly delegated to the social workers.

## The identification of a body of knowledge

Aili and Brante (2007) suggest that when a teacher addresses different issues relating, for example, to classroom instruction, talking with parents about certain issues, or with specific parents about a particular pupil's problems, they draw on a formal body of knowledge that is used to create trust and legitimacy. This perspective can be linked to Abbott's (1988) argument that professional practice is tied up directly in a system of knowledge which is formalised and significant for the particular profession. Aili and Brante (2007) argue that the formal body of knowledge signifies the theoretical base teachers use when acting. With this in mind, I have identified certain aspects of the body of knowledge that the teachers in the resource school can be seen as expressing. This section is primarily based on the empirical data derived from my interviews with the resource school teachers.

## Practical and theoretical knowledge

The teachers clearly differentiate between theoretically- and practically-oriented teaching; they attach an abstract knowledge base and the use of books to the theoretical teaching, whilst social activities constitute the practically-oriented teaching. Kim [T] expresses this explicitly in saying that:

On Wednesdays there is a lot of theory as we have taken a lot of time to do social activities on Monday and Tuesday. So we use books a lot on Wednesdays.

Different subjects are also seen as either theoretical or practical. Anna [T] describes this in the following way:

Theoretical subjects involve the teaching of English, mathematics, Swedish, history and social science – the core subjects – whilst crafts and domestic and consumer science are practical subjects.

The teacher's differentiation of teaching into two forms – theoretical subjects which they conduct in classrooms, primarily using books, and practical subjects that mainly involve doing concrete things – is indicative of the way that the teachers rely on different theoretical foundations.

The teachers can also be seen as having an ambition to transfer the pupils' experiences gained from social activities into knowledge acquisition in different subjects. David [T] provides the following example:

We try to use our social activities within the subject social studies. We have done a map where we mark the places we have been to and by doing that we transfer the experience into the pedagogy of teaching. So that we can see that the time spent on an outing is used in several different ways.

He further explains that:

Social activities have several functions; there are social and subject-related aspects. The main purpose though is social interaction. How it is to be out doing things with ordinary people. Then of course we get a bit of social science into the bargain so to speak, and it is we teachers who have to deal with that so to speak.

David's statement implies that there is a dual purpose with the social activity and that the teachers are responsible for the task of validating the knowledge acquisition which occurs during a social activity. Consequently, they are forced to explicate the pupils' experiential learning to be able to link this to curriculum goals. However, it is also possible to identify the aspect of working with the pupil's social behaviour, although this does not come across as falling within the teacher's remit or responsibility.

## Designing teaching material

There is evidence of the use of a collective knowledge base in the way that the teachers say that they design appropriate teaching material for the resource school pupils. The teachers explain that, primarily, they work together in using different sources for finding appropriate material which they believe will encourage knowledge acquisition and make the lessons meaningful for the pupils. They share old materials with each other, as well as giving each other advice about where they can find new materials and new sources of inspiration. Anna's [T] statement in one of the interviews is illustrative of this practice:

I have made some material on my own, some with previous colleges and some with my colleges here. Some pupils have needed support by pictures and we found those in computers. We visit pedagogical fairs together and sometimes contact our national special education institute to ask for input.

David [T] explains that:

If we want to work with Swedish grammar, we together design a compendium about for example nouns and verbs which we can then use separately.

This can be understood in terms of the way in which the teachers access a collective knowledge-base in the sense that they design and share ideas about learning material. In doing so, the teachers can be seen as being dependent upon one another. For example, they attempt to ensure that the teaching materials are relevant for the teaching in the resource school. This, as Runesson (2004) points out, is an important part of the knowledge base teachers generally use when discussing *what* the pupil should learn.

## The curriculum as a steering tool

The teachers describe that they always relate and refer to the national curriculum and course syllabi when making decisions about content. They stress the importance of having knowledge about how to interpret the hierarchy of different documents, i.e. both the national curriculum *and* the home schools' different local interpretations of the curriculum and syllabi, in order to be able to relate subject knowledge into what is expected that pupils shall learn in the formal system of schooling *and* to be able to prepare the pupils for their eventual transfer back to the home school. David [T] points to the fact that they need to navigate between different interpretations of the curriculum, something that he exemplifies when he says that:



There is a national curriculum, but this is broken down at every school, which means that we work in accordance with the home schools. So all the home schools have different curriculums. So we have to look at our own.

Teachers have different subjects in their teaching qualifications, which reflect different areas of in-depth expertise and different professional knowledge-bases in the particular subjects that they teach. They express how it is necessary to have a good understanding of the different subjects in order to be able to handle the interplay between curriculum demands and classroom teaching. David [T] explains this in the following way when he says that:

In Swedish you can easily assess the pupils' knowledge as we have clearly defined the criteria for grading, which we have done in other subjects to. But we have not yet done that in English, but we will come to that. None of us has a teaching qualification in English. I believe that is the subject we are the most insecure about.

The rather unusual working conditions in the resource school mean that the teachers need to demonstrate an ability to be able to teach in relation to the syllabi for different subjects, make interpretations of the curriculum/syllabi in different schools, and relate this knowledge to pupils' learning. This, in the resource school, spans from early years education (the youngest pupil at the time of my observations was just seven years old) to the education of young adults (the oldest being sixteen).

## Children's learning

A recurrent strand of thought in the interviews is that social feelings and cognitive abilities are interlinked in the ways in which children learn. The teachers also explain that it is not possible to separate subject learning from social learning and that they think that social wellbeing is a base or foundation which functions as a prerequisite for learning. Bernt [T] encapsulates this view neatly when saying:

You cannot split the social and the cognitive. For me the social is superior. The cognitive is subject learning. Even if you know all the multiplication tables and grammatical conjunctions of English verbs or whatever – it doesn't matter – you still need to function socially.

This statement implies that the teachers' perception is that social skills are what these pupils really need to learn to be able to get by in life. This statement, which

in a way is illustrative of the fact that, although the teachers previously emphasized that their understanding of their task is primarily to work with the academic dimension, they also see the social dimension of a pupil's situation as being a prerequisite for opportunities to learn and, taken a stage further, opportunities in life generally. However, they seem to perceive that it is the social workers who hold jurisdiction to work with the social aspect of a pupil's situation. Consequently, they are aware of both academic and social aspects of their knowledge-base in relation to pupils' learning. Nevertheless, in an exercise of collective discretion, they have implicitly delegated the responsibility for the social aspects of the pupils' learning to their co-locational collaborative partners, the social workers.

The teachers describe that, in essence, there is not such a big difference between adults' and children's learning. It is, they seem to take the view, all a matter of a generic process of learning. According to David [T]:

Learning processes are not greatly different if you are an adult or if you are a child. I mean there has to be a couple of goals that are set up. A process that means that you are going to get somewhere. The most difficult thing for our pupils is to get these processes going, to get a process way of thinking going.

The teachers explain that learning is a process in the sense that the aim is always to reach somewhere which is always just a bit further on the way, and that this thus means that the task is never finished. One difference though between the learning of adults and children, the teachers say, is that types of material that it is possible to use need to be created for or adapted to the age of the learner. David [T] articulates this in the following way:

The difference between the younger and the older children is that with the younger ones you can do a lot over a period of time. You can work a lot outside, for example. Being outside and carving different types of wood into different shapes for a long time. Whilst for our older boys that can be a bit more difficult, what can you say, a bit boring in the long run to keep on doing the same thing.

David's statement implies that they need to take age into account when planning the teaching (in similar ways as when using games, as has been previously described) although his perception, from a learning perspective, can be understood that younger children might need longer time to learn whilst the older ones might more quickly grasp what is intended. This situation illustrates the implications of teaching a wide range of ages.

## The teachers' professional identity

### Someone who primarily works with subject knowledge.

The teachers appear comfortable with the division of labour; they teach subjects and are thus responsible for the academic aspect of education, whilst the social workers deal with the social aspects of the pupils' situation. They say that it is very helpful not to have to deal with all of the pupils' social issues and that this gives them the opportunity to concentrate on teaching subject knowledge to a much higher degree. Both Kim [T] and Bernt [T] frame this notion in the following ways:

[Kim] I don't need to have all the contacts outside which relate to the pupils' social situations, for example children social services.

[Bernt] It is nice to have someone who takes care of the social things. To have that division of labour is what we want. It is nice not to have to be involved in everything.

Further, the teachers say that they find the division of responsibility reassuring, in that they can talk about a pupil's behaviour with someone who has competence in social issues, who has a social work education and that, together, they can discuss how to approach the pupil. Anna [T] frames this view of the cooperation when she says,

It is a great advantage. I think that the social workers probably have more training in how you talk about social things that aren't connected to pedagogy. It can be thought of like that.

However, they also express that they too work with the social aspects of the pupil's situation. This implies that a division of respective areas of responsibility is it not as straightforward as might first meet the eye. The teachers express some difficulties about knowing where the boundaries between social work with the pupils and the teachers' social dimension of teaching, actually lie. David's [T] words serve as a good illustration of this belief:

Basically the social learning is pretty much what goes on up here in the classrooms too. It's part of the curriculum and we have a duty to develop social development and so you have to be a good role model and suchlike. It's part of what you could call our statutory duty in teaching. But it is not always clear what is part of the educational social development part and what is part of the social workers' task.

Additionally, it is difficult to know when the social dimension of the pupils' situation belongs to the social workers, or when it falls within the teachers' area of responsibility. David [T] says that:

I am afraid of interfering in the social treatment work as to speak, and I am not interested in doing any kind of social treatment work with the pupils. I don't have any education for that and it is not my intention. At the same time, as a teacher you should work with social upbringing and what's involved with that. Where the boundaries go I just can't say.

or, as Anna [T] puts it:

It can be that you, the teacher and the social worker, work so tightly together that it is difficult to see where one starts and where one stops.

However, on the other hand, they say that certain other social issues are worked with exclusively by the social workers such as, for example, in relation to problems within the family. Anna [T] makes this explicit when she says that:

Some parts of the social we need to work with, but the social issues which concern parents and family work is done by social workers. Things for example like the ART program or pupil talk are also done by social workers.

The teachers seem to express a wish to offer a learning environment which deals with both dimensions of the pupils' educational needs; the social and the cognitive. However the teachers appear to feel more or less comfortable to leave the social dimension of their remit to the social workers. They appear to have a clear understanding about their role and don't appear to have any ambitions to do social work; instead, they appreciate the help they can get from the social workers in supporting the creation of learning environments that they believe are conducive to pupils' learning. One reason might be that the pupils in the resource school all have such a complex social problematic situation that an ordinary understanding of children's social development is not enough and the teachers are aware of their knowledge limitations and view this area of work as being within the proper jurisdiction of the social workers.

For example the teachers express that they would not want to substitute for any of the social workers when it comes to the structured therapeutic talking with the parents or indeed with the pupils. On the other hand, as Anna indicates, knowing where the professional boundaries lie is not so straightforward. Frelin (2010), who examined the relational dimension of the teacher's profession, suggests that teachers will not succeed with knowledge development in any given

situation unless the significant relational conditions with the pupils are focused on. Using this knowledge it might be possible to say that the teacher's jurisdiction of teaching, including the social dimension, might depend on each given teaching situation.

### Someone who works with the more challenging pupils

The teachers explain that they enjoy working in a smaller setting and that they find it rewarding. As they put it, they have the 'more difficult' children to work with. They explain that it is something they find personally rewarding and professionally interesting. David [T] elaborates on this:

Yes, I like working with the tougher kids, the ones who have always had a rougher time and difficulties in all kinds of ways. I don't know why but it is something that attracts me professionally. It can also be a challenge to establish a good relation and to conduct professional teaching.

The teachers also describe that they like working with a smaller number of pupils and their families. They compare their situation at the resource school to working in a traditional school as a class teacher where, they believe, there are fewer opportunities to get to know all the pupils and their families. Anna [T] expresses this view in the following way:

If you are a class teacher you have the main responsibility for a class and you have to take care of a group of children, between twenty to thirty of them, and nowadays it's more common to have thirty. And you don't have that much contact with other classes. At the resource school it is a little group and I get to know the pupils and their parents in a different way.

The teachers' self-image seems to be that, primarily, they are teaching different school subjects to children who are regarded as troublesome and they express an awareness of how family, home and social situations can influence pupils' opportunities for learning.

### The teachers' profession-specific practice

Four areas have been identified which can be described as being central for the teachers' profession-specific practice. These are teaching in a non-traditional school building, teaching a broad span of ages and subjects, organising teaching

with ‘troublesome’ pupil’s, and navigating around different interpretations of the curriculum.

