



The driving teachers' assessment during traffical training, related to the learning goals of reflection and self-knowledge.

Paper for the 2nd NORBIT Scientific Conferense

Current research about transport behaviour in the Nordic countries

Reykjavik, Iceland, August 11th and 12th 2008

Elisabeth Suzen

Nord-Trøndelag University College

Faculty of Education of Driving Instructors

Stjørdal, Norway

<http://www.hint.no>

elisabeth.suzen@hint.no

From 1st of January 2005 new curricula for all driving licence categories were introduced in Norway. This new curricula represent a wider way of thinking in the traffic field, especially didactical categories, which is my field of interest. This paper presents my ongoing PhD project within the subject of didactics. My project will focus on assessment as a didactic category in the curricula, and the implementation of the curriculum among the driving teacher, related to the teachers' self-reflection upon their own assessment practice.

1. Introduction

From 1st of January 2005 new curricula for all driving licence categories were introduced in Norway. The background was that the National Transport Plan 2002-2011 (NTP) pointed out the need for a comprehensive treatment of the entire driving training, as well as the fact that



studies have shown that young, inexperienced drivers are particularly prone to accidents. Based on this, the intention was to improve the quality of the driving training, and to prevent traffic accidents as well as unwanted traffical behaviour, especially among young drivers.

The new curricula represent a wider way of thinking in the traffic field, especially when it comes to didactic categories, where the content and structure of the curricula are mainly based on the GADGET matrix. But changes in content and aimss for training also require *changes in the ways we assess the student*. Therefore, one of the challenges we are facing today is how to assess the learners, mainly when it comes to the more general abstract subjects such as self-knowledge and reflection. The Norwegian model of driving training doesn't present any general platform for how to implement the aims and content in the curriculum. Thereby, the teachers get to use their professional knowledge to interpret the curriculum (Rismark, Stenøien & Sølvsberg, 2004). There are several criteria for a successful curriculum, one being the teachers' ability to comprehend and describe what actually takes place during tuition. It is, in other words, essential that the teacher has the competence and ability required to analyze, interpret and assess (Dale, 1992).

The system is complex, and presents different challenges to the teacher during the implementation. The current curriculum presents few guidelines and rules for implementation. The teachers' professional knowledge is to a larger extent required, than if those guidelines were given; this reflection and deliberation on practice is not requested to the same extend if the curriculum presents guidelines and rules for the implementation. How do the teachers face this challenge? And also; is the teachers' assessment too focused on the final exam, thus narrowing the assessment? My PhD-study will focus on how assessment is introduced as a didactical category in the curriculum, how the teachers have interpreted the curriculum and the teachers' assessment skills and techniques related to the learning aims of reflection and self-knowledge. The purpose is to reach an understanding of;

1. assessment as a didactic category in the new curriculum
2. how the teachers interpret the curriculum
3. in which ways they have implemented this in their practice.



2. Curriculum driving licence category B and BE

The main aim in the traffical education is to gain traffical competence. Road traffic competence is the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation the driver needs to handle the road traffic environment in a safe manner (Læreplanen kl B og BE, 2004:7). The motivation and the willingness are thereby superior factors. The superior aim is to develop the learners' reflection, understanding and attitudes which in all will gain and develop safe traffic behaviour (Rismark, Stenøien og Sølvsberg, 2004). The traffic education, as it stands out, put more emphasis on the learners involvement and have included more abstract goals in the education (Læreplanen kl B og BE, 2004).

Further on, the Norwegian curricula emphasises the learners reflection on the complex system that driving is, and the responsibility of the individual driver (Læreplan kl B og BE, 2004:9). To enhance the driver's reflection, understanding and self-knowledge are the overriding principles.

