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A closer look at the diverse educational phenomena from four Nordic countries

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This issue consists of five papers from four Nordic countries, that is, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Each of the five papers has a theme of its own: ICT and school achievements, attention-promoting activities, school violence and juridification, teacher training, and gender equality.

In the paper ‘Students’ school achievement in light of their leisure ICT use’, Inger Thronsdén and Ove Edvard Hatlevik from Norway investigate ninth grade pupils’ use of ICT in their spare time, specifically the use of computer games and chat. In addition, the school performances of the pupils who are involved in computer games and chat in their spare time is examined. Another variable which is examined is the relationship between gaming and chatting and the pupils’ educational ambitions and home background. The objective is to find out the extent to which games and chat, educational ambitions and home background may help in explaining variations in the pupils’ school performances.

The purpose of Marie Kolmos’s paper ‘Attention-promoting activities as a civilizing stage shift in school settings’ from Denmark is to investigate, by way of socio-cultural and cultural-phenomenological theories, how activities that promote awareness are part of teachers’ management and organization of teaching at two different schools, where the teachers work with activities that, in similar ways to ‘mindfulness’, aim to bring increased awareness and well-being into the classroom.
The overall purpose of Johannes Lunneblad’s paper “We cannot report everything that happens in school” – School violence, juridification, and dialogue’ from Sweden is to contribute to the field with knowledge about how school officials describe how they handle situations where violence between students have been involved. The interest of Lunneblad’s paper is specifically directed at how the school staff talk about incidents that have been reported to the police.

In the paper ‘From university student to teacher in the Danish gymnasium. A Bourdieu inspired analysis of socialisation during a teacher training course’, Henriette Duch and Palle Rasmussen from Denmark examine the education of becoming a high school teacher. Specifically, the authors examine how this particular education takes place within the subjects of Danish, mathematics and social studies. Bourdieu’s sociological theory is central to the examination of certain forms of practice and discourses within these subjects. Finally, potential consequences of the objectives of the education are discussed.

Elina Lahelma’s and Liisa Tainio’s paper ‘The long mission towards gender equality in teacher education: Reflections from a national project in Finland’ from Finland makes use of auto-ethnographic methods, with the aim of analyzing and discussing a national project on gender awareness in teacher education (2008–2011). The conclusion is that gender awareness is difficult, but not impossible.