### To teach in a non-traditional school building

To teach in a building that has not been designed for educational purposes can be seen as one of the specifics for the teachers’ jurisdiction in the resource school. As Lundgren (1993) has shown, teachers’ professional jurisdiction is closely bound to practices that are undertaken in buildings which are designed for school work in environments that have been purposefully planned for the provision of instruction. Linking this with the notion that working conditions are intertwined with the spatial design of the workplace (De Jong, 2005) the teacher’s profession-specific practice can be viewed as being characterised by being less reinforced by the spatial circumstances. Two aspects of this have been found. First, in this sense, the teachers in the resource school have had to relate to a spatial layout that differs from the norm and which needs to be remodelled and redesigned to fit the purpose of teaching different subjects. Secondly, the teachers seem to have singled out visits to other school staffrooms as important. Having access to a regular staffroom – populated almost exclusively by teachers – appears to be of value in the sense that they specifically make sure they can ‘pop in’ when teaching subjects such as art and crafts at another school. Drawing on De Jong’s (1995) argument, that the use and users of different rooms highlights relations of power, one way of understanding the importance placed on visiting teachers’ staffrooms in ordinary schools is that the resource school teachers have found a strategy to strengthen their professional identity by visiting an environment that has a strong symbolic resonance for their profession.

### Teaching all subjects and all ages

The teachers in the resource school can be seen as holding jurisdiction for teaching all ages and all subjects. This makes it possible to argue that the jurisdiction of the resource school teachers can be understood as very broad compared to teachers within the traditional school system. To hold such a broad jurisdiction is a highly unusual situation for either class (grades 1 – 3) or subject (grades 4 – 9) teachers in traditional schools (Skolverket, 2009).

Having a broad jurisdiction might be seen as weakening the teacher’s professional identity in the sense that the teachers need to be competent in

various subjects. This may indicate knowledge on the surface but not in depth. It may be that the resource school teachers assess themselves as being less of a 'proper' teacher when having this broad jurisdiction. Alternatively, the teachers also seem to experience that this broad jurisdiction strengthens their professional identity in being experts in working in a co-located collaborative context and with children in need of special educational support. For example, using the category of *qualifying work* in the teaching profession as proposed by Aili and Brante (2007), and which can be used to describe teachers' practice as methods of handling divergent cases, discretionary work and problem-solving, it could also be argued that the resource school teachers have a high degree of qualifying work in their profession. They need to handle a great deal of divergent cases in the sense of teaching that is aimed at different ages and involves different subjects, as well as the fact that they perceive that they also need to relate to different interpretations of the national curriculum. Consequently, to hold broad jurisdiction can, from a professional perspective, demonstrate that there is an interrelatedness that can both strengthen and weaken professional identity.

The teachers in the resource school can also be seen as exercising a discretionary choice to focus on the academic aspects of their teaching role as a means of strengthening their professional identity and, thus, placing less of a focus on the social dimensions of the teaching task. The reason for this can be twofold. First there is a claim to hold jurisdiction for teaching subject knowledge, which can be seen as being a main trait for teaching. Recent discourses in Sweden posit that a 'proper' or competent teacher is someone who has a clearly defined and relatively narrow subject competence (Sjöberg, 2011). In that sense it is possible to see that the teachers in the resource school are perhaps engaged in legitimising themselves to a higher degree towards their own profession than in relation to the social workers. The social workers' presence in the resource school can be seen as supporting this process. Consequently, they can be seen as negotiating a social order which fits both sets of professional interests; the teachers teach subjects and the social workers work with social aspects of the pupil's situation.

### The organising of teaching 'troublesome' pupils

From an organisational perspective, the notion that the teachers hold broad discretion can be understood as an attempt to meet the demands which arise as a result of the way in which the stakeholders have organised the service. Due to organisational interests, the education department and social services have

chosen not to engage teachers who possess the requisite subject-specific professional qualifications for all ages and all subjects, which would be the case in a traditional school. The practicalities of the reality of the resource school are that they need to mix the ages of the pupils enrolled due to the restrictions on the number of pupils who receive this particular form of support.

Thus, in the way that the school is organised, there is a need to safeguard that there are sufficient members of staff present on an everyday basis to look after the pupils and, in doing so, working tasks need to be structured in a way which means that they can overlap in their jurisdictions and areas of competence.

Giving the teachers more generically-oriented teaching tasks, which is the case in the resource school, can be examined by the use of Hasenfeld's (2010a, 2000) concept of the *moral work* that is conducted in human service organisations. The moral aspect involves asking in what manner services are to be delivered, who has the right to provide certain services to service users, and the proper qualifications that they should possess. The tension between providing appropriate professionally qualified workers and the practicality of service provision is an issue of importance for all street level bureaucracies. If the resource school was organised from a standpoint that the teachers should be trained and have qualifications in all of the curriculum subjects that that need to be taught, then, compared to an organisation that does not discriminate on the basis of pupils' ages, there would be a different focus on the legitimacy of the teachers' profession. The staff conducting the teaching would vary depending on the ages of the pupils and the subjects needed to be taught in relation to the pupils' needs. But this is not the case.

Consequently, the reason given for how the resource school is organised can be seen as being based on the notion that there are other professional teaching skills needed than simply subject-related and age-level-appropriate knowledge and competencies. More emphasis is therefore put on specialist skills in creating a learning environment for changing more unpredictable pupils (i.e. the organisation's raw material) than would be found in ordinary schools. For example, the teachers in the resource school can be seen as being faced with several critical issues. First, the raw material is not inert and the pupils can react in different ways, thus affecting the teaching that is planned (see Hasenfeld, 2010a). This, of course, is the case in a traditional school as well. Nevertheless the pupils in the resource school are more demanding and, using Wedin's (2007) terminology of teacher's knowledge, more difficult to "read".



The teacher's ability to respond to or "read" the pupils' behaviour can be understood in terms of Hasenfeld's (2010a) concept of contingencies. Contingencies arise because neither the reactions of the pupil, nor the responses of the teachers, are fully controllable. For example, the teachers may need to substitute one set of learning materials for another or unexpectedly affect a switch from one subject to another. The notion of handling contingencies can also be seen in the light of the spatial design of the resource school. The teachers' use of the combined dining/pupil room implies that they use the room in an attempt to control the outcome of lessons that have not gone according to plan.

### Navigating between interpretations of the curriculum

To have to consider different interpretations of the curriculum, both the different home schools' as well as their own, can be seen as a particular profession-specific working task of the teachers in the resource school. The teachers in the resource school stress the importance of following the curriculum and, in doing this, two interests appear. By referring to the curriculum as the core steering tool that they are guided by, one interest is to provide legitimacy to themselves as 'proper teachers'. This is generally an important characteristic of being a professional teacher and can be seen as a means of legitimising the teacher's profession. The second interest involves them as seeing themselves as accountable for the pupils' academic learning outcomes. Their aim is to give the pupils adequate subject knowledge so that they can succeed with their goal attainment when they return to the home school. This care for the pupils' learning, can be seen as interrelated with the notion that the resource school teachers practice may also be judged by the home school teachers in terms of each individual pupil's ability to reach the goals. Consequently, the teachers' practice is interdependent with the home school teachers' practice in that a transition of the pupil's learning and educational outcomes takes place between the two educational contexts. This makes the practice of being able to navigate between different interpretations of the curriculum fairly central for the profession-specific identity of the teachers in the resource school, and the teachers can be seen as needing discretion to be able to accomplish this.

Discretion, in this case, basically involves the teacher's liberty to decide what and how to teach certain subjects in relation to standards set out in policy documents (see Dworking, 1977). Guidelines or policies, in this case the national curriculum, with its specific subject syllabuses, can be seen as forming the structural

conditions that promote legitimacy for a profession in supporting its practice. The teachers in the resource school can be seen having what is termed *process discretion*, i.e. in deciding how knowledge goals are to be achieved. However, when it comes to *outcome discretion*, i.e. to decide what the goals should be, they are faced with the task of navigating between the home school interpretations and their own (Coble Vinzant & Crotcher, 1998). In doing this, the teachers exercise what can be termed *rule discretion* (Taylor & Kelly, 2006). They can use their discretion in deciding how to relate to school policy and the different interpretations of the curriculum in relation to the specific educational needs of the different pupils. So, even if they cannot influence the nature of the expected educational outcome stated in the curriculum and subject syllabuses, they can nevertheless make assessments and decisions about what needs to happen so that pupils have a chance of attaining educational goals.

In relation to the social workers, the teachers *process* and *rule discretion* can be understood as their professional power to make decisions about the teaching and the claim of holding this jurisdiction. Further, such claims are non-negotiable in that the teachers are clearly wholly responsible for subject teaching. Connecting this to the notion that having discretion can be viewed as a ‘trait’, and an important professional attribute (Evans & Harris, 2004), this may serve to strengthen the teachers’ professional identity. For example, they do not operate on instructions from the home school teachers; instead they are professionally autonomous in deciding how to teach. This can be linked to Parding’s (2007) findings on teachers’ discretion, and her conclusion that the curriculum offers teachers various degrees of support and that there is an inbuilt trust handed to the teachers as professionals in interpreting the curriculum. Discretion is viewed as crucial for them to be able to practice their profession. Therefore, the teachers in the resource school can be seen as safeguarding an important aspect of their profession-specific professional identity, namely to have discretion of making decisions around the home schools’ interpretations of the curriculum and not involving the social workers in this practice.

# Chapter Ten

## Co-located interprofessional collaboration

In this final chapter I will begin by summarising some of the more salient findings which have been singled out as in some way providing a contribution to the field of knowledge on co-located interprofessional collaboration. Thereafter, I will revisit and discuss a number of the central concepts in this thesis before making a number of proposals for conceptual development.

This thesis sets out to examine processes of interprofessional collaboration in a specific co-located collaborative setting, namely a resource school. Different questions have been posed regarding, for example, the nature and forms of the division of labour, how professionals maintain and develop professional identities, how physical conditions influence practice and how it is decided which pupils should be admitted to the school. In engaging with these questions it became possible to establish that the selection process functioned as a way of legitimising the collaboration. In my analyses of professional practice at the resource school, two forms of practice processes in co-located interprofessional collaboration emerged. Whilst one form involved the doing of *common grounds*, the other involved the doing of *separate grounds*. Doing *common grounds* involves a division of labour in such a way that professional identities are maintained and developed concurrently with the accommodation of organisational imperatives of effective collaborative practice. Doing *separate grounds* can, in contrast, be seen as having a greater focus on maintaining and developing professional identities. Within these forms of practice different themes have emerged which I will expand upon. However I will start off by revisiting and considering the process of pupil selection.

### Selecting pupils - a process of legitimizing collaboration

The intake process in which pupils are selected for enrolment at the resource school forms a part of the structural context of co-located interprofessional collaboration. Examination of the intake process sheds light on the overarching

organizational and professional conditions that frame the day-to-day collaborative practice in the resource school. The explicit criteria for enrolment to the resource school are that (i) the home school shall demonstrate that they have tried all alternative solutions and enrolment at the resource school is a last resort to meet the child's educational needs, and (ii) that social services have assessed that the child needs interventions as a part of a wider so-called home-based solution. In that sense it is possible to say that the formal criteria for enrolment in the resource school are broadly formulated.

Different areas of concern emerge as a consequence of having broadly formulated criteria. These I have categorised as *criteria for placement* discussions, *descriptions of needs* and the *base for arguments*. First, the staff members involved spend a substantial amount of time talking about the criteria for placement and my data reveal that calls were made for more detailed criteria. This can be understood as the staff having a wish to protect pupils and their families from arbitrariness based on individual professional interests. Equally, more detailed criteria could also be regarded as promoting more effective collaboration as time spent on discussing different assessments of need would be reduced with better-defined criteria. However, the broadly formulated criteria also enable the staff to engage in talk about pupils and their families across professional boundaries and outside of the limitations of rules regarding confidentiality. It is also possible to understand the talk about construction of criteria and the arguments behind selecting a particular pupil as being part of the formulation of a clear purpose for the collaboration between social services and education.

Secondly, the *description of the pupils* has its focus on the pupil's behaviour and skills, rather than on intellectual capacity and ability in school subjects. Social behaviour, such as being involved in fights, prone to aggressive outbursts, displays of introverted behaviour or having been violent towards staff are all examples of problems that are expressed. When it comes to social skills, the descriptions can be characterized in terms of a lack. This, for example, could be that the pupil is unable to interact socially with peers. When negative attitudes to school work in general were in focus, these were usually linked to perceptions of the parent's lack of a positive attitude to school.

Further, the issue of confidentiality was highlighted in discussions around the willingness of the parents to cooperate with the resource school. Sometimes there was a complication as it became evident that no one actually knew whether the parents were informed about the fact that their child was the subject of

discussion, or a candidate for enrolment. This confusion sometimes led to a second guessing of the parents' willingness to cooperate with the resource school in, for example, taking part in regular talks around their child's social situation.

