Knowing at work:

A study of professional knowledge in integration work directed to newly arrived immigrants

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Abstract

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Currently, new knowledge domains and professions emerge as a consequence of societal changes that transform conditions for work and work integrated learning. Integration work directed to newly arrived immigrants is one example of such a new professional knowledge domain. In civic orientation, which is the empirical case in this study, quality, standardization and dialogue are explicit strategies that impact the planning, organization and decision-making in everyday work. The interest in this thesis concerns the professional knowledge that is developed in activities aiming to provide heterogeneous groups of immigrants an orientation in the Swedish society. By making activity systems the prime unit of analysis and scrutinizing the ways in which integration workers make use of a stipulated course material and interactions in a specific context, the aim is to contribute to the understanding of the pedagogical and communicative knowledge that is developed in practice. The analytical approach takes its point of departure in a socio-cultural perspective on workplace studies. Three separate studies have been carried out in which the empirical data consist of observations, interviews, video recordings, field notes and documents from various integration offices.

The results show that different perspectives on knowledge and culture becomes relevant in local discourses on quality in integration work. What distinguishes the integration workers professional knowledge concern seeing and understanding the heterogeneity of immigrants’ cultural backgrounds and bridging boundaries. Culture function as an organizing element in work that makes it possible to make distinctions and organize a contextually relevant content that can be elaborated together with the members in the groups. Such work imply transformation of procedures and it is shown that the integration workers develop their knowledge from specific situations to understand the significance of textually mediated
meanings in other situations. Knowledge is developed as the integration workers move between different situations and activities.

It is concluded that the meaning-making involved in bridging between different cultural contexts relies on extensive knowledge in and about the recognition of the other and of interactions based on equal grounds. Negotiating agreements with the members of the groups about how common possibilities and responsibilities can be understood is central for respecting heterogeneity in the process and is at the core of the integration workers professional knowledge. Considering the future development of integration work, cumulative structures are needed that recognize and support the development of the integration workers professional knowledge within as well as between organizations and other related fields of practice and in relation to higher education.
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Introduktion


Ett exempel på en framväxande kunskapsdomän är integrationsarbete riktat mot nyanlända migranter. Central fråga för många samhällen i västvärlden idag är hur integrationsarbete kan organiseras för att stödja migranter inklusion och delaktighet i samhället. Det gör det också till en viktig fråga som vi behöver veta mer om. Integrationsarbete i Sverige handlar sedan många år bland annat om hur nyanlända får information om samhället, dess traditioner, lagstiftning, välfärd etc. Samhällsorientering, som är det empiriska fallet i den här avhandlingen, är en tämligen ny integrationsaktivitet med avsikt att skapa bättre förutsättningar än tidigare för nyanlända att ”orientera sig” i, och få tillgång till olika arenor i det svenska samhället. Genom att på modersmål erbjuda en till innehåll och form standardiserad aktivitet, har man önskat stötta integration genom att ge nyanlända möjligheter att skapa egen mening i det nya landets former för samhälls- och vardagsliv.

De nyanlända utgör en heterogen grupp med olika erfarenheter och kunskaper vilket ställer krav på samhällskommunikatörernas (den beteckning för integrationsarbete i samhällsorientering som används i Länsstyrelsens rapporter) pedagogiska kompetens i relation till både aktivitetens och målgruppens karaktär. Dels handlar det om att göra innehållet i kursmaterialet
begripligt och relevant för deltagarna, och dels om att tillgodose enskilda behov och intressen av information i relation till specifika livsvillkor. Det innebär i sammanhanget att professionell kunskap omfattar såväl planering och organisering som beslutsfattande och vi behöver veta mer om vilken kunskap som krävs för att ”göra det de gör”. Samtidigt betyder det att integrationsarbete har en del gemensamt även med andra yrkesområden såsom exempelvis hälso- och sjukvård, olika former av socialt arbete och lärare i relation till de utmaningar de möter i vardagsarbetet.

Ytterligare en central fråga i sammanhanget som har relevans för samhället och dess utveckling är vilken betydelse erfarenhetsbaserade kunskaper har för högre utbildning. Det empiriska fallet i det här arbetet synliggör lärandeprocesser och generiska kunskaper i ett mångfacetterat sammanhang som hela tiden sätter kreativa och analytiska förmågor på prov. Givet dessa förhållanden blir även frågor som rör hur olika utbildningsinsatser och lärandemiljöer organiseras för att möta både yrkesförberedande kunskapsbehov och behov av fortbildning bland redan yrkesverksamma.

Eftersom samhällsorientering i sin nuvarande form är en relativt ny verksamhet är det rimligt att anta att det finns en brist på historiskt medierade kunskaper och traditioner för att hantera utmaningar i det dagliga arbetet. Denna brist på kunskaper och traditioner bidrar till att samhällskommunikatörernas erfarenheter i arbetet blir extra viktiga för att förstå vad som krävs för att utföra arbetet i enlighet med kvalitets- och standardiseringskriterier. Av intresse i sammanhanget är att samhällskommunikatörerna har varierande yrkeskompetenser i botten och saknar en gemensam kunskapsbas vad gäller samhällsorientering. Detta framväxande yrkesområde, vilket jag menar att det är, baseras med andra ord på en formell förväntan att samhällskommunikatörernas dubbla kulturella kompetens tillsammans med tillgängligt kursmaterial ska utvecklas till gemensamma färddigheter. Det gör att de tillgängliga resurser som används i det konkreta arbetet är betydelsefulla av flera anledningar. Dels för att dess användning får betydelse för själva verksamheten, dels i relation till samhällskommunikatörernas erfarenhetsbaserade lärande och den professionella kunskap som utvecklas. En central fråga i sammanhanget blir då också hur det blir möjligt att både dela och bearbeta erfarenheter kollektivt tillsammans med andra professionella, både inom yrkesgruppen och mellan olika fält.

Syfte och frågeställningar

Det övergripande syftet med den här avhandlingen är att bidra till förståelse av den professionella kunskap som utvecklas i aktiviteter som syftar till att stödja

Ovanstående frågor hanteras och svaras på i tre olika studier, vilka också utgör mitt forskningsresultat:


2. Vesterlind, M. Adapting standardised teaching material to suit local learning conditions. Manus.


**Integrationsarbete ur ett historiskt perspektiv**

Allt eftersom visade det sig att organiseringen av samhällsorientering hade varierade kvalitet i kommunerna. För att samhällsorientering skulle fungera som ett effektivt redskap att erbjuda alla nyanlända lika goda möjligheter till en samlad och enhetlig information om samhällets olika institutioner och lagstiftning uttrycktes behov av att säkra kvaliteten genom standardisering av såväl innehåll som form. Till skillnad från SFI skulle information nu ges på de nyanländas modersmål i dialogform med ökad möjlighet till meningsskapande processer. De riktlinjer för samhällsorientering som kom 2010 skärpte på sätt och vis övergången från traditionell undervisning till en annan form av praktik med fokus på orienterande processer. Avsikten med den här avhandlingen är dock inte att utvärdera det arbete som görs i samhällsorientering. Istället riktas intresset mot den professionella kunskap som utvecklas och kommer till uttryck när de redskap som erbjuds i arbetet används.

Samhällsorienteringens organisering


De förväntningar som uttrycks innebär att de nyanlända ska få möjlighet att göra jämförelser mellan förhållanden i Sverige och de länder de kommer från men också mellan olika erfarenheter bland deltagarna i de olika samhällsorienteringsgrupperna. Det förutsätter dock att samhällskommunikatörerna kan omvandla det generella syftet med aktiviteten till specifika förhållanden och göra innehållet i kursmaterialet begripligt och relevant i relation till de nyanländas olika behov och intressen.

Forskningsöversikt

Tidigare forskning som rör olika aspekter av migranters integration och delaktighet i samhället visar att standardiserade integrationsprogram inte har varit i överensstämmelse med migranters olika behov, intressen och egna
integrationsstrategier. Det framkommer att dessa brister förmodligen kan kopplas till historiska perspektiv på integration och innebär att integrationsarbete måste förstås i relation till rådande integrationspolitik, ideologier, organisatoriskt sammanhang såväl som till migranters behov och intressen. Till viss del avgör rådande perspektiv på integration vad professionella betraktar som problematiskt och vilka redskap de finner användbara i hantering av vardagsarbets olika utmaningar. Implementeringen av samhällsorientering i dess nya form och samhällskommunikatörernas möjligheter att utveckla professionell kunskap har här betydelse.

Kvalitet förstås på olika sätt i olika kontexter och forskning om kvalitet i arbete visar att det omfattar alltifrån interaktioner i arbetets vardagliga möten och användning av resurser till organisatoriska aspekter. Många studier fokuserar hur standardiseringsprocesser och användning av standarder kan bidra till kvalitet genom att identifiera olika aspekter av kvalitetskontroll. Det framkommer att försök att säkerställa kvalitet genom standardiserade arbetsformer ofta kan kopplas till en strävan efter att erbjuda en enhetlig service till alla brukare. Denna strävan efter en likvärdig service visar sig också bidra till problem när mångfald ska hanteras i arbetet. Istället är de professionellas användning av standarder när de hanterar en heterogen ”verklighet” som indikerar vad som kan förstås som kvalitet.


Tidigare forskning om dialog fokuserar hur den kan användas för att skapa bryggor mellan olika sammanhang och samtidigt upprätthålla både enighet och mångfald. Det har bland annat framkommit att sådant överbryggande arbete kräver kunskaper om hur människor görs delaktiga och tillsammans engagerar sig i gemensam aktivitet och frågor som är viktiga för deras framtid. Av studierna framgår att användningen av dialog utmanar etablerade normativa ordningar och antaganden om att betydelsen av given information är självklar. Detta visar på behov av ytterligare kunskap om hur skillnader och olika gränser kan hanteras.
**Teoretisk referensram**

Den teoretiska referensramen i avhandlingen tar sin utgångspunkt i sociokulturella perspektiv på kunskap och lärande. Lärande ses som situerat och relationellt och professionell kunskap ses som en pågående produktion som konstitueras och distribueras i en specifik kontext och organisationskultur. Det innebär vidare att deltagande i yrkesaktiviteter handlar om att lära sig hantera relevanta diskurser, perspektiv, redskap, färdigheter och kunskaper i förhållande till den särskilda praktiken. Däremed förändras också sättet att delta i olika aktiviteter allt eftersom förtrogenheten med olika redskap ökar.


**Datamsamling och analys**

Det empiriska materialet är hämtat från verksamheter för samhällsorientering i åtta kommuner i västra Sverige. Data består i första hand av observationer, fältanteckningar, intervjuer och videoinspelningar. Observationer (totalt ca 115 timmar) genomfördes inledningsvis av både klassrumssituationer och administrativa aktiviteter för att skapa en bild av övergripande förväntningar, arbetsgång och organisering av arbetet på en avdelning för samhällsorientering. Efter ca fyra veckor övergick fokus till klassrumssituationerna. Fältanteckningar gjordes i nära anslutning till observationerna. Intervjuer genomfördes med olika samhällskommunikatörer efter de inledande observationerna för att ge en bild av
deras förberedelser samt deras egen förståelse av sitt uppdrag och vad som sker i klassrumsituationerna. Videoinspelningar gjordes vidare av klassrumsituationer och personalmöten för att få en mer detaljerad bild av organiseringen av aktiviteterna.

Samma observationer, intervjuer och videoinspelningar återkommer i olika studier men i relation till olika analytiska frågor.

I Studie ett analyserades hur kvalitet kommer till uttryck med avseende på individuella, kollektiva, kultur- och artefaktmedierade aspekter av olika aktiviteter i samhällsorientering. I analyserna användes 115 timmars observationer, fältanteckningar, videoinspelningar av åtta personalmöten, 15 intervjuer med samhällssamhällskommunikatörer och två intervjuer med chefer.

Analyserna i Studie två behandlade vilken kunskap som kommer till uttryck när delar av information i ett undervisningsmaterial väljs ut och omstruktureras till korta relevanta presentationer. Här användes 115 timmars observationer av övergripande organisering av arbetet, fältanteckningar, 10 intervjuer med samhällskommunikatörer (bakgrundsdata) samt för närmare analys, videoinspelningar av sju samhällsorienteringstillfällen och åtta personalmöten, 16 förhållandevis korta intervjuer med två samhällskommunikatörer före och efter ett samhällsorienteringstillfälle, Powerpointpresentationer och textmaterial.

I Studie tre analyserades återkommande interaktionsmönster i klassrumsituationer och vilken kunskap som kommer till uttryck när olika kunskapsskällor hanteras och struktureras, under förberedelsefasen och klassrumsituationer, för att tillsammans skapa och upprätthålla en meningsfull aktivitet i relation till deltagarnas framtida livsvägar. Analyserna byggde på 115 timmars observationer, fältanteckningar och tio intervjuer med samhällskommunikatörer.

**Sammanfattning av delstudierna**

**Studie ett**

Resultaten visar tre olika aspekter av kvalitet. För det första framkommer hur kultur fungerar som ett nav för organisering av klassrumaktiviteter. Förståelsen av bakgrunden till heterogeniteten i grupperna är central för samhällskommunikatörernas erkännande av deltagarnas olika positioneringar samt och gör det möjligt att förstå hur deltagarna uppfattar omgivningen och de frågor som hanteras tillsammans under samhällsorienteringstillfällen. För det andra framkommer hur scheman, Powerpointpresentationer och textmaterial
koordinerar olika aktiviteter under en kurs och gör det möjligt att förutse och förbereda orienteringstillsållen. Samtidigt ställer dessa enhetliga villkor stora krav på samhällskommunikatörerna att contextualisera informationen så att den blir relevant i relation till specifika intressen och behov i såväl olika grupper som inom varje grupp. Till sist framkommer att kvalitet kommer till uttryck i de strukturer som utvecklas i organisationen för att stödja och utveckla samhällskommunikatörernas professionella kunskap. Hurvida de kumulativa strukturer som utvecklas kommer att bidra till att synliggöra och stötta samhällskommunikatörernas kunskap kan antas vara centralt för vilken riktning samhällsorientering kommer att ta i framtiden.

Studie två


Studie tre

I den här studien framgår att dialog används på olika sätt. Dels används den som ett redskap för att utveckla interaktionsmönster i grupperna som främjar delaktighet och positionerar deltagarna som gemensamt ansvariga för att aktiviteten ska fortgå. Dialog används också för att skapa länkar mellan kognitiva aspekter av ett ämne och praktiska handling, samt mellan normer och värderingar i olika värderingssystem. Genom att använda olika perspektiv och förståelser som uttrycks i klassrummet så kan olika ämnen problematiseras mer ingående och göra det möjligt att komma fram till en gemensam förståelse av såväl specifika som gemensamma möjligheter och ansvar. Det innebär att det krävs kunskap om hur information i ett undervisningsmaterial är systematiserad, förmåga att rekontextualisera information på ett relevant sätt och hantera olika kunskapskällor i interaktion med deltagarna i grupperna.
Diskussion

Det har lyfts fram att den integrationsaktiviteten som studerats, samhällsorientering, ingår som ett svar på förändringar inte bara i det svenska samhället utan även förändringar på europeisk nivå som har konsekvenser för integrationsarbetets villkor. De riktlinjer för kvalitetsarbete i samhällsorientering som stipulerats kan därför ses som en del i ett större nätverk av regleringar och överenskommelser. Vad som blir kvalitet i samhällsorientering måste därför också förstås i relation till de villkor som anges i samhällskommunikatörernas speciella mandat. Det är då också rimligt att den professionella kunskap som samhällskommunikatörerna utvecklar blir ett bidrag till en vidare diskurs som rör integrationsfrågor, nationellt såväl som globalt.

Avslutningsvis diskuteras olika former av professionell kunskap som är grundläggande för pedagogiska processer med kapacitet att skapa broar mellan olika kulturella system. Jag tar bland annat upp vilken kunskap som krävs för att utveckla en inkluderande miljö och för att skapa länkar mellan olika erfarenheter och mål. Vidare diskuteras vilken kunskap som krävs för att omvandla innehållet i ett bestämt kursmaterial och processa det så att det blir meningsfullt i förhållande till specifika behov och intressen bland deltagarna i olika grupper. Resultaten visar att kunskap utvecklas i rörelsen mellan olika situationer och aktiviteter.

Sammanfattningsvis framgår att det arbete som krävs för att skapa kulturella broar är i högsta grad relationellt och handlar om att komma överens med varandra om hur gemensamma möjligheter och ansvar kan förstås. Utvecklande av sådana överenskommelser, och upprätthållande av dem, förutsätter omfattande kunskaper om och i att erkänna andra som likvärdiga och att skapa en miljö där deltagarna använder varandras erfarenheter för att lära. Medan traditionella integrationsaktiviteter ofta har betonat interkulturell pedagogik som utgår från kulturella likheter och skillnader, så visar det här arbetet en annan form av pedagogisk praktik. Denna pedagogik handlar om andra gränser än de kulturella och om att förstå varje enskild deltagares identitetsarbete i relation till sin fortsatta livsresa, dvs. egna drömmar och mål i livet. Denna form av pedagogiska processer tar sin utgångspunkt i spänningen mellan olika motiv och syftar till att upprätthålla individuell heterogenitet.

För att standardiseringssträvanden ska fungera som kvalitetssäkring krävs villkor som gör det möjligt för samhällskommunikatörer att arbeta via överenskommelser och erkännande. Det innebär bland annat att för att stödja samhällskommunikatörers beslutsprocesser krävs en infrastruktur som kan möta de särskilda omständigheter som kännetecknar arbetet. Vad den professionella,
erfarenhetsbaserade kunskapen innebär i relation till utveckling av kumulativa strukturer inom en organisation och mellan olika praktikfält diskuteras också liksom konsekvenser för högre utbildning.
Appended studies


   Under consideration by an international peer-reviewed journal.

   Author’s contribution: Main writer, study design, collected the main part of the data, main responsibility for the data analyses, and correspondence with the journal. Main responsibility for all aspects of the study and its progress.


   Manuscript.


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   Author’s contribution: Main writer, study design, collected the main part of the data, main responsibility for the data analyses, and correspondence with the journal. Main responsibility for all aspects of the study and its progress.
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1  
   1.1 Work integrated learning and the study of integration work ........................................ 5  
   1.2. Aim. ................................................................................................................... 8  
   1.3. The outline of the thesis .................................................................................... 9  

2 The rise of civic orientation .................................................................................. 11  
   2.1 Perspectives on integration ................................................................................. 11  
   2.2 New responses to migration ................................................................................ 15  
   2.3 Identifying information and language needs ................................................... 15  
   2.4 A multicultural strategy ...................................................................................... 16  
   2.5 A changed focus: from immigrants to integration ............................................ 19  
   2.6 Institutionalisation of integration activities ...................................................... 21  
   2.7 From civic information to civic orientation ..................................................... 23  
   2.8 The regulation of content and form ................................................................. 24  
   2.9 Civic orientation and professionalization ....................................................... 25  

3 Previous research .................................................................................................. 29  
   3.1 Research on integration work ............................................................................. 29  
   3.2 Research on aspects of quality .......................................................................... 33  
   3.3 Research on standards ....................................................................................... 37  
   3.4 Research on dialogue ......................................................................................... 40  

4 Theoretical framing ............................................................................................... 45  
   4.1 Learning, practice, and professional knowledge .............................................. 46  
   4.2 Studying activities .............................................................................................. 48  
   4.3 Mediating tools ................................................................................................. 51
4.3.1 The use of text and meaning-making ............................................. 52

5 Method ........................................................................................................ 57

  5.1 The setting .............................................................................................. 58

  5.2 Data collection ........................................................................................ 61

    5.2.1. Observations and field notes ......................................................... 64

    5.2.2. Video-recording ............................................................................. 65

    5.2.3. Interviews ...................................................................................... 67

    5.2.4. Documents .................................................................................... 68

    5.2.5. Ethical considerations .................................................................... 68

  5.3 Data analysis ........................................................................................... 69

6 Summary of the studies ................................................................................. 73

7 Discussion .................................................................................................... 78

  7.1 Professional knowledge ........................................................................ 80

    7.1.1 Cultural brokers ............................................................................. 81

    7.1.2 Transforming procedures ............................................................... 86

  7.2 Implications for quality assurance ......................................................... 88

  7.3 Reflections on data collection and methodological issues ................. 91

    7.3.1. Validity and generalizability ......................................................... 94

  7.4 Concluding remarks .............................................................................. 95

  7.5 Reflections on future research ............................................................ 97

References ...................................................................................................... 98

APPENDIX A. Information and consent letter ........................................ 112

APPENDIX B. Information and consent letter ........................................ 114

APPENDIX C. Information and consent letter ........................................ 116

Part two: The studies .................................................................................... 118
1 Introduction

Fatma, 37, and Muhammed, 41, live together with their three children Marisol, 9, Ali, 8, and Fatima 5, in a small town in Syria. Fatma works as a hairdresser and Muhammed as a plumber. For many years, they have both run their own business. There is a war going on in their country and some of their neighbours and relatives have been killed. Hoping to start a new life, Fatma and Muhammed decided to escape from the war and terror and set their sight on Europe. Their journey goes via Turkey, then by boat to Greece, continues by foot to Macedonia, and by train to Serbia. In Serbia, they are placed in a refugee camp. After escaping from the camp, they eventually made their way to Sweden, where they appealed for asylum. As they waited for a decision about their application, they were placed at one of the Migration Agency’s refugee accommodations. After 18 months, they have received a residence permit, and now they have just moved into an apartment in a middle sized town in western Sweden. However, they are not yet acquainted with their new country, they do not know the Swedish language, and they find themselves with a lot of questions: Where do we turn in order to get a job to earn our living? What are the rules for starting a business of our own? What about school and pre-school for our children? How does the school system function in Sweden? What if anyone of us gets sick and needs a doctor? How do we get access to the health care system and how does it function? All these things, and more, are still big question marks for Fatma and Muhammed as they begin this new phase of their life journey.

Where a new phase of Fatma, Muhammed, and their children’s life journey starts, the journey as a researcher in this study starts as well. The next step for Fatma and Muhammed is to coordinate with the Public Employment Service in the municipality, involving, among others, employment, Swedish language training, and civic orientation. In these activities, they will meet the people responsible for supporting their orientation and participation in society and working life – i.e., their continued life journey. These staffs have themselves experienced finding their way as new immigrants in Swedish society. These staff come from different countries, speak different languages, and have different cultural experiences. Not
all of them have a formal education, yet they are faced with a quite complex task of bridging newly arrived immigrants to the Swedish society. The interest in this study is to widen our understanding about the professional knowledge that is required in integration work by specifically focusing on the organization of work in civic orientation practice. Civic orientation (SFS 2010:1138), a relatively new integration activity in Sweden, supports immigrant integration in the social and working life by providing access to information about the Swedish society and forming a base for continued knowledge acquisition. The activity targets new immigrants, 20-64 years, and includes a 60-hour program given in the immigrants’ native language. Historically, language training and providing information about Swedish society to immigrants have been crucial activities in immigrant programs in Sweden and it is from these traditions that civic orientation originates. The introduction of the civic orientation regulations in 2010 involved new guidelines about both the content and form of the activity. More specifically, the new regulations emphasized that information about eight specific themes should be processed by means of dialogue. These demands of specific content and dialogic meaning-making imply new expectations on integration workers. This thesis investigates how this information is organized and the interactions needed to make information available, intelligible, and meaningful to newly arrived immigrants.

Today, both information and knowledge have a specific place for the function of society’s shared institutions and play a central role for the understanding of people’s needs. To a great extent, everyday life in modern societies depends on access to digitized information to find, among other things, housing, employment, and social security benefits (e.g., healthcare, parental leave, and education opportunities). As pointed to in the introductory example, in order for new immigrants to continue their life journey, they will need to know how the health care and educational systems function and understand what the law, the organization of different welfare services, and the value systems mean to them. In addition, integration work directed to new immigrants stand out as a welfare service that concerns human needs and life conditions, bridging society’s responsibility to supply information and individual’s needs and interests (cf., Lipsky, 2010). However, human needs might not always be compatible with the demands that are put on the welfare institutions. The increasing demands on standardisation (Bowker & Star, 2000; Timmermans & Berg, 2003) and accountability (Edwards, 2010) in modern societies challenge the welfare actors’ autonomy and competence as new forms of control are implemented (McDonald, 2006). Such tensions between formal expectations and local actions imply specific challenges for those who work with integration activities and make learning conditions and the organization of knowledge in integration work a vital field of study.
In recent decades, pressure has increased for countries in Western Europe to perform integration work\(^1\) for immigrants at a local level (Dahlström, 2007; Joppke, 2007; Goodman 2010; 2012; Eastmond, 2011). Integration work has proved to be a challenge and stands out as a contested and constantly changing welfare domain (Castles & Miller, 2009). This challenge is specifically evident in the recent expectations that governments need to deal with issues related to asylum, refugees, settlements, and civic participation. In the wake of public policy mandates, general demographic shifts, and societal changes, integration work has been transformed (Kettl 2010; Reish & Jani 2012), involving the organization of activities, methods, operating procedures. In the perspective of this study, these kinds of changes indicate that integration work is developing into a new kind of practice. In Sweden, civic orientation is one example of a relatively new integration activity, we need to know more about what constitutes its knowledge base.

Through the years, there has been no formal knowledge standards or established professional education for staff engaged in integration work in Sweden. Recruitment of staff has often been done without formal qualifications (Carlson, 2003; Sarstrand-Marekovic, 2011). Although there have been tendencies indicating a need for dual cultural competence, language, and pedagogical skills, no formalized knowledge base requirements have been established with respect to what qualifies someone as an integration worker. Similar tendencies can be recognized in relation to civic orientation. The requirements for this new civic orientation is stipulated in quite general terms in the regulations (SFS 2010:1138)\(^2\):

\[\text{Civic orientation shall, as far as possible, be conducted in the participant’s mother tongue or another language of which the participant has a good command. When required, an interpreter shall be consulted. The providers of civic orientation shall have adequate pedagogical education or experience and knowledge of special subjects.}\]

Here, the general requirements for integration workers concerns language and pedagogical expertise. In addition, the integration workers are required to go beyond formal education so as to involve cultural skills in order to work

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\(^1\) I will use the term “integration” when referring to the political approach and official use in policy and in public discourse. However, in this thesis I am interested in processes on inclusion – i.e., pedagogical approaches that support people’s participation in various arenas in society. In this context, inclusion refers to processes that promote the possibility for people to engage civically in their everyday life in the society in which they reside as well as across borders.

\(^2\) Author’s translation.
responsibly both in relation to the actual performance and the intentions of the
activity.

The integration workers responsible for performing the programs also have
regular jobs not specifically related to integration work and not all of them have
a formal pedagogical education, yet they all have a task that involves pedagogical
methods and skills. This means that they might handle and frame aspects of their
work from different knowledge domains. In addition, they have immigrated to
Sweden and they have different native languages and cultural experiences.
Although they are also familiar with the Swedish welfare system as well as
traditions, norms, values, and social codes related to Swedish society and speak
Swedish fluently, the requirements about skills and knowledge that are necessary
to do the work have yet to be codified.

What knowledge that is actually presumed to provide civic orientation seems to
be a rather multifaceted issue. Although the participants in the programs generally
come from the same country, speak the same language, and are newly arrived
immigrants, they are unique with respect to education, interests, experiences, age,
religion, etc. These differences mean that the individual possibilities, expectations,
and need for information will vary. For example, people from rural areas and
people with low levels of education will have different needs for information
compared to people from urban areas and those with higher education. And for
people who are illiterate or come from countries with primary oral language
traditions, the conditions most probably are different in relation to people who
come from a country with similar cultural and educational structures as Sweden.
This heterogeneity implies that civic orientation becomes a rather complex
activity to deal with as the information will have to be made available and
intelligible by the integration workers to each individual. It is reasonable to assume
that people working with civic orientation know how to bridge between different
needs, interests, values, and interpretations. This bridging work will most surely
have consequences for immigrants’ possibilities to understand, participate, and
influence different arenas in society. Therefore, there is a need to further
scrutinize what characterizes the professional knowledge involved in such
bridging work and to widen our understanding about knowledge development,
the organization of knowledge, and local performance.
1.1 Work integrated learning and the study of integration work

In this thesis, the integration work studied is placed within a frame of work-integrated learning (WIL). At its core, WIL concerns the relationship between what is often referred to as theory and practice. Patrick et al. define WIL as an “umbrella term used for a range of approaches and strategies that integrate theory with the practice of work within a purposefully designed curriculum” (2008, p. v). WIL specifically focuses on the relationships between learning, knowledge, and work. More specifically, WIL as a knowledge domain includes issues related to how pedagogical approaches and methods can be used to develop learning processes that bridge different contexts. WIL provides a way to deal with changing conditions in working life, which is highly relevant in relation to integration work. Social changes, in this case migration processes and policy mandates, implies that the conditions for WIL change, but it also challenges traditional ways of organizing work and institutional and cultural boundaries and the understanding of what constitutes professional knowledge. Hence, professional knowledge is a significant aspect of this thesis, as well as for WIL.

As civic orientation in its present form is a relatively new activity, it can be presumed that historically there is a lack of mediated traditions and knowledge to be mobilised to handle challenges in everyday work. This lack brings extra relevance to the experiences of the integration workers who are engaged in civic orientation practice. Billet (2001) notes that because people interpret and make sense of what they experience in different ways, integration practice must be understood in light of how people “construct their conceptions or domains of these situationally based requirements for performance” (p. 434). Similarly, Guile and Griffiths maintain that practice-based experiences are significant for developing competent skills required for work and suggest that the different contexts in which the experiences are made need to be taken into account when analysing work experiences:

\[
\text{[L]earning become more of a product and process of interaction within and between contexts and the successful mediation of these relationships is based upon a recognition that learning involves the negotiation of learning as part of actual workplace experience. (2001, p. 127)}
\]

For experience-based knowledge to develop into professional knowledge, experiences also need to be shared and elaborated at a collective basis together with other professionals. This study scrutinizes the integration workers’ everyday actions and interactions in order to widen the understanding of what becomes
professional knowledge in integration work. From an ontological perspective, in this thesis knowledge is seen as embedded in interactions. Similarly, Thång (2004) argues that even though knowledge is personal, it is also manifested and shared between people in activities. The development of the integration workers’ knowledge can be seen as based on interactions within different contexts such as in the classes with the immigrants and sharing with colleagues. This study focuses the interactions with the immigrants and with available tools. The interpretations and use of seemingly fixed and frozen categories and classification systems, often embedded in the teaching materials in civic orientation, presume a great deal of professional knowledge. The integration workers’ access to the specific institutional rules and procedures as well as to the immigrants’ needs and interests makes the integration workers’ experiences of bridging between fixed and situated demands (cf. Mäkitalo, 2012) vital ingredients for the development of relevant professional knowledge within the field of civic orientation.

In this thesis, the knowledge involved in providing civic orientation is considered a base for the emergence of a professional culture that constitutes the activity. The view on professional knowledge in this study is similar to Höghielm’s view:

> [P]rofessional knowledge is to act out in a way that you know what you do, and you do it on purpose after reflection and practice. One can speak of a conscious experience— an experience in action and thought associations. An experienced professional ‘knows’ what to do. He or she has mastered their subject matter and execution of the task to such degree that he or she cannot always describe what is happening with words alone. (2005, p. 9)

Here, professional knowledge is coupled to experiences of engaging in work and is a prerequisite for competent action. As with Lave and Wenger (1991), such a view also indicates that knowledge involves the ability to participate in a specialised activity. This view also implies that being participants in institutional activities involve making use of available resources. Thus, as pointed out by Billet et al., there is relational interdependence between “individual engagement and changing cultural practice at work” (2005, p. 234). For Billet et al., goal-directed activity means that changes emerge within individuals and there is a constant remaking and transformation of cultural practices. These learning processes also refine knowledge and these relationships between learning, knowledge, and work means that civic orientation practice needs to be understood on its own terms as an activity in which integration workers participate and learn and create and improve knowledge. From this view, it is possible to spot the knowledge involved when guidelines and interactions are used in the context of daily work. In this thesis, such a view implies that relevance is given to experiences, the use of text
and interactions, and the organization and development of knowledge in the context practice.

The perspective of professional knowledge and learning that has been presented implies that professional practice can be thought of as historically informed (by the integration workers’ experiences in this case) and embedded in the context where it is used (Lave, 1993). In this thesis, professional knowledge and practice is understood as shaped by the values and aims of the institutions in which the practice is located, which also involves the needs of the people the activity attempts to help as well as the national regulations. Thus, how the staff engages with knowledge is understood as “filtered by what is seen as of professional value and as possible to accomplish” (Edwards & Daniels, 2012, p. 40). A central aspect of accomplishing competent work involves giving accounts for actions in a responsible and sensitive way (Suchman, 2000). Intrinsic in activities, accounts can be understood as elements of situated knowing-in-practice (Mäkitalo, 2003) and constituting what is considered as relevant professional knowledge. Being accountable implies in this study that the integration workers are able to discern what aspects immigrants consider significant while preparing for and performing civic orientation classes. This thesis examines how actions constitute what is considered relevant professional knowledge in civic orientation.

In this thesis, the concept of WIL takes its point of departure from workplace studies (Luff, Hindmarsh & Heath, 2000). This approach provides a perspective for understanding technology and social action in the view of “detailed empirical studies of work and interactions in organisational environments” (p. xiv) and informs the design and deployment of new systems. Here, technology refers to information systems in terms of text and it is the use of text that is the focus, not the text itself. Characteristic for civic orientation practice is what the introduction of new integration guidelines imply in terms of knowledge requirements. Of particular interest is the knowledge needed in the organisation of information, knowledge, and interactions in local work in order to bridge different contexts. In the context of this thesis, it is reasonable to think that studying integration work in action, scrutinizing what relevant knowledge emerges, will have significance for integration work in general and civic orientation in particular.

One central contribution of the empirical analyses of workplace studies will address how work is organized, specifically relationships between social and material aspects of activities. Some of the issues include the role of standards and standardisation (Bowker & Star, 1998; Winman & Rystedt, 2011), mediating conceptual tools or categories (Engeström, 2011), sharing meaning and boundary objects (Bechy, 2003; Ackerman & Halverson, 2004), decision making (Winman & Rystedt, 2012), and inter-professional work (Nicolini, Mengis & Swan, 2012). As argued by Luff et al., workplace studies can reveal that
The competent and accountable use of a system in an organisation is inseparable from a body of local knowledge and reasoning through which technologically informed actions and activities are produced and rendered intelligible. (2000, p. xiv)

That is, the relationship between social actions and material aspects of activity needs to be considered if we want to understand what relevant knowledge is used in local work. Therefore, a crucial concern in relation to this thesis is that we need to know more about the actual use of text as a material-semiotic tool and interactions in integration work and how the material and social aspects interrelate in practice. The relationship between social and material aspects of work with an interest on textually-mediated activities is highlighted in several studies (Heath & Luff, 1996; Moore, 2004; Suchman, 2000). Suchman concludes that instead of making epistemological distinctions between subjective and objective aspects of practice, we should consider differences in relation to work and forms of social interaction: “knowledge as practical reasoning and routine as ways of ordering familiar materials and activities are co-present and rely upon each other in every form of working practice” (2000, p. 43). In similar vein, Moore’s (2004) study illustrates how people engage in knowledge rather than in prescribed content and procedures. From this perspective, curriculum is seen as occurring in practice as a socially-constructed ordering of knowledge use in a specific context. In the context of this thesis, such a perspective makes it possible to scrutinize how knowledge is organized to suit specific circumstances. The ways in which a teaching material is sensitive to situations and sequences of work will most probably have relevance for what it takes for integration workers to prepare a class, organize information, and make it relevant in local use.

