



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Education for the Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity (PREV)
Writing as a means of educating for the prevention of crimes
against humanity

by

Author: Anne B. Reinertsen – Norway

Editor: Richard Harris



The Pestalozzi Programme
Council of Europe Training Programme for education professionals

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The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

Theme: How to move between ‘lovely’ and ‘difficult’ knowledge or writing thoughts forward

Expected outcome

- The general aim of this unit is to use writing as a means of exploring one’s own values, attitudes and possible actions. The emphasis is on the process of writing and how this helps us to better understand our fellow human beings and especially oneself. In this unit, the context is provided by the topic of Crimes against Humanity. It is easy to think that you would do the ‘right’ thing if you found yourself confronted by or caught up in a Crime against Humanity, but in reality what you actually do may be very different. This is the tension between ‘lovely’ and ‘difficult’ knowledge, i.e. knowledge that you are comfortable with and knowledge you are uncomfortable with.
- Writing is therefore being used as a means of exploring one’s current position in relation to values and attitudes with a view to shaping future actions. The emphasis is not on the quality of writing but the way writing can be used to open oneself to critical scrutiny. This is a difficult task but an important one to examine. The knowledge that is generated about yourself, particularly the ‘difficult’ knowledge is potentially very valuable as it provides a way of educating for the *prevention* of Crimes against Humanity.
- Reflexivity is another component of this process. There is a need to understand oneself in order to create new understandings and ways of thinking, feeling and acting.
- The process outlined in this training unit uses writing as a means of reflection to explore the tensions and paradoxes within our ‘difficult knowledge’ to generate new insights that foster critical thinking, protect individuals from easy manipulation by others and promote ways of thinking, feeling and acting that will help prevent future crimes against humanity.

Target group

Type of training	School level	Subject area
Pre- and in-service training	Upper Secondary or High School Teachers	Social Sciences and the Humanities

Brief description of the unit

The initial audience are teachers (pre- and in-service), although the principals can be applied to students as well. Participants need to engage in their own learning through constructing, reconstructing and deconstructing meaning through actively taking part in writing; the focus here is on discussing or speaking about here Crimes against Humanity and oneself, which will involve reflection and analysis. Although there is much detailed historical material and teaching material about Crimes against Humanity, this unit does not look to develop further knowledge about Crimes against Humanity per se, but focuses on the much more complex issue of *education for the prevention* of Crimes against Humanity.

The unit is based upon constructivist pedagogy. Although the product of writing is important, the process is equally important in this context, as participants will have to grapple with knowledge with which they are comfortable and uncomfortable (or 'lovely' and 'difficult' knowledge). Comfortable knowledge reinforces what we think and how we feel, whereas 'difficult' knowledge challenges us and forces us to reconsider our position. The process of writing helps to clarify and make visible our thoughts and values, both for the writer and others. Thus, although writing is usually an individual process, the approach outlined in this unit makes it a collective learning process.

The concept of "*writing stories*" (Richardson & St.Pierre, 2005) is important in this unit. Such stories are autobiographical and self-reflective. They might therefore be messy, incoherent and represented as blends of genres. However, these are stories that help to create meaning and a way of situating one's own biographical experiences in all parts of one's own life. Such writing offers the opportunity to discuss values, human dilemmas and paradoxes. The ultimate goal is for every participant to write such a story.

The historical background material used here is about the Norwegian Jews and their fate during World War Two. This is a story containing aspects of deceit and failure, heroes and the opposite. The "case of Knut Rød" is a means of exploring the seriousness of the theme. However, writing activities can stem from other stories participants choose or know about. In this unit, there is thus freedom to write what participants want related to the overall theme of Crimes against Humanity. Background stories can be created on the basis of historical events in any country.

Summing up this is writing to:

- explore, create, probe, discover, find out more
- doubt and take risks
- make clearer, elaborate
- combine and create new
- see connections or lack of connections
- find questions and discover new
- solving problems and see new
- develop personality and identity
- discuss values, dilemmas and paradoxes
- strengthen ethico- political, subjective judgment
- see oneself and others
- remember
- document experiences and make them available and/or share them with others
- become a member of a writing community; classroom, school, society, culture

Methods/techniques used

- Document/Article analysis
- Group discussions and/or performances
- Writing exercises:
 - o 1. Writing oneself between lovely and difficult knowledge (Individual work)
 - o 2. Genre mix: Inside and outside “the box” and “mashing up” (Working in pairs)
 - o 3. Creating a writing story (Individual work)
 - o 4. Evaluation (Individual work)

Time 4 hours and 25 minutes

A workshop of one day or minimum five hours. Discussions, analysis and writing will overlap and be intertwined throughout the workshop.

