Editorial

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As tradition is in *Outlines - Critical Practice Studies* the editorial is historical, in the sense that it re-introduces papers from the last volume and points backwards to papers you might have missed.

The previous volume 2013(1) contain L. Wittek's *The activity of "writing for learning" in a nursing program – trajectories of meaning making*, L. Beaty's *Confronting school's Contradictions with Video: Youth's need of Agency for Ontological Development*, I. Tucker's *Anticipating the future in the organization of home: Bergson, Whitehead and mental health service users*, and E. Matusov et. al.'s *Community of Learners: Ontological and non-ontological projects*. The volume thus represents a variety of themes as well as theoretical perspectives.

The papers of Wittek, Beaty and Matusov have some commonalities; they focus on interactions between two groups of actors, educators/educational institutions and pupils or students. A recurrent theme in these papers is contradictions and complications between societal arrangements aimed at supporting subjects and subjects striving to make a life, develop and learn. Although pupils or students seem to grasp and make use of some resources made available to them, in order to make potential better futures, they are partly hindered, blocked or misunderstood in doing so by the very same societal and social constraints-system created to support them. Thus, the three papers share a critical analytic attention toward different forms of mismatches between the conditions aimed at supporting specific groups of subjects and the intentionality, interests and existence of these subjects themselves.

Does society need student's development of agency? This is the question that Laura Beaty (pp. 4-25) poses in her examination of the ways young students work with video as part of their education. Based on data from five programs Beaty empirically investigates how students pose questions and seek answers to their societal living through video-productions. But the agency of the students, being critically engaged in their society trough this school activity, tend to produce tensions and provoke school authority and principles of collaboration in school itself. Beaty discusses this contradiction and reasons

that the concept of agency within the schools-structures studied mirrors *individualized self-control* rather than a human capacity to take part in forming ones environment in anticipated better directions. With Vygotsky in mind Beaty questions how society will develop if the young ones are to replace the development of higher psychological functions inherent in agency with a relatively passive mental capacity to adapt to what already is.

Can school (do) 'Community of Learners' only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Matusov, von Dyuke and Han (pp. 41-72) ask, while critically examining methodologies and ideologies inherent and behind the waste practices of "Community of Learners" in school-contexts. The authors' rigor and will to create analytic orderliness built on principles of the human psyche is much appreciated. Matusov et al. makes a crucial distinction between 'ontological' and 'non-ontological' community of learners - projects. In Instrumental (non-ontological) projects the notion of 'community' is separated from the notion of 'instruction' in order to pre-set some endpoints. In this group three main strategies are delineated: *relational* (e.g. a warm climate), *instructional* (e.g. where they do Community of Learners on Mondays) and *engaged* (e.g. being in "the flow" before instruction start). Ontological projects are based on learning as ill-defined, distributed, social, multi-faceted, poly-goal agency-based, and situated processes that integrates all educational aspects. Also the authors find these projects difficult to give vivid examples of.

How does learning technologies such as portfolio work Line Wittek asks (pp. 73 -94) in her investigation of group-portfolio work. Two student groups in a Swedish nursing program were studied in order to examine how their portfolio writing activities contributed to their educational trajectories. Based on theory within the field of dialogicality (e.g. Bakthin, Linnell) Wittek assumes that writing portfolios can be effective tools for learning and meaning making and that collaboration on these activities, which imply discussions, negotiations and shared problem solving, can further these processes. However in the Swedish program studied, the constraining of the activity was so vague that almost anything could take place as port-folio work. Whereas the previous papers on school practices mentioned mainly discuss problems caused by of quite rigid constraining of the student's activities, we are presented to an educational practice which seems left to the students own devices. The students observed mainly spent port-folio time discussing teacher- and school- expectations and worked to establish some kind of intergroup-order. Wittek calls for didactic reflections on the use of educational technologies like the portfolio-work.

Reading these papers in the last volume of *Outlines – Critical Practice Studies* the societal arrangements aimed at supporting people's life and facilitating their development and learning could obviously be improved. However, and in a much smaller scale than desired, they are also functioning well in some places. "Ontological communities" do, however rare, exist in schools. Pupils developing a critical and productive stance through schoolwork do exist. Students do make something functional out of port-folio work. We need, in my opinion, to know much more about these successful instances. Why do the dynamics in these instances turn out in a functional and productive way? Who are supporting this or letting it happen and why? Which kinds of reasoning, planning and activity dominate these locations? Those incidences are of enormous importance to social research and to all of us, especially if we want social workers and organizers of social work to read or dialogue with perspectives in *Outlines – Critical Practice Studies*.

One way to approach these rare occasions lies in the work of Tucker in his paper: *Anticipating the future in the organization of home: Bergson, Whitehead and mental health service users* (pp. 26-40). As mentioned, Tuckers paper does not deal with education or social others structuring the development of subjects. It does however deal with the issue of *becoming* which is a central premise in any pedagogical initiative. To study the becoming of something, we need to look at the future as it present itself (as changed past) in the present. Tucker leans onto Bergson's notion of duration (la duree) and Whitehead's notion of prehension to grasp this fluid intertwined temporality. Bergson is famous for challenging readers understanding of time and temporality and the author is doing an incredible successful job in making Bergson's work comprehensible and useable. Tucker demonstrates this in his analysis of former homeless people's making a future in their (new) homes. Chris's buying of bulks of cans and goods takes on a very literal meaning of staying, stability, not being kicked out, all pointing towards a future as someone who has a home. Roy's cleaning up and throwing out stuff in a house that was formerly his mother's residence means making a spatial (orderly) space, making himself feeling more 'orderly' and 'stable'. Present is always, Tucker argues, produced in the anticipation of the future.

These present-to-future productive moves, can, I suggest, be studied (and practically supported) not only among students and pupils, but also among staff: teachers, pedagogues, social workers and administrators of social institutions. More knowledge of these dynamics seem highly relevant to me, if we are not to miss the cracks in an alienating educational system and the sprouts of productive collaborative agency.