The consideration of these socio-material relationships means that interactions and the use of text in routine work must be studied in action, in the context in which they are used at work. The use of text and interaction is seen as resting on social organisation from which the text and interactions gain relevance and meaning in the workplace activity. Specific interest is directed to the ways in which forms of interaction and meanings of information enter into and transform everyday integration practice. This perspective makes it possible to widen the understanding for what information and interactions are used for, how they change the conditions for work, and in what direction the activity is developed.

1.2. Aim

The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the professional knowledge that is developed in activities aimed to support newly
arrived immigrants in Sweden. More specifically, the purpose is to illuminate the development of pedagogical and communicative knowledge in an institutional welfare activity called civic orientation.

Three questions are investigated in three separate studies.

1. In the first study, the research question concerns how quality is defined and dealt with in the development of a new integration activity.

2. In the second study, the research question addresses what knowledge and conditions are involved in adapting standardized teaching material to suit local circumstances and procedures.

3. In the third study, the research question examines how professional knowledge is expressed in the integration workers’ use of dialogue in civic orientation classes.

1.3. The outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two sections. Part one is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1.** Introduction, aim, and research questions.

**Chapter 2.** The history and rise of civic orientation.

In this chapter, I will provide a brief historical overview to make visible how civic orientation is part of historically emergent ways of organising integration work in Sweden. Different ways of organising integration activities throughout the years have depended on prevailing views on integration and definitions of needs and problems related to integration. Here, I will direct specific attention to the role that Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) and civic information has played in the development of civic orientation.

**Chapter 3.** Previous research.

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of previous research, directing issues concerned with dialogue and communicative activities, the use of standards in learning environments, and issues related to quality and quality development.

**Chapter 4.** Theoretical framing.

In this chapter, I will frame civic orientation as an institutional activity in which the integration workers develop routines and learn how to make use of dialogue
and standardised teaching materials to accomplish work. Specifically, I will present how learning and knowledge is understood in relation to the theoretical approach in this thesis.

**Chapter 5. Method.**

In this chapter, I will provide descriptions of the setting together with discussions regarding data production and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 6. Summary of the studies.**

Chapter six consists of separate summaries of the three different studies.

**Chapter 7. Discussion.**

In this final chapter, the different studies are discussed in relation to the aim and research questions of the thesis and how they contribute to illuminate these. I will focus on the knowledge involved when integration workers make use of standardised course material and dialogue to make information relevant in groups of immigrants with different backgrounds, interests, and needs. These concerns are further developed and discussed from the perspective of dialogue, standards and quality.

Methodological issues are also discussed.

Part two consists of the following three empirical studies where the research is reported:

1. **Vesterlind, M. & Winman, T. Dimensions and perspectives of quality in integration work.**
   
   Under consideration by an international peer-reviewed journal.

2. **Vesterlind, M. Adapting standardised teaching material to suit local learning conditions.**

   Manuscript.


10
2 The rise of civic orientation

The purpose of this chapter is to put integration work in a historical context in order to create a broader understanding of why civic orientation looks like it does today and what it is a response to. The emergence of civic orientation must be understood in light of the different challenges that integration efforts have aimed to manage throughout the years. This study focuses on how different views of integration and definitions of needs have played a role in the organisation of integration activities. Specific attention is paid to the role that Swedish for Immigrants (Svenska för invandrare, SFI) and the civic information, as a part of it, have played in the development of civic orientation. The story below has its origins in the 1960s when questions and policies started to address the need for administrative authorities to meet various needs connected with immigration.

2.1 Perspectives on integration

There is no general definition for integration work. Although there are efforts within the European Commissions to standardise integration policy across Europe (EC, 2010), Goodman (2012) points to a diversity of integration policy design and how the member states have chosen to develop different integration requirements and integration activities. The directions taken reflect how the states define integration in terms of membership and belonging, and these definitions have implications for what kind of relationships between individuals and the state that integration activities aim to support. Yet, integration work takes place at the local level and it is the institutional context that enables the interpretation of governmental directions. Because integration work relies on the prevailing view of integration, local definitions play a central role in the interpretation of state directions and the organisation of integration activities.

Current political debates in democratic welfare states concern how both individual and collective rights can be ensured to all citizens. For example, ideas of assimilation or that integration will occur without major interventions by the state, contrast with views that mean that people’s right to cultural practices and expressions of identity should be safeguarded (Castles & Miller, 2009). The latter perspective acknowledges a need to distinguish cultural differences and to identify particularities coupled to ethnicity and religion. In the UK, the policy framework is dominated by an agenda of community cohesion. Recent research (Mulvey,
2010) shows how distinctions are made in the policy framework between skilled people and refugees and asylum seekers. This distinction implies that integration becomes an individual responsibility and a matter deserving specific support.

The existence of differences in society implies that many individuals and groups fight to become socially and politically recognised. Such differences manifest in culture, identity, and interests and are often referred to as multiculturalism and the right to participate as equals in society irrespective of culture, identity, or interests. Critical voices in the debates mean that even though equal rights are ensured to all citizens, at the practical level, immigrants are often excluded socially, economically, as well as culturally. Two philosophers that represent different views on how the state should handle the relation between individual and collective/cultural rights are Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka.

According to Taylor (1994), recognition is a basic human need closely related to our identity, which relies on recognition or its absence. In this view, identity and self-conception occur in a constant dialogue with others and presupposes active participation in a community in which one can develop. Similarly, Taylor considers cultural recognition just as essential. From Taylor’s point of view, cultural recognition can be depicted both in the private and official sphere. He makes a distinction between two ways that the idea of equal recognition have been perceived. First, in a politics of equal dignity, aiming at treating all individuals the same way by recognizing their humanity. Second, the idea of politics of difference, recognizing collective identities and their right to articulate their vision of what is good. This means, according to Taylor, that collective identities conflict with individual rights to equal treatment. Taylor suggests a third perspective, comprising that representatives from different cultures respect one another as equal partners in dialogue, involving the possibility for each of them to act to ensure the persistence of the collective. Therefore, consideration must be given to group-specific preferences, implying that individual rights may have to be constrained in order to ensure the survival of cultural groups.

Although Kymlicka (1998) to some extent agrees with the recognition of cultural minorities, he argues that group-specific rights should not compromise individual autonomy and freedom of choice. According to Kymlicka (1998), the premise for multiculturalism is membership in a cultural community, a collective essential for people’s identity, well-being, individual freedom, and equality. As with Taylor (1994), Kymlicka believes that the state is never neutral in relation to people’s origin and argues that providing group-specific rights, such as language rights and territorial autonomy, will be a way for the state to protect minority cultures and to maintain liberal principles of justice, although without trespassing the individual right of making a free choice. Kymlicka’s view (1998) represents a rather stable notion of culture and indicate that integration depends on the
possibility for people to keep part of their cultural heritage and have the opportunity to express their ethnic identity.

In view of the above, depending on the understanding of culture, there will be different ways to relate to rights of individuals and the rights of cultural minorities. These differences should influence how to organise integration work. Tensions naturally exist between a culture’s right to develop structures for inclusion and an individual’s right to go beyond the bounds of such structures. Consequently, these kinds of tensions have to be handled in integration work. What do such tensions mean for how integration workers develop and present civic orientation? Should they encourage individuals to exceed their cultural bounds or should they act to sustain established structures? Should differences be paid specific attention or be ignored? Should different cultures exist side-by-side or should they integrate with one another? These questions are not explicitly defined in the Swedish governmental integration policy, yet integration workers need to negotiate such tensions. Thus, how differences are approached have consequences for the organisation of integration work.

Recognising cultural identity and immigrants’ right to keep their culture requires distinguishing cultural variations such as ethnic and religious differences. Clearly, cultural differences create a fertile ground for social problems, including the perspective of “us versus them”. One implication of such identification of differences is that conceptions of values are used, such as “We in Sweden…” do this or that and “You will need…” this or that in order to successively live in Sweden. Thus, while some information about conditions in Sweden may concern practical aspects of life and traditions, such as “We in Sweden generally use warm jackets in the winter and eat herring at midsummer”, there are also issues that are based on the law, such as right-hand traffic and state supplied child care, although the latter is founded on specific values and the former is to a greater extent built on practical aspects of traffic safety. Thus, the use of these kinds of diverse conceptions is specifically applied to non-Western country refugees, because people from the European Union are not included as a target group for civic orientation. It follows that integration and “equal” citizenship becomes a matter of group belonging, depending on where you come from. In brief, it is a question of origins. Such identification delineates the boundaries of society as it renders visible the “non-integrated” (Schinkel & Van Hout, 2010) – the in-group is identified as us, which requires specific social and cultural competencies. Subsequently, such identification of cultural differences simultaneously points to a quest for equality and integration and immigrants become “objects of problematisation” (Schinkel, 2013, p. 1144). Cultural differences, specifically if they are large and/or unfamiliar in combination with the majority-minority
relation, may not be able to be handled by a single template but require mutual sensitivity and mutual respect.

Another aspect is whether all groups, whatever their country of origin, should be treated the same way. Should all groups have the same information? Is it appropriate to emphasize certain information for specific groups? Is some information irrelevant to some groups? However, all these questions about difference and similarity imply great expectations on integration workers in how they handle cultural differences since these expectations concern extremely vital aspects of citizenship and conditions for participation in society.

The ideal picture of socialisation has been related to one nation and one people, and immigrants have often been seen as strangers, attributed with cultural and ethnic identities that contrast with an idealised idea of a “normal” citizen. But how can socialisation processes be understood in societies where there is a plurality of cultures and traditions? In all social groups there is a tension between the individual and the collective. Each group membership both allows and restricts individual acts and identities. Considering the challenges that integration workers face, the notion of culture as an organising concept has limitations for understanding the activity they are engaged in. Instead, the heterogeneity that characterises the groups makes it reasonable to critically question the emphasis that is put on culture in modern discourses on integration. Okin (2002) is one example of such a critical voice that argues that culture cannot be discussed without addressing issues of human values and an individual’s position within a culture. Okin specifically addresses the relation between gender and culture, the tension between women and men, equal rights to recognition, and the multicultural attendance behind group rights for minorities. Although Okin is specifically directing equal rights between women and men, her reasoning can also apply to other differences such as disability, sexuality, ethnicity, education, and age. There is, according to Okin, a risk that the provision of differentiated group rights oppresses individuals’ position in the group and as a consequence undermines vital democratic values of equality. Such processes of inequality can be related to the blindness that occurs when more attention is directed towards differences between cultures than differences within each group.

Clearly, local integration work must be understood in relation to the prevailing view on integration in the society in which it is performed. Thus, there are several aspects integration workers, who “hold the keys to a dimension of citizenship” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 4), need to handle in their everyday work. To understand the knowledge produced within the practice of civic orientation involves taking into account social, cultural, organisational, and historical contexts.
2.2 New responses to migration

In the 1960s, the state was not actively involved in facilitating immigrants’ participation in society. During this time, immigration to Sweden was primarily characterised by labour migrants from Nordic and southern European countries (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). Foreign labour was even recruited from abroad, primarily by the metal, forest, and textile industry as well as hotels and restaurants. There was practically full employment for both immigrants and native-born residents (Ekberg, 2007). When the long-term consequences of immigration were discussed in the mid-1960s (Borevi, 2002), the daily press identified two main factions – one advocating for either universalism and another advocating for a multicultural society (Dahlström, 2004; 2007). Whereas the universalists claimed that no specific attention should be given to ethnic diversity, the multiculturalists supported a more diverse immigration policy. It was obvious that the immigrants were “here to stay” rather than merely casual visitors, so they became recognised as a welfare policy target.

Dahlström (2007) highlights that even before there was an explicit immigration policy, the government committee Utlänningsutredningen (SOU 1967:18) required that the government declare its position regarding the “adjustment issues” – whether it should aim to assimilate or integrate immigrants. The committee related assimilation to language and cultural incorporation and related integration to preserving immigrants’ language, culture, and religious distinctiveness. Although the committee emphasised equality objectives concerning the immigrants’ right to the same standard as the rest of the population, it promoted a universalist position, arguing that there was no need for specific arrangements for ethnic diversity. What is notable (and will be shown below) is that many immigrant programs had already started before the first governmental bill about policy objectives was introduced (Dahlström, 2004; 2007).

2.3 Identifying information and language needs

In 1967 and 1968, issues concerning immigrants’ introduction and adaptation to society were discussed in connection with the implementation of the regulation of the non-Nordic immigration (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). These issues, particularly in relation to working life, had already attracted the attention of the trade union movement. As immigration increased during the 1960s, the union movement meant that social measures were required to facilitate the immigrants’ introduction into working life and adaptation to the conditions in Sweden.
Specifically, language, information, and welfare problems were highlighted, mainly associated with differences regarding culture and religion. The language issue was given particular emphasis as the increasing groups of immigrants were seen as facing difficulties understanding and making themselves understood in their new country. The trade union claimed that foreign workers needed more support than other workers because they lacked experience and knowledge about the Swedish labour market. To bridge the information problems, it was suggested that the introduction would take place during working hours. The idea was that the foreign workers gradually would learn Swedish as they were taken care of by someone who talked the same language. Printed material and films in various languages about immigrants were also produced for Swedish trade unions. In 1970, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen, LO) and the Swedish Employers’ Confederation (Svenska Arbetgivareföreningen, SAF) recommended providing language courses (200 hours of which the first 60 hours would be paid for by the employer) that would primarily take place during working hours (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). In 1971, LO argued for increasing the information for immigrants, including language skills and an orientation about the Swedish society, as LO considered these basic conditions for immigrants to successfully navigate their way to a new social life.

In addition to the efforts of LO and SAF, in 1965 the National Board of Education (Skolöverstyrelsen) was commissioned to arrange Swedish language courses for immigrants (SFI) (Carlson, 2003). At first, SFI was mainly carried out by adult educational associations (studieförbund). In the 1970s, the language courses were included in the framework of the labour market training (Arbetsmarkandsutbildning, AMU) to provide immigrants with knowledge and skills related to Swedish language and society, training that was a prerequisite for planned vocational training within the AMU. The courses were organised in the context of a vocational training or, when concerning refugees, by the Labour Office (Arbetsmarknadsverket). Notably, according to Carlson (2003), there were no binding documents and forms or specific admission requirements for the language teachers and few were full-time employees (SOU 1971:51).

2.4 A multicultural strategy

In 1968, the governmental committee Invandrarutredningen (IU) was summoned to identify immigrants’ adjustment problems in order to provide better support and assistance. The adjustment problems were linked to the need for information and knowledge about the Swedish language (SOU 1971:51). During this time, significant effort was put into different forms of information activities in the
whole society. It was argued that the rapid changes in the society increased the need for information of all citizens (SOU 1969:48). To enable citizens’ participation in the democratic process, it was argued that information about various social functions and institutions was necessary. Governmental directives to IU explicitly stated that there was a need for knowledge about the extent to which the information about Swedish society, including rights and obligations, was received by the immigrants.

The guidelines for immigrant policy that the committee finally presented (SOU 1974:69) acknowledged the increasing diversity in society and suggested three main objectives for a multicultural society: equality (jämlikhet), freedom of choice (valfrihet), and cooperation (samverkan). Although equality was a central theme already in the governmental bill in 1968, in this new definition it was also stated that the immigrants and their children would be offered “real conditions for maintaining” and “developing their languages and traditions” (i.e., the same rights the majority population enjoyed) (SOU 1974:69, p. 95). Freedom of choice implied that members of linguistic minorities should have the opportunity to choose to what extent they wanted to keep and develop their cultural and linguistic identities and to what degree they would like to form a Swedish cultural identity (SOU 1974:69). According to the committee, this view presupposed that immigrants were granted the support required for developing cultural activities. Finally, the objective of cooperation projected fruitful relations between different groups (i.e., the immigrants, minorities, and the majority population). In contrast to universalistic objectives, this was a strategy that emphasised the importance of cultural belonging, locating different groups side-by-side. However, the state would be responsible for supporting both the immigrants’ assimilation to Swedish society and the preservation of ethnic belonging (Borevi, 2002).

The multicultural strategy was based on social democratic traditions, which had influenced the field of integration during the past 30 years and which strongly relied on trusting state interventions (Brekke & Borchgrevnik, 2007). There were also other positions in the public discourse about the relationship between the individual and society. According to Borevi (2002), the right wing political party (Moderaterna) advocated individual freedom to choose between different welfare solutions as opposed to a general solution for all.

In 1975, the Swedish Parliament adopted IU’s proposed objectives, deciding to develop immigrant and minority policy. This decision, according to Södergran (2000), was based on a consensus among all political orientations in the sense that it showed clear refusal of assimilation strategies that previously presupposed that the immigrants would give up their language and cultural identity. At about the same time, there was a significant change in the immigration pattern as
immigration had begun to include more refugees and families, which would require even more individualised governmental support.

In the beginning of the 1980s, criticisms were raised against the policy objectives. Specifically, the objective of the free choice was questioned and whether the immigrants had the right to follow other rules and norms than the rest of the population (Borevi, 2002). Two government committees were formed – Invandrarpolitiska kommittén (IPOK) and Diskrimineringutredningen (DU). Both these committees stated that the objective of free choice was not clear and their suggestion implied changed directions in relation to the 1975 immigrant policy. In IPOK’s view, multiculturalism as a societal value did not motivate the state to support culture preservation. According to Borevi, this view represented the latent conflict between individual autonomy and the collective in the sense that having access to your “own” culture presupposed a group of people who actively promoted non-Swedish cultures. It was hard, according to IPOK, to give all immigrants equal right to “their” cultures since it was hard to give them access to necessary human networks. A governmental bill (Prop. 1985/86:98) stated that the state would no longer support immigrant collectives. Instead, individual needs would be the focus of government programs for immigrants. The government wanted to detail what the free choice meant and reformulated it: “It [the free choice] includes respect for the individual’s identity and integrity as well as opportunities to develop the own cultural heritage within the framework of the basic standards the Swedish society gives to human coexistence” (p. 21). The governmental bill emphasises that there are fundamental values in Sweden (e.g., equality between men and women and the rights of children) that must be maintained in all circumstances. Another change was that the only groups that had been in Sweden for a very long time or always should be referred to as minorities, not recent immigrants.

In 1985, the Immigration Board (Statens invandrarverk, SIV) assumed the main responsibility from the National Labour Market Board (Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen, AMS) for immigrant and refugee reception. It was no longer the needs of the labour market that motivated immigration policy; instead the refugees’ social and psychological needs became the primary motivation for immigration policy. Since then, the guidelines for working with immigrants were based on the Social Services Act (Sarstrand Marekovic, 2011).
2.5 A changed focus: from immigrants to integration

In 1997, there was a significant shift in the Swedish immigration policy (Prop. 1997/98: 16). What earlier had been called immigration policy (invandrarpolitik) was now changed to integration policy (integrationspolitik). The policy objectives in the 1970s were criticised for seeing groups of immigrants as requiring special treatment to support their adaption to Swedish society and for dividing the population into “us” and “them”. Since then, integration was mainstreamed into the government’s general efforts (Bkreke & Borchgrenvik, 2007). That is, focus was on universal solutions, with one exception – the newly arrived immigrants. A central issue in the government bill (Prop. 1997/98: 16) was the relationship between universal and selective programs and it was decided that state-supported programs would only be given during an immigrant’s initial period in Sweden. The bill stated that the introduction programs had to be improved and based on individual needs and circumstances. A starting point was that “it is the individual’s own responsibility to create a good life in Sweden” and “individual initiatives to achieve this” should be supported by administrative authorities (p. 79-80).

Diversity was seen as a more relevant expression than multiculturalism and was a way for the government to point to the change from previous policy. This new outlook emphasised that diversity involves the opportunity for people “to choose their identities” and appear as “independent individuals, with their own resources and with the ability to take responsibility for their own lives” (Prop. 1997/98:16, p. 21). The diversity that was made relevant was related to ethnicity as well as to culture, religion, and language, specifically directing the risk for newly arrived immigrants so their they would not end up “in a worse situation than others” (Ibid. p.22) because of their cultural or ethnic identity. Hence, immigrant status and ethnicity were still the focus, although the needs were defined in relation to the immigrant’s socio-economic situation. According to Borevi (2002), this new focus probably meant that the tensions between universal and targeted interventions persisted. However, previous ideas about groups of immigrants participating in society, side-by-side on equal terms, were changing. Instead, the bill expressed an idea of a new national community, based on mutual tolerance and respect. A common history was less important, and emphasis was given to belonging to Sweden and supporting the fundamental values of Swedish society. Integration was seen as the solution, involving processes at “the individual and societal level” (Prop. 1997/98:16, p.22) and “opportunities to be part of a larger whole without doing violence to cultural and ethnic identity” (p. 22-23).

In 2001, the social democratic government presented a follow-up of the 1997’s integration policy. The petition (Skr. 2001/02:129) criticised the concept of
tolerance in the policy objectives, emphasising respect as a better approach to cultural diversity issues. All behaviours cannot be excused by referencing cultural background, so it was argued that diversity should be respected “as long as this diversity is not contrary to Swedish law or violates human rights” (p. 127). The petition concluded that there are still gaps in introduction programs and suggested that the objectives with the integration policy need to be clarified and the Swedish values need increased attention during the integration process.

In a report (SOU 2008: 58), which was a response to the Investigation of Newcomers Labour Establishment (IJ 2007: 02), Monica Werensfels Röttorp writes that “knowledge of the new country’s laws, traditions, and approach is a prerequisite for integration” (p. 76) and civic knowledge should be included as a mandatory part in the introduction programs. The report formed the basis for a new policy that addressed how new immigrants navigate the labour market.

In 2009, a new governmental bill (Prop. 2009/10:60) suggested new rules regarding how programs should help new immigrants establish a working and social life in Sweden. The bill was preceded by a text (Skr. 2008/09:24) that gave new directions for the integration policy between 2008 and 2010. During this time, the government proposed new policy objectives characterised by an overall objective of “equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all irrespective of ethnic and cultural background” (p. 4). According to the proposal, this objective should be accomplished by a general program and specific programs for newcomers. Strong emphasis was given to an effective introduction program for newcomers to help them find work as fast as possible. The petition recognises integration as an international question that is influenced by EU countries, requiring flexibility and cooperation and recognizing increased diversity in society.

Exclusion (utanförskap) is a central issue in the governmental petition and to “break” exclusion is a priority of integration policy. Work is put forward as the general solution, which is also linked to issues of employability and language skills. Individual responsibility and capacity is emphasised. Diversity is seen as increasing in society and is assumed to create increased risks for conflicts between people with different values, goals, and aspirations. It is argued that the integration policy should prevent and deal with such conflicts. By strengthening peoples’ relationships to issues of democracy and human rights, it was argued that cohesiveness and fundamental values would be fortified. The integration strategy is defined as creating common values in a society with greater diversity. The integration strategy assumed, the Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) was charged with coordinating the introduction programs (Prop.2009/10:60).

It is apparent that the development of integration policy could have taken various directions. Changing demands concerning adjustment versus change (Dahlström, 2004) together with political perspectives have influenced the decisions.
### 2.6 Institutionalisation of integration activities

As mentioned, the first state-financed integration work was in the 1965 when language courses for adult immigrants were organised, often by adult educational associations, by private firms, and by labour market partners (Lundh & Ohlsson, 1999). At first, these language programs were locally initiated, consolidated by the Social Democratic Labour party, and made part of the national policy (Dahlström, 2007). Since then, they have been part of the integration policy. However, there was also specific information efforts directed to immigrants based on cooperation between working groups on immigration issues (Arbetsgruppen för invandrarfrågor and Utlänningsutredningen). In 1965, an information handbook – *New in Sweden (Ny i Sverige)* – was published (Dahlström, 2004). The handbook addressed foreign nationals’ rights and obligations in Sweden as well as issues regarding everyday life.

During the 1980s, the demands for social information being provided to immigrants increased and involved the organisation of social welfare, values, and ideas. Service production contributed to increased demands on language in these years; the lack of Swedish language skills was seen as a barrier for immigrants to find a job. Although the language training held a prominent place among the programs directed to immigrants, it was found that the programs varied greatly in relation to form and focus. The government (social democratic) understood this variation as a factor that depended on whether programs had been directed at employed immigrants, refugees, immigrants covered by labour market policy measures, university students, or others (Prop. 1983/84:199). Since the programs primarily had been conducted as experiments in adult education and as part of labour market policy and refugee policy, the government argued that there was a lack of a coherent system of education, which did not guarantee everyone the Swedish education they needed. The bill proposed a new system of SFI teaching based on the SFI committee’s analysis (SOU 1981:86) and resulted in proposals for increased social responsibility and uniformity primarily targeting newly arrived adult immigrants. One of the conclusions was that Swedish language skills as well as knowledge about Swedish society and work could improve the lives of immigrants. They suggested obligatory participation in the SFI programs, implying the state’s responsibility to offer SFI but the individual’s responsibility to learn Swedish. Later, it was emphasised that SFI should be viewed as part of the refugee reception connected to residence and work (Prop. 1983/84:199). Both the Municipality Federation (Kommunförbundet) and LO stressed that the SFI should be an intervention linked to the reception and LO underscored the benefits of the SFI taking place before entry into the labour market. This view

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3 In 1978, a committee was summoned to review the SFI. The reports were finished in 1981.
implied specific requirements for the organisation of work and resulted in municipalities becoming responsible for language training. This change of responsibility implied the end of the experimentations with Swedish language training that had prevailed since 1965.

In 1985, the refugee reception practice was formalised and the Immigration Board became responsible for local settlement (Kadhim, 2000). The refugee and family integration policy, which replaced the labour migration policies from the 1970s, increased markedly during the 1980s. This alteration contributed to change in the organisation of refugee reception from 1985 that involved increased responsibility for local authorities, resulting in the so-called Strategy for Sweden (Hela Sverige strategin). This new strategy required that all local authorities would develop professional skill activities that address the needs of immigrants and refugees (Södergran, 2000). However, according to Sarstrand Marekovic (2011), there were no policy directives to the local authorities that identified who should work with the refugee reception and how it should be organised. Since the Social Services Act addressed social integration, it was the social workers (who knew that law) and their professional knowledge that often guided the activities directed to refugees. Until 1985, there had been a clientisation of refugees and the official term for the refugee reception had been care and custody (omhändertagande) (Eastmond, 2011). As a consequence, care and custody to some extent characterised the social workers’ role and approach to newcomers.

According to Eastmond (2011), a consequence of this clientisation of refugees is that they tend to become associated with the lack of something, as “persons without agency, to be ‘completed’ by the system” (p. 282). The idea of lack of language and civic skills, for example, is reflected in policy (Prop. 1985/86: 98, p.28), where it is argued that the immigrants needed information in their native language and “to function as a corporate citizen” the individual requires “basic knowledge of society, continuous information about changes in society and the democratic process and access to in-depth and detailed information in different stages of life”. These kinds of arguments about language and information lack/needs are, as mentioned, similar to those of LO and SAF as promulgated in the 1960s, although at that time they were trying to solve communication problems at the work place.

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4 Between 1964 and 1967, net immigration was on average about 28 000 people per year, which was more than double compared to the early 1960s. In 1959, the net immigration was barely 3 500 people per year. While the migration peak in the years 1964-1965 primarily consisted of a south European labour, the peak in 1969-1970 consisted of Finish labour. This can be compared to the years between 1990 and 2001, when 570 000 people came to Sweden and 30% of these were refugees and their relatives. In 2013, 115 845 people immigrated to Sweden.
2.7 From civic information to civic orientation

In SOU 1996:55, it is argued that social changes had contributed to increased demands for “Sweden-specific” skills. Prop. 1997/98:16 states that the SFI should provide knowledge and basic information about social life and the law in Sweden. The bill assumes that to successfully participate in society immigrants need “to understand the unspoken norms and social codes that govern human interaction in everyday life” (p. 84), specifically everyday life in Sweden. In addition, the bill states that civic orientation includes supporting the immigrants’ contacts with different social institutions and associations, specifically labour market contacts. It is further underscored that the orientation program should be adjusted in relation to individual needs and the environment in which the knowledge will be needed (i.e., the local community, future studies, or working life).

At the beginning of 2000, there was a general understanding that the information new immigrants need has never been well defined either in content or form (SOU 2003:75). Additionally, the supply and content of the introduction program varies greatly among municipalities in Sweden. The government wanted to make SFI more efficient by making it a specific language-training program, as the twin goals of language and civic information was seen as confusing. In 2002, a committee (SFI-utredningen) examined how the SFI could be renewed and organised, because there was a concern about the many early dropouts from the language training programs and a belief that information should be provided in a way that ensures everyone is given the opportunity to be included in the training (Dir. 2002: 105). The investigation was conducted in consultation with investigations about refugee reception. The final report (SOU 2003:77) suggests that the SFI programs should provide orientation in civic life and working life and be given in the participants’ native language. The report also suggested that additional strategies are needed to provide all immigrants with civic information about Sweden; however, the government did not agree with the committee’s recommendations (Prop. 2005/06: 148). Instead, the government wanted to continue the individualisation of SFI objectives and content initiated in 2002 in connection with the introduction of a new curriculum. It was argued that civic information about individual rights and obligations should be closely linked to the immigrants’ arrival in Sweden. To avoid misunderstandings, the government wanted this information given in the immigrants’ native languages early during the introduction. In 2007, the SFI curricula were changed, and the objectives of civic life orientation were removed. The same year, a report from the Integration Board (Ett förlorat år) showed that although 90% of the newly arrived immigrants had
participated in SFI, less than half of those who had participated in the municipal introduction had any contact with the labour market.

### 2.8 The regulation of content and form

In 2009, the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality proposed that the civic information program should change its name to civic orientation as this new title better describes the content of the program. In the Council on Legislation, a new law addressing the introduction programs (SFS 2010:197) was suggested with rules for accountability and efforts to accelerate working and social life of new immigrants. This legislation requires each municipality to provide civic orientation to newcomers during the introduction activities. To receive state standard remuneration (schablonersätting), municipalities (rather than the SFI) were now required to provide civic information and to ensure the quality of both content and scope of the activity. An investigation was established to provide a proposal for the form, content, scope, and outcomes of civic orientation. The directives (Dir. 2009:101) stated that the municipalities need support to provide equal quality civic orientation and the intention was to develop a national standard for the program. However, no directives were given about how to organise the activity, so each municipality was given the task to find solutions in relation to their own particular conditions.

The investigation concluded that civic orientation should “aim to deepen a kind of civic spirit” (SOU 2010: 16, p.24) and therefore involve expected rights and responsibilities concerning all citizens. A starting point in the report was that the state is responsible for guaranteeing equal conditions to accomplish participation and equality for all new arrivals with a resident permit. Three main aspects were emphasised in the report: values, welfare, and everyday life, i.e., “knowledge and familiarity with the constitutional foundations [. . .], knowledge of the public institutions, and [. . .] practically applied knowledge of how the welfare state works [. . .] on a local level as well as on various social practices” (SOU 2010: 16, p. 25).

In relation to Norway, Denmark, and a number of other European countries where civic education programs involve tests that determine citizenship, the investigations proposal differed as it highlighted that civic orientation should be a right but not a condition of citizenship. The state’s responsibilities include equal treatment in terms of content, respect for individual participants regarding individual variations (e.g., educational and professional background), as well as state and local responsibilities in terms of orienting immigrants to their new society. The directives for civic orientation became requirements as of December 2010 (SFS. 2010:1138). According to the Counties Agencies Report
2.9 Civic orientation and professionalization

The change from civic information to civic orientation was argued to ensure high quality service (SOU 2010: 16). The investigation maintained that high quality not only deals with mastering the subject but also involves pedagogical skills, the character of the target group, and good language skills. To ensure quality at a national level, the investigation highlighted the need for special educational efforts and a professionalization of civic orientation. The knowledge and experience necessary to conduct effective teaching with a group with these kinds of special qualities could, according to the investigation, not be found among the SFI teachers and refugee coordinators who previously had been responsible for providing immigrants civic information nor among other emerging actors. Although the government in large part adopted the intended proposal, the new regulations did not include requirements for specific higher education and training for those who work with civic orientation.

2.10 Providing civic orientation

The introduction of the civic orientation regulations in 2010 (SFS 2010:1138) involved both specific themes and dialogic meaning making. The emphasis on dialogue and reflection reinforced the move from a traditional teaching situation to a new kind of practice that focuses on processes of orientation.

The objectives are that the newly arrived immigrants develop their knowledge on human rights and fundamental democratic values, concerning the individual's rights and obligations in general, and how society is organized and affects everyday life on a practical level. This includes knowledge about both public institutions and civil society. The strategy that is indicated in relation to the objectives of the activity imply that the integration workers are expected to learn specific content presented in dialogue. Such standardization efforts (SOU

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5 According to the Counties Agencies Report 2015, there is a large discrepancy between the statistics from the Employment Agency and the local authorities. Whereas the Employment Agency reported 8,333 participants, the local authorities reported 14,381 between 2013 and 2014. This discrepancy means there is a high uncertainty regarding participation rates.
2010:16) have been put forward as a uniform solution to guarantee equal service and quality.

The specified information involves eight pre-defined themes stipulated at the national level (SFS 2010:1138):

1. Coming to Sweden;
2. Living in Sweden;
3. The rights and obligations of the individual;
4. The rights and obligations of the individual;
5. Starting a family and living with children in Sweden;
6. Having influence in Sweden;
7. Caring for your health in Sweden; and

To structure and distribute these themes, a schedule, a reference text and a PowerPoint presentation are constituted locally to be used in the scheduled sessions. The teaching material comprise an extended, although reduced, amount of information which is expected to be central for the immigrants understanding of Swedish society and provide a base for continued knowledge acquisition. The functions of the material can also be linked to the distribution of work across time and different groups and courses. A feature of this information system is that it is part of a wider context in which issues of integration and citizenship are crucial. As such, the information system is supposed to serve a wide range of information needs (e.g., national political imperatives, legislation, provision of human rights, professional groups and their tasks, citizens in general and, naturally, new immigrants).

Coordinated work and processes about the immigrants through the program (completing a civic orientation program will improve the immigrants access to the labour market) implies that the integration workers must follow a specific locally-developed curriculum. The integration workers must know when to attend to a group and what information to provide. This means that the teaching material must be available and possible to use across different groups. Such coordination functions become vital considering that civic orientation is part time work and most of the integration workers have other primary occupations, a circumstance that means most of the teachers probably will understand and explain topics in diverse ways. It is reasonable to think that the uniformity of the teaching material becomes necessary for at least two reasons: to ensure the sharing of the specified information that has been valued as important for new immigrants to know about life in Sweden and to prevent each integration worker from having to invent what should be said on each occasion.
Since the immigrants are a heterogeneous group, it can be presumed that the relevance of the information will to some extent depend on immigrants’ different life conditions and the situations that occur in daily work. Therefore, the teaching material presupposes that the integration workers know how to make the information intelligible, relevant, and meaningful in the local context. Studies that have examined the social context where information is used (Ackerman & Halverson, 2004) point to how information needs to be contextualized to become intelligible. Such work must be achieved by the integration workers as a situated action. For example, saying that the Social Insurance System (Försäkringskassan) in Sweden provides financial support when a person, for example, has to stay home from work or refrain from seeking work in order to stay at home to take care of a sick child presupposes that both the Social Insurance System and Care of a Child (vård av sjukt barn, VAB) are meaningful concepts to both the integration worker and the immigrants. Such socially agreed meaning about the concepts cannot be presupposed. In relation to professional knowledge, these circumstances imply that besides knowledge about different subjects, the integration workers must also know how to process information by means of dialogue. In such interactions, it can be presumed that they must use what they know about two specific cultures to bring the activity forward. Making judgments and decisions that are relevant in the very moment and for the purpose of an occasion requires professional knowledge.

Accordingly, making information intelligible and meaningful across different contexts places demands on how the integration workers handle not only processes of sharing information but also tensions that emerge as different systems of norms and values meet. This means that the ways in which the integration workers bridge between the material and the local circumstances will be consequential for the immigrants’ possibilities to understand what the information means to them in everyday life.