Activity 1: Introductory discussions and briefing	▶ 45 minutes ++
Activity 2: Individual writing exercise number one	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 3: Discussion in plenum and pairing up	▶ 20 minutes
Activity 4: Peer writing exercise or writing together	▶ 45 minutes +
Activity 5: Discussion in plenum and performance of examples	▶ 45 minutes +
Activity 6: Individual writing exercise number two	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 7: Evaluation	▶ 20 minutes

Tips for trainers

This requires “a hands on” approach. The number of students should not exceed 10. This unit is theoretically based in deconstruction and feminist post structural theory.

Resources

Articles and materials according to reading list
Participants own material or fields of interest related to Crimes against Humanity
Internet
Appendixes



45 minutes +

Activity 1 Introductory discussions and briefing

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To introduce the theme of writing both theoretically and practically, through the story of the Norwegian Jews during World War II. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Getting to know background and key concepts for writing. ➢ Developing an understanding of practical ethics and the implication of writing ➢ Making concepts operational for own writing. ➢ Formulation of questions related to participants' own interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is interesting about it? ○ What is challenging about it? ○ What might be difficult about it? ○ Possibilities for change? ○ Conditions for change? 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ This is an introductory session about developing concepts through a dialogical approach. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Use the stories in the appendixes, Pippi Thing Searcher (Short Story) and the Knut Rød Case (Appendixes 1 and 2). Use the story of the fate of Norwegian Jews during World War Two. Most of them were shipped to Auschwitz in October 1942 on MS Donau. Very few survived. Examples here include statistical facts and biographical information about two central persons taking part in the shipment: The Head of Oslo Police, Knut Rød, and the single policeman who did not go to work that day. ➢ All articles on list. See also web list. ➢ Participants' own material (if appropriate) ➢ See also resource list or questions about knowledge that might be difficult; Difficult Knowledge 	

(Appendix 3)	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sit in circle to enable participants to share ideas more easily. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Briefing and discussion ➤ Studying and discussing the background articles. Get participants to think about the issues this story raises and in particular what 'difficult' knowledge it creates. ➤ Participants should be reading and discussing the Pippi Longstockings story together. Discuss the importance of words and non-words and what this does to help us understand This is to raise awareness of the relation between 'lovely' and 'difficult' knowledge primarily. However non words might help us open up and discover more. Non words we might use when we do not know something. Non words we might use to create something new. Discuss how this story helps to examine the issues in this activity and this training unit. ➤ If needed, use other materials from the list of articles/web sites and/or the participants' own stories. ➤ Use appendix 3 about difficult knowledge to help the discussion if it starts to slow down or get stuck. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The concept of difficult knowledge might not be easily grasped and might thus need special attention. The trainer needs to be a participant as well the whole time and make sure to talk to every participant. It is important for trainer to know the background articles and materials well. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ End with a discussion about how the concept of writing can help us getting closer to an understanding of the theme education for the prevention of Crimes against Humanity. 	

Activity 2 Individual writing exercise (number one): Writing oneself between lovely and difficult knowledge



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The aim is now to start writing an individual <u>writing story</u>. All participants should produce between half a page and a page. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To examine the concepts of 'lovely' and 'difficult' knowledge ➢ To explore oneself in relation to the theme of Crimes against Humanity and the concepts of 'lovely' and 'difficult' knowledge 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Individual writing 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ List of questions related to 'difficult' knowledge (Appendix 3) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Suggestion: Turn the desk against a wall to create a "room" of your own. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Participants are free to write about whatever they want, as long as it is related to the topic 'Crimes against Humanity'. Use the questions as a way to structure thinking. 	

<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Trainer must be mentor or guide. One can expect many questions and some participants might be a bit worried at this point. ➢ Participants may want to discuss questions with others and this should be encouraged. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It is important that participants by now have something to take away and work with during the next activity which also can be seen as a debriefing of activity 2. 	

Activity 3 Discussion in plenum and pairing up



20 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Discussing and elaborating on effects of writing <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Improved insight in creative analytical practices and processes. 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Group discussion and performance of own texts. Pair work: Giving and getting response. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Own texts 	

<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Begin this activity by sitting in a circle again. After a brief discussion divide the group in pairs. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Read the text for the other. Chose two things that you want the other to give response on. Then ask the other to give one comment in addition. Change roles and repeat the activity. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Hopefully one has by now managed to trigger practical philosophical questions and at this stage one might therefore touch on questions about how difficult is difficult. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In order to keep focus; remind (if needed) the participants that their stories must be linked to the overall theme Crimes against Humanity. 	

