

IDENTITY: FROM FIXED IDEALS TO FLUID INDIVIDUATION

Teaching Deaf Learners conference 2019

The goals of education

- **Qualification:** teaching of knowledge, skills, and understanding to students so they can make decisions on “what to do”.
- **Socialization:** the many ways in which we become, through education, part of specific social, cultural, and political “orders”.
- **Individuation:** becoming an autonomous person who makes choices that are independent from existing social orders, social structures, and social expectations.
(Biesta, 2012)
- Feinberg (1992): the right to an open future.

Inclusive education

- **UNCRPD, Salamanca Statement:** equal access to education for pupils with different backgrounds and identities, such as race, gender, disability and class (UNCRPD, Salamanca Statement).
- **Functional diversity:** the diversity of physiological and psychosocial functioning, with regard to both individual and environmental factors (Patston, 2007).
- **Intersectionality:** the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Identity of deaf and hard-of-hearing people

- **Fixed ideals:** medical model and social model.
- **No more ‘deaf/Deaf’, as:**
 - the identity of deaf and hard-of-hearing children is a work in progress (Tijsseling, 2014); and
 - it is an anachronism in a historical context (Tijsseling, 2014), and
 - it does not reflect the diversity of deaf and hard-of-hearing people (Kusters et al., 2017).
- **False dichotomy:** it is not about illness OR identity but illness AND identity (Solomon, 2012).

Identity of deaf and hard-of hearing pupils in 2019

- **DHH pupils:** are offered *Nederlandse Gebarentaal* (NGT, Dutch Sign Language) and CIDS: culture and identity of deaf and hard-of-hearing people, both in special education and in medium arrangement (groups of deaf pupils in a regular school).
- **Observation:** pupils seem more comfortable in spoken language and some are reluctant to sign language.
- **Question:** why? How is this related to feelings of belonging? To whom?

A tiny little exploratory research

- **Research set up by:** Daan Hermans, Annet de Klerk, Corrie Tijsseling.
- **Respondents:** 2 groups of pupils, from special education and from a medium arrangement. 10 pupils, aged 11-12, end of primary school.
- **Instruments:**
 - Mental Class Maps.
 - Semi-structured interview.

Some wee preliminary results

- **Importance:** pupils want sign language, even though they do not use it themselves.
- **Information:** pupils emphasize the need to inform the people in their environment about the impact of being deaf.

Rich data with interesting observations regarding the important question: **is the identity of DHH pupils fluid and strong enough to be able to make different choices in different life periods, contexts, life events, and transition moments?**

References



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