Essential aspects of the organization of integration activities and the use of resources that will support everyday work will necessarily rely on the understanding of and respect for people’s existential situations and how these conditions impact their possibilities to participate in different social arenas, such as school, working life, and social networks. Therefore, the integration workers are expected to manage issues such as creating an environment that can bridge the different expectations, experiences, presumptions, belongings, and conditions. From the integration workers’ perspective, such performance involves a number of preparatory aspects, such as collecting, transforming, and categorising information in ways that become suitable for the coming class and subsequently use this information in the classroom. How this is done is crucial for understanding aspects of the integration worker’s professional knowledge.
The interpretations and uses of seemingly fixed and frozen categories and classification systems, embedded in the civic orientation, presume a great deal of professional knowledge.

This chapter has given an overview of changes in the ways that integration has been understood since the 1960s and how these changes have contributed to the ways that civic orientation programs are organised today, emphasising information and dialogue. This thesis intends to contribute knowledge that can be relevant for future organizations and the performance of integration work in Sweden and even perhaps in other countries.
3 Previous research

Issues that concern immigrants’ integration and participation in society challenge traditional ways of working with integration. As previously mentioned, central concerns are related to how welfare states recognise cultural and individual identities (cf. Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1998). Whether the view on integration implies that rights should be diversified to suit different cultural groups and specific cultural groups should be given specific support or whether individual differences are the focus have consequences for the organisation of integration work. We need to know more about the nature of integration work – its processes and its organisation. The challenges encompass both the organisation of activities in terms of methods and procedures as well as the development of a body of professional knowledge. Even if language, cultural competence, and pedagogical competence are part of the requirements for working with civic orientation, the regulations do not specify what knowledge is needed to make information intelligible within the local context of the courses. As noted, how professional knowledge is expressed, developed, and organised in practice is a central issue in this thesis.

In Western Europe, there is a move towards standardising integration practices and assessments by formalising procedures, such as tests, civic education, and language courses (Goodman, 2012). However, what aspects of integration work that are decided on at a national level to standardise depends on the prevailing perspective of integration. In Sweden, quality, standardisation, and dialogue are explicit strategies for integration work and become resources in everyday work in civic orientation. How this can be understood will be reflected in the research that I have considered as central and the research I have chosen to make visible the present state of knowledge concerning different aspects of integration work.

3.1 Research on integration work

Valenta and Bunar (2010) wanted to understand more about the limitations of extensive state-assisted integration measures, so they compared the integration policies in Norway and Sweden by focusing on the ideological foundations and main integration programmes in the countries. The results revealed that although both countries provided asylum seekers with state-sponsored integration assistance such as language training, information programmes, housing, and
employment, there were different approaches in the level of coercion used to steer the actions of the refugees in relation to economy, housing, and settlement areas. Even though the practices in Sweden and Norway differ in a number of integration domains, a general conclusion made by the researchers was that integration is especially difficult when it comes to the elimination of inequalities between refugees and the rest of the population, arguing that measures such as housing and training alone cannot result in successful refugee integration. Instead, they put forward a need for an extended policy scope, including the use of more proactive integration intervention.

Eastmond (2011) further develops this line of reasoning by examining the experiences of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina who settled in Sweden in the 1990s. Based on fieldwork with Bosnian families and interviews with staff in the local welfare agencies and in refugee mental health services, it was found that for social workers “immigrant clients” tended to be collectively categorised by reference to special problems such as language, culture, lack of adequate skills, trauma, and poor mental health. This perception views newly-arrived immigrants as unable to participate in Swedish society. Irrespective of former qualifications, everyone had to first undergo the standardised introduction period of 18 months, guided by specific programmes. From the immigrants’ perspective, these requirements limited their mobility, autonomy, and aspirations to quickly rebuild their families and their economic status. Additionally, many immigrants found that the chances to obtain firm employment decreased the longer they trained to become self-sufficient. Eastmond concludes that when welfare services and special integration measures problematize difference as a basis for intervention, such ascriptions may reinforce one another and turn egalitarian ambitions into mechanisms for exclusion.

In a comparative study of social networks and adaptation processes among Somali and Tamil refugees in Norway, Engebrihtsen (2011) addressed the tension between individual achievements and collective concerns experienced by many immigrants. Engebrihtsen found that unaccompanied minors placed in reception centres were organised according to the regulations in relation to tasks, meals, school, etc. Detailed individual plans were created for and together with each youth to ensure that they understood their situation and future expectations. The study concluded that the idea of an individually planned life course could interfere with implications involved with belonging to a transnational family system. Similarly, Erdal (2013) showed in an interview study with Norwegian-Pakistani immigrants in Norway that while structural aspects of integration are discussed as a necessity and requirements to which they adapt over time, socio-cultural aspects are seen more as permitting subjective considerations. Furthermore, the study concluded that the immigrants’ experiences of integration should involve a sense
of belonging both “here and there”. Erdal argued that acknowledging the transnational nature of immigrants’ ties is key to understanding integration strategies and developing successful integration policies.

Engebrihtsen (2011), Erdal (2013), and Bennet et al. (2009) believe civic education efforts must be based on a citizenship style that matches the immigrants’ identity. Bennet et al. wanted to know more about changing citizen identity styles and learning opportunities in various online and offline environments, so they reviewed research on school-based civic education in different post-industrial democracies. They found that a vital aspect of succeeding in activities directed at increasing people's engagement in society is to “recognize the inclination for many people to approach politics from more personal standpoints that permit greater participation and construction of action” (p. 107). Other studies report similar findings. For example, using survey data from high school students and their parents, Ekström and Östman (2013) reported that sharing civic information with young immigrants in peer settings contributed to all dimensions of the youths’ civic orientation.

Other studies of integration work have highlighted the actual work and cultural knowledge in different ways. For example, Türegün (2013) showed that immigrants in Canada seem to acquire a new profession in the form of settlement workers. Based on an online survey and interviews with a group of foreign-born and foreign-trained professionals, Türegün argued that their attraction and retention in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector shows a profession in the making, although boundaries, training, licensing rules, and performance measures have yet to be defined. What this kind of integration work may involve at a more concrete level is further explored by Yohani (2013). Yohani examined the role of cultural brokers during refugee children’s and their families’ school adaptation in Canada by focusing on critical incidents. The brokers worked in an immigrant settlement agency with families with which they shared the same cultural heritage. Based on focus groups, document reviews, and interviews, it was found that the brokers’ position of negotiating cultural differences requires ethical decision-making and continuous evaluation of one’s actions. The work of mediating between the families and the school involved, for example, facilitating the parents’ involvement in their children’s school work by explaining processes and helping them make informed decisions regarding school issues. Part of their role was also to help teachers understand the families’ cultural worldviews and refugee experiences. According to Yohani, bridging work practices require specific attention to their implementation and on-going practice. Yohani also pointed out that this kind of bridging work necessitates on-going training as well as extending the training into the wider organisational system to increase the understanding of each other’s work.
In an interview study, Valenta (2012) focused on the social identities of service providers with immigrant backgrounds in Norwegian reception centres for asylum seekers. Specific interest was directed to how the migrant workers’ “insider position” is experienced and constructed in interactions with asylum seekers and ethnic Norwegian colleagues. The results showed that while the colleagues emphasised individual characteristics and downplayed the migrant workers non-Norwegian background, the asylum seekers’ social identity was emphasised and their professional identity as an employee was constantly negotiated. It was also found that the immigrant workers risked being accused of ethnic favouritism while trying to provide more culturally and linguistically adjusted services. That is, they continually had to negotiate their identities, self-presentation, and role making by handling both the expectations of their compatriots and the formal expectations of the services. The study concluded that the immigrant workers transcended the boundaries of various groups of asylum seekers, balancing “closeness” and “professional distance” to a larger extent than their Norwegian colleagues.

The review above shows that integration work must be understood in relation to integration policies and their ideologies, to the organisational setting, as well as to the immigrants’ needs and interests. These studies make it clear that that civic orientation should consider the basis for integration interventions and for the decisions that professionals make in their everyday work. As pointed out by Yohani (2013), integration workers are faced with situations that demand ethical decision-making to bridge cultures. For Valenta (2012), bridging cultures means that workers have to balance the needs of the immigrants and the formal expectations as they are expected to perform cultural specific work. Immigrant workers are attractive labour in the field because they possess a dual cultural competence (Valenta, 2012, Türegün, 2013, Yohani, 2013). However, it is apparent that knowing about cultural relevant issues is not enough to accomplish successful integration work. Everyday work also presumes procedural knowledge (i.e., knowing how to perform and handle different kinds of tensions and sometimes quite paradoxical circumstances) (Valenta & Bunar, 2010; Eastmond, 2011, Engebrihtsen, 2011; Valenta, 2012). For example, Eastmond (2011) showed that the way immigrants are categorised influences their entrance into the labour market and society. This understanding pinpoints plausible consequences depending on whether categories and other tools are related to the actual situations of the newcomers and support their access to and participation in society. This view is supported by Bennet et al. (2009), Engebrihtsen (2011), and Erdal (2013). Generally, a key concern in integration work seems to be knowing how to handle the relationship between equality and difference. Together the research underscores a need to further explore what constitutes professional knowledge at a more detailed level.
It is obvious from most of the studies referred to in this section that the standardised integration programmes and procedures that have been used to support immigrants’ integration have not been consistent with immigrants’ different needs, interests, and own integration strategies, a deficiency that may be related to historical views on integration. To some degree, such views determine what professionals regard as a problem and what tools they find suitable to handle the challenges they are faced with in their everyday work.

The research suggests that measures that encourage integration activities are not in themselves a guarantee for successful integration (Valenta & Bunar, 2010) and that consideration has to be given to the implementation of new integration efforts and to professionals’ need for continuous learning (Yohani, 2013). However, it is yet to be explored how such learning is institutionally organised to support the needs of professional integration workers.

3.2 Research on aspects of quality

During the last decades, quality has been emphasised with respect to measuring the effects of government programs (Afonso et al., 2010). Similarly, the new reform of civic orientation is required to deliver quality services (SOU 2010:16; SFS 2010:1138). What is perceived as quality in organisations will influence the understanding of an activity and this understanding will often provide direction for changes. Thus, there are different understandings of what quality denotes and connotes. One way to approach quality in research is to focus on the value of something as “good” or “bad”, although this is not the approach in this thesis. Instead, this thesis addresses what quality means at a conceptual level in a specific integration activity.

Mulcahy (2011) found that quality involves struggles between embodied knowledge practices and abstract knowledge representations. Using a material-semiotic approach to explore the constitutive role of Australian teaching standards in the production of practice and identity, Mulcahy video-recorded teaching and made post-lesson interviews with teachers and students to study what quality teaching is by documenting what teachers do. The study concluded that rather than seeking to reconcile differences, high quality work is best achieved by holding in tension different knowledge practices (i.e., social, material, representational, and performative) and various communities. As argued in the study, conceptions of standards such as unitary and stable can serve and conceal the circumstances that give rise to them and efface the “invisible work” that actors do to sustain them.
In an ethnographic study of teacher education in Flanders, Ceulemans et al. (2012) showed how quality assurance and quality control were integrated in a self-evaluation process as teachers engaged in the articulation of a common standard. By tracing standardisation in-the-making, the researchers found that where and in what form the professional standards appeared, and what kind of network they installed (i.e., people, documents, procedures, instruments, etc.) indicated what kinds of activities were central and how professional competencies were filled with detailed substance. In the process of drawing up the self-evaluation report, the staff engaged in feedback relationships such as reading and writing practices, discussing and revising the making of the report, positioning and participating in specific ways of communicating, and interacting with each other and the textual material. The self-evaluation not only represented what was being done but also provided a process of profiling competencies in a qualitative manner. In this process, quality was manifested as the standards and these standards took a prominent position in defining the teacher’s program goals at the same time as the competencies were absorbed into the program’s own profile and frame of reference. Ceulemans et al. concluded that whether the activities and exerted effects introduced by the professional standards render their role more or less stable and essential depends on their relationship to implementation methods, measuring instruments, evaluation procedures, etc. As argued in the study, standards in themselves are not a guarantee for quality. Instead, securing quality requires providing opportunities for people to engage with one another and teachers.

Van Loon and Zuiderent-Jerak (2012) approach a similar problem in a study on the development and introduction of a quality improvement device that was supposed to be applicable to all work processes in a care organisation for older people. The study, based on fieldwork and interviews, revealed that the caregivers’ writing and rewriting processes of the device (the Care Living Plan) failed to fully handle the variations of work in fruitful ways and failed to secure quality. It was found that the organisation’s desire for uniformity was bounded to a specific form of reflexivity that was part of a general, uniform “we” and not to a localised “we” of individual wards. The requirement for uniformity led to tensions that followed from differences not being inscribed in the device. The caregivers explained that care is provided in different ways and that some older people with multi-cultural backgrounds have specific traditions and ways of dealing with disease and illness, which were not captured by the device. The researchers concluded that quality cannot be secured when agenda of reflexivity reduces diversity by assuming everyone to be reflexive in the same way. Instead, it is argued that developing standards to improve quality presupposes definitions of responsibilities for executing what kind of reflexivity about which issues.
Billet et al. (2013) found that consideration needs to be given to the kinds of experiences that novices engage and how these experiences might be organised and ordered to develop occupational specific capacities. Their interview study addressed how midwife students experience their practice-based education, focusing on processes of learning and outcomes. The results revealed that the “following through” was considerably attributed to pedagogical worth in preparing novices and developing understanding of the scope, nature, and breadth of practice. Experiencing how procedures progress and how outcome of behaviour and professional decision-making might impact specific target groups were shown to give access to procedural factors and enactments. This exposure was also argued to developing high-quality procedural knowledge associated with organising, managing, and monitoring. These experiences provided interactions and conceptual development that formed a base for evaluating different approaches in work. The considerations attributed to what particular kinds of learning that need to be secured before novices engage in practice and this can be seen as part of the discourse of work integrated learning, pointing to a need to explicitly identify and provide experiences that enable integration of knowledge learned across different settings.

In a study of professional associations that included teachers, nurses, and auditors in Norway, Nerland and Karseth (2015) addressed aspects of quality by focusing on approaches to standardisation and forms of legitimation. This was done by examining how the professional associations engaged in developing, regulating, and securing collective knowledge in their particular areas of expertise. Based on interviews and document studies, the study showed that different institutional logics guided the knowledge work of the associations. In associations where universalism was at play, this was related to scientific evidence and the knowledge work towards managing local-global relationships. This approach generated an epistemic orientation characterised by collectivity and control and activated a logic that emphasised hierarchical structures and organisational efficiency. Where the knowledge work was more concerned with securing opportunities for differentiation, the source of legitimisation was coupled to images of professional autonomy as a strong footing and weak regulation of practice. A third variant emphasised universalism by supporting international legislation across organisational and national boundaries. These standardisation efforts were linked to legislation rather than to scientific evidence and the logic of the market was in play. The study concluded that efforts to regulate and secure knowledge in and for professional work imply continuous negotiations of different concerns. However, the study argues that the development of procedural standards should be in the hands of the profession as they represent ways of operationalizing the collective knowledge base and are crucial for safeguarding discretion.
In a comparative study of six different schools in California, Trujillo and Woulfin (2014) focused on how intermediary equity-oriented instructional goals were crafted in schools for students of colour learning English in a high-stakes accountability environment. Based on interviews, classroom observations, and documents, the study showed that when teachers deliver uniform content, the democratic nature of the schools is challenged. When definitions of effectiveness and expertise are located outside the local context, learning based on students’ backgrounds and culture tend to become secondary. This lack of consideration implies, according to the researchers, that culturally relevant pedagogy presupposes skills that are specific to students’ local contextual conditions.

So, what can we learn from research about quality? A general conclusion that seems reasonable to draw from the research discussed in this sub-chapter is that quality is understood in different ways in different contexts and embraces everyday interactions, the use of resources, and organisational aspects. Hence, quality covers different kinds of knowledge sources and contexts and involves tensions between perspectives and communities that need to be handled by professionals. However, much of the research seems to focus on understanding how processes of standardisation and the use of standards can contribute to quality by identifying a number of aspects that are assumed to be of significance for securing quality. It follows that research should also address various conditions for professionals to engage in activities to develop knowledge procedures that challenge routines.

Much research recognises the constitutive role of both social and material aspects of practice. An approach that seems to give insights into aspects of quality that make visible the situated work of professionals when they make use of standards in everyday work. The studies indicate that efforts to secure quality by introducing standards is often coupled to organisational attempts to deliver a uniform service, indicating that equality to some degree is associated with uniformity. This desire for uniformity gives rise to tensions between different values (i.e., between uniformity and heterogeneity) that need to be handled. Van Loon and Zuiderent-Jerak (2012), for example, show how these kinds of tensions are coupled to different communities and responsibilities. Other studies point to how such tensions can contribute quality when diversity is maintained (Mulcahy, 2011) and when professionals engage in activities where standards become an integrated part of work (Ceulemans et al., 2012) and point to interdependency between professionals’ experience-based knowledge and the purposes and goals of the organisation (Billet et al., 2005; Billet et al., 2013).

The research makes obvious that standards alone do not guarantee quality. Instead, it is the professionals’ use of them, often handling a rather heterogeneous reality that becomes indicative for the quality of work, together with
organisational structures that support the knowledge involved in responding to diverse needs. In general, the studies indicate that the understanding of quality requires considering the specific kind of knowledge that arises through work. Specifically, procedural knowledge is given prominent value. Based on these results, it seems reasonable in this thesis to address the question of how quality is understood in relation to what rules and values emerge in relation to the regulations and guidelines that direct civic orientation as well as in relation to how knowledge and responsibilities are distributed in the organisation. Therefore, it seems reasonable to address the question of how the integration workers’ situated-knowledge is supported by organisational structures. Understanding how organisational learning occurs and is organised becomes crucial for handling changing conditions and maintaining or increasing learning in processes of organisational change.

3.3 Research on standards

Research has given much attention to standards in a range of areas such as healthcare (Timmermans & Berg, 2003; Nes & Moen, 2010; Winman & Rystedt, 2012), social work (Yardley, 2014), professional associations (Nerland & Karseth, 2015), and education (Allard & Doecke, 2014; Gerrard & Farrell, 2014; Ceulemans, et al., 2012; 2014). Studies on standards bring to the fore questions regarding such issues as decision-making (Winman & Rystedt, 2012), standard actions (Ceulemans, et al., 2012; 2014), reflexivity (Van Loon & Zuiderent-Jerak, 2012; Ryan & Bourke, 2013), and pedagogical perspectives (Mathiesen & Nerland, 2012).

Ceulemans et al. (2014) were interested in the changes that standards undergo and the interactions they bring about in local practices. A socio-technical approach on what educational standards “do” was adopted in the study. By addressing the mechanisms of standards “in action”, the researchers traced how the standards work in inspection and auditing practices of teacher-training programmes in Flanders. This involved focusing the interactions it brought about on the scene as well as before and after leaving it. The results showed that when paper-based course materials were transformed into electronic files, it brought about different kinds of actions. These actions included gathering of material, competencies, etc., mapping by displaying correlations, links, gaps, screening by selecting specific questioning, and matching pieces of information. The leading mechanism was identified as mainly procedural, making standardisation a matter of meeting up with procedures in time. However, to cover the alignment of these activities, continuous monitoring was needed in terms of maintaining, securing, refining,
enrolling, coordinating, and negotiating. The researchers’ concluded that rather than subtracting reality, people’s use of standards involves reconstructing reality and making it less of an evident fact. The approach taken in the study makes it possible to visualise and discuss what is usually taken for granted and professionals’ actions involved in making standards work.

A similar approach was taken by Winman and Rystedt (2012). They showed how information originating in electronic patient records (EPRs) undergoes changes during processes of inter-professional decision making. The researchers observed and audio-recorded team rounds at a hospital ward and video-recorded the nurses’ preparatory work for the rounds. Their focus was on which pieces of information within the EPR were selected, how this information was organised in the briefing, and what structures and interactional patterns were evident during the team rounds. The researchers found that when the nurses sorted out data and constructed the patient briefing, the structure of the EPR was changed into a narrative form that could be used as a resource when making decisions during the team round. The study found that team members’ competent use of standards depended on knowledge about the organisational context and what they are accountable for. Knowing how to handle the standardised artefacts and using the categories that are embedded in new combinations constituted the sense making required for maintaining continuity in the activity. According to Winman and Rystedt, the constraints and possibilities for using standards are not solely a question of design, but rely on professionals’ knowledge about how to bridge standardised categories and their local meaning.

With an interest in pedagogical aspects of work support systems, Mathisen and Nerland (2012) studied an audit support system. For two years, the researchers followed the technology through different phases and contexts by taking field notes and transcribing stimulated talks and interviews. Focus was directed on how the infra-structuring practice was constituted, the type of connections made in different phases, and the resources brought into play. Specific attention was given to critical incidents, how these were addressed, the resources that were mobilised to deal with them, and how they produced epistemic action among the auditors. The results showed how the support system both minimised effort by reducing complexity and generated increased focus on the more vulnerable points. A core challenge, highlighted by the researchers, is the auditors’ selection of critical issues and relevant information, an argument that resembles the conclusions made by Winman and Rystedt (2012). Mathisen and Nerland (2012) point to a reflexive halt in the auditing process when the auditors were faced with various knowledge resources to investigate. However, the engagement in knowledge rested primarily on the practitioners’ infra-structuring practice and mobilisation of relevant resources linked in the system rather than on the system itself. This kind of infra-
structuring practice is similar to what Ceulemans et al. (2014) describe in their study as mechanisms or actions that standards bring about. However, the results from Mathisen and Nerland’s study made visible how routines of work were confronted by the need for additional, time-consuming inquiry. They concluded that pedagogy and curriculum at work concern the organisation of knowledge and knowledge in use in everyday work and this includes “the expectations presented to practitioners to use and engage with this knowledge in certain ways” (p. 88). This supports the conclusions drawn by Winman and Rystedt that competent use of standards relies on knowledge about the organisational context and what the practitioners are accountable for. Nerland and Karseth (2015) take these arguments further (in the study mentioned in the previous section) by pointing to the double role played by standards in professions. Here standards are significant both because they secure spaces of professional discretion and regulate practice by limiting the space of action in everyday work.

Several studies show that the kind of reflexivity that is presupposed from professionals is barely recognised in policy documents that guide work. For example, in a discourse study of national professional standards for teachers from Australia and the UK, Ryan and Bourke (2013) found that little acknowledgement was given to professionals’ mediations between subjective and objective circumstances. The study notes that such reflexivity is essential in decision making; however, by framing reflexivity in quality improvement devices, Van Loon and Zuiderent-Jerak (2012) see reflexivity as not an answer in itself. Instead, they conclude that inclusion and exclusion of certain aspects of work in organisational devices have consequences for its reflexive use. This makes the use of standards also a question of design, and as argued by the researchers, a question of where reflexivity is organisationally situated, who gets to do the reflecting, and what issues are considered.

Research has revealed several lessons about standards. This overview indicates a lack of research in the field of integration work that concerns the use of standards in everyday work, an area this research intends to address. That is, the present thesis focuses on the ways in which curriculum-like standards in the form of textbooks, PowerPoint presentations, and schedules enter in the sequential organisation of local learning conditions in an integration activity. However, in civic orientation there is no “right” knowledge in relation to which the immigrants will be measured. Instead, the purpose is to provide a basis for dialogue and continued knowledge acquisition. However, as pointed out by Nerland and Karseth (2015), procedural standards, as those just mentioned, are of specific interest because they are closely linked to the performance of work and represent ways of operationalizing the collective knowledge base.
The studies indicate that standards need to be enacted in order to actually become and function as standards. It is obvious from research that such knowledgeable use of standards depends on knowledge about the organisational context and what professionals are accountable for (Winman & Rystedt, 2012). This also means that the operational dimensions of procedure standards are revealed when standards are enacted and simultaneously make visible aspects of professionals’ knowledge.

Some of the studies above show how standards become a kind of actors in work as they invoke actions and professionals’ engagement in selecting and organising information in different ways in order to make standard content suit local conditions. This kind of work seems to be time consuming and requires a discerning capacity (Mathisen & Nerland, 2012), although not always officially recognised. In practice, it seems that standards play a dual role (Nerland & Karseth, 2015, Mathisen & Nerland, 2012; Winman & Rystedt, 2012), and the ways that professionals handle standards is closely linked to the resources available in the organisations. This duality makes it significant to study how integration workers make use of a locally standardized teaching material and what pedagogical strategies they use to adapt it and structure information to suit local conditions.

A core issue in current research about standards seems to be the relationship between accountability and professional autonomy – i.e., the scope of action for judgements when standards meet professional work in a specific context.

### 3.4 Research on dialogue

In civic orientation, even the processes in the classroom should be standardised. This is done through dialogue. When people share the same culture (e.g., traditions, norms, and values), they usually expect a more or less shared common sense understanding of the social world. This commonality makes processing information fairly uncomplicated. Thus, as mentioned earlier, in a heterogeneous group (when people do not share the same background) presumptions about how to understand the surrounding world, processing information from a standardised course material, and making it relevant by use of dialogue will presumably be a more challenging task for professionals in charge of the activity. This overview is intended to highlight ways in which dialogue is conceptualised in recent research.

Higham and Farnsworth (2012) wanted to understand the nature of vocational education in action. By focusing curricular dimensions in five work-related courses of a school board in Canada, they found that it was the quality of the
dialogue between education and industry communities that made the courses vocational. By scrutinising data from observations, document studies, and interviews with staff, students, and employers, they found that the intersection between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment created a learning system that together with teachers and students and use of resources mutually reinforced a vocational quality through dialogue between the two fields. The results showed that the dialogue was evident in the teachers’ selection of projects, the tasks, and the assessment of performance. Dialogue was also seen in the collective responsibility given to the students, structured by a task-based approach, teamwork, and links to the industrial field. The voices of the industry were indexed through authentic tasks expected from the students. The dialogue also took place through students’ contacts with the workplaces. According to the researchers, the intention with the enacted curriculum was not to mirror the workplace practice, but to engage in dialogue that addressed the norms and expectations of the industry. The study concluded that the teachers’ knowledge in and about the different domains was central in mediating the dialogue between the communities, which could then be realised in the enacted curriculum. The education-industry dialogue provided meaning and direction for the individual courses. The handling of both formal and informal expectations is described as central for the potential of dialogue in these kinds of curricula. However, a core aspect of the bridging quality of the dialogue was, according to the researchers, the teachers’ indexing of the students in curricula, pedagogical, and assessment decisions; however, civic orientation courses are not educational activities, as were the work-based courses in this study, but the results are interesting in terms of how dialogue is understood and used as a tool to create a learning system that bridges people from one domain to another. Additionally, the study seems to provide significant aspects of dialogue that can be fruitful for understanding the nature of civic orientation in action and what makes up the “integration potential” in these courses.

Akkerman et al. (2006) address the meaning-generating function of dialogue in an ethnographical study of a European collaboration project in academic work between five countries. The study focused on how diverse socio-cultural worlds were brought together, specifically directing how different viewpoints came to the fore. The results showed how the different ideas that project members had were coupled to their professional identities and to the diverse social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they work. However, as the different ideas were never discussed in relation to different contexts, the agreements, disagreements, and the rationale that informed the different arguments were not explored. Consequently, the particularities behind the arguments were translated into already familiar categories. The researchers concluded that a key concern for dialogue is how to see the other as other and that diversity cannot be presupposed. Instead, they
argue that boundaries need to be worked on in dialogue to create meaning-generating effects, presupposing awareness of boundaries to be crossed. These arguments are addressed by Akkerman et al. (2012) in a similar study of an international collaboration project where they focused on the mechanisms of collaboration that allow groups to maintain both unity and diversity. One conclusion they make is that simultaneous maintenance of unity and diversity depends on continuous negotiations of boundaries.

These kinds of tensions between perspectives in dialogue are further elaborated by Engeström (2014) in terms of individual and collective levels of activity. With an interest in how dialogue and context can make up the basis of research, Engeström focused the methodology of developmental work research (DWR) and presented data from empirical work in DWR projects where researchers analysed work practices together with practitioners from the field. Engeström concluded that to attend to processes across different contexts presupposes acknowledging the subjective mechanisms that allow individual participation in collective learning processes and entering a space that increases the potential for developing new knowledge without putting “individual” and “collective” into dualistic opposition. The way Engeström links dialogue to space and context is similar to Higham and Farnsworth (2012) when they point to the development of a learning system and the contexts of different practices interacting.

Like Akkerman et al. (2006), Lalueza and Crespo (2009) show how dialogue requires the ability to take the other’s perspective. Based on weekly conversations with members of a Roma community during a six-month period, the researchers found that dialogues between minority and majority cultures cannot be reduced to a dialogue between two transparent voices concerning traditions versus modernity. It is argued that categorising cultures as collectivist (in relation to individualistic features of cultures in Western countries) is to simplify a more complex reality where different cultures are in constant interaction, negotiating their relationships with one another. The study illustrates how people build their cultural narrative by anticipating and using the arguments of the other. The researchers point to how dialogue between cultural narratives and those of dominant institutions in society, such as schools, will be consequential for processes of socialisation.

Hanny and O’Connor (2013) address the conceptual order and challenges involved in establishing “democratic speaking spaces” (p. 355) and conditions for such engagements. Their study focuses on community organisers in the U.S. who were initiating a change process involving resident participation and dialogue with community members. By video-recording how a planning committee worked through differing interpretations of “resident participation” as a concept and a way of being, they found that moments when the pre-set interactional order was
interrupted required instant repair. The results showed that “resident participation” reoriented the attention of members to focus on their shared objective. Despite eventual contentiousness within the meeting space, there was also a shared understanding that a sense of unity between the residents was needed. The researchers noted how the desire for both unity and diversity served as a generative antinomy, although maintaining the simultaneous priorities was difficult within the stipulated conceptual order. Disruptions of the order appeared to be important points about the ways in which differences were being experienced in the lives of the residents. The researchers concluded that for future oriented practices attention needs to be given to the interactional achievement in establishing inclusive speaking spaces and what that may imply in terms of conditions.

As revealed in the research reported on in this section, dialogue encompasses a range of different communicative patterns and interactions that extend a general notion of dialogue as face-to-face interaction between two or more individuals by means of language. Obviously, fruitful dialogue does not emerge by itself, so there are challenges involved in making use of dialogue, implicating different efforts and conditions. This review reveals that there seems to be a research gap with respect to the use of dialogue in integration work for newly arrived immigrants.

Much research on dialogue attempts to understand how dialogue can be used to bridge different contexts while maintaining both unity and diversity. This type of research identifies different tensions that need to be handled to generate meaning-making processes, tensions that emerge between different knowledge domains, cultural systems (individual and collective), perspectives, values, and understandings (Akkerman et al., 2006; Akkerman et al., 2012; Engeström, 2014; Higham & Fransworth, 2012; Hanny & O’Connor, 2013; Lalueva & Crespo, 2009). For example, Higham and Fransworth’s study points to how establishing bridging processes implies knowing how to direct responsibility and positioning people as participants in an activity, knowing how to engage them in future relevant tasks, and knowing how to facilitate their ability to negotiate issues of interest. Such work seems to be effective and provides useful resources for integration activities where dialogue is an explicit method to bridge different contexts. Based on the results from these studies, it seems relevant in this thesis to address the specific knowledge involved when integration workers support newly arrived immigrants to engage in Swedish society.

Besides the attention given to dimension of space in these studies, making use of dialogue also presupposes considering dimensions of time. Temporality is addressed in terms of how, for example, past experiences and expectations are brought into an activity and projected into future trajectories and consequences as well as in terms of the progress of the activity. It is evident from the studies
that the use of dialogue challenges pre-defined, normative orders (Higham & Farnsworth, 2012; Hanny & O’Connor, 2013). This use of dialogue further enforces the need to investigate how information in standardised course material is processed in dialogue so it becomes intelligible and available as a resource for integration. In addition, these studies suggest that the meaning of information cannot be taken for granted. Time and space are intertwined in dialogue and required for successful meaning-making experiences and perspectives need to be related to different contexts (Akkerman et al., 2006; Akkerman et al., 2012; Higham & Fransworth’s, 2012; Engeström, 2014). As Akkerman et al. (2006) show and Engeström (2014) further develops, even if people participate in the same activity, they do not necessarily explore other people’s perspectives and understandings. The research points to a need for knowledge about relevant boundaries as well as on how to elaborate on them in fruitful ways. As such, this thesis addresses what knowledge work involves and how differences are handled in civic orientation.
4 Theoretical framing

In this chapter, a theoretical framework is provided to grasp and deal with the professional knowledge involved in using text and interactions to bridge different contexts, including different needs, interests, and interpretations in the daily practice of civic orientation. The conceptual tools that are used take a point of departure in a socio-cultural perspective on professional learning and knowledge, implying that learning is considered situational and relational and knowledge is seen as an on-going production enacted, constituted, and distributed in a specific context and organizational culture (c.f. Lave, 1996; Hutchins, 1995; Duguid, 2005). The purpose is to contribute to our understanding of how professional knowledge is expressed, developed, and organized in activities aimed to support newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. Interlinked with a WIL approach, the theoretical framework is used to address the research questions introduced in chapter 1.2.

This research begins by examining how integration workers use texts and interactions in their everyday work. The conceptual framework provided by activity theory is used to scrutinize different aspects of professional learning and knowledge. The ways in which the framework outlines activity as the basic unit of analysis make it possible to scrutinize the professional knowledge that emerges in everyday actions and interactions in relation to the context and organizational culture in which the actions are performed and how available resources are used in the production of daily work. This focus makes it possible to see the relationship between the knowledge required to handle emerging situations in everyday work and aspects of quality. This strategy makes visible the relationships between the individual, collective, artefact-mediated and cultural features of quality and provides a way to understand what is valued in an organizational culture and how that is coupled to how quality work is organized to support the development of practice.

The concepts of mediating tools and meaning making are used to analyse the professional knowledge involved when the integration workers engage in actions and interactions between cultural contexts as they make use of a locally-developed teaching material to organize and coordinate work. The purpose is to contribute to our understanding how professional knowledge is developed when the integration workers make sense of stipulated information in integration activities and what that imply in relation to the ways in which challenges in everyday work are handled. This approach uses the conceptual tools to analyse specific situations
where knowledge is expressed, contributes to the understanding of the relation between professional knowledge, and reveals the unpredictability that characterizes work that bridges different contexts and crosses boundaries.

4.1 Learning, practice, and professional knowledge

What counts as professional learning varies and is linked to specific fields of practice. The situated approach to action taken in this thesis has implications on the view on learning and knowledge that is used to analyse how civic orientation is carried out. In this study, learning is seen as relational in character and embraces participation in everyday activities (Hutchins, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1993; 1996), or more specifically, changed modes of participation in changing activities. Integration workers believe their performance is determined by new demands and as they engage in activities, and they learn through their experiences and contribute to the continuity and transformation of cultural practice. According to Lave (1996), such social processes are based on the process of becoming. In the present work, the process of becoming can be related to the integration workers’ full participation in a cultural practice and becoming a respected participant among colleagues as well as other communities, including the project of developing a professional identity.