Activity 4 Peer writing exercise or writing together



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Gaining new insights both about the theme of Crimes against Humanity and oneself together with another participant. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Writing a new text together with others ➢ See how new meaning is created through “mashing up” own text with those of others. 	

<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work in pairs. Both participants use scissors to cut the text they have produced individually in pieces. The text parts are then all put in a box and mixed. Sentences/text pieces are then drawn randomly from the box one by one, and a new joint story is created through this. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants own sentences 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Make sure five boxes are available 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain how to use the box and why: When we write together with others new meaning might occur. Through experiencing otherness we open up to other rationales and other ways of thinking hopefully creating more. Novelty might be a result of combinations between the two participants writing together, but it might be something completely new that no one had thought about at all before. The box is a means of getting to know both oneself and others - others and oneself. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Here many questions about genres and types of texts might pop up. It is important to define genres as wide as possible. One can write letters, separate and randomly mixed sentences only, poems, short stories, jokes 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See activity five. 	

Activity 5 Discussion in plenum and performing examples/stories



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Sharing experiences from previous activity. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Getting inspiration to create a personal writing story related to the theme Crimes against Humanity. 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Ask participants to share their joint stories with the group and explain what happened when they had to write together. Compare individual writing and writing together. Ask participants to relate the activity to education for Crimes against Humanity. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Participants' stories 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Sit in circle. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The main thing now is to make participants engage in the discussions. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Focus on thinking about the process of writing together. The “results” are not necessarily interesting in themselves at this stage. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ By now the participants should be able to discuss the universal/particular relationship between being and being in the world. 	

Activity 6 Individual writing exercises



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Writing a personal or autobiographical story/text about oneself and or through the theme Crimes against Humanity. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ At this point aims might vary from participant to participant, but every story should be connected to the concept of Crimes against Humanity, 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Individual writing 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ No restrictions 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Again one might want to create some private space or room for every individual participant. In most cases turning the desk against a wall is OK 😊 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Focus on participant's freedom to write what they want and about what they want within the frames of Crimes against Humanity. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ One might ask participants to make a performance of some sort instead of writing one. In general; stories might be created as letters, jokes, short stories, role play, poem, music etc. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Writing is difficult, especially when writing about difficult knowledge. Hopefully writing becomes a way for participant of "seeing oneself and others". Instructor is an important discussant partner all the way. 	

Activity 7 Evaluation



20 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluation of the product and the process <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthen participant's own subjective judgment both about the theme Crimes against Humanity and about oneself in relation to the same theme. However this is just the beginning and participants are probably just starting to grasp both theme and what implications it might have for themselves. That is why the evaluation criteria under are focused on process and not on final results. 	
<p>▶ Methods/techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Methods/techniques used: Performances of stories and group discussion. Reflection on own work according to criteria. 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <p>Evaluation criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ First, does this writing contribute to your understanding of social life? ➤ Second, does your text open up and invite interpretive responses? ➤ Third, is there adequate self-awareness and self exposure for the reader to make judgement about the point of view? Or rather how has your subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text? ➤ And fourth, does your text affect you emotionally or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move you to write more? 	

<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Every participant should evaluate own text. In addition pair up again and let one other participant read and evaluate one text produced by another.	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Spend at least half the time letting the pairs discuss and evaluate the text of the other.	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/Anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Again: Focus on process.	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The main thing is to start reflecting and thinking about difficult knowledge, Crimes against Humanity and oneself. The workshop can be repeated over and over again. The writing is important in itself because it has the effect that we become aware of more and more as we write.	

References

Bauman; Zygmunt. *Afterthought. On Writing; on Writing Sociology*. In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.: Handbook of Qualitative Research. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks. Sage. California. Pp: 1089-1098. 2005.

Pitt, Alice and Britzman, Deborah. *Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: An experiment in psychoanalytic research*. Qualitative Studies in Education. Vol. 16, No. 6. Pp: 755-776. 2003.

Richardson, Laurel and St.Pierre, Elizabeth A. *Writing: A Method of Inquiry*. In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. Handbook of Qualitative Research. Third Edition. Pp: 959-978. Thousand Oaks. Sage. California. 2005.

