

The necessity of a theoretical frame of reference for youth pedagogical professionalism

Christoffer Schultz, PhD student at Aarhus University, Denmark in co-operation with Ungdomsringen

This presentation focuses on the youth pedagogical professionalism in youth clubs and is part of a PhD project exploring this subject and its significance for young people's everyday lives. Research related to young people's affiliation to leisure time institutions is often based on the broad term *leisure time pedagogy*, which typically revolves around children and young people in the age of 6-18 years. However, 13-18 year-olds are subject to individual and societal living conditions that are specific for this period of life, the youth (Mørch, 1985, 2010). Therefore, this presentation argues for the necessity of exploring youth pedagogical professionalism as a *special* professionalism. A professionalism based on a holistic perspective on youth and the specific lifeworld and living conditions of young people. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the professional pedagogical work with young people and how the social communities in the youth clubs constitute a supportive part of the everyday life of young people and their capacity for action.

Several studies across different countries show how youth clubs can have a positive effect on young people's well-being (Akiva et al., 2017; Geidne et al., 2016; Jones & Deutsch, 2011), development and learning (Petersen & Sørensen, 2021; Wright et al., 2010). Drawing on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and perspectives from critical psychology, this presentation contributes with a theoretical frame of reference for understanding the importance of working with young people on expanding their capacity for action (Dreier, 1979; Holzkamp, 1998), while taking the complexity of young people's lifeworlds, living conditions and actions in different activities into account (Danielsen & Vygotsky, 1996; Leontjev, 2009).

This presentation focuses on pedagogical professionalism in Danish youth clubs, which is a relatively under-investigated field. Substantiating this professionalism with more scientific studies could help strengthen the profession and enhance the positive effects of youth clubs on young people's well-being, social functioning, development, and learning. Therefore, this presentation is relevant to the Nordic educational research. Moreover, youth clubs and the target of their pedagogical professionalism are highly similar across Nordic countries and therefore knowledge produced in Denmark may be applied in Nordic countries.

Literature:

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