Thirdly, the *base for arguments* upon which child that should be selected was characterized by a notion of *being forced to choose* and a *construction of legitimate reasons*. It appeared that the arguments put forward by professionals representing education services based on 'being forced to choose' overshadowed the arguments rooted in education-based needs. Social services arguments, on the other hand, centred mainly on the need for the child to be granted a place since without such a placement a care order would be inevitable. This base for arguments was successfully used in negotiation about the number of places offered during the observed intake process where, in one case, social services managed to increase the single place being offered at the resource school to two.

It is possible to identify two functions of the intake process. First, from an organizational perspective encompassing both education and social services, the broadly formulated criteria of 'needs' functions as a means of internally legitimising the collaboration. From a purely educational perspective, commitment to the collaboration is constructed by the engagement of several teachers and the pupil welfare staff in the intake process. This level of engagement promotes a feeling of ownership and responsibility. Equally, the same can be said concerning the social services. Here however the process of legitimating the collaboration was expressed differently. Instead of involving a wide group of staff, as was the case for education, the process was expressed in that they could negotiate so as to increase the number of pupils to be admitted.

Consequently, it is possible to say that the organisation of the intake process functions so as to internally legitimate the collaboration, rather than actually establishing each individual child's need for social and educational support. For example, from the perspective of the education services, it would have been more effective to use a smaller team of different experts who assessed each child (something that was indeed suggested by some of the head teachers). From the perspective of the social services department, the important outcome of the intake process was that, in the final stage, the organization had the power to demonstrate to the case social workers within the social services office that they could access a place at the resource school when a need for a 'home based solution' intervention arose.

The second function of the intake process concerns the engagement of professionals in *people processing* and the *rationing of resources* (Hasenfeld, 2010a). On a comprehensive level the broadly formulated criteria serve to legitimate the professions involved. They are, in Lipsky's words, all street level bureaucrats. Their respective organizations 'trust' the professionals to use their discretion in such a way that children's needs are established and – if necessary – met by a placement at the resource school. In that sense the intake process promotes professional autonomy and legitimacy. They are trusted to choose the 'right' pupils and to define the needs so that the places available are sufficient.

Rationing of resources is about deciding *which* users will be offered the service (Hasenfeld, 2010a). Education and social service organisations expect that the staff shall use their discretion so that the needs that are identified are matched by the places available and not in such a manner that there are 'more' pupils in need of a placement at the resource school than there are places available. The motive here is to avoid exposing that there might be a lack of resources in the municipality. However, they also have to select the 'right' pupils, when adopting this transformation practice (Hasenfeld, 2010a), whilst also assessing pupils' needs. A balance therefore needs to be achieved between selecting pupils who are amenable to change (Hasenfeld, 2010a,) and those are not. Thus choosing pupils who are too 'difficult' or too 'easy' would be problematic. If the pupil's situations are too problematic and it is felt that the resource school would fail to meet the organizational imperative of enabling a durable home-based-solution, keeping the pupil in school and achieving curriculum goals, the legitimacy and the survival of the collaboration between education and social services would be at risk. Equally, if too 'easy' pupils were to be selected the usefulness of the collaborative nature of the venture might be questioned internally, either by the home school teachers or the social services case workers.

A further aspect of the intake process is the lack of transparency which contributes to reducing the opportunities for children and their families to oppose or criticize the decisions that are made. Consequently, it is possible to see the intake process taking place in a 'semi-public' arena. Whilst the formal structure is public, the decisions actually made are informal and dependent upon professional discretion which, according to Lipsky, is characteristic of practice in street level bureaucracies

## Common grounds

The themes identified in the doing of *common grounds*, consist of *interchangeability*, the *construction of a practice ideology* and *interdependence*. The first theme, *interchangeability* involves, in the resource school, the willingness of staff to carry out working tasks that are not specifically associated with their profession. The work tasks to be done in doing common grounds are structured around the design of the school timetable and attendance at formal meetings. The staff at the school have developed a strategy for how to handle the organisational imperatives of getting the work tasks done without the disappearance of boundaries of jurisdiction. In doing so they maintain and develop their professional identity. The staff construct a division of labour that distinguishes between what Abbott (1988) terms the holding of “cognitive” and “practical” jurisdictions and which is illustrated in the sense that the professional who has been planning the activity is responsible for the outcome, even when the activity is not in fact carried out by themselves. For example, whilst a teacher can plan an English lesson, it may be one of the social workers who actually carries it out. Similarly, with the aim of developing the young person’s social skills, a social worker might plan an activity involving shopping, but it may be that the actual trip to the shops is carried out by a teacher.

The notion of carrying out working tasks that are not specifically associated with the profession is present in other research on collaboration (Atkinson et al., 2005; Hudson, 2002). The phenomenon of *interchangeability* is commonly described using the terms ‘merged’ practices, or as an ‘integrative practice’, in that whilst core roles are recognised, there is also a necessary flexibility at the boundaries (Bronstein, 2003; Whittington, 2004). However, the explanation of factors that are suggested as underlying professionals’ engagement in integrative or merged collaboration are usually expressed in positive terms. Examples could be according equal value to each other’s contribution in carrying out working tasks, that the professionals involved see opportunities to learn from each other, or that the deliberate occurrence of ‘role-blurring’ or ‘role-bending’ is a sign of flexibility (Bronstein, 2003; Hudson, 2007; Whittington, 2004). Little emphasis is however normally put on the necessity of having to carry out ‘all of the tasks’ due to organisational imperatives. One conclusion to draw is that the more positive explanations offered for doing non-profession-specific work tasks overshadow the explanations based on the organisational imperatives for getting the job done. By applying the concept of *interchangeability*, as used in this thesis, focus moves from describing processes of collaboration based on attributes

accorded to individual professionals, to the illumination of organisational imperatives that influence the division of labour. This knowledge can further contribute to the understanding of processes of co-located interprofessional collaboration.

The second theme is termed the *construction of a practice ideology*. A practice ideology is constituted by the assumptions the organisations make about the attributes of its clients and the state of the knowledge and the know-how possessed by the organisation (Hasenfeld, 2010a). The practice ideology in the resource school illustrates a common understanding of the task of co-located collaboration around children and young people in need of social and educational support. The practice ideology in the resource school is characterised by the notion that they have an agreement of *the social behavioural objective* based on the value that social learning is a prerequisite of subject knowledge acquisition. The teachers and social workers thus both focus on changing the pupil's social behaviour and promoting wellbeing as a means of facilitating subject knowledge development. The practice ideology is based on the staff's common understanding of children and young people's needs, and how they can collaborate together to meet such needs.

This finding of a common understanding of the task enacted in a construction of a practice ideology is similar to the findings of other research on collaboration. Researchers generally agree that a common understanding of what the task of collaboration involves is a core factor in collaboration (Danermark et al., 2009; Gardner, 2004) However, reaching this common understanding about what collaboration should properly involve, according to Huxham and Vangen (2005), an exercise of negotiations. This, in turn, is more about the continuous managing of aims rather than a precursory task that needs to be dealt with and got out of the way before the real work starts. In that sense it may be possible to argue that the negotiation of a practice ideology in co-located interprofessional collaboration is what Strauss (1978) terms the implicit negotiation of a social order which needs to be produced and reproduced. Thus there are tacit agreements which take into account the underlying assumptions by the staff in the resource school about the needs of pupils and their families, and the technologies and competencies that are available to the staff and which guide collaborative practice. However, according to Strauss (1978), a negotiated social order needs to be continuously reinstated so as to be recognised as an existing and stable organisational structure. Consequently, it may be possible to say that in co-located interprofessional collaboration, an implicit or tacitly negotiated



social order of a common practice ideology is produced and reproduced by the division of labour in the workplace.

The third theme of *interdependence* in co-located interprofessional collaboration involves the *no choice dimension* of the collaborative context. This involves limitations on the room for manoeuvre (except for the ultimate decision to seek alternative employment) of the staff when it comes to deciding whether or not to take part in the collaboration. The teachers and social workers in the resource school are dependent upon each other in order to accomplish the organisational imperatives of the resource school, such as, for example, that the pupils should successfully attain the educational goals and continue to live at home and in a safe environment. The *interdependency* between the staff raises issues about power. Each professional holds power to either make collaboration work or to acquiesce in its failure. This, of course, is quite an obvious statement and common findings on collaboration reveal the key element that one professional group is reliant on the other to be able to accomplish set goals (see e.g. Farmakopoulou, 1999). Similarly, organisations rely on each other in the same way, meaning, consequently, that they cannot work independently and be successful in their practice without the other (see e.g. Frost et al., 2005; Sandfort, 1999). However, according to Bronstein (2003) the more interaction that takes place between professionals, the higher the interdependence appears to be. For example in an integrated team the belief may be stronger that they cannot accomplish their task without each other, whilst in teams or organisations that are working less intensively together the belief of being interdependent of each other is lower. Consequently, interdependence in co-located interprofessional collaboration is characterised by a high degree of interdependence which is a central organisational condition that influences the process of collaboration.

## Separate grounds

Doing *separate ground* involves processes in which the teachers and social workers claim and maintain jurisdiction of working tasks that are profession-specific. The division of labour has the function of strengthening the process of maintaining and developing a profession-specific professional identity. In a simple way it is possible to say that that the teachers in the resource school claim to hold the jurisdiction of organising the teaching of ‘all’ subjects to ‘troublesome’ pupils in ‘all’ ages in an untraditional school building. The social workers, in equally simple terms, claim to hold jurisdiction of having discretion to decide how to talk about social issues in a specific way – i.e. in the form of structured therapeutic talks –

and to hold the power of confidentiality over these talks. One finding is thus that the teachers and social workers claim jurisdiction of profession-specific working tasks that are commonly perceived as core traits for their respective professions. The teachers *teach* and the social workers *talk*. Whilst, naturally, this is a simplified picture of the complexity of the practice each professional conducts in co-located interprofessional collaboration, the process of making clear and easy-to-understand jurisdictional claims is an important feature in collaboration as a means of defining professional roles. A simplified and unambiguous claim of jurisdiction within the heartland of the profession is a means to maintain and develop a profession-specific professional identity and provides legitimacy for those involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration.

Another means of maintaining and reinforcing the profession-specific professional identity in co-located collaborative contexts can be described in terms of how the teachers and social workers at the resource school make use of the spatial structure. The usage differed in the sense that the teachers could be seen as ‘returning’ to traditional ‘teacher’ environments outside the resource school, using home schools and the school where they borrowed specialist classrooms, and in frequenting the teachers’ staffrooms as a means of reinforcing their professional identity. The social workers used a particular ‘talk’ room to reinforce the claim of holding jurisdiction of talking about specific social issues.

## Constructing co-located interprofessional collaboration: shifting subordination, shared professional identity and interdependence

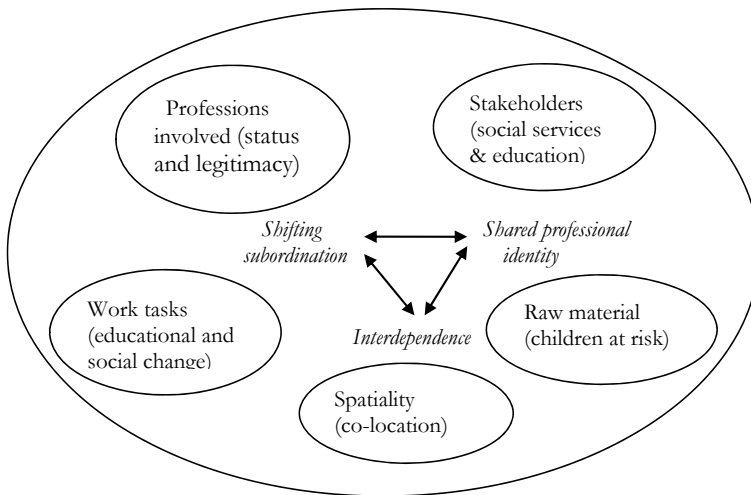
In this section I will revisit, examine and discuss a number of the central concepts used in this thesis and will make some tentative proposals for conceptual development. In particular I will examine the conceptual salience and value of three proposed concepts; *shifting subordination*, *shared professional identity* and *interdependence*. Although these three concepts are interrelated, they relate to different theoretical directions in the examination of diverse processes in co-located interprofessional collaboration. *Shifting subordination* relates to theories of the sociology of professions around claims-making differences between professionals with regard to legitimacy and status. *Shared professional identity* – which also is embedded in the theories of the sociology of professions – focuses on the development of non-specific professional identities due to commonalities with other professions. Finally, the concept of *interdependence* is linked to theories

of negotiations and exchanges between professionals and can be used as a means of examining power relations in co-located interprofessional collaboration.

As stated previously, one of the main theoretical assumptions in this thesis is that collaboration needs to be understood contextually (Farmakopoulou, 1999; Hjortsjö, 2006; Leathard, 2003b). Thus each of the three proposed concepts will be discussed within the context of the resource school. I will begin by discussing the concept of shifting subordination, before moving on to consider shared professional identity and interdependence. Finally, I will discuss a possible relevance of all three these concepts in relation to other contexts of collaboration.

