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Wegener, Charlotte

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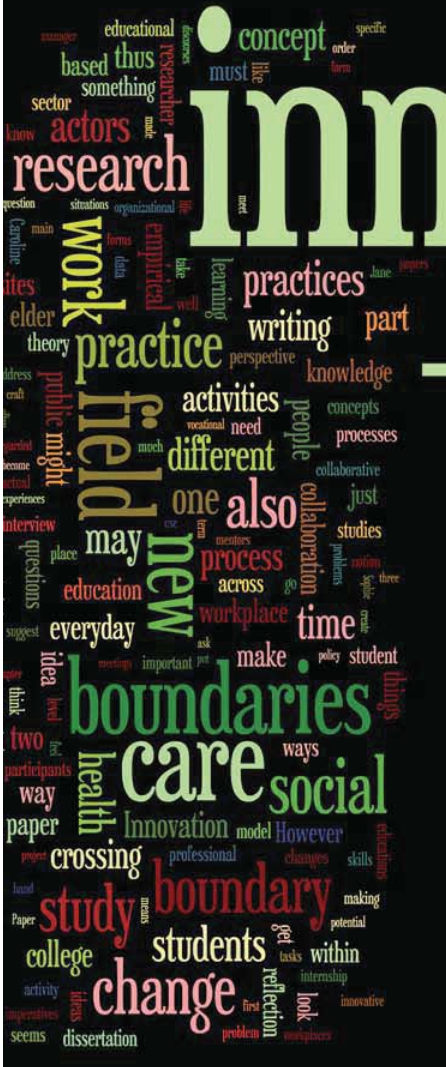

innovation – inside out

Change and stability in social and health care education

Charlotte Wegener

PhD Thesis

SOCIAL & SUNDHEDSSKOLEN | SILKEBORG

AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Innovation – inside out

Change and stability in social and health care education

Charlotte Wegener

August 2013

Ph.D. thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Ph.D. degree

Department of Communication and Psychology, Faculty of Humanities,

Aalborg University

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Supervisor: Professor Lene Tanggaard, Department of Communication,
Aalborg University, Denmark

Second supervisor: Professor Stephen Billett, School of Education and Professional Studies,
Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Company supervisor: Deputy Director Karen Brix Roed, The Social and Health Care College,
Silkeborg, Denmark

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Dansk resume

Formål: Formålet med dette studie er at undersøge og udfordre kravet om innovation i offentlige velfærdsdomæner. Studiet spørger til hvordan sociale praksisser på tværs af grænser udfolder sig i social- og sundhedsuddannelserne i lyset af innovationsimperativer.

Metode: Studiet er designet som et tværorganisatorisk feltstudie af samarbejdspraksisser i social- og sundhedsuddannelserne i Danmark og undersøger aktiviteter mellem mennesker og de arbejdsopgaver og artefakter, som de interagerer med. Det tværorganisatoriske design er baseret på den teoretisk informerede hypotese, at grænsekrydsninger mellem forskellige organisationer og professioner skaber potentiale for innovation.

Den empiriske praksis er en social- og sundhedsskole; de relaterede primærkommunale praktikpladser (plejehjem og hjemmepleje); kommunerne, der er elevernes ansættende myndighed; samt nationale interesseorganisationer og myndigheder, der udvikler og lovgiver i forhold til uddannelserne. Den empiriske praksis er således tværorganisatorisk og udfolder sig på tre niveauer: makro, meso og mikro. Lovgivningsmæssige forandringer og nationale indsatsområder (makroniveau), ledelsessamarbejde og strategier (mesoniveau) og hverdagspraksis blandt elever, undervisere, praktikvejledere, uddannelsesansvarlige og ledere (mikroniveau). Baseret på den pragmatiske forståelse af 'situationen' som analyseenhed studeres innovation som indlejret i arbejde og studier - i *situationer* – hvor mennesker krydser grænser mellem skole og praksis og mellem niveauer, løser arbejdsopgaver, lærer nyt, forandrer praksis, og hvor de møder forandrings- og innovationsimperativer.

Resultater: Afhandlingen består af 5 artikler indrammet af 7 kapitler. Den viser, hvordan innovation er uløseligt vævet ind i hverdagspraksisser, og hvordan innovationsimperativer påvirker og påvirkes af temaer i relation til professionelle kompetencer, arbejdsrutiner og værdier. Mange forskellige interessenter er direkte og indirekte involveret i samarbejde i det social- og sundhedsfaglige uddannelsesfelt, og aktørerne har forskellig adgang til beslutningsprocesser og dialog på tværs af organisatoriske grænser og mellem niveauer. Innovationsimperativer og –initiativer involverer både epistemologiske og ontologiske processer af meningsskabelser men også tab af mening. Innovation konceptualiseres forsøgsvist som dynamikken mellem aktørers målrettede engagement på den ene side og forandret praksis på den anden. Innovation forstås således som 'intenderet forandring' - menneskers bevidste og målrettede forandring af en social praksis. Studiet argumenterer for, at innovation er en gennemgribende diskurs karakteriseret af ambivalens og modsætninger, som

aktørerne i feltet både er modtagere og medskabere af. Innovation har tendens til at tage diskursive former, af og til på bekostning af handlinger, der fører til aktuel forandring. På den anden side er der masser af innovationsinitiativer blandt social- og sundhedsfaglige aktører på både makro-, meso- og mikroniveau. Studiet udvikler et begreb om 'hverdagsinnovation' gennem 'boundary pushing' ('skubbe' eller 'flytte' grænser). Disse begreber udfordrer fejringen af radikal innovation, og der argumenteres for, at innovation lettere opstår i situationer, hvor aktører er i stand til – og får mulighed for – at balancere forandringer med stabilitet. Rutiner, relationer og kompetencer udviklet over tid er vigtige stabiliserende faktorer, som er afgørende for at skabe holdbar og ønsket forandring.

Projektets bidrag og forslag til yderligere forskning: Når innovation betragtes som integreret i arbejdspraksisser og ikke kun som krav, der påføres fra politisk eller ledelsesmæssig side, så bliver undervisere, praktikvejledere, daglige ledere, elever og borgere centrale aktører i udviklingen af den social- og sundhedsfaglige praksis.

Studie argumenterer for, at innovation ikke er det eneste svar på fremtidens udfordringer. Veletablerede ideer og konventionelle indsigter om uddannelse og menneskers behov for omsorg og pleje synes at være essentielle for en velfungerende velfærdssektor. Hvis innovationsbegrebet er kommet for at blive, er det måske nødvendigt med andre kriterier end 'nyhed' og 'værdi', som begrebet traditionelt defineres ved hjælp af. Kriterier der anerkender, at *ønsket forandring* er vigtigere end nyhed, og at værdi ikke kun må forstås som (økonomisk eller ikke-økonomisk) værdiskabelse, som medarbejdere og ledere skal bidrage til, men også som disse aktørers *værdibaserede* praksisser.

Afslutningsvist argumenterer studiet for, at social- og sundhedssektoren kan ses som en banebrydende sektor. Det banebrydende består i et muligt filosofisk bidrag til et bredere felt af offentlig innovation forankret i sektorens specifikke fokus på *omsorg og pleje* (engelsk: 'care'). I arbejdet med at lindre smerte og hjælpe mennesker gennem eksistentielle spørgsmål, er problemer ikke altid noget, der kan løses. Der er ofte en mere ydmyg indstilling knyttet til ideer om 'godt og dårligt', 'fremgang og tilbageskridt'. Forståelsen for, at fremskridt ikke er entydigt, kan inspirere den generelle debat om og forskningen i offentlig innovation. Når vi stiller spørgsmålet: 'Hvordan påvirkes social- og sundhedssektoren af innovationsimperativer', må vi også vende det om og spørge: 'Hvordan kan innovationsimperativer påvirkes af social- og sundhedsfaglige begreber som fx omsorg?'

Summary in English

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to scrutinize and challenge the call for innovation in welfare domains. The study asks how social practices across boundaries unfold in the field of social and health care educations under innovation imperatives.

Methodology: The design is a multi-sited field study of collaborative practices in social and health care educations in Denmark, and it explores activities and interactions among people, the work tasks and the artifacts with which they engage. The multi-sited design is based on the theoretically informed hypothesis that crossing boundaries between different organizations and professions creates the potential for innovation.

The empirical field is a social and health care college, the student internship facilities at elder care centers and home care departments, and the municipalities and national authorities that develop and implement social and health care education. The empirical practice is thus understood to be cross-organizational. The study was carried out on three levels, macro, meso and micro: Policy requirements for change (macro level), managerial strategies and collaboration (meso level) and the daily work tasks in educators' and students' everyday practices (micro level). Based on a pragmatic notion of the 'situation' as the unit of analysis, innovation is studied as social practices, embedded in work and training activities and interactions -- in situations across sites where work tasks are performed, where change and innovation imperatives are encountered, and where knowledge and skills are learnt and transformed.

Findings: The dissertation consists of five articles framed by seven chapters. It shows how innovation is intricately woven into everyday practices of work life, affected by and affecting issues of professional skills, work practices and values. Many different stakeholders are involved directly or indirectly in collaboration in the field of social and health care educations, and actors have varying access to decision-making and dialogue across boundaries. Innovation imperatives and initiatives involve epistemological and ontological issues of both meaning-making and loss of meaning. Innovation is tentatively conceptualized as the dynamics between actors' intentional engagement and actual change in practice. Thus, innovation is understood as 'intended change', i.e., individuals' intentional remaking of the social practices. The study suggests that innovation is a pervasive public discourse characterized by ambiguity and contradictions, which the actors in the field are both subject to and co-creators of. Innovation tends to take discursive forms, sometimes at the expense of actions leading to actual change.

There are, however, numerous innovation initiatives among social and health care actors taking place at macro, meso and micro levels. The study develops the notions of *everyday innovation* and *boundary pushing.* These notions challenge (what I argue to be) the celebration of radical innovation within discourses of public innovation, and I suggest that innovation is more likely to occur in situations where actors are able to -- and get the change to -- balance change processes with a degree of stability. Routines, relations, skills and knowledge built over time are important stabilizing factors that are crucially necessary in order to create sustainable and desired change.

Value and suggestions for further research: When innovation is regarded as emergent practices and not just as a set of demands imposed from policy and management levels, educators, students and care recipients can then become key stakeholders in the development of the social practices.

The study argues that innovation is not the (only) answer to future welfare challenges. Established ideas and conventional insights about education and peoples' needs for care seem just as essential for a well-functioning welfare sector. If innovation is here to stay, then other than the traditional defining criteria 'novelty' and 'value' might be needed. Criteria that acknowledge that *desired change* is more important than novelty, and that value must be understood not only in terms of the value *creation* (economic or non-economic), to which frontline actors are required to contribute, but also as these actors' value-based practices.

Finally, the study suggests that elder care and the social and health care education may also be regarded as a pioneering sector. It is pioneering in so far as it offers a philosophical contribution to a wider field of public innovation. This contribution lies in the specifics of the care sector, whose main concern is human *care*: death is inevitable, as we are dealing with relief of pain and existential questions. Accordingly, the care sector can propose a distinctly modest approach about 'good', 'better' and 'bad' to the idea of innovation. This very modesty can inspire the general debate and research in the field on public innovation. When asking: 'How is the social and health care sector affected by innovation imperatives?' we may also ask the reverse question: 'How are innovation imperatives affected by the notion of care?'

1. Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for turning innovation 'inside out', as the dissertation title indicates. Field diary reflections, interview data and fieldnotes provide an introduction to the study's different kinds of empirical data and illustrate how the meaning of innovation is continuously created and recreated. The chapter also introduces the social and health care education setting as an empirical field and presents the mains concepts and ideas that have guided the study.

Ambivalence

'My first innovation conference'

Hundreds of welfare innovators are gathered in a former storage building on the edge of town. Numbered, blue balloons are tied to exhibit booths, each describing their own innovation project. I stroll through the exhibition. At a health exhibit, a nurse offers to measure my blood glucose level, but my level falls below the lowest measurement unit, the nurse tells me. I don't know if this is good or bad. I spot an acquaintance who I haven't seen in some time; we hug and tell each other how great it is to meet again… until she sees some other acquaintances and moves on.

A toastmaster in a black dress with fishnet stockings enters the area and blows a fog horn to start the presentation program at the booths. We are instructed to look at our conference folders and choose the booths we would like to visit. Every time she blows the horn, we must move on to the next booth on our list, looking for the proper numbered balloon floating over it. People begin to move. After some time, the horn blows. People move again. The balloons sway back and forth, making it difficult for me to see which booth I should go to. I do not always reach the designated booth until the next horn sounds. However, when the session is over, I find myself with a pile of brochures and business cards.

Now we are going to work through an innovation process in groups. My group's task is to identify a burning platform in public schools and to develop new solutions to it. We must move on to the next step in the innovation process every time we hear the horn. The toastmaster instructs us in problem framing, idea generation, selection of the best idea and the action plan design. We generate post-its, group them into piles and end up producing a flow chart which we hang on the wall of

the exhibition area using Sticky Tack. We can now proceed to the exhibit of solutions.

It's lunchtime. The chefs are very fit and wear black t-shirts. The food is vegetarian and organic. There are no chairs. Hyperstimulated and increasingly feeling lost, I spot an empty back room area with a round sofa in the middle. I take a seat among paper sheets and crayons. Outside, the snow is falling heavily. Maybe I will not be able to get to the railway station? Maybe I can't get home! I grab my bag, rush to the lobby and ask the receptionist to call a cab. 'Unfortunately, this is not possible,' she says. 'All taxi driving has been suspended due to the snowfall.' I fumble through coats and run out into the snow, coat in hand. Not a soul. I look back and notice another conference participant just rushing out. 'There might be a bus stop further down the road,' she shouts, and we run side by side. Just then, a bus comes wobbling by. We run and wave and the bus' rear end is slipping to the side as it stops in the middle of the road. We board the bus and throw ourselves into the seats, exhausted. The snowdrifts make it a two-hour ride to the railway station, and my traveling companion and I talk all the way.

Reviewing my field diary, it seemed that I escaped, but it was just temporarily. 'Innovation is everywhere', as one interviewee emphasized in my study of innovation in the social and health care educations. According to Helge, a district manager whom I met during field work, the employees complain to him that the continuous changes in work routine are making them exhausted. Helge recalls to me how he tells his employees:

> I can only assure you that changes will accelerate, and you are welcome to join in. If not, you might just climb down and look for some other place where changes are not part of the agenda. However, I don't know such a place.

Indeed, there seemed to be no possibility to call the innovation agenda in question, neither for me nor for the employees and managers with whom I carried out field work. The innovation agenda hits hard from inside and outside the field of social and health care, as illustrated in the following exchange between Inge, an educational staff member working at the municipality, and myself:

Inge: I think innovation has become a whoopee! word because that's what innovation is like. We'd all like to look into the future and the crystal ball and be part of it. So I think it's a way of selling something.

CW: What is it people want to sell?

Inge: Well, I think people want to sell change. Simple as that.

The innovation agenda is alluring, with its abundance of offers, activities and invitation to be 'part of it'. Yet at the same time, it is confusing and exhausting with dead-end arguments, rapid-fire decision-making, and no space or time for random exploration, much less getting lost. Innovation is a 'nice word you can add to your vocabulary', as another interviewee put it. Yet more than this, it is a word with the potential to create change, as exemplified by this manager who just negotiated the yearly budgets:

> I said: Let's not call it 'budget cuts' this year and talk about innovation instead. It is a much healthier way of working. Cutbacks give people a feeling of loss. It is kind of grey. 'Innovation' was quite different. Everybody joined in.

Innovation is a word one can use for specific purposes. But like other words, it is attached to a broader concept, and an agenda of strategies and practices. What might be an innovative practice? I posed this question to the people I interviewed, and the question was not easily answered. 'I guess that 'everyday rehabilitation'[1] is a new practice close to innovation. It is a very very old idea though,' a municipal manager replied. In general, it seemed to me that innovative practices were based on old ideas. To watch people 'doing innovation', we can observe the student intern, Winnie:

> Winnie is carrying out her round of morning care to three residents at the elder care center. She enters George's room, says, 'Good morning,' draws the curtains and asks how he is feeling. Did he have a good night's sleep? After a while, George sits up on the bedside. Winnie says that she will be back in a little while and assist him to the bathroom. I follow Winnie into Jennifer's room. Jennifer is already awake. After some small talk, Winnie and Jennifer go into the bathroom, and Winnie puts out two toothbrushes.
>
> 'This one is for your dentures, and this one is for your own teeth,' Winnie explains. 'When you have finished brushing, you must put on your dentures.'
>
> 'Yes, yes,' Jennifer says, 'I am not sure I can remember it.'

[1] The purpose of everyday rehabilitation is to get the citizen to be as self-sufficient as possible by developing their capabilities. Communication and coordination between the health care personal is regarded as the key to a successful everyday rehabilitation approach.

> ‘You will do fine, I’m sure,’ Winnie insists. ‘I will be back soon to help with the clothes.’ We leave Jennifer’s room, and Winnie explains to me that she was instructed to do the morning care with one resident at a time. She did that for a while, but then she realized that she was pushing them to hurry up and that she did tasks that they were actually able to do by themselves.
> ‘Now I mix up the morning care between the three of them’, she says. ‘They get more time, and I do not hurry them up anymore. Leaving them for a while also empowers them because they get the chance to do more themselves.’

Winnie has described how she encountered a problem, and how she solved it. She changes her practice and explains this in terms of her professional knowledge of ‘empowerment’[2]. She might actually be doing the everyday rehabilitation that the municipal manager mentioned. We do not know whether Winnie had reflected first and then changed her practice or vice-versa. Perhaps the reflection and the changed practice emerged together. The example of Winnie represents one of the core arguments of this study: that innovation can be defined as the dynamics between intention and actual change in practice. This dynamic will be elaborated in Chapters 2 and 11.

Old or new, exhausting or inspiring, discursive strategy or everyday practice? Diversity and contradictions continuously arose when I talked to people about innovation. I observed emerging new practices, some of them recognized as new and valuable by actors in the field, while others were ignored as new and valuable. Ambivalence towards the idea of innovation seemed to be prevalent in the social and health care field generally and within those individuals working in the field, including myself. Ambivalence is a recurrent theme. The dissertation takes its point of departure in a pragmatic investigation of innovation within a specific empirical field (involving activities and interactions which include people, objects, the past and the envisioned future), as described in Chapter 3. At the same time, I also address the problem of how to research innovation. Before entering into innovation, ambivalence and related topics, let us take a brief guided tour of the empirical field.

The field of social and health care education

In Denmark, the social and health care educations are part of the vocational education and training (VET) system. Like such systems in other countries, the Danish VET system combines

[2] Empowerment in health and social care refers to the balancing of rights and responsibilities of an individual, community and health promoting agencies.

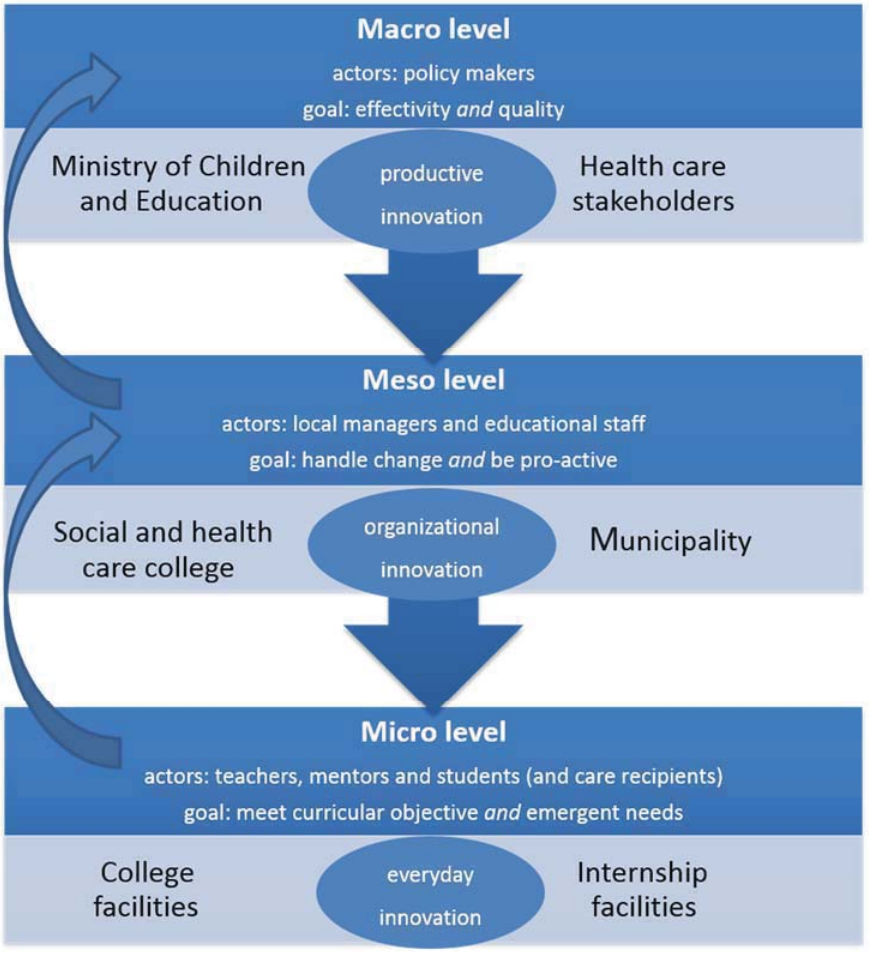
classroom work at a training school or college with an internship in affiliated workplaces.[3] Vocational education and training consists of a basic course (Danish: grundforløb) and a main course (Danish: hovedforløb). The basic programmes are gathered in 12 vocational clusters leading to the related vocational programmes of which 'Health, care and pedagogy' represents the largest segment, with 30 percent of all VET students. The social and health care programme has two levels: the lower level, social and health care worker (Danish: social- og sundhedshjælper) takes 14 months of training, and graduates can obtain jobs in elder care centers or municipal or private home care departments. Candidates carry out daily care tasks for an elderly person in their home or residential institution, such as personal hygiene, help with dressing, or cleaning. The upper level, social and health care assistant (Danish: social- og sundhedsassistent) adds an additional 20 months of training. Candidates can obtain jobs at the same kind of workplaces but now also in hospitals. I conducted fieldwork at both levels of the main programme but I included only internship facilities at the elder care sector (not hospitals). Approximately two-thirds of the training takes places in the workplace internships. Central competencies to be trained in the social and health care educations are, among others, practical and personal help, care and nursing, health promotion, coordination, activity and rehabilitation.[4] The students get employed at the municipality when they are admitted to the college, they obtain trainee wages during their study, and the municipality is the student's employer during both the college based coursework and the workplace-based internship periods. The field social and health care education is thus cross-organizational. It involves collaboration between two key welfare areas (vocational education and elder care) both characterized by continuous change in terms of more specialized work tasks, demands for efficient use of resources and (in the case of VET) curricular adjustments in order to meet new needs and conditions.

Table 1 visualizes the empirical field where I interviewed people and carried out the field work. The dark blue boxes mention the key actors (who) and the goals associated with innovation on each level (what), while the light blue boxes mention the sites (where). The vertical movements across the three levels are indicated by the arrows, and the horizontal movements are indicated to take place in the bubbles. I worked retrospectively with the model (in dialogue with Stephen Billett) to try to map the landscape of my empirical field and to indicate that innovation initiatives and discourses have different goals and involve different actors, sites and levels. I

[3] http://eng.uvm.dk/Education/Upper-Secondary-Education/Vocational-Education-and-Training-(vet)
[4] http://www.passinfo.dk/PASS-for-uddannelsessoegende

will return to the elements of the model in Chapter 2 where I address the innovation concept, and in Chapter 5, where I place the five dissertation articles within the framework.

Table 1: The empirical field of social and health care education



From the outset, my intention was to carry out the fieldwork in the 'bubbles', i.e., the collaborative activities where educational and workplace practices and logics meet. As I will show, it was not easy to predict *where* this was actually happening. Eventually, I was guided by the actors, theory, my own curiosity and coincidences. As in most social science research, there were detours taken and shortcuts discovered. I learned from it all. I learned that 'the college' and 'the workplace' are not just physical sites of human activity. They were also imaginative and discursive representations of 'the other', appearing when students, during internship, talked with their workplace mentor about what they had been taught at school, or when a teacher asked the students who had returned from internships to tell stories from their

experiences to the class. In a later stages of my research, I presented the model to the local educational committee, a statutory collaborative committee between college and municipalities, (Danish: det lokale uddannelsesudvalg, LUU), and the committee members agreed that it was a useful way to map the research landscape. They also pointed to the weaknesses of a hierarchical model, which resonated with my own concerns. A diagram of formal decision-making powers and responsibilities is only one way to order the different parties of the field. However, as one committee member commented on the model:

> These exercises of power do exist. We can only disguise it with words. There are a lot of informal crisscrossing connections and possibilities, though, of exercising influence.

Another reservation about the chosen terms in the model is that the term 'everyday' should not be reserved for teachers and workplace mentors. Policy-makers and managers (like all other people) also perform everyday work when they go to work. These are all to be viewed as everyday practices (Lave, 1988). Nevertheless, this is one out of many possible maps of the terrain of innovation in the social and health care educations, a map with reductionist terms and with firm and obvious boundaries between levels and sites. This dissertation focuses on the crisscrossing paths made by actors who traverse this terrain.

Main concepts

The overall research question of this study is: How do social practices across boundaries unfold in the field of social and health care education in the light of innovation imperatives? How I came to ask this question, and the implications of asking it, are elaborated in Chapter 2. Here, I will address the main concepts that guided the study.

The study argues that innovation is intricately woven into everyday practices of work life, affected by and affecting epistemological and ontological issues of professional skills, work practices and values. It is based on the idea that collaboration between people with different professions from different organizations involves different types of boundaries. Hence, I focus on discontinuities and collisions as well as cohesion and the creation of new practices. Boundaries are associated with both individual and organizational change, and a recognition or negotiation of boundaries is supposed to carry potential for innovation (Engeström, 1987; Manning, Van Maanen & Miller, 1990). It is precisely this assumption that got me initially involved with the concept of boundaries. I designed the interview protocol (see Appendix) and the subsequent ethnographic field study around the concept of 'boundary-crossing'. However, as indicated, boundary-crossing is just part of the story, and I develop the analyses focusing on

issues of boundary-crossing, boundary maintenance, boundary creation and boundary deconstruction. The research field of workplace learning has provided useful conceptual frameworks to view innovation as embedded in practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991) where problems must be solved and new needs emerge. An important implication of this view is to consider the workplace as a site for learning, and to view learning as a prerequisite for innovation (Ellström, 2010). The reverse reasoning is that emerging requirements for enhancing learning call for innovative practices at the workplaces (Billett & Choy, 2013). I have found insights from the workplace learning literature on personal and social agency (Billett, 2008) and enabling and constraining learning environments (Ellström, Ekholm & Ellström, 2008) to be especially useful, although I do not address learning as such.

Rather, I use pragmatic and situated notions of practice as 'doing' and 'knowing' involving different parties, activities, goals and circumstances across a 'multitude of interrelated events' (Lave, [1993] 2009:204). Human doing and knowing are thus flexible engagements with the world in 'open-ended processes of improvisation with the social, material, and experiential resources at hand' (ibid.:204). Lave argues that there are no fixed boundaries between activity and its settings, between cognitive, bodily and social forms of activity, and between problems and solutions (Lave, 1988). Her practice theory thus attends to the integration of emotion, motivation and agency, and it pays particular attention to 'differences among participants, and to the ongoing struggles that develop across activities around those differences' (Holland & Lave, 2009:5).

Structure and style

In their presentation and elaboration of a situated account of learning, Nielsen and Tanggaard (2011) underline the importance of access to and transparency in the field. This suggests that learning is not only a cognitive process of information processing or knowledge acquisition (an epistemological process), but more fundamentally, an ontological process, an essential part of becoming somebody, an identity-constitutional process (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). How this merging of epistemological and ontological issues came to apply to me as a researcher is reflected in the following diary reflection from a course for doctoral students, where we were asked to write 100 words about why our research project was important (it turned out that I needed only 86 words to address this when translated to English):

‘A hundred words about why this it important’

The most interesting is what happens when we move out of our comfort zone and meet people who think and act differently. I would like to get theoretical knowledge about that, be able to teach it and to write about it. Curiosity and fear walk hand in hand and must be taken in doses. If there is too much fear, we withdraw and entrench. If there is too much curiosity, we flutter and do not translate the new into something useful. Balancing between belonging and exploring.

This balancing of entrenchment and adventure is evident in the empirical data and in my research process. I have tried to keep these acts of balancing visible in the presentation of my data, so as to make the research process transparent, my arguments reliable and to invite the reader into the discovery process. The meaning and usefulness of innovation is co-produced in practice, and I do not have any final answers. I thus aim at a pragmatic validation through ongoing communication and collaboration (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010) -- with real end envisioned readers and collaborative partners.

The analyses of my empirical data are found in five articles (Chapters 6-10). The fragmented nature of an article-based dissertation is here amplified by the study’s strong empirical focus. Every time I entered the field, the complexity increased. Moreover, I gradually found that the boundaries of ‘the field’ were permeable and fluid, and I was not able to fully comprehend and decide when I was in or out of the field. This was partly due to the fact that I was carrying out my doctoral research while employed at the social and health care college that was part of the field. However, the complexity was also generated because I was inspired by a range of people, places and artifacts that I had originally not regarded as part of the study in the first place. Coincidental conversations at social events, reading fiction and newspapers sparked new ideas and inspired me to venture beyond the boundaries of my initial plans.

According the questions that I had posed, the situations I found myself in, and the ostensible purposes of the actors whom I encountered, ‘innovation’ seemed to be a bunch of ‘things’. The frames of reference, the metaphors and the tools you have at hand all shape what you perceive (Hasse, 2011). As I have tried to challenge my own concepts, make frames of reference clash and experiment with different tools, fragmentation turned out to be unavoidable. The style and structure of the dissertation thus aims at what Van Maanen ([1988] 2011) refers to as an ‘impressionist tale’: an innovative use of techniques and styles which

emphasizes the episodic, complex and ambivalent realities under study (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2010). The impressionist work is figurative and highly personalized. It aims to evoke an open, participatory sense in the viewer, listener or reader. Impressionist tales present the *doing* rather than the doer or what has been done (Van Maanen ([1988] 2011). Van Maanen continues:

> Reflective meditative themes may develop from the story and spin off in a number of fieldworker-determined directions. The story itself, the impressionist's tale, is a representational means of cracking open the culture and the fieldworker's way of knowing it so that both can be jointly examined. Impressionist writing tries to keep both subject and object in constant view. The epistemological aim is then to braid the knower with the known (ibid.:102).

The overall structure of the dissertation chapters, while not entirely chronological, is intended to be an account of my research journey that makes visible my ideas, choices and changes of perspective during the process of investigation. Descriptions of empirical situations (field notes and interview quotes) along with reflections from my field diary serve as prototypical, empirical examples throughout the chapters (Tanggaard, forthcoming). Janesick (2010) suggests that representation must convince readers using narrative vignettes and quotes from interview transcripts, fieldnotes, documents and all other documentary evidence available. 'In this case, more is more,' Janesick (2010:177) claims. One of the teachers whom I interviewed, named Hannah, expresses a similar approach in this interview quote:

> The first day after internship, the students are so full of stories. This is so valuable for the teaching because all those examples can be extended with theory. Sometimes, I think that the traineeship is much more meaningful and motivating to them because they get instant feedback from the citizens' condition and mood. However, I feel that I can fetch the practical into the theoretical and make them think of images, experiences and actions.

I have tried to do what Janesick suggests in writing and what Hannah does in class. I find that academic writing for an audience is a constant balancing between the density of lived experience and rigorous argumentation and theorizing. Nevertheless, it's time to take off.

In the following chapters, I initiate turning the innovation concept inside out as promised in the dissertation title. I begin in Chapter 2 with a discussion of innovation as a concept and as a research field, argue for the relevance of the study, and tell the story of why I changed my initial research design. This is followed by a description of my methodological considerations

in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I scrutinize the concepts of boundary and boundary-crossing. Together with Chapter 2, Chapter 4 contains the main part of my theoretical studies of the two key concepts ‘innovation’ and ‘boundaries’. In Chapter 5, I introduce the concept of ‘crystallization’ as an alternative to ‘triangulation’ as a validation principal. I also use crystallization as a methodological grip to introduce the five articles as five different perspectives on my research question. The five articles (A-E) are placed in Chapters 6-10. Chapter 11 concludes on the previous chapters and the articles. Finally, in Chapter 12, I present limitations of the study and address the study’s possible implications for the social and health care practice, for theories of boundary and boundary-crossing and for methodology in the research field of public welfare innovation.

2. Innovation beyond familiarity and fashion

This chapter presents innovation as a concept and as a research field. It argues for the relevance of the study from a social and health care perspective (the empirical argument) and from a public innovation perspective (the theoretical argument). This chapter also tells the story of my initial intervention design, why I changed it and how I began to pursue the idea of innovation as embedded in social practices. Moving from the 'inside out' -- as the dissertation title indicates -- of my consultancy perspective and of common rhetoric in the field, I changed my initial research questions asking 'What should be done?' and started asking 'What is going on?'

Something old, something new, something borrowed…

Innovation is a pervasive discourse (Fenwick, 2012), a buzz-word (Hasse, 2011) and an imperative for societies and workplaces (Høyrup, Bonnafous-Boucher, Hasse, Lotz & Møller, 2012). Innovation has also invaded the health care field (Spurgeon, Burke & Cooper, 2012) as well as the elder care sector (van Loon & Zuiderent-Jerak, 2012). Meanwhile, public innovation is becoming a research field in its own right (Sørensen & Torfing, 2012). A literature review on social innovation (which includes health, education and welfare services) in Europe observes that a service does not have an autonomous existence, which makes it different from a physical object that has technical specifications. Distinctive features of social innovation are thus 1) the *relational* dimension as the relationship between the user and the service provider is direct, 2) the *processual* dimension, as the process of innovating and the diffusion of innovation is never fully accomplished, and 3) the *interactional* dimension, as the generating and dissemination of the innovation unfolds within a complex system (society as a whole) and between different systems, contexts or implementing environments (Crepaldi, De Rosa & Pesce, 2012). Due to this immateriality, some researchers argue that there is an under-developed appreciation of what public sector innovation might mean in practice and how it could best be supported (Bessant, Hughes & Richards, 2010). Additionally, the goals of such immaterial changes -- more effective services, enhanced knowledge and skills building -- may be difficult to identify, manage and assess.

An extensive part of the innovation literature addresses collaborative innovation across organizational (involving different institutions or organizations), professional (involving different occupational groups) or mental boundaries (involving different conceptual frameworks or frameworks of understanding). These kinds of cross-boundary innovation

processes are referred to as employee-driven innovation (Kristensen & Voxted, 2009; Høyrup et al., 2012), collaborative innovation (Hartley, 2005; Bommert, 2010; Sørensen & Torfing, 2012) or co-creation (Bason, 2011). Crepaldi et al. (2012:13) list the variety of actors in social innovation: 'firms, third sector organizations, public authorities, clients, users, stakeholders, groups', and the entangled nature of social innovations in network that might be:

> relational, structural, cognitive, cultural, political, territorial/spatial/geographical, temporal, institutional, moral or normative, emotional embedding including also social class and gender inequalities structures.

No less. These ideas of innovation across different kinds of boundaries are associated with a wave of experiments in the public sector, the aim of which has been to involve different stakeholders as co-producers of new products and processes. Denmark holds a central position in these efforts because of its relatively non-hierarchical workplace structures and cultures (Hasse, 2011). Interview studies of vocational teachers' work practices have found that the development of innovations is complex, iterative and primarily a social process (Messmann & Mulder, 2011), while other studies turn to actors and sites not primarily associated with innovation potential, such as the frail elderly as innovation initiator worth learning from (Heinzen & Vail, 2003).

What is new about innovation? The concept itself is certainly not new. Within educational research, innovation has been a topic for decades (Miles, 1964; Huberman & Miles, 1984). The idea of involving employees in innovation processes was addressed by Drucker in 1987 (Høyrup et al., 2012). Almost 30 years ago, research on elder care innovation concluded that a full account of the innovation process must not only illuminate strategic choices and management but also take into account the motivations, value positions and assumptions of the innovators (Ferlie, Challis & Davies, 1984). Recently, innovation has been criticized from an educational philosophical perspective for its own self-negation; anything new must eventually be doomed as old in order to maintain the innovation spiral (Paulsen & Klausen, 2012). However, a critical perspective on innovation is not new either. Almost fifty years ago, Rogers identified what he called a 'pro-innovation bias', whereby researchers often overlook important knowledge due to an overriding interest in (retrospectively) successful innovation processes (Rogers, [1962] 2003). It seems to me that this is still a relevant concern. According to Delamont, Atkinson and Pugsley (2010:6), educational sciences operate with a very short time

horizon. Terminology changes as fashions come and go, thus making previous or even recent research seem obsolete, they argue.

Embarking on my research journey, I asked myself and subsequently my empirical data and the innovation literature I read the following questions: Could it be that a pro-innovation bias overshadowed the fact that old ideas might also turn out to be drivers for desired change? Could it be that the very discourse of innovation restricted innovation in practice? How do we research a buzz-word with a non-fashionable terminology? How do we embrace ambivalence? Throughout the study, I have kept a personal field diary of methodological discovery, critical monologues, whims and reflections like 'My first innovation conference', which introduced the theme ambivalence in Chapter 1. I use a few of these in the dissertation in order to illustrate how my intended and unintended 'professional amazement' (Hastrup, 1992) came to drive the study in new directions through dialogues with actors in the field, with data, with theory and with experiences that did not seem to have much to do with my research theme. These autoethnographic features serve to address two agendas, as suggested by Delamont et al. (2010): firstly, fighting familiarity and secondly also fighting fashion. Innovation is fashionable and attributed with several positive connotations. However, during my study, I found that innovation is also familiar. Actors in the field explained to me that imperatives to change are everyday conditions of their work. Changes happened from inside the field, in the form of actors' experimentation, and from outside in the form of cutbacks or new legislation, each movement influenced and merging with the other. 'We work with human beings', the informants said in diverse ways. That meant that things change all the time *and* that one cannot just change things due to sudden whims. Stability and change are both crucial to doing a decent job. A wedding between innovation and social and health care education might then involve 'something old', which retains the things that are working well, 'something new' that can deal with changing conditions, 'something borrowed' from other domains, and also 'something blue' -- a poetic, irrational ingredient.

Relevance from a social and health care perspective

The emergence of the innovation concept in educational and elder care contexts is part of a general movement within public welfare where innovation has both economic and social purposes (Shapiro, Haahr, Bayer & Boekholt, 2007). As part of the health care sector, the social and health care educations and the elder care sector are subject to the so-called triple challenges of an aging population, costly technology and rising public expectations (Bevan, 2012).

Combined with budget constraints are calls for increased efficiency of care, better quality and lower costs. Baldock and Evers (1991) outline alterations in the dominant ideologies of welfare, in which the main shift is the inclusion -- if not priority -- of market and economic criteria. The authors argue that the appeal for innovative ways to support dependent old people reflects a shift from the passive care recipient to the active co-producer of care, a more pluralistic mix of care providers (state, family and voluntary sector) and a service level determined by cost calculations and not by needs.