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed the concept of community of practice to express how staff learn through engagement in activity:

A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. (p. 98)

Community of practice is related to the negotiation of meaning within as well as between communities. Full participation in a community of practice implies learning how to understand and use specific tools, categories, and discourses related to practice. For instance, learning how to use the textual material and PowerPoint presentations in civic orientation can be thought of as socialising a practice with its particular language and use of categories and making them “one’s own”. Wertsch (1998) uses the concept of appropriation to refer to the process of becoming familiar with cultural tools. This kind of changed relation to a specific task can also be understood as a changed understanding of and ability to perform in a specific context by making use of available resources (Hutchins, 1995). Thus, the integration workers’ knowing is seen as recognisable in their actions and operations and the classroom is seen as a context with norms, rules, and relations and where the immigrants’ experiences and expectations are
important resources for the joint activities. From this point of view, the integration workers’ learning processes involve aspects of content, “knowing what”, as well as procedures, “knowing how” something is done in particular situations. Such ability to perform is here seen as “resulting from an increasing ability to structure the world by means of language […]
a growing capacity to structure one’s own behaviours and intellectual practices in purposeful manners in situated practices” (Säljö, 2009, p. 207). Following this, it is reasonable to think that by directing the development of the integration workers’ knowledge learning turns into questions of performing and knowing rather than possessing, acquiring, or accumulating knowledge.

Thus, the integration workers’ knowing is in this thesis understood as located at the intersection of individual and collective/cultural action in pursuing their task. Hutchins (1995) points to how people know how to handle challenges and use experiences. From the integration workers’ perspective, this encompasses, for example, formal responsibilities and resources they draw on from different cultural contexts when pursuing their task. In this process, their prior experiences of a situation and their recognition of possible outcomes becomes resources for advancing the activity. Each coming situation will then involve some kind of restructuring of the situation and changed performance. Learning how to perform a task can from such view be seen as a trajectory of increasing skills to master the use of cultural tools in interaction with the environment: “[A]s the propagation of a wave of organization moving across a complex set of media […] from external media to internal media and back to external media” (Hutchins, 1995, p. 310). In this view, learning is a process of distributed cognition over people and tools, internal and external representation, including people’s participation in different activities.

The number of actions that a person can perform in collaboration with others is encompassed by what Vygotsky (1978) calls the zone of proximal development. In learning, Vygotsky specifically points to how our thinking is founded on social interactions and we use language and other tools as resources to re-think and re-construct practice. Although learning is socially founded, it is not a passive process of socialisation. As pointed to by Billet (2004), individuals will always choose how they engage in tasks and what they make out of their experiences. By engaging in the tools that are afforded by the workplace, both the tools and the individual are transformed by interactions. This kind of engagement with available tools when pursuing the objectives of the activity make visible the “relational interdependency between individual and social contributions to thinking and acting (Billet, 2005, p. 235). When integration workers engage in everyday thinking and acting, their knowledge is changed as well. This means that what the integration workers define as localised needs in a specific situation constitute what
knowledge is required for performing the activity. This knowledge cannot be separated from the actual situations where they carry out their task and the circumstances for and the judgements about the performances are exerted (cf. Billet, 2004). Thus, knowing how integration workers learn in practice is central for the development of professional knowledge. That is, the reciprocal character of learning and practice draws attention to how learning processes are supported. From the perspective of this study, the integration workers’ individual learning are intertwined with the organisational context and must be understood in relation to the ways in which the entire activity system learns.

4.2 Studying activities

Civic orientation is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a much larger context in which issues of integration and citizenship related to various forms of migration are of current concern. On a political level, the issues of integration and citizenship engage within as well as between nations. As already mentioned, in the EU, for example, there is cooperation between participating countries to harmonise integration policy concerning non-European citizens. In Sweden, the government and parliament are responsible for developing policies for these kinds of questions.

Integration work is articulated and developed in a range of contexts, including state agencies, county councils, municipalities, administration services, institutions, and local concrete practices. The decentralised responsibility for municipalities to offer civic orientation to newly arrived immigrants means that the governmental policy is transferred to a local context in the form of plans of action, budgets, and reports. The locally-developed guidelines are manifested in the encounters between the integration workers and the immigrants. These encounters are made up by the integration workers’ concrete actions to realise practice and characterised by their understanding and use of the plans and guidelines in each situation. Thus, the local practice in each municipality develops specific ways to organise work and this practice is characterised by current conditions.

One way of handling such complexity in this thesis is offered by activity theory. From the perspective of activity theory, various contexts can be understood as what Engeström (1987) calls activity systems. For Engeström, both contexts and activity systems are always in motion because “contexts are activity systems” (1993, p. 67). For Nardi, what takes place in an activity system is the context and is “constituted through the enactment of an activity” (1996, p. 76). This implies that context is both internal and external to individuals, involving particular
objects and goals as well as artefacts, other people, and settings. Hence contexts (activities) are generated as people engage in practice through their own objects. Thus, the interplay between societies, institutions, and individuals becomes relevant for understanding how various learning processes and significances of the work with civic orientation rise through different ways of acting, reasoning, and handling the experiences that are made over time in relation to the task of the activity. That is, to understand how people learn implies to make activity the unit of analysis.

Leont’ev (1978) argues that within an activity system three levels of analysis need to be used that are interrelated to one another: activity, actions, and operations. In this thesis, the local organization of civic orientation is analysed at the level of activity. The activity is by governmental policy categorized as providing information to facilitate immigrants’ integration in Swedish society. Thus, the actual organization of civic orientation takes shape and manifests through individual and collective actions and sequences of actions that are related to one another. For example, for an integration worker to teach a class on democracy, various actions have to be performed to prepare for the actual carrying out of the class. These actions are conscious and involve the use of available resources, but are not aimed at directly giving the class. The general object of the class (e.g., teaching democracy) is accomplished by the integration worker’s perceived motive and goals coupled to each action.

The integration worker’s actual performance, the operations, relies on current conditions and tools (i.e., the means and methods by which the actions are achieved) (cf. Leont’ev, 1978). Such routine aspects of work are not always consciously performed, but are embedded in daily practice. For example, skilled integration workers do not have to think about how to keep a class moving; they just do it. That is, actions have turned into automatic operations while becoming routines. Accordingly, when the conditions for work change, the operations may transform into conscious actions (Nardi, 1996). The interdependence between the levels implies that activities are shaped and transformed over time and by generating actions and operations they realise and reproduce themselves (Engeström, 2001). It follows that civic orientation is understood as an open system that develops and expands over time. Such dimensions of time refer to durable and collective aspects of activity as well as to emergent, situated achievements when performing in classes. The subject that performs the action can refer to either an individual or a subgroup, depending on the focus in the analysis. Nevertheless, as activities are continuously changing, it is not always clear what knowledge is required to handle emerging demands that challenge routine aspects of work. Such emerging demands is in this study seen as disturbances of the normal workflow that can be used to illuminate and question the common
ways of doing things (Miettinen, 2000). This kind of situatedness indicates a possible view on learning and knowledge as outcomes of the integration workers’ competent actions.

The general object of civic orientation, which gives meaning to the activity, is the immigrants need for information and integration. According to Engeström (1993), the object of an activity refers to the “problem space” (p.67) that the activity is directed to. From the perspective in this study, the object is never seen as completed; instead it is continuously worked upon and negotiated. The object makes it possible to distinguish one activity system from another and later to connect individuals’ actions to the collective activity (Leont’ev, 1978). Connected to the object is the expected outcome of civic orientation – the immigrants will get an orientation in the Swedish society and understand what information means to them in their new life situation, which in this thesis is seen as what motivates the integration workers to engage in practice. Although object and outcomes (goals) are coupled to one another (Engeström, 2008), an integration worker might find it difficult to establish links between the durable object of activity and the goals of their on-going actions. Such paradoxical relationships are characteristic for activity systems and can be thought of as sources of change.

To accomplish the purpose with this thesis, I need to scrutinise how civic orientation is materialised in integration workers’ concrete practice. To embrace the relationship between the integration workers’ daily performance and the institutional organisation of the activity, the local organisation of civic orientation in a municipality is the prime unit of analysis. Such focus on an entire activity system makes it possible to analyse situated aspects of the integration workers’ practice regarding individual, collective, artefact-mediated, and cultural features of the work. Another potential with the analytical focus is the emphasis on the relation between collective and individual levels of learning and knowledge and how they are entwined and mutually constitutive in practice.

To more entirely grasp the societal and collective dimensions of activity, the concepts of rules, community, and division of labour (Engeström, 1993; 1999) will also be used as tools for the analysis. The rules, which also comprise the norms and values of the activity, can be explicit as well as implicit and direct what actions and interactions are possible to perform. In this thesis, rules refer to regulations, guidelines, and traditions. The community embraces the people that engage in activity in various ways, using different tools. They all share the same object, which also connects them to one another. Here, the community refers to the municipality. It could just as well refer to the government, but in line with the interest of this thesis, the municipality, involving various subgroups, is a more relevant focus. The division of labour is related to the division of tasks between the members in the community, which in the case of this study refers to the
integration workers, administrative staff, and management. Individuals might also have different positions within the division of labour. The positions can be coupled to various degrees of power and status. For example, the position of integration workers is different from the position of management. Their responsibilities and impact in various areas may differ from one another, which implies that they are made accountable for distinct tasks. In this thesis, the integration workers’ actions will be understood both in relation to the overall activity of civic orientation and to the situation and tools at hand.

4.3 Mediating tools

Civic orientation is mediated by a number of artefacts, such as guidelines, textual material, PowerPoint presentations, and language. Artefacts shape or even determine people’s actions (Rowley & Hartley, 2008); however, even if it seems reasonable to think that artefacts to some extent influence actions, in this thesis it is assumed that artefacts are context bound and that the integration workers orient their actions by the use of artefacts, material as well as intellectual ones (cf. Heath, Hindmarsch & Luff, 2010). Therefore, it is the ways that artefacts are used by the integration workers that shape the ways they act and learn.

Artefacts are created and transformed as the activity is developed so they carry a particular culture and knowledge (Kutti, 1996). In line with this, guidelines, textual material, and PowerPoint presentations are seen as cultural tools or resources that the integration workers use to accomplish their task. The ways in which tools mediate actions imply that as the integration workers enter into and participate in practice, they learn how to engage with the object of activity and with the participants in the civic orientation programs by means of available signs and tools (cf. Vygotsky, 1978). At the same time, as they learn to make use of the tools, practice is changed as well.

By focusing on the use of artefacts, it is possible to analyse how integration workers go about doing their work and the knowledge involved when navigating in the context of activity. Following Vygotsky’s reasoning (1978), this means that when making use of artefacts, the integration workers’ thinking cannot be separated from the daily activities in which they engage. Thus, in this study, artefacts are seen as an integrated part of daily work. Similarly, cognitive processes are seen as distributed in artefacts (Hutchins, 1995) and coupled to cultural specific ways of understanding and solving given tasks. This view on the distributed relation between cognitive processes and artefacts implies that the way the integration workers define their task relies on the tools at hand. Hence, as the integration workers make use of and interact with artefacts, it is reasonable to
think that they also engage with shares of society’s collective experiences and knowledge (cf. Säljö, 2005; Wertsch, 1998).

In this study, the artefacts are tied to many functions that are part of a larger context in which issues of integration and citizenship are significant. In addition to providing integration workers with information, artefacts help distribute work across time and between different groups and programs and ensure quality. In such view, the artefacts serve a range of information needs. One intention in the present work is to explore the knowledge involved in adapting the information held within the artefacts to suit the local practice, which is related to procedural concerns, such as selecting, organising, and utilizing information in classes.

In this study, artefacts can be thought of as representing an aspect of the integration worker’s daily practice that links them to historically developed knowledge and experiences. However, it is the integration workers’ use of artefacts and the interactions between them that is of specific interest. From such a view, the mediating function of artefacts becomes significant for this study for developing an understanding of the organisation and operation of civic orientation and the learning processes involved.

4.3.1 The use of text and meaning-making

In civic orientation, the use of written text is one central aspect of work due to its function of mediating knowledge. Thus, written text can be understood in different ways depending on its use in a specific context (Linell, 1998). Following this, the meaning of text is not to be found in the text itself, but has to be accomplished. This thesis specifically focuses on meaning-making in relation to how information is made intelligible to rather heterogeneous groups with respect to particular boundaries. The emphasis on dialogue in the regulation (SFS 2010:1138) implies that specific knowledge of processing information between different cultural contexts is required to carry out the activity. To analyse the professional knowledge involved when the integration workers engage in such interactions, a dialogic approach is used (Linell, 1998), where different understandings of an issue are processed in interaction between different contexts.

In this thesis, a central concern is how text is used in these kinds of transitions across different contexts. Even if text in the form of information and categories can be seen as knowledge bearers, their meaning is, according to Winman and Rystedt (2012), situated. This means that both the local interpretative work and the knowledge intrinsic to such activity must be taken into account. Similarly,
Hutchins (1995) notes how a rule seems to change meaning when it is moved to a new context: “[N]ew words seem necessary to make distinctions in the new context that were not needed and not made in the old context” (p. 218). In the same sense, transferring knowledge from one context to another requires that the information is organized and expressed in contextually significant ways. Of particular interest in this study is how the integration workers engage in re-contextualizing information (cf. Becky, 2003; Ackerman & Halverson, 2004) to suit their purpose, which is based on how they understand the situation. Additionally, they have to re-contextualise local understandings to create shared meaning for all the participants and their different life-worlds.

One way of framing the significance of text in meaning-making processes is by using the concept that Latour (1986) refers to as inscriptions – i.e., artefacts that have the capacity to retain information and knowledge from different sources over time. Such a function implies that texts have the ability to organise phenomena differently than spoken language (Goodwin, 1994) and they “structure perception” (p. 609) as they are used within a specific context. That is, they can be thought of as guiding the integration workers’ ways of understanding the environment and how they engage and act upon it from the perspective that is established as it is used. In this study, inscriptions are seen as artefacts that tie material with immaterial tools, such as categories and classification systems in the form of, for example, textual material and PowerPoint presentations and can be shared with other people. As the content in the teaching material is supposed to apply to people with varied experiences, the use of text requires interpretational work, encompassing knowledge of content as well as of how the content can be transformed to become intelligible and accessible to the immigrants. Using inscriptions as an analytical concept will serve to explore ways in which integration workers transform the structure of the stipulated text by selecting, highlighting, and organising pieces of information into verbal presentations that suit the situation at hand and, consequently, making it possible for immigrants with different knowledge needs to understand and respond to. Such aspects of professional knowledge become significant in civic orientation as the activity is supposed to have a dialogic form, presupposing responsiveness and mutual engagement. As mentioned earlier, the aim is to help immigrants understand what different phenomena in society mean and how these phenomena are related to one another and make it possible for the immigrants to continuously acquire knowledge independently. It is not the actual inscriptions that explain the meaning of things: “[I]t is the inscription as the fine edge and the final stage of a whole process of mobilization, that modifies the scale of the rhetoric” (Latour, 1986, p. 15). This understanding means that inscriptions are continuously transformed and reified as they are used to suit local circumstances.
These kinds of transitions between written text and verbal presentation are referred to as reification (Sfard, 1991; Sfard and Linchevski, 1994). In this study, reification is used to increase the understanding of the knowledge involved in the ways the integration workers attend to and discern what will be a relevant action in a situation in which the teaching material is going to be applied. This duality of process and object in reification involves an ability to think both operationally and structurally and implies that the envisioned outcome of the activity can be used by the integration workers as a symbolic tool to guide the direction of the next step to be taken. Hence artefacts can be thought of as both enabling and generating actions. From the perspective of distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995), such step-by-step coordination of a written procedure means that learning can be understood as changed cognition that emerges in interaction with the environment in the process of bringing an activity forward. To understand what is going on in a current situation, individuals use their experiences of earlier situations as resources to establish meaning. In addition, the meaning of the next step is established using current experience and coordinating it with the tools at hand. The organisation of tools and interactions become central to activity in the sense that they can either constrain or promote action. At the same time, as there is interplay between cognitive, material, and social structures, there is also historically derived material artefacts and practices that shape cognitive processes. In line with this, distribution of cognitive processes can be performed in various ways – across members in a social group, involving coordination between internal and external structure and through time in the sense that past experiences can be used to transform future actions (Hollan, Hutchins & Kirsh, 2000).

Following the ways that inscriptions are reified and function in processes of meaning-making, another related concern in this study is how the teaching material can be used to link different contexts. In order to grasp what characterises the integration workers’ bridging work, the concept of boundary objects is used to analyse how artefacts are used to bridge between different systems of norms and values. Boundary objects refer to adaptable and heterogeneous aspects of artefacts:

[O]bjects which both inhabit several intersecting social worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them . . . [They are] both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use. Through their plasticity of meaning, boundary objects translate concepts, viewpoints and values across contexts. (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p.393)
The plasticity of meaning that features boundary objects enables the translation of various perspectives, ideas, and values across contexts. This means that handling boundary objects becomes a significant aspect of the integration workers interpretational work and indicates the knowledge involved in processing information in a dialogic form. Hence, boundary objects can also be thought of as outcomes of reification.

The meaning-making activities that the integration workers are expected to perform as part of the dialogic form make language and categories significant aspects of work. However, the meaning of information relies on the integration workers’ interpretational skills to make sense of the information. This means that without being actually material, language and communication can be thought of as having material consequences (cf. Mäkitalo & Säljö, 2002a, 2002b). This view is of specific significance when it comes to integration work and the use of categories and categorisation systems. For example, the category “rights and obligations” in the textual material crystallizes part of the practice that the integration workers engage with. For such an abstract concept to become meaningful, integration workers must rely on meaning-making with respect to the relation between categories and link it to situations that the immigrants are familiar with and can engage in.

A central concern for the integration workers is to support new immigrants’ orientation and future trajectories in Swedish society. Part of that work involves preparing and organizing the learning processes in such a way that the immigrants articulate their experiences, opinions, values, etc. The participatory positionings that are constructed and made available to the immigrants constitute the learning processes that are established in the classroom activity (cf. Kumpulainen & Lipponen, 2010). Central concern to this study is examining what such relational aspects of learning imply in terms of promoting the immigrants’ participation and engagement in classes in relation to their own life trajectories in Sweden. To understand how integration workers engage interactional practices and enable different positionings, their actions are the focus (e.g., what they orient to, and what resources becomes relevant as they interpret and construct meaning as the activity unfolds). How integration workers go about establishing commonly shared patterns of interaction in the classroom environment when making use of the stipulated text will have consequences for the immigrants’ opportunities of understanding and orienting in a new context. Therefore, the boundary crossing work performed by the integration workers is of particular interest when trying to capture the knowledge involved in practice that is specific for this kind of orienting activities.

Aspects of boundary crossing can be described as “a process of establishing continuity in a situation of sociocultural difference” (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011,
p. 152) and involves the way connections are established between different contexts. Such meaning-making involves, according to Akkerman et al. (2006), making boundaries and differences visible so they can be used as resources in the learning process. For the integration workers, this means at least two things: that the participants’ different experiences, questions, etc. can be used to bring the activity forward and linking the immigrants’ life-worlds and future trajectories in Swedish society.
5 Method

This chapter presents the research process. First, the civic orientation setting is described. Second, the data collection in terms of the different steps in the research process is described, followed by a more detailed description of the methods that have been used. Finally, the data analysis in the different studies are described.

The study presented in this thesis has been carried out in connection to a project called “Integration and municipal collaboration” (Integration och kommunal samverkan) that is funded by the European Social Fund of Sweden. The empirical material used here, however, was collected by me, separately from that project, for the specific purposes of this dissertation.

To understand what professional knowledge is developed in activities aiming to support newly arrived immigrants in Sweden, it was central to get a hold of interactions and how specifically designed texts (guidelines, the teaching material, etc.) were used in everyday practice. For this purpose, focus was directed to everyday social actions and interactions in the workplace (cf. Luff et al. 2000), specifically focusing constitutive details of practice in terms of the sequential ordering of work and the orientation of actors toward their task and responsibilities. Data have been generated through observations, field notes, video-recordings, interviews, and documents.

The empirical material used in this thesis derives from integration offices in eight middle sized municipalities in western Sweden. These offices all face the challenge of organising the activity according to a new act (SFS 2010:1138). One ambition with the present work has been to achieve a broader case than just one municipality can provide. The intention has been that the integration workers in the different municipalities should represent different experiences of organizing work and transforming civic orientation practice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations and field notes</th>
<th>Video-recordings</th>
<th>Interviews (individual)</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115 hours Field notes Informal interviews</td>
<td>14 hours of classes Eight work meetings, 60-90 minutes (in excess of the 115 hours of observations)</td>
<td>11 with integration workers, about 60 minutes 16 with integration workers (before and after four classes), 15-30 minutes Four with integration workers (after a course), 30-50 minutes Two with the management, 60-90 minutes</td>
<td>Policy Local guidelines, Schedule Referential text PowerPoint slides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Overview of the methods used.

5.1 The setting

This section gives an overall picture of the civic orientation setting that is common for the integration offices. Since all settings at the various offices do not look exactly the same, this is an attempt to give an idea of typical features of civic orientation practice.

Organisation

Organisationally, civic orientation is incorporated within the integration office in the municipality. The municipality is responsible for the activity and for decisions to ensure the integration policies are adhered to, and the County Agencies are responsible for follow-up. The administrative resources surrounding civic orientation consists of staff who are responsible for calling the participants to
attend the courses, attendance supervision, and managing contacts with external actors and authorities such as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), official administrators at the Social Services, the Public Employment Service, and several others. Every month, management is responsible for organising work meetings. The work meetings are held at different times of the day, sometimes at lunch and other times in the evening. Hence integration workers do not always have the possibility to participate since they usually are working at their regular job during the day.

The integration workers

The integration workers responsible for performing the courses are engaged hourly by the integration offices, depending on existing needs in relation to the languages that are represented among the immigrants. Most of the integration workers work with civic orientation in addition to their regular jobs as teachers, nurses, interpreters, social workers, etc. Their regular jobs are not specifically related to integration work and not all of them have a formal pedagogical education, yet they all have a task that involves pedagogical methods and skills. These conditions imply that they handle, frame, and highlight aspects of their work with civic orientation from different knowledge domains.

However, all the integration workers immigrated to Sweden and in most cases management considers them familiar with the Swedish welfare system as well as with traditions, norms, values, and social codes related to Swedish society. They come from different countries and have different native languages and cultural experiences, but they all are fluent in Swedish. Their language skills and their double cultural competence and experiences of migration that they share with the individuals they work with (e.g., the experience of leaving one’s homeland and relocating in a new country with somewhat other ways of organising and doing things and understandings of what a good life is) are expected to make them especially suitable for working as an integration worker. Since civic orientation is a new kind of integration activity, the requirements about skills and knowledge that are necessary to do the work have yet to be codified.

The participants

The act (2010:1138) targets newly arrived immigrants between the ages of 20 and 64 who have been granted resident permits for refugee or other asylum reasons or for family reunion with a refugee. The participants come from different countries, rural and urban, they have different languages and levels of education, work experiences, ages, genders, religions, etc. Furthermore, the participants are categorized and divided into groups according to their native language. Exceptions are done when there are not enough participants that have the same
native language and the activity can be worked out in English or another language the participants know. Sometimes interpreters are used.

Even when it comes to specific languages, such as Arabic, Somali, or Dari, many dialects are represented as well as different knowledge about the language. For example, some participants are illiterate, so they may have a rather limited vocabulary and understanding of words, while others might have an academic education, from which follows a more extended ability to understand and use the language.

When a civic orientation program begins, participants are invited to join and are given a time and place to meet. The program is obligatory, but there are no tests involved. Attendance at the courses is a prerequisite for being financially reimbursed.

The environment and resources at disposal

A typical civic orientation class takes place in a room furnished with desks arranged in rows and with a whiteboard and computer equipment for PowerPoint presentations. The whole arrangement resembles a traditional classroom. Each participant sits at a desk that faces the integration worker and the screen where the PowerPoint presentation is viewed. A regular group contains about 10 to 20 participants and they meet 20 times, three hours per meeting.

The integration workers have a source text and PowerPoint slides in Swedish about the content to be delivered for each class and this information is often based on what is written in the Swedish law. The PowerPoint slides summarise the written text and include some questions to discuss during the class. A booklet in easy Swedish about the content of civic orientation is also given to the participants. All material is based on the eight pre-defined areas stipulated at the national level (SFS 2010:1138). However, the way these areas are organised and handled in each class is up to the integration office and the integration worker. In order for the participants to get an overview of the course, there is a schedule on the wall that shows the theme for each class.

The classes

Civic orientation is supposed to provide extensive access to information for the participants. Such provision implies that the integration worker has to elucidate disparate pieces of information and relate them to everyday life so that it becomes intelligible and meaningful for the participants. Furthermore, the objectives include developing the participants’ knowledge on human rights and fundamental democratic values. These issues involve the individual’s rights and obligations in
general and how society is organised and affects everyday life on a practical level. This includes knowledge about both public institutions and civil society.

Before a class, the integration worker knows what information is going to be taught and has an idea of what the participants might expect. An average class starts with the integration worker introducing the theme of the day. To support the introduction, a PowerPoint presentation is used. Sometimes the integration worker also uses the Internet to demonstrate to the participants how they, for example, can find the homepage of the Swedish Social Insurance Administration and read the information in their native language. After the introduction, the participants have the opportunity to ask questions. The integration worker also directs questions to the participants and encourages them to talk, reflect, and make comparisons not only between Sweden and their homeland but also between different experiences among all the participants in the group.

Consequently, from the integration workers’ perspective, the content, the organisation, and the performance of the activity involve several aspects, such as collecting information, transforming and categorising information into the civic orientation, and subsequently using this information in classrooms. Therefore, during a session the integration worker is supposed to offer the potential for not only sharing information but also for supporting collaborative sense making between the participants. Due to the heterogeneity of the groups, the integration workers are expected to manage issues such as creating an environment that can bridge the gap between different expectations, experiences, presumptions, belongings, and conditions.

5.2 Data collection

In order to understand what features the professional knowledge involved in the production of integration activities, this study examines the coordination and organization of everyday work. Specific focus has been directed to procedures, social interactions, and how available resources, in terms of text (e.g., referential text, schedule, PowerPoint presentations) are used in everyday work with respect to contingencies and circumstances of daily work within the organizational setting (cf. Heath & Luff, 2000).

When I entered the research field, the new Act (SFS 2010:1138) was just about to enter into force and the new guidelines on both the content and form of the activity were still at the initial stage of being introduced, involving new challenges for both staff and management. An initial interest was to grasp the overall workflow and organization of the activity. In total, about 115 hours of
observations were carried out, including the observations of a research colleague (my co-writer in two of the articles) for two to four days a week for about three to four hours each time. The observations were carried out by each researcher separately, and 65 hours were carried out by me. Initially, the purpose was to understand the overall expectations, norms, and procedures at the workplace that were related to the organization and coordination of work. Such elements can be seen as features of the locally shared knowledge that have emerged over time and that the staff consider relevant to align themselves to (cf. Agar, 1986).

During the first four weeks, both administrative work and classes were observed. The focus changed over time from administration work to the integration workers’ performance in classes. By following the processes, the administrative organisation of civic orientation, and the integration workers’ actions and interactions in the classes, it was possible to gain an understanding of how different activities were related to each other and what interventions were established parts of the staff’s regular work. The initial observations included five classes of civic orientation. Field notes were made in close relation to the observations directing the environment, the participants in the sessions, activities, actions, and interactions. Included in the observations were also the integration workers’ preparations of classes, the actual classes, discussions between integration workers, documentation work, and administration and team meetings. My research colleague also followed an integration worker throughout a program.

Such variations of focus were considered essential in order to get an understanding of what happens alongside the class activity as well as before and after:

Members of a setting typically bring to bear a range of resources when using a technology or artefact, including expertise and skills associated with the domain, typical problems that occur in the setting, and activities and issues that have arisen in preceding periods of activity. (Luff and Heath, 2012, p. 271)

Furthermore, the observations included informal interviews with administrative staff and integration workers concerning situations that occurred, the purposes and outcomes, and the relationships between different activities. The observations started out quite broadly, asking “What” questions to get an understanding of what was going on at the workplace. As the observations advanced and the focus shifted and was narrowed down, “How” questions and “In relation to what” questions guided the observations.

6 We carried out the observations at different times and at different locations.
After the initial fieldwork, the interest was turned to get a deeper impression of the integration workers’ understanding of their task and what happens in classroom situations. Ten interviews with integration workers were conducted specifically directing what they perceived as challenging and in what ways it was challenging. Specific attention was directed to issues concerning diversity and equality and how the professional demand to establish dialogue-based situations were perceived and coped with by the integration workers. The approach is similar to Silverman (2000) who argues that narratives bring to the fore the situated nature of accounts and the frame of reference used by the interviewees. Taking such an approach facilitated the understanding of the collaborative work of the integration workers as well as the ways in which they created and handled classroom situations making use of available artefacts.

Following the interviews, more detailed observations were made of classes in order to understand how activities were performed. This was first done as participant observations but to better grasp the details of interactions and how text entered into and transformed practice, video-recordings were displayed. Linked to the classes, 16 interviews were made with two integration workers, lasting about 15-30 minutes. The interviews were carried out on four occasions, just before and directly after a class. The interviews focused on preparations and expectations before a class and how they valued the outcome of the classes.

Another activity that was distinguished as crucial was the periodic working meetings at the integration office. These meetings took place on average once a month and included the manager of operations, administrative staff, and integration workers. In these meetings, routine aspects of work were deliberated, including the use of the teaching material and the organization and development of work. Eight meetings, between 60 and 90 minutes, were video recorded. The video-recordings made it possible to document how the integration workers and the management interacted with one another as they talked about routine aspects of work.

As the field work proceeded, the integration workers at one integration office were attending a locally organized course with the purpose to develop the integration workers’ skills in working with civic orientation. I was interested in finding out who initiated the course and understanding what the integration workers perceived as central and of particular relevance for them and how the content in the course related to their needs. Shortly after the course had ended, I individually interviewed four of the integration workers between 30 and 50 minutes. Two interviews were also made with the management from one integration office. These interviews lasted 60-90 minutes each. In these interviews, my purpose was to identify how issues of quality control were handled in relation to knowledge and knowledge development. One more interview, about 60
minutes long, was made with an integration worker about his role at one of the integration offices.

One dilemma that I had to handle during the research was the fact that I did not speak the languages that the classes were carried out in (except when the classes were carried out in Swedish and interpreters were used). In order to understand what was taking place verbally, I asked the integration workers to tell me what was being discussed. After every class, I also had a conversation with the integration workers in order to ask questions and find out more about what took place in the group. Another source of help was the PowerPoint slides as they were written in Swedish. This material helped me identify what was discussed. The fact that I did not understand the languages that were used during the classes was both a disadvantage and an advantage. On the one hand, it prevented the possibilities to follow the content of the discussions at a detailed level. On the other hand, it forced be to be more observant to the tone of voice, interactions, body language, gestures, etc. However, since the focus was on the integration workers and their performance of the activity, I could talk to them to get their view on specific situations. Subsequently, the field notes were used to note specific occasions, interactions, etc. that I could use to ask further questions about.

5.2.1. Observations and field notes

The observations focused on how staff members navigated the system of information and tasks, how information was transferred to talk in the civic orientation class, and how this information, in turn, was understood as consequential for the newly arrived immigrants’ needs. The objective of the first part of the research was to gain an understanding of what overall expectations, norms, and activities are adhered to when organising and coordinating work (see section 5.2). The aim was to document and analyse those pre-established patterns that concern objects, purposes, goals, values, and procedures already in place.

Field notes were produced in connection with the observations. In the beginning, I documented most of what I could see and hear and when attending classes with interpreters, I tried to note as much of the talk as possible. These notes included reflections of what I saw and heard. The field notes documented the type of activity, the topics addressed, the participants, and the interactions that took place. The purpose was to get an overall understanding of the work processes and how

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The observations made by the co-researcher (co-author in Study 1 and 3) that have completed my study encompass following an integration worker through a whole program, including preparations, documentation, and classes.
different activities were interrelated and connected to the overall integration work at the organisation. All field notes were read and reread in order to obtain both an overall view of the data and detailed insights to guide further observations.

5.2.2. Video-recording

Video-recording was used to document the organisation of activity at an interactional detailed level. Video-recording classes and work meetings made it possible to analyse the activity as a temporally unfolding process, encompassing talk in interaction, the use of tools, and the integration workers’ ways of attending to situations that they were sensitive to. About 14 hours of classes and eight working meetings were recorded, each 60-90 minutes long. I was present during all the recordings and notes were also taken. The recordings were watched several times and sequences that were discerned as specifically interesting for the study were transcribed.

Different kinds of cameras were used, both digital cameras with a memory card and older devices with videotapes. A stable mid-shot angle was chosen, and two cameras were used in most cases to cover different angles. One camera was positioned in the back of the classroom, in front of the integration worker, and the second camera was positioned in the front of the classroom, capturing the participants in the classes. Nevertheless, due to technicalities, such as the limits of the camera lens in relation to the size of the room and the location of the people, it was hard to capture everyone. Sometimes incidents also occurred that interfered with my intentions, as when one of the cameras stopped working during a class.

The camera focusing on the integration workers provided access to details within the localities, catching both the content on the screen and the white board (i.e., the PowerPoint presentations and the notes that were made during the class). This framing, which turned out to be the angle used in the study, supported the analysis of regularities in how interactions were organized with the other actors in the classroom, the use of artefacts (i.e., the screen with the PowerPoint presentations, the whiteboard, the integration workers’ own notations), and how the integration workers initiated a topic in a class – i.e., how the text entered into and transformed the civic orientation practice.

Choosing the sequences when a topic was introduced in class provided possibilities to capture the rearrangements of information (cf. Jordan & Henderson, 1995). However, the video-recording of its own could not facilitate the analysis in Study 2 of the differences between how the information was sequentially ordered in the artefacts and the ways in which it was selected and
reorganized in the verbal presentations. Assembling data from field work, interviews, and documents facilitated such an analysis. For example, by using the referential text, it was possible to discern what pieces of information from different parts of the text were selected and put together in the verbal presentation. In similar vein, the PowerPoint slides revealed the integration workers own notations from preparing the classes on relevant aspects to bringing up at an occasion and in what order. By including interviews before and after the classes, it was possible to develop an analysis of a trajectory of integration workers’ actions and reassembling how they discerned, organized, and produced actions with regard to past and future activities. It is argued by Jordan and Henderson (1995) that tracking what is brought into or reorganized prior to an activity reveals crucial aspects necessary for carrying it out. Following this line of reasoning means that it also becomes possible to investigate the extent to which, in this case, the teaching material facilitated the coordination of activities and information through the use of it. However, such tracking made it possible to analyse aspects of the professional knowledge involved in making information intelligible and meaningful to the immigrants.

The video-recorded classes analysed in Study 2 were organised differently than the classes in other courses as the integration office wanted to test how a new way of organising the activity worked out. The class was mixed with different language groups together in the same room and the integration worker was assisted by three interpreters during a class. Two of the interpreters were experienced integration workers. At most occasions, the integration worker decided to divide the class in the different language groups in order for them to discuss certain issues. These sequences of small group discussions lasted about 15 minutes. During these sequences, the interpreters followed “their” group, ready to enter and support the discussions when needed. I video-recorded one of the groups. This recording provided interactional “hot spots” and sequences when the interpreter had to facilitate the discussions by clarifying to the group the issue that they were going to discuss. I followed up these sequences with the interpreter in order to understand what had happened.

To capture the on-going talk and interactions in the working meetings, two cameras were used, positioned on the opposite sides of the table around which the participants were seated. The video recordings were watched, reviewed, and scrutinized several times. Excerpts of interest for Study 1 and 2 were transcribed verbatim. The analytical focus was directed to how different aspects of quality were expressed (Study 1) and regular patterns of how different knowledge claims were made in relation to the responsible use of artefacts in routine work (Study 2). By providing the possibilities to view the interaction and also go back to see
and listen made it easier to distinguish who was saying what and when and how people oriented to one another.

Altogether, the video-recordings provided a resource for more complex levels of analysis of the procedures and organisation of the work. My focus was on language and interactions and how the procedures and organisation of the activity and knowledge is constituted in and through discourse. Video-recordings enabled recording of sequences of actions and activity in classes and in the work meetings in which events and knowledge were discursively constituted.

