

Vibeke Solbue, Bergen University College:

Intercultural education in the footsteps of Fargespill

Tuesday 07.06 at 14.00

Venue: Bergen University College, room TBA

Keywords: Intercultural education, intercultural competences, dialogue, inter-subjectivity

Abstract: The presentation will focus on intercultural education. How can we recognize key elements from intercultural theory in the methodology of Fargespill?

Intercultural education is an approach derived from multicultural education that places great importance on relational factors. It is not based on such categories as ethnic Norwegians or immigrants. In intercultural education, inter-subjectivity and dialogue are emphasized, both of which are essential factors to provide an education that supports social equality.

In order to get a picture of intercultural education, the typologies of the intercultural class that served as a case study for my doctoral dissertation will be presented. This study was conducted in the first year of a general education class in upper secondary school, where 11 of 24 students were immigrants. Previous research on immigrants in Norwegian schools tends to show a picture of a marginalized group despite an institutional context characterized by egalitarianism. The analysis shows that diversity is accepted in the class. Pupils demonstrate mutual respect for each other and they do not define others based on ethnicity. The way the school and the teachers work with the class is a central factor in forming mutual acceptance. An intentional structure frames the possibilities for inter-subjective relations. Through these possibilities the participants create mutual meaning.

In order to understand more of the intercultural class and the power of intercultural education, I will go further with the analyses and look closer at the concept and the recognition of intercultural competencies in the class.

Key questions:

Why is intercultural education a way to understand the power in and of the diverse society?

Why is it important for teachers to focus on the intercultural competences that students bring into the society?

Recommended Reading:

Solbue, V. (2014). Dialogen som visker ut kategorier: En studie av hvilke erfaringer innvandrerdømmere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre har med videregående skole. Hva forteller ungdommenes erfaringer om videregående skoles håndtering av etniske ulikheter? Doctoral thesis. University of Bergen.

Solbue, V., Helleve, I., Smith, K. (2014). "In this class we are so different that I can be myself!" Opportunities in diversity in a first grade upper secondary school in Norway. Revised version under review in *Journal of Intercultural Education* (Published in the Doctoral thesis)

Solbue, V. (2013). Praksisfellesskap innvandrerungdom erfarer i møte med videregående skole. (Community of practice immigrant youth experience meeting upper secondary school). *Utbildning & Demokrati* 22(2), 59-80.

Thomas Solomon, University of Bergen:

The Play of Colors: Staging Multiculturalism in Norway

Tuesday 07.06 at 14.00

Venue: Bergen University College, room TBA

Keywords: multiculturalism, minorities, majoritarian/minoritarian, representation

Abstract: Fargespill ("play of colors") is a series of musical performances in Norway that have been staged from 2004 to the present. Each performance consists of a sequence of musical and dance numbers performed by children and youth from different minority and immigrant groups, many of whom came to Norway as refugees, together with white Norwegian children. The songs and choreographies represent the home countries of the children who perform, and have included for example music and dance from Somalia, Myanmar (Burma), Rwanda, Kurdistan, and Eritrea, combined together with Norwegian folk music in often elaborate production numbers with colorful costumes and complex musical arrangements. While the specific musical numbers used and cast members may change from one performance season to the next, the concept remains the same - a representation of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity in Norway staged through the voices and bodies of the children on stage.

Using as a starting point recent theorizations of multiculturalism and discussions of race and racism in Norway, this presentation offers a critical perspective on Fargespill. I also draw on Deleuze and Guattari's twin concepts of majoritarian/minoritarian to interpret Fargespill's representations. I argue that while Fargespill represents itself as being a minoritarian mode of expression, it is actually fully in the majoritarian mode, as it incorporates the sounding and moving bodies of minority and refugee children into a script that reinstatiates existing narratives about Norwegian cultural identity and the place of minorities in Norwegian society. I thus explore the question of whether the representations of Fargespill constitute a positive contribution to creating a climate for embracing difference in Norway, or whether Fargespill is better understood as a reassuring story white Norwegians tell themselves about multicultural Norway that, at best, naively sidesteps ongoing problems of racism and intolerance toward minorities and immigrants endemic in contemporary Norwegian society.

Key questions:

How do Fargespill's representations of cultural diversity in Norway, however well-intended, promote already existing majority-centered values and reconstitute existing techniques for managing cultural difference in Norway?

What role does music play in Fargespill's representations of multicultural integration in Norway?

Recommended reading:

Bogue, Ronald. 2005. "The Minor." In Giles Deleuze: Key Concepts, edited by Charles J. Stivale, 110-120. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Gressgård, Randi. 2010. *Multicultural Dialogue: Dilemmas, Paradoxes, Conflicts*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Gullestad, Marianne. 2004. "Blind Slaves of our Prejudices: Debating 'Culture' and 'Race' in Norway." *Ethnos* 69(2):177-203.