Innovation has been introduced as a solution for addressing growing global economic competition, and the Danish Government has formulated educational policies for providing students with a high-quality set of competencies and skills. At the same time, student retention is highly prioritized in order to ensure that a higher percentage of Danish youth obtain at least a secondary education. Nevertheless, politicians and commentators claim that the Danish educational system is 'lagging hopelessly behind' when it comes to preparing students to generate ideas, combine knowledge in new ways and innovate.[5] Politicians, researchers and the media in Denmark have directed much of their attention towards vocational educational training institutions (VET) because of high drop-out rates among students in these programs (Lippke, 2013). The social and health care educations play a central role as part of the vocational system, where the political goal is that 95% of a youth cohort should complete an education at an upper secondary level. The imperatives of this goal increase the possibility that some students will be enrolled in educational programs despite not being ready for training or feeling unsure about their educational decision. The problem of student retention needs to be regarded in the context of increasing demands for professional skills and knowledge due to more complex tasks and at the same time a constrained economy in the elder care sector. PenSam, the social and health care professionals' insurance company, has sounded the alarm in the media[6] and announced that the proportion of pensions paid out due to mental illness has increased from 15% to 27 % (2003-10). PenSam points to the social and health colleges and suggests that one reason may be that some students just barely manage to finish their studies but have such serious personal problems that they find it difficult to manage at a workplace. Indeed, the caring work force and the students enrolled in social and health care education colleges suffer from dropouts, early (disability) retirements and a relatively high rate of

[5]The weekly business newsletter 'Monday Morning' 5 March 2012: https://www.mm.dk/uddannelser-skaber-ikke-innovationskraft

[6] The newspaper *Politiken*, 9 May 2012.

absenteeism (Borg, Faber & Fallentin, 2007b, 2007a). Dropping out of vocational education has complex causes of both academic and social nature. To some extent, it is possible to ameliorate these problems through organizational measures (Jensen, Husted, Kamstrup, Haselmann & Daugaard, 2009). Similarly, Aronsson and Lindh (2004) point to organizational causes behind low rates of absenteeism, focusing on good leadership and collective responsibility as factors behind low rates of absenteeism. Problems such as high dropout and absenteeism rates must be dealt by conducting organizational, inter-organizational and cross-sector investigations and interventions. The emphasis on innovation in the public sector can thus be seen as a reflection of the need for new kinds of collaboration, new ways of problem-solving and eventually, new ways of problem-framing.

Expectations to educational institutions as cradles of innovation and innovation drivers have increased in Denmark. Under the government's recent innovation strategy, education is one of the three pillars to ensure closer collaboration and linkage among research, education and innovation (Regeringen, 2012). Innovation is a curricular requirement in vocational education. Vocational instruction must 'give the students competencies which aim at innovation and self-employment' ("Erhvervsuddannelsesloven," 2011 §22,5). Innovation is thus closely linked to entrepreneurship, and teaching and information materials for VET education often utilizes cases and ideas for technical educations (e.g. Sørensen, Dall & Gottlieb, 2008). Accordingly, it remains unclear what is exactly meant by innovation within the context of care educations. A consultancy report about social and health care students' innovation competencies (NewInsightA/S, 2013) seems to reflect a growing interest in incremental innovation in everyday work practices. Inherent in the idea of the educational sector as cradle of innovation is an interest in the innovation potential of ordinary staff employees and within everyday work practices. Innovation competencies can be imparted, and innovative workplace cultures can be created and nurtured. But how? And what does innovation actually mean? This was my initial motivation in undertaking research on innovation within social and health care education.

Relevance from an innovation research perspective

The concept of innovation has spread from private to public domains and thus made new interpretations necessary. Hartley (2005) points to the limitations of a simple transfer of theory and empirical findings from the private sector to public organizations, arguing for building a robust public sector theory. When innovation is regarded as integrated into work practices in the public sector, practitioners become key stakeholders in decision-making processes, and in

the organization and development of professional roles and tasks (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood & Hawkins, 2005; Hanson, Magnusson, Nolan & Nolan, 2006; Chiatti, Fry & Hanson, 2011). Workers are increasingly required to engage in affective domains and to make informed judgments at work (Billett & Choy, 2013). However, the innovation that emerges from the everyday practices has not yet been widely explored (Price, Boud & Scheeres, 2012). Actors' daily, local work practices and their problem-solving activities may be innovative, but such innovative practices might be overlooked by those whose frame of reference is product innovation (Evans & Waite, 2010; Hillier & Figgis, 2011). However, these neglected and often relationally-based forms of innovation require that people get access to working creatively (Tanggaard, 2011). This unrecognized innovative practices may not be part of the official agenda of the organization, but may later be 'integrated in cooperative and managerial efforts of the organization' (Høyrup et al., 2012:8).

The study of dynamics of change and innovation thus requires a focus on the everyday practices where employees and managers carry out their work. Studies of innovation must address the emerging, negotiated processes of interaction and participation, and researchers within welfare domains have rightly emphasized the frequently chaotic, dynamic and fluid quality of innovation (Ferlie et al., 2005). A Danish study of innovation in home care argues that in addition to a policy and management approach, innovation must be observed and understood from a process and practice perspective (Fuglsang, 2010). Based on a concept developed by Lévi-Strauss, Fuglsang suggests 'bricolage' as a term for care helpers' everyday adjustments, as they evolve through interactions with the care recipients and their dialogues with colleagues. Innovation as bricolage points to the idea of using the materials at hand in order to solve new problems. As such, it is closely linked to the idea of organizational change through incremental adjustments of everyday routines (Suchman, 2000). The term 'bricolage' is also suggested as an analytical research method and refers to the construction or creation of a research product from a diverse range of objects that happen to be at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007) -- a method I investigate in Article E.

Regarding this study's initial notion of innovation through boundary-crossing, similar calls for practice-based research have been put forward. In their review of research on boundaries and boundary objects, Akkerman and Bakker (2011:153) suggest that future studies address the situated micro perspective of boundaries and boundary-crossing and 'study how sociocultural differences play out in and are being shaped by knowledge processes, personal and professional relations, and mediations, but also in feelings of belonging and identities.' Sociocultural

differences do not lead to experiences of discontinuities per se, as we move across different practices all the time, sometimes without even noticing. That is, the *discontinuities* may be the crucial element in a definition of boundary-crossing, the authors suggest. The second call put forward by Akkerman and Bakker (2011:153) is that future research in boundaries identify 'a set of methodological indicators or markers with which diversity as well as consequent discontinuities can be empirically detected.' They suggest markers of membership as well as spatial, verbal and temporal markers -- an idea that I pursue in Article D by investigating markers of insiderness and outsiderness. However, Akkerman and Bakker also consider some methodological limitations, noting that most of the boundary literature has not explicitly defined its central concepts. Citing Edwards and Fowler (2007), they point to the fact that the boundary concept may be self-fulfilling and argue that research on boundaries has been as much about *making* boundaries as a challenge to the boundaries themselves. Based on the review, the authors call for more integrative and multidisciplinary studies of boundaries. Additionally, I would argue that the review also indicates that most of the research has not challenged the *concept* of boundaries. Is it helpful? What stands out and what is ignored when we adopt a boundary perspective? This question is explored in Chapter 4.

During my study, my intention became to also investigate the premises for my initial theoretical informed hypothesis that crossing boundaries holds innovation potential. This skepticism towards concepts is partly driven by my own ambivalence, as discussed in Chapter 1. However, my skepticism was fueled by the actors in the field, who often expressed their feelings of disorientation, confusion and uncertainty. The concepts of boundary-crossing and innovation, while acting as a point of departure for my investigation, also became objects of study: I came to question 'boundaries' and 'innovation' as viable concepts. 'Boundaries' may become so fluid or so invisible that the concept cannot serve as an analytical tool, while 'innovation' seems to be a 'cover' for an ever-changing mix of policy discourses and managerial imperatives. In the meantime, those whom I spent time with in the social and health care sector tended to understand actual changes in practice differently. Instead of innovation, they spoke of 'development', 'experiment', of 'doing a decent job', or as 'organizing more effectively'. This caused me to reflect on my own research process: Was I looking *at* innovation and boundary-crossing or was I looking *with* innovation and boundary-crossing? I guess that the answer is: both. So, what can be done to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy where we only find what we were looking for in the first place? How do we separate the objects we look *at* from the tools we look *with*? In Chapter 3, I address precisely these questions. However, as the following

section outlines, focusing on the 'everyday practice' of social and health care turned out to be the best means of interrogating my conceptual toolbox. Challenging my perspective, therefore, was not as difficult as implied here because the boundaries of what was possible to actually *do* in practice hit me really hard.

Initial aims – the consultant heals the world

Prior to undertaking doctoral research, I worked as a consultant and manager at the social and health care college that serves as a site of my field study. I was involved in several change initiatives, some of them explicitly referred to as innovation, while others implicitly carried a notion of innovation. I was involved in collaborative activities at all three levels displayed in the map of the field (Table 1). Of course, I had my own ideas of what innovation should be and the associated problems it might entail. The following assumptions served as my working hypothesis:

- At the macro level, educational policy-makers address new demands from the government to train a more effective and skilled work force, under conditions of financial constraints and ever more complex care tasks. Strategies for innovation emphasize the role of educational institutions, but it remains unclear as to what constitutes 'innovation' within social and health care education programs.
- At the meso level, managers and consultants address issues of better student transition between college and workplaces, better collaboration between educators from school and municipal staff, and better training of the workplace mentors who supervise the students during their internships. The college and the municipalities collaborate in a range of ways, but few people are actually involved in innovation projects, and the innovation projects do not necessarily influence practice in the long term.
- At the micro level, teachers, workplace mentors and students are concerned with combining theory and practice, with the building of students' professional identity across college and the care work. While innovation is explicitly listed as part of the curriculum of social and health care educations, some teachers, students and care staff frequently seek to distance themselves from the innovation concept.

From my consultancy and managerial perspectives of making things happen and solving problems, my research project was based on the premise that increased interaction among a

diversity of professionals involved in boundary-crossing activities would stimulate the potential for innovation. From my application [translated from Danish]:

> The aim of the study is to strengthen job satisfaction through employee-driven innovation across social and health care workplaces and the college. The intervention study will initiate and run four change laboratories, where actors with different positions in the field develop an innovation model for college and workplace collaboration. The innovation model is supposed to be a tool for policy-makers and managers to involve employees in organizational development. The research questions are:
> How can cross-organizational employee-driven innovation enhance:
> The employees' job satisfaction, creativity and professional identity?
> The organizations' psychosocial work environment and adaptability?

The proposal form asked whether I anticipated potential sources of error. I wrote:

> Time pressure and financial constraints may mean that participation in the project activities is rejected. It may also mean that the participants do not get the opportunity to collect data between the innovation model's four deep dives (see below). This problem is dealt with by setting aside time for participants beyond the formal project meetings. There is a risk that prototypes and collaborations can be rejected on the grounds that it is too resource-intensive. It is therefore extremely important that the project develops prototypes and innovation models that respond realistically to time. The project has a major task in communicating methods and results that are simple, accessible and easy to implement. The project will help to communicate the message that it is innovative, valuable and attractive to work in the social and health care sector.

I received the research grant, but this anticipated, potential source of error turned out to be terrifyingly precise: layoffs in the involved municipalities, many projects already running, my prospective participants complaining that they have no time to participate. And even worse: my own doubts about adding change laboratories to a field already inundated with change initiatives and innovation imperatives. I also found justification in the literature for keeping a distance to my own change eagerness in as much as 'schools and workplaces are bombarded by interventions from all kinds of outside agents (e.g., consultants, administrators, customers, competitors, partners, and politicians)' (Engeström, 2009:325). Engestöm continues: 'practitioners and managers incessantly make their own interventions'.

Creating a distance to my consultancy rhetoric (moving from 'inside out' as the dissertation title indicates), I gave up my quest for imposing change and chose instead to immerse myself

in the actual practice. From asking 'What should be done?' I started asking, 'What is going on?' Accordingly, I abandoned my original intervention design and began to follow the idea of innovation as an everyday practice, in *interactions* between people in work situations. Innovation is therefore viewed as a social practice. While trying to unpack innovation (turning innovation 'inside out' as the dissertation title also indicates), I realized that its meaning is continuously created and recreated by those who use the term or must react to others' using it. I also started to notice that there were certain activities that, while not considered by me or actors in the field to be innovation, still seemed to be essential in research on innovation.

The iterative questioning

> *'A complicated relationship'*
>
> *Why did I take an interest in innovation at all? It seems to be a kind of love-hate relationship. I attended this innovation course and received a diploma showing that I am now an 'innovation pioneer'. Yet after attending various innovation events, I return totally exhausted and confused. Afterwards, I distance myself from it and make fun of the innovation concept, claiming that society does not need innovation, it needs stabilization. As if they were contradictions.*

Flick (2009) observes that research questions usually originate with the researchers' personal biographies and their social contexts. Agee (2009) finds that many of her students are 'in love' with a particular theory even before shaping their questions, and that their own life experiences have often played a role in their choice of research topic. I was indeed in love with the idea of boundary-crossing between different organizations, mainly because I saw myself as crossing boundaries throughout my working life as a consultant, finding ways to make different parties collaborate, or as a part-time employee in two different organizations. The format of the Danish 'industrial Ph.D.'[7] enforced this self-image of a boundary-crosser between professional working life and academia. I was eager to challenge this image, however. Agee notes that 'the process of qualitative inquiry should invite the possibility to question personal theories and to expand or modify the original conceptual framework and research questions' (Agee, 2009:439).

[7] The Danish industrial Ph.D. is a program where the student is hired by a company and enrolled at a university at the same time. The industrial Ph.D. program is open to staff in both private and public sector: http://fivu.dk/en/research-and-innovation/funding-programmes-for-research-and-innovation/find-danish-funding-programmes/postgraduates-in-the-private-sector/industrial-phd?set_language=en&cl=en

I stuck to my initial ideas of investigating boundary-crossing as a resource for innovation on macro, meso and micro level, as illustrated in my map of the field in Chapter 1. Policy-makers, managers, teachers, mentors and students participate in cross-boundary activities for different reasons, and they may have different goals and purposes. Hence, I decided to study these levels and ask: What kinds of boundaries exist in the social and health care educations and what constitutes boundary-crossing? What is going on at the boundaries? Based on the hypothesis that a variety of actors and professional competencies involved in boundary-crossing foster mutual investigation and problem solving, I conducted the initial interviews. I was surprised that none of the interviewees had stories of novel ideas or novel practices emerging through organizational boundary-crossing. While transcribing and doing initial coding of the interviews, I started my fieldwork at sites that the interviewees had pointed out as sites of college-workplace collaboration. I expected that these sites -- being sites of boundary-crossing -- would hold an innovation potential. I was aware that I had not defined innovation (because I pursued an empirical definition) and that this lack of definition prevented me from classifying my data in terms of the presence or degree of innovative activities. While analyzing my data, I relied on more tentative, working definitions of innovation as 'anything that seeks to do something new, or [which addresses] 'a concern that would not otherwise be met' (Price et al., 2012:77), or '[d]oing things differently and doing different things' (Maher in Bevan, 2012:37).

In discovering the absence of mutual investigation and novel practices through organizational boundary-crossing, the data may look like the following dialogue at a collaborative meeting. It takes place between two municipal educational staff members, Ann and Jane, and Sue, who works for the college):

> Ann: Some of my colleagues have asked if they could attend the student innovation workshop, you have arranged. It would be interesting.
>
> Sue: I was considering whether some of you would like to attend the closing part of the workshop as 'flies on the wall'. However, I found it important to keep it as a free space for the students.
>
> Ann: It says here in the minutes from the workshop that the students want a brochure about how the college takes care of the students during internship. We find this expression rather unfortunate. It is as if we are very dangerous out there. I recognize that some students might feel alone during their internship and that is also why we have initiated a dialogue group to find out more about this, together with the student council.

Sue: This is the expression from the students at the workshop. It does not express a college's point of view.

Ann: Then I would like it to be clearly stated in the minutes. There is no reason to cause trouble for the students. They also need to learn how to handle being employees.

Jane: There is already a brochure about what to do if you have problems during internship. I have talked to my students, and only one-third know about it. We may try to use this before we produce new material.

Sue: We can put the phrase 'how the college takes care of the students during internship' in quotation marks. Would it help?

Ann: I would like it to be clear that this is a student point of view. But do as you please. It's your minutes, after all.

Sue: It will be rephrased [looks at the secretary who nods]. Let's sum up who's in the dialogue group.

Are students supposed to be under the wing of the college, or do they have to learn how to conduct themselves at a workplace? How come 'being cared for' and 'learning to be an employee' to be contrasts? I am pretty sure that the meeting participants, if asked, would agree that educators should both provide guidance to their students and instruct them in being good employees. Surely they would agree that collaboration between the two parties is the best way to meet student needs and educational requirements. However, struggling for *access* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in different forms seems to be more prevalent at this meeting. Ann has a mandate from her home organization that access to a student workshop ought to include representatives from the municipality. Who has access to the minutes? Sue argues for giving access to a student voice, while Ann points to the inappropriateness of drawing up an 'us-and-them' dichotomy in writing. The tiniest change is suggested: quotation marks will be added to the minutes, but the minutes is no more an object for collaboration, as Ann metaphorically hands it over to be the sole 'property' of the college. A final agreement seems to be to deny access of the initial problem that some students may feel isolated during their internship. The way to move on seems to be to abandon the actual topic of discussion from the meeting agenda.

In this example, the boundaries between collaborative parties were drawn. They were certainly not crossed. I had a tentative hypothesis that participants attended these formal meetings with a mandate from their home organization, and that informal sites of collaboration might therefore be more fertile places for innovation. However, I regarded it as a simplification to draw up a dichotomy of formal and informal sites of collaboration. Nevertheless, I felt that I had to look other places or revise my idea of innovative boundary-crossing -- or both:

‘Looking for the wrong thing or at the wrong places?’

I have been working in different capacities in the social and health care education system for almost my entire working life, and I imagined that I had taken many of the established routines in this system for granted.

Therefore, I decided to interview people I knew and people I did not know using the same interview guide. I realize the limitations of my own educational perspective for understanding the elder care workplaces. The first interview at an elder care center was an eye-opener to my own limited view. I am not at all familiar with elder care institutions as workplaces. The questions in my interview guide about inter-organizational movements and collaboration do not seem relevant, as managers and workplace mentors rarely meet with staff from the college. There is hardly any organizational boundary-crossing that they can tell me about.

Boundary-crossing may be an academic carrot not relevant to most of the people working in the field I am studying. It seems that boundary-crossing is an activity of the few. I may be studying something that does not exist or is not as important as I imagined.

There may be, however, several other boundaries at stake. Mental boundaries between what is possible and what is not, or between what are relevant and irrelevant themes to discuss. The interviewees certainly ask for more organizational boundary-crossing. Are there boundaries that participants want to cross or is it just my own exaggerated fantasies (though informed by theory) of what creates innovation and job satisfaction? Could it be that innovation emerges somewhere else? Not at the organizational boundaries?

I still attended as many formal collaborative meetings as possible, but I also extended my fieldwork to other sites that the interviewees pointed out as boundary-crossing sites. I observed everyday work at the college and the elder care centers; I observed teaching, caregiving, the mentoring of students. It seemed that boundaries changed, emerged and disappeared in chaotic patterns. The designated sites were not what I had anticipated as sites of boundary-crossing practices (elaborated in Chapter 4). According to Agee (2009), qualitative questions have an evolutionary character. First, iterations of questions are tentative and exploratory and these broader research questions are sometimes not stated as questions but rather as goals for the

study. Sub-questions narrow the broader focus and while allowing for discovery, they also give direction to the particular kinds of data to collect. Thus, questions become 'tools for discovery as well as tools for clarity and focus' (Agee, 2009:446). Researchers invariably begin their work expecting to see certain events occur. We may construct our research questions and fieldwork tasks around those expectations. Theoretical framing evolves and changes during most studies (Agee, 2009). St. Pierre (2011) tells the story of her 'dictionary' of concepts she does not understand, including her thirty-page entry on 'subjectivity' which is the focus of her work. She writes: 'Still, I don't know what subjectivity *means*' (ibid.:614). In this light, it is not so bad that I feel reluctant to define innovation (though see my suggestions in the concluding Chapter 11). I worked hard to stop exploring and to transform the process into the shape of a dissertation. Several times I made a table of contents, an outline of a structure and even a schedule of when to write each section or chapter. I never managed to stick to the plans. My guideline, rather, became immersion in doing fieldwork, reading, reflecting and writing as inseparable activities in a continuous search for 'professional amazement' (Hastrup, 1992). Above all, I have been writing as a 'method of inquiry' (Richardson, 2003) and as a way to 'think differently' (St. Pierre, 1997).

I was driven to explore innovation in practice, not just other peoples' practices but also to practice innovation myself. Following Dewey, knowing is something which we *do*. Analysis is physically and actively behaving towards facts, and 'active experimentation is essential to verifications' (Dewey, 1916: 331 cited in Engeström & Miettinen, 1999:6). I did not pursue or assess innovative effects in the field. Rather, I traced salient situations where intentions for change or change imperatives seemed obvious to me and where actual change occurred in some occasions, while efforts for stability were prevalent at other times; change and stabilization -- boundary-crossing and boundary-consolidation -- could also occur simultaneously.

The overall research questions eventually became these:

- How do social practices across boundaries unfold in the field of social and health care education in the light of innovation imperatives?

Subquestions:

- In which ways, if any, is a practice-based understanding of innovation useful in this field, and is it possible to trace context-specific notions of innovation? (Implications for practice).

- In which ways, if any, does a practice-based understanding of innovation inform a broader theoretical field of public innovation? (Implications for theory).
- What insights of methodological relevance does this study offer to the study of cross-boundary innovation? (Implications for methodology).

Based on my own research, and supported by the findings of others, I thus assumed that there are innovation imperatives that affect the actors and practices I studied. While the overarching question was framed by the theoretical concepts of innovation and boundaries, working with the subquestions was a way of exploring empirical data at hand. My aim then became to study innovation as a multifaceted concept that may evolve both through focused collaborative activities to create change *and* through everyday work when people interact in situations requiring creativity, intuition and presence. I also sought to study activities that did not fit into my ideas of what innovation might be, and at times during fieldwork, I deliberately 'forgot' that I was studying innovation and just immersed myself in the activities that happened to unfold.

Let us now leave the research questions for a while to take a look at my methodological considerations in light of these questions. In Chapter 11, I will return to see if I have been able to answer them, and in Chapter 12, I will consider the value and usefulness of these answers and the new questions they generate.

3. Into the field: Methodological considerations

This chapter presents the design of the empirical investigations and the methods by which I constructed, retained, analyzed and presented the empirical data. It ends up telling the story of how two residents helped me make my way down an unforeseen methodological path, forcing me to revise my initial conceptualization of innovation through boundary-crossing.

Multi-sited ethnography

Traditional ethnographic fieldwork implies a long-term stay in the field. However, 'there is now a growing awareness that the object of ethnography is dispersed in (diffuse) space-time relations and contested' (Tanggaard, forthcoming). Long-term fieldwork is often replaced by brief ethnographic visits, and these ethnographic visits seek to explore critical aspects of activity, for instance development, learning and change (Kerosuo, 2006:93; Brockmann, 2011). 'When the thing traced is within the realm of discourse and modes of thought, then the circulation of signs, symbols, and metaphors guides the design of ethnography' Marcus (1995:97) claims. According to Marcus (1995:106):

> Multi-sited ethnographies define their objects of study through several different modes or techniques. These techniques might be understood as practices of construction through (preplanned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given an initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it.

The overall aim was to trace the idea of innovation between different settings and I constructed these movements as boundary-crossing. The actors with whom I spent time during field studies were students, college teachers, workplace mentors, educational staff, managers and policymakers at municipality and national levels. The care recipients were important actors, too, although my focus on them was limited to their interaction with the student interns. The sites of my fieldwork were classrooms, internship facilities at elder care centers, meeting rooms, managers' offices, conference hotels, staff rooms, corridors and cars (when I traveled with teachers or municipal educational staff from one meeting to the next). Each of these situations was unique in the way boundary-crossing played out (or did not play out). At the same time, they can be understood as part of organizational, national and international contexts of performance and quality requirement, as outlined in Chapter 2. Innovation as the object of study is mobile, and my strategy was to follow 'connections, associations, and putative relationships' (Marcus, 1995:97). Marcus describes the notion of a multi-sited study as

bringing together social grounds that produce a particular discourse of policy and the situated communities such policy affects:

> Multi-sited ethnography is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (Marcus, 1998:90).

My study may not entirely live up to Marcus' idea of different sites (e.g. sites of television production and reception, or indigenous peoples' moving within and across states), but it is indeed a study of 'the practice of translation' (of the innovation imperative between college and workplace practices and logics and between legislative and organizational change and the everyday responses to and reconstruction of these). It is also a study that 'connects the several sites that the research explores' and traces 'distinctive discourses from site to site' (Marcus, 1995:100-101). In the following section, I address how I retained my experiences in the field and further developed my ideas of how to comprehend what was going on across and within these multiple sites.

The 'situation' as the unit of analysis

The ethnographic field study allows the researcher to focus on different spaces in social practices and follow cross-contextual moves (Tanggaard, forthcoming). A space is not fixed but, as put by Edwards and Fowler (2007:113-114):

> fragmented, multi-dimensional, contradictory, and provisional […], one that is made actively and relationally through connections rather than being an inert background. Here location is fashioned, not found, uncovered, nor pre-existing the practices that take place within it. Routes and not roots are a mark of territorialisation, and rhizomic metaphors begin to emerge.

The researcher can fashion these locations by means of the 'situation' as the unit of analysis. The 'situation' is contextually bounded and unfolds over time. Based on Dewey (1938), Elkjær (2005) conceptualizes situations as activities and interactions which include people, objects, the past and the envisioned future. Wholes cannot be reduced to the sum of the parts, and a structuring principal is thus the *organizing as a process* and not the organization as a system (Elkjær, 2005). Lave ([1993] 2009:206) captures the multifaceted nature of a 'situation' this way:

> The heterogeneous, multifocal character of situated activity implies that conflict is a ubiquitous aspect of human existence. This follows if we assume that people in the same situation, people who are helping to constitute 'a situation' together, know different things and speak with different interests and experience from different social locations.

The context and the individual constitute each other and cannot be studied as separate units and according to Lave ([1993] 2009:201), research on everyday practice should focus on the relations between persons acting *and* the social world, that is, the 'improvisational, future-creating character of mundane practice.' Based on the notions of organizing as a process and situated activity, boundary-crossing does not just address transition between organizational or professional settings. Rather, boundary-crossing refers to ongoing processes of experience and construction (elaborated in Chapter 4).

Overview of data

To open up for investigation of what an analytical situation might be, I initially conducted sixteen, one-hour long, semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in what I assumed to be cross-boundary collaboration. The interview questions are based on the theoretical concepts of boundaries, boundary-crossing and boundary objects, the idea of 'meeting perspectives' and wondering/questioning existing practices as drivers for innovation. The questions focus on daily work tasks, collaboration across sites and change experiences. I ask the interviewee about what they consider to be evolving movement and needs in the field of social and health care. The questions about innovation focus in part on discourse, and respondents were asked whether innovation is a topic of conversation at the workplace, and if so, in which contexts this takes place and who exactly uses the term 'innovation'. Attention was also paid to concrete experiences, and respondents were asked whether they have participated in innovative initiatives or can identify areas where innovation has taken place. Finally, the respondents were asked what they feel innovation means, as well as whether -- and potentially, why -- they view it as a relevant concept. I did not ask about innovation until late in the interview, and none of the interviewees mentioned the term until I reached these questions in my interview protocol. The aim was to generate a rich material basis for understanding the variety and diversity of experiences, discourses and activities in the field (Tanggaard, 2011). The interview protocol is included as an appendix.

The interviewees were three teachers at the college, two workplace mentors, three municipal educational staff members[8], one manager at the social and healthcare college, three managers of care facilities, two managers working in two different municipalities and two stakeholder organization consultants[9] involved in reforms of the social and health care education on a national level.

As part of the interview, I asked where to look for cross-boundary activities. Subsequently, I designed the field study according to their suggestions. I aimed to divide my fieldwork time between internship providers (municipalities and elder care centers) on the one hand and, and the college on the other hand. I succeeded roughly in doing this, with about 90 hours of fieldwork at the college, 55 hours of field work at the elder care centers and 20 hours in the municipalities.

Writing down and writing up

Atkinson (1990) describes how the ethnographer, in the field, writes things *down* and then at a later stage writes things *up* into a report or a paper. Both these forms of writing involve textual constructions of reality. In practice, reflection, planning, entry, data collection, withdrawal from the field, analysis, and write-up are intertwined, and Denzin & Lincoln suggest that writing is not simply the activity researchers begin once the inquiry is complete. Rather, writing is a kind of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Several scholars have suggested metaphors to illustrate this creative and disciplined process of qualitative inquiry. For instance, Janesick (2010) uses dance as a metaphor for qualitative research, suggesting 'stretching' as a metaphor for the fine-tuning of researcher skills that includes interviewing, observing, narrative and poetic writing, along with habits of keeping a reflective research journal, the analysis habit, the creative habit and the collaborative habit, based on Dewey's notion of 'habits of the mind' (Janesick, 2010:1-4). 'Stretching' means exercising the senses, to acknowledge subjectivity and to 'understand where one is situated in the research act' (Janesick, 2010:147). Based on Dewey ([1910] 1997), she argues for developing these habits by 'practicing' because 'practice' takes time, effort, reflection and intention, as well as willingness to see the old in new ways and to go beyond preconceptions. Meaning is thus an ongoing constructive process.

[8] Staff at the local municipal administration in charge of social and health care students' training

[9] One consultant from Local Government Denmark (LGDK), the interest group and member authority of Danish municipalities. (Danish: Kommunernes Landsforening, KL), and one from FOA, the trade union for social and health care helpers and assistants (Danish: FOA – Fag og Arbejde)

The construction of meaning takes place between the researcher and the participants in the study, and without self-consciousness it is impossible to fully interpret one's data, she claims.

Table 2: Field study sites, activities, actors involved, and the duration of my stay at each site

Site	Activity	Actors	Duration
College: one college was the main site, two others serve as supplementary sites	Teaching of students Training courses for mentors Seminars/workshops for mentors Staff meetings Project group meetings Committee meetings Student council meetings and innovation workshops Informal talks	Teachers Managers Students Municipal educational staff Workplace mentors	90 hours
Elder care centers: two centers were the main sites, others (about 15) I visited for specific scheduled activities together with a college teacher or a municipal consultant	Students daily work and interaction with mentors Morning meetings Introductory interviews Midway meetings Final assessment interviews Coffee, lunch and smoking breaks	Workplace mentors Students Managers Care recipients	55 hours
Municipalities (three different):	Informal interviews Introduction to students prior to their first internship Information meetings for mentors	Municipal educational staff Workplace mentors Students	20 hours
National meetings and conferences (about 10 different activities)	Project about college and workplace collaboration Introduction to educational committees tasks and role Introduction of new legislation and curriculum	Stakeholder organization consultants Staff from Ministry of education	60 hours
International activities (Brisbane, AUS)	Postgraduate training for vocational teachers Field study and interviews with elder care staff and residents	Present and future vocational teachers Elder care staff and manager Care recipients	10 hours 5 hours

I experienced how this was true when I wrote Article D which emerged while reading about insider research and, at the same time, trying to understand student and workplace mentor interactions through my own experiences of being both insider and outsider in the field. I doubt, though, that data can ever be 'fully' interpreted.

I wrote from the first day -- for remembrance, for investigation, for publication and for fun. At meetings, I kept a journal in my field diary, in which I also collected all paperwork used in the situation. During breaks at the elder care centers, I took notes on my cell phone and wrote them into prose in the evening. I told the staff that I was not texting. The students were not allowed to send text messages during work, and I did not want to be perceived as being pre-occupied with outside matters. Wolcott (1990) discusses the usefulness and importance of 'writing early'. He argues that writing about our work provides a baseline, an articulation of where we have been as researchers. This emphasizes the importance of writing assumptions and impressions during the process of analysis. While doing so, I experienced what Geertz (1989:1) argues, that it is an illusion that ethnography is a matter of sorting strange and irregular fact into familiar and orderly categories. He suggests that it is more 'a kind of writing, putting things to paper', and in this dual nature of ethnographic practice of experiencing and writing, new worlds can be explored and created. This exploration and creation of new worlds appeared to me as crucial, because I was partly an insider and partly an outsider. I needed tools to both explore and create, and how I dealt with these experiences and needs is addressed in the following section.

Insider research

Educational research is often characterized by similarities between the researcher and the researched, with the consequent risk that central features of education are taken for granted and become almost invisible. This problem is not new, having been addressed more than thirty years ago by, for example, Wolcott (1981). This debate is even more intrusive, as the number of researchers conducting research in their own workplace has increased during the last 25 years (Mercer, 2007). While my research time at the college is listed in the table as 90 hours, I spent much more time there because I was also employed there. However, I sought to distinguish between being a colleague and a field researcher and to always be explicit when I was present for research reasons. Managing these positions was no easy task, and sometimes I felt that I was spying rather than observing. Ethical and methodological dilemmas of insiderness (Mercer, 2007) are discussed in Article D about the fluid nature of insider and

outsider positions in the field. Despite my intentions to put my cards on the table and present myself as either colleague or researcher, I could not resist jotting down conversations such as this one with Allan, an experienced physiotherapy instructor at the college:

> During the coffee break, Allan tells me that he has read that the hottest new ideas in elderly care are Eden principles.
>
> ‘It is about the residents making their own decision when it comes to bedtimes. That you eat together with the residents and engage with the residents and things like that. It is so sad,’ he says.
>
> I ask if it is sad because it ought to be a matter of course. He replies: ‘Social and health care is a strange field.’ He leans in and whispers:
>
> ‘It’s the nurses. Well, some of them are O.K., but others are like… [making a gesture with straight hands pointing ahead].
>
> I ask him if he means ‘forms’ and he replies, ‘Yes, forms and measurements. Nurses love measurements.

During this exchange, I suddenly become a confidante with whom Allan can share his concerns and make a discreet joke about a group of professionals that neither of us are part of but who -- according to him -- seem to set the agenda in the field. Cassell (2005) refers to the interview as an interactive process of meaning-making and co-construction. Although this is not a formal interview situation, I find the same dynamics here: Allan and I are actively engaging in the construction of a shared story of ‘us and them’. It is boundary-making, or boundary-reassertion of the most obvious kind. Only too willing to suggest interpretations of his hints, I am certainly not a neutral and innocent researcher. Nor am I an intimate colleague, because I immediately feel that this is a situation of relevance beyond this coffee break. I had just been complicit in the co-production -- or reproduction -- of a professional boundary.

What makes this conversation data? This question came to me during several situations and was reinforced by my insider position at the college. From now on, everything is data, Tanggaard and Brinkmann (2010) note with reference to Latour. Following this notion, an answer to my own question is that I *made* it data. I remembered it, wrote it down in my field diary and now I am writing it up as a point of departure for reflection on the researcher role. Data is not collected, but constructed. Conversely, the researcher is also subject to construction, Cassell (2005:176) notes. ‘People’s willingness to talk to you, and what people say to you, is influenced by who they think you are’ (Drever cited in Mercer, 2007:14). The following fieldnote displays the volatile positions as a field researcher and in particular the repositioning

I experienced. Due to one word mentioned by one of the participants, I suddenly become visible, or maybe I was just the last one to realize that I was visible all the time:

> I am observing a training course for workplace mentors held at the college, and the instructor is a colleague of mine. I introduce myself as a researcher studying college and internship collaboration, and I do not mention the word 'innovation'. I purposely make a brief introduction of myself, as neutral as possible, with the intention not to disturb the themes and to prevent the mentors from feeling uncertain, as they might not be familiar with the term innovation. During a discussion, one of the participants mentions 'innovation'. The instructor instantly turns to me and exclaims excitedly: 'Innovation – there you are, Charlotte!'
>
> All twenty participants turn their heads toward me, inquiringly. I feel like a photographer whom the actors were instructed not to look at during the shooting, and then suddenly, they all look anyway, wave and smile into the camera. Any illusion that this is 'reality' fells flat: This is not the undisturbed 'reality'; it is my shot of reality.

At the training course, I tried not to position myself as part of the training. My tactic here was to introduce myself and my project as superficially as possible. My research interest was directed towards the participants, the instructor and training themes, and I tried hard not to interfere. But as soon as one participant introduces the word 'innovation', and the instructor enthusiastically refers the class to me because she knows about my research theme, I am suddenly made part of the scene. I am now 'in front of the camera'. Feeling embarrassed and awkward, my own body let me know that I had changed status. In Cassell's terms (2005:172), this experience 'taught me the important lesson that the researcher is a key part of the research process and that the positivist ideal of the independent researcher is unattainable.' Later that day at class (as I might as well get something out of being exposed), I discuss with the participants about their perception of innovation. One mentor says: 'Documentation is good, but things become too innovative when you have to write an action plan just to get a safety rail cover to prevent the person from getting his legs pinched.' Another mentor adds: 'We must include it in our vocabulary. We need to show that we are moving with the times and keeping up with the private sector.' A third mentor says that innovation is important in the field of social and health care. However, when I ask for a specific example of innovation, she cannot give me one. Only these three participants take part in the dialogue. Two of them refer to their former jobs in private companies, and the third refers to her husband's employment in 'the private sector'. The remaining participants are silent. I started to realize a recurrent theme in my data:

the concept of innovation is associated with foreign domains. Innovation is something that 'comes in' from 'outside', or is imposed or pressured by 'outsiders'. I also realized that innovation is a rhetorical tool -- something you can include in your vocabulary to gain status. These ideas are elaborated in Articles B and C and in an additional article in Danish (Wegener, 2012a), where I argue that the innovation discourse potentially restricts innovation in practice because actors invest their engagement into more discourse to 'keep up appearance' or to defend core values in their work. Concurrently, I realized that insider and outsider positions were at stake, not just for me as a researcher, but also for actors in the field. I started writing Article D that elaborated these ideas into a coherent narrative. These writings were kinds of knot-working between my own bodily experiences, literature studies and evolving analytic categorization. Knot-working, therefore, is the cue to the following section.

Knot-working and not-knowing

The design of the study was inspired by the idea of 'knot-working' as a part of the activity of crossing boundaries (Engeström, 1987; Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). Engeström defines knot-working as the combination of different kinds of knowledge to achieve new insights. In terms of promoting cross-organizational and cross-professional innovation, knot-working is seen as a core activity (Engeström, 2009). According to Engeström, it is productive to gather people with different knowledge so as to enforce 'meeting perspectives'. Knot-working does not necessarily involve new factual knowledge; rather, it is the act of combining knowledge in new ways, as when people from different units or organizations meet to solve a problem. In the following interview, an elder care center manager, Beate, tells a story that can be regarded at knot-working:

> Beate: When I started as a manager here, the staff might say: 'This lady with dementia who cries all the time that she has to go to the toilet… there is nothing we can do about it. It's damn annoying to look at and listen to, but it's due to her illness.' Today they know that the social context and what they do have a crucial impact on the residents' behavior. We use Tom Kitwood.
>
> CW: I don't know him.
>
> Beate: No, and that's a crying shame. He is the pioneer in the field of dementia, and we use his ideas in our work with all the residents because what is valuable for one person with dementia may be valuable for all the other residents as well. With Kitwood's analytical model, we address the person as a whole. Often, you think that you know enough, and then you forget to be curious. With Kitwood, we can

look at a range of things and support the identity when these persons may not be able to do everything on their own anymore.