### 5.2.3. Interviews

As mentioned, the first individual interviews were carried out with ten integrations workers. These interviews were followed by 16 shorter interviews with two integration workers before and after four classes. Four interviews were made in relation to a course that the integration workers had attended and one interview was made with an integration worker about his role at one of the integration offices. Finally, two interviews were made with the management at one of the integration offices, lasting one to one and a half hour. The individuals chose where they wanted to be interviewed and often they chose to be interviewed at the integration office, as it was in close connection to the work.

All interviews were based on interview templates, which contained themes rather than fixed questions. This means that it was to some extent possible for the interviewees to influence the content and process (Forsey, 2008). For example, the order of when different themes were brought up could vary, depending on the nature of the interview situation. My ambition with such an approach was to encourage individuals to give an account of situations, choices, and complexities they face in work. Locating the individuals in everyday events at the workplace as well as in a wider socio-cultural context facilitated analysing the resources the integration workers made use of when performing civic orientation, how they went about doing their work, as well as different knowledge claims. Following this reasoning, it was not the particular individuals that I was primarily interested in; I was most interested in understanding the work practice – i.e., how people go about doing their work – in order to explore how knowledge is co-constructed as people draw on the social and material resources that are available to them (cf. Jordan & Henderson, 1995).

The formal interviews were audio recorded and listened to several times. Summaries were made of the interviews and transcriptions were made of sequences that were of interest for the study (see Study 1, Study 2, and Study 3).
The shorter interviews and the interviews with the management were transcribed verbatim.

Informal interviews, or talks, were made with staff members both in and about various situations. This kind of talk and direct questioning, applying more or less directly to a situation, facilitated understanding more about what was going on. Questions regarding specific situations were asked if the situation itself did not allow for direct questioning or if the purpose was to find out more about the relationships between different activities.

5.2.4. Documents

Documents in terms of PowerPoint presentations, textual materials, schedules, and policy guidelines have been used mainly as background information. Although the referential text and the PowerPoint presentations were also used to trace different decisions on the documents taken by the integration worker to organize information in relevant ways when introducing a subject to the immigrants in class (see section 5.2.2).

5.2.5. Ethical considerations

All staff at the integration offices and the participants in the groups that I visited were given oral and written information about the aims of the study. Specific attention was given to the fact that it was the work of the integration workers that was my focus, not the immigrants themselves. During the information sessions, people were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and its purpose. The written information has been translated into the languages most represented in the civic orientation classes and interpreters were used to facilitate the understanding. Confidentiality was guaranteed and they were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing an explanation. All people involved were informed that all data, recorded and written, would be handled carefully and strictly confidential and used for the purpose of research. Everyone volunteered to participate.

The empirical material was treated with respect to the integrity of the people involved. All places, localities, and persons were anonymised. This means that when names have been used in the text, they are fictitious. Other ethical considerations concern my intention not to scrutinise a specific municipality, integration office, or integration worker in relation to how well they accomplish.
their tasks. Instead, my focus was on the practical work with civic orientation (i.e., the performance of the activity).

Before I carried out the video-recordings I was already familiar with the setting and the staff and the participants had an idea of who I was and the aims and scope of the research. Although everyone agreed to the video-recordings, it is possible that the presence of the camera to some extent may have been uncomfortable for some of them.

5.3 Data analysis

The analytical focus of this thesis was on how professional knowledge in civic orientation is constituted by the actions of integration workers and other staff. The field notes were used as resources for understanding the overall workflow and served as a guide on how to conduct the study. For all three studies, the following research questions guided my research and were used as the basis for the analysis of data.

1. How is quality defined and dealt with in the development of a new integration activity?
2. What knowledge and conditions are involved in adapting a standardized teaching material to suit local circumstances and procedures?
3. How is professional knowledge expressed in the integration workers’ use of dialogue in civic orientation classes?

These research questions were used to explore different aspects of the professional knowledge that is developed and made relevant in activities. In the following section, I will give a brief presentation of the analysis of data in the different studies.

Study 1: Dimensions and perspectives of quality in integration work

Study 1 focused on how dimensions of quality are discussed, understood, and deployed in relation to the way immigration integration is supported. The analysis included the entire activity system, which made it possible to analyse individual, collective, artefact-mediated, and cultural features of quality with respect to civic orientation.

The data consist of observations, field notes, 17 interviews, and video-recordings of working meetings (see Table 1 in section 5.2). Two of the interviews were made with the management at one integration office (with the branch head and the head of operations), but most interviews were made with the integration workers
because their work is targeted in the study. The interviews focused on knowledge and quality in work. Excerpts from the video-recordings were used to reflect different perspectives on quality. Local office guidelines, schedules, and policies were used as background information. The field notes were used for documenting the workflow, for guiding the analysis and as complementary data to support the analysis.

Analyses of interview data and interactions were made to identify recurring patterns of how aspects of quality were expressed. In this process, interviews and video-recordings were listened to, reviewed, and scrutinised several times. Excerpts of interest for this particular study were transcribed verbatim. To grasp what was valued, how and in relation to what, the staging of rules, community, and division of labour guided the analysis. In addition, the ways in which different interlocutors positioned themselves and others were analysed in order to reveal formal stances in the activity and how specific agendas and perspectives on quality were articulated. Different positioning played out in terms of different responsibilities and people were held accountable for distinct tasks.

Initially, three categories were identified in the analysis as significant tools (or even strong actors) in maintaining and securing quality: culture, knowledge, and teaching material and methods (standardizations). Culture stood out as a core aspect of quality in relation to the integration workers’ ability to perform their daily work. The closer analysis of the interviews and the transcribed parts of the video-recordings involved analysing culture at a more detailed level. These analyses focused how differences in the groups of immigrants were understood and what values and attributes emerged as aspects of quality in relation to the traditions that directed the integration workers’ actions. Of specific concern was how the bridging aspects of the integration workers’ work were expressed.

**Study 2: Adapting standardised teaching material to suit local learning conditions**

Study 2 addressed what pedagogical strategies the integration workers need when adapting a standardised teaching material to suit local learning conditions in civic orientation courses. Focus was directed to manifestations of the integration workers’ professional knowledge when text from the teaching material were transformed to contextually relevant verbal presentations to be elaborated in class.

The data initially included 115 hours of observations, field notes and ten interviews with integrations workers, which were used as background knowledge guiding the study (for more details of the data production see Table 1, section 5.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.2.4). The preparatory work stood out as salient activities were integration workers engaged in analytic scrutiny regarding the use of standards and was chosen for closer analysis. PowerPoint presentations, including
notes, the schedule and the stipulated referential text made up part of the data to capture the integration workers’ preparation work. The data also consist of video-recordings from seven classes and from eight work meetings. The recording of the classes focused on how the integration workers verbally presented relevant facts in interaction with the members of the class as well as with the PowerPoint presentations, their own notes, and the whiteboard. In the work meetings, the use of the standardized material was essential when talking about routine aspects of work; therefore, they were important arenas for reflection on the future organization of activity. In total 16 pre- and post-class interviews were carried out with two integration workers in close relation to the performance of classes. The interviews focused on preparations and expectations and afterwards the focus shifted to how they valued the outcome of the classes. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim.

The interviews were analysed by focusing on the use of the stipulated information in relation to preparations, expectations, and outcomes. The notes on the PowerPoint presentations were analysed in relation to the stipulated order and content in the standardised teaching material by focusing on how gaps were filled by selecting, organising and categorising information. The video-recordings of the classes were viewed several times and transcripts were made of sequences where a topic was introduced to the class. Focus was directed to differences between how information was sequentially ordered in the teaching material and how it was organised in the verbal presentations (see section 5.2.2). Five work meetings were selected for closer analysis because of their specific focus on aspects of standardisation and development of practice. The analysis focused on different knowledge claims regarding the responsible use of standards in routine work, particularly how the integration workers justified their actions given their organisational identities and positions.

Study 3: Knowing in practice: The use of dialogue as a pedagogical method in integration work

Study 3 was directed towards identifying dialogue and the knowledge involved when the integration workers made use of dialogue in the context of their everyday social actions and interactions with a heterogeneous group of people in civic orientation classes. More specifically, the study focused on identifying manifestations of knowledge in the integration workers’ management of heterogeneity, organisation of information, and work of interpretation to bridge different contexts.

The data are based on 115 hours of observations, field notes, and ten interviews (also referred to in Study 1 and 2) with integration workers (see Table 1 and section 5.2, 5.2.1, and 5.2.3). The closer observations of following an integration
worker throughout a program facilitated the understanding of how different activities were interrelated.

The observations and field notes were used to get an understanding of the overall workflow and how the integration workers' knowledge functioned as a link between activities. The analysis focused on how pieces of information from texts and PowerPoint slides were made intelligible in the integration workers' interactions with the immigrants (e.g., how chunks of text were transformed into verbal utterances). Of specific interest were the kinds of knowledge integration workers need to contribute in order to make sense of past and future activities in civic orientation.

The interviews were used to analyse the integration workers' narratives as they spoke about their understanding of their task and as embedded in the practices of their everyday work. In analysing the interviews, focus was directed to the integration workers' narratives of their performance and dilemmas in everyday work and how they accounted for challenges involved when making use of dialogue. Of specific interest was the categorical work employed in preparing as well as performing the activity. This categorical work facilitated understanding how joint interactions were accomplished in the classes. Two questions were directed to the data: What turns into resources in the use of dialogue? How are these resources used in dialogue? The bridging work between different domains, experiences, expectations, etc. stood out as salient. Reflection concerning identified patterns and categories were summarized and linked to theoretical perspectives on knowledge and learning. Finally, the analysis was related to the analysis of the field notes and observations of interactional patterns, which made possible a shaped analysis of the integration workers’ knowledge in practice.
6 Summary of the studies

Study 1: Dimensions and perspectives of quality in integration work

Quality is a concept that all welfare services relate to when considering how to accomplish their goals, yet such considerations are often made without defining what the value of specific services means in relation to different demands and expectations. This study explores how quality is defined and dealt with in integration work that aims to support immigrants’ integration in Sweden. The study intends to understand the relational and constructed character of quality work in a local activity by scrutinizing how dimensions of quality are discussed, understood and deployed.

The following data sources were used: interviews with integration workers and management, video-recording monthly work meetings, documents, and work structure. The interview data and video recordings were analysed to explore how aspects of quality were understood. Furthermore, the community, staging of rules, and division of labour guided the analysis to grasp what was valued, how it was valued and in relation to what.

The results identify three types of quality. First, culture is an aspect of quality in classroom interactions. By making relevant what particularities to attend to, culture functions as an organising element of the activity. The integration workers’ understanding of the immigrants’ cultural background and experiences is central for recognising how the immigrants position themselves – as men and women, young and old, urban and rural, etc. This positioning affects the way they perceive their environment and the issues they are dealing with in the sessions. This understanding makes it possible for the integration workers to use dichotomies between cultures and other differences in the group to go deeper into a subject. Such actions contribute to increasing the immigrants’ access to active participation in society. Second, quality is understood in the context of standardised methods and textual material as they coordinate activities throughout the course. The textual material and PowerPoint presentations structured and provided ways to anticipate and prepare for civic orientation lessons. As the immigrants move from one scheduled theme to another, a uniform and equal service delivery is secured. However, a uniform script cannot effectively deal with the differences between and within groups and the fact that integration workers sometimes need to let go of the stipulated order to respond to situations at hand. Third, the concept of quality is part of the organisational structures that support and develop practitioners’ knowledge. Tensions revealed
in the organisation between objective and subjective knowledge indicate management’s and integration workers’ different relations to quality. Whereas management gave precedence to vertical distribution of knowledge, the integration workers emphasised horizontal aspects of knowledge that would help them adapt their activities to the needs of the specific immigrant group.

These different manifestations of quality are embedded in different perspectives on culture and knowledge, expressed as tensions between values of creativity and standardisation and between equality and heterogeneity. The integration workers constantly had to display the situated meaning of information, which relied on their understanding of the heterogeneity of culture. Thus, to secure quality on the local level, the situated knowledge involved putting standardised procedures into use in processes of meaning making. For example, this study found that the quality of civic orientation depends on the organisation’s capacity to support the integration workers’ ability to bridge culturally determined perspectives when they encounter different boundaries in everyday practice. Therefore, seeing and understanding the heterogeneity of immigrants’ cultural backgrounds and bridging boundaries is what distinguishes bridging cultural knowledge. That knowledge is central to the future organisation of integration work but could become invisible with a one-sided emphasis on standardisation in an attempt to ensure quality work.

**Study 2: Adapting standardised teaching material to suit local learning conditions**

Recently, research from around the world has been interested in the use of standards. This study widens our understanding of the interpretative work involved in selecting, organising, and categorising information to make standardised teaching material relevant in an integration activity directed to newly arrived immigrants. Hence, this study explores the professional knowledge and conditions involved in adapting standardised teaching material in the preparation and organisation of a procedure that will support collaborative meaning-making processes in civic orientation programs.

The data were produced by video-recording civic orientation classes and work meetings. Additionally, interviews, observations, field notes, PowerPoint presentations, textbooks, and notes documented data to capture the overall workflow and integration workers’ preparation work. The analysis partly focused on gaps that were bridged between the stipulated standardised information and the local organisation with respect to how and what information was presented in the classroom. The video-recordings of the classes were analysed with a focus
on what was said and on structures and interactions between the integration workers and the standardised material to capture the reorganisation of information. The analysis of the work meetings focused on different knowledge claims regarding the use of standards in routine work. How the integration workers justified their actions given their organisational identities and positions were of specific interest.

The results show how there are tensions inherent in standards and struggles involved in making use of the standards in everyday work. The standards should function both as tools in meaning making activities and as a control system for securing equal service for all immigrants. Thus, the way the integration workers structured work to suit specific occasions often differed from the structured order in the standardised material. The study shows a lack of correspondence between the structure of information in the standards and the immigrants’ life trajectories, which requires that the integration workers reorganise the information to make it relevant. In this work, their notes play a central role in structuring a narrative order that makes sense to the immigrants. This interpretative work implies that they continuously had to consider local concerns in order to meet individual knowledge needs.

The integration workers often prepared their lessons by selecting and organising information in a suitable form. Such reduction of information relies on their judgement of what information will be significant for the needs of the immigrants and the purpose of the activity. The reorganization into narrative patterns, connecting categories, events, and actors, invokes temporality and sensitivity to the particularities that characterise specific situations. Such operationalizing of the standard text presupposes knowledge about how different pieces of information relate to one another and how they work together in relation to different cultural expressions.

Although standardisation of content and procedures has been put forward as a general solution to increase quality in civic orientation, all of the integration workers’ actions cannot be standardised. In practice, there is a need to take into account the autonomous work and the professional knowledge involved in transforming information into contextually relevant verbal presentations, so there is a need for social learning spaces that make it possible to reflect about routine work.
Study 3: Knowing in practice: The use of dialogue as a pedagogical method in integration work

Many studies addressing the knowledge involved in communication across cultures are either based on individual perspectives of competence or on the role of macrostructures. This study concerns the local definition of professional knowledge in a specific integration activity directed to new immigrants. Focus is directed towards exploring the knowledge involved when integration workers make use of dialogue in everyday interactions and deal with challenges involved in making standardised information intelligible and meaningful to immigrants with different backgrounds, including levels of education, age, gender, etc.

The empirical data emanate from observations, field notes, and interviews with integration workers at an integration office where dialogue is used in civic orientation programs to process information about the Swedish society and everyday life. The analytical focus was to identify and describe recurrent interactional patterns in meaning-making processes and what kinds of knowing that are involved in the categorical work of preparing and performing the activity.

The results show three different aspects of the use of dialogue. First, it shows how the integration workers use dialogue as a tool to develop interactional patterns that support participation and distribute responsibility for the activity. This is characterised by the way they encourage the immigrants to ask questions and talk to each other about what the information means to them and to give personal examples in order to make the information intelligible. By paying attention to different understandings that are expressed and how they relate to one another, the integration workers can learn about different perspectives and decide how to continue the elaboration of a subject. The use of these resources makes it possible to organise a focus that highlights practical consequences in the immigrants’ new life situation in Sweden, such as consequences for individual and collective responsibility and opportunity. Such use of dialogue presupposes knowing when to entrust the conversation to the immigrants and stimulate a sense of belonging and acceptance of everyone’s own thoughts and opinions.

Second, links between different practices are created in which the course materials are used as tools for dialogue about the meaning of different topics, norms, and values. When the integration workers prepare a class, a core concern is to use these resources not only to make comparisons between the different cultures but also to enable new interpretations of topics in order to bridge cognitive aspects of a topic and practical action in society. When the interpretation of a topic changes (e.g., the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, Försäkringskassan), so does the immigrants’ cognitive and communicative conditions. Knowing how to re-contextualise the information to make it meaningful for the immigrants is of
particular significance, as the integration workers have to take into account the relationships between the pre-made course material, the immigrants’ needs, the organisation of classes, and the engagement in the activity – i.e., the dialogic process.

Third, through dialogue the immigrants’ understanding of artefacts, opinions, and experiences are used to bridge the gap between different systems of norms and values, which requires the skilful handling of various knowledge sources. This ability is seen in classes when unpredictable situations occur and when immigrants bring up topics that interrupt the normal flow of talk. In these situations, the integration workers’ ability to know how to organise information in the flow of a conversation becomes central. Such improvisational work relies on knowing how information is systemised. As noted in the results, the plasticity of categories in the teaching material that is respectful towards different norm systems is a prerequisite for dialogue and presupposes knowledge about the relationship between the content and aims of the course and the contingency of meaning-making processes.

The study of the integration workers’ interactions with immigrants shows that the meaning of information cannot be presupposed. The work of bridging standardised information and contextually relevant meanings is central in integration processes. As such, formal requirements of processing information using dialogue need to account for the various dimensions of knowledge involved in such bridging processes. Therefore, to develop a future oriented practice, organised structures for learning and sharing knowledge are needed that link past experiences to present and future actions.
7 Discussion

This thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of how professional knowledge is developed in activities directed to support new immigrants’ inclusion in Swedish society. A central concern has been the different kinds of knowledge involved in bridging immigrants from one cultural system to another.

Study 1 locates the integration workers’ actions within a wider context where different discourses on knowledge and integration, including ways to approach individual rights and needs, are present and point to crucial aspects of the professional knowledge needed in civic orientation. The focus directed how quality is defined and dealt with in the development of integration work. The results reveal that the organizational discourses about quality are embedded in different perspectives on culture and knowledge. These perspectives are expressed as tensions between different values, standardization, and creativity and between equality and heterogeneity. While routines served to structure work, the recognition and understanding of the heterogeneity of the immigrants’ cultural backgrounds was significant for the integration workers’ understanding, framing, and responding to particular needs and interests. The results showed that the integration workers play an intermediary role and need to know how to adjust their actions to bridge boundaries. It is concluded that the ways in which conflicting interests inherent in the system are dealt with in relation to what the integration workers do are crucial concerns and how knowledge is organised determines how quality is defined in the organisation.

In Study 2, the results support the arguments in Study 1 about the need to consider the situated aspects of the integration workers’ knowledge. From focusing how a locally standardized teaching material is adapted to local circumstances and procedures, the results indicate that although uniform solutions provide a structure and general view on how to understand the immigrants’ needs, conditions, and life trajectories in their new country of residence, the integration workers’ need to attend to every need in all groups cannot be anticipated by standardized structures alone. Instead, the sequential structuring of the activity relies on knowing how different pieces of information relate to one another and work together in relation to different cultural expressions. This means that what becomes constitutive for the integration workers’ knowledge concerns how they link the past, present, and future activities in work. Increasing standardization might be counterproductive as it constrains the possibilities to deal with local differences.
Study 3 focuses on what becomes constitutive for the integration workers’ professional knowledge when they make use of dialogue in everyday interactions, making locally standardised information intelligible and meaningful to immigrants with different backgrounds, education, age, etc. The study indicates that the integration workers prior understanding of situations, based on personal cultural experiences (competence) and formal expectations of work, becomes a resource in the organization of the activity and handling of unpredictable situations. The results show how the categorised information that is used in the activities might hold different meanings to the individuals in the groups. The integration workers re-contextualize information to make it locally relevant by handling different knowledge sources in ways that maintain heterogeneity in the meaning making process. Knowledge about how to bridge between standardized information and contextually tailored meanings are developed over time and across different activities in and through on-going practice, bridging from one situation to another through everyday talk and interactions.

Together, these three studies contribute to the understanding of the pedagogical and communicative knowledge that is developed in civic orientation operating simultaneously at different times and social scales: the conduct of the activity, the integration workers’ learning by contributing to the activity, and the historical development of practice.

Based on the results from this thesis, what can be said about how professional knowledge in integration work is understood? Each society and period of time is characterized by their specific philosophical ideas about integration. During the last decades, policy and public debates in western countries have focused multicultural solutions to the challenges of integration that nation states are faced with. As pointed out before, many ideas are based on Kymlicka (1998) and Taylor (1994) and their multicultural approaches to integration (see section 2.1). Thus, depending on the perspective, multiculturalism can be understood in different ways. In Sweden, when multiculturalism was introduced in the 1970s, it was seen as a way to move away from assimilation strategies by recognition of and supporting group-differentiated rights, immigrants’ ethnic identities, and a broader participation in society, including housing, employment, social care, education, equal rights etc. Since then, multicultural goals have been guiding the introduction of new reforms, including integration activities directed to immigrants such as language training and civic orientation. Thus, multicultural ideologies have implications for the organization of integration activities and what becomes considered as professional competence.

Considering the integration activities studied, the integration workers’ professional knowledge must be understood in relation to the surrounding world, taking into consideration philosophical ideas, political imperatives at both
European and national level, legislation, the provision of welfare services, professional groups and their assignments, and the actual citizens. The new directions for quality work in civic orientation (SFS 2010:1138, SOU 2010:16) can from such a view be seen as part of a larger network of regulations and agreements. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the organization of integration activities that have been scrutinized in this thesis is a response to new requirements both locally and globally. For this reason, the professional knowledge that is developed can also be seen as a contribution to the wider discourse on integration issues.

The move from civic information to civic orientation implied for the integration workers a new mandate to establish processes of orientation instead of informing or teaching (see section 2.6-2.9). This change has consequences for the integration workers’ profession and the organization. For the integration workers, the focus on developing processes of orientation enhances the importance of promoting the immigrants’ participation in various arenas of society at both individual and structural level, a view also supported by recent research (Bennet et al., 2009; Eastmond, 2011; Ekström & Östman, 2013; Erdal, 2013; Yohani, 2013). In the regulations for civic orientation, which is linked to wider integration policy changes, dialogue becomes a central tool to link different domains and when the integration workers learn, they engage in a domain with artefacts and ideas that are already invested with culturally specific meaning. What becomes considered as quality in civic orientation must be understood in relation to the premises that are given in the specific mandate.

7.1 Professional knowledge

In this section, the results will be discussed in relation to the overall aim of the thesis. First, the professional knowledge involved in bridging different cultures and the formation of professional identity will be discussed. Second, I will discuss the professional knowledge involved in transforming artefacts and what that imply in relation to development of professional knowledge. Third, cumulative aspects of knowledge will be highlighted and related to the direction that the development of the practice will take. Finally, the methodological approach used in this thesis will be addressed and how it has contributed to widen the understanding of professional knowledge and work integrated learning in integration work. A final conclusion will then be presented and some suggestions for future research.
7.1.1 Cultural brokers

One crucial aspect of the integration workers’ professional knowledge is how they handle premises of work. On the one hand, they are expected to execute routine tasks; on the other hand, they are expected to develop meaning-making activities together with heterogeneous groups of immigrants (i.e., responding to and taking different perspectives into account). It is obvious from the results that the integration workers’ understanding of the immigrants’ experiences is used as a recourse to break out of this tension and to take epistemic responsibility in relation to changes in the organization of work.

One central characteristic of the integration workers’ professional knowledge is cultural brokering. Cultural brokering involves various aspects of professional knowledge, encompassing the organization of an inclusive environment and the use of interactions and artefacts. For example, the results in Study 3 show how the integration workers use their experiences of asymmetric relationships to form, what in line with the reasoning of Lave & Wenger (1991) can be called, an inclusive environment that reflects individuals’ need to experience themselves as equal participants. Such re-configuring of the environment enables different participatory positions and makes it possible for a heterogenic group of people to experience a sense of connectedness with one another. Such sense of connectedness is significant for enabling people to share, challenge, and develop experiences together. Although speaking the same language does not guarantee such connections, the language becomes a common denominator and, following the reasoning of Vygotsky (1978), a collective resource in the activity that can increase the ability for everyone to participate and respond to the content from their own cultural and knowledge perspective. In line with the view of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Hutchins (1995), the communication supports in such sense the collective learning taking place in the activity. Simultaneously, communication becomes a consequence of learning as it mediates experience and contributes to enhanced conditions for personal engagements. Making such engagements possible involves according to Edwards (2010) changing the relation between individual and system. The results illustrate that by positioning the immigrants as knowledgeable and active agents in a mutual activity, the integration workers actively support the immigrants taking control over their own integration process. The practice that is constituted can be understood as bridging practice, linking different experience-based meanings and the goal of the activity. In this way, Taylor’s (1994) account of the significance of cultural belonging in a community where people share the same language way becomes central to work.

Another aspect of the cultural brokering concerns the use of dialogue. The results in Study 3 illustrate how dialogue is used as a means (rather than a goal) to develop interactional patterns that enhance participation by distributing the responsibility
for the activity and encouraging people to talk to and take one another into
consideration, learn from each other, and actively contribute to the production of
knowledge. Seen in this way, integration work becomes a matter of transforming
the initial side-by-side position of cultures to individuals interacting with one
another, participating in a communicative activity.

As evident in Study 3, a crucial characteristic of the integration workers’
professional knowledge concerns how they come to an agreement with the
immigrants about the purpose of the activity, which in line with the reasoning of
Engeström et al. (2015) should be of equal relevance for the people involved. For
example, the ways in which the teaching material were used provided
communicative rules that made it possible to compare and make joint inquiries
and connections between concepts and their representations in different
practices. Although the teaching material is designed for such purpose, it is a
matter of how it is used by the integration workers that is at the core of the activity
(Study 1, 2, and 3). In line with Billet’s view (2014), this means that there are
relations between the integration workers’ understanding of their task and their
respect for individual conditions, taking into consideration the relations between
the stipulated teaching material, individual needs, the organization of a class, and
the engagement in the activity.

The results show that the teaching material is used to compare cultures, individual
experiences, and understandings in new ways, providing possibilities to make new
experiences together and broaden the immigrants’ understanding of abstract
societal phenomena. As seen in Study 3, when asking the immigrants to discuss
in smaller groups what “the free school choice” means to them from a personal
and social perspective, the integration workers responded to the contributions by
invoking dichotomies between individual and collective responsibility in order for
the immigrants to scrutinize boundaries and consequences of concern in everyday
life. By giving the responsibility for the activity to immigrants, they are required
to critically scrutinize the situation and to give voice to civic issues from different
perspectives open for a diversity of interpretations. This responsibility can be seen
as a way to support individuals’ development of understanding of Swedish society,
their identity work, and agency in relation to their own trajectories. Such strategies
presume understanding the importance of creating links between different
systems of horizontal relations. As argued by Ekström and Östman, (2013),
interpersonal communication in groups can function as a resource for peoples’
civic orientation. It is known that deliberation is not limited to certain
communicative qualities, but, as pointed to by Kim and Kim (2008) and Ekström
and Östman (2013), include informal conversation about political and social
issues. Thus, it is reasonable to think that this kind of deliberation is specifically
important during a period of life when people are starting to orient themselves in
a new country and engage in social life at various arenas in society. In line with
the reasoning of Taylor (1994) and Kymlicka (1998), developing such patterns of communication makes visible the integration workers understanding of the importance of recognizing cultural groups, but also that consideration must be given to human values and individual positions within a culture. As argued by Okin (2002), to encompass equal rights to recognition the recognition of values and individual positions are fundamental. Therefore, when choosing to use teaching material as means (rather than goals) for mediating meaning, the teaching material function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Such use makes it possible to link concepts and their representations in different practices. Simultaneously, such linking enables transforming the immigrants’ position as recipients and aliens in relation to Swedish culture and welfare system by providing tools that will enable increased participation. These kinds of experiences would have been less likely in a conventional informative integration activity and provide significant generic skills to be used in other situations.

A central aspect of the professional knowledge concerns identifying relevant discourses to be elaborated. When facts about elderly care were introduced (Study 3), the integration workers did not draw on elderly care policy, but invoked arguments from how it was linked to other topics in the teaching material. Thus, it is obvious that understanding how teaching material is systemized and presenting facts that are correct are not enough to reach a common understanding. Rather, it is the dialogic interactions that make possible the open ended meaning making needed to invoke different focal aspects to topics and maintain heterogeneity in the process. As illustrated in Study 3, a wider interpretation of elderly care was needed to agree on its meaning in relation to the situation at hand. The bridging potential of the interactions relies on the integration workers’ understanding of the categories in the stipulated information as open enough for different ways of understanding consequences of the Swedish system that are equally relevant to people and shows respect for different value systems. As each individual need cannot be anticipated in each group and in every situation; there must be a certain plasticity in the ways that the information in the teaching material is used. There is more than one way of understanding a topic that can be valued as significant. Instead, the various interactional contributions in talk mirror different ideas of what matters in understanding a specific category as well as understanding cultural and diversity-informed challenges related to integration. The different interactional contributions function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989) as they bridge different value systems by jointly developing a common proficiency. It is apparent that the use of interactions contributes new meaning and what Hall and Horn call representational adequacy – “a locally negotiated judgement of sufficiency” (2012, p. 251). Therefore, it is reasonable to think that when meaning-making becomes a significant part of the immigrants’ experiences, multi-vocal representations of different perspectives are
needed for that work and this relies on the creative performance. What can be considered as general about a category depends on processes of local assembly.

One decisive aspect of the professional knowledge involved in integrating work is to understand how the integration workers deal with the relation between individual and culture. The results show that the cultural heterogeneity in the groups makes it hard for people to meet and understand one another. In line with the reasoning of Okin (2002), this means that the integration workers need to discern critical boundaries and create cultural bridges between people (Study 2 & 3). The integration workers’ brokering skills become a resource to engage with a range of knowledge sources and coordinate joint actions (cf. Vygotsky, 1978). The results also show that cultural brokers need to understand that cultural-specific boarders and concerns constantly change and, as argued by Lalueza and Crespo (2009), that critical elements of identity are negotiated in relation to others (Study 1 & 3).

The results in Study 3 make visible how cultural brokering also involves treating each way of life as of equal value, not ranking one voice or one culture as more valuable than another. The acknowledgement of different standpoints can be understood as a way to bring relevance to the recognition of cultural groups (cf. Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1998), implying not only juridical aspects of respect for people’s right to their own thoughts and opinions, but also treating people as, what Honneth (in Madsen, 2006) refer to as accountable citizens capable of contributing to the democratic process. In line with the reasoning of Engeström et al. (2015), such an approach is also made visible in the ways in which the integration workers position the immigrants as active agents in the activity and mutually accountable for developing common proficiency. Thus, without the possibility for the immigrants to understand the relevance and meaning of something, the risk is that it will be extremely difficult for them to make a claim, take a personal stance, or orient themselves in relation to their personal interest as well as understanding the interest of others. What is at stake here is how different viewpoints are produced and the ways in which the integration workers provide possibilities for people to take various positions. Such possibilities are provided by expanding the participation framework to also involve discussions in smaller groups, making it possible for individuals to move between different arenas and participate in different overlapping communicative activities. This kind of organization of situations was also taken further by the integration workers when preparing for how to make use of the stipulated information on other occasions. The ways in which the integration workers approached and made use of categorised information and interactions are also applicable in other situations. This means that the knowledge that is manifested concern re-contextualization and can be relevant also in other work contexts where issues of integration are crucial.
Apparently, engaging in dialogic interactions provides opportunities for people to develop what Kim and Kim call a “socio-political self” (2008, p. 58) on an everyday basis, increasing the understanding of both the self and others. The ways in which the integration workers handle the interrelationship between the instrumental and dialogic dimensions of the activity are part of professional knowledge and becomes visible in the ways that the integration workers transform the standards in local use, produce new rules for talk, and simultaneously allow themselves to change. When the integration workers choose to use dialogue, they also challenge the established order of things by reflexively attending to the ways in which interruptions in instruction-oriented work point to other ways of being in relation. This means that becoming a competent integration worker, performing cultural brokering, involves quite a complex interactional process that relies on the ability to take the other’s perspective and learn together. Similar to arguments put forward by Billet (2001), a readiness to change can be seen as a part of their professional development that also transforms practice. Thus, such processes presuppose a pedagogical approach that support and make possible critical reflection over taken-for-granted ideas, positions, and challenges linked to work. Billet framed the situation as follows:

[T]he development of expertise […] is characterised by intersections between the trajectories of the transforming social practice and individuals’ ontogenetic development. Because of their unique ways of knowing, individuals’ conceptions of the requirements for performance will likely be differentiated in some way from others acting in the social practice. (2001, p. 443)

Experiences of the kind of joint meaning-making activities, made visible in the results in this thesis, are significant resources in work. The results in Study 2 illustrate how experiences are transformed by the integration workers into new understanding and used to organise and communicate new topics. In a similar vein, the process of re-establishing actions and interactions across sites can be understood as a resource for learning that affects the individual as well as the different practices. By paying attention to various expressions, the integration workers also learn about perspectives and can make use of different viewpoints to decide how to organise the learning process at hand. The ways in which the formal procedures are transformed point to how local standardization of procedures (based on experience) is, what Wenger (1998) refers to as a cultural production and, following the reasoning of Lave and Wenger (1991), a situated accomplishment.
7.1.2 Transforming procedures

The integration workers continuously learn new ways of engaging with stipulated concepts. Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), this imply that the knowledge that is developed transforms the standardized procedures as well. It is obvious that the idea of providing equal information and regulating practice by means of pre-set procedures constrains the understanding of culture specific and heterogeneous aspects related to the members in the groups. These constrains create an awareness among the integration workers that engage them in what Billet describe as “the kind of thinking, acting, and learning that are important for effective vocational practice” (2006, p. 45) that emerges in relation to specific tasks and situations. Although the stipulated artefacts are significant tools for structuring work, as illustrated in Study 2, the integration workers develop a pedagogic process by consciously selecting and combining pieces of information to provide adequate representations that will acknowledge individual experiences, characteristics of the groups, and maintain continuity in the activity. This type of pedagogy relies not only on revealing information but also on understanding that knowledge is historically shaped and embedded in practice (Säljö, 2005). As such, it becomes a resource in organising the activity and bringing perspective to situational decisions. Thus, the reflexivity presupposed from the integration workers is not fully supported by the pre-determined structure. Instead, it is part of the integration workers’ professional knowledge.

It is apparent that organizing learning situations stretches beyond the scheduled class to also involve other activities. The results in all three studies make explicit how preparing a class is one activity where the integration workers’ professional knowledge manifests. The teaching material brings about anticipations of the upcoming class and by operationalizing the standardized content it gives room for individual variation and support for people’s personal integration strategies. By assembling and linking categories to the immigrants’ expectations and needs, the integration workers change the object of activity and, simultaneously, the stipulated procedures.

An interesting aspect of the structuring work performed is how the connections that are made serve to represent immigrants’ needs, the objectives and responsibilities of the integration workers in ways that address general issues that concern control and what Ceulemans et al (2012) refer to as quality assurance methods. As illustrated in Study 2, the integration worker constructed an interlinked problem area that many newly arrived immigrants are faced with, concerning psychological matters regarding learning conditions and embodied consequences of crises. Such sensibility to various cultural expressions and recognition of individual needs relies on being familiar with the particularities of a situation and what it will require. These experiences are used in other situations.
to modify the procedure by bringing pieces of internal and external structure into coordination (Hutchins, 1995). Therefore, a representation is step-by-step enriched with meaning to serve as a contextually relevant content to introduce in class. When materialised, such patterns of structuring information can serve as what Hutchins (2005) calls an “anchoring device” that can be used as a resource in other situations to deal with problem areas that are consequential for the immigrants’ inclusion and possibilities to participate on different social arenas. It is also a manifestation of the professional knowledge involved in bridging the gap between standardized information and particular needs and dealing with the development of the activity. Similar function can be attributed to the personal notes made on the bottom of the PowerPoint slides.