Seven subjects are included in the driving training, which all are important to gain road traffic competence. "*Tendencies with regard to actions and assessment*" and "*Self- knowledge*" are among those seven. The curriculum reads: "*...learners must gain experience in reflecting on the way they tend to act and make assessment and thereby gain a deeper understanding of what it means to travel on the road. The subject should be emphasised both initially and at the end of the training*". (Læreplan kl B og BE, 2004:10). Further, about self- knowledge; "*...learners should be confronted with and reflect on the way they themselves tend to behave. This insight constitutes important ballast when the learner shall start driving on his/her own.*" (Læreplan kl B og BE, 2004:10). These are all important aims and content in the Norwegian curriculum.

According to work procedures, the curriculum says that "*The training should be organised in a way that induces the learner to develop a capacity for reflection, to see the situation from the perspective of others and to cooperate on the road.*" (Læreplan kl B og BE, 2004:12).

The purpose of driver training is to help learners achieve road traffic competence. Some of the teaching objectives intended to contribute to this competence cannot, for different reasons, be included in a driving test. Other teaching objects would be too time-consuming to measure in



a test. To ensure that these subjects are nonetheless included in the training, compulsory courses have been introduced (Læreplan kl B og BE, 2004:11). In these courses, there is an emphasis on exercises which are not easy for earners to carry out alone; subjects as understanding of risk and other subjects who are largely concerned with attitudes to road safety. However; attending those courses doesn't in any way assure that the student has gained the necessary knowledge. To a large extent, it's the teachers' responsibility to measure whether these goals are reached or not. Thus should the assessment of those subjects be included in the learning process.

3. Curriculum theory

In the curriculum field as general, the focus has almost always been what ought to be, not what is. We can be experimental, but in an analytical sense, and ask questions like “what are the students taught in school? How is this curriculum organized?” We are some distance from such theory building, since the necessary empirical work is skimpy (Goodlad, 1979). John Dewey also emphasis the need for theory to begin and end in practice. But theorist and researchers have favoured experiments and have turned only rarely to analyse of what exist (ibid).

The curriculum can be understood from various levels. A tool for researches on the practical has been developed by the american researcher John Goodlad (1979). He outlined five different curricular levels; 1. *The ideal curriculum*, which emerge from the idealistic planning process. 2. *The formal curriculum*, the written curriculum. 3. *The perceived curriculum*, the curricula of the mind. (The teachers' understanding and interpretation of the curriculum will form the education, but also other factors will play a part.) 4. *The operationalized curriculum* is what goes on hour after hour, day after day in schools. (And there is no way of knowing, for sure, what this is.) 5. *The experienced curriculum* is the one experienced by the students.

“The central problem of curriculum study is the gap between our ideas and aspirations and our attempts to operationalize them.” (Stenhouse 1975:3). Stenhouse points out 2 different views of the curriculum (1975:2);



1. On one hand the curriculum is seen as the *intention*, an idea about what one would like to happen.
2. On the other hand it is seen as the *existing* state of affairs in schools, what does in fact happen.

Stenhouse thinks that curriculum study is concerned with the relationship between the two views of curriculum – as intention and as reality. Neither intentions nor happenings can be discussed until they are described, curriculum study rests on how we talk or write about these two ideas of curriculum. The curriculum development movement is an attack on the separation between theory and practice.

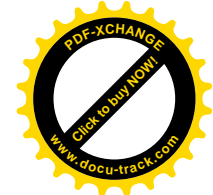
My focus will mainly be on the relationship between the perceived and the operationalized curriculum, and the assessment being done. My study will therefore both focus on the planning for education – the teachers’ understanding of assessment as a didactic category – and on the empirical side – in which ways the teachers evaluate the students. In this implementation of curriculum, the teachers’ thinking and reflection becomes central.

4. The teachers’ thinking - reflection in action

The theories of teachers’ thinking and reflection give us an understanding of the complexity which exist in the relationship between the formal curriculum and the operationalized curriculum

Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) says that reflection can be understood as a systematical and critical review of our own handling in action. He sees the assessment knowledge being performed as a systematic self-research and as a practical developing process. Reflection will improve practice. A curriculum which is a framework for practice, and which doesn’t set the regulations for practice, asks for interpretation from the teacher. This will also request pedagogical and didactical knowledge from the teachers. The teachers should weigh alternatives and their costs and consequences against one another, and choose, not the right, but the best alternative (Schwab 319:1978).