Reinertsen, Anne B. *My Norwegian Lusekofte*. International Review of Qualitative Research. Vol.1. No.2. Pp: 283-298. August 2008.

Case material on “*The Knut Rød Case*”; the policeman who led the deportation of Norwegian Jews during world war two.

Participants own material, theme or point of interest related to Crimes against Humanity and/or practical ethics.

Internet sites:

Institute of Education, University of London; The Holocaust Education Programme: *New study highlights gaps in Holocaust education in English secondary schools*. www.hedp.org.uk or email: hedp@ioe.ac.uk

The Norwegian Holocaust Center: The Norwegian Jews and World War II. www.hlsenteret.no

The Falstad senter in Levanger, Norway www.falstadsenteret.no

www.nrk.no : Studio Sokrates: Jazz og Pedagogikk
P2 Akademiet: ”Språket stuper kråke i Gresset” (Gro Dahle)

Appendix 1

Activity

a) Writing competences forward: A democratization and humanization of pedagogy.

- introduction of theme, literature, practical use and connections.

Theoretical framework:

- Constructivist pedagogy
- Pedagogical philosophy
- Ethics – ethics of consequence (Slow Pedagogue)
- Moral philosophy: Adorno: Minima Moralia. Kant: Imperative of duty
- Post-structuralism: Derrida, Deleuze, Arendt
- Post-modern: Lyotard; “the human condition”.

Important concepts:

Language/Language play (Action inscribed in language)

Pippi Longstockings and being a “thing searcher” through inventing words that do not exist. (Reading and discussing story)

The writing subject (Derrida): Writing as a more practical variant of deconstruction

Becoming (Deleuze, Bauman)

Lovely and Difficult Knowledge (Pitt & Britzman): Learning between innovation and negation (Jokes, poetry, paradoxes and resistance)

Negative capital, loss, negative dialectics, formal negativity or Aporia - Praxis of Aporia

Negative theology; religion without religion.

CAP Ethnography (Richardson & StPierre)

Mashing up or writing together.

b) Start thinking about own field of interest:

What is interesting about it?

What is challenging about it?

What might be difficult about it?

Possibilities for change?

Conditions for change?

c) Background: Crimes against Humanity

Can Character be taught? (S. Bauman)

When does education about end and education to prevent begin, or how difficult is difficult?

How to make pedagogy relevant for students lives?

The story about the Norwegian Jews during the Second World War:

- Statistics
- The Donau 1942
- Knut Rød
- The majority of the police force who came to work that day and the one who did not
- Today...

(This is just one example. Other examples that you know of can be used.)

Appendix 2

Activity

Pippi as thing – searcher

In Scandinavia we have been, and still are, blessed with authors who have devoted their professional lives to creating fantastic literature for children and thus for parents/teachers/adults. Wonderful stories and wonderful characters are created. One of these authors is the late Astrid Lindgren and one of her characters is Pippi Longstockings. Pippi is the strongest and most courageous girl in the world and she has a vivid imagination. One morning when her friends Tommy and Annika come along she is sitting on her kitchen table (yes not on the chair) dreaming about a new invention she has made. Tommy and Annika are not surprised because Pippi invents things all the time. Still they would like to know what it is this time. “I have invented a new word”, says Pippi, “a brand new word”. Of course Tommy and Annika want to know what word, and Pippi tells them that the word is VERVESPIRIT. (Spunk in the original) “It is a very good word; one of the best I have ever heard”, says Pippi. “VERVESPIRIT,” asks Tommy, “what does that mean?” “Had I only known that”, Pippi answers longingly; “the only thing I know is that it does not mean vacuum cleaner”. Tommy and Annika think about this for some time and finally Annika says: “But if it does not mean anything, then it is not useful, is it?” “That is exactly what bothers me, so now we have to find out”, Pippi says.

The kids start searching or hunting for the meaning of the word. First they think that it may be a colour or a sound, but decide against it; they think they already have words for this. As they search more, everything however became mysterious in a way, and they decide to go

to town and bring money because VERVESPIRIT might be something that can be bought and it might even be expensive. Pippi and her friends decide to ask for VERVESPIRIT in the candy store because maybe it is something lovely and sweet ☺? The lady in the store first says that she does not think that they have VERVESPIRIT, but Pippi insists: “Any good store must have VERVESPIRIT!” The lady then says that they are sold out (because she did not want to admit that she did not know what it was). Pippi is both triggered and happy about this answer and therefore asks the lady to describe VERVESPIRIT for her. But as we might now expect the lady has to admit that she does not know, or at least that they do not have VERVESPIRIT in her store. Pippi is very disappointed but she decides to go on searching and hunting for it. “I am not going home without VERVESPIRIT”, she says. The children ask in the hardware store. The man behind the counter looks foxy and he tries to tell them that VERVESPIRIT is a garden tool, but Pippi knows the particular tool and has another name for it too: “You should not try to fool an innocent child”, she says. Before they leave the hardware store, the man suggests that they can ask for VERVESPIRIT in the neighbouring store selling sowing equipment, but Pippi rejects this: “I know that much. I will not find it there”. (I do not think Pippi likes sewing very much)