CW: Identity?

Beate: Identity, yes. Do you feel you belong to a community? Do you feel included? Do you feel that you have meaningful things to do? Do you feel that comfort is there when you need it? These are the basic things that Kitwood says we need in order to thrive as human beings.

Beate bases the training of staff and students on Kitwood's model. The training thus promotes knot-working between professional knowledge, interactions with the residents, reflection and experimentation with new ways of providing care. She herself does not call this 'knot-working'; however, in research on innovation in the elder care sector, Kitwood's ideas of person-centered care are highlighted as an innovative service and care form (Verleye & Gemmel, 2011). Beate is not aware that researchers use the term innovation for what she does. During my interview with her, she seems to associate innovation with more radical changes and certainly not with old ideas as Kitwood's model.

In class, knot-working may appear as the following situation that I observed in a course for social and care students:

> Today the class take up the topic of diabetes. The teacher, Betinna, asks if anyone knows somebody with diabetes. A student replies that she once took care of a patient with diabetes. Another student says that her grandmother suffers from diabetes, and that she had to change her diet. A student asks if diabetes can cause brain damage. Betinna explains carbohydrates and liver function. She picks up a bottle of juice from her bag: 'Liquid works fast', she says. 'You don't ask a person; just make him or her drink in a hurry.'
>
> She picks up a box of insulin 'pens' and injection needles and starts to pass them around to the class. There are different colors, and the students discuss how to distinguish among them. They discuss the smell of the pens, and some students take photos with their cell phones. Betinna explains the procedures for administering insulin. She says that a company has sponsored the distribution of glucose measuring equipment for everybody, which she will bring next week. Today she will measure her own glucose in order to prepare them for their own tests. She takes a blood test from her thumb and shows them the result.
>
> 'Wow, it's low', one student says, 'did you have breakfast?'
>
> Another student adds: 'Please, drink the juice and do it again!' Betinna promises to take one more test – after the break.

In this situation, Betinna introduces a new subject to the students by involving their experiences. She makes space for their stories and questions until almost all students are involved, either with stories from private or professional life or with questions prompted by the stories they hear. She brings out objects from the medicine cabinet, and everyone gets the opportunity to sense and ask questions. Finally, she uses a tiny bit of her own blood to show the procedure of glucose measuring, and the students easily connect the result to their new factual knowledge about the impact of food and drink. They even want her to do a small experiment with the equipment at hand (to drink the juice to get a higher score).

Writing about fieldwork, Wolcott (1999:70) remarks that:

> [t]here has to be an idea guiding what we choose to describe and how we choose to describe it. […] We do not and cannot simply observe, watch or look; we must observe, watch, and look for something.

My baseline conceptions of boundary-crossing and knot-working were this 'something'. They turned out to be useful metaphors to look with and to understand what I found to come to grips with diversity, constant movements and change -- and with well functioning managing and teaching, as exemplified above. Sfard (1998) points out that metaphors shape the environment that is constructed, the kinds of activities that can be recognized, the kinds of relationships that researchers can have with the people they are studying, and the kinds of insights that can be gained through fieldwork-based research (cited in Penuel & O'Connor, 2010:273). The metaphor of knot-working shaped what I saw, what I paid attention to and how I interpreted it. However, how can one avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy, as also asked in Chapter 2? Looking for knot-working and conveniently finding… knot-working?

Hasse (2011) defines the process of a field study as the researcher's learning process. She contests the claim by some researchers that it is only the researcher's theoretical viewpoint that determines what she can learn about the everyday life of others. She differentiates between the 'analytical field' and the 'empirical field', and contests the idea that researchers can simply apply theory to the data. Researchers also need to challenge their categories and theories. Theoretical concepts may explain phenomena encountered in the empirical field; however, these same concepts also shape the researcher's attention and the language used to describe what they see (Hasse, 2011). That is, theories do not simply explain empirical phenomenon, they also shape and even limit the researcher's attention and understanding of what is to be part of the empirical study and what is not. In deciding what is part of the study and what is not,

boundaries are drawn. Delimiting one's field of study is a necessary activity for all research, but there is a risk that the researcher's initial theoretical concepts block potential questioning and thus potential learning about the object of study. Analysis based only on the premises of the analytical field will not create new knowledge. Hasse reminds us that we have to learn from the empirical field and use what we learn to challenge and elaborate the analytical field.

What I learned was that the concept of knot-working explained empirical phenomena in the field; however, knot-working was not always within reach, neither for me nor for the actors in my study. During an assessment interview with a student, Sophie, her workplace mentor, Karen, read aloud from the internship manual, in an ironic tone:

> 'Objective no. 10: Acquire the skills to plan, assess and evaluate the guidance and cooperation with citizens and other cooperation partners.' I think this is nonsense. What do you think, Sophie?

Feelings of things being nonsense -- or feelings of not-knowing -- seemed pervasive to me. The following might be my study's ultimate not-knowing story:

> In the elder care center living room, the resident Annie is wandering around. 'I am so confused. Why am I here?' she asks, continuously. Once in a while, the social and health care assistant, Helga, or the student intern, Peter, responds to her:
>
> Helga: It's because your husband passed away. It's 18 months ago, and now you are here. Where do you live?
>
> Annie: I live at Vestergade 201.
>
> Helga: No, you live here, just down the corridor, in room 6. Where do you live?
>
> Annie: I live in room 6.
>
> Helga: That's fine.
>
> Later on, Annie addresses Peter, the student intern:
>
> Annie: I'm so confused. Why am I here?
>
> Peter: It's because your husband passed away.
>
> Annie: What am I supposed to do?
>
> Peter suggests that she watch TV, and he guides her to the sofa. Another resident, Elsa, sits down beside Annie on the sofa:
>
> Annie: I'm so confused. I don't know why I'm here.
>
> Elsa: I don't know either.
>
> Annie: It's damn annoying.
>
> Elsa: Yes, but I am here right next to you.

Though this exchange adds no obvious insight related to my research questions about boundary-crossing and innovation, I could not forget it. I saw it as irrelevant from my analytical work. Yet it touched me, and eventually forced me to return to this page in my field diary until I knew the dialogue by heart. An invitation to attend a conference on meaning-making and meaning-breaking, and a reading of Lather's (2007) 'methodology of getting lost' in the landscape of knowledge or the landscape of science gave me an analytical 'hook' on which to channel my emotional engagement. Dementia could possibly be the ultimate meaning-breaking state of mind. Did these two ladies mirror a feeling only too well-known to me? Did it hold any methodological potential? I asked these questions in the paper for the conference with the theme 'meaning-making and meaning-breaking' (Wegener, 2013a). This piece of writing helped me to question my own research question and even pose the reverse question (see 'Implications for theory and methodology' in Chapter 12). Lather (2007:136) argues that we should cultivate the ability to engage with 'not knowing' and to move toward a 'vacillation of knowing and not knowing'. Wandering and getting lost become methodological practices. It may seem cynical to exploit the everyday confusion of two old women with dementia, yet the experience of getting lost is all too human. Most of the time, we try to knot-work, to make connections, to re-orient ourselves, to make sense and look for answers. Dementia is a state of involuntary not-knowing. Researchers may also inadvertently get lost. We may even become confused. But researchers are supposed to utilize these experiences. More than that, I will argue that we can turn these experiences into a deliberate strategy to achieve understanding.

This strategy of not-knowing seems relevant in the study of innovation, as it holds creative potentials. Koestler (1964) puts forward the idea that any creative act is not a simple association, but a 'bisociation'. He coins this term to mean 'perceiving a situation in two habitually incompatible associative contexts… [which] causes an abrupt transfer of thought from one matrix to another governed by a different logic' (Taylor, 1999, 34). According to Koestler, *all* forms of creativity -- whether in science, comedy, or art -- are driven by this mechanism of bisociation. Not-knowing -- giving up logic and reasoning -- provides a better start for the bisociative jump that will be required to solve a problem. Koestler describes this process with the French phrase *reculer pour mieux sauter* -- 'to retreat for a better jump' (Taylor, 1999, 36). Association techniques fail to discover relevant information that is not related in obvious associative ways. Bisociative modes of thinking allow the mixing of conceptual categories and contexts that are normally separated, allowing for the joining of unrelated, often conflicting information in a new way.

Annie will never get a meaning-making answer as to why she is at the elder care center. The fact: 'your husband is dead' does not reduce her feeling of loss and of being lost. She will keep asking, 'Why am I here?' Don't we all ask that question once in a while? I certainly did when I was at the innovation conference (Chapter 1). It is damn annoying. However, new perspectives might show up in unexpected ways at unexpected places. Taking the time and getting company -- as Annie did on the sofa in front of the television and as I did in the bus while fleeing the innovation conference -- is not a bad response. To be continued… (in Chapter 12).

As stated by Tanggaard (forthcoming), ethnographic fieldwork builds on the assumption that the researcher's own experience is one of the most important gateways to obtaining knowledge of the field. My bisociative jump between my own disorientation at the innovation conference and Annie's state of confusion while wandering around the elder care center living room turned out to be a gateway to new knowledge. But the journey came to an end, and while lost for a period, I ended up finding my way. I had traced innovation through the 'lens' of the boundary concept, and I got lost. That was a good thing. I also re-constructed both innovation and boundaries in useful ways for making statements about what I experienced. That was even better. I admit that I had a fling with deconstructionism. I had fun. However, I found that deconstruction, while inspiring and offering a range of techniques for amazement and entertaining modes of representation, was not enough. I needed to reconstruct as well. Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) argue that 'gap-spotting' seems to be the dominate strategy to design most studies in management, sociology, psychology and education. However, 'gap-spotting tends to *under-problematize* the existing literature and, thus, reinforces rather than challenges already influential theories' (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013:6). Postmodern and social constructionist theories encourage problematization; however, the authors argue that the primary aim of these theories is to disrupt rather than build up; hence, they tend to *over-problematize* the research undertaken. Following this line of reasoning, they argue for a process of 'dialectical interrogation' that can 'stimulate a rethink of one's established ideas and facilitate imagination and creative reframing of how one conceptualizes and reasons' (ibid.:49) Thus, they aim to integrate what they call 'positive' and 'negative' research agendas that can help us unpack our own assumptions as well as common assumptions in theory or expressed by people in the field under study.

The next chapter deals with my processes of constructing and deconstructing a boundary perspective on innovation, while the following chapters reflect what I learned and the conclusions that it made possible.

4. Crossing and deconstructing boundaries

This chapter presents my attempts to study innovation using the boundary concept. It presents both the utility of using boundary as an analytical lens, as well as its limitations. The analysis which forms the basis of this chapter has evolved through iterative knot-working and not-knowing processes of literature studies, analyses of empirical data and reflections upon my positions as a field researcher. The chapter argues that boundaries are a pervasive but also contested concept which, with reservations, can contribute valuable explanatory power for researching innovation in a practice perspective.

Out of the container and into the landscape

According to Engeström and Miettinen (1999), the concept of boundary-crossing was developed along with contextual and cultural theories within psychology, situated learning within education and the concept of practice within sociology. The boundary-crossing perspective reflects the insight that it is not sufficient to focus on singular, relatively isolated events and systems. A literature review on boundary-crossing in educational research notes that boundaries are becoming explicit because people search to mobilize themselves across more and more specialized practices (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). On a paradigmatic level, the increased interest in multi-sited and cross-boundary studies seems to express an appreciation of diversity and a growing influence of a postmodern focus on the marginal and decentered (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Akkerman & Bakker suggest that boundaries should be studied not only within systemic or macro perspectives but also within situated micro perspectives that describe participants' experiences. By doing so, the authors argue, it becomes possible to investigate how sociocultural continuities and discontinuities are shaped by interpersonal relations. I regard my study as primarily applying such a micro perspective.

Edwards, Biesta and Thorpe (2009) describe how learning contexts -- traditionally conceived as bounded containers -- have been reconceptualized by activity theory (Engeström, 1987), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) as more fluid and relational. In light of these theories, the landscape metaphor turns out to be a particularly appropriate one. Becher and Trowler (2001:16) note that 'land exists without an observer, but landscape does not: the 'scape' is the projection of human consciousness, the way the land is perceived and responded to.' A related metaphor, the journey, is addressed by Agee (2009:432), who suggests research questions as 'navigational tools that can help a researcher map possible directions but also to inquire about the unexpected.' Engeström (2009:312), too,

makes explicit use of the landscape and travel metaphors. He describes the research landscape ‘as a terrain of activity to be dwelled in and explored.’ The terrain has pre-existing trails, as well as landmarks and boundaries made by others, and when new dwellers enter the terrain, they ‘both adapt to the dominant trails and struggle to break away from them’ (ibid.:313). In this conceptual context, Engeström describes the nature of agency as the increased capability to traverse the terrain effectively and independently of institutional and organizational frameworks.

What is a boundary?

While previous research within education, work and innovation focused mainly on particular groups and certain domains of expertise, many recent studies are more heterogeneous. They involve multiple sites and participants from different professions and cultures (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Boundary is a conceptual framing of what we encounter, and it ‘can be either crossed and/or deconstructed’, as Edwards and Fowler (2007:120) note. Boundaries define what is inside and outside the field under study, what counts as data and what does not. The notion of boundaries as learning resource has been elaborated in studies of vocational students dealing with boundaries between school and work practices (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003; Tanggaard, 2007; Harreveld & Singh, 2009). ‘When problems in school-work transitions are conceived as boundaries, establishing a productive relation between school and work practices can be conceived as a matter of boundary-crossing’ (Akkerman and Bakker (2012:155). A boundary indicates that two or more sites are relevant to each other in a particular way. In this sense a boundary is ‘a socio-cultural difference leading to discontinuity in action and interaction’ (ibid.:133). Although Akkerman and Bakker speak of ‘sites’, their review indicates that a boundary may be something other than a spatial metaphor. The study of boundaries thus largely entails studying something invisible (Hernes, 2004). Based on a traditional categorization within sociology, Hernes (2004) suggests a framework for handling this invisibility and studying boundaries as ‘physical’ ‘social’ and ‘mental’ boundaries. Physical boundaries refer to the materiality of boundaries, e.g. partitioning, regulations and rules. Hernes describes social boundaries as referring to social bonding between people and the creation of group identity in relation to other groups. According to Hernes, mental boundaries relate to mechanisms, such as ideas, understanding and beliefs that tend to guide actions. Drawing mental boundaries is a way of making sense of the world (Hernes, 2004). This idea resonates with Bowker and Star (2000:287) who state that: ‘[w]e need to classify in order to learn – it is a cognitive function that allows us to think about things.’

Boundaries, then, are cognitive devices that allow us to categorize to try to make sense of the world. They are not drawn once and for all but emerge and are reproduced through interaction, based partly on past experiences and partly on changes within the environment (Hernes, 2004; Kerosuo, 2006). If boundaries are nothing more than classifications, then are all classifications boundaries? It seems that a boundary has to be contiguous in order to make it a distinctive metaphor. The concept is ambiguous because boundaries both divide and connect sides (Kerosuo, 2001). Let me illustrate the complexity of the boundary concept with an example from my fieldwork:

> I meet with the workplace mentor, Susan, the municipal educational staff member, Jane, and the student, Caroline, for a scheduled one-and-a-half-hour-long introductory interview to plan Caroline's internship at the elder care center. Talking on the phone, Susan gesticulates to us that she will be ready in a moment. She ends the call, instructs a colleague to take over and tells her that she will be back in an hour. On our way to the meeting room, she tells us that a resident with dementia is missing, again, and that she has just started up the search for her. It happens more than once a week, and every time the search must involve the care staff, the municipal dementia coordinator, a transport unit and the police.
> In the meeting room, Jane asks Caroline if she has any experience of social and health care work, and Caroline says, 'No'. Jane pulls up a ring binder with folders and finds the folder with Caroline's name on it. Jane places the form with the elements of the introductory interview in front of Caroline. She notices that Caroline and Susan have arrived empty-handed and remarks that the student and the mentor are expected to fill in the form together during the interview. She hands over two extra forms and lets Caroline borrow her pen.
> Jane asks Caroline about her learning style. Caroline is not sure. She likes sort of trying things. She was surprised that it felt strange [Danish: grænseoverskridende, lit. boundary-transcending] to feed Linda, she says. But now she has tried it a couple of times, and she feels comfortable. Jane asks her if she has reflected on her own reaction, and Caroline says no, not really, she was just surprised, but now she is okay.
> 'The logbook is a very useful tool for reflection', Jane says, 'Do you use it'?
> 'Not yet', Caroline replies.
> Jane wants to know if Caroline was introduced to log writing at the college. Yes, she was introduced, Caroline replies. Jane suggests that Caroline get the log writing going by writing a diary every day, and she asks how she feels about writing. Caroline says that she feels fine. Jane turns to Susan to make an agreement on the best-suited reflection format for Caroline. Susan suggests the log as a starting point to avoid things piling up. Taking into account that Caroline is a novice, it is important not to make things too complicated,

so they will work their way through one thing at a time. Jane and Susan agree that the log is the best reflection format for Caroline. Doing the log writing, Caroline will obtain the opportunity to practice reflection and writing skills, which is an important challenge, taking into consideration that she is the practical type.

'Okay, now I will put out all my papers', Jane says. 'We have all kinds of tool to help you through the internship period.'

She picks one and shows it to Susan:

'This form is useful for Caroline's reflection. We made this in order to look into your head and observe how you think', she adds to Caroline.

Jane says that now they will go through the nine internship objectives and the personal objectives. She picks two forms from the pile and shows Caroline and Susan a third pre-completed form. They have made up an imaginary student and filled in the 'objectives form' in order to make it more illustrative, she explains. They go through the form. Jane is about to open a book but hesitates and asks what time it is. There are two minutes left. Jane asks if we can continue for five more minutes, and Susan replies:

'It is okay. Although I cannot think of anything but our missing resident.'

In this meeting, several boundaries are encountered, crossed and constructed. The resident has crossed the physical boundary of the elder care center and disappeared. The student Caroline encounters a barrier while feeding a paralyzed resident for the first time, but manages to transcend it. Repeating this task, it becomes familiar and eventually she feels 'okay'. It seems that the boundary has disappeared. Is it necessary to do reflections in her log book to overcome this boundary? It seems not. Can you cross the boundary to another person's head by means of a form? Maybe. How come Caroline is categorized as a 'novice' and as 'the practical type'? It seems to be based on only two answers: that she has no experience of social and health care work (she might have other relevant experiences) and that she 'likes sort of trying things'. The workplace mentor faces obvious boundaries between two kinds of obligations: as a responsible mentor, she must sit still and involve herself in the learning process; as a responsible staff member of the elder facility, she must rush out to find the missing resident. And, facing the boundaries of my own tools for comprehension, I came to ask: Are boundaries actually a useful concept to understand what is going on? What gets cleared up by calling all this 'boundary' practice? Let us turn to the boundary literature once more.

Innovation at boundaries – boundaries of innovation

Some researchers stress that boundaries are supposed to create situations that challenge actors to negotiate and combine ingredients from multiple and often parallel activities with distinctive

objects (Kerosuo, 2006:87; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Akkerman and Bakker (2011) identify 'transformation' as one of four learning mechanisms described in the literature on boundaries. In this section, I will scrutinize the idea of transformation because I see it as the one mechanism associated with innovation. The study of transformation, they state, consistently starts with a 'confrontation', some shortcoming or problem which forces actors in the different sites to reconsider their practices or their way of collaborating. The studies indicate that without a confrontation, transformation cannot be expected. Other bodies of literature would argue against such conclusions. For example, literature of art-based methods of inquiry that inspired me while writing Article E points to the often overlooked human desire for uncertainty, adventure and exploration (Otto, 2007). Experimentation is seen as a human driving force, not necessarily initiated by a lack or a problem. The second process in transformation is recognizing a 'shared problem space'. Transforming current practices is 'motivated by and directed towards the problem space that binds the practices together' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:148). Thus, the crossing of boundaries indicates a deliberate and goal-directed aim for change. The third process in transforming is 'hybridization', the creation of new cultural forms based on ingredients from different contexts, such as a new concept, new analytical model or new interdisciplinary field. The fourth process proposed is 'crystallization', which is a more extreme form of learning and change than hybridization. The term 'crystallization' indicates that a new creation is actually embedded in practice and thus entails real change. According to Akkerman and Bakker (2011) the studies that deal with this conception of boundary-crossing emphasize the importance of these transformation processes. However, the empirical findings of the studies they review show that transformation is rarely achieved in practice. Here we have a dilemma: how is it that boundaries and boundary-crossing are conceptualized and promoted as innovation drivers if almost no empirical findings support this? Does this make the theories of boundary-crossing idealistic and prescriptive rather than realistic and descriptive? It seems that the studies are more inclined to explain this shortcoming by referring to 'the distinct cultural historical practices' (ibid.:149) or the 'habitus of the members of the project team' (Postlethwaite, 2007:483) rather than questioning the utility of the boundary approach as such.

The fifth process proposed by Akkerman and Bakker (2011:149) is 'the importance of *maintaining uniqueness of the intersecting practices*' [emphasis in original]. This process highlights what the authors call 'ambivalent directions', but it might also be understood as the integration of old and new – a perspective I take up with a colleague in a conference paper arguing for the slightly pushing of boundaries (Lippke & Wegener, 2013). This perspective is

elaborated in Chapter 11. The last process required for transformation is the '*continuous joint work at the boundary*' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:149) [emphasis in original]. Based on the reviewed studies, Akkerman and Bakker propose insufficient joint work as the explanation for the lack of empirical support to the theory of transformation through boundary-crossing. Once more, it seems that practice is the problem, not theory. Transformation is coveted, and more transformation is required, but the practice doesn't work out. It's damn annoying!

An explanation for this frustration with practice may be that studies based on the concept of boundaries as transformational power often investigate the effect of interventions. In these contexts, change imperatives are often part of the research design. New researchers tend to adopt and utilize concepts already established within the domain of research. Edwards and Fowler (2007:107) put it this way:

> Through such uptake, we might be said to be accepting both the concepts but also the boundaries between concepts that the very process of conceptualisation produces. A concept in many ways relies for its meaning on that which it excludes for it to come into being, a process of othering in order to fashion some sense of identity for the concept.

It seems that change imperatives are embedded in what Edwards and Fowler term the boundary 'identity'. During analysis, through continuous field studies and while writing Articles B and C, I came to realize that considerable effort in inter-organizational activities was an effort to maintain stability rather than create change. The underlying dynamic may be that of boundary-reinforcement rather than boundary-crossing. More importantly, we have tended to interpret, almost as a reflex any kind of boundary reinforcement as 'resistance to change', thus making boundary-crossing into a normative activity.

Akkerman and Bakker conclude that:

> [m]any studies seem to use the term *boundaries* when discontinuities are expected rather than empirically detected. This can lead to a problematic conceptualization of boundaries, namely, one that completely resides in the existence of sociocultural differences (2011:152).

Following this, the authors stress that boundaries are a meaningful analytic concept only when the term conceptualizes sociocultural differences leading to *discontinuity*. This part of the definition also stresses that the concept of boundaries is 'malleable and dynamic constructs' (ibid.:152). More importantly, these constructs are both participants' constructs (which might

be diverse, fluent and constantly changing) *and* the researcher's constructs (which might be… well, constructs that cause the researcher to interpret all experiences of discontinuity as evidence of boundaries). Boundaries are not just *encountered*; they are primarily an analytical lens, a way of explaining, excluding – or inviting in. That is, moving across sites is not perceived as boundary work as such – it may become so only by retrospective 'boundary thinking'. There are differences, and conflicts, but these are not necessarily *boundary* differences or conflicts. As noted in Edwards and Fowler (2007:118):

> I think here we have to think à la Lakoff and Johnson in terms of the deeply embedded spatial metaphors through which we make sense of the world and what I want to call 'boundary thinking'. Others might want to frame it as issues of structure and agency, but a lot of the thinking around those metaphors strikes me as fairly ungenerative.

Boundary thinking, thus, is a way to address the fact that differences are *fashioned* and as such, may be emerging through the very fashioning of the boundary. What might, then, be alternatives to boundaries and similar spatial metaphors, if any?

Deconstructing boundaries

As mentioned in Chapter 2, much research and indeed much public and policy discourse of innovation fails to ask basic questions of their principal concepts. We continually search out more 'drivers for innovation', and we want fewer 'barriers to innovation'. Following this premise, much research on public innovation involves pursuing innovation moments, discovering that there is less innovation than was expected or desired, explaining the 'barriers' to innovation and proposing measures to overcome these. Research can thus be regarded as the mobilization of certain concepts and disciplines to represent and order what is occurring. This involves boundary-marking, as certain concepts are 'taken to be pre-existing in a social reality to be explored rather than fashioned through discursive and material practices and exercises of power; that is, boundary-marking' (Edwards & Fowler, 2007:109-110). Does the idea of innovation through boundary-crossing need a round of deconstruction? As anticipated in Chapter 3, I gave it a try. Van Maanen (2010:248) stated: 'To the poststructuralist, reality may be a nice place to visit but no one really lives there. It is better treated as a fragile social construction, subject to numerous lines of sight and interpretation.' I made the opposite movement as I feel that I actually live in some kind of reality; however, there are numerous metaphors that can be mobilized in order to try to understand what is going on (including some metaphors that are not spatial).

St. Pierre (2011) cites Derrida, who claimed that the first move of deconstruction is not dissolving but rather reversing binary oppositions. However, I was not sure what binaries I might reverse in order to start the deconstruction. I reflected on this in a field diary entry:

> *'Binaries'*
>
> *In the case of innovation – what might binaries be? I often play the game with my children: 'What is the opposite of…?' (What is the opposite of cat, of running, of the color red?) It is a wonderful way to play with language, perception and reality. What is the opposite of innovation? Stagnation? Stability? Slow living? Regression? Random change? Depending on what contrast you choose, the meaning of innovation changes. Do some of these (constructed) dichotomies inform the way innovation can be studied and conceptualized? When I try to conceptualize innovation and study actors' own meaning-making of innovation, I realize that I must also study meaning-breaking. When we look for innovation, we must also look for what might be the opposite of innovation.*

I turned to construct and challenge binaries and observe, analyze and represent in writing the concept of innovation as constant changes of forms, practices and meanings. I also experienced the need for reading and writing about topics or practices that did not seem to have much to do with innovation. I crossed boundaries of my preconceptions and I deconstructed binaries. Yet, my reading and writing seemed essential in some strange peripheral way. It seemed, then, that I was able to deconstruct the boundaries of 'essential' and 'peripheral'. A good starting. My data slipped through my fingers, my initial concepts ruptured, and I decided to go with the flow and allow the categories to dissolve. I exercised boundary-crossing and boundary-deconstruction as mentioned by Edwards and Fowler (2007).

> *'Dissolving categories'*
>
> *'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans,' John Lennon sang. Likewise, innovation might be what happens in the field while you're busy planning to make it happen -- or looking for it at envisioned sites (such as boundaries). From another angle: you might as well learn something new about innovation in the process of dissolving categories, instead of trying to 'capture' innovation by means of categories.*

According to St. Pierre (2011:620) a deconstructionist approach makes it impossible to describe the aim and structure in advance of a study, and in cannot be 'captured at the end in representation'. The only way to make this kind of analysis is to accept a 'simultaneity of living, reading and writing', as St. Pierre (2011:621) notes. St. Pierre continues:

> I imagine a cacophony of ideas swirling as we think about our topics with all we can muster – with words from theorists, participants, conference audience, friends and lovers, ghosts who haunt our studies, characters in fiction and films and dreams.

It was indeed reassuring to see in print what I myself had experienced, and it heartened me to do my own deconstructive piece on categories in dialogue with a fictional character (Article E). I also wanted to stop the swirling and tried out various binary dissolving strategies to reconceptualize innovation as 'sustainable innovation' or 'grassroots innovation'. I fell temporarily in love with 'slow innovation' (Steen & Dhondt, 2010), but the seemingly contradictory combination of slowness and novelty seemed to strike back, and I could not escape a feeling of ambivalence:

> *'Driftwood with slow-words'*
>
> *I open my e-mailbox and peruse the subject lines. There are e-mails from friends and colleagues and some newsletters to which I subscribe. It seems that my spam filter is working well. It turns out, however, that a new filter might be needed: an 'innovation enthusiasm' filter. Or is it rather an 'innovation abuse' filter?*
>
> *Let's take a look at this newsletter [translated from Danish]:*
>
> Intuition researcher Carl E.
> Intuition and innovation for the art of slow pace. A new contemplative awareness and slow culture for modern, high-speed people. The art of slow hurrying to get things done quicker needs a new mindset, a new poly-perspective lens.
> What do modern time philosophy, Theory U, Mindfulness, creativity and flow theories have in common with slow and happiness philosophy, innovation and intuition?
> What is this newly emerging transcultural or global sustainability and be-ability trend that breaks with the fundamental premises of industrial society?
> How can we accomplish more by doing less?
> How do we get ready to grasp the future, find a new higher mental gear, get more free time and choose the good life?

> Come and listen to philosopher and future researcher Carl E., the creator of the exhibitions of driftwood with slow-words.
>
> *I feel a sudden physical and mental wind down. Everything is basically O.K., and I will be able to finish my dissertation despite feeling that I am proceeding at a snail's pace. Maybe I should go to this lecture and then choose the good life? O.K., I admit that the ironic tone of the last sentence ushers in a critical stance, but I seriously consider going there. At the same time, I sense insidious discomfort. What is wrong?*

Here, innovation seems to be part of an argument for combining New Public Management and New Age spirituality that would presumably take us to a state where there are no more binaries. But the absence of binaries is an illusion, for 'no binaries' means 'no boundaries', and thus no creative tension, the very tension that stimulates innovation. The wrong part is the illusion of no binaries, no boundaries and thus no tensions. I realized that binaries are useful. The task is to keep questioning them, to deconstruct and reconstruct them so as to continually learn more. I went back to Lave's 'ongoing struggles' (Holland & Lave, 2009:5) and 'open-ended processes of improvisation (Lave, [1993] 2009:204). Just *doing* seemed to make do.

However, it is still relevant to ask: 'Does the notion of boundaries create dichotomies that limit the study of innovation?'

Back to boundaries

My answer is: 'Yes, boundaries create dichotomies'. To me, it seems like a good thing. Dichotomies are useful and limitations are unavoidable and necessary. Johnsson, Boud and Solomon (2012) note that the boundary-crossing literature highlights the importance of encountering difference. However, they also argue that the notion of boundary-crossing builds on the assumption of a desired alignment among components in a system. It entails that when tensions and contradictions arise, individuals will attempt to cross boundaries to resolve tensions. On the basis of empirical findings they suggest that 'the notion of boundaries is a metaphorical device that restricts expansive understandings of workplace learning and inhibits creative ways of considering other possibilities' (Johnsson et al., 2012:62). However, this is not the only way to understand the concepts of boundaries and boundary-crossing. Deconstruction of boundaries, boundary-creation and boundary-reinforcement are relevant terms when we investigate innovation as I have tried to show. 'We may not be able to move

beyond distinctions and boundaries because we need to consider the work we are doing inscribing certain distinctions/boundaries,' Edwards and Fowler (2007:118) note. Hence, '[t]his does not mean that we need to think of concepts and objects in a relationship of cause and effect; they might co-emerge' (ibid.:120).

It is time to present my articles, and 'co-emergence' is in fact an apt cue. A recurrent theme in my articles might be understood as this co-emergence. Co-emergence of imperatives encountered, created and acted out, activities and rhetoric forming the imperatives, never fixed in time and space and never unambiguously originating from one site affecting the other.

5. Learning through article production

This chapter presents the five articles that constitute the basis for my arguments and conclusions. Together and individually, they are representations of what I learned as I cross-cut the field, left it to write and returned with new ideas and questions in continuous movements from the inside out and from the outside back in. The aim is to make visible my own processes of searching, getting lost, gaining insights and making decisions by means of article production.

Crystallization

'There is no "correct" telling of this event,' Denzin and Lincoln (2007:8) state. They argue for 'crystallization' (Richardson, 2003) and not 'triangulation' as a validation principal. Triangulation is not enough because here are many more than three angles to a case, they note. Crystallization is multifactorial, a creative performance around a central theme that creates simultaneity, not linearity. Also, it can be questioned whether if it is the same event or the same 'thing' you observe, when you observe it from different angles. Assembling these articles into a shared chapter is indeed a retrospective exercise, as I did not write according to an overall aim, and only Article C, on innovation and values, has been produced in conscious dialogue with Article B written prior to it. In this section, the articles are framed into a short narrative of not getting to the essential. This is only partly the truth; however, it reflects a consistent feeling of not getting to the *core* of my study. I wrote Article A about student reflection (Wegener, 2013b) thinking that I had to write about innovation, as it was the main theme of my project. However, my data was loaded with 'reflection', and I felt that I had to scrutinize this theme to pave the way for the theme of innovation. I then co-wrote Article B about discourses of innovation (Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013), thinking that I would like to write about actual innovative practices. At long last, I wrote Article C about innovation practices, but I had neglected the concept of boundaries (Wegener, 2012b). In Article D, about insider and outsider positions, I scrutinized the concept of boundaries (Wegener, in review), but the analysis did not address innovation at all. Not until I wrote about the epistemological and ontological process of academic writing in Article E (Wegener, forthcoming) did I realize that there is no essence of 'innovation' and 'boundaries'. I was investigating boundaries and innovation from different *perspectives*, from inside and outside my empirical data, with different analytical tools and using different representational forms. I had held the innovation crystal up and allowed the light to shine through it from different angles. Crystallization. However, in Article E, I actually manage to push *boundaries* (between research and fiction) and create *everyday innovation* (constructing something new by means of things at hand).

These two terms: ‘boundary pushing’ (distinct from ‘boundary-crossing’) and ‘everyday innovation’ (distinct from ‘radical innovation’ and ‘intervention’) are elaborated in Chapter 11. Finally, I was ready to write a paper exploring the relationship between the two main concepts of my study. Unfortunately, time was up.

Reflection across boundaries (Article A)

In one of the initial interviews, a manager at an elder care center said:

> The students do not know the things that are really needed, and the education has a totally improper focus. They do not learn to reflect upon the care recipients and the work tasks. Instead, they must reflect on their own learning style and set their own learning objectives, which they do not have the necessary insight to do.

Half a year later, based on this and similar statements during interviews and fieldwork, I wrote a conference paper and subsequently Article A about reflection. I did not anticipate that I would focus on reflection when I designed the study, but it turned out that reflection was a pervasive, problematized issue in the field. Moreover, it complemented my investigation of the boundary-crossing concept. I realized that students find it hard to simply reflect when they are asked to do so -- the reflection has to be about *something*. This something must be of bodily, emotional or intellectual importance. I reached the conclusion that reflection must be about a ‘salient experience’ (in dialogue with Stephen Billett). The article shows that reflective processes take place within a range of settings, contacts and through activities, many of which are initiated and enacted by the students themselves. Daily working and teaching situations and a variety of objects at hand support students’ reflections.

The article does not link reflection to innovation, but later I found that reflection and innovation were intimately linked. In the literature as well, Messmann and Mulder (2011) found that throughout the development of an innovation, reflection played an important role, not only fostering innovations but also teachers’ professional development. To improve the quality of care for older people, van Loon and Zuiderent-Jerak (2012) argue for exploring reflexivity in practice by analyzing how it is framed and which issues are articulated and excluded. They show how reflexivity is a technique for dealing with the complexity of care, and that ‘situated reflexivity’ is a way to adapt to the dual processes of internal and external changes on the one hand and a means of allowing for creativity, innovation and improvement of the services on the other.

From a boundary perspective, Akkerman and Bakker (2012) suggest 'reflection' across sites, as when actors are taking on the perspective of the other practice. Reflective mechanisms emphasize distinctive perspectives as 'a boundary creates a possibility to look at oneself through the eyes of other worlds […] and thus a new construction of identity that informs future practice' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011:145-146). However, 'reflection as an act of individual consciousness does not necessarily change its object' (Lektorsky, 2009:86). To approach innovation, I had to look not only for reflection and what might 'inform future practice'. I also had to look for actual change in practice. It turned out that the concluding remark -- that imperatives must come with content -- could be applied to the notion of innovation: Reflection must be about *something* and so must innovation if it is not to be purely rhetorical.

The craft, levers and purpose of innovation (Articles B and C)

Inspired by the notion of craftsmanship (Sennett, 2008; Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2010), this article, written with my supervisor Lene Tanggaard, develops a tripartite model of innovation based mainly on my interview data. Initially, the model was suggested in a Danish book chapter (Wegener & Tanggaard, 2012). The model suggests that innovation requires levers (understood as methods and management contexts) as well as craft (understood as professional skills and rootedness), if it is to be integrated into the core services of a specific context. That is, without the craft dimension, the innovation concept becomes (or remains) a floating signifier (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999) which may serve almost any purpose, e.g. to justify budget cutbacks, to label specific individuals or groups as 'resistant to change' or to include specific individuals or groups into change processes while excluding others. Concurrently, in the Danish article, I argued that innovation discourse itself may in fact work to constrict actual innovation (Wegener, 2012a). I became particularly interested in the actors' activities and arguments for carrying out these activities. I traced this theme in Article C. The main point put forward here is that the value dimension of public innovation must be understood not only in terms of value *creation* (economic or non-economic), to which actors are required to contribute, but also as value-based practices and *clashes* between actors' values and the values associated with innovation imperatives. Values are not only universal, general beliefs; rather, values are wedded to actions in practice. Thus, innovation cannot be understood in epistemological terms alone. Encountering innovation imperatives or altering one's work practices in innovative ways are value-based, ontological activities. It is about being in the world.

How to conduct and represent fieldwork (Articles D and E)

Being in the world, or at least being in the field, also came to be the focal point of the methodological Article D. In my attempt to understand innovation in a cross-organizational field, I analyzed the actors as temporary insiders and outsiders from the perspective of my own temporary positions as a field researcher. Thus, insiderness and outsiderness serve as sensitizing concepts (Blumer, 1954) which give the researcher a general *sense* of reference in approaching empirical instances. In such instances, all elements, actors and artifacts determine how outsider and insider themes are presented and articulated. The multiple sites are not fixed sites in time and space divided by boundaries; rather, there is an intertwining, mutually susceptible and ever-flowing of *positions* (available to individuals and purposely occupied by individuals) and *sites* (constituting the context and also changed by individual activity). Thus, these analyses made me realize that the analytical point of departure was not the organization as a system, but organizing as a process (Weick, 1979; Feldman, 2000; Elkjær, 2005) as mentioned in Chapter 3.