The core concepts and the different explicit contextual factors, i.e. the professionals involved, the stakeholders, the raw material, spatiality and the work tasks that characterise the context of co-located interprofessional collaboration in the resource school are set out in figure 3

Figure 3. Contextual factors and core concepts.



### Shifting subordination

In this thesis Abbott's (1988) concepts of jurisdiction and subordination have been central to my examination and understanding of the teachers' and social workers' division of labour when collaborating and I have used the concepts to illuminate the processes of maintaining and developing a professional identity

and legitimacy. Further, I have proposed that these concepts can usefully be used to identify and describe processes of handling potential jurisdictional boundary conflicts in co-located interprofessional collaboration. However, the findings indicate that subordination in the workplace in the case at the centre of this study is neither static, nor the result of a fought-and-won (or lost) conflict, but rather is something that is fluid and the dynamics of which change from one situation to another. Thus, to understand subordination in the workplace arena, my suggestion is that, rather than the type of subordination described by Abbott (1988) in the public opinion and legal arenas, what might take place in co-located settings is more a form of fluctuating, non-permanent or *shifting subordination*. From the research carried out in this thesis, it would appear that in cases of co-located interprofessional collaboration, similar processes of subordination occur as in the public and formal arena. However, unlike processes of subordination in the latter arenas, these processes do not result in one profession ending up having jurisdictional dominance over the other. Rather, it is the case that subordination shifts in that, in different situations, the role of superordinate/subordinated changes. I will now take a closer look at concepts of jurisdiction and subordination which form the basis for this argument.

### *Jurisdiction and subordination*

Abbot (1988) uses the concept of jurisdiction to explain how professionals maintain, develop, and indeed lose, professional legitimacy and status. Jurisdiction, according to Abbott, involves the exclusive right or monopoly of legitimate activity within a particular field. The concept has two dimensions; one that involves who should *carry out* what working tasks, and another relating to who should have *control over* those working tasks. Claims of jurisdiction are made in three arenas; two formal arenas, namely the arena of public opinion and the arena of the legal system, and a third informal arena, that of the workplace. Claims of jurisdiction in the arena of public opinion, for example in the media, can concern an abstract space of work in which there exist clear boundaries within which homogenous groups operate. For example, with regard to the diagnosis and treatment of illness, doctors have a recognised jurisdiction. Similarly, in the settlement of contractual disputes, lawyers have exclusive jurisdiction. As regards the second of Abbot's two formal arenas, claims made by professional groups in the legal arena are more specific. Here legal jurisdiction concerns certain rights, such as for example the right of doctors to prescribe medication. Jurisdiction that has been established in these two formal arenas tends to be maintained over time and any changes tend to involve protracted and

highly contentious processes. In the informal arena of the workplace, however, jurisdiction, according to Abbott, involves the simple claim to control certain tasks as a means of maintaining the flow of work and ensuring that organisational obligations are fulfilled. Here the question often centres around who can control and supervise the work, and who is qualified to do which parts of it.

In the arena of public opinion and in the legal arena, one of the commonest methods of settling conflicts of jurisdiction is, according to Abbott, the *subordination* of one profession in relation to the other. Although of course having serious consequences for the 'losing' profession, subordination nevertheless generally takes the form of an explicit settlement between the two professional groups who operate within the sphere in question. In his examination of the concept of subordination, Abbot provides the following definition:

Sometimes the subordination is merely intellectual, *the dominant profession retaining only cognitive control of the jurisdiction, while allowing practical jurisdiction to be shared more widely* (Abbott, 1988 p. 69). The direct creation of subordinate groups has great advantage for the profession with full jurisdiction. It enables *extension of dominant effort without division of dominant perquisites /.../ Most importantly; it settles the public and legal relation between the incumbent of domination and subordination from the start* (my emphasis) (Abbott, 1988, p. 69, p 72).

Although Abbot uses the term subordination in relation to jurisdictional conflicts that take place within the legal and public arenas, it has the potential, I would argue, to also be usefully extended to the workplace arena. It would in particular seem be of value in describing the ways in which conflicts are resolved and potential conflicts prevented in co-located interprofessional collaboration.

Abbot's concept of subordination, as described above, comprises three specific elements. In unpacking Abbot's definition of the concept of subordination, I will now consider how each of these three elements can be related to interprofessional co-located collaboration.

*The holding of cognitive jurisdiction whilst practical jurisdiction is handed to the subordinate profession* can be illustrated by the phenomenon of interchangeability in the resource school. The teachers and social workers distinguish between who has planned the work tasks and who carries them out i.e. there are differences in cognitive and practical jurisdictions. Jurisdiction usually links professions with tasks, and the claim of doing a certain task is a means of legitimating the

profession. However, the use of cognitive and practical jurisdiction can allow professionals in co-located collaborative settings to carry out various working tasks without linking each specific working task to their profession. Thus, in this sense, even though carrying out a task, this does not mean that the professional group in question is actually making claims of holding jurisdiction over that particular working task. For example to return to the resource school, the social workers are not making claims of holding full jurisdiction for teaching subject content. Similarly, the teachers do not make any claims as to holding a jurisdiction of talking in a special way about social issues when involved with pupils in a social activity.

*The extension of dominant effort without the division of dominant perquisites* involves that if, as suggested by Abbot, the subordination of one profession under another has great advantages for the profession with full jurisdiction, the superordinate profession can maintain and enhance its professional legitimacy without too much effort. For example, in the resource school, interchangeability means that in the public arena, the credit to be gained in relation to subject knowledge acquisition attaches to the teaching profession, even though the teachers may not have been the ones who actually carried out everything involved in the pupils' learning. The same can be said with regard to the social workers in that the teachers often carry out social activities that promote social development for the pupil.

*Settling the public and legal relations between the incumbents of domination and subordination* is the third important dimension of the concept of subordination in the legal or public opinion arenas and concerns the issue that subordination is an explicit settlement between two formal professional groups. Abbot's point is that when conflicts of jurisdiction arise they need to be settled since subordination assumes a complexity in the division of labour. This recognition can, I would argue, also be extended to Abbot's third arena in which claims for jurisdiction are made, that is to say the workplace. Subordination can also be seen as important in the workplace as regards co-located collaboration in that, if such processes did not exist, the workplace would be inundated with jurisdictional conflicts and wars around "jurisdictional turf".

However the type of subordination that occurs in a co-located collaborative workplace setting is not the same sort as that in the legal and public arenas. It differs in at least one important respect, namely that subordination in such a context lacks the permanency of the legal and public arenas and is instead

characterised by fluidity and contingency. It is a form of subordination that differs from one situation to another and, importantly, is one where, depending on the situation, the superordinate and subordinate roles fluctuate between the two professional groups.

To be explicit, the use of the concept of subordination in explaining processes of professionalization and the division of labour between different professions – which involves historical settlement of jurisdictional disputes in the formal arenas of public opinion and the legal system – differs from the proposed use of the concept as applied in the arena of the workplace. The settlement of jurisdictional disputes by subordination in the public opinion and legal arenas tends to be relatively stable and can be characterised by consistency and a permanency of subordination which has developed historically over time. The use of the concept of subordination in the workplace can, in contrast, help to illuminate more subtle divisions of labour aimed at reducing jurisdictional disputes and maintaining and developing professional identities. Such jurisdictional disputes are not settled publically and the division of labour is rather something that is negotiated and contextually-determined. It is fluid, contingent and ‘shifting’. Indeed, the balance in the distribution of tasks with the support of cognitive and practical jurisdiction can, in the type of co-located interprofessional collaborative workplace setting that I have studied, be seen as continuously shifting and, at any particular point in time, calibrations in jurisdictional competence and the balance between superordinate/subordinate positions take place in deciding on the optimal division of working tasks.

Nevertheless, even if the manifestations differ, the motive for being engaged in *shifting subordination* in the arena of the workplace when settling potential jurisdictional disputes is the same as it is for subordination in the formal and legal arenas. The aim is to maintain and develop professional legitimacy and identity by the extension of dominant effort without the division of dominant perquisites. The use of shifting subordination in a co-located setting gives legitimacy to the professionals involved in their turn-taking of being either superordinates or subordinates. Simply explained, by doing non-profession-specific working tasks, each group helps the other in the process of maintaining and developing professional legitimacy and identity when involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration. The type of subordination that occurs in such a setting might thus be best regarded as shifting, dynamic, and reciprocal, rather than the case of one professional group trying to establish a superordinate role on a more permanent basis.

Consequently, shifting subordination prevents the risk that the staff internally perceive that the practice that takes place in co-located settings is non-professional or that, as professionals, they have ‘gone native’ in blending in with the other profession.

This later point is important in that in the arena of the public opinion, the generally-held notion is that all professionals have an interest in projecting a clear and unambiguous picture of a distinct jurisdictional link to working tasks (see Abbott, 1988). Such discourses have the important function of supporting the legitimacy of professions. Thus by the use of *shifting subordination* the professional groups involved uphold their respective profession’s legitimacy.

Finally, it could be argued that professionals involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration are simply ‘being practical’ and ‘sharing’ the burden of the work, and that they attach no deeper meaning to it. Such a view would imply that the theory of potential conflicts relating to boundaries of jurisdiction would not be relevant and that a form of professional ‘blending’ is unproblematic. However, such a view misses the point. By instead adopting a conceptual approach, such as I advocate in my use of the term ‘shifting subordination’, this enables us to identify the complex underlying patterns of jurisdiction that are at play in co-located settings. Rather than simply seeing practice in a co-located setting such as the one that I have studied as characterised by flexibility, innovation and reciprocity, the use of the concept of shifting subordination allows light to be shed on processes of jurisdictional claim-making that are just as important in establishing professional legitimacy in a co-located workplace setting as they are in the legal and public opinion arenas.

## Shared professional identity

The second conceptual issue that I want to examine is Evett’s (2006a) concept of *shared professional identity*. I take the position that Evett’s concept might usefully be extended to situations of co-located interprofessional collaboration where shared professional identity can be used as a means of describing the processes involved in maintaining and developing professional identities. In particular, I will argue that it can enable professional groups working closely together in a co-located context to enhance their own professional status as well as, at the same time, to accommodate organizational imperatives such as, for example, that the pupils should successfully attain the educational goals and continue to live at home and in a safe environment.



According to Heggen (2008) professional identity is constructed and re-constructed through practice and involves the production of a self-perception of one's own professional role in the workplace in relation to other professionals. Heggen explains that professional identity is wider than formal descriptions of the profession made by professional bodies and that it is linked to self-identification rather than to formal descriptions or a consensual profession-specific professional identity. In the discussion that follows the point I wish to make is that professionals involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration may, in addition to their own defined profession-specific professional identity, also have a *shared professional identity* which is workplace dependent.

In her research into the development of professionalism within the field of the sociology of professions, Evetts (2006a) uses the concept of *shared professional identity*. Inspired by Hughes' (as cited in Evetts 2006a, p.518) work on professional socialisation in the workplace, Evetts explains that the concept of shared professional identity is used to encapsulate the dual motives of professions of promoting professionalism as a means to legitimate their profession by providing good service, and of using the monopoly of expert knowledge for economic gain. My point of departure here is that *shared professional identity* also can serve as a useful theoretical concept that neatly encapsulates the dual motives that professional groups have when collaborating. In a co-located setting, such a shared professional identity can also translate into professionals' dual motives of promoting and maintaining their own professional legitimacy whilst, at the same time, accommodating the organization's imperatives of delivering effective collaborative service.

Evetts describes the concept of shared professional identities in the following way:

This shared professional identity /.../ is associated with a sense of common experience, understanding and expertise, *shared ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions*. This common identity is *produced and reproduced* (my italics) through occupational and professional socialization by means of shared educational backgrounds, professional training and vocational experience, and by membership of professional associations...and institutes where practitioners develop and maintain a shared work culture (Evetts, 2006a, p. 134).

The composition of the concept of shared professional identity is principally determined by two elements. The first of these is the professional associations with *shared work experience and shared perceptions of problems and solutions*. The second

is the *production and reproduction of a shared professional identity*. I will now consider each element in turn.

*Shared work experience* and the *perception of problems and solutions* are both emphasised in Evett's description of a shared professional identity. Professionals gain work experience and construct perceptions of problems and solutions within the workplace they practice in and within the organisation in which they are employed. One way of understanding the process of developing a shared professional identity is to more closely examine the work conditions in the organisation that the professionals are located in. For example in the resource school the teachers and social workers share the experience of working with children and young people in need of special educational and social support. Using Hasenfeld's (2010a), terminology these pupils are the 'raw material' and the 'stuff' that human service organisations work with. The fact that it is real people who comprise the 'stuff' that is worked with means that the work of human service organisations will always involve moral work (Hasenfeld, 2010a). To provide an illustration of these ideas, the staff in the resource school were sometimes faced with the necessity of having to make moral-based decisions on the distribution of limited resources, such as for example who should accompany a pupil to a home school. These shared experiences can function in a way that highlights commonalities between the two professional groups (who are working with the same raw material) and glossing over professional and organisational differences. It is in such a context that a shared professional identity can emerge.