VERVESPIRIT now seems very difficult to find, but suddenly Pippi has a bright idea: “Maybe it after all is an illness! Let us ask the doctor.” But again as we might expect, the doctor tells Pippi that there is no such illness called VERVESPIRIT, and that even if there was he doubted that Pippi would have caught anything because she is healthier than most people. To give it a last chance Pippi climbs a wall on a three storey building to look through a window for VERVESPIRIT. In the room inside, two ladies are having tea when Pippi suddenly and through the window asks them if they have seen VERVESPIRIT? The ladies scream in fear and ask if someone has escaped? “That is exactly what I also want to know”, says an eager Pippi. The two ladies continue screaming: “Maybe it is under the bed? Does it bite?” “One almost should think so. It seems to have big teeth”, Pippi answers. Pippi looks around, but again she is disappointed. There is not as much as a hair in the room that can serve as a trace of VERVESPIRIT. Tommy, Annika and Pippi now decide to go home because there is obviously no VERVESPIRIT in the whole town. As they came home, Tommy almost treads on an insect that lay in front of the porch. “Take care”, says Pippi. All three bend down and study the insect. It is green, glittering and it has wings. “It is beautiful. I wonder what kind of insect it is”, says Annika? The children compare it to all the other insects they know, but have no answer. Suddenly Pippi, smiles: “I know what it is. It is VERVESPIRIT. Is it not funny that we have been looking for it all over the town without finding it, and all the time it was on the threshold just outside our house” (Lindgren 1992, my free retelling and invention of another word!)

Vervespiting and a true story

When Hans Blix, the former leader of the international group of weapon inspectors to Iraq, was interviewed by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation on the 31 August 2004 in connection with the publishing of his new book, he was asked by the interviewer what could have been done differently in Iraq so that the war could have been avoided? Hans Blix (a Swede and well acquainted with Lindgren;s authorship) smiled and answered: “VERVESPIRIT. I do not know. I think we would have had to invent new words, but we did not have them then so the war is unfortunately a fact”.

Appendix 3

Activity

An unpleasant story

Knut Rød: The policeman who led and coordinated the deportation of the Norwegian Jews during the Second World War. The action was described as very well organized and exceptionally efficient.

532 Norwegian Jews were shipped by MS Donau to Auschwitz 26.October 1942.

403 belonged to Rød' own police district.

Eleven survived.

Rød was charged with treason in 1948 but was acquitted because:

“the isolated actions of facilitating the deportation of Norwegian Jews has undoubtedly been of minor importance compared to the risky work he also has done against the interest of the enemy “ (Germany) (My translation).

The story touches both the unpleasantness of a Norwegian having contributed to the holocaust and simultaneously having been acquitted for what he did.

One policeman chose not go to work this day. What if others did the same thing?

Themes of interest:

Humanity and values

Difficult knowledge

The Rule of Law

Preparing for the incalculable

Appendix 4

Activity 2

Difficult Knowledge

Describe and narrate your difficulties with knowledge:

What counts for you as difficult knowledge?

What happens to knowledge in times of difficulties?

What makes knowledge difficult in teaching and learning?

Narrate or describe times when meaning has broken down in learning and teaching and times where you attempted some sort of repair in making meaning.

These are "prompts" to think about or think with.

Select and speak to whatever prompt that allows you to narrate experiences on difficult knowledge.