I had, thus, two articles about the volatility of boundaries (Articles A and D) and two articles about the volatility of innovation (Articles B and C). Do two 'volatilities' make a 'tangibility'? On my deconstructive detour, I tried to abandon this quest, but eventually, I wanted to merge the articles' different perspectives and conclusions. I needed solid ground from where to stake my case. Some kind of tangibility. Qualitative research must seek to tell a moral narrative about things we want to pursue, the *why* of qualitative research (Packer, 2010). Rereading the novel *A Biographer's Tale* (Byatt, 2001) while writing Article E, I found that this novel demonstrates how the accumulation and meticulous ordering of facts does not generate the big truth, but that several truths lie in the compatibility of so-called real life and research, and of the researcher and the researched. I also realized that academic writing is complex, disciplined and identity-related work (Kamler, 2008). Together with Phineas, the protagonist of Byatt's novel, I gradually found a 'voice of experience' (Willis, 2008:49) and practiced the craft of transforming life into research texts. Through immersion in the writing flow, letting go of one coherent argument and one overall narrative, I arrived at some kind of new consistency.

Displays of articles

Before this arrival (Chapter 11) I suggest a schematic display to arrange the articles into a shared frame.

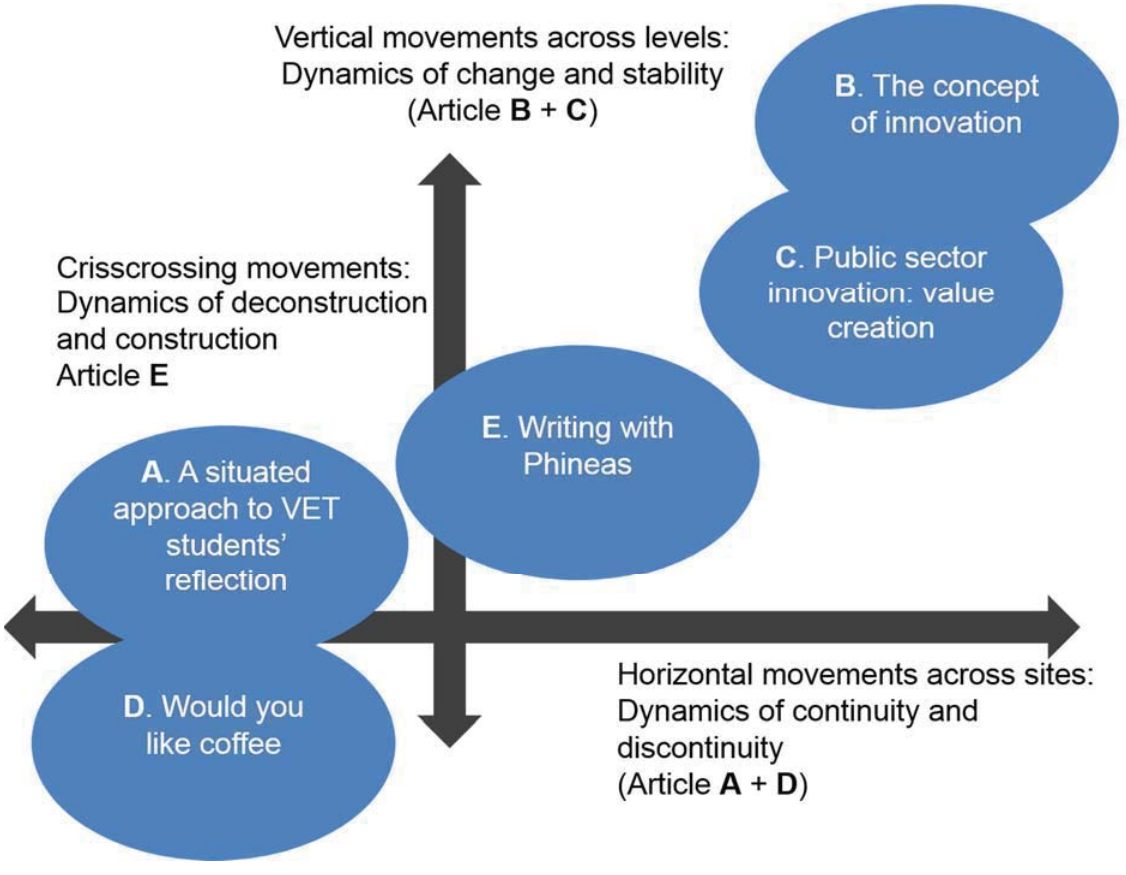
Table 3: Schematic presentation of research articles

Article title	Main imperative addressed	Boundary addressed	Main conclusion	Article classification
A. 'A situated approach to VET students' reflection'	Reflect!	Workplace affordances vs. spontaneous initiatives	Important educator skills are presence, responsiveness and agility	Framework construction
B. 'The concept of innovation'	Innovate!	Management rhetoric vs. everyday work practices	Sustainable innovations must build on actors' skills, knowledge and values	Conceptualization based on empirical data
C. 'Public sector innovation'	Create value!	Economic values vs. 'human' values	Encountering innovation imperatives or changing work practices are value-based, ontological activities.	Critical comment
D. 'Would you like a cup of coffee?'	Participate!	Insider vs. outsider	Insiderness and outsiderness are fragile, ever-changing positions	Methodological reflection
E. 'Writing with Phineas'	Connect!	Coherence vs. fragmentation	Fictional genres generate, if not 'facts', then at least some truths	Auto-ethnographic account
The dissertation as a whole	The imperatives are ambiguous and powerful	Everyday innovation unfolds between stability and change	Boundary-pushing is a way to observe and come to grips with everyday innovation	Impressionist tale

The table shows how all the articles address an imperative and construct a boundary. I also suggest how brief conclusions from each article may inform the overall conclusion of this dissertation.

Another way to organize the articles is drafted here into a simplified version of the initial framework model in Chapter 1.

Table 4: The articles within the initial framework (Table 1 in Chapter 1)



The vertical dimension refers to movements among the policy, organizational and everyday work levels, while the horizontal dimension refers to movements across sites between the college and internship facilities. The two articles about innovation (Articles B and C) mainly address the vertical movements of actors encountering and constructing innovation imperatives (across levels), while Articles A and D deal with the crossing of vertical boundaries (across sites). Article E deconstructs the idea of categorizing (as e.g. levels and sites) while reconstructing a key narrative about the joy of writing -- and of researching and living -- as social endeavors.

6. A situated approach to VET students' reflection (Article A)

Full title:

A situated approach to VET students' reflection processes across boundaries

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A situated approach to VET students' reflection processes across boundaries

Charlotte Wegener*

Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Aalborg Øest, Denmark

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The purpose of this paper is to illuminate the intersection between institutional requirements for reflection and students' actual reflection initiatives in the social and health care education programmes. A situated perspective makes it possible to illuminate individuals' commitment, curiosity and uncertainty as bases for understanding reflective actions, which can be either supported or constrained by the social environment in which they are enacted. The analysis is based on an ethnographic field study of boundary-crossing activities at a social and healthcare college and the elder care centres where students work as trainees. The paper adds to the creation of a shared language among educators by suggesting a model based on four factors labelled: (i) 'salient experiences', (ii) 'reflection objects', (iii) 'reflection zones' and (iv) 'reflection facilitators'. A key finding is that students initiate reflection in a range of ways. Yet, these reflections can be overlooked if they do not fit into the required methods. When educators pay attention to these reflective starting points, they can expand their role as reflection facilitators, and the students' potentials for learning through reflection can be enhanced. The paper adds to previous research on boundary crossing in vocational education and highlights the notion of visible reflection.

Keywords: situated learning; boundary crossing; VET; reflection; ethnography

Reflection in the social and health care educations

In Vocational Education and Training (VET), students are required to learn across organisational boundaries, as they alternate through experiences in schools and workplaces throughout their education and interact with different educators, kinds of learning environments and work tasks. Hence, it is important to understand how these experiences and demands shape their learning. This paper is based on an ethnographic field study on learning and innovation in the social and health care educations in

*Email: cw@id.aau.dk

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Denmark. Social and health care studies in Denmark are part of the VET System combining coursework at a social and health, college and internship in the elder care sector. The study shows that educators at school and the workplaces enact particular didactical practices when facilitating students' learning across organisational boundaries. Reflection is one of their main didactical practices, and students' reflection is regarded as a critical activity to link practical experience with the knowledge they acquire in school. This practice connects with recent research on reflection in health care professions that regards reflection processes as an integral part of learning and building professional identity, integrating theory and practice from the outset (Mann, Gordon, and MacLeod 2009).

The present study shows that students and workplace supervisors interact by means of two main reflection tools: (i) log writing and (ii) self-evaluation according to a list of pre-specified learning objectives. The log and list serve as dialogue tools during the workplace supervisors' scheduled learning dialogues with students. Sometimes, a teacher at school introduces the log writing. However, more often, students are introduced to these logs during their first internship period when their supervisors ask them to consider their own learning style and to reflect upon daily work tasks. The list of learning objectives is part of the intended curriculum, and in addition to being a dialogue tool, it also serves as a checklist at assessment interviews. During the present field study, both tools were subject to discussions in the school-practice collaboration, and in everyday dialogues between students and educators. Yet, many workplace supervisors stated that it was difficult to support the students' learning processes by the means of these two formats. Furthermore, many students avoided the log writing or expressed concerns about how to relate the learning objectives on the list to everyday work tasks. This avoidance or confusion sometimes led the educators to conclude that students' ability to reflect was either absent or under-developed. Additionally, school-based educators tended to criticise the supervisor skills or learning environment at the workplaces, whilst the workplace educators pointed to insufficient preparation for reflection at school as the main problem. Another explanation was that the requirements for student reflection skills were too abstract. To illustrate this criticism, we anticipate the empirical analysis and give the floor to a manager at an elder care centre. In this interview quote, she criticises the notion of self-reflection:

> The demands are either too high or too low. The students are supposed to specify their own learning style. Nobody can do that! Nor are they able to set their own learning objectives. Who is able to do that anyway? You can't formulate your own learning objectives in the midst of your training. Somebody with an overview must do that for you.

Instead, according to this manager, the student reflection processes should focus on actual work tasks and on communication:

> What is really demanding is reflection in the sense of being curious, critical, looking from different angles and asking questions. These kinds of reflection skills should be trained. If you reflect in that sense, then you are able to really *see* the needs of the elderly.

In these two quotes, the manager expresses the main finding presented in this paper. That is, learning styles and learning objectives are abstract ideas, and to become applicable and useful, the learning objectives must focus on the daily work tasks where students interact with the learning content and the care recipient. In general, neither the log nor the list of learning objectives seemed to facilitate reflection per se, even though they were useful for some students in maintaining and structuring their experiences into reflection. However, during the field observations, students frequently spontaneously expressed curiosity, doubt and commitment. These expressions emerged from emotional and embodied experiences in their private lives, at school or their workplaces. The aim of this paper is to analyse these expressions as the individuals' way of engaging with and become reflective about what they are experiencing in their interaction with the social and physical contexts that comprised their educational programme. The main point is that reflection has to be concerned with *something*. In this paper, this 'something' is called 'a salient experience'. A salient experience can be unintended as the sudden death of an elderly resident, or the student or the educator can intentionally seek it out. Thus, the concept of a salient experience refers to the students' initiating purposeful reflective processes that are mediated by interactions with objects and other actors in the social context. Conversely, reflection processes can be restricted by these interactions or the lack of interactions.

Below, the concept of boundaries and boundary crossing in a vocational educational context are introduced and discussed, as is the paper's place in the literature on reflection. Then, the research field and method in question are outlined, as is a model of a contextual and interactive understanding of reflection, based on the empirical findings. The model proposes that four elements must be taken into consideration in the processes of facilitating student reflection: (i) salient experiences, (ii) reflection objects, (iii) reflection zones and (iv) the facilitator role. Finally, how this model may add to the creation of a shared language among educators across organisational boundaries in the VET field is discussed in summary.

Boundary crossing and workplace learning

The consideration here of students' movement across and learning through distinct kinds of social spaces is based on the body of literature on workplace learning acknowledging that learning occurs through everyday

activities in workplaces (Lave and Wenger 1991; Billett 2001; Ellström 2006; Tanggaard 2009). The main assumption is that learning and cognition have to be understood as actions and activities integrated or embedded in a complex social and cultural context. The theory of situated learning described learning as the newcomer's movement from the periphery of a community-of-practice, learning through actively involvement in working and problem-solving (Lave and Wenger 1991). Although engaging with the theory of situated learning, many researchers propose that workplace learning is more complex than a one-way movement from peripheral to full membership of a community of practice. According to Engeström, Miettinen, and Punamäki (1999), what seems to be missing is the movement outwards and in unexpected directions: questioning of authority, innovation, or initiation of change. That is, learning cannot be studied 'in isolated contexts, the main theoretical and empirical concern is to study how people combine, modify and connect learning across places' (Tanggaard 2009, 696). This learning across places is evident in Engeström's concept of 'boundary crossing', and boundaries are regarded as potentials for both individual and organisational learning, focusing on learning as an integrated part of everyday work and education in multi-organisational fields (Engeström 1987). The focus is on the situatedness of human action and the researcher's interest must therefore aim at understanding how social order is constructed, how coordination is achieved, and how innovations in complex settings evolve (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003, 296). The concept of boundaries and boundary crossing reframe the problem of transfer. Rather than viewing transfer of theory to practice as individual mental processes, the unit of analysis expands from individuals' cleverness or ability to manipulate knowledge to contexts of interaction and communication. Thus, boundary crossing is 'a way of transcending the dualism between thought and activity, theory and practice, facts and values' (Engeström, Miettinen, and Punamäki 1999, 5). In a recent literature review on boundary crossing in educational research, a boundary is defined as a difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction (Akkerman and Bakker 2011, 133):

> Boundaries simultaneously suggest a sameness and continuity in the sense that within discontinuity two or more sites are relevant to one another in a particular way.

This definition indicates that a boundary may be mental as well as social or organisational. The main point is that the individual combines knowledge across these boundaries, and that both the individual and the context change during these processes. As expressed by Billett (2006, 58):

> So the process of learning is shaped through interactions between social and individual contributions, yet with individuals playing a highly agentic role in

> those interactions. Moreover, the agency is not restricted to individual learning. It also shapes cultural change.

That is, in these shifting contexts, practices are not merely reproduced, but also elaborated.

The theories of situated and practice-based learning and boundary crossing are, in part, applied and developed in the research field of vocational education (e.g. Tanggaard 2007). Vocational students cross organisational boundaries between school and the workplaces during their education and differences between one practice and another make students realise something new about their own and others' practices, and these experiences create the possibility to look at oneself through the eyes of other worlds (Akkerman and Bakker 2011). The students transfer knowledge and skills while crossing organisational boundaries between school, the workplaces and their private lives, and 'the very process of such transfer involves active interpreting, modifying and reconstructing the skills and knowledge' (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003, 4). Likewise, the school and workplace educators engage in collaborative interaction in which they learn something from each other while acting as mediators and boundary crossers between the school and workplaces.

While boundary crossing refers to individuals' transitions and interactions across different sites, a 'boundary object' refers to the artefacts doing the crossing, fulfilling a bridging function (Star 1989; Akkerman and Bakker 2011). Likewise, 'boundary zones' is a way of conceptualising the places where it is possible to integrate different perspectives (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003, 230). In the following analysis, the reflection tools are positioned as boundary enablers, labelled 'reflection objects', and the physical and social settings comprising boundary zones, labelled 'reflection zones'. Students and educators are boundary crossers; the students as they interpret, modify and reconstruct their salient experiences, and educators as they act as facilitators during these processes. In activity theory, these processes are referred to as expansive learning. This process suggests that 'learners make a conscious effort to reflect on their own activity, and through reflection they can break away from their predetermined contexts for action' (Kerosuo 2006, 11–12). Boundaries create situations in which tasks at hand challenge practitioners to negotiate and combine ingredients from multiple and often parallel activities with distinctive objects (Kerosuo 2006, 87). Thus, expansive (or innovative) learning is not presuming an individual experimenting and reflecting on the experiment; rather, they 'are understood to occur in groups, through everyday interactions in decision making, discussion of occurrences, adjustments, and accidents' (Fenwick 2004, 232). However, as the analysis will show, during the present field study, the reflection discourse emphasised a rather individualistic and separate activity. The following section deals with perceptions of reflection in working life and education.

Visible and interactive reflection

In the 1980s, the literature closely linked reflection to action in everyday workplace settings and in education. Schön published *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) and Kolb integrated the notion of reflection in a cyclic model of experiential learning based on Dewey, Lewin and Piaget (Kolb 1984), for instance. Although these theories involve individuals' interaction with the environment, the perspectives are primarily individualistic (Høyrup and Elkjaer 2006). The immediate social context was given full consideration with Lave and Wenger's book *Situated Learning* (1991) which provided the research field on practice-based learning with the analytical concept of 'communities-of-practice'. This concept defined learning as socially constructed, interactive processes, inseparable from working. This privileging of the situational factors is later nuanced, e.g. by Billett who points at the 'relational interdependence' between the individual actor and the social context:

> [a] social practice, such as a classroom or a workplace, needs to be understood in terms that include (a) participants' interest, identities, and subjectivities; (b) the degree of consonance between these; and (c) the goals and continuities of the social practice, including the possibility for an active role in its remaking. This interdependence and dialogicity is inherent in the process of meaning making and construction of knowledge. (Billett 2006, 62)

A number of studies have shown that there are substantial creativity and space for reflective activities in many kinds of work processes (Ellström 2006). However, many organisations tend to drive out reflection processes from the visible working life and into a 'shadow system' or even outside the workplace (Ibid., 51). In the present study, the students' log writing and learning dialogues with workplace supervisors seemed to be part of such a shadow system, because these activities are often located in meeting rooms or at the manager's office, separated from the daily work tasks. According to Ellström, reflection can be supported by being 'made visible' and a part of the agenda of working life (2006, 51). The notion of visibility makes it possible to take interactive and material aspects of learning through reflection into consideration. That is, learning can be restricted and supported by actors and artefacts in many different locations and types of interactions (Fuller and Unwin 2003; Ellström, Ekholm, and Ellström 2008). In a Danish context, these observations are supported by a research project on assessment in vocational education. The authors suggest a situated and relational perspective on knowledge and learning as an alternative to theories on self-directed learning (Tanggaard and Elmholdt 2008). From a situated and relational perspective, assessment must be 'organised as an activity that takes place in relation to the on-going flow of production in the workplace' (Ibid., 113). However, the requirement for reflection in the social and health care education seems to emphasise the individualistic, introspective approach

as developed by Schön (1983). As a consequence, the individual students are labelled as skilled or not skilled for reflection while the social contexts are partly ignored.

Boud and Middleton (2003) have asserted that the growing emphasis on reflection in education acknowledges that the development of a professional identity is part of students' learning throughout the courses of their study. Regarding reflection as a key element in building a professional identity, Boud defined reflection in the context of learning as:

> … a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation. (Boud 1985, 19)

As this definition captures both intellectual and affective dimensions of reflection, it serves as a well-suited base for the analyses here, keeping in mind that the concept of reflection provides meaning at individual, group and organisational levels (Høyrup and Elkjaer 2006, 30). Despite the fact that reflection is a main topic in health care education, a literature review on reflective practice in health care professions notes that the research literature is dispersed over several fields, including education, nursing and psychology. Furthermore, the evidence to support curricular interventions concerning reflection remains largely theoretical (Mann, Gordon, and MacLeod 2009, 596). The conclusions of the review are (2009, 608):

> Across all of the diverse settings and methods, it appears that the most influential elements in enabling the development of reflection and reflective practice are a supportive environment, both intellectually and emotionally; an authentic context; accommodation for individual differences in learning style; mentoring; group discussion; support; and, free expression of opinion.

Despite this knowledge, recent studies on reflection stress the importance of seeking a better understanding of how reflection and developmental learning takes place in practice (Ellström 2010). Another key research task is to seek a better understanding of how reflective practices can be supported (Ibid.). The present study should be regarded as a contribution to these needs and the research questions addressed are thus:

(1) Which visible actions can be regarded as reflective starting point?
(2) What characterise these reflection situations?
(3) How can reflective practice be supported across boundaries?

The following section outlines how these questions are addressed through practical inquiry.

Research method

The empirical data consists of interviews and ethnographic fieldwork at cross-organisational activities at a social and healthcare college, a number of elder care centres and three municipal authorities. Traditional ethnographic fieldwork implies a long-term stay in the field. However, 'there is now a growing awareness that the object of ethnography is dispersed in (diffuse) space-time relations and contested' (Tanggaard forthcoming). Long-term fieldwork is often replaced by brief ethnographic visits (Kerosuo 2006, 93) and these ethnographies are interested in exploring critical aspects of activity in terms of development, learning and change. Marcus (1995) suggests six strategies for constructing a multi-site ethnography: follow the people, follow the thing, follow the metaphor, follow the plot, story or allegory, follow the life or biography, and follow the conflict. The overall aim of the ethnography here is about 'following the metaphor', namely boundary crossing. While I followed this metaphor, multiple stories of reflection appeared and these stories are put into dialogue with the theory of boundary crossing in this paper.

The observations were carried out over the course of six months, 1–2 days a week and more than a 100 students were involved in the observed activities. The observed activities were selected on the basis of a theoretically informed hypothesis that cross-organisational collaboration between educational institutions and workplaces creates the potential for expansive learning and innovation (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003). Thus, the main focus was learning and innovation while reflection as a research theme emerged from the preliminary thematic analysis of the empirical material. Observations took place at teaching activities related to practice, introductory meetings for students prior to their internship, student and supervisor interactions during work days and assessment interviews, coffee breaks, different kinds of collaborative meetings and supervisor training activities. During these activities, *reflection* was mentioned and problematised to a great extend, especially by municipality educational consultants and workplace supervisors. At collaborative meetings, the logbook was a discussion topic that coursed emotional expressions and implacable attitudes on several occasions. Boundaries were drawn, not crossed. For this reason, I decided to analyse the stories of reflection across boundaries. The theoretical concepts of boundary objects and boundary zones shaped my focus and initiated the design of the four-element empirical model. The purpose of the model is to capture the complexity of reflective actions and reflection contexts and, in a visual way, expand supervisors' and teachers' scope for action when they want to support the student reflection.

Findings and discussions

The empirical model describes the process of reflection as a system of visible factors that influence or shape students' reflection. The arrows in the

centre of the model represent the student interacting with the four factors while the circulation indicates that a reflection process may be initiated by any of the four factors. However, during the field observations, some interactions were more prominent than others, differing in each situation (Figure 1).

The following analysis deals with empirical situations at school and at the workplaces where students interact with the four factors.

Salient experiences

As mentioned, reflection was a main theme at the learning dialogues and collaborative meetings. However, reflection as a requirement per se did not initiate reflection as illustrated in this field note from an introductory meeting with the student, Caroline, and the municipal consultant, Jane:

> Jane asks Caroline about her learning style. Caroline is not sure, she likes sort of trying things, she says, and adds that she was surprised that it felt barrier breaking to feed the paralyzed lady. But now she has tried it a couple of times, and she feels fine. Jane asks her if she has reflected on her own reaction, and Caroline say no, not really, she was just surprised, but now she is okay.

At these introductory meetings, students are asked to tell the supervisor or municipal consultant about their learning style. Learning style is referred to

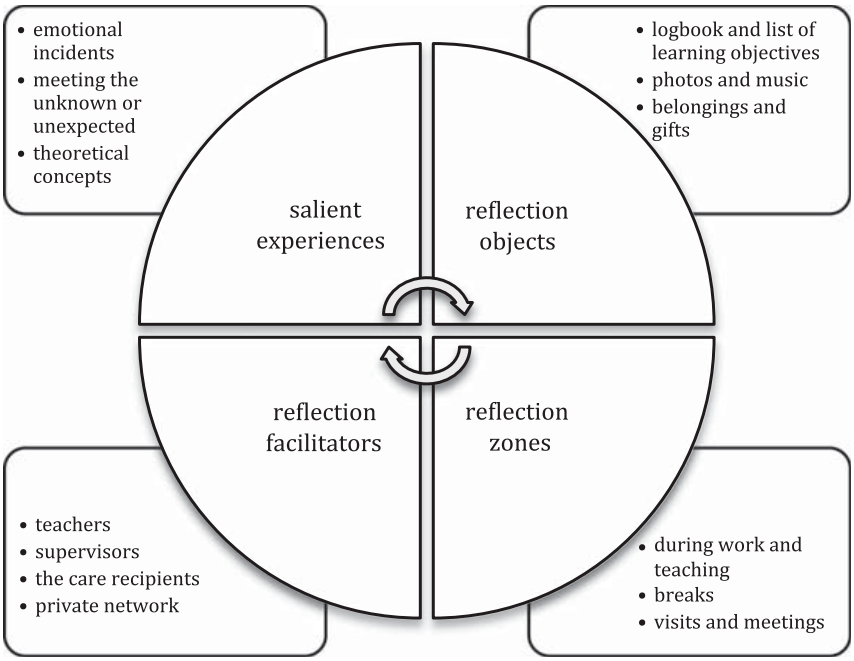

Figure 1. Four-factor model which may add to a shared language among educators.

as the student's preferences, which the learning processes must be planned in accordance with. Hence, to understand something referred to as learning style means knowing about what particular knowledge and ways of knowing the student brings to the process of learning (Billett 2006). However, at all the observed situations, the students seem to be more concerned with present and future activities, and Caroline's answer is characteristic. As she has no concrete work task to connect to, the question on learning style does not initiate any reflection. However, Caroline brings up the feeding of the paralysed lady as an actual salient experience that is both emotional and embodied. It seems that she has actually reflected, as she is able to verbalise her own surprise and the way she overcame a barrier, namely by 'trying things', as she mentions initially. Although she does not regard 'trying things' as a learning style, this strategy can be interpreted as her first step in order to develop a professional identity. However, this kind of learning style or strategy does not fit into the concept of reflection, and at the end of the meeting, the consultant describes Caroline as 'the practical type who finds it difficult to reflect'. This suggests an idealised type of reflection of solitary introspection, rather than reflection arising through engagement in activities, trying to improve, praising what you have done, while this seems to be what Caroline is suggesting.

In fact, the observations are loaded with students' stories of surprises and concerns about their interaction with the care recipients. One especially salient experience is death. The following quote is from a meeting arranged by the municipality educational unit in order to make sure that all students have had a proper introduction at the workplaces. A student articulates a salient experience from her first week of internship:

> I asked my teacher at school if we could talk about death prior to the internship, but my teacher said: It almost never happens. Then, after one week together with my supervisor, I am turning over an elderly lady in her bed, and then she died, just like that! My supervisor told me to go outside and get some fresh air and collect myself. I had never seen a dead person before, and I was scared of doing something wrong. To the relatives it just happens once. It can't be undone.

The student's story about death can be interpreted as a reflective starting point, but the meeting is structured as a one-by-one inquiry, and no one volunteers as a reflection facilitator. We do not know if this student would have felt more secure if her teacher at school had talked to her about death; however, the two quotes show how students' reflections are related to their sense of professional identity during interactions with their clients.

Another salient experience is the interaction between the student and the theoretical concepts. As the following dialogue illustrates, even well-known concepts learnet at school may cause the students some struggle during

internship. The dialogue takes place at an elder care centre just after the morning care of Gudrun:

> Supervisor: Today Gudrun said: 'I can do it myself'. That's fine, and of course she is allowed to wash herself.
> Student: We learned a lot about that at school: Help them to help themselves.
> Supervisor: Yes, what will you do tomorrow if she says that she will not do it?
> Student: It wouldn't be okay to say: 'You did it yesterday, so you *must* do it'.
> Supervisor: No, maybe she is having a bad day, and your assistance may be just what she needs to get through the day. You will learn to estimate from experience.

At this interaction, the student identifies 'self-help' as the theoretical concept in play, but a simple transfer of the concept from a school context to a workplace context is not possible. The supervisor challenges the student's reflection skills by asking her to interpret and reconstruct her knowledge into adequate reactions, matching the elderly's changing moods and needs. However, it seems that the student is not supported much, as her estimation skills are supposed to develop only through experience and not through dialogue with the supervisor. This advice connects with Schön's notion of reflection as a 'trial and error' practice or as 'intuitively knowing' what to do (Schön 1983; Kotzee 2012, 8). That is, reflection requirements turn out to be a way of leaving the students on their own – doing their own interpretations and decisions. During the field observations, students were often on their own managing their interactions with theoretical concepts. This male student had just started his first internship period and he tells me:

> I must learn to express myself in a different manner. I am here to see how the land lies and learn a new way of communication. Maybe I have insulted some people here because I said: 'I don't get it; why are you doing it this way, when the book says something else'. Yesterday, at the introductory meeting, they suggested this new expression: *to wonder*. I have written it down to practice and make it sound right. I will try to say: *I wonder*. It's important that I learn to express myself in a more feminine way, I guess.

This reflection can be interpreted as Peter's attempt to adapt to cultural norms and codes at the workplace (Lave and Wenger 1991). By replacing 'I don't get it' with 'I wonder', Peter suggests that he will not insult the staff. However, a twinge of irony in Peter's statement indicates that he may be in a process of mastering a specific reflection discourse, but not in a process of expansive learning (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003). Peter's reflection in his interaction with the concept of wondering may be what Wertsch (1998)

refers to as ‘mastery’. Mastery is characterised as traditional considerations of ‘knowing how to do’ particular actions. However, Peter’s expression of not feeling comfortable with the reflection format (he must write down the word ‘wondering’ to familiarise) may be the lack of what Wertsch refers to as ‘appropriation’; to make something one's own. When the students are asked to reflect on the supervisors and teachers, they often explain the reflection activity as a process of *wondering*. However, as this male student has discovered, the questioning and wondering must follow cultural norms and codes, which are often tacit and ambiguous.

Reflection objects

As mentioned, log writing and a list of pre-specified learning objectives are the main reflection objects offered to the students. Students are rarely introduced to log writing at school and the supervisors at the workplaces have different opinions on the log. At an introductory meeting, this dialogue illustrates the ambiguity of the log:

Supervisor: Then there is the log writing (laughs). How do you feel about it?
Student: Fine.
Supervisor: Are you doing log writing?
Student: (Pause) No.
Supervisor: (Looking at me) Well, they expect us to use the log.
Student: (Is silent, looks down)
Supervisor: I don’t insist that you do it because there is so much writing to do in your weekly assignments. But you can write something about one of the residents, what are good and bad, and why it is so.
Student: Yes. I have a hard time with the log, because it’s not a dairy.

It seems that this interaction does not initiate the student’s reflection through log writing, as the supervisor associates written reflections with the weekly assignments and regards the log as an extra, unnecessary requirement. Neither the supervisor nor the student is in a process of appropriation (Wertsch 1998) – of making the log their own. That is, they master the dialogue about the log, maybe in honour of the researcher. Furthermore, the supervisor’s instructions are vague and may be regarded as an attempt to satisfy the researcher as a representative of ‘they’. Whom the supervisor’s expression ‘they’ refers to is not clear, however, during the fieldwork, this vague expression is common in cases of external requirements, which sometimes meant the social and healthcare college, sometimes the municipality and sometimes the ministry. Most commonly, however, it referred to unintelligible, ill-defined or overwhelming requirement. However, not everyone felt alienated from the log. Another supervisor regards the log as a valuable reflection object, but despite that, she has never met a student who liked the

log, she says during an interview. She compares the log with the assessment interviews, and the main problem is that the students feel trapped:

> They feel that once they have written it, they must defend it and be able to explain. It's just like the assessment interviews; they are so focused on doing it right. I try to explain to them that it's about reflection, it's not about wrong or right, it's not about what *I* want from them.

This statement captures the ambiguity of the log, which is, on the one hand, a reflection tool, and on the other hand, a tool for controlling and assessing the students' reflection skills and theoretical knowledge. The ambiguity seems even more evident when it comes to the supervisors' own reflection objects. During a mandatory training course for new supervisors, the supervisors are asked to do log writing between the first and the second week of training. First day of the second week, it turns out that none of the supervisors have written anything, and the instructor tells the course participants that they do not stand out. According to her, nobody attending this course ever does the log-writing homework. Apparently, the supervisors try to apply a reflection object, which is not useful as a tool for their own reflection.

While the log is subject to several conflicts, the list of learning objectives is accepted as it is part of the intended curriculum, and the students must meet all requirements on the list to pass their exam. The list defines the intermediate and final interviews with the student during internship. However, to some degree, the list is also associated with uncertainty. A workplace supervisor puts it this way during an interview:

> Our workdays are busy, and the tasks changes all the time. It is difficult to know if the student has been through it all. Sometimes I feel; wow, it's a lot.

Besides feelings of overload, workplace supervisors in general find it difficult to interpret the learning objectives, and the list is subject to both frustration and irony. At an intermediate interview with the student Sophie, the supervisor, Karen, reads aloud:

> 'Objective no. 10: Acquire the skills to plan, assess and evaluate the guidance and cooperation with citizens and other cooperation partners'. I think this is nonsense. What do you think yourself, Sophie?

Sophie asks for a concrete situation to connect to. Karen gives an example and they agree that Sophie is capable within this area. As Karen's statement illustrates, the students and the supervisors often agree that the learning objectives are incomprehensible, and that people with no understanding of the complexity of everyday life made them up. In Wertcsh' words, they agree on a mastery approach. Both students and supervisors seem to have similar feelings of being trapped by obscure and unintelligible requirements.

However, students seem to feel liberated when other reflection objects are in play. These objects are closely linked to everyday work tasks and emotional and embodied experiences. For example, students take pictures of everyday work situations with their mobile phones, while others listen to music that captures a specific feeling, and some of them bring belonging or gifts into the learning processes. A teacher notes:

> One of my students carried out her internship in England, and she brought home a badge and a diploma. I circulated the objects in class and we talked about conditions for elder people in England, and what you get from meeting a different culture.

This teacher actively involves a student-initiated object into the teaching, and thus transforms it into a shared reflection object, focusing explicitly on the expansive learning potential in boundary crossing (Engeström 1987; Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003). Another example is a teacher who plays music at class as a means to involve emotions, and music as a reflection object inspires her students. She says:

> We have had this subject on psychiatry and the next day one of my student brought a CD with Gnags [a famous Danish rock band]. He told me that the subject reminded him of this song and he had printed the lyrics for me. It complemented the subject perfectly! And of course I put it on at once, and we all listened to the song and talked about the lyrics.

These teachers are aware that the students are sharing salient experiences, and they jump to reflection opportunities involving everyone in the classroom. The aesthetic expressions are not considered arbitrary or private, but are taken to the core of the subject at class and used for didactical purposes. The students are appreciated for their contribution, and they respond by being more inclined to go beyond the right-or-wrong dichotomy. In Wertchs' terminology, these interactions seem to be a shared appropriation of reflection. These types of shared reflections were not observed during field observations at the workplaces. At most occasions, students were not invited to staff meetings, seminars or other kinds of reflection zones. The next section deals with these zones.

Reflection zones

As highlighted above, students often initiated reflection processes during work, the teaching of a subject or in other interactions where reflection was not the object per se. In fact, designated reflection zones seemed to restrict explicit reflection of the required kind. However, it was likely to initiate other kinds of introspection. As these reflection processes were not visible (Ellström 2006), educators seemed to have difficulties in acting on them. Invisibility seems to be the case in the following quote. Once during internship, a

teacher from school visits the workplace and attends a meeting with the student and the supervisor. Once in a while, the student does not thrive, and the teachers sometimes find it difficult to spot. A teacher tells me:

> I just wonder why the students don't say anything until the meeting is over. Sometimes they are completely mute. The students don't dare touching problems. They believe that they must get along with their supervisor or they will not pass. They do everything they can to fit in and don't ask for too much.

Though these visits are aimed at mutual reflection across boundaries, this type of reflection zone does not support the handling of conflicts if students regard the reflection requirement only aimed at her and not at cultural change (Billett 2006).

However, meeting rooms can be fruitful reflection zones when the actors engage in mutual exploration of a shared object and the process is directed towards improvement of practice. As an example, a manager regards student and employee reflection as integrated. She is inspired by Tom Kitwood's concept of person-centred care, which highlights the importance of the person with dementia rather than the disease process itself. She organises the staff meetings as mutual reflection processes within a framework of person-centred care, asking questions such as: What is best for the residents in your group? How can we understand this specific elderly lady who cries all the time? Kitwood's concept has framed all staff meetings and is part of the learning environment for both students and staff, she explains:

> The students attend these meetings as well. I don't require anything except from attendance. My intensions are that they become curious along the way, because this concept is useful everywhere.

These situations are exceptions from the above-mentioned exclusion of students from collective reflection zones and seem to be good examples of learning through interactions between social and individual contributions (Billett 2006). As the students are invited into these reflection practices, they get the opportunity to both learn from others and contribute to social change. This gradual and voluntary change is central in the following quote from an educational setting. Recently completed an optional course on conflict resolution, a student tells me that she especially benefitted from the forum theatre; an interactive style of theatre offering the participant to explore the possibilities and share stories in a supportive environment:

> Maybe one third of our education is about facts, and the rest is personal judgments. Working with people, conflicts arise all the time. I have read about communication, but the hands-on-course gave me a much deeper understanding of my interaction with colleges and the elderly. The drama exercises offered us the opportunity to test different expressions prior to real interactions.

She stresses the voluntary aspect, and the fact that there were no right and wrong. This learning process can be understood as the journey of appropriation into a reflection zone, in her own speed. In fact, a reflection zone with no rights or wrongs can be established in infinite ways. Students often feel free to ask questions and reflect in settings that invite the students' to bodily and emotional involvement. The following field note describes a group of students at a visit at the local church together with their teacher:

> The vicar opens a transportable altar and takes out the contents, telling about the communion ritual at an elder care centre or at the hospital. The students ask a lot of questions. They would like to know which themes are common then talking to a dying person, and if she is able to let go of other peoples' grief when she takes time off.

This experience included both factual knowledge and embodied, emotional aspects, and later, in the classroom, the students keep talking about death and their concerns about learning to deal with a dying person and the relatives. No requirements for reflection were stated; however, it may be preparing the students for the death of an elderly person, as the student in the first section asked for.

As demonstrated above, students are required to ask questions and wonder which seems to be a generic term for being open-minded, curious and showing the ability to ask questions. However, throughout the field observations, it remained unclear who was supposed to interact with the students' curiosity and turn it into reflection processes. The next section deals with the fourth factor in the model.

Reflection facilitators

As previously demonstrated, supervisors did not use the log as a reflection object in their own learning processes, and in general, they express that they are anxious to do everything 'right', just like the students. This mutual conception about right and wrong may be one reason why some students use reflection facilitators from outside the educational context when feelings of insecurity or loneliness occur. This is evident when a young student tells me about an old lady at the elder care centre where she is carrying out her internship:

> I had been taking care of her for several weeks and she was getting worse every day. One day she suddenly grabbed my wrist and said: 'Out'. I was so scared. I talked to my mum and she said: 'Maybe she meant that she wanted to get out of her life. You wouldn't know. But don't take it personally'.