It is obvious that the ways in which the integration workers make distinctions and approach the immigrants’ needs and interests in a specific context also indicate an institutional responsibility to provide adequate conditions for newly arrived immigrants to, as in the case above, process information at a pace that is sensible for their specific learning status. As the structure of the teaching material lacks such recognition of individual needs, understanding how the pre-scribed information works together with different cultural expressions becomes a matter of professional knowledge, including ethical considerations. Following this, knowing how information is processed forgoes knowing what becomes a relevant content and calls for what Duguid (2005) refers to as ethical and epistemic commitment, not only of the integration workers but also of the organization as a whole.

A significant feature of developing meaning-making processes relies on the integration workers’ understanding of the relation between the contiguous character of dialogue and what Winman and Rystedt (2012) refer to as the indexical plasticity of categories, including that they can be understood in various ways. As illustrated in Study 3, in the talk about elderly care and in relation to the decisions that the integration worker made, categories can be used in various ways, which also is a presumption for meaning-making activities. Thus, as it is not possible to predict every knowledge need in each group and at each occasion, an indexical plasticity in relation to the use of the information in the teaching material is important. The teaching material has to enable negotiation of meaning in relation to the stipulated categories and what they imply in people’s everyday life. As revealed in Study 3, part of the integration workers’ knowledge manifests in continuous re-contextualisation of information. However, such knowledge develops over time and can be seen as transforming a stipulated structure for a specific purpose. Drawing on Miettinen et al., this kind of “changing interrelationship between objects of practice and the means of their realisation” (2012, p. 350) is vital for understanding aspects of professional knowledge.
An interesting dimension of the gap bridging performed by the integration workers is how they envision the outcome of the activity by thinking in structures. Simultaneously, culture (understanding the heterogeneity of the immigrants’ backgrounds), seen as what Vygotsky (1978) calls a symbolic tool, obviously supports the production of new tools and relevant content. Being sensitive to and able to discern specific knowledge needs among the members of the groups is crucial knowledge for skilful performance. Such aspects of professional knowledge must be understood in relation to experiences that guide the decisions the integration workers make when selecting the “characters” to be part of a “plot” that is fruitful for a specific occasion. Making use of standards is a tightrope walk of handling demands for control and local needs for autonomy. Thus the ways in which the general discourse on integration work manifest in everyday work point to how the meaning-making performed by the integration workers seem to contribute to that discourse.

7.2 Implications for quality assurance

How does integration workers’ knowledge relate to aspects of quality? In Study 1, the analysis showed how quality is multifaceted and is incorporated in organizational structures as well as in work processes. The analysis in this thesis show how professional knowledge develop in relation to both the process and content of the activity. The knowing how involved in cultural brokering, coming to an agreement with the immigrants through recognition of cultural groups and individual rights, was evident in the ways in which interactions, categories, and topics in the teaching material are related and organized to develop a common understanding (Study 3). This knowledge relies on what by Wertsch (1998) is referred to as the appropriation of cultural tools – i.e., the teaching material with its standardized structures and categories and understanding how they work together with different cultural expressions within the frames of a specific activity system. As shown in Study 2, the integration workers undertake an evaluative work in organizing pieces of information in new constellations to provide a contextually relevant content for a specific purpose. The ways in which they engage in learning, developing knowledge from their experiences, include that they engage in their own learning process involving what Billet (2014) refer to as procedural, conceptual, as well as dispositional dimensions. This means that there is an interrelationship between standardization and the bridging work performed – i.e., a process of reification which according to Sfard (1991) involves the ability of thinking both operationally and structurally. Thus, the professional knowledge that is developed and becomes valid must be understood in relation to the activity
system of which it is part, including policy regulations, economy, guidelines, responsibilities, relations, etc.

Although cultural brokering concerns dimensions of the activities that are not always visible, it is an expression of the particular knowledge involved in navigating between different activity systems, producing inclusive processes. The kind of communicative actions that are carried out by the integration workers actually produces a space in which the everyday and political concerns in integration are elaborated and in which the principles that regulate the daily activities are constituted in interaction with the immigrants (Study 3). The high value of standardization put forward in the political discourse tends to become constitutive for how quality in integration work is defined. Thus, as illustrated in Study 1, quality is manifested when local use and heterogeneity is balanced with uniform solutions. Displaying the situated meaning of information depends on the integration workers’ understanding of the heterogeneity of individual backgrounds and bridging boundaries and brings value to the particularities in the groups. Such bridging work implies handling tensions inherent in quite paradoxical relations between equality and particularity. Fostering social equality, a seemingly admirable goal, builds on an idea that all citizens have the same kind of needs and thus right to the same kinds of social service. However, principles of equality risk being discriminatory as they tend to be blind to diversity and culturally-specific needs (cf. Taylor, 1994). On the other hand, promoting ethnic identity formations might, as pointed to by Okin (2002), involve giving the consent to hierarchal structures that risk putting principles of equal treatment and individual rights aside. In this sense, the less explicit rules and communicative actions performed by integration workers must be understood as actual ways of realizing the encompassing discourse on integration.

One crucial question that is highlighted in the results in Study 1 concerns how different discourses on quality and knowledge intersect in relation to what the integration workers do. The ways in which learning and professional knowledge is understood will most probably have implications for the direction that civic orientation practice will take.

When considering the on-going practice of civic orientation and future development of integration activities, we should consider the implications the above has for the development of professional knowledge. What does the integration workers’ contextual actions and their ways to assert their jurisdiction, as shown in this study, imply for the understanding of future development of formal education and for the cumulative experiential knowledge produced within as well as between practices?
For example, what does the above mean for the structures that are developed in the workplace to support collective learning processes? How does it become possible to agree on a common course of action? These are issues that also integration workers highlight (Study 1). It is a responsibility of management to create conditions for developing the structures necessary for, with the words of Edwards, “building workforce capacity” (2012, p. 29) that can handle changing conditions. For example, at present, the organization of the workforce is rather dispersed, which restrains the integration workers’ possibilities to share experiences with one another. However, existing structures in terms of the regular work meetings have the potential for developing links not only between integration workers but also between the integration workers and the management. Following this, consideration can also be given to implications in relation to other integration offices in Sweden, other fields, and between working life and the academy. It is reasonable to think that the ways in which the integration workers’ professional knowledge is made visible and sustained will have implications for the direction that civic orientation practice will take.

Learning to become a skilled integration worker is not just a question of learning specific pedagogical methods. Developing professional knowledge is according to Lave (1999) intertwined with developing professional identity and, as argued by Brown and Duguid (2001), ability to act in ways that are socially recognized. Part of this relies on participation in a community, encompassing specific regulations, norms, values, standards, and expectations on work. How these expectations are realized in concrete work is made visible in the integration workers’ everyday actions, which is interconnected to a wider network of actors and discourse on integration and multiculturalism (Study 1). The results make evident how there are tensions between different values, between the teaching material, designed for processing the immigrants through the system in a uniform way, and the use of its use in daily practice. As highlighted in Study two, integration workers need a certain amount of autonomy.

Integration work is not just an issue that concerns pedagogical methods, standardization, and organizational aspects of organized civic orientation. It is reasonable to think that it has implications also for many other actors and activities in society. Today, almost all welfare institutions face challenges involved with issues of diversity and inclusion in one way or another and the need for inter-professional working and learning is increasing. This cooperation helps professionals to jointly deal with mutually acknowledged challenges. Therefore, it seems important to consider how different forms of expertise can develop common representations, not to reach consensus but to develop what Edwards refer to as a “partially shared understanding of what matters for other contributing experts” (2011, p. 39), to bring bearing to concepts of relevance for integration
work that also can be related to the overall discourse on integration and multiculturalism. This view challenges organizations, including higher education, to consider forms of interpersonal relations as well as the design and delivery of courses and programmes.

7.3 Reflections on data collection and methodological issues

A point of departure in this thesis has been an interest in understanding processes of learning and the development of professional knowledge to handle changing demands in a new integration activity. By studying integration work within the frames of WIL, I hope to contribute ways to understand how such processes occur and can be organised to meet changing conditions. The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the professional knowledge that is developed in activities aimed to support newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. The theoretical framing that is used suggests that learning is seen as relational and situated and professional knowledge is understood as an on-going production, manifested in interactions and in the use of artefacts in a specific context and organisational culture. Such framing implies that to understand professional knowledge and learning, activities must be made the unit of analysis. That is, the analysis should address how people act and interact with one another through the use of mediating artefacts in a specific context, what experiences they make, and how they make sense of these. The activity theoretical frame work provides conceptual tools to investigate the development of professional knowledge within a specific activity system.

Taking integration work-in-action (cf. Luff et al, 2000) as a point of departure in my studies provided possibilities to fill a gap in research about integration work by investigating the professional knowledge “in action” in everyday work. Such an approach makes it possible to bring light to detailed aspects of routine work, the integration workers’ concrete use of interactions and artefacts, and transformations of practice. In other words, the approach has made it possible to open “the black box” of the integration workers’ knowledge by scrutinizing their performances and sequential structuring of work. Thus, it becomes possible to illuminate how text and interactions are integrated in meaning making activities, including language, communication, thinking, and acting in various activities. Consequently, professional knowledge and learning are understood in relation to the activities in which operations and actions are carried out. Studying integration work-in-action provides opportunities to grasp generic as well as specific features of collaborative work. By analysing and bringing to the forefront configurations of knowledge and learning, the approach brings to the scene the actual resources
in the work and how these resources are used, which actors are involved, what they do, and how actions are approached and staged. Altogether, this makes it possible to question what is taken for granted, highlighting aspects of the integration workers’ professional knowledge.

In order to grasp the use of artefacts and interactional organization of activities and the moment-by-moment, collaborative conduct of activities, which according to Luff et al. (2000) is a prime concern in workplace studies, video-recordings have been used. It is not possible to capture everything with video. There are a lot of things going on in the surrounding environment and in activities linked to the actual performances that demand other methods (e.g., in relation to the activity of preparing classes and to historical aspects of practice). To capture the complexities of practice, I also used observations, filed notes, interviews, and documents. The analysis of the initial interviews and observations provided material to formulate the three research questions that have guided the research.

Of course, there are also consequences involved in choosing a specific methodological approach. A perspective also includes limits of what is possible to see, analyse, and draw conclusions about. In relation to the choices I have made, the approach does not enable investigating psychological dimensions of learning and knowledge, the teaching material, or the meaning or social construction of tools and artefacts. Neither does it support analysis to value whether something is good or bad, e.g., the content of teaching material or the performance and organization of work. In contrast, the approach I have chosen aligns with the one of Heath, et al. (2000) and highlights how the integration workers make sense of the artefacts that are available to them.

Using operations as an analytical focus provided ways to scrutinize fundamental aspects of the knowledge involved in conducting meaning-making processes. Interviews and observations provided material to analyse and highlight the categorical work deployed by the integration workers when bringing together different perspectives and understandings to reach a shared objective in the activity. Such work is vital for integration workers to understand to carry out an orienting activity with the potential to bridge different contexts. One changing potential of the activity that needs to be considered for supporting the development of practice is the borderland between the textually mediated meaning and the object of the activity. As shown in Study 3, scrutinizing routine work in situ made visible the knowledge involved in establishing an arena for shared inquiries and how different focal aspects of categories are constituted that have relevance for bridging different domains, experiences, expectations, etc. The methodological approach provided understanding of aspects of the professional knowledge that are crucial for establishing and upholding an agreement with and among the immigrants in a joint activity. It also made it possible to investigate the development of professional knowledge as a process of bridging gaps from one
situation to another. Such expansion of professional knowledge is relevant in a specific organizational culture and thus in the field of integration work.

Investigating the use of a standardized teaching material through the lens of actions provided ways to capture structural aspects of work, the professional knowledge involved in organising a procedure, and transformations of practice. Observations, field notes, video-recordings, interviews, and documents provided material that made it possible to analyse sequences of work and the knowledge involved in organising information and making connections that are significant for the integration workers to understand in order to make use of and bring relevance to the information in the teaching material (Study 2). Focusing actions made visible how specific patterns of structuring information were crucial for constituting relevant perspectives on different topics. Scrutinizing the sequential structuring of work make it possible to highlight significant aspects of work that are vital for understanding how contextually relevant content is constituted that can be jointly elaborated on in class. Thus, to shape the activity, it seems important to consider the ways in which the stipulated content work together with different cultural expressions. Additionally, the methodological approach that is used contributes understanding of conditions that are essential for the interpretational and creative work involved in bringing life to prescribed information.

The ways in which experiences are used to structure and bring a relevant perspective to different themes (Study 2) can be compared with unpredictable situations of which the integration workers have no experience (Study 3). The ways in which interactions and different perspectives and understandings are assembled and used in such situations point to significant aspects of the professional knowledge involved in maintaining heterogeneity and simultaneously constituting a relevant content in the meaning-making process. A vital aspect to consider is the ways in which the integration workers extend their knowledge from specific situations to understand the importance of textually mediated meanings in other situations.

Using activity as an analytical focus made it possible to scrutinize the relation between individuals’ ways of talking in and about daily practice and the collective organization of work in a municipality. This approach showed how securing quality and continuity in meaning-making activities relies on division of labour and putting resources from different epistemic practices into use in on-going work. As illustrated in Study 1, resources from both standardized procedures and culture are used by the integration workers to organize the activity and display the situated meaning of information together with the immigrants. Of specific interest is how the methodological approach provides ways to analyse and highlight values and the rules guiding the integration workers’ operations and actions of linking between these different practices. Simultaneously, this makes visible crucial aspects of the integration workers’ prior knowledge, meaning-making, and the cumulative approaches to knowledge that are at the core of quality work (i.e., of
developing a future oriented bridging practice that enhances the immigrants’ access to society).

The methodological approach applied in this thesis can be a fruitful way to gain understandings for further development of integration work. It seems reasonable to think that the results also may have relevance for integration work in general in practices such as health care, social services, education, police, and NGOs (i.e., in all kinds of work that involve handling issues related to diversity and inclusion). However, there might be certain limitations to making generalisations of the results in relation to international contexts considering differences in relation to history, laws, integration policies, and organisation of integration activities.

From a WIL-perspective, the preceding analysis in this thesis provides insights of relevance for developing learning processes within practice as well as for the development and organization of higher education. Supporting processes of education will most likely benefit the development of integration workers’ professional identity and professional culture. For higher education, this may imply developing courses and curricula in order to support already qualified professionals’ needs of continued learning within practice as well as for preparing students for future integration work by providing a basis of knowledge within the field.

Within practice, the analysis points to the significance of developing relations between the organization of work and other activities that enable learning between integration workers as well as between the integration workers and the activity system as a whole. One example of such activity is the work meetings where the integration workers and management at the integration offices meet on a regular basis. These meetings can provide possibilities to share experiences handling challenges in daily work and make the professional knowledge of integration workers within integration work visible within practice. Such structures would promote the development of a bridging practice on a system level. In order to develop a future oriented bridging practice, organized structures for learning that can stimulate and value the integration workers’ creativity in work and its outcomes become important.

### 7.3.1. Validity and generalizability

In the early stages of analysis, key sequences and excerpts from the data were shared with other researchers. That was a way to consider different interpretations of the episodes, bring to the fore significant aspects for analysis and for fruitful ideas to emerge on issues that could be possible to investigate further (c.f. Jordan
& Henderson, 1995). In this respect, the co-writer in two of the articles in this thesis, filled a significant function. In these data sessions, video clips have been jointly viewed and reviewed to look for consistencies and inconsistencies in relation to the early analysis, but also to find out if more researchers than I notice similar phenomena. Procedures have been carried out in relation to excerpts from interviews that have been read and re-read together.

Results and conclusions of the research have been communicated and discussed in sessions with integration workers (mainly). Critical situations and challenges in everyday work and how these were handled were portrayed in these sessions and what manifested as professional knowledge. This way of portraying relevant cases makes it possible for integration workers in various fields to recognize patterns and judge whether the results can be used to understand similar situations in other contexts. Thus, as pointed out by Larsson (2005; 2009), such interpretations depend on being acquainted with the culture that features the described context. The validity and generalizability of the results in the different studies in this thesis relies on whether they serve as illustrations that contribute to new ways of understanding aspects of professional knowledge in integration work. With such a view, the validity and generalizability of the results become issues for the audience that take part in judgment of the studies.

7.4 Concluding remarks

This thesis has contributed some aspects of the professional knowledge that are fundamental for the pedagogical processes that are crucial for bridging different cultural systems. One central conclusion is that such bridging work is a relational endeavour that relies on the recognition of the other and of interactions based on equal grounds. Such understanding and managing the on-going negotiation of such agreements is at the core of what can be considered as professional knowledge. While traditional integration activities often have emphasised an intercultural pedagogy based on comparing cultural similarities and differences, highlighted by e.g. Lasonen (2010), the cultural brokering revealed in this thesis make visible a somewhat other pedagogic practice. In understanding the identity work of each group member in relation to their individual on-going life projects as dependent on the others for its meaning and scrutinizing differences between individual and collective/society’s responsibilities in relation to future consequences facilitated interconnectedness among the members although their background varied. Instead of having a clear goal in mind for their bridging work, it is what Engeström et al (2015) refer to as the conflict in motives that makes integration workers take on action.
The ways in which information is communicated and made relevant is based on a logic that depends on the conditions at hand. This means that for standardization efforts to be fruitful in securing a quality service to all immigrants, such efforts must make similar conditions possible as those mentioned above, allowing heterogeneity to be maintained. As demonstrated in the results in this thesis, a consequence of standardisation efforts is that practice inevitably changes as different forms of knowledge are contextualized and re-contextualized as the integration workers move between situations and activities. Such “knowing at work” relies on an understanding of the actual activity. Therefore, to support decision-making and context-relevant pedagogical processes, infrastructure must be designed to meet the particularities and concerns in work.

The preparation activities stand out as particularly interesting in the sense that they highlight aspects of the organization of work that often pass unnoticed but make evident the professional knowledge that makes the mediating of the meaning of the pre-set information possible as well as the transformation of procedures that bring contextual relevance to the content. The gap-bridging performed by the integration workers, from one situation to another, provide experiences that can be used as resources in new situations. In this bridging process, standards are transformed over time and across different activities.

Thus, the relation between transforming standard procedures (Study 2) and generalisation of the knowledge that is developed relies on the ways in which the knowledge is aggregated to have a wider relevance in the activity system and even beyond that to external networks. For organizations that want to keep up with changes in society and “develop knowledge continuously” it seems reasonable to align with Brown and Duguid:

For such organizations, the most important relationship between quasi-autonomous communities within a dynamically structured firm must be one of negotiation- negotiation which allows change, on the one hand, to occur locally and, on the other hand to affect global strategic change if necessary. (2001, p. 209)

As been highlighted in this thesis, it is significant that cumulative structures are developed that will not only recognize the integration workers’ professional knowledge but also support the generation and use of new knowledge (cf. Evans, et al., 2010). In order to develop a sustainable knowledge domain of integration work that stretches beyond local civic orientation practices, it seems necessary to also consider how the knowledge involved in cultural brokering can be distributed and “brokered” also in relation to other fields of practice that face challenges involved with bridging between cultural systems, including higher education.
7.5 Reflections on future research

The work with this thesis has raised many questions that may deserve further investigations.

- Quality work feedback mechanisms include regional and national contexts: How should it be organised? With what tools?
- Another question that would deserve further investigations is how teaching material could be designed to better suit individual knowledge needs and allowing for work, education, etc. at the same time as the civic orientation program is given? The ways in which civic orientation is organized now contributes to fragmented activities that put certain limits in relation to the immigrants’ own integration strategies. For example, what would a digitalisation of civic orientation imply in relation to time and room aspects? For example, would it allow for more flexible learning? Development of digital tools is already going on in this area. There is, for example, a national joint data platform being developed for civic orientation, common materials, PowerPoint presentations, etc. From a WIL perspective, it would be interesting to investigate how this inter-institutional development of civic orientation plays out, taking a starting point in the methodological approach used in this thesis, both in relation to professionals’ work and to the experiences of the newly arrived immigrants.
- Finally, one more question that would be interesting to investigate concerns what the results in this thesis imply in relation to higher education, for relations between the practice fields and universities, and for the organisation of training professionals.
References


Hej,

Vi är två doktorander, XX och Marie Westerlind, anställda på Högskolan Väst i Trollhättan som håller på med ett forskningsprojekt angående de introduktionsprogram som anordnads i Sverige för nyanlända flyktingar. Vi är speciellt intresserade av hur samhällsinformation/samhällsorientering går till. Våra syften med forskningen handlar dels om hur integration förstår och görs i en praktisk verksamhet och dels om det handlingsutrymme som skapas för deltagarna.

För att samla in underlag för vår forskning är det viktigt att vi får möjlighet att träffa personer som på olika sätt medverkar i samhällsinformationen; det vill säga deltagare, informatörer, samordnare etc. Ert deltagande är med andra ord värdefullt för oss. Vi vill gärna ta del av vad som sker under samhällsinformationen och andra aktiviteter som är knutna till den verksamheten. Det kan ske genom att vi sitter med under olika pass med samhällsinformation, gör intervjuer med deltagare och andra inblandade samt några videoinspelningar av hur ett pass med samhällsinformation kan gå till.

Allt deltagande är frivillig och var och en har rätt att själv bestämma över sin medverkan. Det innebär bland annat att deltagare kan välja att avbryta sin medverkan när som helst utan att ange skäl för sitt val. Allt material kommer att anonymiseras, hanteras konfidentiellt och endast att användas för forskningsändamål. Utöver oss själva kommer våra handledare vara de enda personer som tar del av de uppgifter som samlas in. Insamlat material kommer att analyseras, sammanställas i artikelform och slutligen publiceras i såväl nationella som internationella tidskrifter samt i form av ett större avhandlingsarbete. Det kommer att erbjudas möjlighet för alla deltagare att ta del av resultaten.

APPENDIX A. Information and consent letter
Med vänliga hälsningar;

XX och Marie Westerlind

Handledare:  XX  Tel. XX
             XX  Tel. XX
             XX  Tel. XX

Doktorander: XX  Tel. XX
             Marie Westerlind  Tel. XX

Samtycke

Jag har tagit del av och förstått ovanstående information och jag samtycker till att delta i forskningsprojektet.

Datum:

Namn:
Hej,


För att samla in underlag för min forskning är det viktigt att få möjlighet att träffa personer som på olika sätt medverkar i samhällsorientering; det vill säga deltagare, orienterare, samordnare etc. Ert deltagande är med andra ord värdefullt för mig. Jag vill gärna ta del av vad som sker under samhällsorienteringen och andra aktiviteter som är knutna till den verksamheten. Det kan ske genom att sitta med i olika sammanhang och göra observationer, t ex under olika pass med samhällsorientering, genom intervjuer samt några videoinspelningar av hur ett pass med samhällsinformation kan gå till.

Allt deltagande är frivillig och var och en har rätt att själv bestämma över sin medverkan. Det innebär bland annat att deltagare kan välja att avbryta sin medverkan när som helst utan att ange skäl för sitt val. Allt material kommer att anonymiseras, hanteras konfidentiellt och endast att användas för forskningsändamål. Insamlat material kommer att analyseras, sammanställas i artikelform och slutligen publiceras i såväl nationella som internationella tidskrifter samt i form av ett större avhandlingsarbete. Det kommer att erbjudas möjlighet för alla deltagare att ta del av resultaten.

Med vänliga hälsningar;

Marie Westerlind
Samtycke

Jag har tagit del av och förstått ovanstående information och jag samtycker till att delta i forskningsprojektet.

Datum:

Namn:
APPENDIX C. Information and consent letter

HÖGSKOLAN VÄST

قسم الإنسان والمجتمع

86 461 ترولهتين

نحن طالبين في درجة الدكتوراه (فراح عبد الله ومارى فيسترين) ونعمل بجامعه فيست في ترولهتين في مشروع بحث عن برنامج المقدمه التي تعطي للاجئين الجدد الواقفين حديثًا للسويد. نحن مهتمين خاصه بدراسة كيف تعمل دوره معلومات المجتمع.

أهدافنا من هذه البحث هي كيف يتم فهم وتنفيذ الاندماج في الواقع ومساهمة الفعل للمندمجين، وفك تجمع معلومات لهذا البحث فانه ذا صعب أن نجد الفرصه لمقابلة هؤلاء المندمجين الذين يتلقون هذه الدوره إلى جانب المعلمين والمنسفين الذين يعملون في هذا الحقل............. الخ

ولهذا فإن المشاركين في هذا البرنامج مهمين لنا جدا ونحن نطلب منك معرفة ما يحدث في دوره معلومات المجتمع والأنشطة الأخرى المتعلقة بهذا الشأن. سوف نتمكن من فهم هذا البحث عن طريق وسائل متعددة منها عمل مقابلات معكم في الأوقات المحاضرات مجتمعين ومقابلات أخرى منفردين مع أشخاص خارج هذه المجال وعمل تسجيلات فيديو عن كيف يتم عمل دروس ومحاضرات معلومات المجتمع.

ال اختيار هنا للمندمجين ان ينشروا الينا او لا او او كل شخص له الحق ان يقرر الانضمام الينا في هذا البحث من دونه. وهذا يعني من ضمن أمور أخرى أن المندمجين لهم الحق الكامل في إبقاء هذه المقابلات في أي وقت يرغبون وبدون إبقاء إسباب.

كل المعلومات التي سوف نتبادلها منكم سوف تحتوي بالسريه الكامله وايضا تحليلها سوف يكون سريًا وسوف نستعملها فقط في الغرض من هذا البحث وليس شيا اخري. الأشخاص الذين لهم الحق في الاطلاع على هذه المعلومات هم منحن ومشرفي البحث المتواجدين معنا أو رغوا في ذلك.

إيضا هذه المعلومات التي سوف نحصل عليها منكم سوف يتم تحليلها ووضعها في مقالات وفني النهاية سوف يتم نشرها في مجالات أبحاث محلية ودولية اضافه إلى كتابين خاصين برسالة الدكتوراه لنا نحن وسوف نتعطي الفرصه لكل المندمجين للاطلاع على النتيجات.

تحياتنا...

116
المشرفين

XX        Tel. XX
XX        Tel. XX
XX        Tel. XX

الباحثات

Marie Westerlind        Tel. XX
XX        Tel. XX

موافقه

لقد اطلعتم على كل هذه المعلومات وفهمتها تماماً واننا موافقون على المشاركة في هذا البحث.

التاريخ:

الاسم:
Part two: The studies
Dimensions and Perspectives of Quality in Integration Work

Marie Vesterlind and Thomas Winman

Abstract

Social work organizations are faced with rapid changes that increase demands on quality and quality assessment. Before deciding how to assess quality, it is necessary to define what quality means with regard to a specific activity. Defining what is meant by quality is especially important before assessing the quality of integration activities developed for new immigrants. To address these issues, this study focuses on the concept of quality with respect to the efforts made to support immigrant integration in Sweden, through an activity called civic orientation. The data consist of interviews, observations, and video recordings of personnel working in an integration office. The results show how quality is manifested: firstly, in organizational structures for supporting and developing practitioners’ knowledge; secondly, in standardized methods and material, and thirdly, in recognizing and attending to individual differences and the sense of cultural belonging in daily interactions. One conclusion is that the knowledge of the integration workers – seeing and understanding the heterogeneity of immigrants’ cultural backgrounds and bridging boundaries – is vital to the quality of civic orientation. That knowledge is central to the future organization of integration work, but could become invisible with a one-sided emphasis on standardization in quality work.

Keywords: Quality; Integration work; Civic orientation; Cultural brokers; Standardization; Professional knowledge
1. Introduction

The focus of this study concerns the qualitative foundations of Swedish immigrant integration activities in one of the main programs used by Swedish authorities to help immigrants integrate into Swedish society, a program called civic orientation (CO). In particular, this study focuses on how integration workers and managers dealing with immigrant integration in Sweden define quality. Even if the empirical case in this study is CO, the results can be seen as having relevance also in other contexts where cultures and experiences meet and intersect.

In recent decades, societal structures, welfare organizations, and work processes have been challenged as a result of increased immigration and changing immigration policies. In this context, public integration work has been transformed by both public policy mandates as well as general demographic and societal changes (Kettl 2010; Reish and Jani 2012). This involves how activities are organized, what methods are used, and how operating procedures are implemented as well as management and governance. These changes have been seen in the development of structures that promote participation and learning in the workplace (Van de Wiel and Van den Bossche 2013; Valeala et al. 2014). Such transformations are discursive changes at the social, business, and professional level (McDonald 2006), where differences in logic and principles are at play in the determination of what is quality.

Quality is a concept that comprises both products and performances. It is almost impossible to even imagine a discussion in areas such as health care or education that does not relate to how these organisations accomplish their goals and this discussion would inevitably require considering how quality and quality assessment are defined. Understanding how integration activities work requires understanding how dimensions of quality are discussed, understood, and employed.

Integration is a concept that has been used in many ways, but it often involves both social structure and individual behaviour. On the individual level, integration can generally be defined as structural or affective interconnectedness with others as well as with social institutions, as individuals position themselves and are positioned by others through social interaction and relationships with different kinds of institutions (Berkman and Glass 2000). The structural component of integration incorporates a dimension where individuals participate in formal organizations and informal social relationships, such as participating in formal volunteer activities and spending informal time with
neighbours and friends. This view of integration also means that participation can vary from low to high and that integration activities in general aim to support both formal and informal relationships.

2. Quality and inclusion

But what is quality? We often talk about 'good quality' without problematizing what we actually mean when we categorize something as good or less good. According to Dahler-Larsen (2008), quality can be defined from five perspectives: 1) reducing variations around a defined standard, 2) obtaining certain effects, 3) reaching declared political goals, 4) meeting the preferences of the users, and 5) securing quality by the organizational system. These perspectives encompass aspects of quality that are relevant for this study, thus, our interest is to explore how different aspects are defined by integration workers and managers in integration activities. In this study, the key issue is related to the labour market, multiculturalism, inclusiveness, humanism, education, democracy, health care, and social care. They are all societal aspects that simultaneously both constitute and reveal the dilemmas with quality on a conceptual level. For example, there is no one definition for either multiculturalism or inclusiveness. These concepts also imply that they are desirable; that is, they have something that is good. When the concepts are brought to life, they are filled with this something, and what this something is, or consists of, is the totality of the characteristics of the concepts. Moreover, this inherent something – its features, functions, effectiveness, and capabilities – will be so valuable that citizens will desire it.

When it comes to multiculturalism and inclusiveness, the complexities arise as soon as we change perspectives: from personal to societal, from thematic to practical, or from diversity to coherence. First, what is multiculturalism? In Swedish society, there exist significant differences and many individuals and groups desire to be socially and politically recognized. Such differences manifest themselves in culture, identity, and interests, which together are usually referred to as multiculturalism. From one multicultural perspective, 'cultures' and 'cultural groups' are recognized even though they include a wide range of religions, languages, ethnicities and nationalities. Does multiculturalism include cultures existing independently side-by-side, existing as a hybrid of several cultures, or existing as independent yet slightly overlapping with other cultures (see, e.g., Taylor 1999; Kymlicka 1995)? Of course, if we take into account social, economic, religious, and demographic aspects, we soon see that multiculturalism is a diverse category or concept that needs further nuancing. If
we talk about inclusiveness, we need to come to an understanding with regard to a number of issues to frame and articulate what it means. Once these issues are considered, the degree of inclusivity can be measured. This approach will identify where a society is and where a society will go with respect to inclusivity. Then, the actions and activities that the authorities initiate will emanate from the desire to reach this something – this agreed definition of what is desirable with respect to an inclusive society. Quality can thereby be seen as describing to what extent actions and activities reach this something. But on the other hand, this something is an outcome of what a society sees as qualitatively desirable. Quality with respect to inclusiveness can then include dress code regulations (or the opposite) in public schools or the workplace, the right (or absence of the right) to education in one’s mother tongue, and religious or political freedom (or regulations), but quality can also include specific integration activities provided for immigrants to support their integration process.

3. Quality and civic orientation

Issues of quality often come up when discussing the CO program for new immigrants in Sweden. CO, given in the immigrants’ mother tongue and presented in a dialogic form, is a 60-hour integration activity where immigrants learn about Swedish society. The regulation (SFS 2010:1138) states that the purpose of CO is to facilitate the integration of new arrivals into the work and life of the community by providing a basic understanding of Swedish society and by forming a basis for further knowledge acquisition. CO provides the immigrants with information about the following:

1. Human rights and fundamental democratic values;
2. The individual's rights and obligations in general;
3. How society is organized; and
4. Practical everyday life.

The emphasis is on the practical aspect of living in Sweden. The exact content and extent and focus of each thematic area are adapted to the immigrants’ specific conditions and the local conditions. But the immigrants are a heterogeneous group. They have very different experiences and knowledge – they are young and old, men and women, skilled and unskilled, from urban and rural areas, and from different countries and religious backgrounds.
Like a schoolroom, the physical facilities of the integration offices include tables and chairs, distributed in rows, and a whiteboard located at the front. The activities are scheduled four days a week with each meeting lasting two hours. Quality and continuity in everyday work, in terms of both content and form, are accomplished through the schedule, and the framing and structuring of activities. The 60-hour program is for newly arrived immigrants, a category that reflects Swedish integration policy. This sort of politics of representation (Wills and Mehan 1987) categorizes people; in this case, the category positions all immigrants as in need of the same kind of integration support. The program is given in the immigrants’ native language, so the groups are categorized by language. A program generally starts when there is a full group (i.e., 15 – 20 people). If a participant is absent from one occasion (session) that can be made up the next time the program is given since the program is highly structured. However, this strict structure means that deviation from the planned activities or changes in the pace at which the activities are provided is greatly restricted, constraining the immigrants’ other priorities such as education and work. An immigrant must complete the program to gain access to work and education programs.

CO can be understood in several ways, but it corresponds quite well with the second of the EU’s 'common basic principles': “Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union”. But what are these values the immigrants shall respect and relate to? The answer is given as 'the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law' (Council of European Union and Hall, 2004, 19). All these are political values, not substantive ethical values. The quality concept within CO can then be understood and measured in and from several dimensions: the European political imperatives, the national political imperatives, (change of) legislation, provision of human services, professional groups and their assignments, and, of course, the citizens themselves. Talking about dimensions of quality in this way also implies that quality is seen as a construction that only exists in relation to its surroundings. From this follows a highly relevant question: How is quality defined and how is it dealt with in a new integration activity such as CO?

4. Theoretical aspects of activities

Even though we now are in a situation where integration work is discussed in most Western countries, we still need to know more about how quality in integration work is understood, and in what ways the meanings of quality enter
into and transform everyday integration practices. Consequently, we argue that the way quality is understood has a massive influence on how to organize work, but also on staff members’ (integration workers) modes of expression and, more specifically, knowledge and methods of performing integration work. From this point of view, the theoretical and methodological perspective of this study is that quality cannot be isolated from the context in which it is put to work.

A point of departure for this study is that issues of quality in CO are part of a much larger context in which issues of integration and citizenship, related to various forms of migration, are of current concern. Integration work is then articulated and developed in a range of contexts, involving various actors and perspectives: such as those relating to economy, organization, and obligations.