1. Thinking about breakdowns in encounters with others:

Times when you felt misunderstood in the classroom

Times when you felt let down or disappointed by others

Times when someone's response felt disappointing

Times when you tried to persuade others and were not successful

2. Thinking about fighting with knowledge:

Times when you encountered ideas that initially and perhaps still bother you

Times when you worried about knowledge

Times when your ideas and your feelings were at odds with each other

Times when you could not separate the good from the bad in knowledge

3. Thinking about reconsidering knowledge:

Times when an idea or viewpoint prompted you to reconsider previous views

Times when you questioned the ways you were seeing things

Times when you fell out of love with an idea or theory
Times when your identity as teacher or student became irrelevant
Times when you created new conditions for learning and teaching

4. Thinking about experiences of influence:

Times when you misunderstood others
Times when empathy was tried and failed
Times when advice of others felt meaningless
Times when you decided you needed to ask for help
Times where you wanted to explain something but words failed you or when you could not find the right words
Times when you received criticism that was difficult to listen to
Times when you felt overly susceptible to the influence of others
Times when you tried to help others
Times when your intuitive response failed
Times when the help you gave proved unhelpful

5. Thinking about experiencing of aloneness with others:

Times you felt alienated in the classroom
Times when you needed help but could not ask
Times when you felt lonely in the classroom or in learning
Times when you felt like a stranger in the classroom

6. Thinking about experiences of confusion:

Times when you realized you were mistaken but could not turn back
Times when you felt lost or were falling behind
Times when learning about the world seemed to ask a great deal from you
Times when you worked through confusion
Times when you felt you were on the wrong track
Times when knowledge felt too exiting
Times when you felt ambivalent about knowledge
Times when knowledge overwhelmed you

7. Thinking about encounters with insufficient knowledge:

Times when knowledge felt insufficient
Times when knowledge seemed suspicious
Times when knowledge seemed absurd
Times when knowledge betrayed you
Times when knowledge felt empty
Times when knowledge did not seem to count
Times when the purposes of your knowledge lost focus
Times when you had difficulty using knowledge
Times when an idea felt threatening or incomprehensible
Times when you were bored by knowledge

8. Thinking about encounters with promise of knowledge:

Times when you returned to read a book and found something unexpected in the second reading
Times when you fell in love with an idea or theory
Times when knowledge felt promising
Times when you felt represented in learning and teaching
Times when you did not care whether you were represented
Times when you discovered you were deceiving yourself
Times when you have been asked a question that surprised you and pushed you to consider something about yourself that you had not previously considered

9. Thinking about encounters with the promise of learning:

Times when difficulties could be tolerated and learned from
Times when you were excited in the classroom
Times when you felt the force of surprise in learning and teaching
Times when dramatically changed your mind
Times when your practices of learning dramatically changed
Times when you rethought your own self-knowledge

10. Thinking about experiences of hostility:

- Times when you felt attacked or when you wished you could express hostility
- Times when you used knowledge to shock others
- Times when you refused to read a particular text or participate in a particular discussion
- Times when you wished for the teacher's or student's removal
- Times when the present felt repetitious
- Times when you could not attach to ideas
- Times when books made you angry
- Times when you became defensive toward ideas or others
- Times when you had nothing to say

11. Thinking about encounters with authority:

- Times when you recognized the constraints of the institution upon your learning and teaching
- Times when you became aware of the history of your learning practices
- Times when your identity as student and/or teacher became irrelevant
- Times when authority could not be located
- Times when you questioned authority
- Times when your own authority was questioned by others
- Times when evaluation felt meaningless or inadequate

12. Thinking about encounters with anxiety:

- Times when you felt remorse in teaching and learning
- Times when you disappointed yourself
- Times when knowledge embarrassed you
- Times when an encounter with knowledge made you feel ashamed
- Times when an encounter with knowledge made you feel guilty
- Times when an encounter with knowledge made you feel fearful

13. Thinking about encounters with relevance:

- Times when it was difficult to distinguish the important from the unimportant
- Times when theory and practice seemed in profound conflict
- Times when you noticed that your ideas were irrelevant
- Times when what you thought was important was considered trivial
- Times when something you learned altered other knowledge you held
- Times when you discovered you had been deceived by the absence of knowledge
- Times when you became dissatisfied with school knowledge

14. Thinking about experiences of time in learning and teaching:

- Times when you felt as if your response in the present was really about something that had happened in the past
- Times when your learning occurred much later than the lesson
- Times when your fantasies or rehearsals about teaching or learning failed you
- Times when you began to question what you were learning
- Times when you began to question why you were learning
- Times when teaching or learning felt fragmented

15. Thinking about encounters with obstacles:

- Times when your writing was blocked
- Times when your reading was blocked
- Times when your speaking with others was blocked
- Times when you lost your interest

A different kind of question:

Thinking about your story, how would you describe the qualities of knowledge and where would you put the difficulty?

Adapted from

“Difficult Knowledge Project” (designed by Professors Deborah Britzman and Alice Pitt, Faculty of Education, York University.)