It may be helpful for this student to use her mother as a reflection facilitator, even though it seems that she stopped the reflection at an early stage. Using

her mother may indicate that she is uncomfortable with using her supervisor when she feels anxious or inadequate. Another topic stated in this quote is, that the students in general do not regard unpleasant feelings as a starting point for learning, and they are reluctant to ask the supervisor for help to handle their feelings. Sometimes, the supervisors are aware of this reluctance and try to assist the student. A supervisor expresses this kind of awareness at an assessment interview with the student, Hannah, and a municipal consultant:

> A resident had various diseases and the doctor had said that painkillers were dangerous for her because of the antidepressant drug. The resident was really in pain, and her bipolar characteristics stood out. Hannah was completely hysterical. She must learn to ask for assistance before she freaks out. We all ask for help once in a while. Nobody has to be alone when they make tough decisions. Then I told Hannah: 'Go get your lunch box and take a break, and after that we will solve the problem together'.

As illustrated in this example, the students are often focused on being or becoming professionals. A learning position seems less attractive, and as a consequence, the students rarely ask the supervisor which feelings are appropriate or in which way they can use their feelings and still act as a professional. This supervisor insists that the student must learn to ask for help, and she tries to make it easier by telling her that asking for help is considered to be a professional skill. The object of the situation is not reflecting in the sense of thinking or talking about Hannah's own reactions; instead, the supervisor teaches her another way of acting, standing next to her all the time. That is, Hannah is not told what to do as there is no right or wrong, but she may become able of changing the situation *and* learn to be less reluctant to ask for help (Billett 2006).

As a concluding remark on the reflection facilitator role, we return to the first category, the salient experience. A critique of the reflection concept as it is outlined by Schön claims that 'professional knowledge consists for Schön not so much in being able to modify or change a situation in a particular way, but in being able to conceive of or understand the situation in her own way' (Kotzee 2012, 8). The present study supports this critique. Educators must facilitate reflection aimed at the individual's ability to act and change situations because learning arises through the engagement in goal-directed work activities and interactions (Billett 2010, 5).

Conclusions

The objective of this paper is to illuminate reflection as visible actions and explore in which ways reflection processes are enabled and restricted in the complex encounters between the individual student and the social contexts

in the social and health care educations. The paper shows that reflective processes take place within a range of settings, contacts and through activities, many of which are initiated and enacted by the students themselves. A potential criticism of this perspective is that reflection must be situated within an educational context to facilitate students' conscious learning. However, if these almost invisible initiatives are ignored, reflection processes are restricted. Similarly, actors, objects and zones in the social context can promote reflection processes. Firstly, the reflection requirement remains vague if it is not embedded in concrete experiences. When students are asked to reflect, they always turn to or ask for a concrete experience and all the observed reflective starting points emerge from salient experiences. Secondly, the reflection processes are often supposed to take place in meeting rooms and offices by means of the log or the list of learning objectives, and reflection did happen in a meeting room once in a while. However, students quite often associated the required objects and separate zones with a test situation and turned to a right-or-wrong dichotomy. Daily working and teaching situations and a variety of objects at hand supported a more experimental and free approach in the students' reflection processes. However, educators tended to overlook these initiatives. Thus follows the third concluding remark, which is that educators are key actors in the students' encounters with shifting educational context. The student and educator interaction is not merely concerned with applying theory to practice or connecting workplace and 'bookish' knowledge. It is concerned with the student handling emotional situations, curiosity, criticism and excitement while building a professional identity. Reflection practice is part of that practice and, as suggested by Ellström (2006), the students are supported in these practices by visibility in the sense of dialogues and actions, and by the use of a variety of objects. Additionally, the main educator skills suggested from the present study have attentiveness and agility to react on a diversity of emerging and almost invisible reflection initiatives.

Didactical and cooperative considerations

Regarding reflection as visible actions makes the didactical considerations complex. On the other hand, the notion of visibility seems to make the facilitation of students' reflection skills more operational. I have had the opportunity to present the four-factor model at collaborative meetings with participants from social and health care collages and from the hospitals and municipal elder care. The model itself serves as a reflection object and initiates constructive dialogues about new ways of facilitating student reflection across boundaries. In particular, the participants praised the model for its contribution to a shared language about student education in the social and health care sector. Thus, this model may contribute to expand teachers and

supervisors options as reflection facilitators, be aware of diverse reflection zones, using a variety of reflection objects and intentionally seek out and build on salient experiences across boundaries.

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Notes on contributor

Charlotte Wegener is an industrial PhD researcher at the Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Denmark. She studies cross-organisational learning and innovation in the public sector, focusing on educational institutions. She has published "The Concept of Innovation as Perceived by Public Sector Frontline Staff: Outline of a Tripartite Empirical Model of Innovation" with Lene Tanggaard in *Studies in Continuing Education*, 2012, and "Public Sector Innovation: Value Creation or Value Loss?" in *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, Issue 4/2012.

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7. The concept of innovation (Article B)

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The concept of innovation as perceived by public sector frontline staff – outline of a tripartite empirical model of innovation

Charlotte Wegener[a,b]* and Lene Tanggaard[a]

[a]*Department of Communication, Aalborg University, Aalborg, Denmark;* [b]*Social and Health Care College, Silkeborg, Denmark*

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This article investigates the innovation concept in two key welfare areas where the demands for innovation are substantial, namely vocational education and elder care. On the basis of ethnographic fieldwork and interviews on the collaboration between an educational institution and elder care services, the article develops a tripartite empirical model of innovation. The model suggests that innovation requires levers (understood as methods and management contexts) as well as craft (understood as professional skills and rootedness), if it is to be integrated into the core services of a specific context. The article also discusses how innovation's value-creating aspects should be understood in a public sector context. The proposed innovation model yields recommendations on issues that should be considered in establishing successful innovation in a public, cross-organizational context.

Keywords: public innovation; boundary crossing; elder care; vocational education; ethnography

Introduction

Recent years have witnessed an intensive effort to apply and operationalize the concept of innovation in a public sector context (e.g. Halvorsen et al. 2005; Hartley 2005; Mulgan and Albury 2003; Osborne 1998). The pressure for innovation in the elder care sector is part of a wider reconstruction of the welfare system, due to economic constraints and demographic change (Baldock and Evers 1991). This article is based on an ongoing Danish research project dealing with these efforts in the sphere of social and healthcare education, which falls under vocational education in Denmark. The research project is thus cross-organizational, and the field of study consists of a social and healthcare college, a number of elder care homes and home-help sections where students conduct internships and three municipal authorities who employ the social and health care students over the entire period of their degrees. This article thus sheds light on the innovation concept within two key welfare areas, namely vocational education and elder care. On the basis of the research, the article distinguishes between innovation as a craft and innovation as a lever. The term 'craft' is based on Richard Sennett's notion of craftsmanship as the basic human impulse to do a job well for its own sake, which involves developing skills and focusing on the work (Sennett 2008). The most significant aspect of this

*Corresponding author. Email: cw@id.aau.dk

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differentiation is that levers, understood as methods and management concepts, are not sufficient. True innovation requires craft to integrate innovation into the public sector's core services. Below, we deal briefly with the how, why and where of innovation, after which we consider the article's place in the creativity literature, that on organizational change and that on in the elder care sector. Secondly, we describe the research in question and outline a tripartite model, based on frontline manager and employee perspectives on the innovation concept, as expressed in the interviews forming part of the study. Finally, we discuss how the model can contribute to democratizing the concept of innovation and emphasize the importance of empowering the different stakeholders that intervene in innovation processes, including students, care givers and care managers.

The new, the useful and the utilized

The phrasing, 'the new, the useful and the utilized' express a popular conception of innovation. For example Mulgan (2007) notes that:

> The simplest definition is that public sector innovation is about new ideas that work at creating public value. The ideas have to be at least in part new (rather than improvements); they have to be taken up (rather than just being good ideas); and they have to be useful.

This definition thus requires that innovations be new, implemented and exert a positive impact on public value creation (Bloch 2010). However, the concepts of 'new', 'implemented' and 'public value' are subject to debate and considerable disagreement in the research on public sector innovation.

The first of these elements, 'the new', concerns how the new arises – the 'how' of innovation. Recent research emphasizes the potential offered by a democratic understanding of innovation (Von Hippel 2005) and focuses on talented communities of practice (Tanggaard 2008), employee- and user-driven innovation (Kristensen and Voxted 2009) and collaboration-driven innovation across public welfare area (Sørensen and Torfing 2010).

The second of the elements, 'the useful', concerns the contents, or the 'what', of innovation. The innovation concept has shifted from characterizing primarily product development in the private sector to also dealing with skills and organizational development in the public sector (e.g. Bason 2010; Hartley 2005; Osborne 1998).

The third element, 'the utilized', concerns the aim or impact of innovation – the 'why'. Descriptions of the history of the innovation concept often refer to the economist Joseph Schumpeter, and many definitions of innovation involve the need to add value. Yet, value is a variable concept, and within educational research, innovation is valued as a skill that can contribute to creating a better world (Darsø 2011).

The tripartite model developed in the present context underlines the three aspects: the new, the useful and the utilized by focusing, respectively, on levers, crafts and value. As evidenced in the empirical sections of the paper, the frontline-staff participants in the study emphasize that many innovation initiatives fail if they are not based on the knowledge, expertise and crafts of the actual people involved. In addition, if innovation initiatives differ radically from the values prevailing in the field, intervention processes become very difficult or even doomed to failure.

Likewise, innovation researchers are increasingly recognizing that people's experiences of being able to take responsibility and to work creatively are vital for the creation of innovative organizations (Peters 2010; Ville 2011). Accordingly, useful and productive innovation requires employees in organizations to have access to and/or feel motivated to work and develop their skill creativity in the workplace (Craft 2005; Glâveanu 2010, 2011; McWilliam, Dawson, and Pei-Ling Tan 2011). That is, innovation requires that people get a chance to work creatively (Tanggaard 2011).

Democratic, practice-based innovation

Researchers concerned with front line professionals in welfare domains emphasize the sometimes chaotic, dynamic and fluid quality of innovation (Ferlie et al. 2005). Consequently, concepts of learning, creativity and cooperation become crucial to understanding the dynamics of innovation. However, creativity and innovation are by no means concepts with fixed definitions.

In 1991, Wehner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Magyari-Beck researched the common themes in more than 100 doctoral theses dealing with creativity and innovation. One of their conclusions was that the psychological literature often refers to the creativity concept, whereas the more management-oriented literature typically focuses on innovation.

Whereas, Wehner et al. stated in 1991 that psychological creativity research was dominated by an individualist orientation, a similar overview study by Kahl, Hermes da Fonseca, and Witte in 2009 shows that recent doctoral theses focus more on group creativity than individual. The most recent research also engages far more with the practical conditions that make creativity and innovation possible, and not least the differences that can prevail between creative practices in different social fields and cultures (Mumford 2003).

The present article's interest in innovation in a cross-organizational context of education and elder care should be understood in light of these trends. Our distinction between innovation as a lever and innovation as a craft is the result of empirical analysis, but also of a desire to understand how innovation can become rooted in an organizational context and lead to real changes in practice. The research field of organizational learning provides useful conceptual frameworks to view innovation as embedded in practice (Brown and Duguid 1991). While previously, innovations were seen primarily as a function of management and investments in research and development, in the present context, innovations are also viewed as a function of learning and knowledge creation that takes place in the production of goods and services within organizations. An important implication of this broader view is the need to consider the workplace as a site for learning and learning as a prerequisite for innovation (Ellström 2010). Empowering front line actors includes allowing them to play a key role in decision-making processes, product design, renewal of the care organization and defining their own new roles and tasks (e.g. Chiatti et al. 2011; Hanson et al. 2006).

Crossing organizational boundaries

The empirical data consists of interviews and ethnographic fieldwork on cross-organizational collaboration between a social and healthcare college, care facilities and

three municipal authorities conducted by the first author of this article. Sixteen, one-hour, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three instructors at the college, two work place mentors, three consultants, one manager at a social and healthcare college, three managers at the care facilities, two managers at the municipality and two consultant, involved in the social and health care education on a national level. They are all female, except one of the managers. The observations were carried out over the course of six months, 1–2 days a week, at collaboration meetings, informal visits and coffee breaks, guidance and teaching of students, and various training activities.

The respondents and the observed activities were selected on the basis of a theoretically informed hypothesis that cross-organizational collaboration between educational institutions and workplaces creates the potential for innovation (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003). The respondents were thus selected on the basis of their high level of involvement in assignments that go beyond their own organizations by linking school and practice through instruction, guidance and further training, or developing the organizational, economic and legal framework for education within elder care. In addition, more than a 100 students were involved in the observed activities.

The interviews took place at the interviewees' workplaces, and the interviews deal with collaborative activities and workplace learning in general, of which innovation is the last topic in the interview protocol (Appendix 1). The questions on innovation focus in part on discourse, and respondents were asked whether innovation is a topic at the workplace, if so in which contexts this takes place, and who exactly uses the term innovation. Attention was also paid to experience, and respondents were asked whether they have participated in innovative initiatives or can identify areas where innovation has taken place. Finally, the topic shifted to the creation of meaning, and respondents were asked what they feel innovation means, as well as whether (and potentially, why) they view it as a relevant concept. We thus view our respondents as active co-creators of innovation discourses, with the aim of generating a rich material basis for understanding the variety and diversity of innovation discourses used in the field (Tanggaard 2011).

The preliminary thematic analysis revealed a number of themes and discourses, such as content requirements, as well as methodological reflections, emotional assertions and position statements. The analysis did not focus on comparing the empirical data with established definitions of innovation or assessing particular activities as more or less innovative. Rather, it considered the importance of the innovation concept in a specific empirical field, as expressed in the actors' own statements.

Below, we illustrate the three dimensions of the innovation concept. First, we consider examples in which respondents' statements can be categorized as levers. We then consider examples that can be categorized as craft, followed by the third dimension, namely ethics and values. Finally, we propose a model of public innovation that integrates levers, craft and values.

The lever dimension of innovation

Innovation as a legitimization lever

The term 'innovation' is often used to legitimize existing practice. The following statement shows how one can comply formally with new legislation without devoting

new resources to it. An instructor explains that, after the interview, she will present a class of students with the selection of electives and that the college is now required to offer an elective entitled 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship':

> I: Yes, OK? Who'll be teaching it?
>
> Jytte: I mean, we don't have 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship' if anyone wants it. But we'll refer them to the business school. No one will want it, but we *have to* offer it.

She indicates that the students will not request the elective, but the college fulfils its legal obligations to offer the elective by making an agreement with the business school. This represents a token attempt to manage external requirements concerning innovation that are not regarded as compatible with the students' needs and interests or the college's resources. A legitimization lever thus represents a creative solution to the conflict, with the result that the college can save its resources for more important or relevant changes.

Innovation as a methodological lever

Some respondents regard innovation as a method of viewing things from new perspectives. 'Shaking things up', 'thinking outside the box' and 'looking at things on a meta-level' are used as metaphors for the innovative process. As a method, innovation refers to specific activities in which the respondents have participated, as well as to ideas they have concerning the nature of innovation. One instructor would like to use a particular innovation method, because it possesses a formative aspect:

> I: And that's a context in which innovation can be used, you think?
>
> Anna: I think it can. But I don't have any experience with it.
>
> I: Yeah. I think you've said that. But could you just try to describe how you think it works?
>
> Anna: I think that the students get more practice, have better experiences with what they can use the method for. Take as your starting point something or other that you don't think is satisfactory, then use it to go through the phases of innovation. So, I believe that they could get a method they could use, regardless of whether they're at a care centre dealing with something the staff isn't happy about and would like to solve. Or if it's about something in their own lives.

The instructor argues that the innovative method can be used as a tool for empowerment. When the students themselves participate in defining the content of education by generating ideas, the innovation process becomes liberating, since it helps teach them an overall method of dealing with something that is unsatisfactory. In this case, the instructor links innovation with her fundamental values relating to liberating pedagogical practice.

Yet, many respondents also express scepticism about the degree to which ideas can be translated into real change. One manager states that her work section has hired a consultant so that they can be 'led into innovative thinking'. This has not

been done to solve any specific problems but rather to teach methods for 'thinking about what we do not know'. She had hoped for something more specific, but the consultant has in any case 'gotten our brains going'. Another respondent, however, unambiguously condemns an innovation process:

> I: You told me earlier that you received 'about 1700 ideas'. How did you . . .?
>
> Linda: Well, it wasn't exactly 1700
>
> I: No (we laugh)
>
> Linda: It was really amateurish. I'm telling you.
>
> I: You are allowed to be amateurish
>
> Linda: It was crazy. We just said: How can we find some employees who can do things, think differently? Who is always proposing different stuff?' And we got them together and just asked them what could simplify our work processes. And so they just started shooting from the hip, and there were a lot, a lot, a lot of things. But how can we manage everything, right? And I don't think that anything new came out of that.

The open problem statement is probably one of the reasons why, despite their quantitative success, the proposals received are not considered a qualitative success.

Innovation as a power lever

Being affected by requirements for innovation leads to various experiences of empowerment and disempowerment, as well as to various strategies for managing them. One employee at a municipal authority says of the concept of innovation:

> Belinda: Innovation is just another word for budget cuts.
>
> I: Yes?
>
> Belinda. We just had a budget cut and now we are expected to be innovative. That means that we must do it using less resources.
>
> I: Okay?
>
> Belinda: Yes. And we have to find new ways of doing things, because that's the trend. Of course, it's also – we have to do less. But if we don't manage, then we can, you know, turn it around and say, 'I'm not particularly innovative because I haven't found the right way to become more efficient'.

She expresses the potential feelings of disempowerment and of being unable to cope. Yet, most statements of this kind turn out to be followed by reclaiming power. Although the actors may feel a twinge of frustration or that they have been trampled upon, they all quickly get back 'into the saddle' as active co-creators within the innovation discourse. Irony and laughter are powerful elements, just as the actors are professionally confident and present their arguments on the basis of their experiences and involvement. When the interview is over, Belinda says:

> I have no problem saying 'innovative'. I often say, 'I work innovatively and on the basis of evidence in a learning organization'. And then they laugh. I make fun of it too. My most innovative trait consists of me suggesting that we have a pillow room with beanbag chairs, where we can sit with our laptops. I think that's innovative. I really mean it. Yeah, I do. And then there's someone who says that we can't. 'It's, you know, a workplace'. 'Yes, exactly', I say. I'm employed precisely in order to think innovatively, and I can't do that sitting in front of a square desk.

This respondent first explodes the idea of power by describing innovation histrionically using the (empty) terms 'evidence' and 'the learning organization'. She then reconquers the discourse by arguing in favour of a room with pillows. When presented in this way, the discourse becomes a game or a power struggle in which one positions oneself via the 'next innovative move'. Whether she genuinely wants a pillow room is unclear, but her request has the desired effect of revealing the hypocrisy behind the innovation discourse. She is expected to be innovative, yet a change in the physical framework through providing informal furniture is rejected as inappropriate for a workplace.

Humour can also take the form of a disarming laugh, for instance when someone displays outright rejection of innovation as an incomprehensible foreign term:

> I: My research project is called 'Innovative school-practice collaboration'. What is your opinion on that concept: innovation? What does it mean and . . .
>
> Sue: I think it's hard, that foreign term. I don't exactly know how to define it. Is it some sort of new idea, or . . .? [*Laughs.*] When I ask like that, it's because I think it's become kind of a commonplace. It's kind of like, woah! Nice word you can add to your vocabulary. I'm just more used to 'development'. I've always thought 'development'. Innovation, it's become a fashionable word, which I don't really know what it covers. But development, I know what that is, right?

This respondent first positions herself as humble and unsure of how to define innovation. It quickly becomes clear, however, that this is a conscious strategy to avoid being seduced by a 'nice word you can add to your vocabulary'.

Innovation as a lever for savings

The respondent's statements reveal a close association between innovation and economic belt-tightening. Many examples entail action coming first in the form of budget cuts and innovative thinking representing a reaction to the challenges brought about by the cuts. A manager at the social and healthcare college describes innovation as a 'necessary evil', while a dialogue with a care centre manager proceeds as follows:

> I: So you haven't labelled this as innovation?
>
> Jenny: No, but we will label is as innovation in the near future. I invited this consultant to make us *think* differently. How do you start to think of what you don't know? That's hard, isn't it?
>
> I: So it's about method?
>
> Jenny: Well, we did not reach method. But we kind of opened up. Layoffs meant that employees have had to develop their minds, because something happened that we simply

> hadn't believed possible. So it was a serious disturbance and you thought, 'If that can happen, anything can happen'. The good that came out of it was that people also think, 'What I can't imagine, is really possible too'. So I think it's given us greater potential to do things differently because the employees, they're more involved than they were before because they're thinking, 'Well, who knows?'

The cuts are described as a serious disturbance that has shifted the boundaries of what people believe possible, which has resulted in a greater readiness for change. This statement suggests that the potential for innovation has grown, though another interpretation might be that readiness for change is based on fears concerning the next round of layoffs. Another manager explains that she consciously uses the innovation concept to speak clearly about innovation as a substitute for deteriorating quality, as a result of budgetary pressure. In her experience, this boosts energy and gets the employees thinking in terms of possibilities instead of limitations.

One of our respondents, a workplace supervisor, had never come across the term 'innovation' before. The interviewer suggests that it can be translated as 'change' and subsequently receives the following answer:

> You get used to things being changed on a regular basis. Because everything changes, and we have to think differently all the time. With budget cuts and that sort of thing. It might just happen that they come in and say, 'OK, those of them who've been here a long time, they definitely get paid a bit more than people who've just graduated'. Suddenly, being good at doing your job isn't the most important thing anymore. That sort of thing can make me nervous.

This supervisor regards constantly 'thinking differently' as a basic requirement. Changes are associated with budget cuts, and she expresses anxiety that the craft – being skilled and dutiful – will lose value, putting her at risk of being fired.

We will now analyse what respondents think about the craft dimension of innovation.

The craft dimension of innovation

Innovation as skills development

Both managers and employees tend to focus substantially on the skills development and structural adjustments needed to meet new professional requirements and economic conditions.

An instructor at the social and healthcare college immediately rejects the innovation concept as incomprehensible and irrelevant. She speaks instead of skills development as the appropriate means of achieving an ethically and professionally responsible work basis. She refers to cases in which the media has concealed mistakes and unethical treatment of elder care centre residents:

> I: Is innovation a relevant concept in relation to anything you've said?
>
> Signe: Well, I don't know. Actually, I consider that to be development.
>
> I: What is the difference, in your opinion?
>
> Signe: (silence)

I: It's not a trick question.

Signe: Well, I'm just used to 'development'. I have always considered development. 'Innovation' has become a buzzword that I do not understand. I'm just more used to 'development'.

I: Yes?

Signe: There've been situations with really horribly glaring incidents of staff not fulfilling their duties. And the municipalities can't afford that, neither ethically nor financially. It's so important that we train staff really, really well, so they can manage things like that. And that's where I think that fresh thinking and creativity and development . . . Innovation, whatever it is, is relevant. One of my students has had four weeks of work experience abroad, where she found an elderly person is being dropped out of the transfer lift three times. And she's talked about the way they speak to the elderly and the handicapped, in a way we'd never talk to . . . She said, 'Signe, you'd never go along with that'. [*Laughter.*] It was this sort of thing: 'If you don't stop that, we'll take the call bell from you'. I mean, really, totally terrible.

I: You feel, then, that it's the interpersonal and personal skills that can make things easier and better in terms of the craft.

Signe: Yes, and particularly the profession, for example, preventing pressure sores. Pressure sores can develop in two to three hours and can last multiple years and cost 100,000s of Danish kroner, in addition to their being painful for the person who has them. So, it's both professional aspects; so you drop someone from the transfer lift because you don't know that the sheet should be crossed instead of straight. But definitely also the mental, the interpersonal and the psychological. And I think that a lot of sick leave among staff, I mean, some of it could certainly be on account of injuring your back or knee and that sort of thing. But if there's an enormous amount of staff on sick leave, it's because they don't feel they can get the job done, and they can't fulfil their duties well enough.

Her demands for future education in the elder care sector are rooted in craft-focused thinking, and she nuances the interviewer's conception of craft as just something that should 'go easier'. Craft is relevant in itself and is directly associated with the working environment, which deteriorates if the professional foundations prove insufficient. A similar example is presented by another instructor, who talks with students about how elder care was practiced a century ago and asks them to imagine it will be in another 100 years. Her aim is to help students understand that current practice is not a given and that they are co-creators of the future.

Innovation as small changes in practice

Changes in practice that result from day-to-day problem solving, and are coupled with values and visions, are generally mentioned as positive examples. However, respondents rarely label them as 'innovations', instead describing them as 'developments', 'fresh thinking' or 'changes'. From this perspective, innovation appears an attractive alternative to some respondents' experiences with development projects characterized by intensive resource use and only retroactive assessment. Others feel that only radical changes deserve the 'innovation label'. 'We've always, of course, done development. Those are the small steps where you adjust and test as you go along', says one manager. An example of this kind of innovation is a group of

instructors who test a slightly altered form of work-experience visits, in which they first oversee a student's work for half an hour, and then have a discussion with the student and the work place mentor. One of the instructors explains:

> I get a whole lot served to me on a silver platter. I mean, how the student speaks to the elderly, opens the door, squats so she's eye level with an elderly person who's sitting on a chair. She takes her time, opens windows for ventilation without being asked, comments that there are new flowers on the table. Or whatever it is. A whole lot of little things that they wouldn't necessarily talk about.

Changes in practice in the form of overseeing a student's work prior to an evaluation meeting is linked directly to the educational requirement of combining professional and personal skills. The changed practice also accommodates those students who have difficulty reflecting on what they have learned. This initiative is an example of how one can innovatively link content and form, craft and lever and, through a minor extension of existing practice, create a changed practice that adheres to the relevant goals and values.

Innovation and values

Many respondents make statements about the explicit and implicit values of innovation. The interviewer asks a municipal consultant whether innovation is important in her world:

> Inge: I mean, 'innovative', it's probably . . . It's probably the modern way. All of our managers have been to a day seminar about innovation. So, now we're supposed to be innovative. My feeling is that it's a *whoopee!* word. I definitely think I know what it means, and it's probably a word that sells tickets when you need money for something or other. [*Laughs.*] But maybe it'd be possible to find a word that wasn't so, well, *whoopee!*
>
> I: What is it about the word? Why is it a *whoopee!* word?
>
> Inge: I think it's become a *whoopee!* word because that's how innovation is. We'd all like to look into the future and the crystal ball and be part of it. So I think it's a way of selling something.
>
> I: What is it people want to sell?
>
> Inge: Well, I think people want to sell change. Simple as that.
>
> I: Any particular changes?
>
> Inge: Well, we've just had a big budget cut. And now, we have to be innovative. In other words, now we have to figure out how to do it with fewer resources.

This is a thematization of innovation as an offer that employees cannot refuse. If you do not want to look into the future, you are not 'a part of it'. The innovation concept is also rejected as just a new label for something old; in this case, it is about fulfilling the same duties with fewer resources.

When respondents reject innovation, a recurring argument is that the concept is foreign to their work domain and brings unwanted values into a public sector

context. The innovation concept is associated with product development and bottom lines: 'It's more about money than it is about people', as one respondent says. Meanwhile, another respondent associates it with New Public Management thinking, saying that innovation is about turning everything into 'a big business' and complaining that it is 'the business language that's conquering the care world'. Innovation as an economic discourse, as a change that adds value, makes its presence felt as its own worst enemy. Innovation is indeed defined using value-related terms, but these values are unwanted, and the innovation concept is thus rejected.

However, this does not prevent a desire to internalize the innovation concept. Another respondent says:

> I: So, who says 'innovation'?
>
> Petra: Managers say innovation. That's why I don't listen (laugh). No, language is power. And we've had a lot of words being used that we didn't really know the meaning of, which we've stolen from somewhere else. 'Innovative', I think, actually has something to do with design. Doesn't it? If you go all the way back – the development of new thingamajigs, technical and electronic and that kind of thing, right? 'Product design', it's probably called. So, we race over, and then we also want to get the mental part into our heads, right? Then it's the mental part.

Innovation is again regarded as something mental, occurring 'in our heads'. This respondent's statement also thematizes innovation as a concept that makes its mark in a particular domain but also, as Sennett (2005, 127) notes, a situation in which the actors discredit existing values through an uncritical focus on the new.

Others regard the concept's commodifying and economic connotations as beneficial. One respondent says that the innovation concept influences one's opinion of duty of care, causing one to see it as a commodity that must be supplied. In this respondent's view, the innovation concept has potential for qualifying public services, if the elder care sector allows itself to be inspired by competitive thinking from the private sector.

Some respondents find it inspiring to translate a concept from another domain. One instructor says that it is 'the liberal mind's attempt at creating some growth' but that it can also be used in a 'humanist' fashion for creation and education. Yet, the value of innovation can, just like commodities in a consumer society, have an ephemeral character. An interview with one instructor provides the following insights:

> I: When you hear the word 'innovation', where do you hear it? Who uses the word?
>
> Pia: I think it's very much the business world. It has more to do with money and IT than it does with people. It's not something I'm comfortable with. I've heard the word time and again, and I've always thought to myself that I don't quite understand it.
>
> I: But you haven't heard it here at school?
>
> Pia: Yeah, I have.
>
> I: In what contexts?
>
> Pia: Projects. [*Laughs.*]

> I: [*Laughs.*] Yes, and then you laugh?
>
> Pia: Because I'm still not comfortable with the word. It's not a word that has anything to do with my regular work, I think.
>
> I: No. And what do you think projects are?
>
> Pia: Well, it often turns into some temporary sort of thing. Projects crop up, and once they are completed, you can't always see anything from them.

This instructor associates innovation with temporariness and emphasizes a tendency that projects do not result in changed practice at the workplace.

Discussion

In analysing statements about innovation in a social and healthcare context, we have argued that experiences with innovation processes, and opinions about the innovation concept can be categorized either as a lever or as a craft.

This does not mean that craft and levers should be dichotomized. When respondents perceive levers negatively, it should be seen in the light of their feeling that the craft dimension is lacking. The empirical data thus reveals a tendency toward instrumentalization of the innovation concept, in which innovation is experienced as a pure entity, detached from content and values.

The tendency among respondents to reject the labelling of new practices as 'innovation', combined with the concept often being detached from specific contents, leads us to ask: Is innovation an appropriate descriptive category for the development, fresh thinking and creativity that takes place in social and healthcare field? What does the innovation concept add to the domain that was not already there from the start?

Our final interview excerpt attempts an answer:

> I: Some of the people I interview find it difficult to relate to the word 'innovation'. What are your thoughts . . .
>
> Nanna: It's because it's new, right?
>
> I: Yes?
>
> Nanna: In a few years, people will think, 'Well, yes, yes'. Then we'll all have had a taste of it and maybe be tired of hearing about it. And then we'll of course find a new word, so we can get curious again. Then we'll be confused again, right? So, there's someone who gets a bit irritated, and other people get a bit excited. But in any case, we'll be shaken awake.

Is the innovation concept justified solely through its newness? To consider this, we must return to our original theoretical distinction between innovation and similar concepts. Respondents frequently make the point that 'development' is integrated into both thought and action, so that it is a more appropriate label for both the new and efforts at renewal. The respondents feel neither that 'development' needs to be applied from another domain nor that it is associated with implicit and opaque demands. By contrast, when the meaning of 'innovation' is discussed and negotiated,

the result is a mixture of excitement, criticism and ambivalence. It is therefore clear that the innovation discourse prompts both a reorientation and deeper reflection on those fundamental values that people wish to preserve.

All of our respondents are deeply involved in developing and maintaining high levels of professionalism, so that students are educated to become talented employees and managers. There is also a strong awareness of there being a crisis in the air and an acceptance that new solutions are necessary. With this in mind, we have developed a model of innovation that we feel incorporates three key elements that are decisive for a successful innovation concept in social and healthcare education and in the associated work area. This can also be viewed as a recommendation for a balanced public sector innovation model (Figure 1).

The model should be regarded as a recommendation of overarching elements, which must be present for an innovation process to succeed and for the concept to genuinely inspire people to be innovative. If one or two of the elements are felt to be missing from the innovation process, the actors' react with passivity or resistance. If the craft dimension is not present, participants feel that their professionalism is neglected. If the lever dimension is missing, the innovation demands may seem oppressive and thus make participants unsure of where to even begin. And if the ethical dimension is lacking, participants feel that, although innovation may be taking place, their values and requirements for how the work field should develop cannot be recognized.

The integration of an ethical element into an innovation model is an expression of our view that it is vital to make the creation of meaning and, consequently, personal psychological aspects central to innovation processes. The innovation discourse articulates real changes and differences in understanding, habits and norms

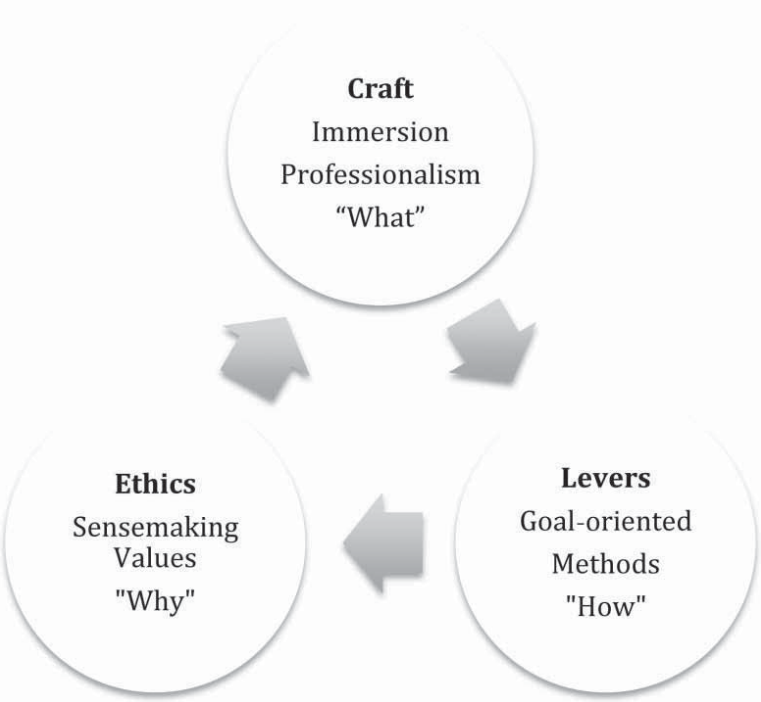

Figure 1. Outline of a tripartite empirical model of innovation.

in the social and healthcare education and work field. Almost 30 years ago, research on elder care innovation concluded that a full account of the innovation process must not only illuminate strategic choices and management 'but also take into account the motivations, value positions and assumptions of innovators' (Ferlie, Challis, and Davies 1984). To do so, Weick's (1995) concept of 'sensemaking' is useful, as it describes how changes, uncertainty and ambiguity result in the active construction and negotiation of meaning. Our empirical data contains multiple instances of these sensemaking processes, which lead to acceptance, rejection or co-construction of the innovation concept. Sensemaking is an active process, involving energy and commitment, and the model highlights its potential when integrated into innovation processes. Working explicitly with sensemaking in the form of discussion and responsiveness to participant visions and values will increase the complexity of innovation processes. However, this will also increase the potential for creating sustainable innovations that meet future changes and demands.

When translating the innovation concept from the private to the public domain, it is not enough just to investigate the kinds of public value to which innovation should contribute. Hartley emphasizes the limitations and challenges involved in transferring theory and empirical findings from private businesses to public organizations, arguing for a robust theory originating in the public sector itself. It is thus necessary to understand public value in a wider sense than immediate effects (Hartley 2005). Our model should be seen as a contribution to this understanding.

Innovation in practice

Which practical recommendations can we draw from the analysis? In itself, the empirical data contains a number of exemplary innovations. These include examples of change processes in which both professionalism and values take the centre stage, and in a number of instances, value-oriented changes seem to have been implemented without prior levers in the form of management initiatives or controlled processes. An exciting new field of research is emerging concerning so-called 'uninitiated innovations' (Kristensen and Voxted 2011). 'Uninitiated' means both that the actors do not define the change as innovation and that management is not involved. As far as uninitiated innovations are concerned, the levers in our model become the last step in an innovation process, potentially contributing a suitable framework for experimenting with and generalizing the knowledge created in specific fields of practice.

For example, the new model of work-experience visits described in our empirical data can be seen as a bottom-up innovation process, in which a group of employees formulate an idea that builds upon the profession linking of theory and practice (craft), with the aim of recognizing students' varied resources and reflection strategies (ethics and sensemaking). At the management and municipal authority level, this initiative is supported in the sense that information is distributed to all interested parties, and the necessary resources are set aside (levers).

This innovation exemplifies the model and indicates the need to display a degree of sensitivity and receptiveness in all innovation processes. The model can serve as an indicator of issues to which one should be particularly receptive. As thematized provisionally in the literature review, recent research tends to stress the need to view

creativity and innovation alongside contextual issues. Whenever innovation is on the agenda, it is thus advantageous to ask the following questions:

(1) Craft: On what professional competence does innovation build? What professional competence would we like to develop? Which resources and experiences already exist among staff and collaborating partners?
(2) Levers: How can we implement and control the process? How can we support employee initiatives? How can we create interventions that inspire fresh thinking?
(3) Ethics: What values are involved in the innovation process? Which values do we wish to preserve or strive for? How can we manage conflicts of value and feelings of loss?

Limitations of the study

A final word on the limitations of the study is necessary. One limitation concerns the way innovation was brought into the empirical data. During the semi-structured interviews, the interviewees were asked directly about innovation. None of them mentioned innovation spontaneously. During the field studies, innovation was raised only once as a spontaneous statement from a participant. The absence of a spontaneous discourse on innovation may indicate that the term is less important in the field than this article suggests. Secondly, we have focused on discourse on innovation and not on specific innovative actions or activities. As a consequence, the analysis does not concern actual innovations, observed in the field.

Conclusion

Through theoretical studies on creativity and innovation, as well as analyses of interview and fieldwork material, we have presented a practice-based innovation concept that covers both the associated dilemmas and the strength of commitment. The concept is inspiring, because it gives actors new procedural tools, challenges habitual thinking and promotes fresh thinking and development. The obstacles consist of the opposite of these benefits, namely that actors in the field perceive the procedural tools to be decontextualized and that the change requirements are unclear.

The empirical accentuation of the innovation concept's uncertain content, alongside value-based and ethical considerations, forms the basis for our innovation model, which couples method, content and ethics. The model is circular and stresses that all three elements can serve as starting points for innovation. Similarly, it is relevant for both top-down and bottom-up innovation. The model also explains why the innovation discourse occasionally encounters scepticism or resistance, which we feel occurs because one or two of its elements are missing or accorded low priority.

As noted above, it is vital to develop a public innovation concept, which is informed by public empirical research. Our empirical analysis suggests that public value assumes a central role in innovation discourses and innovation processes. The strength of innovation as a lever lies in its ability to indicate simple courses of action and implementation. The strength of innovation as craft lies in its use of and respect for participants' professional skills and experience, enhancing the potential for the

innovations to become rooted in situated practice. The strength of innovation as ethics lies in its visionary aspect, associating innovation efforts with participant values, thereby creating support and commitment.

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Appendix 1. Interview protocol for the project 'Cross-organizational innovation in the social and health care educations'.