Another area within which a shared professional identity can emerge concerns the shared perception of problems and the solutions that are workplace-based. In such situations Hasenfeld (2010a) has suggested that a shared practice ideology can evolve as a result of negotiation. In the context of the resource school, the practice ideology of working with the *social behavioural objective* based on a value that social learning is a prerequisite for subject learning could be an example. Thus the construction of a practice ideology in co-located interprofessional collaboration illustrates how the perception of problems and solutions can be shared.

The *production and reproduction* of a shared professional identity is the second important element in Evetts' concept. In her discussion of the role of professional socialization by means of having a shared educational background Evetts points out that this does not necessarily mean that the professionals have

the *same* professional education. Nevertheless, a program of professional education that has a focus on work with people (i.e. social work and teacher education) forms part of the base upon which in later professional careers, a shared professional identity can be produced and reproduced. To illustrate this point, let us return again to the resource school. Here the social workers and teachers have a similar educational background in, for example, being expected to promote children's social skills. Whilst the teachers work towards developing social skills in what they term fostering (which, for example, involves the development of empathy and democratic values) the social workers can be regarded as carrying out a similar task, although one that is usually focused on a specific child or children and which often involves the focusing of the family situation and interpersonal relations.

Furthermore, the meaning of belonging to a professional association – which again doesn't need to be the same association – can be a shared experience which produces and reproduces the perception of having a shared professional identity. Thus the teachers' and social workers' membership of a professional body can contribute to developing and maintaining a shared working culture of professionalism where commonalities might include a focus on professional ethics that are not directly linked to the work carried out.

It appears that the production and reproduction of a shared professional identity is linked to a specific work culture as well as being linked to a specific workplace. When it comes to co-located inter-professional collaboration, even though the processes of producing and reproducing this shared professional identity are somewhat different, the prerequisites – namely shared experiences – are nevertheless similar.

The main difference in the way that the concept of shared professional identity as it is used by Evetts and the use as I propose in understanding processes of identity-creation in co-located interprofessional collaboration is that, in Evetts' use of the term, it refers to the development of a *general* professionalism. Evetts (2006a) means that the development of professionalism is not only related to workplace conditions but, instead, evolves across boundaries of workplace experience as well as within workplace experience.

In my use of the term, however, the process of constructing a shared professional identity in a co-located setting is workplace dependent. It is in the day-to-day decision-making, negotiation and fluid divisions of labour that a shared professional identity is produced and reproduced. In co-located

interprofessional collaboration this type of shared professional identity is important. Going back to Evett's original rationale for the development of professionalism, where there is a dual interest in providing rational and effective service and enhancing professional status and economic gains, this dual interest may be equally present in the shared professional identity of professionals in co-located situations such as the resource school. The groups wish to preserve and develop professional status and provide effective service. Hence a shared professional identity can evolve.

Although in co-located settings such as the resource school there may be, as I have argued, a shared professional identity, there is of course also a profession-specific professional identity. The presence of a profession-specific identity and a shared professional identity are of course not mutually-exclusive. It is not a case of the former diminishing or indeed disappearing as a result of the later. Instead, the identities might operate on a parallel and concurrent basis. For example, in the resource school, when a teacher is teaching maths in a classroom together with a social worker who is assisting a pupil, the profession-specific identity of the teacher is foregrounded. However, let us imagine that some disturbance takes place. One of the pupils starts acting out. Here the teacher and the social worker might act in unison to solve the situation. In such a situation, it is the shared professional identity that suddenly becomes foregrounded.

Put another way, they work together with the pupil's social behaviour based on an agreed practice ideology and, in tackling this issue – which in a co-located context such as a resource school can be an extremely frequent occurrence – the professional identity of being a maths teacher is, momentarily at least, placed in the background. A similar situation might be when a social worker is having a structured therapeutic talk session with a pupil. Here the profession-specific professional identity will be at the forefront. The pupil might though, for example, ask a question about how to construct an argument in a text and the social worker might respond by spending the session explaining how this can be done. At this point in time it might be that the shared professional identity that is at the forefront. Thus, rather than having strictly defined professional identities, it appears that there may be two types of professional identity. Consequently, it can be noted that collaborative practice involves a simultaneous process of maintaining and/or developing a profession-specific and a shared professional identity.

## Interdependence

Finally, I would like to expand upon another important finding, the phenomenon of a high degree of interdependence between the staff in the resource school. This is linked to the *no choice dimension of collaboration* which involves that staff in the resource school have limited opportunities to withdraw from collaboration (except from quitting). In particular I would like to look again at interdependence in co-located interprofessional collaboration in relation to Huxham and Vangen's (2005) theory of collaborative advantage and in particular their concepts of *commitment* and *trust*. The construction of commitment and trust is, according to Huxham and Vangen, often evidenced by processes involving sustained engagement and a durable willingness to participate over a period of time. In looking at commitment and trust – and drawing on exchange theory developed by Hirschman (1970) and in particular his concepts of exit, voice and loyalty that are used to explain the processes of people either leaving or remaining in an organization – I will discuss how a high degree of interdependence shapes processes of co-located interprofessional collaboration.

My argument is based on the notion that if you seek employment in a co-located interprofessional setting you are – explicitly – perceived to be committed to the collaboration. If not, you would hardly seek employment in such a setting. Drawing on Strauss' (1978) theory of a negotiated social order, commitment to work at the resource school and limited exit opportunities both influence the negotiation of a social order of collaborative practice. In particular staff members may be cautious about raising their voice since, if they were to do so, they might risk instigating a more fundamental renegotiation of the social order which in turn could cause greater conflicts.

I will now examine the concepts of exit and voice in a little more detail. The theory of opportunities for exit and voice was developed within the field of economic science and relates to the ways in which companies compete with each other. However Hirschman (1970) argues that the theory can also successfully be applied to public and non-profit-making organisations. Basically, exit means that customers who are not satisfied with the products provided by a firm can simply switch to another. It is regarded as a 'clean' concept based on the notion that that one either exits or not. Transferring this to co-located interprofessional collaboration, exit opportunities may involve switching to another employment without having tried to change the work conditions that are regarded as problematic. Voice, on the contrary, is, according to Hirschman, a more 'messy' concept since it can graduate from faint grumblings to violent protests. Voice

involves the articulation of critical opinions rather than an anonymous or secret voice in switching markets. In co-located interprofessional collaboration voice can be translated into the expression of critical opinions regarding the practice conducted.

The two concepts of exit and voice can be helpful in illuminating power relations in co-located interprofessional collaboration. According to Hirschman, voice is constrained when there are no exit opportunities. This means that, in order for an individual professional to remain within the organization, critical opinions may have to be held in check.

However, there are other factors influencing exit, one of which is the concept of loyalty. Loyalty is described as a special attachment to an organisation which, in co-located interprofessional collaboration, can perhaps be found in the reasons for applying for the job in the first place and a commitment to the idea of collaboration. The presence of loyalty makes exit less likely. The principle determinant of using voice and not resorting to exit is that there is a willingness to trade off the certainty of exit against the possibility of improvement by giving voice.

Consequently, in Straus's terms, there is no other option than acquiescing in the negotiated/re-negotiated social order of collaboration and – in my view – very carefully assess how voice can be raised when initiating renegotiations of the existing social order of collaboration. This mutual interdependence means that each professional body relies on the accommodation of the other. It is a means of distributing power equally and each professional is an incumbent of such power. This now leads us to the question of trust-building.

According to Huxham and Vangen (2005) trust, in the context of collaboration, is about the anticipations that something will be forthcoming as a return for the efforts that have been put into the collaboration. It is a belief and a placing of faith in the capacity and will of the other professional group to deliver the expected benefits of the collaboration. Trust, in Huxham and Vangen's terms, is about the willingness of being vulnerable and accepting that the actions of collaborative partners not only risk the collaboration, but that such eventualities can impact negatively on the respective partners' future.

With this in the background it is possible to imagine in another scenario, that each professional involved in co-located interprofessional collaboration has invested interests and a commitment to negotiate a social order that will enable

the momentum of the collaboration to be maintained. This commitment can be interpreted as being positive, for example in a scenario when raising voice is coupled with loyalty and giving voice results in improvement and development of services, which benefit the service user. However, there might also be a risk that the professionals themselves are silencing their voice because they do not want to risk obstructing the negotiated social order or the practice ideology. This might mean that they work effectively without major conflicts, bearing in mind that the option of exit does not exist. If though they were to raise voice, this might involve the risk that the whole collaborative venture could eventually collapse, meaning that they all would be without employment. Thus the consequences would have an immediate impact on the professionals themselves.

The other scenario, of silencing their voice, could instead have consequences for the service users. For example, the collaborating professionals can create common narratives of how to understand the service users' problems, even though the service user may view things quite differently. And, whilst in reality members of staff might see the problems inherent in the commonly-constructed narrative, they might nevertheless refrain from voicing such an opinion due to not wanting to disturb the socially agreed order of the collaborative practice.

## Interprofessional collaboration in different contexts

The phenomenon of co-located interprofessional collaboration has been examined in a particular setting and, naturally, there are other examples of similar interprofessional collaborative practices where different professionals share the same locality and organisational imperatives. The question is whether the phenomena of *shifting subordination*, *shared professional identity* and *interdependence* can be identified in comparable manners as in the resource school at the centre of the current enquiry. To explore and discuss this question, I will make use of a model that aims to describe necessary, but not sufficient, factors that need to be satisfied and under which these phenomena arise.

Figure 4. Model of conceptual and contextual factors in co-located interprofessional collaboration

Shifting subordination  Shared professional identity  Inter-dependence	Contextual factors	Characteristics
	The people (raw material)	Level of interaction, element of urgency, level of vulnerability
	Stakeholders	Level of accountability, responsibilities, ownership
	Professions involved	Status, legitimacy, power balance, claims of jurisdiction, autonomy, discretion
	Work tasks	Non-profession-specific and profession-specific work tasks
	Spatiality	Co-location, temporary co-location, separate buildings

For each of the three concepts I will now outline the collaborative conditions under which the phenomenon arises.

### Shifting subordination

Shifting subordination is a process where professionals in collaboration systematically and reciprocally conduct non-profession-specific working tasks as a result of organisational imperatives. It can take place when and if the following conditions are satisfied:

- *Co-collocation.* This is the first and most obvious condition. Some form of co-location in a separate building, set apart from the stakeholder’s regular location, is necessary if the professionals systematically carry out each other’s work tasks, either on an everyday or a regular reoccurring basis.
- *A lack of an explicit hierarchy: balanced professional status and legitimacy between the professionals involved.* Workplaces with fairly equal power balances between the professionals allow for reciprocity. The professionals have more or less similar professional status and legitimacy to defend, and neither is ‘losing out’ by demeaning their professional status in doing the other profession’s profession-specific working tasks.
- *Few legally controlled areas of jurisdiction.* Workplaces with few strictly legally controlled areas of jurisdiction which surround the working tasks (i.e. the fewer staff that can carry out the task, the fewer the opportunities for



dividing the labour in terms reciprocal of cognitive and practical jurisdiction) provide the conditions under which shifting subordination might arise. The staff can use their discretion to divide their labour to fit organisational imperatives.

## Shared professional identity

A shared professional identity is additional to the profession-specific identity and is constructed around shared workplace conditions.

It can take place when the following conditions are satisfied:

- *Co-location* needs to be in place. A shared professional identity is workplace-dependent. Together with a profession-specific identity, a shared professional identity operates concurrently in practice. In any given situation either the profession-specific or the shared identity can be either in the foreground or the background. However, even though co-location is in place, constructing a shared professional identity does not automatically occur. Other things also need to be present. These are, i) a commitment to accomplish the organisational imperatives of effective collaboration, ii) a sense of common experience and iii) shared ways of perceiving problems and their solutions.
- *Interaction with the 'people' to collaborate around* (the raw material). This is the triggering mechanism for the foregrounding and backgrounding of profession-specific and shared professional identities. For example, interaction between members of the different professional groups can quite rapidly involve the transformation from a profession-specific identity to a shared professional identity. Equally, the level of vulnerability in 'emergency' situations – in particular when the people can be assessed as dependent on the professionals' intervention – can create a form of 'temporary workplace-shared professional identity'.