Schön points out that reflection can be seen as the opposite to routine, because reflection gives the opportunity to check and criticise the silent knowledge that have been growing out



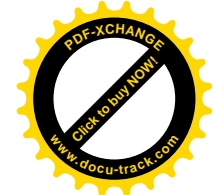
of our experiences (Schön, 1983). He put emphasis on the difference between reflection-in-action and reflection-over-action. Erling Lars Dale (Øzerk, 1999) points out that reflection-over-practice must take place outside the learning situation, where the teachers are allowed time and space to reflect freely. In the same manner, Dewey claims that reflection is central when experiences are built. Through reflection teachers can better be aware of their practice, making it easier to find the consequences between actions and the actions' consequences (Dewey, 1961). The assessment being done by the teacher during the learning process is part of the teachers' practical theory.

The teachers' knowledge and reflection over various/different alternative courses of action influence the teachers' ability to underlie their own choices (Johansen og Tjeldvoll, 1989). It becomes central to learn the teachers' reflection in action and the reasoning for their actions. Actions and reflection are central subjects in the didactics, and also central in the teachers' didactical competence. Erling Lars Dale (1992) refers to didactical wisdom as the teachers' ability to implement the intentions in the curricula into practice.

5. Assessment as a part of the teachers' practical

Formative evaluation (also referred to as process evaluation) takes place during the training process. The attention is aimed at the students learning, and the evaluation is often of an informal character. Summative evaluation (also referred to as product evaluation) takes place towards the end of the training process. It's the product of the students learning that is made subject to the evaluation, and the evaluation form is often more formal. The assessments during driving training have a formative character, while the driving test is a product evaluation.

Any curricula should be constructed from the relationship and connections between the different categories that all educational situations are made upon. The didactic relation model by Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) puts emphasis on the importance of the relations between the goals, content, frames, methods, assessment and didactical conditions (students-, teachers-, physical, social and cultural). The model illustrate that all categories are depending on each other, and that all activity connected to the education must allow for this. A choice made for one category will influence other categories, which means that final choices cannot be made



for one category alone. Thereby the assessment being done must be in connection with the changes in the other categories. Subject for discussion could be; assessment as a didactic category in the curriculum, the driving teacher's understanding of the curriculum, and which skills and techniques they are using in their assessment practice, related to the abstract learning goals. How do they reflect upon, and reason, their practice?

In the driving education, assessment includes guidance. During the driving training, two guidance lessons are compulsory. Guidance is also maybe the most important function of assessment (Loeng, S., Torgersen, G. Melbye, P.E. and Lodgaard, E., 2001). Guidance shall support the learning process and give the learners possibilities of self-assessment. This is important during the whole learning process, and in particularly during the compulsory guidance lessons.

Regarding assessment, Goodlad points out that the teachers' assessment and guidance reflect what they believe to be important and, in turn, convey students the kinds of things they are expected to learn (Goodlad, in Gress, 1988). Heckhausen (1967) claims that we, as teachers, are influenced by the expectation of results. The teaching is dictated by results, and therefore content and aims which are harder to test are often forgotten. It's easier to test definite aims. Subjects as attitudes, self- knowledge and reflection may easier be left behind.

The society (norms and culture) and life surroundings (physical and social) influences us as people. The teachers use themselves as an instrument. This means that every learning situation is depending on who are participating. It also means that the curriculum is interpreted in different ways, depending on the background and experiences of the teacher.

6. Qualitative approach

Regarding choice of method, it is essential that the choice is based upon the studies purpose as well as the reason for the research taking place. In order to select a method, the purpose and reasoning for the study have to be clear (Kvale, 2007).