Theoretical themes	Interview questions
Boundary zones and the role as a broker	Please tell me about your workplace – the place where you usually go to work. Where is it, who are you with, and what do you do when you are there? Where do you go when you leave your workplace to collaborate with the college/practice/municipality? Who do you meet with and what kinds of work tasks do you engage in? Do collaborative partners from the college/practice/the municipality sometimes visit you at your workplace? If so, what kind of work tasks do you engage in? Do you engage in collaborative activities with the college/practice without meeting in a physical sense? How does it work and what is the collaboration about?
Communities of practice and meeting of perspectives	Who do you consider to be the most important people in your working live? Who do you consider to be the most important people from the college/practice (where the interviewee does not work) Do you have an example of collaboration between the college and practice where perspectives meet and different points of view are at stake? Did it result in new ideas/solutions? Or did it become deadlock? Do you have an example of valuable collaboration? What does it provide to you and your workplace? Do you have an example of difficult or dissatisfactory collaboration? Do you consider any missed opportunities for collaboration across organizations?
Mediating artefacts/boundary objects	Do you have examples of collaboration across organizations with fixed procedures (e.g. agendas, annual plans, attendees, chairmen) Are there any codes (written/unwritten) Which codes and procedures do you appreciate? Why? Which codes and procedures do you dislike? Why? Which documents are present in the college/practice collaboration? (e.g. summaries, reports, legal texts, information materials) What do you use them for? Where are they?
The initiation of an expansive cycle	Did anything in your work life recently made you wonder or did you question something?

Appendix 1 (*Continued*)

Theoretical themes	Interview questions
	Did you have a conversation which anyone about that? Do you have examples of areas where new ways of acting or thinking occurred recently? What initiated it? Do you consider the new way of acting or thinking to be an improvement?
Boundary-crossing facilitating innovation	Did you recently become curiously or did you recently learn something new from collaboration with the college/practice? Has your workplace or part of it been involved in collaborative activities with the college/practice? What topic did the collaboration address? What happened and did it affect the way you work/perform tasks now?
Innovation definition, discourse and similar terms	Is innovation a topic at your workplace? If so, who uses the word innovation? If you do not use the term, how can we talk about the topic using other terms? Did you participate in any events or projects together with the college/practice, dealing with innovation? Did you attend any other events or projects together with the college/practice? What was it about? What do you consider to be the outcome? Do you have examples of areas where innovation took place? What does innovation mean, according to you? Can you identify what supports and restricts innovation? Do you participate in activities that contribute to development of the social and health care field?
Present and future challenges that bring out innovation – zone of proximal development	Have you lately experienced changes or new requirement to you and your colleges? How do/did you and your colleges react? Do any of the changes involve collaboration partners from the college/practice? Does some of the changes concerns both the college and practice? Do you have examples of the college and practice solving problems together? Do you have examples of the college and practice cause problems to each other? In your opinion, what are the main areas of collaboration in the near future?

Appendix 1 (*Continued*)

Theoretical themes	Interview questions
Identification of brokers, boundary zones and boundary objects	I would like to talk to other persons involved in cross-collaborative activities. Who would you recommend? I would like to do field studies on cross-collaborative activities. Which activities/places would you recommend? In your opinion, where is it possible to actually *observe* collaboration across organizations? I would like to read documents concerned with cross-organizational collaboration? Which documents would you recommend?

8. Public sector innovation: Value creation or value loss? (Article C)

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Public sector innovation: Value creation or value loss?

Abstract

This paper explores the value dimension of public innovation in the light of practitioners' values and asks why there seems to be a clash between innovation imperatives and workplace practices in the public sector. The paper contributes to the research on public innovation from a practice perspective by providing evidence from an ethnographic field study on innovation in social and health care studies in Denmark. These studies are part of the vocational education and training (VET) system, which combines coursework at a college and internship in the elder care sector. The study is thus cross-organisational and involves two key welfare areas characterised by rapid change, and in which innovation imperatives are substantial. The analysis shows that values are, to a large extent, articulated and acted out when practitioners encounter innovation imperatives. At the same time, in a range of ways, practitioners initiate innovations grounded in their values. The main point put forward is that the value dimension of public innovation must be understood not only in terms of value *creation* (economic or non-economic), which frontline practitioners are required to contribute to, but also as value-based practices and *clashes* between practitioners' values and the values associated with innovation imperatives.

Introduction

The phenomenon of innovation is becoming increasingly important for both societies and public workplaces (Høyrup, Bonnafous-Boucher, Hasse, Lotz & Møller, 2012:39). Yet, some researchers argue that there is under-developed appreciation of what public sector innovation might mean in practice and how it can best be supported (Bessant, Hughes & Richards, 2010). Many researchers identify two fundamental criteria for innovation: newness and value (Høyrup, 2010). What constitutes being new and valuable, however, rests on community values and expectations (Engeström, 1999) as well as individuals' desires, needs and requirements (Billett, 2009).

To illuminate the character and centrality of practitioners' values in what constitutes the value dimensions of innovation, this paper elaborates on a model proposing that the value dimension of public innovation must include practitioners' values in their everyday work (Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013).

To unfold the argument, this paper explores a specific occurrence observed in the empirical field, which I have termed 'value clashes'. This term indicates that the innovation imperative

articulates real changes and differences in understandings, habits and ways of working. When practitioners encounter innovation imperatives, they interpret, modify and integrate the innovation concept in diverse ways, and these processes are, to a large extent, constituted by the practitioners' values and the way in which they interpret value dimensions inherent in the innovation concept. Likewise, these practitioners initiate new ways of working in practice on the basis of their values, and these new ways, albeit sometimes subtle and unrecognised, contain potential for innovation on larger scales. Thus, this paper takes a broad view on the concept of innovation and explores it as "anything that seeks to do something new, or address a concern that would not otherwise be met." (Price, Boud & Scheeres, 2012).

The structure of the paper is as follows; firstly, the value dimensions of innovation are framed in a public sector context and secondly, the perspective of practice and practitioners is presented. After explaining the design of the study, practitioners' statements about work and their activities in practice are taken to the fore to illuminate value clashes within these practices. In conclusion, a discussion section will highlight implications and practical consideration.

Exploring value-aspects beyond economic benefit

Recent years have witnessed an intensive effort to apply and operationalize the concept of innovation from private domains into the public sector, and a main concern is to define public value (Mulgan & Albury, 2003; Halvorsen, Hauknes, Miles & Røste, 2005; Hartley, 2005). When introducing the innovation concept to public domains, the value to which innovation should contribute cannot be measured directly on the basis of the bottom line. Within public service organisations, innovations are aimed at producing benefits for individuals, but also at providing public goods and services, establishing collective efficiency, and creating collective rules and purposes (Hartley, 2005). Hartley notes that analysis of innovation needs to consider not just the immediate improvements in service quality and fitness for purpose, but wider issues of public value. It is thus necessary to understand public value in terms which are broader than economic and immediate effects (Hartley, 2005; Kristensen & Voxted, 2009). In a public sector context, innovation has a potential role to play in strengthening social development and social cohesion, focusing on both economic and social developments. Innovation is seen to hold the potential of prevention of marginalisation, increased social security and the development of health care systems (Shapiro, Haahr, Bayer & Boekholt, 2007) as well as combining effectiveness and quality (Digmann, 2006). Within

educational research, innovation is regarded as a competency which can contribute to a better world (Darsø, 2011), and as the transformation of creativity into something valuable for others in a given social practice (Tanggaard, 2010). Innovation imperatives thus address diverse problems, often interweaving economic and social purposes.

The public sector is sometimes accused of not being innovative (enough), and some researchers state that the public sector is characterised by numerous barriers to innovation. These barriers result in random innovation driven by a few isolated individuals, and innovations locked in the social practice in which they were invented (Mulgan, 2007; Bason, 2011:15). However, as the analysis in the paper indicates, these are not necessarily weaknesses, but might be regarded as strengths. Random innovations might turn into sustainable change because they were invented out of necessity and actual needs in the actual practice. Likewise, an innovation might be locked within a specific practice precisely because it is part of a value-based change process among the actual practitioners. When diagnosing the public sector as "not up to the job yet" (Bason, 2011:15), we run the risk of ignoring important aspects of value creation within practitioners' daily work. There might be good reasons for rejections of innovation, one of them being that there are important values in the practice that practitioners want to retain. Additionally, practitioners' value-based activities with innovation potential may never be acknowledged as innovation in the quest for radical change.

A practice and practitioner perspective on innovation

A major part of the literature on pubic innovation deals with governmental or managerial perspectives with the aim to develop frameworks for different types of innovation and suggest support models for effective strategic leadership (e.g. Bessant et al., 2010). Research on innovation that emerges from the everyday practices of practitioners has not been widely explored (Price et al., 2012). However, as (Schatzki, 2002:253) argues:

> "[…] an account of the progression of the social site that leaves out the creative contribution of individuals – working alone or in teams, in disciplines or as part of a wider scene of cultural, technical and intellectual production – overlooks an absolutely crucial site for innovation, rearrangement and reorganization."

The dynamics of change and innovation thus involve the study of actual practices where practitioners talk, interact and conduct their work. Innovation is not just a question of the

individual being or becoming creative or not, or being more or less open minded toward the innovation imperative. Innovation is regarded as emerging, negotiated processes of learning and participation, including both personal values and involvement with the social spaces of innovation. Researchers concerned with practice and practitioners in welfare domains emphasise the sometimes chaotic, dynamic and fluid quality of innovation (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, Wood & Hawkins, 2005). From the perspective of practitioners' values, innovation cannot solely be measured in terms of processes leading to new products and the implementation of new processes. Kemmis (2010:25) terms this latter understanding "the technicist view of practice" and argues:

> "This view is particularly apparent in the recent „evidence-based practice" movement, which, in my view, demeans practice by its resolute focus on measurable outcomes or outputs at the expense of many of the other features of practices […]. In its zeal for measuring practice, the evidence-based view makes practice almost unrecognizable from the perspective of professional practitioners whose intentions, values and commitments are crucial in the conduct of their work."

Accordingly, as this paper suggests, there is substantial innovation potential within daily work practices, and research focusing on the practitioner perspectives and daily work practices might provide knowledge of importance for management strategies beyond measurable evidence. When innovation is regarded as integrated in work practices, practitioners become key stakeholders in decision-making processes, and in the organisation and development of professional roles and tasks (Ferlie et al., 2005; Hanson, Magnusson, Nolan & Nolan, 2006; Chiatti, Fry & Hanson, 2011). Before giving voice to these stakeholders, however, the methodological decisions and key terms of the study is outlined.

Method

The empirical material derives from a Danish research project in the field of social and healthcare education and consists of interviews and ethnographic field observations of work practices at a social and health care college, at elder care homes where students work as trainees, and at three municipal authorities which employ the students over the entire period of their studies. The design of the study is based on a theoretically informed hypothesis that cross-organisational activities between educational institutions and workplaces create potential for innovation (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). Sixteen interviews were conducted with teachers, student mentors, consultants and managers. The observations were

carried out over the course of six months, one or two days a week, at daily work practices at the college and elder care centers, including teaching activities related to students' internships, student and supervisor interactions during work, assessment interviews, coffee breaks, different kinds of collaborative meetings and training activities for health care workers.

The interview questions focus on daily work and collaboration, and the question about innovation focus in part on discourse, and respondents were asked whether innovation is a topic at the workplace, if so in which contexts this takes place, and who exactly uses the term 'innovation'. Attention was also paid to experience, and respondents were asked whether they have participated in innovative initiatives or can identify areas where innovation has taken place. Finally, the respondents were asked what they feel innovation means, as well as whether (and potentially, why) they view it as a relevant concept. The aim was to generate a rich material basis for understanding the variety and diversity of experiences, discourses and activities in the field (Tanggaard, 2011).

The preliminary thematic analysis took a grounded theory point of departure. According to Charmaz and Henwood (2008), grounded theory can be used in conjunction with numerous qualitative approaches such as ethnography and discursive analysis, and it fosters a view on individual behaviour as embedded in social contexts (241). Although informed by theory in the design of the study, the analysis did not focus on comparing the empirical data with established definitions of innovation or assessing particular activities as more or less innovative. Instead, I coded with gerunds (a verb form ending in –ing) to code for actions and activities (Charmaz, 2011) with the aim of exploring what was *happening* in the interviews and field observations. In the following section this analytical grip is indicated by using headlines with gerunds.

Analysis: Experiencing value clashes

The first section of the analysis illustrates how the innovation imperative is rejected because of value clashes and how, at the same time, it seems impossible to take another stance. The teacher, Susan, rejects innovation because she associates it with unwanted values, and the district director, Helge, argues for a 'no alternative' perspective, presenting innovation as ubiquitous. In the second section, the care worker, Grethe, and her colleagues reinterpret innovation for a specific purpose, namely gaining status. Thirdly, the trade union consultant, Inga, argues for the benefit of involving many perspectives into innovation processes, and the

teacher, Leonard, facilitates such a process despite concerns about mixed agendas. Finally, the student, Anna, is practicing value-based care work and advocating for the core value of just being present when it is needed, and the care center manager, Vivian, shows how such an approach can turn into sustainable organisational innovation.

Rejecting innovation and defending values

In the following quote, innovation is rejected because of value clashes. A teacher at the social and health care college states that innovation is "everywhere"; I then ask her why she thinks the concept is prevalent these days:

> Susan: It is because it fits in with that New Public Management-thinking, right? Turning everything into a big business.
>
> Charlotte: Do you feel it is a business term?
>
> Susan: Yes, I think so.
>
> Charlotte: Is it about economics?
>
> Susan: Yes, it is about economics. In my opinion, the extensive cuts in public welfare are objectionable. Within our field, it is crucial that everyone encounters a human attitude. Not like today… the way social benefits are being distributed in the home care sector. It is 'catalogues' and 'services' and 'clients'. Everything is clientised. It is the business language that's conquering the care world. I do not welcome that. We need our own vocabulary. You cannot, you *should* not make money on welfare and human care.

Susan's statement reveals a close association between innovation and economic cutbacks, and the cuts are described as a threat to the welfare state as we know it, which she finds unacceptable. This statement suggests that innovation is imposed from the outside, affecting the care world with not only economic restrictions but also with a vocabulary that ruins future possibilities for a human attitude toward the care work and the care recipients. The quote exemplifies how a practitioner's engagement with what is encountered is not merely in response to the pressure of the world. Instead, it is also shaped by the desires, needs and requirements of individuals (Billett, 2009:213). When, in the present study, practitioners reject innovation, a recurring argument is that the concept is foreign to their domain of work, associates innovation with (New Public) Management thinking and brings unwanted values into the care sector. The innovation concept is associated with product development and bottom lines: 'It's more about money than it is about people', one practitioner says, and

another states: “We just made extensive savings, and now we are supposed to be innovative.” Thus, the innovation concept fits into an economic discourse, a change that adds value, but these values are unwanted, and the innovation imperative is thus rejected. However, there seems to be no alternative as this field note indicates:

> I arrive at the elder care center to meet with the manager Alice and ask for permission to do field observations. Her door is closed, and while waiting, I have a chat with Helge, the director of the district. He says that innovation should begin with acknowledging differences.
>
> - We have this group about new building activities. The will is there and a desire to innovate. The economy is good, the ideas are multiple, and it’s great fun.
>
> Alice arrives and invites me in. Heading for her office, the director continues:
>
> - The main problem with innovation is employee inertia. They tell me that they are exhausted, but this is not my fault. I tell them: I can only assure you that changes will accelerate, and you are welcome to join in. If not, you might just climb down and look for some other place where changes are not part of the agenda. However, I don’t know such a place.
>
> Alice replies to me:
>
> - I have told Helge that we are not going to initiate anything new for the time being. We also need to get things finished.

This dialogue indicates that employee experiences of moving too fast or being forced to adapt to rapid changes may be a reason for rejecting innovation imperatives. Additionally, rejections and a feeling of overload may arise if managers do not agree on organisational priorities, and if the processes of change take the form of beginnings, one after another, without any conclusions or evaluation.

Democratising innovation – or bypassing practitioner perspectives

Practitioners’ daily, local work practices and their problem solving activities may take the form of innovation, which is often overlooked in traditional notions of product and process innovation (Evans & Waite, 2010; Hillier & Figgis, 2011). However, these forms of innovation require that people get access to working creatively (Tanggaard, 2011). This access can be claimed, denied or granted as will be illuminated in the following section. Interpretations of innovation take several forms and often with the purpose to express value consideration. These social and health care professionals are on a training course to become student mentors, and invite me into a dialogue on innovation:

Grethe: It's very modern. But what does is mean, Charlotte?

Charlotte: I want to find out what is means in social and health care education. Interpretations are diverse.

Hanne: Then we are innovative, I think. We just make up our own interpretation.

Karen: We must include it in our vocabulary. We need to show that we are moving with the times and keeping up appearances with the private sector.

As this dialogue indicates, innovation is not necessarily on the agenda because practitioners feel there is a need for changes in practice. Rather, there is a need for more legitimacy, which is supposed to be enhanced by getting access to a private sector innovation discourse.

The centrality of access to innovation is also evident when a trade union consultant replies to my question: "What does innovation mean – according to you":

Inga: I think of innovation as detached from welfare technology. Often, it is coupled to all that welfare technology, but right now I just make that decoupling. I regard innovative processes as creative processes. We once did a study which showed that early school leavers are more innovative and creative than people with longer educations.

Charlotte: Really?

Inga: Yes. We would like our members, the social and health care workers and nurse assistants, to approach their work with an out-of-the-box-mindset, with a nuanced approach and openness to other solutions than the common ones. This is the way we think about the translation of innovation. We would like our members to be more involved in projects out there at the workplaces.

Charlotte: Yes.

Inga: Yes, because they take part in big projects with other perspectives. Often, however, our members are being bypassed and they are not invited into steering groups and reference groups.

This consultant explicitly focuses on social innovation, not neglecting technology, but leaving it out of the conversation in order to shed light on the potentials for innovation through care workers' involvement in projects. Additionally, she finds the innovation concept useful when conceptualising care workers' learning processes and desired competencies.

Often, provisions for vocational and professional education fail to take sufficient account of those who engage with initiatives that attempt to motivate or direct their learning in particular

ways (Billett, 2009). As suggested by the union trade consultant, empowering care practitioners includes allowing them to play a key role in the renewal of the organisation and defining their own new roles and tasks. As the trade union consultant notes, care workers' access to projects adds value to the development processes because they bring other perspectives. The second part of her argument deals with value creation in the daily work processes. Her point is that 'innovation' conceptualises a desired skill; that the care workers develop an open and curious mindset.

These desired skills are also evident in the teacher Leonard's work. He is the main resource on a training course for social and health care workers about rehabilitation, which is part of a municipality innovation project aiming at citizen empowerment. In the following scene he has a chat with his colleague, Mette, after a day of teaching:

> Leonard tells Mette that he really sympathizes with the way the municipality defines rehabilitation: Setting goals for the care in collaboration with the citizen. This course contributes to focusing on the professional aspects of the practices, he says. Mette wonders why they have not worked like that before, because she has been teaching it for years. Leonard replies that he has looked through the student case assignments from school, and they do not seem to address rehabilitation. Additionally, a newly trained care worker cannot change a culture. He knows from other training activities that it takes years to create new routines, and it requires both training of resource persons and many practitioners as well as political pressure. However, this is also a dilemma, he says, because heavy pressure for cut backs means that citizens are not involved voluntarily. Currently, the citizens must collaborate or they will get no care. That leaves the care worker in a difficult position, Leonard says and continues:
>
> - When economy comes to the forth to this degree, problems arise. However, the participants are still exited. They are changing culture and they are not afraid to admit former mistakes. They really are in a process of new comprehensions.

The social and health care workers at Leonard's course are from the same municipality as Helge's exhausted employees. How is it possible to create two such different stories about practitioners' encountering innovation imperatives? Firstly, the care workers at the course get access to processes of change. Secondly, the imperative is grounded in actual work practices, and thirdly, it seems that Leonard manages to create an atmosphere of mutual investigation. Similar conclusions are drawn in action research on innovation where participants are described as occupied with actual problem solving in a complex, demanding

and dynamic context, while, at the same time, the practitioners associate innovation imperatives with big, revolutionary changes (Hillier & Figgis, 2011). This means that practitioners might reject innovation because it is associated with radical and rapid change while, at the same time, they are actually creative in ways that hold potential for innovation. The last part of the analysis will illuminate this occupation with the actual practice and can be interpreted as the smallest, most subtle activity with innovation potentials. It also highlights a common value clash in the practice of social and health care educations.

Hurrying or taking the time needed

The following field note is about Anna, who is about to finish her internship period at the elder care center. Anna, her two mentors and the manager are gathered around the table to give Anna her last feedback before she returns to school. I am present too as a field researcher:

> The manager asks Anna how she likes it here, and Anna replies:
> - Oh yes, I have had a good time, and the colleagues are nice, but there is too much hurrying in and hurrying out, just finishing the task and then off for coffee. I don't feel comfortable with an attitude like that.
> The manager replies that she appreciates the transparency and that she does not regard Anna's complaints as gossip. If she does not get to know about these things, she will not be able to react.
> Anna says that she makes a point of talking to the residents and not being in a hurry. She has noticed that the resident Sigrid starts to tremble when the physiotherapist enters the room, and that he tugs Sigrid's arm back and forth in a violent manner. They agree the Anna's mentor will talk it over with the relatives.
> Later that day I accompany Anna on her way to Sigrid's room. Anna elaborates on the negative attitude towards the residents.
> - It's probably because they have worked here for too long. The residents have had a long life, worked hard and deserve respect. I make a point of treating the residents with decency, she says.
> We enter into Sigrid's room. Sigrid is in her bed, dribbling. Anna sits down, picks up a napkin and tells Sigrid that they will put it in order. Sigrid's hand is squeezed tightly and Anna takes hold of it and carefully works her own fingers in between Sigrid's.
> - Your grip is so firm, please help me, Anna whispers, repeatedly stroking Sigrid's arm. After some time, Sigrid's fingers loosen up for a second and Anna carefully tucks in the

> corner of the quilt. We leave the room. In the corridor Anna tells me that is was this arm the physiotherapist tugged at. She couldn't stand watching it.

This field note illuminates a core aspect in the field under study, namely the encounters between hurrying and taking the time to do what is required. Being a student, Anna is new to the actual practice, and she evaluates her internship by highlighting this clash of values. Does this field note have anything to do with innovation? From a practice and practitioner perspective it does. Anna encounters practices of hurrying, which clashes with her own values of taking time and being patient. She does not keep her concerns in private, but involves the manager and the mentor, who promises to take action. We do not know if this will lead to actual new practices at this elder care center. However, initiated by a newcomer, there are potentials for changes in practitioners' attitude depending on the managers will and ability to follow up.

The following quote from an interview with a care center manager, Vivian, illuminates how Anna's change initiative, although easily overlooked, may be understood as a creative contribution that holds the potential for innovation of the actual practice:

> During the last 18 months the employees have changed their perspective. We have turned away from routines and are now focusing on what is valuable for the care worker. The good colleague was quick and finished her tasks in a hurry. You wanted to work with her, because together you got things done, and then you had time to rest and enjoy yourself in the staff room. We initiated the change by introducing mutual reflections on the residents' needs, and we keep doing this at all our staff meetings. Every team has drafted objectives for their residents, and they work with their objectives every day. Before, I often heard someone say: 'This resident with dementia cries all the time that she wants to go to the toilet. It is so annoying but we can't do anything about it, because it's just due to her disease.' Today they know that the wellbeing of residents relies massively on conditions of the practice and how they interact with residents as professionals. This is a revolution, one step at a time.

The two situations indicate that changes on a very small scale, defending core values within the actual practice, hold potentials for value-based change if supported and nurtured over time.

Discussion

Almost fifty years ago, Rogers identified what he called a 'pro-innovation bias', which refers to researchers often overlooking important knowledge regarding how innovation is expanded and implemented due to an overriding interest in (retrospectively) successful innovation processes (Rogers, [1962] 2003). In the actual field study and the studied literature that guided the analysis, this bias seems to be just as pervasive within public welfare organisations and in discourses of public innovation. This pervasiveness places additional pressure on producing results and may lead to an uncritical rejection of practitioners' knowledge and experience. In his book *The Culture of the new Capitalism*, Sennett (2005) argues that organisations have a 'tendency to discount past achievement in looking toward the future' and that it makes people skim rather than dwell.

Building on Sennett's argument, the main point suggested here is that discourses of public innovation may be so pervasive that welfare organisations engage with the innovation concept at the expense of key values, which may be forgotten or even devaluated. From this perspective, value creation emerges through experiences and interpretations of values inherent in work practices and in innovation imperatives. Values are not only universal, general beliefs about the good, the right and the just. Rather, values are wedded to actions in practice, and they come to light when practitioners perform their work and reflect upon it. Thus, innovation cannot be understood in epistemological terms alone. This is not just a question of adapting or rejecting innovation imperatives or changing demands. Encountering innovation imperatives or changing work practices in innovative ways are value-based, ontological activities. This is about being in the world.

Practical implications

What might be the practical implications of keeping this perspective in mind? This paper suggests a democratisation of the concept of innovation and emphasizes the importance of empowering different stakeholders that intervene in innovation processes, including students, teachers, workplace mentors and managers. This paper points at the necessity to build change and innovation on existing knowledge, routines and values. Sustainable innovation is not about "shaking it all up" or "turning everything upside down"; rather, innovation and questions of values are embedded in and acted out in concrete situations. Questions about motivations and values in professional working life are present when practitioners encounter the innovation imperative, and when their values and visions are included in or excluded

from organisational change processes. A practice perspective on innovation acknowledges that practitioners' values and visions provide guidelines for what may reasonably be changed and what may be preserved. It also acknowledges that practitioners' access to innovation discourses and intervention initiatives is vital for both desired social change and skills development.

Inviting different practitioners (and thus potential value clashes) into both the public discourses and into organisational innovation processes might increase complexity. However, it also increases the potentials for the anchoring of innovations – and the potential for keeping alive dialogues on values beyond the innovation imperative.

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9. ‘Would you like a cup of coffee?’ (Article D)

Full title: “Would you like a cup of coffee?” Using the researcher’s insider and outsider positions as a sensitizing concept

In second review for *Ethnography and Education*

‘Would you like a cup of coffee?’ Using the researcher’s insider and outsider positions as a sensitizing concept

Abstract

This article uses the notion of a ‘sensitizing concept’ (Blumer, 1954) in order to understand insider and outsider dynamics in cross-organizational field research. The analysis is based on a study of learning and innovation in the social and health care educations in Denmark. As these educations combine classroom training and workplace internships, the students and educators frequently cross organizational boundaries as part of their training and educating. In my attempt to understand boundaries as learning and innovation resources, I reflect on my own shifting insider and outsider positions as a field researcher. It is argued that the researcher’s experience of changing insiderness and outsiderness in cross-organizational field studies can serve as a vantage point from where to investigate emotional and material aspects of boundary-crossing.

Keywords: field study, sensitizing concept, insider research, boundary crossing, boundary object

Introduction: Crossing boundaries

The purpose of this article is to scrutinize the concepts of boundaries and boundary-crossing through the lens of the researcher’s own experiences of encountering and crossing boundaries in the field. As stated by Tanggaard (forthcoming), ethnographic fieldwork builds on the assumption that the researcher’s own experience is one of the most important gateways to obtaining knowledge of the field. The article illuminates how the researcher can obtain valuable information about the field under study by using shifting insider and outsider positions as a vantage point to analyze boundary-crossing. Boundaries are associated with both individual and organizational change, and a recognition or negotiation of boundaries is supposed to carry potential for learning and innovation (Engeström, 1987; Manning, Van Maanen & Miller, 1990; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a, 2011b, 2012). In a literature review on boundary crossing in educational research, a boundary is defined as a difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a:133):

> "Boundaries simultaneously suggest a sameness and continuity in the sense that within discontinuity two or more sites are relevant to one another in a particular way."

Sociocultural differences do not lead to experiences of boundaries per se, as we move across different practices and sites all the time, sometimes without even noticing. Accordingly, the authors suggest that *discontinuities* may be the crucial element in a definition of boundary-crossing. Future studies should address the situated micro perspective of boundaries and boundary-crossing and 'study how sociocultural differences play out in and are being shaped by knowledge processes, personal and professional relations, and mediations, but also in feelings of belonging and identities' (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a:153). They also argue that future research in boundaries should identify 'a set of methodological indicators or markers with which diversity as well as consequent discontinuities can be empirically detected' (ibid.:153). In this article, I investigate such empirically detectable markers by means of the terms 'insider' and 'outsider'.

Firstly, insider and outsider research is briefly introduced and discussed in relation to Blumer's notion of sensitizing concepts (1954). Secondly, the research field and method in question are outlined. Data is presented concurrently to illustrate how my own experiences of discontinuities sensitized me while analyzing a student's internship at an elder care center. The analysis shows that insignificant or almost invisible artifacts, signs and gestures are involved in positioning actors as insiders or outsiders.

Entering the field

The article is based on a cross-organizational field study of boundary-crossing practices in the social and health care educations in Denmark. These educations, as part of the vocational education and training (VET) system, combine classroom training at a social and health care college and internships at workplaces in the elder care sector. Before entering the field as a researcher, I worked as a manager at the social and health care college that was part of the field. I also had work experience as an educational consultant and teacher. My lack of knowledge about working in the elder care sector was evident, however. Hence, I regarded myself as both an insider and an outsider researcher and consulted the literature on insider and outsider research (Merton, 1972; Griffith, 1998; Mercer, 2007). An insider researcher may be defined as a researcher who has lived familiarity with the group being researched, while the outsider is 'a researcher who does not have any intimate knowledge of the group

being researched, prior to entry into the group' (Griffith, 1998:361). Insider and outsider positions, however, turned out to be much more complex, fluid and unpredictable than this dichotomy would indicate. They were not 'definitive concepts' which provided prescriptions of what to see, but 'sensitizing concepts' which guided my gaze during fieldwork and the subsequent analysis of my data (Blumer, 1954).

The notion of a sensitizing concept made me realize that negotiations of insider and outsider positions affected me as a researcher as well as the people in the field. In particular, the sensitizing provided by my alternating insiderness and outsiderness helped me understand the emotional and material aspects of crossing boundaries. These insights are based on thematic analysis of my empirical data as a whole. In this article, I present these insights by means of a single narrative of my encounter with a student. I selected this narrative because it displays several markers of belonging and professional relations involved in boundary-crossing as mentioned by Akkerman and Bakker (2011a). At a glance, the student, whom I shall call 'Peter', seemed to be the ideal student making his way through the social and health care education program. He was mature, male (a sought-after minority in a female-dominated occupation), with a good sense of humor and very committed to a job in the care sector. Yet, Peter encountered considerable difficulties during his training. In my effort to understand Peter's problems, I extracted knowledge of a more general significance for understanding material and emotional aspects embedded in the activity of crossing boundaries.

To illustrate the material and emotional aspects, coffee plays a significant role as an artifact during the narrative. While boundary crossing refers to individuals' experiences of discontinuity in action or interaction across boundaries, a 'boundary object' refers to the artifacts doing the crossing, fulfilling a bridging function (Star, 1989; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a). The coffee culture of Scandinavia in many ways resemblances the culture of 'a cuppa tea' in the UK (Kjeldgaard & Ostberg, 2007). Coffee is an essential part of showing hospitality and is traditionally integrated into the temporal structures of everyday life such as the morning and the afternoon breaks (in the afternoon served with a something sweet). 'At work, a joint coffee break may be used for informal discussions or negotiations' (ibid.:178). The reason for choosing coffee as this narrative's core artifact is that Danish social and health care workers are sometimes accused of not working hard enough. An often used phrase is that 'they take too many coffee breaks' instead of spending time with the elderly residents at the elder care centers. Coffee drinking is thus a metaphor for ineffectiveness and lack of

professionalism. Coffee played a significant role during my fieldwork and not just as an excuse to take a break. Rather, coffee turned out to be an artifact with power extending beyond collegial relaxation and beyond keeping me alert. Coffee (like many other artifacts) actually reinforced insider and outsider positions.

As a point of departure, the following example deals with experiences from my very first day in the field; a day that turned out to be a long one without coffee until the afternoon:

> I get up one and a half hours earlier than I am accustomed to in order to attend the morning meeting at the elder care center. I have an appointment with a mentor [the workplace supervisor for students during their internship]. When the mentor notices me in the corridor, she hurries out to meet me outside the staff room. She tells me that her student has called in sick, and that I should go home, in her opinion. I tell her that I would like to stay if it is okay. She says:
> ‘Come on in then, and have a cup of coffee, but after that I would like you to go home.’
> There are about 15 staff members; some already sitting at the staff room table with coffee cups, others arriving, chatting and drawing coffee from a dispenser. I take a seat. Nobody pays attention to me, so I quickly introduce myself and ask if they have been informed about my visit. There are a few nods, but I cannot decipher any response from the majority of faces.
> The lady at the other end of the table says: ‘Okay, let’s get going.’ They start reviewing the events of the previous night and the current status of each resident. It seems impolite to help myself at the coffee dispenser, so for my part, it turns out that this morning meeting will be without any coffee.

I was tired, I admit, and coffee would have been nice. But what really hit me was the feeling of awkwardness. As a consultant and as a teacher, I am experienced in encountering new people, and I did not doubt my ability to meet and interact with new people in unfamiliar situations. What I did not expect was the embodied discomfort of being just ignored, and that such discomfort would paralyze me. Initially, it made me doubt my own capability as a field researcher. Over the next six months, however, my field notes about rapidly changing insider and outsider positions piled up. An analytical theme had emerged.

Sensitizing concepts

Commenting on the construction of field notes, Wolcott (1999:70) states that descriptions are always accomplished in terms of purpose:

> There has to be an idea guiding what we choose to describe and how we choose to describe it. […] We do not and cannot simply observe, watch or look; we must observe, watch, and look for something.

The initial theoretical concept of 'boundary-crossing' framed my study, as did the notions of 'insider' and 'outsider'. Over time, the notion of a sensitizing concept (Blumer, 1954) helped me to refine my initial theoretical concepts and offered a 'possibility for questioning personal theories and for expanding or modifying the original conceptual framework' (Agee, 2009:439). According to Blumer, a sensitizing concept helps direct the researcher's gaze so that a too broad perspective is avoided as the field study progresses. A sensitizing concept works as an analytical gaze or foundation from which the researcher conducts analyses and adds new aspects to the researched situations. Blumer (1954:7) contrasts sensitizing concepts to definitive concepts:

> A definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks. [. . .] A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or benchmarks and consequently, it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look.

Blumer points out that a sensitizing concept is grounded in sense instead of explicit objective traits. It cannot be formulated and communicated by formal definition; rather, it is accomplished by apt illustrations, 'which [enable] one to grasp the reference in terms of one's own experience' (Blumer, 1954:9).

Instead of viewing insiderness as a potential bias to be minimized, I came to embrace my 'own experience' of changing insider and outsider positions as a gateway to analyze boundary-crossing. Thus, 'insider' and 'outsider' are not definitive concepts. Rather, they are understood in terms of a continuum with multiple dimensions (Mercer, 2007:13):

> The researcher's relationship with the researched is not static, but fluctuates constantly, shifting back and forth along a continuum of possibilities, from one moment to the next, from one location to the next, from one interaction to the next, and even from one discussion topic to the next.

As mentioned, my first experience of being an outsider at the morning meeting was not unexpected. What I did not expect was the way in which this outsider position sensitized me to an insider/outsider theme with analytical potential well-suited for a field study of boundary-crossing.

Ethnographic visits across boundaries

Traditional ethnographic fieldwork implies a long-term residence in a bounded field. However, 'there is now a growing awareness that the object of ethnography is dispersed in (diffuse) space-time relations and contested' (Tanggaard, forthcoming). Long-term fieldwork is often replaced by brief ethnographic visits, and these ethnographies endeavor to explore critical aspects of activity in terms of development, learning and change (Kerosuo, 2006:93). The empirical data from my study consists of 16 initial interviews followed by ethnographic fieldwork at the interface of cross-organizational activities in the field of social and healthcare educations. Most of my fieldwork was carried out over the course of six months for 1-2 days per week, and more than a hundred students were involved in the activities. The activities included classroom settings, daily care of elderly residents at elder care centers, assessment interviews, corridor chats and coffee breaks, different types of collaborative meetings and training activities for social and health care workers and local and national conferences for health care educators and policy-makers.

The activities which formed the object of my research were selected on the basis of a theoretically informed hypothesis that crossing boundaries between educational institutions and workplaces creates the potential for learning and innovation (Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). The analysis of movements across and learning through distinct types of social spaces is informed by the body of literature on workplace learning acknowledging that learning and innovation occurs through everyday activities in workplaces (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Ellström, Ekholm & Ellström, 2008; Tanggaard, 2009; Ellström, 2010; Billett, 2012). The main assumption is that learning and innovation have to be understood as actions and activities that are embedded in a complex social context. According to the theory of situated learning, people have to join a community and initiate the learning process at the periphery (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A prerequisite for learning, therefore, is access to interaction with other people, work tasks and artifacts in the field (Elkjær, 2005). This notion of access was evident at the morning meeting, as I was urgently in need of a new gatekeeper so that I could enter the everyday activities of the care work. Peter turned out to fill in that role:

> At the morning meeting, I realize that the guy next to me is a student, Peter, and he invites me to join him during the day. We walk to one of the units with Peter's mentor, Linda, and they allocate the tasks of the day. Then Linda and Peter go to Adam's apartment, accompanied by me, waiting outside the door. Linda walks in and says, rather loudly: 'Morning, today there are three of us.'
>
> Adam asks me to come in. He is in bed. A skinny hand appears from under the quilt and shakes mine. He asks if I am the new substitute. I try to reply at what I think is an adequate volume, but he doesn't hear me.
>
> 'No, she's here to keep an eye on Peter', Linda shouts.
>
> I thank Adam for inviting me in and leave the bedroom, stand at the kitchen table, idle, while Linda and Peter are doing Adam's morning hygiene. Peter talks to Adam, from time to time asking Linda how to lift and turn him. An acrid smell of stool emerges. I feel very uncomfortable and move to the kitchen corner to be sure to block my view to the bedroom. There are portraits of two children on the table. I avert my eyes. This is the private life of a stranger.

As described above, I actually did cross a boundary and got access, even to a very intimate space of the care work. I interacted with core members of the elder care institution (student, mentor and resident), and I encountered core artifacts (quilts, stool and photos). However, I found that other kinds of boundaries had emerged. Though welcomed by a handshake from a man with limited strength left for such efforts, I sought the periphery and found that it did not exist as a fixed space to indicate a boundary. The periphery was a bodily feeling of not knowing the appropriate volume of conversation, not knowing where to place myself or where to fix my gaze.