CO can be understood as an activity system and can be scrutinized at three interrelated levels: activity, actions, and operations (Engeström 2008). In this study, our prime focus is the local organization of the activity in a municipality. The interplay between society, institutions, and individuals becomes relevant for understanding how through different voices various perspectives on quality arise (i.e., ways of acting, reasoning, and handling the experiences that are made in relation to the task of the activity system). In this study, the activity is directed at newly arrived immigrants. Governmental policy categorizes activity as providing information about Swedish society in a way that helps immigrants integrate into Swedish society. The immigrants’ need for information and integration can be seen as the learning objective at which the activity is directed (Engeström 1993, 67) – what people talk about and hope to accomplish at the integration office.

However, even if the immigrants’ integration gives meaning to the activity, individuals have their own goals and engagements. For example, to be able to teach a class on democracy, an integration worker has to carry out a series of actions. These activities include preparing for the lesson. Such preparations imply that the general objective of the lesson (e.g., lessons on democracy) is accomplished by the integration worker’s perceived motive and goals coupled to each action. In our study, we found that the integration workers’ integration of immigrant experiences is mediated by what their experiences allowed them to recognize and respond to. However, the integration worker’s actual performance, the operations, depends on current conditions and tools (i.e., the means or methods by which their actions are carried out). Such aspects of work are embedded in daily routine practice and are not always consciously performed. For example, the integration workers do not have to think about how to keep a session moving; they just do it. The interdependence between the different levels (Engeström 2008) implies that CO is shaped and transformed by generating actions and operations. An integration worker, however, might find it
difficult to establish a link between the durable object of an activity and the goals of their on-going actions, although these are connected. Such paradoxical relations are characteristic for activity systems and can be thought of as sources of change. The changing dimensions of CO imply that it is not always clear how quality is defined. That is, there is an inseparable relationship between the knowledge required to handle situations that challenge routine aspects of work and aspects of quality. In other words, the concept of quality is an historical accomplishment and can be seen as ‘recurring patterns of purposeful activity that are distributed over people and technologies in work practice’ (Hall and Horn 2012, 241).

An integration worker’s main concern is to establish links between the immigrants’ cultures and Swedish culture, a process that Akkerman and Bakker (2011) call ‘boundary crossing’. Boundary crossing involves generating new meaning and new understanding across cultural differences. How the integration workers identify, understand, and frame distinctive perspectives in meaning making processes becomes central to facilitating the immigrants’ understandings of everyday life in Sweden. Sometimes, however, situations that disturb the on-going conversations emerge, and challenge the routine aspects of the work. How well integration workers deal with these interruptions can be seen as an indication of their competence.

From a boundary crossing perspective, we consider quality in relation to how different viewpoints are produced with specific voices and relate to specific positions. This multi-voicedness, for example, illustrates how individuals can take on varying perspectives and move between different positions. In such situations, both unity and diversity can be maintained by creating mutual accountability (Akkerman, Admiraal, and Simons 2012). Such a view becomes relevant for describing how boundaries are constructed and overcome. In our study, different positions are evident in discourses about quality, as people both respond to former utterances and anticipate future responses. Hence, processes of positioning are both shaped by context and are context renewing (Hermans 2001).

5. Method

The empirical material in this study comes from an integration office in Sweden. After being provided with the details of the study, all of the staff members and management agreed to participate in the study. To embrace the relation between individuals’ way of talking in and about everyday practice and the collective
organization of activity, we focused on the entire activity system which made it possible to analyse individual, collective, artefact-mediated, and cultural features of quality with respect to CO.

To grasp the workflow and the ways that work is organized, about 115 hours of observations were carried out, divided between both of the authors. The purpose of those observations was to understand the overall expectations, norms, purposes and procedures already in place that adhered to the organization and coordination of work. The observations were focused on different activities and different discussions and can be described as a funnel shaped process where the point of departure was questions starting with *What is valued?*. Observations also involved talking to different staff members in and about various situations. Field notes were written in close conjunction with the observations, and time, place, activities, as well as what the immediate interpretation of what the participants addressed as important, were all recorded. These notes have been used as complementary data to support and illustrate our interpretations.

Another purpose of the observations was to highlight for closer scrutiny those activities that played a critical role for how quality is defined in immigrant integration work. The periodic working meetings at the department were distinguished as this sort of crucial activity as they focused on aspects of quality related to the organization, development, and understanding of their work. These meetings included the manager of operations, administrative staff, and integration workers. Eight meetings were recorded, all between 60 and 90 minutes long. The video recorder was arranged to capture how the integration workers and the managers interacted with each other and what brought up on the PowerPoint.

Additionally, a total of 17 interviews were conducted and tape-recorded – 15 with integration workers and two with management. Most interviews were done with the integration workers’ since their work is specifically targeted in the study. The interviews generally lasted about one hour, but varied between 30 and 90 minutes. All interviews were conducted at locations specified by the integration workers. Attention was focused on knowledge and quality in work. The interviews with the management were transcribed verbatim, but the interviews with the integration workers were summarized as an initial step. When transcribed, some of the oral remarks were edited to make them easier to understand.
5.1. Analysis

This study focuses on some aspects of quality and how integration workers and managers involved in CO conceive of quality. All data were used as a basis for analysis, and in order to form a preliminary hypothesis of how quality was understood and expressed, the field notes were used initially for documenting the workflow as well as guiding the analyses. Thereafter we analysed the interviews and the video recordings to find recurrent patterns of the way the staff and management understood aspects of quality. In that process, the interviews and the video recordings were listened to, reviewed and scrutinized several times.

Excerpts of interest for this particular study were transcribed verbatim. To grasp what was valued, how and in relation to what, the staging of rules, community, and division of labour (Engeström 2001) guided our analysis as well as the ways in which different interlocutors positioned themselves and others. Such positioning made visible their formal stance in relation to the activity as well as the ways in which they articulated specific agenda and perspectives on quality. Additionally, different positioning played out in terms of different responsibilities and people were held accountable for distinct tasks accordingly.

The initial analysis identified three categories that emerged as significant tools (or even strong actors) in maintaining and securing quality: culture, knowledge, and material and methods (standardizations). Specifically, culture stood out as a core aspect of quality in relation to the integration workers’ ability to perform their daily tasks, making information intelligible and meaningful to the immigrants. Subsequently, we continued with closer analysis of the interviews and transcribed parts of the video recordings, starting with more detailed analysis of culture by scrutinizing how differences in the groups of immigrants were understood and what values and attributes emerged as aspects of quality in relation to the integration workers’ actions. Specific focus was directed towards narratives about the bridging aspects of the integration workers’ task.

In relation to learning material and methods at hand for the integration work, a structured order seemed to influence the distribution and processing of information. That finding directed our focus to analyse what rules and attributes emerged as aspects of quality in relation to the regulations and guidelines that directed the activity. The next step directed our analysis to examine the cumulative approaches to knowledge inherent in the system of activity. We identified quality aspects in relation to how knowledge and responsibilities were horizontally and vertically distributed in relation to the community.
6. Results

In the daily work associated with CO, the integration workers and management refer to quality in different ways and in different contexts: in everyday interactions in the classroom, in relation to resources such as methods and learning material, and from a knowledge perspective. What actually becomes quality is revealed in the enactment of rules, community standards, and division of labour.

6.1. Quality as culture in action

One central aspect of quality in the daily activities is culture. Culture is integral in the integration workers’ daily work in both expected and quite unseen ways and quality is manifested as they invoke culture in classroom interactions with the immigrants. CO is designed to provide information about Swedish society and to make comparisons between different cultures. What is less noticed is that the integration workers’ work relies on the ability both to recognize the multiplicity of differences in the groups and to recognize the group members’ sense of cultural belonging. This awareness enables the integration workers to bridge cultures. That is, culture functions as the organizing element of the activity.

In the following excerpt one manager makes evident the institutional expectations on the integration workers’ dual cultural competence:

You will still need a certain amount of time in Sweden to be able to compare the cultural part in any way, and at the same time, it has sometimes been on the contrary, in order to bridge between different cultures, you cannot have been too long in Sweden. Otherwise you do not have the material to compare with.

This utterance positions the integration workers as brokers between cultures. Such boundary crossing is an aspect of quality in the integration workers’ work, where culture becomes a core feature. The integration workers consistently expressed the view that it was their responsibility to recognize the multiple differences in the groups:

When you’re little, you are socialized into norms and values and a culture [...] you have the culture as a starting point. It is easy to bring this up in the classroom too, but when you see that there are also other opinions, then one understands. [...] it’s a richness,
it is a resource for me that a person may see different things with different perspectives. That is what I am trying to emphasize in class.

This utterance stresses that people’s positions are relational and linked to cultural and historical experiences. By understanding the immigrants’ cultural belonging, the integration workers can understand how their different positions affect the way they perceive the environment and the issues that are dealt with in the sessions. This utterance also indicates an understanding of peoples’ need to belong and ability to move between different positions. Such movement can be considered as sense making processes and therefore part of identity (Akkerman and Van Eijk 2013) with a potential of spanning boundaries. Even dichotomies between cultures and differences in the group are used by integration workers to go deeper into the subject, which becomes a crucial aspect of quality in their work. Likewise, the integration workers’ discourse also revealed how quality depends on varying perspectives as well as on bringing the immigrants into account:

What is it that Iranians, for example, with their culture and their background are concerned about?

The integration worker is simultaneously ‘othering’ (Akkerman and Bakker 2011) the Iranians and locating culture for them. By distancing oneself from a cultural value system, the integration worker is bringing the immigrants into account by challenging them to participate in the activity. The integration workers’ objective positioning of ‘themselves’ is a prerequisite for directing and jointly scrutinizing cultural boundaries (i.e., how the different cultures relate to one another). The integration workers’ ‘transitional understandings’ (Shotter 2008, 506) enable the anticipation of relevant issues that most surely will raise questions and lead to the negotiation of different norms and values, making new courses of action possible, although letting each group member take his or her own stance. Such identification and negotiations of boundaries have the potential to lead to new understandings of everyday life, norms, and values in different cultures. The utterance positions the immigrants as active and responsible, while also encouraging them to respond to their on-going life projects. As another integration worker put it: ‘It is their [the immigrants] role to become more active in society’. This understanding of society ‘through their [the immigrants’] thoughts ‘indicates the integration worker’s desire to make connections between the already known and the desired outcome, successful integration into Swedish society. Such dimensions of performance become important aspects of quality, aiming to increase the immigrants’ access to active participation in society. Thus, the choices the integration workers make regarding how to carry out a specific
action are partly (re-)enacted from experience, partly improvised, and partly coupled to envisioning the future. In other words, the objective is not to overcome differences but to establish continuity in action and interaction between different positions and cultures.

6.2. Quality in methods and learning material in action

Different aspects of standardization and the responsibility to secure a uniform delivery of service to all immigrants, according to the national regulations (SFS 2010:1138), are interlinked with quality. This aspect of quality implies developing artefacts to secure that the distribution of information to the immigrants contains the same content and is delivered in an equal manner. In CO, both the content and the form are stipulated at a national level, implying that the freedom to choose – e.g., the literature to be used – is utterly constrained. Hence, methods and material, found in textbooks and power point presentations, are based on eight pre-defined themes stipulated in the restriction, which are divided into subthemes and provide a set of categories that define the ’problem areas’. Hence, these constraints significantly influence how integration workers perform their tasks and how quality is defined.

The scheduled processing through the different themes assures that all immigrants receive the same information. From an institutional perspective, the scheduled processing implies a vital aspect of the work done (see, e.g., Mäkitalo and Säljö 2002). By using standardized tools, quality becomes equated with equality and is manifested as the immigrants move from one scheduled theme to another (a cumulative quality). However, it is reasonable critically to consider whether these standardized programs actually do what they claim they do or even provide equal opportunities once an immigrant completes the CO.

Making quality a question of standardization and equality influences how integration workers interact with the immigrants. When the integration workers are conducting a lesson, the script coordinates their actions in relation to what is relevant and to provide a way for them to anticipate and prepare for questions that are generally asked during the lesson (e.g., facts about Swedish society). The integration workers describe the content of the lessons as having different significance depending on the groups and their cultural heritage, indicating that a uniform script cannot effectively deal with the differences between groups.

The integration workers position themselves as responsible for following the script and on the whole see the script as logical:
I think the arrangement that we have today and the order of the headings is rather logical. It starts with ‘Coming to Sweden’, and it ends with ‘Growing old in Sweden’.

The reflective remark made above, on the chronological order of the issues in the script, indicates that the script might be right and logical from an imagined life course perspective, and this is perceived as quality. However, this objective ‘logic’ and the way it corresponds to the heterogeneity of the groups as well as the subjective life world of each of the immigrants, can be called into question when considering the relation between the standardized order of different categories in the script and the immigrants’ own life projects. Designed for institutional use, the script can actually make it difficult for integration workers to relay information. That is, the rigor of the script may make it difficult for integration workers to respond to individual immigrants’ issues (see, Mäkitalo 2012), indicating the complex and contested character of quality. This complex character of quality is made evident in a manager’s remark: ‘[standardized scripts] should be a tool to help you to perform, but also a quality assurance that all receive our department’s CO’. The utterance points to a both/and function associated with standardization. This dual functionality indicates a boundary crossing potential (Akkerman and Bakker 2011) and becomes a vital actor in accomplishing quality, distributing and structuring work that everyone needs to relate to. Although the standardized material is valued as a strong actor in their work, obviously there are times that the integration workers need to let go of the stipulated order to respond to situations at hand. A challenge seems to lie in the way standardized information can be organized in order to support the integration workers’ creative abilities.

6.3. Perspectives on knowledge

Generating and maintaining professional knowledge is coupled to the ways in which it is considered cumulative in character and thus structured and organized in CO. Whether the integration workers’ knowledge will persist or cease influences the shaping and constitution of professional knowledge as well as how quality is defined.

In this case, CO is characterized by a rather fragmented and hierarchical organization of labour and knowledge communities. However, many issues require the integration workers to have specific knowledge. One such issue is sexuality, which is a subject that can be challenging for anyone and even more challenging in cultures where it can be taboo to discuss sexuality in mixed-gendered groups. It is reasonable to think that it is easier to talk about the
parental insurance system than about sexuality. A reasonable question would be what the category of relevance is that forms the basis of the distinctions that are made regarding content knowledge, since it is quite consequential for maintaining quality.

However, to deliver ‘quality integration service’, there is a need for structures to support and develop knowledge in the CO. Through internal education, management makes evident their responsibility for securing the integration workers’ knowledge base – ‘where we know that it differs very much culturally’ – and about group processes to make them ‘suitable for the mission’. One manager emphasizes the need to keep the integration workers ‘job-ready ‗, indicating a boundary between objective knowledge and the integration workers’ subjective knowledge. The managements’ view reveals a vertical distribution of knowledge, implying that objectified knowledge is given precedence over the integration workers’ situated knowledge. The interviews with management also reveal that quality aspects of the organization of work are related to developing and maintaining structures and processes for continued knowledge development.

The integration workers expressed a desire for a common knowledge base (especially pedagogical knowledge) that would help them adapt their activities for the specific needs of the immigrants. The following utterance highlights a boundary between management and the integration workers and the multiple boundaries between the integration workers’ level of knowledge, indicating an organizational perspective that needs to be taken into account when assessing quality.

[We] want to have a course in education science. If we want better results, we need to create a common denominator among us. But even among the integration workers, the level of education is very diverse. It can have an effect, more or less. But at least we have had a common denominator – the courses that we have had here and the meetings we’ve had here always provide us with some knowledge and it’s open – you discuss, you criticize, complain, appreciate, everything.

In addition, the utterance addresses how the integration workers frame their tasks, an understanding that addresses the ambiguous nature of their activity with respect to assessing its quality in relation to a larger collective system of activity. By conditioning the enhancement of work, the boundary between what currently characterizes the activity as a whole and what is yet to be accomplished is emphasized, indicating a possible path of action. The utterance reveals that the integration workers’ desire more action from management while also
acknowledging horizontal aspects of knowledge development. The utterance indicates a readiness to move from an ‘individual’ view of knowledge and learning to one that takes into account the perspectives of others. In other words, quality depends on developing a common denominator in the system of activity, which requires a learning environment that supports boundary-crossing activities as a way of promoting the continuous development of new knowledge.

The approach to the cumulative dimensions of knowledge will have implications for what becomes valued as quality work, and the above utterance addresses how boundary-crossing activities can serve to secure both learning and quality. However, ensuring learning and quality requires recognizing what the integration workers actually do. The results reveal different perspectives on where to locate knowledge, which are relative to and constitutive of one another. Simultaneously, the results indicate the integration workers’ and management’s different relations to quality, maintained through different positioning, voicing, and interactions with different actors within the activity system, who jointly design and conduct the CO.

7. Discussion

We started by scrutinizing how quality is understood with respect to an integration activity. Our study revealed that quality in CO simultaneously encompasses three goals/motives: 1) understanding and responding to the heterogeneity of the groups in daily interactions; 2) developing standardized procedures; and 3) establishing a cumulative approach to knowledge in the organization. We argue that these goals/motives are embedded in different perspectives on culture and knowledge, which become evident in the organizational discourses about quality. Furthermore, these different perspectives are expressed as tensions between values of creativity and standardization as well as between equality and heterogeneity.

7.1. Interests in conflict

Our results revealed a paradoxical relation in the activity system between, on the one hand, the effort made to achieve a specific professional knowledge domain in relation to the integration workers’ dual cultural competence, and, on the other hand, and the effort made to standardize routines in terms of means and methods in order to secure quality through detailed ways of accounting for
work. While the standardizations served to structure work, aiming to offer a uniform and equal delivery of service, we recognized the immigrants’ culture played a significant role for the integration workers’ understanding of, framing of, and response to the heterogeneity of the groups. We hold that there is a risk that different goals/motives contradict one another with respect to equality versus heterogeneity. If so, such a conflict of interest might indicate a paradoxical aspect inherent in the activity system which is consequential for the concept of quality and essential for the understanding of how to support the integration of immigrants.

At the operational level, our results indicate that quality to a great extent was characterized by the creative dimension of the integration workers’ performance, as they adjusted their actions to the immigrants’ needs. We argue that vital aspects of quality emerge in activities and cannot simply be regarded as a given in the sequential pre-structured order. Hence, our findings point to the integration workers’ knowledge as being involved in displaying the situated meaning of information, which relies on their understanding of the heterogeneity of culture. The challenge to secure quality can never be addressed without considering the situated knowledge required for imposing standardized procedures onto the processes of meaning making. As Wittgenstein argues (1958), no rules can sufficiently specify a pattern of behaviour because the interpretation of a rule requires more rules. Similarly, Kim and Kim (2008, p. 59) argue that ‘the rules for deliberation are to be produced only through deliberation’, implying that such rules and skills are produced by people interacting with one another. The significance (quality) of the integration workers’ rules became apparent in their creative performance as they responded to and made use of the differences in the groups.

7.2. Cultural brokers

The integration workers take many perspectives into account and function as cultural brokers as they create links in a chain of democratic governance. Accordingly, they have a specific understanding of the learning context and what Veillard (2012) calls a horizontal expertise that allows crossing boundaries between cultures and different positions. Such boundary-crossing skills involve supporting the immigrants’ access to society by enhancing the opportunities for knowledgeable actions in a new cultural context (see, Tanggaard 2007). These skills comprise the integration workers’ “ability to manage and integrate multiple, divergent discourses and practices across social boundaries” (Walker
and Nocon 2007, 181) and to consider many perspectives (Akkerman et al. 2006).

The integration workers’ are positioned between two cultures, so they need to be able simultaneously to face the ambiguity of boundaries (i.e., the neither/nor and both/and perspectives of belonging). Such a position allows them to address and articulate ‘meanings and perspectives of various intersecting worlds’ (Akkerman and Bakker 2011, 142). At the same time, their in-between position also enables them to move beyond boundaries by negotiating the meaning of various subjects in the groups, which entails more complex judgments than just transferring information about Swedish culture.

However, the integration workers are responsible not only for supporting the immigrants’ trajectories but also for making sure that they get the information they have a legal right to. We argue that the standardized material stabilizes work in terms of content and procedure and for the integration workers it also indicates what supplemental information is needed to make sense of different subjects. Thereby one can say that aspects of quality are incorporated in both organizational structure and the work processes. However, what is at stake here is the way information is organized in terms of sequential order and content. That is, the order and content should support the integration workers’ activities (see, Mäkitalo 2012), and the policy discourse should be reflected in the textual material, but these concerns are not always satisfied and transparent. Even if the integration workers use the material to structure their activities, we hold that the fundamental structural conditions for their work are never actually questioned. But as long as the underlying cultural models of standardizations remain implicit, their potential as boundary objects will presumably go unrecognized (Akkerman and Bakker 2011).

### 7.3. Institutional implications

The complexity of quality resides in the fact that the way in which quality is constituted must also be understood in relation to the organizational context. We argue that quality emerges at the boundary between different discourses and a basic question is how these discourses intersect in relation to what the integration workers actually do. Many policy makers and others have argued for the need for national standards to ensure quality and equal service to all immigrants, so every immigrant will be given the same information and as a consequence will have the same opportunities. However, if quality in CO is equated with standardization and equality/uniformity, it is likely that the principles of a democratic conversation about the organization of everyday life
will suffer. And if that is the case, it is likely that the situated knowledge of the integration workers will be ignored. That is, this situation will make their cultural knowledge invisible. This limitation also has consequences for the immigrants’ process of integration. The high value of standardization in the political discourse, as a central aspect for ensuring quality, collides with the heterogeneous character of the participants and their ability to adapt information and methods to the participants’ specific needs and contexts. Only valuing principles of equality in CO may conflict with the immigrants’ need to be acknowledged for their specific cultural as well as individual identity. If the multiplicity of different identities within the groups is neglected, equality might result in homogenization. The consequence of ignoring differences might be that the system will continue to reproduce the outcome it intended to change.

We argue that the quality of the CO practices will depend on the organizations’ capacity to develop cumulative structures that support the integration workers’ work of navigating and bridging the different boundaries they encounter in their work. One aspect of such an organization would involve spending time on making explicit the integration workers’ in situ rules. Another challenge could be to re-map the CO practice into a learning space in which the multidimensionality of the immigrants’ identities comes into play (see, Akkerman and Van Eijck 2013, 69). The presence of different citizenship realities has implications for CO. Bennet, Wells and Rank (2009, 107) emphasise the importance of recognizing different paradigms of citizenship in activities that support integration and argues that a vital aspect of succeeding in such activities is to ‘recognize the inclination for many people to approach politics from more personal standpoints that permit greater participation and construction of action’. Such a development of learning spaces would help immigrants develop perspectives on Swedish culture that make sense to them without minimising their own individual and cultural identities.

References


Adapting Standardized Teaching Material to Suit Local Learning Conditions

Marie Vesterlind

Abstract

Standards have become generic elements in welfare practices and are expected to facilitate procedures and secure a uniform service to all citizens. This study investigates the knowledge involved in making practical use of a standardized teaching material to meet a diversity of knowledge needs in an integration activity aiming to support newly arrived immigrants’ participation in society. Through video observations, interviews and document studies, the sequential structuring of information is reorganized into narrative patterns that presuppose knowledge about how different pieces of information relate to one another, and how they work together in relation to different cultural expressions. It is argued that the procedural knowledge and scope of action intrinsic in bridging between different boundaries is decisive for understanding the basic conditions necessary for how a standardized teaching material can support processes of meaning making in integration work.

Keywords: Standards; Standardization; Professional knowledge; autonomy; civic orientation; Integration work
1. Introduction

Standards have become generic elements of organization, expected to facilitate procedures, decision-making, and information management in many professions (Winman & Rystedt, 2012). They are meant to uphold public trust, and to secure that uniform service is offered to all citizens (Timmermans & Berg, 2003). A central function of standards is accomplished by formulating what interests and needs to attend to and how, as well as defining the tasks and obligations that institutions are responsible for (Heath & Luff, 1996). Standards are, as argued by Bowker and Star (1999), understood as basic for organizing actions and creating social order through the generation of agreed-upon rules. Professional knowledge is not only required to make use of standards and handle changing conditions; it is also challenges methods, procedures and established knowledge bases that are taken for granted. According to Nerland and Jensen (2012, p. 115), conditions and expectations for expert work must consider the ‘role knowledge plays in these processes’. Of specific interest in this study is the professional knowledge and conditions involved in adapting standardized teaching material to local circumstances and procedures at an integration office in Sweden. This is an office where standards are put into practice for a very heterogenous audience of different ages, with different types of work experience, and education, who come from different religious traditions, cultures, economic situations, family situations, language groups, and so on. The knowledge each individual carries with them varies and their interest and ambitions in life differ as well. Yet, they have essentially no prior knowledge about the organization of, and everyday life in, their new country. This places great demands on the integration workers to provide information that can meet each individual knowledge-need on each occasion.

Even though we know that standards stabilize practice, even to the point of becoming homogenizing factors, and, to some extent, presupposing homogeneity (Timmermans & Berg, 1997), in this kind of practice it is very hard to make such restrictive procedures work. For example, the category ‘rights and obligations’ crystalizes part of the practice that the integration workers engage with, but the category has to be re-formulated in the local activity in order for it to be intelligible. Although standards are necessary to ensure the sharing of specified information and to prevent each integration worker from having to invent what should be said on each occasion, the meaning of information cannot be entirely presupposed. So since standards are regarded as bridging complex differences, it is also reasonable to assume that standards become both contested and challenged. While standards are required, constituting what Nerland and Karseth (2015) refer to as a shared knowledge base of a
professional practice and distributing responsibilities, all related individual needs cannot be anticipated. Therefore, standards provided for specific practices might need to be adapted to suit local variations and heterogeneity.

Many studies, such as Timmermans and Berg (2003) as well as Nes and Moen (2010), have focused on the way standardizations play out in practice, and one general conclusion of these studies is that standardization involves tensions between the general and the local. However, fewer studies have focused on the way standards are adapted in local use, and this study contributes to such an approach by focusing on routine aspects of work and the knowledge and interpretational work involved in what Button and Sharrock (2000) call the sequential structuring of information. More specifically, the research question concerns what knowledge and conditions are involved in adapting standardized teaching material to suit local circumstances and procedures. Of particular interest is the professional knowledge involved in transforming textual information to verbal presentations of relevance for a heterogeneous audience. The purpose is to contribute knowledge about the possibilities and constraints of using standards for supporting collective meaning-making processes across contexts and differences in integration work. The ways in which standards are used in current integration practices are analysed from the perspective of, what Timmermans and Berg (1997) refer to as ‘standardization in action’. From this viewpoint, standards are seen as an integral part of daily activities, that ‘generates action and creates new forms of life’ by bringing ‘into existence new ideas, entities, values, and even subjects’ (Timmermans & Berg, 2003, p. 23).

2. Theory

In this study, standards are distributed in artefacts such as schedules, PowerPoints, and textbooks to guide the daily work. To frame the significance of the information held in such artefacts in meaning-making processes, they are conceptualized in what Latour (1986) calls inscriptions. In this study inscriptions are seen as concretizations of mental models, generated to become accessible by, and sharable with, others (c.f. Sfard, 1991). Although inscriptions can be carried across different settings, serving as entities for organizing actions, Winman and Rystedt (2012) argue that their meaning relies on interpretational work and is related to their use in a specific context. Given the context of this study, complex efforts are involved in making a stipulated content serve a range of different knowledge-needs and purposes. An integration office needs to handle such heterogeneity in its daily practices, and the use of standards requires not only knowledge of its content but also of the way the content can be
transformed so that it has significance in the immigrants’ everyday lives and future activities. Winman and Rystedt (2011) demonstrate in a study of the use of information in a designed information system how the structure of the information is frequently transformed into narrative forms that are adapted to the responsibilities of the professionals. The implications of the study suggest that in order to serve different knowledge-needs, a decisive condition for standardized information systems requires that they are open for different readings. Thus, adapting standardized teaching material comprises what Mathiesen and Nerland (2012) call analytical engagements. Such engagements in selecting, highlighting and reorganizing categorized information into new constellations presupposes according to Vesterlind and Winman (2015) knowledge about how information is structured in textual material. Therefore, when studying the meaning-making involved in transforming text to talk, one has to take into account the local interpretative work and the knowledge intrinsic in transforming information in processes of decision-making (Winman & Rystedt, 2012).

An assumption in this study is that the meaning of standardized information relies on its use in a specific context. Duguid (2005) specifically points to the ‘art of knowing’ involved in productive sharing of codified information. This implies that transforming information into relevant verbal presentations as part of situated practice, involves epistemic responsibility rather than a one-directional transfer of information from one situation to another (c.f. Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). As pointed to by Hall and Horn (2012), information must be brought to life to have significance in complex settings and to make it possible to reach a shared understanding of a situation. The judgments involved in such processes rely on what is believed to be ‘knowable and valuable’ (p. 251) in a specific practice. To understand what professional knowledge is involved in this sort of animating work, the concept of boundary object as ‘a means of translation’ (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393) is used to analyse how categories are selected and organized to supply relevant perspectives on the information. According to Boland and Tenkasi (1995, p. 225), perspective making as ‘communication that strengthens the unique knowledge of a community’ and perspective taking as ‘communication that improves its ability to take the knowledge of other communities into account’ are central aspects of the knowledge involved in producing narratives that enable shared understanding. For example, what ‘rights and obligations’ means in everyday life can be framed from different perspectives and it must be imbued with attributes of relevance in relation to different cultural and individual experiences. Following the reasoning above, in this study locally adapted teaching materials, including categorized information, are seen as functioning as boundary objects that are ‘both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several
parties employing them’ (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 393) by enabling connections between different social worlds. Thus it is not the standards per se that bridge boundaries. Bridging boundaries relies on professional knowledge manifested when the integration workers move back and forth between what Holland et al (2000, p.185) refer to as ‘attending to the properties of the representation and the properties of the thing represented’ and in this sense makes use of previous experiences in the shaping of future integration activities. As already pointed to, the way this bridging work is done in processes of selecting and organizing structured information is the focus in this study, specifically targeting the knowledge involved in transforming an immense amount of information to short verbal presentations with contextual relevance.

3. Civic orientation

One example of an integration activity in Sweden where the use of standards is at the core of daily work is civic orientation. Civic orientation is a 60-hour-long, nationally regulated integration activity (SFS 2010:1138) in which both content and form are standardized. The activity is given in the immigrants’ native language and presented in dialogic form, where recently arrived immigrants learn about Swedish society. The objective is that the immigrants develop knowledge of human rights and fundamental democratic values, concerning the individual’s rights and obligations in general, and how society is organized and affects everyday life on a practical level. According to the Swedish Statute Book (Ibid.) the purpose of the activity is to facilitate the integration of new immigrants into work and into the life of the community. This shall be done by providing extensive access to information about Swedish society and by forming a basis for reflection and dialogue and further knowledge-acquisition.

The integration workers are hired on an hourly basis by the integration office. Most of them have other regular jobs, not specifically related to integration work and not all of them have formal training in pedagogics. Still, their task involves pedagogical methods and skills. These conditions imply that they handle, frame and highlight aspects of their work from different knowledge domains. The integration workers have migrated to Sweden from different countries. Their experiences of migration, dual cultural competence and language skills are expected to make them specifically suitable for this kind of work. Thus, what knowledge is required to actually do the work is something we need to know more about.

At the particular integration office in this study, each class lasts for two hours and is held five days a week. The classroom is furnished as in a ‘traditional’
school; the immigrants sit in rows with a whiteboard and a screen at the front, so that they can see the PowerPoint presentation. The integration workers are positioned in front of the immigrants and can from that position easily control the PowerPoint and make use of the whiteboard. On the fifth day of the week, the activities of the week are summarized and discussed.

The activity is structured according to the following pre-defined themes:

1. Coming to Sweden
2. Living in Sweden
3. Supporting yourself and developing in Sweden
4. The rights and obligations of the individual
5. Starting a family and living with children in Sweden
6. Having influence in Sweden
7. Caring for your health in Sweden

To structure and distribute these different themes, a schedule, a reference text and a PowerPoint presentation are provided for use in each class. All written material is in Swedish. The schedule shows when different themes are going to be taken up, giving directions as to when to bring up a specific theme and when to shift to another. Similarly, the integration workers know what is expected of them and how their actions fit into the broader system of activities. The reference text comprises 328 pages of hierarchically structured categories correlating to the stipulated themes, organized as chapters and sub-headings. The PowerPoint is structured according to the same themes, with main headings, sub-categories and additional sub-categories, based on the text. There is also a picture on each slide illustrating the main category of a theme. This organization provides a view of how the categories are related to one another and how they fit into the specific order in a series of steps to be processed and which, together, organize the information. From this viewpoint, the structured order functions as an element that organizes the actions to be taken. Thus, the predefined order gives no consideration to particularities in the groups, i.e. whether the participants can read and write or not, from which country they come etc.

Several functions are tied to the standards. These functions are linked to ways of providing the integration workers with access to information and reducing the
vast amount of information that could be considered of interest. From an organizational perspective, the functions are coupled to the distribution of work across time and between different groups and courses, and to ensure that quality is maintained. Characteristic of these functions in this context is that they form part of a larger context in which issues of integration and citizenship are vital concerns and are, in this way, supposed to serve a range of information-needs, such as national political imperatives, legislation, provision of human services, professional groups and their assignments, citizens and, of course, recently arrived immigrants. Adapting the information contained in the standards to suit the local practice is related to concerns such as: deciding which parts of the content should be especially highlighted, reorganization of the order in which they should be taken up, and utilizing this information in classes. In particular, this implies that the integration workers need to know how to invoke their cultural and semantic competence and make sense of categorized information in order for it to become relevant in the local context of the participants (c.f. Mäkitalo & Säljö, 2002; Winman & Rystedt, 2011).

Thus, the different tools that are used to standardize and secure the content and procedure of the activity, a schedule, a reference text, a PowerPoint presentation and the integrated structure constrain the autonomy of the integration workers to decide what literature and content to use, when to introduce a subject and from what perspective. The limited time frame and conditions for work are also setting limits for autonomy.

4. Method

The data collection took place at integration offices in eight middle-sized municipalities in western Sweden. All staff members, management, and participants in the civic orientation courses were informed and asked for permission to conduct the studies, to which they all agreed. Confidentiality was guaranteed and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The data is derived from 115 hours of observations, field notes, interviews, documents and video-recordings of classes and working meetings. The observations aimed at grasping the overall expectations, purposes, processes and patterns related to the overall organization and coordination of work. Different activities were in focus and to get an understanding of how the activities were interrelated, one integration worker was followed throughout one course of civic orientation. Of specific interest was how text was transformed into talk in civic orientation classes and how the information was perceived as
consequential for different knowledge needs. Field notes were produced in close relationship to the observations, and they encompassed the environment, the participants, overall activities, actions and times.

The preparation for classes was chosen for closer investigations as it stood out as a central activity where the integration workers engaged in analytic scrutiny in relation to the categorized information in the standards. Class preparation was seen to have a contextually relevant content that could be jointly elaborated upon in class. The preparatory work involved evaluating previous class experience and, based on that, selecting and organizing pieces of information from the teaching material into a narrative that could serve as a relevant introduction to a subject that would be elaborated upon in class.

Video recordings of seven civic orientation classes, constituting a total duration of 14 hours, were chosen for closer analysis of the sequential order of information in the entries made in class. Given the specific interest in the transformation from text to talk in this study, I chose to analyse video recordings of classes that were going to be held in ‘simple Swedish’. Three interpreters, two of whom were experienced integration workers always assisted in these classes. Choosing these classes was a way for me as a researcher to handle the fact that I do not speak any of the languages otherwise used in integration classes. Although these circumstances may involve certain constraints on the results of the study, the overall data support the outcomes of the analysis. The class consisted of a group of twelve people, including three different language groups. Two cameras were used in order to record the integration workers’ interaction with the members of the class, as well as with the PowerPoint, their own notes and the whiteboard. The reference text ‘About Sweden’ and the PowerPoints that were used by the integration workers were partly based on the nationally stipulated content and order of information and partly locally designed. There was, however, an effort made towards using the national standard. A vital aspect of the national standard is that it is still under development.