I will focus on the assessment skills and techniques used by the teachers during their tuition, related to the aims of reflection and self- knowledge. To get an understanding of what they



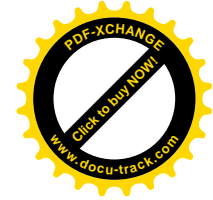
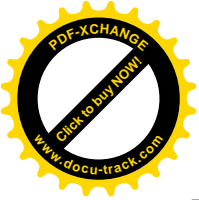
self mean they are doing, I will also focus on how the teachers reflect upon their own assessment methods.

Klaus B. Jensen claims that qualitative studies have 3 things in common; 1. to construct meaning, 2. meaningful actions should, as far as possible, be studied in their natural surroundings 3. researcher as an interpreting subject . The qualitative ambition is to create meaning in action.

Qualitative methods intent to reach meaning and experiences which cannot be quantified (Kvale, 1997). With qualitative methods like document analysis, interview and observation, I should be able to answer my research questions. The intention is for these methods to supply an accurate description of the practice taken place, the deliberation among the teachers in addition to insight in the reasons and the reflection among teachers related to their own practice. This should illustrate some opportunities, challenges and consequences related to the implementation of the curriculum, especially concerning the assessment of road traffic competence.

My study will include approximately 6-8 teachers. Subjects of discussion could be;

- What kind of understanding do they have related to the main aim “road traffic competence”?
- In what ways have they interpreted the curriculum?
- In which ways do they adjust the learning situations, in order for the learners to reach the aims?
- Their reflection around own implementation of the curriculum.
- What’s new?
- What are the challenges regarding to their own experience?
- What are their understandings of the curriculum’s intentions?
- How do they understand and explain their own practice?
-?



7. ...to be continued

This paper presents my ongoing PhD-project at Nord-Trøndelag University College Faculty of Education of Driving Instructors, Stjørdal, Norway. The aim is to get my degree in the end of 2011. Hopefully the practical will follow the intention with formal plan!

* * *

References

- Bjørndal, B. og Lieberg, S. (1978). *Nye veier i didaktikken*. Oslo: Aschehoug
- Dale, E.L. (1992). *Pedagogisk filosofi*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal.
- Dewey, J. (1961). *Democracy and education. An introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Macmillan Company.
- Goodlad, J. (1979). *Curriculum Inquiry. The Study of Curriculum Practice*. McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Gress, J. R. (1988). *Curriculum. An introduction to the field*. California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Heckhausen, H. (1967). *The Anatomy of achievement motivation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Jensen, K.B. *A handbook of media and communication research* (2002).
- Johansen, K. og Tjeldvoll, A. (1989). *Skoleledelse og skoleutvikling*. Oslo: Solun forlag A/S.
- Kvale, S. (1997). *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. Oslo. Ad notam Gyldendal.
- Lauvås, P. og Handal, G. (2000). *Veiledning og praktisk yrkesteori*. Oslo: J.W. Cappelen forlag a.s.
- Loeng, S., Torgersen, G., Melbye, P.E. and Lodgaard, E. (2001). *Voksenpedagogikk i kompetansesamfunnet*. Del III. Læringsforlaget.
- Læreplan Førerkortklasse B og BE* (2004). Håndbok nr. 252, Statens vegvesen vegdirektoratet. ISBN 82-7207-566-0. (Curriculum *Driving licence categories B and BE*. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration.)
- Rismark, M, Stenøien, J. og Sølvberg, A. (2004). *18 tentakler – en analyse av plandokumenter for ny føreropplæring*. Trondheim; NTNU.



Schwab, J. (1983). *The Practical 4: Something for curriculum professors to do. Curriculum Inquiry*. Trykt opp i Gundem, B.B. (red) (1986). Om læreplanteori og læreplanpraksis, kompendium 3: Det pedagogiske studiet. Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, Universitetet i Oslo.

Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practioner. How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*. London: Heinemann.

Øzerk, Kamil (1999). *Opplæringsteori og læreplanforståelse*. Oplandske Bokforlag.

Stortingsmelding nr. 46 (1999-2000) Nasjonal Transportplan 2002-2011. Oslo: Samferdselsdepartementet.