Although engaging with the theory of situated learning, many researchers propose that workplace learning is more complex than a one-way movement from peripheral to full membership of a community of practice. According to Engeström and Miettinen (1999), what seems to be missing is the movement outwards and in unexpected directions: the questioning of authority, innovation or initiation of change. That is, learning cannot be studied 'in isolated contexts, the main theoretical and empirical concern is to study how people combine, modify and connect learning across places' (Tanggaard, 2009:696). Likewise, my narrative shows that there is no predictable trajectory from outsider to insider. Rather, these two positions emerge, fluctuate and change along with shifting activities, in the interplay among participants and artifacts. Peter, although a student intern, held an insider position while doing the care. Soon afterwards, however, this insider position became unstable because there

were no more care tasks to perform. Outsiderness due to idleness is anticipated in the following example:

> Selma needs suppression stockings [to prevent swelling of the legs], and while Linda and Peter help put them on, she says: 'So, am I going for a walk today?'
> Linda responds: 'Easy, we'll have to wait and see. I can't promise.'
> Having completed this task, Peter and I are alone in the central living room. I ask him about the schedule of the day, but nothing has been planned, he tells me. He has no mentor to work with today; he is expected to 'latch on to different staff', as he puts it. Days feel long, he must admit. The wall clock points to nine. In need of sleep and caffeine, I can hardly cope with the prospect of six hours of idleness until three o'clock, when Peter's shift ends.

It seemed that Peter and I were both caught in outsider positions. Nobody needed us or noticed us. However, as the day dragged on, it turned out that our shared outsiderness provided me with valuable data -- and even with a cup of coffee. With no scheduled activities, Peter and I spent most of our time in the central living room talking. In my field diary I wrote:

> He really likes talking to the residents, he tells me, but he finds it difficult to interact with the staff. He wants feedback, but nobody tells him if he performs well. Even if things are going fine, he would like to know, he says. He has never tried this before, and though he was comfortable talking to people in his earlier jobs, this is something quite different, he feels. Peter shows me an assignment from school, tells me that his teacher praised him and asks about my research project; will it be of any use? One of his friends is pursuing a Ph.D. project, and they often discuss what all these research reports are good for, he says, adding: 'Nobody reads them anyway.'
> In the afternoon, he asks me if I would like a cup of coffee, and I gratefully accept. We join Linda and two residents in front of the TV. Peter tells Linda that he would like to take Selma for a walk. It is very difficult to put on the suppression stockings when her legs are so swollen.
> 'At school we were taught that exercise reduces swollenness. Isn't that a fact?'
> 'It might be', Linda replies, 'but it is impossible today because Selma has a visitor, and tomorrow we are all off for the staff workshop, and you will then be the most experienced one here.'

> Linda says that he can take Selma for a walk on Thursday and then twice a week. However, they need to be sure that Selma knows it is temporary. It is impossible to keep the walk schedule when Peter isn't there anymore.

In the above example, insider and outsider positions are played out and boundaries are negotiated in diverse ways. My encounter with Peter is framed by our shared outsider position. The first person noticing me at the morning meeting asks me to leave, another impatiently waits for me to introduce myself to 'get going', and that day Peter is the only person who offers me coffee and company. The routines at the morning meeting are unknown to me, and I feel even more paralyzed in the resident Adam's private apartment. Due to these unfamiliar routines and having no role to fill, I learn from my bodily experience how it might feel to be a newcomer student. Some apparently simple acts such as drawing a cup of coffee from the dispenser or talking to an elderly resident feel awkward, and I am grateful when Peter reduces my feeling of awkwardness by telling me about his school assignment or even bothers to question the relevance of my research project. Peter shows himself to be a skilled student who is able to connect his care practice with his classroom knowledge about swollen legs and exercise. His request to take Selma for a walk seems to be a move to gain access and even make a small impact on the actual practice. However, his request for a meaningful activity is rejected or at least postponed. Thus, our shared outsiderness is established through the extra time we have on our hands and our limited access to staff and work tasks. Soon, we turn to discuss themes (school assignments and research projects) from outside the boundaries of the care institution. My outsider position, however, turned out to be volatile, while Peter struggled to break free or more precisely to break in.

Struggling for insiderness

The next example from this elder care center describes a situation at the manager's office. This is Peter's third week as a student intern and his first formal meeting with the manager and his mentor. The meeting is framed as an 'introductory interview':

> I arrive ten minutes in advance and chat with the manager, Sue. She asks me if I would like to talk to the new project coordinator. He might have a lot of interesting things to tell me, she says, and hands me his e-mail address. At the meeting table there are four cups, a coffee pot, milk and sugar. The mentor, Linda, arrives, we sit down and the coffee pot is circulated. Peter was present a moment ago, but now he has disappeared. Sue asks where he went, and Linda says that he got scared, and now he doesn't want to participate. They

> laugh. Peter arrives with a cup of tea. Sue looks at the teacup and asks him if he feels well again.
> ‘I just prefer tea today, I don’t drink tea because I was ill’, he says.
> Usually he is never ill, so the new bacterial environment probably caused him to suddenly become ill last week, he says. Linda says that a period of illness is common when people arrive in a new environment. Peter says that he was present when Adam passed away, and he is happy about that, because he had had many conversations with Adam about gardening, as Peter himself grows berries. He felt comfortable in meeting Adam’s next of kin and talking with them when they arrived. Sue says that it is impressive that he talked with Adam’s relatives. Peter replies that it felt natural and it was a good day, in that sense.

During this part of the interview, Peter mentions a success that makes him appear as a skilled employee, who is capable of handling Adam’s death. Peter seems to reject the credit he has apparently gained from Sue’s being impressed that he met the relatives. Peter prefers the word ‘natural’, an indication that he wants to be considered an insider. However, Peter does not manage to be recognized as such. He is not able to cross the boundary to the professional community at the elder care center, as we learn from the following field note:

> Linda says that she feels they have talked Adam’s death through and adds that talking things through is important.
> ‘There are no stupid questions, and asking the same question more than once is allowed. You must wonder, so we can wonder and question what we do’, she says.
> Peter asks Linda for her opinion of his work.
> ‘Well…,’ Linda replies.
> Peter tells us that Linda has stated that he *talks*. Linda says that he must *ask*.
> ‘You are a student, so don’t get me wrong, it is a positive statement’, she says.

This dialogue can be interpreted as Peter struggles for an insider position as a colleague, while the mentor keeps addressing him as a student. She emphasizes ‘asking questions’ and ‘wondering’ as desirable student speech acts, while Peter asks for feedback on his performance. He does not receive any, as Linda’s only reply is ‘Well…,’ which seems to be the beginning of a sentence. However, nothing follows. Instead, Peter is encouraged to ask and wonder, and though abundantly complying with this request, he succeeds neither as a student nor as a colleague:

> Peter asks if there is a procedure for disinfection of doorknobs.

> ‘Only if something is going around; it’s not a hospital, after all’, Sue says.
>
> Peter has read in the strategy plan that they use two types of gloves. He would like to know where the blue ones are.
>
> ‘They are out there in the locker, I guess, but they are only for hormone ointment,’ Sue replies.
>
> He also asks why they use soap for intimate hygiene. At school they were taught not to do that.
>
> ‘Well, it’s not regular soap,’ Sue explains, ‘and some residents still smell if we don’t use soap. So soap is a necessity.’
>
> ‘Well, okay’, Peter replies, and adds that he would like to talk about medication. As they know, he discovered an extra pill the first time he gave Jenny her pills.
>
> ‘Yes, we receive only the pre-packed doses from the pharmacy now. So all we need to do is to check that it’s the right number. We don’t need to know what types of pills they get’, Sue explains.
>
> Sue asks why Peter is interested in medication.
>
> ‘It is because I would like to keep an eye on the side effects’, Peter says.

Peter asks about procedures and seems to have scrutinized potential shortcomings. Though phrased as questions, Peter’s statements resemble those of an inspector rather than those of a student eager to learn. The manager averts all potential accusations by referring to Peter’s lack of practical experience. While his actions may be interpreted as a struggle to become an insider by displaying insider knowledge, he is repeatedly put in his place as an outsider with no sense of how to make the everyday tasks go smoothly. ‘It’s not a hospital’ indicates that Peter misinterprets this type of workplace, while gloves and soap are used according to practical circumstances, a condition that Peter does not yet fully decode. Finally, his interest in medication is dismissed as outside his area of competence. It is understandable that the manager feels a need to defend her territory, but the effect is that Peter is pushed into the periphery. In fact, he is told to stay there, to be less curious, less exploratory. This is in contrast to their explicit expectation: that he should wonder about what he sees and experiences. Then Peter turns to a success, namely his walks with Selma:

> Peter tells Sue that he and Linda have considered walks with Selma as one of his personal learning objectives.
>
> ‘Yesterday, I took Selma for a walk, and she was a bit reluctant, but when we arrived at the ladies clothing store, she really cheered up’, Peter says.

> Sue replies that they need to describe it as a learning objective for him and Selma; he cannot just take her for a walk. They then turn to discuss other residents and decide on one more resident that Peter might be responsible for.
> ‘We’ll initiate this after Easter’, Linda says, ‘now let’s take one step at a time.’
> Peter turns to his expectations:
> ‘Besides this, I expect to pass according to all 47 objectives here at the back’, he says, flipping the folder at random.
> Sue takes the folder and opens it:
> ‘I can hear that you are anxious, but take a look. You don’t have to pass all objectives until your second internship period. Almost everyone passes’, she says.
> ‘No, it’s something else’, Peter says, ‘I don’t understand how you are going to assess me when I am alone with the residents.’
> Linda tells him that she is going to follow him at his tasks once in a while, being the fly on the wall. And he is always welcome to ask for help.
> ‘I see’, Peter says.
> ‘You are assertive, you see’, Linda says. ‘Other students must be accompanied for a long time.’

Peter comments ironically on the number of learning objectives by referring to ‘all 47 objective here at the back’. There are in fact nine professional objectives and eight objectives covering personal competencies. He rejects the peripheral student position and relates to the organizing of his learning process as he doubts the staff’s basis for assessment if they do not supervise him directly. Accordingly, he devaluates the workplace as a site for learning. Peter is calmed down, or disarmed, by being addresses as an insecure student. ‘Almost everyone passes’ indicates that Peter does not need to be that ambitious, while the final statement that he is ’assertive’ may indicate that he is too eager to become an insider.

On this second visit, the manager takes her time to chat with me and discuss my research project. She offers me an e-mail address of someone who I could contact in connection with my research. The manager’s small office and the meeting setup are familiar to me, and the fact that four coffee cups (for the manager, the mentor, Peter and me) have been set out indicates that I was expected. Despite the fact that I arrive in mid-morning just to attend this introductory interview, I immediately feel as an insider. Thus, I am already in a safe place at the table, with a full cup of coffee, witnessing the staff making fun of the student (‘he got scared’) when he arrives as the last participant (with a teacup in hand and thus rejecting the coffee cup set out for him). This is my final field note for that day:

> After the introductory interview, Sue and Linda leave for a staff meeting, and Peter and I chat for a short while in the corridor before I go home.
> ‘So, now you’re off for the real life’, Peter says.

Though this small event may seem trivial, it also articulates insider and outsider themes rather aptly. In ‘real life’ outside the elder center walls, Peter is a gardener, makes friends with academics and is appreciated for his school assignments. He is an insider in diverse contexts in the sense of a ’lived familiarity’ with discourses, artifacts and values. As a student at the elder care center, however, Peter struggles to become an insider, but he is either unable to decode the discourses, artifacts and values encountered or in other cases simply does not accept them as legitimate. With his ‘real life’ remark, Peter may signal an envy of my free access to this life, with its available insider positions. These positions were denied him at the introductory interview which had just transpired. I feel like a traitor. Peter invited me in and assuaged my feelings of awkwardness. He provided me with good data when I myself was feeling like an outsider. Despite being an outsider himself, he made me feel welcome. Now, I just leave him. On this day, Peter is an outsider on his own.

The breakdown of a continuous learning trajectory

About one month later, I revisit the elder care center and meet Peter again. We are walking down the corridor when we meet one of the residents, Selma.

> Selma is using her walker. Peter and I join her and chat with her, helping her to move a few inches back and forth. I compliment Selma on her nice watch, and she looks at me, expressionless. Peter takes me aside and whispers that I must never mention the watch again; it is connected to an alarm which goes off when she tries to walk outside the center. Because of her dementia, she does tend to wander off once in a while, and sometimes she gets furious when she focuses on the watch. That’s why it is very important to ignore it.

I feel ignorant and embarrassed. However, as I do not seem to cause any commotion this time, I notice that Peter had become familiar with routines and residents’ needs. Based on his command of the situation with Selma, it seems that he has moved to an insider position, and he therefore treats me as an outsider who needs guidance. I am pleased. This interpretation of progress seems to be supported a little later:

> It is lunchtime in the staff room. I join Peter, who tells me that he is now responsible for three residents. Fetching his hot pie from the microwave oven, he raises his fist in a sign of victory. Peter gets beeped and tells me that he has to leave because one of his residents is vomiting. After some ten minutes he returns, pitching into his now cold pie with a broad smile.

As mentioned, norms, routines and discourses are decoded through interactions with participants and artifacts (Elkjær, 2005). In his interactions with Selma and me and in the way he deals with her watch, his beeper, his task of attending to the sick resident and digging into his cold pie, Peter displays considerable insider competence. He discretely prevents me from making trouble, and he willingly leaves his lunch break to meet an emergency call for help. Is this a story of a standard learning trajectory from outsider to insider, from a peripheral position to full membership? Not quite:

> After lunch, in the elevator, Peter tells me that he is very frustrated. He wants to be involved in the care planning, but he does not know who to ask. I suggest that he bring up his desire to be more involved at the mid-way interview later today, but then he might explode, he says. I consider suggesting alternative strategies, but the elevator has arrived, and our conversation is over.
>
> Peter is busy and leaves me, and I feel that I am alone for a very long time. I am relieved when somebody finally approaches me. It is Linda, Peter's mentor, who tells me that things are not going as they should, so it is not a good idea that I attend the midway interview as planned. 'It wouldn't be fair to Peter', she says, and I quickly agree. Peter is in one of the resident apartments. I wait outside the door of the apartment, until he comes out. I tell him that I will go home. Peter looks at me and says: 'Really?' We shake hands, and I tell him that I have planned field work at the college so we will probably meet there.

At the morning meeting, I used Peter as a gatekeeper to remain in the field. In the above example, I am asked not to attend the mid-way interview for the sake of Peter, and I feel so uncomfortable that I automatically accept the exclusion and leave the setting. I hereby get a glimpse of -- and contribute to -- a culture of conflict management behind closed doors in rooms and elevators. I hurried off, anxious about the prospect of actually witnessing Peter exploding or the staff confronting him in ways that might make him regret his desire for an assessment of his work. My heart rate and my fleeing the area reflected the essence of this tense situation.

Creating co-authors

I was denied access to Peter's mid-way assessment interview and missed a crucial event in his internship. Did Peter remain stuck in an outsider position, or did new spaces become available over time? Because my field study was designed as brief visits to different sites, I made no further field visits to that particular elder care center. I moved on to other sites in my continuous exploration and crossing of boundaries. I did not follow Linda and Peter over time; however, it turned out that I was not the only one to decide when the fieldwork was finished. Linda and Peter both invited themselves into my research project by volunteering additional information that they felt I should have. Research is an interactive process. It may involve multiple speaking parts, but who gets the final say? Van Maanen (2010:245) comments on this change of positions among researchers and the researched, claiming that 'the career paths of those we study are currently on a roll -- from savage to primitive to subject to native to informant to interlocutor to, ultimately, co-author.'

My fieldwork at the various sites ended after six months. From my office desk, the people whom I had met in the field – educators, students, mentors – gradually became distant to me. However, they did not all willingly accept this peripheral position. They wanted to become co-authors. It is a request that I intend to meet:

> I attend a conference for mentors. During the break, I meet Linda at the coffee dispenser in the corridor. I draw a cup of coffee from a dispenser and initiate a conversation about the conference theme. I feel that it would be a breach of professional confidentiality to ask about Peter's situation while we are outside the boundaries of the care center. However, Linda gets to this point immediately. She tells me that things went very wrong, but they sorted it out. Jenny, a staff member at one of the other units, has now taken over as Peter's mentor.
>
> 'He was not at all aware of his impact on me and the team,' she says. 'We were all so [making a 'fed up' gesture with her hand on the throat]. He was taught at school to ask questions, and he bombarded me with questions.'
>
> 'Now Jenny is keeping an eagle eye on him, and things will be fine. He is skilled.'

Linda wants me to know that though she was 'fed up' with Peter's questioning, they have tried to act as professionals and to see Peter's potential. Our joint coffee break enables a brief confidentiality, and Linda seizes the opportunity to explain why I was asked to leave prior to Peter's midway interview. Peter also needed to explain a few things to me:

> On the first day at my office after the summer holiday, Peter phones me. He wants to tell me about the final stage of his internship. It turned out to the mid-way assessment interview that they had decided to transfer him to another unit, with another mentor, he tells me.
>
> 'They did not feel that I fitted into the rhythm of the unit and said that I asked too many questions', Peter tells me. 'But, you know, I was told to do so at school.'
>
> 'So how did it all turn out? Did you like the remaining part of the internship?' I ask.
>
> He did, Peter replies. The residents were so happy with him. On his last day, at the afternoon coffee break, he made pancakes with blueberry jam for all of them.
>
> 'I'm a berry gardener, you know.'

During internship, Peter struggles to be recognized for his professional skills as a social and health care student. He does not really manage. On the phone, it seems important to Peter to remind me that he is a berry gardener. All meals at the elder care center are delivered from a meal delivery service. However, as the obligatory 'something sweet' for the afternoon coffee break as mentioned by Kjeldgaard and Ostberg (2007), Peter brings blueberry jam from home and makes pancakes for the residents. Blueberry jam and pancakes thus serve as boundary objects for Peter to integrate two different sites and bring professional pride from one to the other.

Concluding remarks

What has been learned by using 'insider' and 'outsider' as sensitizing concepts? How does this analytical approach help to refine the concepts of boundaries and boundary-crossing? My continuous coming and going gave rise to extensive negotiations of access. Brockmann (2011) highlights the processes of negotiating the researcher role and claims that the time spent on negotiation is relatively extensive when the total stay at each particular site is only a few days. At the same time, she regards the negotiation processes as valuable data. When the researcher designs a study of short-term stays in different sites, she also deliberately destabilizes the researcher role. Short term stays imply continual negotiations; not only of researcher roles but even of situations and activities, in which the researcher's presence might be welcomed, merely tolerated, or absolutely excluded. In the absence of the gradual acceptance that would normally come from a continuous visit to a single locale, in which the researcher also becomes partially invisible, short-term stays require renegotiation under each and every situation. Insider and outsider positions are created, altered, and reproduced, as are the boundaries between researcher and informants and among informants. Accordingly, the

continuous transition between insiderness and outsiderness can be a fruitful vantage point for observations and analyses of boundary crossing. Boundaries may be organizational (as when Peter refers to his knowledge from school about swollen legs), professional (as when Peter is told not to show an interest in medication) and mental or bodily (as when I try to hide from the intimacy of the care work at Adam's apartment). Insider and outsider *positions* are not stable categories in which the researcher and the actors in the field are situated. The multiple *sites* are not fixed sites in time and space; rather, positions (available to individuals and occupied by individuals) and sites (constituting the context and also changed by individual activity) are intertwined, mutually susceptible and ever-flowing.

My analysis indicates that negotiations of and the unpredictability of positions may come into conflict with the formal processes of learning and carrying out workplace tasks (such as taking a resident for a walk to alleviate leg swelling or taking an interest in a patient's medication even when it is not one's formal responsibility). Actors can make (intentionally or unintentionally) use of a diverse range of artifacts, signs and gestures to block or facilitate learning and innovation initiatives for others. Accordingly, actors who find themselves pushed into outsider positions will find it more difficult to learn and innovate. These artifacts, signs and gestures tend to be invisible and are easily overlooked. The researcher's own sense of changing insiderness and outsiderness and the artifacts, signs and gestures involved, seems to be a fruitful vantage point from where markers of the discontinuities of boundary-crossing can be empirically detected.

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10. Writing with Phineas (Article E)

Full title:

Writing with Phineas: How a fictional character from A. S. Byatt helped me turn my ethnographic data into a research text

In press, special issue on collaborative writing: ‘Collaborative Writing as a Method of Inquiry’, *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies*

Writing with Phineas:
How a fictional character from A. S. Byatt helped me turn my ethnographic data into a research text

Abstract

This paper describes a collaborative writing strategy when you are alone. It is the story of how I came to bring Phineas, the protagonist in A.S. Byatt's *A Biographer's Tale* (2001), into my writing process as a third voice in my dialogue with my data. It is a self-reflective "messy text" (Denzin, 1997:225) that shows how co-writers are always present, even when you might feel that you are writing all alone.

In *A Biographer's Tale*, the academic Phineas renounces his post-structural dissertation project in literature to search for "things" and "facts". He decides to write a biography. However, Phineas discovers that "facts" are slippery and not easily "pieced together". Phineas writes about his struggles, and so do I. Through co-writing with Phineas, I gradually found a voice of experience, which helped me to transforming my ethnographic data into research texts.

Keywords: co-writing, literature, ethnography, categorization, researcher voice

From field notes to text

"Facts and truth really don't have much to do with each other."

- William Faulkner

Scene 1:

I am preparing for a week at a research "refuge". I have packed all my field notes, my taped and transcribed interviews, and a pile of documents collected from people in the field, along with variously neon colored highlighting pens and post-its. I'm ready to get going. I had read A Biographer's Tale some *years ago, and I was reminded of the story of the protagonist Phineas, his struggle with categorization and his development as a writer and a human being despite (or because of) his unsuccessful research came to my mind. I remembered a poetic scene where Phineas' girlfriend Vera tries to discover the underlying structure of a set of marbles. It is a task involving patience, space and tough decision-making, not easily accomplished (p. 172):*

> *"I decided to start by dividing them into colours. Blue, green, brown, purple, white and clear, red, pink, and so on. I got out the table because I had to put what I call the* overlab *and* links *– ones that are equally blue and green, or yellow and brown – between the major groups. The ones that are merely flecked with one colour, but predominantly another, I've put with the colour. Then I've divided the colours into opaque and transparent. Then I've got oddities, like turquoise, and fawn. And a couple of iridescent ones. Like opals."*

I also remembered a strange satisfactory feeling of fulfillment at the end of the story, even though Vera and Phineas left this task uncompleted. I did not plan to waste my precious time alone at the refuge on leisure activities; however, I threw the novel into my suitcase just before I was about to leave home.

Entering my room at the refuge, briefly noticing the beautiful sea view, I leave my clothes and the novel in my suitcase. I spread out all my papers on the floor. Red, yellow and blue highlighters. Piles of post-its. I cannot wait to get an overview of my data, trace the significant themes, detect the hidden patterns and identify the key categories. This is great!

According to Van Maanen (2010) ethnographers rarely provide systematic descriptions of how they get from field notes to research texts. That week at the refuge, I started to learn that "writing up" is not simply a matter of coding, mapping and piecing things together into coherent text. Secluded, I forced myself to create a social space with things at hand, ending up inviting into my writing process a bewildered and naïve fictional character. Van Maanen (2010:243-244) has emphasized the social and contextual aspects of writing. Hence, while we write, we also spend our time:

> "reading other writers, discussing our ideas of content and style with colleagues, the various shaping roles that are played by coauthors, critics, reviewers, readers, friends, relatives, (dreaded) thesis advisors both present and past, and the writing to and for others in a language whose grammar, tone, voice, genre, and figures of speech literally encode collectivity. Such collectivity is still not much talked about among ethnographers."

In this sense, all writing is collaborative. We all write down words, sentences and ideas based on others people's work. We are all in material or imagined dialogues with others. Speedy

(2012) argues that all writing spaces accumulate stories and people brought into the writing process by the author. As writers, we are constantly in dialogue with material or speculative others (Pineau, 2012). These spaces of "betweenness" offer detachment from binary conceptions and categorical differences such as sole authored or co-authored (Diversi & Moreira, 2009; Gale & Wyatt, 2010).

My urgent need for a dialogue partner and co-writer emerged when I realized that I had to install myself in my text in some way. But how? In the introduction to their book C*ollecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Denzin and Lincoln (2007:4-5) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world". This initial, generic definition also mentions that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them." However, the things we study are taken out of their "natural settings" and brought to the researcher's desk. These things are torn into pieces and put together into (new) patterns. What are these "things" that the researcher choose to bring into the study? Which "setting" does the researcher frame or interpret as "natural"? And how could I differentiate my own perception of meaning from the perception of the people I was studying? These questions caused me anxiety in my solitary writing space at the refuge. Having planned to start writing up my ethnographic field study of educational innovation, I suddenly encountered a block. The present paper is an account of my learning process while I immersed myself into these questions, almost drowning in so-called *facts* and how I gradually created paths of *truths* which I could follow. It seeks to elucidate my change of perspective on analysis and writing as a result of my dialogues with my new fictional co-writer Phineas. According to Richardson (1990:49), such a "paper in progress might be academically minor, but *literarily* major because it helps you find your frame, tone, narrative stance, metaphors, and audience [emphasis in original]"

This paper has the structure of a "bricolage" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007:5), a concept that refers to the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of objects that happen to be at hand. In this case, a fictional character offers new frames of reference, thus opening up inquiry for more than one single meaning of what is experienced. As noted by Speedy (2012), collaborative writing is an innovative contribution to qualitative research methodology due to its attention to multiplicity and connections. Ethnographic writing as a creative research *activity* is also a key concept in Richardson's writing. Hence, in one of her "writing-stories", Richardson (1995:196) observes that:

> "We can take pleasures in the crafting and recrafting. For those who are talented enough, both ethnography and fiction are possibilities. For others of us, an ethnography, which is consciously infused with literary devices and which rejoices in, rather than recoils from, the partial vision and situated knowledge of our own lived experience, is a worthy contender."

Why did Richardson's writing stories teach me more about how to represent my own research in writing than several of the social science methodology books that I had read? How did my pleasure in reading fiction push my analysis and writing in what I consider to be a fruitful direction? According to Geertz (1989), writing ethnography is a way of telling stories. The narrative aspects of learning is shown in Orr's (1996) study of how workers develop skills and identity through telling and sharing stories about their work. This paper tells my own co-writing story about dissolving a series of conventional dichotomies: facts and fiction, analyzing and writing, the researcher and the research object, and the sole-authored and co-authored text.

"A mess, a mystery, and a miracle"

Several researchers in the social sciences have emphasized that much of our thinking is metaphorical (Richardson, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007; Lakoff & Johnson, [1980] 1993). Fiction has increasingly been used by social researchers as a means of accessing "hard-to-get-at" dimensions of human experience (Leavy, 2012). Reading fiction offers the researcher a new way to rethink and question her own assumptions and avoid hasty interpretations.

While a traditional notion of research in the social sciences has reductive tendencies, aimed at producing "generalizations and closure", the artist is concerned with "complexity, ambiguity and openness." (Watson, 2011:398-399). Crossing these disciplinary boundaries gives access "to another set of tools which enable exploration of some issues of social and educational interest in – slightly – different ways." (Watson, 2011:406). Reading fiction is thus a collaborative writing process that invites dwelling in the analytical process, observing from different angles, experimenting, and asking different kinds of questions. Fiction also offers the researcher different modes of representation. The voice of the novelist can be that of a rebel, because fiction offers irony and wit as two methods of resistance that are frowned upon within traditional research (Czarniawska-Joerges & de Monthoux, 2012). Watson (2011) suggests three ways of using fiction in educational research:

1. Fiction as data ranging from illustrative literary quotes to the use of entire novels.
2. Fiction as an analytical tool.
3. Fiction as representational mode, ranging from entire works written as fictional forms to the insertion of poetry, vignettes, etc.

According to Watson, within educational research, fictional forms of representation are more widespread than the use of fiction as data or analytical tool. There exist a wide variety of fictional modes, however. This paper investigates the use of fiction as an analytical tool: in my work of writing up data and searching for my own path to analysis, I found a fiction-based collaborator and co-author with whom I could discuss and write along with.

Otto (2007) proposes a methodology called "novel inquiry", which is a way of integrating fictional texts into the analytical process. Reading fiction, she argues, researchers can expect answers that would not arise from questions that typically characterize more traditional forms of qualitative inquiry. Literature offers a particular picture of the world that researchers see through the author's eyes. This picture does not pretend to be exhaustive; it is neither the truth nor purely imagination. Rather, literature is a contribution to the rich world of human experience. All three ways of integrating fiction "insert the researcher as an observing, experiencing, and reflecting I, who reports on lived experience in the first person singular, using literary and aesthetic forms of representation" (Brinkmann, 2009:1389). How, then, do we differentiate ethnography from fiction? The presence of formal editorial devices, such as preface, footnotes and references are insufficient, since fictional accounts could have these as well. Narrative researcher Czarniawska argues that researchers should continuously reflect over the genres of qualitative research rather than worry about fictive elements (cited in Brinkmann, 2009:1389). She advocates more "creative borrowing" between the genres of fact-producing science and fiction-producing literature. As noted by Van Maanen (2010), ethnography is relatively free of a thoroughly specialized vocabulary and a privileged conceptual apparatus. Hence, when compared to other forms of social science writing, "ethnography continues to carry a slight literary air" (251). Van Maanen considers the literary aspect to be a benefit, since "convincing ethnography will always be something of a mess, a mystery, and a miracle" (ibid.:251).

Residing at this refuge for scientists writing in privacy, I was not open to such ideas, however. My fear of coming out with airy speculations and subjective statements prevented me from regarding fiction as a source of inspiration.

When categories do not "emerge"

Scene 2:

Days pass at the research refuge. I create five main categories, subdividing these so as to include much of my data. Yet somehow, I find the categories boring. They do not really tell me anything new. I start over by identifying significant incidents (or at least incidents which seem to be significant) and transfer them onto individual sheets of paper, giving each sheet a headline. I continue with this "project" for about two days until I realize that the individual sheets are way too small, and that my notes are so reduced that I cannot remember what social situations they were parts of.

I print out my interview transcripts and digital fieldnotes and ask the refuge manager for a scissors. I cut up every so-called unit of meaning and put them into individual piles, coding them for emotions, activities, place, the informant's job description… creating headlines along the way. There is now a narrow walking path from my bed to the door of my room. Phineas remains mute, lying within Byatt's novel at the bottom of my suitcase.

I go for a long walk by the sea.

Through the process of sorting, coding and looking for categories, the words became decontextualized, and I felt that the process neither did justice to my lived experience in the field nor to the participants' lives. I felt that my analyses had not captured any truths. Or they captured truths so obvious and general that they seemed banal. At the time, I did not know that St. Pierre (2011:622) strongly advises her doctoral students *not* to code because she has seen too many students become exhausted after months of tedious coding, only to produce "low-level, insignificant themes; untheorized stories; or extended descriptions that do not get to the intellectual problem of explaining why things are as they are."

It is widely recognized within qualitative methodology that the subjectivity of the researcher is intimately involved in scientific research (Ratner, 2002). However, many qualitative researchers report their results as "themes" that "emerged" from their data. (Packer, 2010:70) Referring to Heidegger, Packer notes that interpretations claiming that themes *stand out* tell us more about the researcher than about the people observed. Packer (2010:71-72) criticizes those researchers who generate categorizations for not being interested in the particular individual but in what we can learn from the category the individuals are supposed to belong to:

> "[T]he researcher's job is to identify concepts. The researcher compares what has been said by different people in order to identify what is common to their words and therefore in their experiences. The common words and phrases in their interviews are unpacked to spell out the concepts they contain."

Following this he asks (79): "When coding, are researchers active or passive? Are they merely observing patterns of meaning that 'emerge' from the data, or are they actively inventing codes?" His answer, unsurprisingly, is that categories do not exist within the data as such. Categories are the researcher's constructs, based on preferences and experiences. As noted by Bowker and Star (2000:287), concepts and categories are historically situated. They are learned as part of membership in communities of practice.

So, what can be done to avoid hasty interpretations and to avoid claiming that the themes or categories miraculously *stood out*? We need to acknowledge that writing is not only inscription but also discovery (St. Pierre, 1997). Packer (2010:238) argues that "[a]nalyzing fieldnotes by coding and indexing them fails to consider the way of seeing that provides the basis for what the ethnographer writes, or how this way of seeing is transformed by the practice of writing". Thus, through writing, researchers can get into dialogue with their own concepts, deconstruct socially learned categories to explore how to think otherwise (St. Pierre, 1997). In the following, though reluctantly (as I did not have time for leisure activities!), I took up this request and turned to dialogue with Phineas in order to challenge my preconceptions of neutral categorization. Dialoguing, I found, became the only way for me to conduct sound and solid analyses.

Scene 3:

When I return from my walk by the sea, it seems that my sheets of paper and post-its have had a life of their own. The path from my door to the bed is barely visible. Still visible, just outside the window, are the seagulls, flying slowly against the wind. Walking barefoot amongst the piles of paper, with a slippery feeling that is both physical and metaphorical, I grab A Biographer's Tale from *the bottom of my messy suitcase. I take a shortcut to the bed and break into Phineas' monologue:*

Charlotte: *I feel like giving it all up. This writing refuge has turned into a prison.*

Phineas: *"It was a sunny day and the windows were very dirty. I was looking out of the windows, and I thought, I'm not going to go on with this any more. Just like that. It was May 8th 1994. I know that, because my mother had*

been buried the week before, and I'd missed the seminar on Frankenstein." (Byatt, 2001:1)

Charlotte: *I knew you would agree. Let's break free and enjoy life outside the dirty windows – let's walk along the beach, watch the seagulls.*

Phineas: *"I don't think my mother's death has anything to do with my decision, though as I set it down, I see it might be construed that way."*

Charlotte: *"Set it down"! "Construed"! You're still writing!? And with an audience in mind, no less! What are you up to?*

Phineas: *"I know a dirty window is an ancient, well-worn trope for intellectual dissatisfaction and scholarly blindness. The thing is, that the thing was also there. A real, very dirty window, shutting out the sun. A* thing*."*

Charlotte: *Okay, let's go for tangible things out in the sun.*

Phineas: *"I need a life full of* things*. Full of facts." (4)*

Charlotte: *The more you insist, the more your obsession with facts seems naïve. I like you. Do you mind if I tag along?*

Phineas is putting things to paper, discovering new connections or causal links. Or maybe he just puts facts to paper based on his own associations? A dirty window is both a thing and a metaphor for his feeling of detachment from life. However, Phineas cannot get undisturbed access to the things – as soon as he sets down his thoughts, his intentions, he discovers that the thing is not so much a name of an object but more a particular subject-object relation (Brown, 2001). He cannot just tell what happened. Causal links and connections emerge as soon as incidents are randomly or purposely placed side by side. I started to realize that during my analytic struggle, I was unconsciously *constructing* causal links and categories, and that my data was inevitably created and analyzed by *me*. I needed to turn this process into a conscious, deliberate activity. But how?

Facts and truths

Scene 4:

Back home in my office, I unpack my plastic file folders full of incomplete categories. I make piles of papers and then – resignedly – leave them on the floor while I ask Phineas what he will be doing now that he has abandoned his literary studies.

Phineas: *"The project may have come to me in a dream. I am not being fanciful, simply precise. I woke one morning and thought, it would be interesting to find out about Scholes Destry-Scholes."*

Charlotte: *So a real person, though deceased, is your new project?*

Phineas: *"I could write a biography, I said to myself." (20)*

Charlotte: *So how did you embark?*

Phineas: *"I decided that I would do something Destry-Scholes himself claimed often to have done in his own research. I would visit the house where he was born." (30)*

Charlotte: *Good idea. Being present in the field. So what did you learn?*

Phineas: *"The house resembles, quite a lot, the square red brick box in which I was born in a suburb of Nottingham. I tried not to think of this. I don't like the place where I was born, and I don't go there. Destry-Scholes's childhood is nothing at all to do with mine." (31)*

Charlotte: *I see that you have set out to avoid giving any information about your own life and your own desires. You do not want to write the self-reflective, ambiguous texts you have been taught to do during your literary studies.*

Ethnographic fieldwork traditionally involves an eyewitness researcher who intends to capture the life of those in "the field" in a form that is as true as possible (Kerosuo, 2006:93). Critical self-reflections in ethnography have led researchers to speak about the "truth" of the research subject as an outcome of interaction, or even of collaboration between research subjects and researchers. Phineas can only perceive and describe the field in the light of his childhood. Edwards, Biesta and Thorpe (2009) describe how learning contexts – traditionally conceived as bounded containers – have been reconceptualized as fluid and relational by activity theory (Engeström, 1987), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), actor network theory and posthuman theorists. I had designed my own field study on the basis of situated learning theories, and I came to realize that in light of these, that while the "field" exists without an observer, the "field work" does not. (I have read this somewhere and forgotten who wrote it, so it is the voice of another, though uncredited, co-writer).

During my initial dialogues with Phineas, I sensed how epistemological struggle with representation and blurred genres compels us to ask how we come to think of things in a certain way and what would be made possible if we were to think otherwise (Lather, 2007).

Accordingly, it seemed possible to gain important insights about the field I was studying if I saw methodological struggles as a point of departure for analysis (Ringer, 2013).

Scene 5

Charlotte: *How is your research progressing? Perhaps you've received three documents written by your new object of study, the biographer Destry-Scholes?*

Phineas: *"I had the idea, which turned out to be hopelessly idealistic, that I should approach them with a completely open mind, a kind of the researcher's version of the tabula rasa." (35-36)*

Charlotte: *Me, too. So how did you manage to open your mind?*

Phineas: *"This was not difficult, as my hypotheses were very ghostly, thin air, no more."*

Charlotte: *Phineas, we need to find out what stories we want to tell.*

Phineas: *"So we piece things together. I shall describe the narratives as I found them."*

Charlotte: *I see. You give up on theory and describe the raw data. However, the very process of doing so creates new meanings and connections. Don't you see?*

Phineas: *"I give them baldly, out of their original crumpled chaos. There were no headings."*

Charlotte: *Cheer up! Life comes without headings.*

"Things" seem more factual than words, and Phineas longs for tangible facts out in the sun – "out in real life". It turns out, however, that the real life facts he is looking for are sparse and slippery. The three unpublished manuscripts deal with three historical personages – an explorer, a taxonomist and a poet - who in each of their individual contexts have tried to find an overall structure into which the parts fit, thus "bringing order to the rampant world of creatures and things" in Phineas' words. However, it becomes apparent to Phineas that language does not reflect but rather produces the truth, the meaning, the subjects (Varga-Dobai, 2012). Similarly, taped interviews and field notes do not constitute the "findings". The participants make choices about what to tell and display during the researcher's presence, and the data are always collected by a researcher who makes choices and

interpretations. “The raw data of ethnography are actually already cooked.“ (Packer, 2010:225).

Cultural analyses are thus situated, partial perspectives based on the researcher’s constructions (Hasse, 2011) If conclusions depend on the researcher’s categories and narratives and the researcher constructs the text, what kinds of responsibilities should the researcher have? What responsibilities are required if research texts are neither pure fiction nor the product of the researcher being a pure microphone holder? Hasse’s answer is that research is driven by the researcher’s engagement in learning. Theories and analytical concepts, experiences and preferences are tools that the researcher can carry with her into the field as inseparable companions (Hasse, 2011). However, the researcher must question the usefulness of these tools and allow the use of new tools (such as a co-writer) into the process so as to maintain her ability to see the material from different angels.