## Interdependence

Interdependence occurs when professions or organisations cannot accomplish the task in hand without each other. It can take place when the following conditions are satisfied:

- *Co-location.* Collaboration is co-located and the professionals' profession-specific working tasks are interlinked with each other and accountability is shared.
- *Limited opportunities of exit.* Other than quitting the employment, there are no other exit opportunities. To 'raise voice' may create conflict or impact on quality. 'Loyalty' can either silence or promote 'voice'.
- *A mutual dependency to meet organisational imperatives.* There needs to be a willingness to negotiate a social order that meets the organisational imperative and which might compromise their sense of professionalism.
- *The joint responsibility of stakeholders for the outcome of the collaboration.* Stakeholders share financial responsibility and accountability and have a sense of 'ownership' of the collaborative activity.

## Concluding remarks

The necessary conditions presented here are by no means an exhaustive list of factors that can explain the presence of the proposed phenomena of shifting subordination, shared professional identity and interdependence. Many other possible contextual factors need to be taken into account when examining co-located interprofessional collaboration. These can be factors such as the continuity of professionals involved, the size of the venture, the number of staff and stakeholders, interpersonal relations and probably many others. The value of these factors, it is hoped, is that they can form focal issues for further research into co-located interprofessional collaboration.

Together with proposals for conceptual development, the findings presented and discussed here leave several questions unanswered. These I would like to group into two areas. Whilst one area concerns professional knowledge development in social work, the other is about the relative value of interprofessional collaboration for service users.

The learning and knowledge development of professionals in co-located interprofessional collaboration can be examined on different levels. It can be about the individual social workers' workplace-based learning and knowledge development. For example, do shifting subordination and a shared professional identity contribute to an extension of social work competence and, if so, how can that be incorporated into the knowledge base of social work?

A different level of knowledge development might relate to work done in programs of social work education provided by university social work departments. Since university educators regularly focus on professionalism in terms of explicit profession-specific working tasks, questions here include how social work students are prepared to handle situations of shifting subordination, in doing non-profession-specific working tasks.

On a local municipal level, the question may relate to the nature of the learning and knowledge development take places at a management level, with regard, for example, to deciding which people to collaborate around and with which other stakeholders. Municipal social service departments are politically controlled organisations and a relevant question to be addressed would therefore concern the types of learning and knowledge development that can be identified with regard to local policy.

However, with regard to examining the relative outcome of interprofessional collaboration, the key question may be, does it matter? Does collaboration in general and professionals' learning and knowledge development in particular affect the outcomes for service users, or can resources spent on collaboration be better used in different ways? Research clearly points to the lack of knowledge around the outcomes of collaboration – particularly of the co-located sort – and it may be that there needs to be some sort of differentiation as to when collaboration is of value for the people it seeks to benefit.



## Swedish summary

### Inledning

Samarbete kring barn och ungdomar har traditionellt sett varit en del i socialt arbete och de senaste tjugo åren har kraven på samarbete kring barn som far illa eller riskerar att fara illa intensifieras såväl nationellt som internationellt. I Sverige infördes 2003 en skärpning av socialtjänstens övergripande ansvar för samarbete om barn som far illa, eller riskerar att fara illa (Socialstyrelsen, 2007). I England förstärktes kraven på samarbete 2004 i samband med införandet av en ny barnavårdslag (Department of Education and Skills, 2003). Även i Danmark och Australien kan likartade förändringar skönjas, exempelvis introducerade Danmark ”Barnets Reform” 2010-2013, där krav på tätare samarbete ställs. Snarlika krav ställdes i Australien i samband med introduktionen av National Framework for Protecting Children, 2009–2020 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2010; The Ministry of Social Affairs, Denmark, 2010). Dessa olika reformer pekar på att samarbete kring barn och unga är en samtida aktuell fråga i det sociala arbetet.

Det finns även relativt omfattande forskning om samarbete kring barn och unga. Några exempel på svenska och internationella studier är Bing, 2005; Danermark, Germundsson, Englund & Löf, 2009; Hjelte, 2005; Hjortsjö, 2005; Kreitzer & Lafrance, 2009; SOU 2010:95; Webb & Vulliamy, 2001. I tidigare forskning finns ofta en strävan efter att beskriva främjande och hindrande faktorer vid samarbete, vilket kan förklaras med att många forskningsrapporter är skrivna utifrån ett uppdrag att utvärdera samarbete. I denna avhandling ligger fokus inte i första hand på att söka framgångsfaktorer utan på att undersöka processer i samarbete kopplat till relationen mellan olika professioner och de organisatoriska sammanhang de professionella befinner sig i.

Avhandlingen handlar om samarbete mellan två professionella grupper och fokuserar processer i samlokaliserat interprofessionellt samarbete. Den verksamhet där dessa processer har studerats är en s.k. resursskola. I denna resursskola arbetar lärare och socialarbetare med barn och ungdomar som har svårigheter både i skolan och i sin sociala situation, vilket manifesteras i att de dels har åtgärdsprogram i skolan dels har insatser från socialtjänsten.

## Syfte och frågeställningar

Syftet med studien är att beskriva och analysera processer i samlokaliserat interprofessionellt samarbete i en resursskola och mellan de två professionerna lärare och socialarbetare. Resursskolan som kontext innebär att studien ges en särskild utbildningsmässig inramning, bland annat genom att barnen både har särskilt stöd i skolan och insatser från socialtjänsten. De huvudfrågor som behandlas i avhandlingen är:

*Vilken typ av, och vilka former för, arbetsdelning skapas i resursskolan?* Bland annat har jag ställt frågor om vilka anspråk på olika arbetsuppgifter som personalen gör, på vilka grunder dessa anspråk görs, vilka teknologier som används i det praktiska arbetet och vilka konsekvenser det får. En underfråga blir därmed vad som kan ses vara gemensamma arbetsuppgifter och teknologier och vad kan anses vara professionsspecifika arbetsuppgifter och teknologier?

*Hur bibehålls och utvecklas professionell identitet i samlokaliserat samarbete?* Denna frågeställning kan brytas ned i följande konkreta frågor som har undersökts i studien. Vilken roll spelar professionell kunskapsbas och praktik i fördelningen av arbetsuppgifter? Hur förstår exempelvis lärarna och socialarbetarna barns särskilda behov utifrån sociala aspekter och aspekter om ämneslärande samt vilka uppfattningar finns om hur man bäst kan möta dessa olika behov? Vilka argument förs fram angående krav på jurisdiktion vid fördelning av arbetsuppgifter? Vad gör socialarbetarna och lärarna för att legitimera deras professionella roll, och vilka argument används?

*På vilket sätt påverkar organisatoriska förhållanden hur arbetsuppgifter utförs?* Här fokuseras vilken roll organisatoriska villkor och infrastruktur spelar för den professionella praktiken.

*Vilka organisatoriska och professionella intressen kan urskiljas i antagningsprocessen dvs. när det bestäms vilka elever som ska gå i resursskolan?* Denna frågeställning knyter an till frågor som hur uppfattar de olika professionella som representerar skolan och socialtjänsten och är inblandade i antagningsprocessen barnen/den unges problem och behov? Hur uppvisas och uttrycks elevernas behov för att de ska vara kvalificerade för en plats på resursskolan? Hur kommer professionerna fram till ett beslut om vilka som ska erbjudas plats på resursskolan? Vilka argument framförs?

Det finns i tidigare forskningen om samarbete ingen enhetlig definition av vad det betyder eller hur det ska benämnas. Begrepp som "samordning", "samsyn",

”kollaboration”, ”samverkan”, ”tvärprofessionellt teamarbete”, etc. används med olika innebörder i olika texter av olika aktörer (Boklund, 1995; Danemark, 2000; Leathard, 2003b; Whittington, 2004; Socialstyrelsen, 2006b; SOU:2010:95).

I avhandlingen har jag valt att utgå från Meads & Ashcroft (2005) definition av samarbete:

At its simplest collaboration is about working together. It therefore implies both difference (it is something less than complete integration or unification), and commonality (there is some shared goal or activity which is the focus of collaboration (p. 15).

Samarbete som åsyftas i denna avhandling är det arbete lärarna och socialarbetarna gör tillsammans kring barnen och ungdomarna som går i resursskolan.

Resursskolan som studerats etablerades år 2000 och hade vid studiens genomförande tio anställda, fyra lärare och sex socialarbetare, fördelat på fem lärarpositioner och fem socialarbetarpositioner, dvs. en socialarbetare var anställd som lärare. Skolan hade tio elever mellan sju och sexton år. Elevernas skolsociala problematik uttrycktes bland annat i hög frånvaro, svårt att koncentrera sig, svårt med socialt samspel med andra elever (både i en-till-en-relationer och i grupp), motivation att studera, bristande ämneskunskaper, samt svårt att hantera krav och konflikter.

Eleverna deltog hela tiden parallellt i sin hemskolas undervisning, samt i hemskolans klassaktiviteter såsom skolresor och idrottsdagar. Målet var att eleverna så snart som möjligt skulle kunna återgå till skolgång i hemskolan. Resursskolan finansierades av den lokala utbildningsförvaltningen och socialtjänstens individ- och familjeomsorg (IFO). Resursskolan finns belägen i en mellanstor stad.

## Teoretisk ram

En central utgångspunkt för studien är att professionell identitet, status, legitimitet och organisatoriska förhållanden påverkar förutsättningar för samarbete (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Således tar avhandlingen sin teoretiska utgångspunkt i att stukturen (organisationen) och aktörerna (professionen) är viktiga faktorer för att förstå processer i interprofessionellt samarbete. Av detta skäl har jag valt att använda en organisations- och professionsteoretisk ansats.

Denna ansats ger möjligheter att dels diskutera vad som kan vara organisationens intressen i hur arbetet fördelas, dels få syn på professionernas anspråk på att utföra olika professionslegitimerande arbetsuppgifter. Centrala begrepp som används utifrån teorier om *human service organisations* är *people as raw material*, *practice ideology*, *discretion*, och *indeterminacy in technologies*, Hasenfeld, 2010a).<sup>12</sup> Hasenfeld menar att man kan lista olika specifika karaktärsdrag för human-service-organisationer, och det främsta karaktärsdraget är att man arbetar med människor, vilket betyder att människan är organisationens råvara som skall bearbetas och förädlas. Begreppet *service technology* beskriver vad som görs i en organisation och Hasenfeld menar att ett ytterligare kännetecken för HSO's är att det finns en inbyggd obestämbarhet om vad som faktiskt är den bästa tekniken för att bearbeta "råvaran", samt att HSO's är i hög grad beroende av att använda tekniker som är socialt erkända och legitima. Denna obestämbarhet innebär att de professionella har "vid diskretion", d.v.s. ett handlingsutrymme för att göra antaganden om vad som kännetecknar de människor de jobbar med och hur de bäst ska bli "bearbetade" (dvs. hjälpta). Ett annat kännetecken är att allt arbete med människor är ett moraliskt arbete. En aspekt av det moraliska arbete är att bedöma vem som ska få service eller inte få service, d.v.s. *rationing av resources*.

Utifrån professionssociologiska teorier har bland annat begreppen *jurisdiction* och *subordination* varit användbara för att undersöka fördelning av arbetsuppgifter och bakomliggande skäl hur till fördelningen har kunnat mejslas fram. Jurisdiktion innebär enligt Andrew Abbott (1988, 1995) att en profession gör anspråk på att ha monopol på att utföra vissa arbetsuppgifter. Dessa anspråk kan göras på tre olika arenor. I den legala arenan kan de handla om att en professionsorganisation söker legitimation, t.ex. läkarlegitimation. På den offentliga arenan kan det t.ex. handla om att fackföreningen driver olika kampanjer i pressen om vilka arbetsområden som är legitima för just den professionen. I den tredje arenan görs anspråken på arbetsplatsen och då handlar det om vem som har legitimitet att göra vilka arbetsuppgifter på just den arbetsplatsen. Det är på arbetsplatsarenan som denna studie fokuserar. Abbott pekar likaså på olika sätt att lösa dispyter kring jurisdiktion. En vanlig lösning är att profession blir underordnad den andra "subordinated". Den dominerande professionen har kognitiv jurisdiktion, vilket betyder att man behåller kognitiv makt över arbetsuppgiften, medan den andra professionen har vad han benämner praktisk jurisdiktion.

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<sup>12</sup> Jag har valt att inte översätta teoretiska begrepp till svenska mot bakgrund av att de används på engelska i avhandlingen.



För att beskriva förhandlingsdimensionen av arbetsfördelningen i samarbete har främst Strauss (1978) begrepp *negotiated social order* varit användbart. Enligt Strauss är en förhandling “*The possible means for getting things accomplished. It is used to get done the thing that an actor (person, group, organisation, nation and so on) wishes to get done, includes making things work or making them continuing working*” (p 11). Han menar att alla sociala ordningar är framförhandlade i någon mening.

## Metod

Studien är en fallstudie där resursskolan är ett exempel på en verksamhet där *processer i tvärprofessionellt samarbete* äger rum och kan studeras. Valet att göra en fallstudie har motiverats av en ansats att på ett fördjupat och detaljerat sätt beskriva fenomenet processer i interprofessionellt samarbete i en kontext snarare än att ge en bredare kontextoberoende beskrivning av fenomenet. Frågor som varför och hur snarare än hur ofta och hur många har styrts valet av metod (Flyvbjerg, 2007; Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994).