In *Writing Culture* Clifford and Marcus (1986:11) demonstrate how that which appears to be “real” or “common sense” is an outcome of social codes and conventions, and that the ethnographer’s absence from the text is but a rhetorical device which serves to establish authority. Referring to Clifford, Marcus argues for a fragmentation perspective in the sense that history is composed of various local narratives (Marcus, 1998:41). From a fragmentation perspective, the researcher regards cultures as constant movements. Reality is emerging, always ambiguous and complex (Hasse, 2011:53) and always open to “a multiplicity of interpretations that do not coalesce into a stable consensus” (Martin, 1992:53, cited in Hasse 2011). Richardson (1990:10) puts it this way:

> “Although a life is not a narrative, people make sense of their lives and the lives of others through narrative constructions. In our work as researchers, we weigh and sift experiences, make choices regarding what is significant, what is trivial, what to include, what to exclude. We do not simply chronicle “what happened next,” but place the “next” in a meaningful context. By doing so, we craft narratives; we write lives.”

The frames of reference, the metaphors, the tools you place beside you - and most important - your lived experience and values, shape what you perceive and thus what you chose to represent. This shaping of perception occurs unconsciously, as when Phineas associatively connects his decision to drop with a seminar on Frankenstein and his mother’s death. And it

can be sought out intentionally, as when I deliberately seek inspiration from fictional Phineas to inform my writing.

"Life is no text"

Bringing together ideas or objects from previously unrelated domains is perceived as a "hallmark of innovation" (Barley, 2006:18). In ethnography the innovation emerges through two intimately intertwined processes: fieldwork and writing (Hastrup, 1990). Presence [in the field] is no longer a source of absolute authority separated from writing – it is "the fiction of realism" (Hastrup, 1990:49). Geertz (1989:1) argues that it is an illusion that ethnography is a matter of sorting strange and irregular fact into familiar and orderly categories. He suggests that it is more "a kind of writing, putting things to paper", and in this dual nature of ethnographic practice of experiencing and writing, new worlds can be explored and created. As aptly noted by Richardson (2003:501) "I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it." Although "[l]ife is no text, and is not reducible to one," as Hastrup (1990:53) states, writers fashion empirical materials into a piece of prose; they transform interviews, documents and field notes into a text. This process requires complex decision-making (Richardson, 1990, 9).

Atkinson (1990) describes how the ethnographer, in the field, writes things *down* and then at a later stage writes things *up* into a report or a paper. Both these forms of writing involve textual constructions of reality in which the writing performs itself in different ways. Meanwhile, Phineas and I struggle to transform life into texts. We are part of the life we study, and our subjectivity is part of what we perceive. Yet in the majority of research texts, the researcher still seems strangely irrelevant.

Scene 6

Phineas: *"I am not interested in myself." (99).*

Charlotte: *Me neither. However, I have written a conference paper with the title "Would you like coffee? Using the researcher's insider and outsider positions as a sensitizing concept in a cross-organizational field study". The paper argues for a transversal play between insider and outsider positions from the perspective of my own temporary positions as a field researcher.*

Phineas: *"If I were to write about myself, where would I start? Arbitrarily, let me decide, with my socks. Socks are facts."*

Charlotte: *Arbitrarily? Socks! The paper is not about me. It's about the connections between people and artifacts. Coffee is a significant artifact which brings about significant emotions. Not like your socks. You're right, however, in the sense that this is just a personal account, and that it concerns only a single aspect of my research.*

Phineas: *"Unlike many people I know, I don't have lots of odd socks, because I take them off and roll them immediately into a single ball, which I put in a laundry-bag until I empty that into the launderette, and I repeat this process before leaving the launderette." (101)*

Charlotte: *You are such a stickler. Detail and completeness hasn't helped you much so far!*

Phineas: *"It is nonsense to say that you have always odd socks. This reads like a bit of Beckett, not like an autobiography. It is a fact, but it has a displaced, odd, surreal look."*

Charlotte: *You're right. An accumulation of facts doesn't make your story any more true. You are telling a story about your own low self-esteem and obsession with triviality.*

Phineas: *"What colour are socks?"*

Charlotte: *Please, stop this!*

Phineas: *"I could go on to other aspects of my daily life. Bookshelves, for instance, except that those could be seen as…"*

Charlotte: *Shut up!*

Having silenced Phineas, and thrown the novel into a corner of the room, I complete my paper and submit it to the conference website.

In the conference paper, I built a narrative on *coffee* as a material artifact and as a metaphor for being invited into social spaces. I based the paper on my own experiences during fieldwork. Though narrowed down to a single aspect of daily life in an educational institutional setting, I felt that this analysis captured a larger story about human experience. Nevertheless, I regarded the paper as a writing exercise, more of a detour from my main research project.

Scene 7

I return to my piles of paper, reorder them, take off my boots and climb up on my desk get an overview. I descend and go for a walk on them. The papers still feel slippery when you tread on them. Weeks go by, and I use my time to read several books about qualitative methodology. The piles of paper are not really piles anymore; rather, they erode into changing landscapes of unlived possibilities. Meanwhile, "reality" forces me to produce: I must present my project at a research workshop, and my supervisor invites me to co-write a paper with her.

I make a presentation at the research workshop proposing seven categories of how the actors in my field study interpret innovation. The audience finds the categories very reasonable and engages me in a dialogue about what we agree to term an 'innovation imperative'. When I return home, I reconstruct my data into three categories and write an article draft for my supervisor. This paper is later published with the title "The concept of innovation as perceived by public sector frontline staff" (Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013). Three categories seem just as relevant and reasonable as seven. Are three categories more true than seven? I miss Phineas.

I expected an analytical process of identifying categories embedded in the data and the "piecing together" of field notes, interview transcripts and documents as an activity separate from my subjective experiences and values. However, my anticipated neat categorization never emerged. Simultaneously, however, I had an urge to write papers based on specific parts of my data. I started to realize my own situatedness, my own values and goals as being essential elements of my research, and I began to produce different kinds of texts. But I was still unsure of whether these various texts were proper research.

Scene 8

Charlotte: *Phineas, I am not annoyed at you anymore. I see that you've come across all these index cards that Destry-Sholes wrote. You must be happy having such a large amount of "raw" facts?*

Phineas: *"My initial feeling on confronting the cards, with so limited time to read them in, was panic. I decided to read them all through, and to note - on paper – all the subjects of the 'entries'. Then I would look for groupings (if any) and copy out what I myself found most striking. What other approach could I use?" (144)*

Charlotte: *I don't know.*

Phineas: *"It was all peculiarly unsatisfactory."*

Charlotte: *I know. Despite your analytical efforts and struggle to separate your own life from your research, the data remain fragmented and unintelligible. Your new research project might fall short, but eighty pages later, it seems that you are still stuck?*

Phineas: *"I add some more random cards from the shoebox. They are random, that is to say, I picked them from their places (widely separated) and rearranged them in this document. The threads of connections are my own." (227)*

Charlotte: *Yes, the threads are our own. We seem to gradually realize that we must make decisions, take control and become the authors of our texts and of our lives. We have a shared story to tell.*

Hastrup stresses a particular way of being present in the field; not just being, but "becoming", and likewise, the writing process is a process of becoming. "The concept of becoming implies that one gives in to an alien reality and allows oneself to change in the process." (Hastrup, 1990:50). Time for closure? Not really. This kind of change is infinite.

The "why" with infinite answers

Scene 9

I complete another manuscript based on one of the three categories of innovation, arguing that innovations must be grounded in practitioners' values (Wegener, 2012). My workshop presentation with the seven categories remains untouched in my laptop folder together with other presentations. Once in a while, people who listen to my presentation tell me that it made an impact on their concept of innovation. So I decide that I might rework it into an article someday. I rewrite the conference paper "Would you like coffee?" and submit it to a journal. Finally, I am beginning to give up looking for the big truth and realize that I am, just like Phineas, deliberately constructing my data into categories and narratives of experienced truth. Are categories embedded in the data or made up by the researcher? Does the truth lie in categorization or in narrating? The answer is "Yes". This is great!

A Biographer's Tale tells the story of human eager to make connections, to make things fit together, to make sense. In another of Byatt's novels, one of her protagonists observes: "Coherence and closure are deep human desires that are presently unfashionable. But they are always both frightening and enchantingly desirable." (Byatt, 1990:456) However, in opposition to this desire for absolute truth and certainty is the often overlooked desire for uncertainty, adventure and exploration. This human proclivity is often satisfied by knowledge created within the arts (Otto, 2007). I find both kinds of desires represented in the novel – and in my own process of becoming a researcher through writing and co-writing. Fictional genres and co-writing with fictional characters as research tools generate, if not unquestionable "facts", then at least some truths about the field under study.

In this paper, I have told a story about how I brought a fictional character into my writing and turned it into co-writing. Or did Phineas enter my world without being invited? Nevertheless, he helped me in as least two ways. On the one hand, he served as a lever for alienating (Delamont, Atkinson & Pugsley, 2010) myself from my writing process. On the other hand, Phineas enabled me to immerse myself into self-conscious writing in innovative ways. I tried an oft-cited phrase: "When all else fails, try something counterintuitive" (Newell, Shaw & Simon, 1962). Letting the categorization work alone for a while, exploring places outside the "dirty windows" like walking the beach and turning to dialogue with fiction inspired me to interact with my data in new ways and make decisions about which categories and narratives to craft. I realized that the gap between art and science is really a path with a variety of blending possibilities. I started "being conscious about the interpretative process of selecting methods and genres" (Ellington, 2011:595). Alas, Phineas was still with me, at times tapping me on the shoulder.

Scene 10

Charlotte: *So, Phineas, I see that your hero Destry-Scholes has deliberately woven lies and inventions into his collection of facts. This is disappointing, isn't it?*

Phineas: *"I seemed to understand that the imaginary narrative had sprung out of the scholarly one, and that the compulsion to invent was in some way related to my own sense that in constructing this narrative I have had to insert facts about myself, and not only dry facts, but my feelings, and now my interpretations."(236-237)*

Charlotte: *Yes, these lies made you reflect upon your assumptions of reality and how to write about reality.*

Phineas: *"I have somehow been made to write my own story, to write in different ways." (237)*

Charlotte: *Your writing is fragmentary just like your story consists of fragmentary information about fragmentary lives. Your data is a range of odd artifacts – unfinished manuscripts, marbles and index cards - not fitting into categories and not really making you or me more informed. One narrative, however, runs through the fragments, and that is the story of writing as a life-extending human activity.*

Phineas: *"Reading and writing extends – not infinitely, but violently, but giddily – the variations we can perceive on the truth we thus discover." (237)*

Inspired by Phineas' open-ended textual collage, I gave up on finite categorizing and ordering and let go of *one* ending or solution. I accepted that the ethnographer constructs reality partly on the basis of his or her interests (Marcus, 1998). Or as stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2007:8): "There is no 'correct' telling of this event."

Contestation of realism, however, "should not make us lose sight of the reality of fieldwork and of 'realism' as a quite respectable epistemology" (Hastrup, 1990:50). There is, in fact, a reality to be explored and truths to be told.

Another precaution to be mentioned here is that experimental writing in ethnography risks missing the point that *all* writing is performative (Packer, 2010:239):

> "If experimental writing becomes merely a celebration of relativity, it will merely undercut the radicality of the debate over ethnography, which is not that there is no truth, but that truths are products of the contacts among distinct forms of life, conditioned by historical and cultural circumstances that are themselves results of struggles for power."

Thus, qualitative research must aim at telling a moral narrative about things we want to pursue, the *why* of qualitative research (Packer, 2010). Phineas sets out to find "facts" about a "real" person, the biographer Destry-Scholes, only to discover that the bits of information are open-ended and that "piecing things together" seems impossible. The data is not just limited, fragmented and messy. It is untrustworthy, ambiguous and open to several interpretations.

Byatt's project is to show that dichotomies are inadequate when dealing with the complexities involved in the study of social life and subjectivity. She demonstrates how the accumulation and meticulous ordering of facts do not generate the big truth, but that several truths lie in the compatibility of so-called "real life" and "research", in the encounters between researcher (and the people the researcher brings with him or her) and the researched. Like Phineas, I finally gave up my quest to discover an overall consistency and to make everything fit into a whole. In particular, Phineas' struggle with categorization and the breakdown of his intended structuring of data provided me with an ironic distance to my own struggles.

In co-writing with Phineas, he came to serve as a catalyst in the process of construction and deconstruction of categories and the relation between the research project and the researcher's experiences and values. Most importantly, Phineas informed the way I chose to be present in my writing. Through Phineas' meticulous analytic strategies, which resulted only in confusion and disillusion, I faced the dead end of my own meticulous analyses and accepted that I could write different types of texts with different arguments and forms of representation (Richardson, 1990; Ellington, 2011). I did not turn into an autobiographer (though this paper is autobiographic). Rather, I searched for a "writer stance" (Hyland, 2002), constituted certain values and thus privileged some orderings of facts over others (Richardson, 1990). Together with Phineas, I gradually learned the craft of transforming life into research texts and found a "voice of experience" (Willis, 2008:49).

Scene 11

Phineas: *"I have nearly reached the end of this story. Not of my life, but of that fragment of the tapeworm that began in one dusty-windowed room in Prince Albert College." (249)*

Charlotte: *Yes, this tapeworm made you search for facts and write about facts. However, you reported this search for facts in your own ambiguous and subjective writing.*

Phineas: *"I have admitted I am writing a story which in a haphazard (aleatory) way has become a first-person story, and, from being a story of a search told in the first person, has become, I have to recognise – a first-person proper, an autobiography."*

Charlotte: *I like the story of the researcher getting back into the research text. Through our dialogues, the first person singular turned into a first person plural.*

Phineas: *"I detest autobiography. Slippery, unreliable, and worse, imprecise."*

Charlotte: *However, you actually transformed real life into a real text.*

Phineas: *"So I am going to stop writing this story. The problem is I have become addicted to writing – that is, to setting down the English language, myself, in arrangements chosen by me, for – let it be admitted – pleasure." (250)*

Charlotte: *Pleasure is not a bad driver for writing. Speaking of pleasure, Phineas, guess how I realized the theme "facts" and "truths" for this piece of writing? I was two weeks delayed, and I knew I had to work hard to reach the kindly extended new deadline. However, I went to have coffee with a friend, and while he waited for the coffee at the bar, I chose a table in a nice spot with shade and a gentle breeze. On the table was this sign in a shiny picture frame:*

William Faulkner
"Facts and truth really
don't have much to do
with each other."

By the way, did you and Vera ever find the "marble taxonomy"?

Phineas: *"We massed the marbles randomly in a great glass bowl I bought her for a present. We stood them where the soft light filtered through them." (252)*

Charlotte: *Writing does extend life. And soft light through colored glass is surely a great answer to the "why" of qualitative research.*

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11. Conclusion

So, how do social practices across boundaries unfold in the field of social and health care education in the light of innovation imperatives? Here, I will sum up reflections from the prior chapters and the articles. The sub-questions are addressed in Chapter 12.

Craft, levers and purpose

When innovation is regarded as integrated into work practices and not just the transfer of imposed requirements, educators and students become key stakeholders in the development of the social practice. The actors are required to build and maintain a professional identity as teacher, social and health care worker or assistant, educational staff member or manager. At the same time, they must continuously meet the needs and requirements from care recipients, deal with new ways of organizing, react to new legislation and adjust to new financial incentives and constraints. Ambivalence and constant balancing are embedded in these practices. The point of departure of this research project was a single type of normative imperative: 'We need more innovation!' I embarked on a journey and arrived at another type of normative imperative: 'We need stability to ground desirable innovations! Innovation is not just a question of individuals being or becoming creative, nor is it a matter of being more or less open-minded toward change and innovation imperatives. It is not just about overcoming boundaries to create change. It is, I argue, also about amplifying boundaries so as to create stability. Without stability, no innovation.

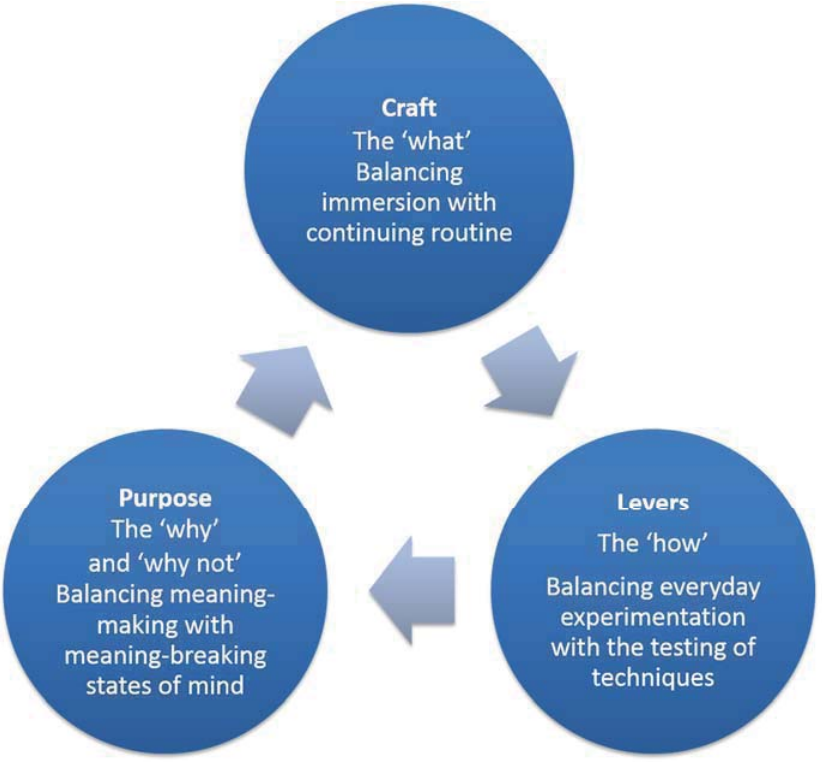
The dissertation shows that many different stakeholders are involved directly or indirectly in collaboration in the field of social and health care educations, and that access to decision-making and dialogue across boundaries differs between actors. The media and public rhetoric have great influence on how innovation is perceived and enacted. The field is thus complex, and the imperatives for innovation and change may generate, or reinforce contradictions and ambivalence for the actors in the field. As such these actors are both objects of these contradictions and ambivalences but creators of them as well.

I suggest three driving forces in innovation processes: 'craft', 'levers' and 'purpose'. These forces are based primarily on the model suggested in Article B; however, the value dimension (labeled 'ethics' in the article) is slightly elaborated here, based on Article C. It seems to me that 'purpose' is a category of the same kind as 'craft' and 'levers'. It is a driving force. Here, I add the idea that each of these forces contains a degree of ambiguity, thus entailing the need

for actors to balance different kinds of activity. These 'balancing acts' can be described as follows:

- Craft: balancing immersion with continuing routine to get things done.
- Levers: balancing everyday experimentation with the testing of instrumental innovation techniques.
- Purpose: balancing meaning-making with meaning-breaking states of mind.

Table 5: Three central forces in innovation processes



These three forces and their inherent binaries seem to be central to innovation as social practice. This issue is addressed in the following.

Everyday innovation and boundary pushing

Public innovation rhetoric tends to celebrate visible and radical changes at the expense of improvisations, small modifications and everyday openings for innovation (Fenwick, 2012; Wegener & Tanggaard, 2013). Attempts to appreciate a specific type of innovation may render it visible, while other types of innovation remain or become invisible within the discourses of public innovation. Similar conclusions in the field of social and health care are outlined from

interview studies (Fuglsang, 2010) and action research on innovation (Hillier & Figgis, 2011), where participants are described as occupied with actual problem-solving in a complex, demanding and dynamic context, while, at the same time, the actors associate innovation imperatives with major, revolutionary changes. The innovation imperative and research based solely on the high status of radical innovation runs the risk of devaluating everyday practice as a source of innovative thinking and acting.

Did I see innovation at boundaries? Not really. At least not in ways described in theories of boundary-crossing. I found innovation, however, but it was innovation of a more modest kind. It was innovation that was easily overlooked but with intrinsic change potential. Did I see boundaries? Many actors in the field find the boundary metaphor useful, and the conceptualization of boundary-crossing in Article A is a useful pedagogical tool when I speak at mentor training courses and at municipal innovation seminars. The model proposed in the article always initiates dialogues among participants and thus seems to serve as a tool for bringing different perspectives together (and maybe even for 'knot-working'). However, 'boundary' is a much more complex, unmanageable and annoying metaphor than I expected. I did not find a better concept during my study, so I do not abandon it. Rather, I tentatively connect boundary with another verb, to *push*, and suggest a related, but distinctive concept: 'boundary-pushing'. While 'boundary-crossing' may indicate an activity of the individual in relation to something which is there, something fixed in time and space, 'boundary-pushing' suggests activities in which both the individual and the social space change. Students, educators, meeting chairpersons and policy-makers can push seemingly fixed boundaries and thus create spaces for shared exploration and experimentation.

Based on the notion of 'everyday innovation' as put forward by Lippke and Wegener (2013), I suggest that innovation initiatives as shared exploration and experimentation address goals (intentions) and enactments (change) and seek to secure a balance between continuity and discontinuity in practice. The term 'everyday innovation' is suggested in the field of elder care by Nählinder and Sundin (2009) as a strategy to take innovations from employees in care organizations to the market. Here, I use the term to underscore how routine, relations and skills built over time are stabilizing factors from which both change and stability can be reinforced. I tentatively conceptualize everyday innovation as *the dynamic between intentional engagement and actual change in practice.* Everyday innovation should thus be distinguished form a radical innovation which comes from an outside imperative or change agent. This conceptualization of everyday innovation can thus evade discussions of the degree of novelty

(local or global), and value (for whom and, in this respect, conflicting interests). It also distinguishes innovation from ‘development’ and ‘change’, which may be unintended or beyond human influence. Additionally, it delimits innovation from ‘learning’, which may be a prerequisite for or an outcome of innovation but does not necessarily lead to an actual change in the social practice.

Both change and stability are needed because innovation involves epistemological and ontological issues of both meaning-making and also loss of meaning. The innovation imperative that constituted my point of departure is thus replaced by an imperative to act and interact, as stated here by Weick (2009:vii) quoting Dewey:

> people try to fold order into streaming, changing experience. My efforts to understand these ongoing efforts are guided by John’s Dewey’s imperative for action: ‘So act as to increase meaning of present experience’ (Dewey, 1922, p. 283). I want to suggest that people in general try to follow this imperative. And I want to provide specific ideas and images that can become part of the reader’s attempt to increase the meaning of his or her experience or to craft a more compelling imperative.

The student Winnie’s new way of organizing her morning care tasks or the examples used in teacher Betinna’s diabetes class are prime examples of boundary-pushing and thus everyday innovations. Winnie and Betinna try to reflect, combine and interact with people and things at hand. They try to increase the meaning of their practices and make them meaningful to others. The craft of innovating involves both intentional boundary-pushing and the unintentional managing of situations where actors experiment with the material at hand, make mistakes or solve emerging needs and problems. At a later stage, this unintentional problem-solving or learning from errors may turn into deliberate change and thus be termed ‘everyday innovation’. In this process, new boundaries are drawn, others disappear or are revised. Some of ‘us’ become ‘them’, and some of ‘them’ ‘us’.

12. Reading innovation forwards

‘Not finished, only over’

It is time to stop. The dissertation has to be submitted soon. This is a limitation per se. In the words of Van Maanen ([1988] 2011:120): ‘We know that our analyses are not finished, only over.’ My own ambivalence has been both a force to keep on questioning and experimenting but also a limitation that prevented me from arriving at any closure and conclusion. My escape from innovation conferences and my barricading against the seductive rhetoric of slow innovation in my mailbox pushed me, as did the dialogues with people in the field and with peers. ‘You are not ambivalent’ my writing buddy, Karen, said after having read a draft, ‘you just disapprove’. She was right. I headed back for constructive perspectives on innovation, and I hope I have managed to keep this dissertation ambivalent. I still go to innovation conferences, and I still get exhausted and confused. However, I also meet inspiring people and sometimes I even get a new idea or initiate a new project while being there. Real innovation requires active transformation processes that shape new solutions but also new problems (Hasse, 2011). Assuming this research process holds acts of ‘real innovation’, did I then reach any solutions? What kind of new problems arose out of my research?

At times, I was more interested in the activity of unpacking and exploring than in what I actually found ‘inside’ innovation. In Chapter 2 I asked: ‘How do we research a buzz-word beyond familiarity and fashion?’ Eventually, I became more and more interested in this ‘doing’, as stated by (Van Maanen, [1988] 2011) in his description of the impressionist tale, However, it is time to stop seeking out professional amazement and finally finish the text. This is also a crucial element regarding innovation in social and health care. Innovation imperatives do not leave much time for ‘retreating’ (for a better jump) as Koestler put it. The imperative seems to be ‘forward, forward!’ But where are we heading? What do we leave behind? Alice, manager at the elder care center, talked about her own role in relation to her boss Helge: ‘I have told Helge that we are not going to initiate anything new for the time being. We also need to get things finished.’ We met Helge in one of the initial quotes. According to him, employees who feel exhausted just have to accept that change is on the agenda because no place is free from the imperatives of change. He is right. He is also wrong.

People make agendas. People deal with outside interventions and change imperatives with identity and agency (Billett, 2009, 2010). Resistance and subversion are essential to actual change and to change imperatives at workplaces. They are ‘not accidental disturbances to be

eliminated' (Engeström, 2009:320). One explanation as to why actors say 'No' to innovation lies in the business and economic connotations. Oliver (2009) notes that conceptualizations of innovation as invariably 'new' or 'improved' are directly inherited from a business model in which government, like business, can achieve greater efficiency and profitability. He conceptualizes creativity by way of its process and innovation by way of its products. To read creativity as innovation is to 'read it backwards, in terms of results, instead of forwards, in terms of movements that gave rise to them' (Oliver, 2009:319). Did I read innovation as creativity? I did read innovation forwards -- as potential -- and claimed that this is possible. I could have studied creativity, and I may have ended up reaching similar or other conclusions. However, the field of social and health care is loaded with innovation discourses and innovation imperatives. I felt that this concept needed new perspectives. If innovation is here to stay (in the social and health care sector and in other public welfare domains), other criteria than novelty and value might be needed, as also suggested by Tanggaard and Hjorth (2012). These alternative criteria have to acknowledge that *desired change* is more important than novelty, and that value must be understood not only in terms of value *creation* (economic or non-economic), to which frontline actors are required to contribute, but also as these actors' value-based practices (Wegener, 2012b).

Implications for practice

The first sub-question was: In which ways, if any, is a practice-based understanding of innovation useful in this field, and is it possible to identify context-specific notions of innovation? Answers to this question might be these:

Demographic and economic challenges are supposed to be solved by means of innovation. From a policy level, innovation is included in most curricula from secondary level and up. Governmental as well as private funds support innovation project, new ideas, and pilot projects. These funds govern activities to develop ideas and test them in measurable ways. 'This appears as common sense, particularly economically, but it also depends on a form of reductionism to quantifiable indicators, and ultimately a target-driven public sphere' as noted by Oliver (2009:321). It has to be 'for the first time', with 'new collaboration partners' and preferably a lot of them. I suggest that these requirements are due to a failure to acknowledge of everyday innovation. Radical change is needed; however, everyday innovation based on actors mastery of skills, taking time, offering company and being curious is vital in the social and health care sector and other welfare domains as well.

From an overall perspective, the actors in this study share the goal of educating and retaining skilled employees with a capability to run and develop the field of social and health care. However, this dissertation points at conflicting interests and contrasting aims which, at times, cause resistance to innovation, limit shared perspectives and generate apparent inertia and inadequate implementation of change initiatives. The actors in this study express ambivalence and feelings of imbalance between stability and change. Their sense of stability is sometimes so weak that the energy and desire to initiate change is limited. Instead, they focus their efforts on creating a well-functioning everyday work life, caring for the care recipients, for themselves and for their peers. They endeavor to shield themselves from change that looks like deterioration. Innovation is regarded as a concept from another domain (technical, economic or simply 'the private sector') that invades the actors' domain, where terms such as 'ethics', 'empathy' and 'presence' should be used instead of 'services', 'products' and 'bottom line'. Part of the collaborative activities is focused on negotiations, issues of access and on finding quick solutions to external requirements and change. Projects with an innovative aim tend to be regarded as detached from the daily work practices and even contributing to dichotomies such as the 'development oriented' (those who happily embrace innovation) or the 'sluggish' (those reluctant to involve in innovation) or -- reversing the argument -- the 'irresponsible' (those who too happily embrace innovation) or those 'who make ends meet' (and are therefore reluctant to innovate).

Parallel to this rather pessimistic angle, the study also tells a story of a cross-organizational field of teeming actors, who are involved in dialogues, who adjust and experiment with new ways of working and problem-solving. This pushing of boundaries is not the collaborative innovation that consultancy reports are made of, and they do not get funding. This story is populated with people who first and foremost *do*. They operate within their everyday work together with a range of collaborative partners, care recipients and students with whom they build relations, enhance skills and explore new ways of working in productive balances between routines and change.

Implications for theory and methodology

In which ways, if any, does a practice-based understanding of innovation inform a broader theoretical field of public innovation? What insights of methodological relevance does this study offer to the study of cross-boundary innovation? These sub-questions are addressed here.

Based on the notion of everyday innovation, I have suggested the term 'boundary-pushing' to illuminate how continuity and discontinuity unfold simultaneously in practice. Stabilizing is necessary in order to create spaces in which people feel safe enough to invest themselves in small or large-scale experimentation and change. Additionally, the notion of boundary-pushing serves as a theoretical tool to grab a core activity of 'everyday innovation'. 'Boundary-pushing' might be an example of Dewey's term 'transaction' (Dewey & Bentley, [1949] 1960). The term was in the periphery of my attention for a long time, but I realized it too late to really integrate it into my analyses.[10] According to Dewey, 'inter-action' refers to causal interconnections, while 'trans-action' refers to processes of inseparable organism-environment situations. I have not used 'interaction' to indicate any causality; however, my final conceptualizations may rather be termed 'transaction'.

Returning to Packer's 'why' of qualitative research, this dissertation adds a critical perspective to the public innovation imperative. Maybe innovation is not the (only) answer to future welfare challenges. Stagnation, stability and even regression (as my initially suggested binaries to innovation in Chapter 4), seem essential to a well-functioning welfare sector. Maybe these processes should not be condemned as barriers to innovation or barriers to welfare but as sustainable preconditions *for* future welfare, along with change and innovation. An old idea that might inspire future research is Koestler's term 'bisociation', which challenges the linear views about change and creativity. Researching innovation through methodologies of meaning-breaking (that allows for bisociation) activities is worth pursuing. Most of us are well-trained in knot-working. We need to practice not-knowing. I have performed this exercise of balancing the two over and over. Through writing from different angles, writing different types of texts with different arguments and forms of representation (Richardson, 1990), I aimed at the 'doing', in the words of Van Maanen ([1988] 2011) in his description of the impressionist tale; to continuously interact (or maybe trans-act) with theory, the field and my own visions and values. For Richardson (2003) the image of the crystal combines multidimensionalities and angles of approach. What we see when we look at a crystal depends on how we hold it up to the light. Innovation is a nice crystal, but there are other crystals worth letting the light shine through. Whether situations of pushing boundaries deserve the label 'innovation' is a question not easily answered. From this perspective, however, another relevant question is how social and health care and the related educations may also be regarded as a pioneering sector. When

[10] Thank you, Raymond Smith, for your presentation at the 8th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning, Scotland, June 2013.

asking: ‘How is the social and health care sector affected by innovation imperatives?’ we may also ask the reverse question: ‘How are innovation imperatives affected by the notion of care?’

On the Stanford Social Innovation blog[11], elder care is emphasized as a field which may offer a philosophical contribution to a wider field of social innovation. Social innovators, the blogger argues, like to talk about ‘solutions’, about ‘gaps’ that can be ‘closed’ and ‘problems’ that can be ‘solved’. This is not the kind of rhetoric one hears in the field of elder care, he writes, and I agree. The main concern is *care*: death is inevitable, as we are dealing with alleviation of distress, relief of pain and existential questions at the end of life. Elder care can propose a distinctly modest approach about ‘good’, ‘better’ and ‘bad’ to the idea of innovation. Such modesty might inspire the general debate and research in the field of public innovation. In fact, *care* may become a new buzz-word, a pervasive discourse or even a new imperative for societies and workplaces, as mentioned to introduce the innovation concept in Chapter 2. A sign of this trend toward ‘care’ as a new buzz-word is ‘Code of Care’[12], a Danish non-profit organization that works with companies to hire workers who would normally be regarded as unable to work. Their slogan is ‘More care, less me’, indicating the need for a less egoistic and more inclusive and caring labor market and society.

Based on empirical studies in health care, Mol (2008) has suggested the term ‘the logic of care’, which -- like ‘bisociative thinking’ -- challenges linear conceptions of change. In many practices, care practices included, Mol argues, time is not linear. One thing does not follow from and after the other. Practices are brought into being once and again. Rather than fitting with ideas of control, such processes depend on differences among the involved parties, on trying things out, telling stories and sharing values:

> So in the logic of care, defining ‘good’, ‘worse’ and ‘better’ does not precede practice, but forms part of it. A difficult part too. One that gives ample occasion for ambivalences, disagreements, insecurity, misunderstandings and conflicts. Nobody ever said that care would be easy. Establishing what ‘better’ might be is a difficult task, and once it seems to be clear, something is likely to change. Try again. On and on it goes. ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ are never settled in the logic of care.

[11] http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/elderly_care_and_the_future_of_social_innovation#bio-footer

[12] http://om.cchobby.dk/pages/webside.asp?articleGuid=118046

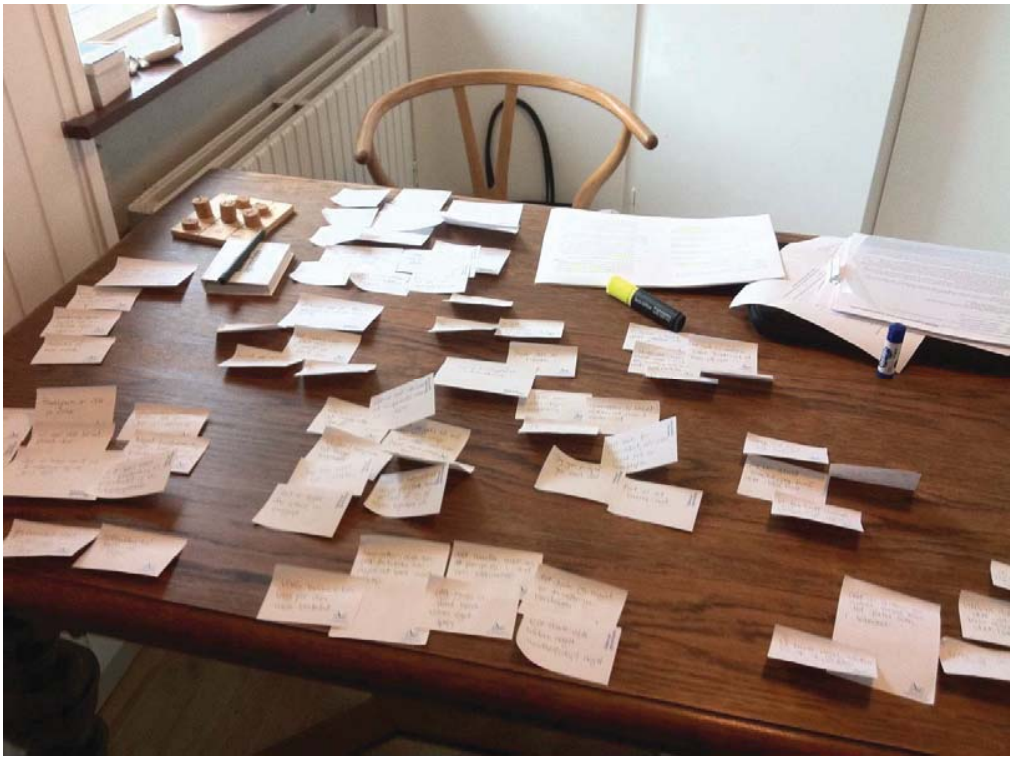
Following the logic of care, it might be possible to free innovation from its economic and technical connotations and reconstruct it on the premises of specific public domains. We might even decide to replace innovation with a more care-oriented concept.

Appendix: Interview protocol

Theoretical themes	Interview questions
Boundary zones and the role as a broker	Please tell me about your workplace – the place where you usually go to work. Where is it, who are you with, and what do you do when you are there? Where do you go when you leave your workplace to collaborate with the college/practice/municipality? Who do you meet with, and what kinds of work tasks do you engage in? Do collaborative partners from the college/practice/the municipality sometimes visit you at your workplace? If so, what kind of work tasks do you engage in? Do you engage in collaborative activities with the college/practice without meeting in a physical sense? How does it work and what is the collaboration about?
Communities of practice and meeting of perspectives	Who do you consider to be the most important people in your working life? Who do you consider to be the most important people from the college/practice (where the interviewee does not work)? Do you have an example of collaboration between the college and practice where perspectives meet and different point of views are at stake? Did it lead to new ideas/solutions? Or did it become a deadlock? Do you have an example of valuable collaboration? What does it provide to you and your workplace? Do you have an example of difficult or dissatisfactory collaboration? Do you consider any missed opportunities for collaboration across organizations?
Mediating artefacts/boundary objects	Do you have examples of collaboration across organizations with fixed procedures (e.g. agendas, annual plans, attendees, chairmen) Are there any codes (written/unwritten) Which codes and procedures do you appreciate? Why? Which codes and procedures do you dislike? Why? Which documents are present in the college/practice collaboration (e.g. summaries, reports, legal texts, information materials)? What do you use them for? Where are they?
The initiation of an expansive cycle	Did anything in your work life recently make you wonder, or did you question something? Did you discuss it with anyone? Do you have examples of areas where new ways of acting or thinking occurred recently? What initiated it? Do you consider the new way of acting or thinking to be an improvement?

Boundary-crossing facilitating innovation	Did you recently become curiously or did you recently learn something new from collaboration with the college/practice? Has your workplace or part of it been involved in collaborative activities with the college/practice? What topic did the collaboration address? What happened and did it affect the way you work /perform tasks now?
Innovation definition, discourse and similar terms	Is innovation a topic at your workplace? If so, who uses the word innovation? If you do not use the term, how can we talk about the topic using other terms? Did you participate in any events or projects together with the college/practice, dealing with innovation? Did you attend any other events or projects together with the college/practice? What was it about? What do you consider to be the outcome? Do you have examples of areas where innovation took place? What does innovation mean, according to you? Can you identify what supports and restricts innovation? Do you participate in activities that contribute to development of the social and health care field?
Present and future challenges that bring out innovation – zone of proximal development	Have you recently experienced changes or new requirements to you and your colleges? How do/did you and your colleges react? Do any of the changes involve collaborating partners from the college/practice? Do some of the changes concern both the college and practice? Do you have examples of the college and practice solving problems together? Do you have examples of the college and practice causing problems for each other? In your opinion, what are the main areas of collaboration in the near future?
Identification of brokers, boundary zones and boundary objects	I would like to talk to other persons involved in cross-collaborative activities. Who would you recommend I could meet? I would like to do field studies on cross-collaborative activities. Which activities/places would you recommend? In your opinion, where is it possible to actually *observe* collaboration across organizations? I would like to read documents concerned with cross-organizational collaboration? Which documents would you recommend?

Across sites – coding and coffee



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