Mina urvalskriterier för att bestämma ett lämpligt fall var att: 1) skolan skulle ha ett uttalat tvärprofessionellt samarbete kring elever, 2) att lärare och socialarbetare skulle arbeta tillsammans dagligen, 3) och att eleverna dels hade insatser från socialtjänsten, dels erhöll särskilt pedagogiskt stöd av skolan. Utifrån dessa kriterier fann jag att en resursskola skulle vara ett adekvat exempel.

De forskningsmetoder som använts är intervjuer och deltagande observationer. Mellan januari 2005 och februari 2006 genomfördes tolv semistrukturerade intervjuer med lärare respektive socialarbetare, två telefonintervjuer med initiativtagaren till den aktuella resursskolan vilka var en politiker respektive chef inom utbildningsområdet, tjugotvå deltagande observationer i resursskolans verksamhet, fyra observationer av personalmöten i resursskolan samt sex observationer av samarbetsmöten under antagningprocessen av nya elever.

Analysstrategin jag har valt att använda är vad Patton (2002) beskriver som *tematisk analys*, vilket innebär att jag försöker finna olika mönster i materialet och skapa teman. Analysen har skett i två steg. Först har enskilda intervjuer kodats och olika mönster har identifierats. Dessa mönster har sedan bildat underlag för mer övergripande tematiseringar. Fältanteckningarna har bearbetats lite annorlunda, då en första tolkning och bearbetning gjordes redan vid nedtecknandet av observationerna.

## Resultat

Avhandlingen har fyra resultatkapitel: Kapitel 6, *intake process*, kapitel 7, *common grounds*, kapitel 8 & 9, *separate grounds - socialarbetare* och *separat grounds - lärare*.

Kapitel 6, ”intake process” behandlar antagningsprocessen, dvs. på vilket sätt eleverna som går på resursskolan kommer dit. Här blir den bredare kontext som processer i interprofessionellt samarbete mellan skola och socialtjänst ingår i synlig. Antagningsprocessen beskrivs i fem steg, 1) skolans elevhälsa diskuterar med lärare om eventuella elever som kan behöva resursskolans verksamhet, 2) skolans elevhälsoteam och personal från socialtjänst och resursskolan går igenom förslag vid ett gemensamt möte, 3) en skriftlig ansökan görs som inkluderar social- och pedagogisk utredning, 4) resursskolans personal diskuterar dessa ansökningar och ger förslag på vilka elever som ska erbjudas plats, 5) en styrgrupp som består av chefer från socialtjänst och utbildningsförvaltningens centrala stödteam tar beslut om vilka elevers som ska erbjudas plats på resursskolan.

Det övergripande kriteriet för att en elev ska vara aktuell för skolgång på resursskolan är att hemskolan har försökt med de insatser de har till förfogande, exempelvis elevassistent, och att socialtjänsten har bedömt att barnet är i behov av socialtjänstens insatser, oftast då inom ramen för en s.k. ”hemmaplanslösning” (se Forkby, 2005). En hemmaplanslösning innebär att socialtjänsten arbetar intensivt med barn och familjer i hemmiljö med syfte att undvika att barnet behöver omhändertas och placeras utanför hemmet. Det breda kriterium som finns lämnar det öppet för tolkningar för hur olika problemsituationer gällande barnen ska tolkas.

Resultatet visar att personal som är involverad, dvs. lärare, rektor, skolpsykolog, specialpedagog, kurator, individ- och familjeomsorgens mellanchefer och socialarbetare från resursskolan, under mötena är upptagna av att *prata om antagningprocessen*, hur den ska gå till och på vilka grunder elever ska väljas ut. Ett centralt tema som framträder är diskussionen om avsaknad av detaljerade kriterier för om en elev ska komma i fråga för en plats på resursskolan eller inte. Exempelvis diskuterades hur hög frånvaro som ska anses spegla ett behov i samma grad som svårigheter med läsning, eller ett beteende som lärarna finner svårt att bemöta. Betydelsen av att använda ett relativt brett kriterium för antagning, kan ses från två perspektiv. Utifrån det ena perspektivet, vilket kan ses gagna professionerna, kan ett brett kriterium för antagning antas leda till en fördjupad diskussion om elever i olika former av svårigheter, vilket i sin tur kan

medföra att de inblandande ökar sin förståelse för varandras yrkesroller och kunskapsområden. Professionerna har också diskretion eller handlingsutrymme att göra behovsbedömningar utan restriktioner i form av detaljerade kriterier. Detta kan tolkas som att professionerna ges legitimitet av organisationen att inneha den kompens som krävs för att göra dessa bedömningar.

Det andra perspektivet utgår preliminärt från en omsorg om brukarna och på en idé om effektivisering av samarbetet mellan företrädare för olika professioner. Utifrån elevens och vårdnadshavares perspektiv skapar mer detaljerade kriterier större transparens, vilket skapar rättsäkerhet och minskar utrymmet för godtycke i urvalsprocessen. Samarbetet mellan de inblandade professionerna blir effektivare när diskretionsutrymme minskar, eftersom den tid som behövs för att diskutera tolkningar av sociala och utbildningsrelaterade behov minskar. En tidseffektiv antagningsprocess kan även legitimera samarbetet gentemot andra aktörer som exempelvis polisen och politiker. Samtidigt riskerar legitimiteten inåt mot skolorganisationen och socialtjänsten att minska genom att de professionella i mindre utsträckning upplever delaktighet i samarbetet.

I kapitel 7, ”Doing common ground” undersöks arbetsdelningen mellan lärare och socialarbetare utifrån vad som kan vara gemensamma arbetsuppgifter och teknologier. Tre aspekter av arbetsdelningen bildar den gemensamma grunden. Dessa är:

- strukturering av arbetet
- samarbetets teknologier
- samarbetets relationer

Strukturering av arbetet: Såväl långsiktig som kortsiktig planering av aktiviteter är en av nyckeluppgifterna för personalen, och är en viktig del i hur arbetet i resurskolan struktureras. Aktiviteterna struktureras kring *schemat* och *formella möten*. Ett övergripande mönster som framträder när det handlar om planering och ansvar för aktiviteter är att den profession som planerar en aktivitet är ansvarig för resultatet, men behöver inte vara den som utför aktiviteten. Denna arbetsdelning kan förstås med hjälp av Abbotts (1988) teorier om jurisdiktion. Han delar upp begreppet jurisdiktion dvs. att ha legitim kontroll över en arbetsuppgift eller ett arbetsområde i två delar, kognitiv och praktisk jurisdiktion. Kognitiv jurisdiktion innebär att ha kontroll över vad arbetsuppgiften innehåller och vem som utför den. Praktisk jurisdiktion innebär att ha kontroll över

utförandet men inte planering av innehåll. Exempel på kognitiv jurisdiktion är att en lärare som planerar en lektion i engelska är ansvarig för resultatet dvs. kunskapsutvecklingen i engelska för eleven. Exempel på praktisk jurisdiktion är att socialarbetare genomför lektionen på uppdrag av läraren. På samma sätt kan en socialarbetare planera en social aktivitet som exempelvis att de gör en skidresa med syftet är att utveckla elevens förmåga att delta i socialt samspel. Då är socialarbetarna ansvariga för elevens sociala utveckling. Däremot kan läraren utföra aktiviteten.

Även i mer kortsiktig planering som sker på grund av exempelvis sjukdom eller hastigt inplanerade möten med olika samarbetspartners (såsom barn- och ungdomspsykiatrin, socialtjänsten eller elevens hemskola), kan den som har tidsutrymme åta sig arbetsuppgifter som inte är professionsspecifika. Det kan innebära att en socialarbetare får undervisa eller en lärare går på möte med barnpsykiatrin och diskuterar sociala aspekter av elevens situation.

Detta fenomen att både lärare och socialarbetare kan göra arbetsuppgifter som inte är professionsspecifika har jag benämnt *interchangeability*.

Samarbetets teknologier: Teknologier är det som lärarna och socialarbetarna gör för att påverka eleverna och deras föräldrar (se Glisson, 2001; Hasenfeld, 2010). I avhandlingsstudien har jag identifierat tre huvudsakliga teknologier:

- *små grupper & social interaktion*, vilket personalen menar skapar bättre förutsättningar för lärande som främjar ämneskunskaps- och social utveckling. Motivet är att de då kan arbeta individualiserat utifrån varje elevs behov, utifrån ett pedagogiskt och socialt perspektiv. Lärarna och socialarbetarna menar också att en liten grupp och social interaktion skapar förutsättningar för att skapa kvalitativt bra relationer med elever och föräldrar, vilket främjar lärande.
- *pågående omplanering & intensiv kommunikation*. Lärarna och socialarbetarna pratar intensivt med varandra, de utbyter konstant information om elevernas beteende och de skapar mening tillsammans för hur de kan tolka och förstå elevernas beteende. Utifrån denna intensiva kommunikation planerar de om det som var tänkt i tidigare skeden. En förklaring till denna omplanering och kommunikation är att elevernas individuella beteende och agerande är mycket föränderligt. Det kan vara att eleven agerar ut, blir aggressiv, tystnar, försvinner och den tänkta aktiviteten behöver omvärderas och planeras om.

- *informella möten* med föräldrar, elevens hemskolas lärare och andra relevanta professioner som arbetar i kommunen exempelvis polis, ungdomscoach. Används till att utbyta information om eleverna.

Sammantaget har lärarna och socialarbetarna förhandlat fram användningen av dessa teknologier i resursskolan. En tolkning är att dessa teknologier är viktiga verktyg för att eleverna ska komma till och stanna kvar i skolan och därmed främjas såväl den sociala utvecklingen och ämneslärande. En alternativ tolkning är att teknologierna syftar till att få social kontroll över eleverna, att säkerställa skolnärvaro så att de inte befinner sig på andra inte önskvärda ställen, t.ex. på sina hemskolor. Utifrån en sådan tolkning kommer ämneslärande i andra hand.

Samarbetets relationer: Meads och Aschcroft (2005) poängterar att samarbetsrelationen i hög grad är beroende av kontexten. En kontextuell organisatorisk faktor i resursskolan är att lärarna och socialarbetarna är *tvungna att samarbeta*, alternativt välja att sluta sin anställning. Detta skiljer sig från exempelvis mer reguljärt samarbete, där de professionella kan undvika att närvara på ett möte, inte ringa ett samtal som förväntas etc. utan att det får större direkta konsekvenser. Inom ramen för denna övergripande kontextuella faktor, att vara tvungna att samarbeta, har lärarna och socialarbetarna förhandlat fram en *practice ideology* (se Hasenfeld, 2010a) där de är överens om att arbeta med *det sociala beteendemålet*. Detta mål är baserat på en värdering där ämneslärande förutsätts av ett socialt välbefinnande. Däremot skiljer det sig aningen beträffande fokus hur lärarna och socialarbetarna förstår och arbetar med detta mål. Förenklat kan man säga att lärarna har ett kompensande perspektiv. De uppfattar att mycket av elevernas beteende har sin grund i föräldrars brister i uppfostran och att lärarna behöver agera som ”bra förebilder” för att främja social utveckling. Samtidigt kan en dubbelhet skönjas i deras förhållningsätt, eftersom de tydligt uttrycker att elevernas bästa är att få bo med sina föräldrar. De uttrycker att föräldrarna brister, men att eleverna ändå har det bäst då de bor hos föräldrarna.

Socialarbetarna uttrycker på likande sätt att de vill agera som ”bra förebilder” för eleverna, men de menar att förändring av elevernas beteende främst sker genom att man arbetar direkt med föräldrarna, inte att de själva kan kompensera föräldrarnas brister. Istället kan man säga att de ser föräldrarna som medansvariga i arbetet med att förändra elevernas sociala beteende.

Det finns en maktaspekt i samarbetsrelationen mellan lärarna och socialarbetarna. De är i allra högst grad beroende av varandra för att utföra sitt uppdrag, det vill säga att skapa förutsättningar för elevernas utveckling och för

att de ska kunna bo kvar i sina hem. Detta ömsesidiga relationsberoende kan sägas skapa en relativt jämn maktbalans. Båda parter besitter makt både att ”göra” så att samarbetet flyter på och fungerar, samt att obstruera samarbetet. De båda professionerna har förhandlat fram en social ordning där:

- strukturen i arbetet är centrerad kring schemat och formella möten och där fördelningen av arbetsuppgifter sker utifrån kognitiv och praktisk jurisdiktion, d.v.s. interchangeability,
- samarbetsteknologier består av att arbeta med små grupper och social interaktion, kontinuerlig omplanering och intensiv kommunikation,
- en samarbetsrelation består av en praktik ideologi i form av ett *socialt beteendemål* baserat på en värdering att ämneslärande förutsätter ett socialt välbefinnande.

Strauss (1980) påpekar dock att en framförhandlad social ordning kontinuerligt omförhandlas. En tolkning är att mer genomgripande omförhandlingar av en ny social ordning är resurskrävande och mindre tid då kan ägnas åt det praktiska arbetet, vilket i sin tur kan påverka effektiviteten i samarbetet. En konsekvens kan vara att dessa omförhandlingar inte får ske ”för ofta”. Det finns dock risker med att undvika att förhandla fram en ny social ordning då omförhandlingar kan leda till utveckling och ökad kvalitet.

I kapitel 8 & 9, *separate grounds- social worker* och *separat grounds – teacher*, fokuseras de anspråk socialarbetarna och lärarna gör på jurisdiktion, det vill säga det ansvarsområde som ”tillhör” dem i arbetet på resursskolan och genom att utföra det bibehåller och legitimerar de sin professionsspecifika identitet. Socialarbetarens anspråk på jurisdiktion är för det första, att övergripande ansvara för att elevens skolgång fungerar utifrån ett förändrat socialt beteende vilket ger eleven förutsättningar för nå ämneskunskapsmål och bo kvar i sitt hem. För det andra att genomföra strukturerade terapeutiska samtal i ett särskilt rum. För det tredje att bestämma innehållet i dessa samtal för att kunna säkerställa att elever och föräldrar är återkommande villiga att delta. Exempelvis används teknologin att elever och föräldrar kan styra innehållet i samtalet i relativt hög grad, samt att socialarbetaren har diskretion att bestämma vilken information om samtalens innehåll som lärarna och ansvarig socialarbetare på socialkontoret ska få tillgång till. Att säkerställa att eleverna och föräldrarna deltar i samtal är en förutsättning både för socialarbetarnas legitimitet och för att främja elevernas och föräldrarnas möjligheter till att förändra sin sociala situation. För det fjärde att samtala med

andra liknande professioner: Socialarbetarna deltar företrädesvis i formella möten med professionella som arbetar med sociala aspekter, exempelvis från barn och ungdomspsykiatri och social byrån. Slutligen att hålla förberedande samtal om samtal: Socialarbetarna planerar de strukturerade terapeutiska samtalen och samtal med andra professionella på ett särskilt sätt.

En central del av socialarbetarnas kunskapsbas är att arbeta utifrån ett socialkonstruktionistiskt förhållningssätt. De uttrycker att de behöver förstå elevernas och föräldrarnas uppfattning om verkligheten, dvs. att varje människa uppfattning av sin situation är en "sann" konstruktion. Motivet till att inta ett sådant förhållningssätt är att man behöver som socialarbetare förstå hur elever och föräldrar upplever sin situation för att i samtal kunna främja social förändring. En ytterligare aspekt av kunskapsbas är att socialarbetarna kan ses utveckla professionell kunskap genom att prata med varandra. Socialarbetarna lär informellt genom ett intensivt utbyte av information och genom att planera om redan planerade aktiviteter samt formellt genom handledning.

När det kommer till professionsspecifik identitet för socialarbetarna i resursskolan karaktäriseras denna av att de ansvarar för de strukturerade samtalen med föräldrar och elever men de upplever att de förväntas hjälpa till med allt annat på skolan likaså, vilket ses som problematiskt. De uttrycker att de förväntas förbereda frukost duka bordet vid lunch, tvätta bilen, vara med på lektioner ta hand om konflikter etc. En ytterligare aspekt av professionsspecifik identitet är att de är autonom profession som har diskretion att organisera sitt arbete utifrån eget omdöme, till exempel bestämmer de självständigt om struktur och innehåll i de samtal de för med elever och föräldrar. En vidare aspekt av professionsspecifik identitet är att vara engagerad eller snarare förpliktigad till att vilja arbeta i en skolmiljö med andra institutionella ramar än vad som är brukligt i en socialtjänstmiljö.

Lärarens anspråk på jurisdiktion är för det första att ta ansvar för elevens resultat när det gäller ämneslärande. Dessutom tar de ansvar för att skapa främjande situationer för ämneslärande. Lärarna framhåller att eleverna har en tidigare erfarenhet av misslyckande i skolan vilket innebär att de behöver arbeta med motivationen att delta i lektioner. Lärarna använder olika teknologier för att motivera eleverna att delta i lektioner: individualiserat lärande för att stödja ämneslärande t.ex. att skapa eget material som är individualiserat för att möta varje elevs behov, utifrån ålder och ämnesinnehåll. Ett tredje ansvarsområde är för det pedagogiska samarbetet med hemskolornas lärare i form av möten där

elevernas ämneslärande bedöms. Ett ytterligare område som lärarna tar ansvar för är att navigera mellan olika tolkningar av kursplaner. Lärarna i resurskolan behöver synkronisera sina tolkningar av kursplaner i flera ämnen med flertalet hemskolors tolkningar. Det kan exempelvis röra sig om 5-6 olika skolors tolkningar av ämnet engelska. Syftet är att underlätta elevens återgång till sin klass om lärarna arbetar utifrån kursplanen på liknade sätt. Vidare undervisar de i icke skolanpassade lokaler. Resurskolan är situerad i en gammal villa. Infrastrukturen är inte ändamålsenlig för att undervisa i alla ämnen vilket innebär att de också får låna salar från en annan skola till slöjd och gymnastik.

En central del av lärarnas kunskapsbas är den ämnesteoretisk kunskap de har, i majoritet av kärnämnen, men att den saknas i engelska. De har kompetens i att skapa läromedel i förhållande till kursplanens mål samt skapa kursinnehåll som ger eleven förutsättningar att uppnå kursplansmål.

När det kommer till professionsspecifik identitet för lärarna i resurskolan framträder att den karaktäriseras av att, för det för det första är lärare som främst arbetar med ämneslärande, de sociala dimensionerna av lärarens arbete nedtonas. För det andra att vara en lärare som arbetar med elever som har svårigheter i skolarbetet. För det tredje att vara en lärare som arbetar med alla åldrar och ämnen i grundskolan, i en byggnad som inte är anpassad till att vara skola.

En övergripande tolkning av de anspråk på jurisdiktion som lärarna och socialarbetarna gör är att lärarna framhåller framförallt ansvar för ämneslärande hos eleverna och socialarbetarna framhåller framförallt ansvar för utveckling av elevernas sociala beteende. De teknologier de använder för att hantera detta ansvar är kortfattat att lärarna undervisar och socialarbetarna samtalar med elever och föräldrar. Självklar är det en förenkling av ett mångfacetterat och svårt arbete, dock kan man tolka detta som ett sätt att beskriva sitt yrke så närliggande det som kännetecknar professionens jurisdiktion generellt i den offentliga arenan (se Abbott, 1988), d.v.s. lärare undervisar och socialarbetare samtalsbehandlar. Konsekvensen av att lyfta fram detta generella kännetecken blir att respektive professions synliggörs och yrkesrollen blir tydlig i en samarbetskontext.

I kapitel 10 *co-located interprofessional collaboration* sammanfattas och diskuteras resultaten och förslag på begreppsutveckling görs. Diskussionen fokuserar frågeställningarna; vilka organisatoriska och professionella intressen kan ses i antagningsprocessen; hur bibehålls och utvecklas professionell identitet i samlokaliserat samarbete och på vilket sätt påverkar organisatoriska förhållanden hur arbetsuppgifter fördelas och utförs.



Antagningsprocessen kan förstås ha två funktioner. För det första, utifrån relativt breda kriterium, att skolans försök till olika lösningar har misslyckats och att socialtjänsten bedömer att insatser behövs, är en funktion att förankra samarbetet mellan skolan och socialtjänsten inåt i respektive organisation. Detta medför ett organisatoriskt utrymme som ger förutsättningar till att många olika professioner är inblandade vilket kan, för de inblandade professionerna, skapa delaktighet och en ansvarskänsla för samarbetets fortlevnad. De inblandade individuella professionerna får möjlighet att uttrycka sina tolkningar av vad barnets pedagogiska och sociala ”behov” kan vara. Detta kan tolkas som att organisationen ger utrymme för professionell diskretion och på så sätt tillskriver professionerna legitimitet. För det andra, har antagningsprocessen funktionen att de professionella genom sin bedömning av social och pedagogiska behov kategoriserar och sorterar vilka barn som ska anses vara i behov av stöd, det som Hasenfeld (2010a) kallar den processen att sortera eller kategorisera vilka som ska få hjälp *people processing*. Närliggande *people processing* finns oftast ett uppdrag av *rationing of resources*, d.v.s. att bestämma vilka som ska få hjälp när resurserna inte räcker till. Professionerna som är inblandade i antagningsprocessen kan ses vara engagerade i att bedöma sociala och pedagogiska behov på ett sådant sätt att det matchar det antal platser som finns att tillgå. De förväntas inte bedöma att det sociala och pedagogiska behovet exempelvis finns hos de 16 elever som först diskuterades.<sup>13</sup> Kortfattat kan man säga att professionerna som är inblandade i antagningsprocessen, förväntas bedöma behov så att det passar antal platser tillgängliga samt att det blir ”rätt” elever. Det kan inte vara elever som är för ”svåra” på så sätt att resursskolan inte lyckas med sitt uppdrag, då konsekvensen kan bli att de riskera samarbetets legitimitet utåt, både på den offentliga arenan och inåt de egna organisationerna. De kan inte heller välja för ”lätta” elever, då konsekvensen skulle kunna bli att hemskolorna eller socialtjänsten upplever att de inte har någon reell nytta av resursskolan med minskad legitimering som följd.

En ytterligare aspekt av antagningsprocessen är att faserna i processen är formella, men innehållet i diskussionerna är informella och inte dokumenterade. Kopplas detta till det breda kriteriet för antagning kan man säga att transparensen för hur beslut tas är låg. Låg transparens gör det näst intill omöjligt för föräldrar och elever att kritisera beslut som tas.

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<sup>13</sup> Det var så många elever som diskuterades i fas 2 av antagningsprocessen, därefter gjordes fyra formella ansökningar till enda plats som fanns att tillgå. Dock i förhandling kunde socialtjänsten få fram ytterligare en plats till ett specifikt barn.

Två områden för arbetsdelning i resursskolan som framkommit i studien kan beskrivas i termer av *common grounds* och *separat grounds*. Common grounds, ”det gemensamma” är en del av den organisatoriska kontext som de professionella befinner sig i och kan ses bestå av en framförhandlad social ordning av interchangeability (utbytbarhet), konstruktion av practice ideology (praxisideologi) och interdependence (ömsesidigt beroende).

I *separat grounds* ”det åtskilda” framträder en professionsspecifik identitet i samlokaliserat samarbete. Lärarna och socialarbetarna hävdar sin jurisdiktion inom de centrala arbetsområden som de i den offentliga arenan kan uppfattas ha legitimitet, d.v.s. att lärare undervisar och socialarbetare samtalsbehandlar.

Avslutningsvis i kapitlet diskuteras tre begrepp; *shifting subordination*, *shared professional identity* och *interdependence*, och en modell föreslås för att beskriva och förstå processer i samlokaliserat interprofessionellt samarbete.

*Shifting subordination* (*skiftande underordning*) är en process där professioner som samarbetar systematiskt och ömsesidigt gör varandras professionsspecifika arbetsuppgifter, dvs. delar upp arbetsuppgifter med hjälp av kognitiv och praktisk jurisdiktion. Denna process kan ses i resursskolan. Både lärare och socialarbetare bibehåller och utvecklar sin professionsspecifika identitet genom denna process.

*Shared professional identity* (*delad professionsidentitet*) finns tillsammans med den professionsspecifika identiteten. Konstruktion av en sådan identitet är arbetsplatsberoende. Den utvecklas utifrån att professionerna är förpliktade att uppfylla de organisatoriska kraven på ett effektivt samarbete. Både organisationen och professionen legitimeras av ett sådant samarbete.

*Interdependence* (*ömsesidigt beroende*) finns när respektive organisation eller profession inte kan fullfölja sitt uppdrag på egen hand. Interdependence kan belysa maktrelationen mellan olika intressenter som samarbetar.

Med hjälp av dessa tre begrepp kan professions och organisations intressen undersökas i samlokaliserat interprofessionellt samarbete. Fortsatt forskning föreslås inom två områden. Det första rör lärande och kunskapsutveckling för professioner, både i det praktiska arbetet och på professions-utbildningar. Bidrar *shifting subordination* och *shared professional identity* till en ökad kunskapsbas för professionerna inblandade i samarbete, och i så fall, hur uttryck det i praktiskt arbetet med barn. Det andra området gäller om samarbetet får någon betydelse

för barnen och deras familjer. Spelar professionell kunskapsutveckling relaterat till samarbete i realiteten någon roll för utfallet av insatsen, utifrån barn och föräldrars perspektiv.



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