Additionally, video recordings of eight working meetings were carried out. These meetings were revealed to be essential activities in which the use of standards in routine work were discussed. In this sense the meetings were important arenas for reflection on the future organization of activity. At these meetings, taking place on average once a month, it was common that the management, administrative staff and some integration workers were present. Two cameras were used to capture the interactions between people, what was said and by whom, and how they related to one another. Excerpts of specific interest for the study were transcribed.
Interviews were done in order to enable deeper analysis of the structuring work performed. First, interviews were done with ten integration workers, lasting about one hour each, focusing on how they perceived their task and what they perceived as challenging in their work. As the preparation work stood out as an important area of interest, in total 16 pre- and post-class interviews of approximately 15-30 minutes were carried out with two integration workers. The interviews focused on preparations and expectations and, afterwards, the focus shifted to how they valued the outcome of the classes. All interviews were audio-taped and the pre- and post-class interviews were transcribed verbatim. The first ten interviews have mainly been used as background data guiding the study, although sequences about preparation were selected for closer analysis.

4.1. Analysis

The video recordings of the classes were watched several times and transcriptions were made of segments of verbal presentations of information. Focus was placed on what was said and to structures and interactions between the integration worker and the standards in order to capture the rearrangement of information (c.f. Jordan & Henderson, 1995). Specific attention was directed to differences between how the information was sequentially ordered in the standards and the ways in which selected pieces of information were reorganized in the verbal presentations. The PowerPoint slides revealed the notes made by the integration worker when preparing the classes. The notes were analysed in relation to the structured order and content of the text and PowerPoint, focusing ‘gaps’ that were bridged in relation to the stipulated order. Taken together, analysis was done of the trajectories of the integration workers’ actions; I reassembled how they selected, organized and produced contextually relevant content. Such tracing made it possible to analyse aspects of the knowledge involved in such structuring work and the extent to which the standards facilitated the coordination and organization of work.

Five video-recordings of working meetings were chosen for closer analysis. They were selected because of their distinct focus on aspects of the standardization of work and the development of practice. Excerpts that reflected different aspects of the local use of standards were specifically chosen for analysis. The analytical focus was directed toward regular patterns of different knowledge-claims in relation to the responsible use of artefacts in routine work and how different accounts related to particular organizational identities and positions.
The pre-class interviews were analysed with a focus on expectations and on which information had been specifically selected for the class. Similarly, the post-class interviews were analysed in relation to reflective remarks made on the outcomes of the classes.

The excerpts presented in the results are chosen to illustrate regular discursive patterns and sequentiality based on the overall data. The quotations from the video recordings are free from the markers of ‘spoken language’ and from the continuous interpretations made by the interpreters during the classes. Every effort was made not to reduce meaning.

5. Results

In this section, I will present the way the integration workers make use of standards in their everyday work and of the knowledge involved in transforming information to contextually relevant content. Before attending to these meaning-making activities, I will first illustrate different perspectives on knowledge, surfacing in negotiations between the management and the integration workers, and how these perspectives are linked to different responsibilities. This will be done by explaining how the use of standards is talked about in working meetings at one integration office. Following this, I will outline typical examples from the data that illustrate patterned and recurrent ways that transformations of information are manifested within the integration workers’ everyday work. The sequential structuring of verbal presentations of information can be described as comprising three different, though overlapping phases: preparing, presenting and framing locally-relevant knowledge.

5.1. Standards and struggles involved in providing civic orientation

Standards involve many levels in an organization. The analysis revealed that both the management and the integration workers were involved with following pre-set procedures, but that different epistemic positions were often adopted as a basis for the legitimation of practice. In the working meetings, the management made claims of standardization efforts based on legislation and as a way to ensure uniformity and quality. The consequences of following specific procedures were, however, highlighted by the integration workers with regard to adapting the standards to meet local needs, drawing on experience-based knowledge. This kind of contradiction is inherent in standards, and the struggles
involved in making local use of them in the provision of civic orientation become apparent in talk about routine work. The following excerpt from a working meeting at one integration office (IO) highlights the dilemmas of, and differing priorities given to, the use of standards. When we enter the discussion, the integration worker, David, and the manager, Vera, are elaborating on the use of standards in relation to quality aspects of work.

**Excerpt 1**

David: No templates work because we are working with individuals [...] and the method, then, is something we must develop every day [...] because there can be such a difference from one day to the other, with different people, depending on the subject you're talking about.

Vera: But, I think, if we are going to think about legal guarantees and quality, there must be some kind of package in the IO's civic orientation to be certified.

David’s utterance points to the unpredictable character of everyday work. He draws attention to the difficulties of processing information in a uniform way while, at the same time, considering individuals’ specific needs for knowledge. The lack of satisfactory correspondence between the pre-given information in the text and the real-life situations of the immigrants is made evident. By addressing the varied aspects of the work, David is identifying the need to be able to exercise discretion when making judgments at work, as different particular concerns need to be considered on a continuous basis in order to make the information workable.

Vera is recasting the issue to an institutional concern of securing quality by formulating what kind of problem they are dealing with. By drawing on the institutional responsibility to provide and maintain legal certainty, she is indicating a standardized course of action, equating quality in this aspect with uniformity. Vera’s positioning of standards as the locus of control versus the specific work of the integration workers indicates a valuation of attributes that positions the standards as being responsible for processing the information. Vera’s stance can be understood with regard to the responsibility to ensure that the practice at the office is in line with the national terminological and procedural standards, which are also linked to wider European standards regarding integration.
In Excerpt 2, David is recognizing the integration workers’ institutional accountability without letting go of his own knowledgability and is drawing attention to different perspectives operating in parallel.

**Excerpt 2**

Of course, there should be a standard, and that is, among other things, the material we use and the headings. We know that this is our premise. […] we can use whatever shade we want when colouring in the colouring book, but it’s not okay to colour outside the lines.

This utterance outlines a possible course of action by acknowledging both the need for standards and autonomy in the real-life performance of the activity. By pointing to the use of the teaching material and the headings, David is indicating that the standards serve to get the job done but, if they are to be manageable, they cannot be too detailed. Instead, the work relies on the knowledgeable use of standards. The positioning of the integration workers as ‘the artists’ that are colouring the picture (and should, therefore, have the management’s trust to decide on what colours to use) and the management as those responsible for securing that the frames are visible and used, make visible two different points of view as to where to locate knowledge that is relative and constitutive to one another. Simultaneously, the utterance indicates the integration workers’ and management’s different relationships to the use of standards, maintained through their different positions, voices and interactions with different actors within the activity system, which jointly make up the practice of civic orientation.

The utterances made by David, in both Excerpts 1 and 2, point to a qualitative difference between giving information about something and orienting people in a new society. Even if the standards are valued as strong actors in the work, distributing and structuring work, there is an expressed need to sometimes let go of the stipulated order in order to respond to situations at hand. Although the integration workers are provided with, and are familiar with, the standards, a key issue is how they judge a situation and decide upon how to put the standards to use. Such knowledge points to an awareness of opportunities and anticipation of the immigrants’ knowledge-needs. It is notable that autonomy is taken into account, but the overall structuring of the activity is not questioned.
5.2. Making entries

When preparing a class, the analysis revealed that the integration workers first check out what information they are expected to provide from the reference text, ‘About Sweden’. They also search for complementary information in the various chapters, needed for the construction of a relevant presentation. At a working meeting, one integration worker explained to the management that priorities among the chapters are made in relation to ‘the needs in the groups’. Such work of constructing a relevant presentation sometimes involves using other sources as well. The interviews with the integration workers reveal that they stay up-to-date by reading and adding to the stipulated information. It is also emphasized that the relevance of the material varies ‘depending on the language group’, as expressed by one integration worker. Therefore, a vital aspect of preparation involves anticipation and expectation that guide the approach to which specific knowledge needs to be addressed in the group. Generally, the integration workers do not expect the immigrants to know so much about the subjects, or at least not about the specific considerations being given to them in Sweden. According to the interviews, the immigrants might know ‘a little about some things’ but not ‘how issues are handled’. For example, when the custody of children is brought up, one integration worker says that the immigrants may have heard ‘rumours about Social Services’ that ‘frighten’ them. According to another integration worker, some of the immigrants ‘think that the social workers decide on their own’, which makes it important to explain how decisions must be based on the Social Services Act and what this implies compared to ‘parents’ responsibility based on Sharia law’. Taken together, these conditions imply that the integration workers must know how to operationalize the text in their effort to make it valid.

In the example concerning the ‘parental role’ presented below, the information corresponds to four printed pages in the standard text. Figure 1 displays the work of the integration workers in identifying, selecting and organizing pieces of information in an appropriate way at the bottom of the PowerPoint slide, not visible to the audience. These notes represent a condensed part of the information accessible in the reference text, and illustrate the first step in adapting the standards make them workable in a learning situation.
The notes in Figure 1 are an outcome of identifying and selecting information both from the sub-chapter ‘The parental role’ (that belongs to the fifth chapter, ‘Having a family and living with children in Sweden’) and from other chapters and sub-categories. For example, ‘BRIS’ (Children’s Rights in Society) and ‘the Convention on the Rights of the Child’ are excerpts from the sub-chapter concerning ‘Children’s rights’, located in the fourth chapter, ‘Individual rights and obligations’. Selecting and condensing information in this way is not arbitrary; it relies partly on the integration workers’ anticipations and on their exercising judgment regarding what information will be relevant for the purpose of the activity in a particular group on a specific occasion, but also on their knowing where to find the information in the reference text. Therefore, understanding how to operationalize the text in a work situation with actual people is a core issue for the integration workers, which relies on an ability to view things from the perspective of the immigrants. By deciding which categories are valid for each presentation and by making notes, the integration workers are, at the same time, constructing a resource that can be used for evaluating accounting details later on. Accordingly, anticipating activities can be seen as both shaping and guiding the activity and its direction. This study shows
that making notes can be seen as having a prospective function in supporting the integration workers’ need to fulfil their responsibilities. Similar views on making notes have been highlighted in studies from the healthcare sector (Winman & Rystedt, 2011), where it is argued that prospective perspectives on what needs to be done are provided by making use of retrospective content. What may, at first glance, look like simple notes imply, instead, the complex work of identifying and assembling relevant pieces of information for the specific occasion, by moving around in the reference text. These selections presuppose knowledge of how these pieces connect to the particularities that characterize different knowledge-needs in a specific group, and provide direction for what to do next. In this sense, retrospective content is used as a resource for future events. Seen as integral to the manifestation and adjustment of information, the notes can constitute a prospective and reflexive function and contribute to reifying processes. This is relevant for practice since the pedagogical strategies used by the integration workers, together with the standards, concern both the organization of knowledge and its use in daily work.

5.3. Framing the ‘plot’

After selecting and organizing the information, the next step for the integration workers is constructing a coherent narrative to introduce a subject. How this is done has relevance for how the meaning-making process proceeds. Meaning-making is at the heart of the activity and the narrative becomes a resource for making inquiries together. The video recordings show that the introduction of a subject is often short and serves to invite the immigrants to join in and engage in the activity. Generally, the integration workers begin a class by directing attention to the PowerPoint, reminding the immigrants of what they have talked about earlier in the program, checking off the headings they have completed, and pointing to the theme of the day and to what lies ahead. After that, the integration worker turns to the group and to their notes for taking new directions.

Excerpt 3 is from a class in which facts about disability were presented and it illustrates how an integration worker selects and organizes information by using categories previously talked about in the course and putting them into a new context. Here the concept of ‘everyone’s equal value’ is picked up from previous classes and serves to give a specific perspective on the information.
Excerpt 3

I have written disability here. [...] Then, if we go back to last week when we talked a lot about everyone's equal value, and apply it to the person who has a disability.

By tracing information back to the reference text, the utterance reveals that the concept of ‘everyone’s equal value’ is a recurring category that not only was talked about ‘last week’, but that is also specifically treated in chapter four (‘The rights and obligations of the individual’), which is a theme yet to come. In Excerpt 3, the category is seen as contextually relevant and is used to reorganize the content to a coherent narrative and to invoke a reorientation in the subject of disability. By making intertextual links to a prior discussion (‘if we go back’ and ‘when we talked a lot about’), the integration worker is relating to a common experience of dialogue with the group in order to establish shared understanding for the on-going activity. When directing the immigrants’ attention to their own experiences of past classes, the immigrants are positioned as knowledgeable and expected to contribute to the current activity. By repeatedly invoking specific categories, these issues are stretched out over different classes by the integration workers and immigrants as a joint accomplishment and a way of interacting. This kind of strategy (i.e. drawing on shared experiences of talk) can be seen as a prerequisite to the accomplishment of civic orientation by means of creating continuity in the common learning experience.

When ‘everyone's equal value’ is invoked (Excerpt 3), it is used as a category of accountability (c.f. Garfinkel, 1967; Timmermans & Berg, 1997) that provides the integration worker with objective arguments for making the content manageable and relevant to the situation at hand. Understanding the meaning of ‘disability’ cannot be taken for granted and, to make sense of what the category means in Sweden, the integration worker links it to basic values in the Swedish legal system that are related to the promotion of equality and participation in social activities. The transformation is significant to the promotion of understanding how the welfare system is organized in Sweden and its relation to the individual’s living conditions. The recurring categories function as links between subjects that can be perceived as quite dispersed when they are presented in the reference text, and illustrate the way the categories cannot stand by themselves but, instead, take on meaning in relation to other categories. The linking to earlier subjects illustrates how the activity both evolves by means of the on-going transformation of the information and how this is dependent on prior discussion.
This way of making clear and factual points (e.g. about conditions in Sweden) underlines how the meaning-making process is dependent on the ability to bring in temporality to the activity, by referring to past and future events (c.f. Boland & Tenkasi, 1995). The utterance in Excerpt 3 can be seen as the integration worker’s anticipation of the immigrants’ responses to the overall theme of the class. In the case of the integration workers, these meaning-making activities involve the identification of relevant boundaries and connections between different knowledge-domains when constructing a narrative with the potential to bring different perspectives into dialogue. Doing this, the information is given new meaning in a new context and the reconstruction of the information provides a starting point from which the activity can proceed.

The following example illustrates how a narrative is constructed to become relevant to the specific group of immigrants. Again, categories are repeatedly selected, but what is especially interesting is the simultaneous redefinition of both the immigrants’ needs and the objectives and responsibilities of the integration workers. In Excerpt 4, the purpose is to construct a starting point that enables a focused inquiry into what ‘Living with multiple cultures’ means in relation to the ‘The parental role’. The subject is introduced by relating it to the migration process and its consequences in terms of losing friends, relatives, work etc., and how this can have an effect on the parent-child relationship. Below, we see the reconstruction of the subject that will serve as a locally relevant narrative in addressing specific needs.

**Excerpt 4**

We talked about this during the first week – what happens when you move is that you might react normally even though you’re in an abnormal situation. Moving away from one’s home leads to feelings of sadness, grief and loss [...]. You cannot hide this from your kids. [...] they have the constant feeling that their parents are a bit sad and this affects them too. They learn the language very quickly and they will soon be standing with one foot in each culture.

The first part of the utterance introduces a transformation by referring to what they talked about the first week, ‘what happens when you move’, that is picked up from ‘The migration process’ (a sub-title in the first chapter). By bringing in the migration process and its consequences, the integration worker is indicating that there are relevant aspects to consider in relation to the parent-child relationship in a new country. The utterance emphasizes the relationship between a previous discussion of the migration process, current experiences of the parent-child relationship, and the present ‘Living with multiple cultures’
subject. Furthermore, it is obvious how these parts must be discursively activated and connected in order to restore meaning to the situation, which will direct the orientation of the on-going activity. The intertextual link ‘you’ addresses (some of) the immigrants’ current experiences and is used as a resource to build up the narrative. The affirmations made by the integration worker about the kids – ‘they have the constant feeling that their parents are a bit sad and this affects them too’ – is derived from the integration worker’s notes. Together with the account that then follows – that the children ‘learn the language very quickly and they will soon be standing with one foot in each culture’ – this describes an interlinked problem area that the immigrants are faced with, concerning not only crises but also the different learning phases of adults and children. The word ‘quickly’ is derived from the reference text, was picked up in the notes, and is used to direct everyday life-concerns regarding the consequences of the fact that children learn both the language and culture more quickly than their parents. It is obvious that if they had not been talking about the consequences of the migration process before, it would not have been possible for the integration worker to approach the subject in this way. This is not an arbitrary method of simply adding something to the content. It is, instead, an operation that comes from knowing the members of a specific group and their needs, and from familiarity with a process of structuring experience and reasoning. The accounts that are used supply the integration worker with subjective arguments for transforming the immigrants’ needs in relation to the institution’s responsibility. By framing the situation as a psychological matter regarding learning conditions and concrete consequences of crises, the institution is positioned as being accountable for providing respectful and adequate conditions for individuals to be able to process the information at a pace that is sensitive to their specific psychological and learning status. Most probably, the immigrants have been faced with handling these kinds of learning conditions during the whole program. However, the integration workers are not obliged to do anything about these conditions within the structures currently provided by the standards.

By going beyond the decontextualized content in the text (Excerpts 3 and 4), a sufficiently significant space for the on-going activity was generated. In this space, new meanings were provided by recontextualizing the immigrants’ experiences from previous classes. Such processes of bringing information to life (Hall & Horn, 2012) feature the work of the integration workers and what they are presupposed to know in order to successfully carry out their responsibility – i.e. to give the recently arrived immigrant an orientation in Swedish society. From such a viewpoint, the actions taking place before the actual class reflect both the knowledge required to handle and adapt standards to local circumstances and a core aspect of routine work that will serve to
organize the integration workers’ view and understanding of situations. Since
the standards are supposed to supply a range of different knowledge-needs, the
integration workers are expected to know how to shape pieces of information
into intelligible structures that make sense to the immigrants. Such work
functions to connect different domains and relies on established practices
(Rystedt et al, 2011).

Knowing which pieces of information to use, where and when to enter them,
demonstrates the integration workers’ knowledge of how to use standards to
meet individual needs. The narrative structuring of connecting different
categories, events and actors invokes temporality and sensitivity to the
particularities that feature in specific situations. These pedagogical strategies
imply that historical, cultural and relational contexts are re-enacted and weaved
together, providing novel understandings. One could say that the narratives
provide openings for moments of reflection and discussion that both build
upon the past and extend into the future. This kind of meaning-making is not
fully supported by the standards available to the integration workers, which is
something they have to consider when planning classes.

6. Discussion

In this study the routine work of adapting standards to meet local circumstances
and procedures in civic orientation have been analysed. Specific focus was
placed on what knowledge was involved in selecting, organizing and
categorizing information in the initial phase of preparing for and introducing
relevant facts in classes. The result specifically illustrates how the gap between
uniform procedures and the concrete use of standards in everyday work
involves relations between the predefined content and structure of information,
and the integration workers construction of a coherent narrative to suit local
circumstances. What is specific about handling this kind of tension is how it
stands out as a significant aspect of work that is important for making practical
use of standards in order to meet multiple knowledge needs.

Characteristic of the use of standards in civic orientation is how it relies on the
subjective skills of meaning-making. Although standards are developed for
supporting work, they provide accumulated knowledge that is supposed to be
valid in relation to all groups and to each class. Such tensions are usually
handled by the integration workers, yet it is obvious that the different steps of
transforming information that are necessary for carrying out the activity are not
supported by the standards. Instead, the analysis indicates that the notes played
a key, mediating role in this respect. By selecting and linking categories from
different knowledge-domains, the notes became pedagogical resources in that they contributed to the reorganization of procedures by which the integration workers constructed a contextually relevant content to be processed. In line with the reasoning of Mathiesen and Nerland (2012), the analysis shows how the notes and narrative structures both reflect and promote changes in practice. Engaging in and developing knowledge and practice appears as a significant aspect of work and presupposes knowledge about the standards and the context it is going to be used in. Aligning with arguments put forward by Winman and Rystedt (2011), the analysis shows that standardization in itself is not a solution that will guarantee equality of service that is able to meet different individual needs but relies on interpretational skills.

The strivings for standardization have been put forward as a general solution to safeguard quality through increased control of both content and procedures that structure everyday work (SFS 2010:1138). Yet, the emphasis on uniform standards across different groups also indicates the need for a space for autonomy and flexibility in local use. This is illustrated by the ways in which the integration workers make abstract concepts fit the specific context at hand, by moving around among the different chapters to construct a coherent narrative. For example, adding ‘they learn the language very quickly and they will soon be standing with one foot in each culture’ (Excerpt 4) when addressing the parent-child relationship, illustrates how the information is reconstructed in such a way that specific and current needs are identified. The integration worker constructed a narrative that both stressed many of the immigrants’ troublesome circumstances and the possible need for support, as well as one that is sensitive to their specific health and learning conditions. Although using the standards as a point of departure, the construction of a relevant narrative presupposed familiarity with the context of the immigrants’ lives. In a similar vein, Winman and Rystedt (2012) have pointed out that in this sort of reconstruction of information, the narrative is simultaneously shaped by both the information and the context. However, such analytical and creative use of standards is a matter of engagement and relies on the integration workers’ taking responsibility for deciding what needs to be addressed and when. Simultaneously, making such decisions depends upon knowing the particularities of the circumstances and what they will require and knowing when in a procedure to invoke certain categories from a stipulated text and where to find these in the standardized material. Hence, the results illustrate the way this kind of epistemic engagement rests upon mobilization and organization of relevant resources (Mathisen & Nerland, 2012) and how the rigidity of pre-defined structures activates a need for additional inquiry to transform information for practical use.
The results demonstrate the way the integration workers’ anticipations, raise the prospect of an alternative order of work that relies on animating actors, events, and information etc., in narratives that structure future work (c.f. Hall, Wright & Wieckert, 2007). The emergence of this sort of alternative order indicates how standards that are used for a heterogeneous audience must support reflective activities necessary for handling different knowledge-needs if they are to relate to both the immigrants’ current needs and the routine work. Although the standards provide a structure and a general view on how to understand the immigrants’ needs, identities, conditions and life-trajectories in their new country of residence, the analysis indicates that standards alone cannot anticipate every need in all groups of immigrants that the integration workers need to attend to. In both providing support to the immigrants’ orientation in society and making efficient use of the standards, different perspectives are invoked in the presentations. Such jurisdictional work depends on the scope of action available when standards and the work with a specific task intersect. With this in mind, knowing how different pieces of information relate to one another, and how they work together in relation to different cultural expressions, becomes decisive for understanding some of the basic conditions needed for standards to support collective meaning-making processes across contexts and differences in integration work.

Making use of standards must, therefore, be based on professional knowledge which, in the case of the integration workers, includes distinct ways of, what Hall and Horn (2012) describe as, viewing and identifying things of interest in a professional domain of scrutiny, reflecting, evaluating, and making decisions about what to do next. Making such distinctions are vital not least when bearing in mind the ethical considerations involved in practice.

7. Conclusion

One central conclusion is that the professional knowledge involved in bringing information to life must be understood in relation to the institutional context of which their knowledge is a part (c.f. Duguid, 2005). The ways in which information is structured by the integration workers to constitute a contextually relevant content must to be considered in relation to emphasis given to the use of standards in integration work. What constitutes a relevant content cannot be separated from different ways of conceiving knowledge. This study points to the significance of recognizing the knowing how (ibid.) and autonomy needed for making practical use of standards in order to deliver a service that takes into account the diversity of knowledge-needs that must be attended to across
different groups of immigrants. Although standards may be seen as vital for maintaining continuity and stabilizing work, when attending to different individual needs, increasing standardization may be counter-productive as it restrains the possibilities of dealing with differences and variations. As pointed to, every individual knowledge need at each occasion cannot be predicted. Instead, it is the integration workers moving between, what Nerland and Jensen (2012, p. 116) express as, ‘what is known and what remains to explore or improve’ that makes it possible to animate information and in this sense contribute to the continuation of the immigrants’ individual life trajectories. Thus, this kind of reflective activity in which the integration workers use their experiences to constitute relevant perspectives on information, also brings relevance to organizational structures for learning and sharing experiences.

Since the standards define both the content and structure of the activity, they tend to become constitutive of what practice is about, although not all of the integration workers’ actions can be standardized. Despite the fact that the standards provide focus for representing accumulated knowledge, it is the integration workers’ knowledgeable use of them that makes them workable across boundaries, and this relies on their autonomous work. Thus, the overall responsibility for quality that is a function of management should include awareness of the vital importance of the individual pedagogical creativity and sensitivity needed to realize the spirit and not only the letters of standards. Since the employment of standards in everyday work also concerns ‘the organization of knowledge and knowledge-use’ (Mathiesen & Nerland, 2012, p. 88), in terms of knowledge-engagement, the demands made upon integration workers, locally as well as nationally, become crucial for the future development of the activity.

References


KNOWING IN PRACTICE

The use of dialogue as a pedagogical method in integration work

Abstract
This study analyses dialogue as an aspect of professional knowledge when integration workers are orienting newly arrived immigrants about Swedish society and everyday life in an integration activity called civic orientation. The data consists of interviews with integration workers and observations of classes in Sweden. The results show that using dialogue involves knowing how to mobilise a contextual foundation for mediating between different experience-based meanings and how to re-contextualise information, which requires skilful handling of various knowledge sources. To bridge between standardised information and contextually relevant meanings is central in integration processes and here, dialogue could support future integration work.

Keywords
professional knowledge • dialogue • meaning making • integration work • civic orientation

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1 Introduction
Integration work is a constantly changing professional domain, not least because its task is closely connected to societal changes, such as increased migration and changed patterns of movements across borders. Recent studies show that social welfare work is constantly facing new contexts and forms of diversity that requires new knowledge to manage, for example, different kinds of boundaries, belongings and to meet emergent needs (Dominelli 2010; Reish & Jani 2012; Harrington & Beddoe 2014). Turegón (2013) argues that work relating to immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers is a new field of practice where traditional ways of organising and carrying out work are being challenged. But can it be argued that integration work practice is developing into a new field of practice? The position taken in this study suggests that it is. Even though integration work practice is a highly skilled activity calling for an extensive knowledge base, we need to understand what constitutes the knowledge base of integration work and how this can be applied to the dilemmas regularly encountered in everyday practice at the workplace.

One example of such a developing field of practice in the Swedish context is civic orientation, which is a 60-hour group activity held in the immigrants’ native language. The activity is aimed at providing extensive access to information and orientation on how Swedish society is organised and affects everyday life on a practical level. The regulation (SFS 2010:1138) stipulates that the activity is to be carried out in a dialogic form and is to provide a foundation for subsequent acquisition of knowledge. Until 2007, civic orientation was included in the education system as part of the Swedish language education for immigrants. However, the new regulation in 2010 implied an explicit demand on the staff to accomplish dialogue in interaction with the immigrants focussing on the immigrants’ own understanding and processes of integration.

In general, the work with civic orientation is a part-time activity funded by the municipality, where the integration workers have other primary occupations. The integration workers themselves have migrated to Sweden, not all of them have formal pedagogical education. However, the ministry of integration in Sweden emphasises that the specific knowledge required for the task goes beyond formal education and indicates cultural ability to work responsibly, both in relation to the performance and intentions of the activity.

At a general level, the knowledge requirements of the staff working with civic orientation concern language and pedagogical expertise. Though, the emphasis on dialogue in the regulation indirectly also implies that specific knowledge of processing information between different cultural contexts is required. It also requires an ability to make information intelligible, relevant and meaningful to immigrants with different backgrounds, level of education, age and so on. In the case of civic orientation, professional dialogue has a specific purpose: to both inform and develop an understanding of various issues and what they mean in the new country. The way in which the integration workers use dialogue, therefore, has some consequences for the immigrants’ perception and understanding of the world in a new context.
Our aim in this study is to explore what knowledge is involved when the integration workers engage in the kind of interactions, which, in this study, is called professional dialogue. We approach dialogue as conversations where various understandings of a specific issue are identified and processed in interaction between intersecting contexts (Linell 1998). We argue that in order to explore what constitutes the integration workers’ specialised (professional) knowledge, one need to focus on their use of dialogue in everyday work. Therefore, we are focussing on the integration workers’ performance of work at an integration unit in a mid-sized Swedish municipality. Our ambition is to contribute knowledge that can be relevant in the field of international migration and integration and for future organisation and performance of integration work.

2 Perspectives on professional knowledge and learning

There are many perspectives on research of competence and professional knowledge in cultural contexts. While some studies have focussed on individual’s knowledge (Xiao & Chen 2009), others have emphasised the perspective of macrostructures where societal communication on cultural competence is focussed (Phipps 2014). Teräs & Lasonen (2013) and Lasonen (2010), on the other hand, mean that intercultural competence is reciprocal and embedded and intertwined in actions, such as preparing, reflecting, guiding and responding. Intercultural competence is thereby seen as integral to expertise and professional identity (Lasonen 2010). This is tantamount to Martin & Nakayama (2015) who argue that professional knowledge and intercultural competence only can be revealed and understood if one is emphasising the dynamic, historically and contextually situated aspects of activities.

While some scholars (Liddicot 2009) argue that intercultural communication involves ‘engagement with a conceptually different construction of experience’ (p. 130). Others (Rathje 2007; Teräs & Lasonen 2013) argue that the concept ‘intercultural communication’ does not untangle the complexity of professional knowledge involved in intercultural encounters, a claim that we support. A common way to define professional knowledge is related to professions that have managed to establish a specific knowledge domain for dealing with their specified tasks. Such a view is related to the idea of occupational closure, which, according to Payne (2001: 135), builds upon a ‘shaky base’ in relation to practical activities, such as integration work. Instead of treating professional knowledge as given, Goodwin (1994) and Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that it is produced and reproduced in and through the everyday activities of the practice. In the present study, there is no research-based professional knowledge to fall back upon; instead, the experience-based personal knowledge of the integration workers will eventually emerge into professionalism. Or, as Högheim (2005) argues:

Professional skills and professional knowledge is to act out in a way where you know what you do, and you do it on purpose after reflection and practice. One can speak of a conscious experience - an experience in action and thought associations. An experienced professional ‘knows’ what to do. He or she has mastered their subject matter and execution of the task to such a degree that he or she cannot always describe what is happening with words alone. (p. 9)

What is highlighted in Högheim’s argument is that professional knowledge is connected to both facts and principles, being familiar with various subjects and to human action. On a general level, professional knowledge is a prerequisite for competent action that is acknowledged by others, which also means that knowledge is the ability to participate in a specific activity (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991). This view implies that learning is seen as intercultural, emerging between people when they engage in social practice. A particularly interesting feature in the integration workers’ work concerns the significance between learning and making information intelligible and meaningful to the immigrants. For example, what the social insurance system (Försäkringskassan) in Sweden may mean to each individual in everyday life cannot be presupposed. Thus, a process of transferring information between different contexts involves both tensions and crossing boundaries.

Boundary crossing (Akkerman & Bakker 2011) is crucial in civic orientation and refers to when integration workers in classroom move between different social worlds (cultural and social systems) in order to make information intelligible for immigrants with different backgrounds and belongings. In such situations, dialogue is important for bridging between different perspectives. When integration workers are bridging between different systems, they can also take help from artifacts (for example, policy, regulations, textual material and PowerPoint presentations) that can work as boundary objects. In Star and Griesemer’s (1989) definition, boundary objects are described as:

… objects which both inhabit several intersecting social worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them… [They are] both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use. (p. 393)

Through their plasticity of meaning, boundary objects translate concepts, viewpoints and values across contexts. In this study, context is understood as ‘a social world constituted in relation with persons acting’ (Lave 1993: 5), implying that structure and experience generate one another. In summary, this implies that knowing how to handle boundary objects becomes a vital aspect of the integration workers’ interpretational work. Or, besides knowledge about various subjects related to integration work, the integration workers must know how to process information by means of dialogue, using what they know about two specific cultures to bring the activity forward by making judgments of action that benefit the purpose of an occasion. Knowing what to do and how, is related to complex sets of assumptions and contingencies outside the formal prescriptions of action (Suchman 1987). Making relevant judgments and decisions largely rely on professional knowledge and skills and are ‘exercised in the very activity’ (Dunne 1993: 74).

The view on knowledge and learning in this study turns the practice into what Mäktitalo and Säljö (2002: 59) call an ‘institutionalized knowledge producing activity’ where dialogue is a means of the work performed. In adopting this approach, we concur with a number of studies in different domains that illustrate how knowledge is locally organised and linked to the specific concerns of the everyday activities of work (Mäktitalo 2012; Winnman, Säljö & Rydstedt 2012). The approach used in these studies pinpoints the relationship between social and material aspects of activity indicating that in order to understand what locally relevant knowledge emerges in activity, we need to scrutinise both the integration workers’ ways of reasoning and their use of dialogue in routine work.
2.1 The work with civic orientation and meaning making

In focusing on the integration workers’ meaning-making activities, the use of language and categories becomes vital aspects of knowing. Categories are historical, used in institutionalised acting and thinking (Douglas 1986) and made relevant within particular practices (Mäkitalo & Saljö 2002). Even though there are tools and artifacts provided specifically for civic orientation, the meaning and functions of categories may vary among the participating immigrants. Understanding the meaning of categories depends on the integration workers’ sense-making of the relationship between categories. If tensions emerge between participants with divergent opinions or perspectives, dialogue is one way of crossing boundaries. Such work is fundamental for bridging between different practices. Consequently, the integration workers’ work involves several crucial aspects, such as collecting, transforming and categorising information to create incipient points of entry and presenting relevant illustrations that the immigrants can draw on. Such codifying (cf. Goodwin 1994) and representation of categories and classifications becomes central to the integration workers’ organisation of activity in order to not only share information with the participating immigrants, but also for supporting collaborative sense-making between them. How the integration workers understand and deal with these kinds of meaning-making challenges will be highlighted in this study.

3 The study

The data for this study are derived from 115 hours of observations, field notes and 10 interviews with integration workers at an integration-unit in Sweden. The observations were carried out by each of the authors separately and took place on 2–4 days a week, 3–4 hours each time. The observations had different foci and the purpose of the initial part was to understand the overall expectations, norms, purposes and procedures already in place that adhered to the organisation and coordination of work (Agar 1986). This initial part included five sessions of civic orientation, in total about 20 hours. The aim was to document and analyse the pre-established patterns concerning ‘objects, purposes, goals, values and procedures already in place’ (Linell 1998: 187) that constitute elements of the historically and locally shared knowledge that the integration workers consider relevant to align themselves to. Field notes were produced directed at the environment, the participants, the overall activities, actions and times. The integration workers’ preparation of classes, the classes themselves, discussions between the integration workers, documentation work, administration and team meetings were included in the observations.

After the initial period of the fieldwork, we followed one integration worker throughout an entire course of civic orientation, to gain insight about how different activities were interrelated and what interventions were established parts of the integration workers’ regular work. Attention was directed towards how the integration workers navigated between information and tasks, how information was transferred into talk in the civic orientation class and how this information, in turn, was understood as consequential for the needs of the newly arrived immigrants. The observation includes informal interviews with the integration workers both in and about various situations to discover what was going on, the purpose and outcomes of and the relationships between different activities. Field notes were produced in close conjunction with the activities with a structure of direct observations, direct interpretations, analytical memos and personal memos. Extra focus was put on what resources were used, interactional behaviour including body movement, gestures, intonation and eye contact.

The interviews with the integration workers lasted for about 1 hour each and were tape-recorded. Our intention was to get an impression of the integration workers’ own understanding about what happens in classroom situations, what they perceive as challenging and in what way it is challenging. Attention was directed to issues of diversity and equality and how the integration workers perceived and coped with the professional demand to establish dialogue-based situations.

3.1 Data analysis

We used the field notes to obtain a general understanding of the overall workflow and ways in which the integration workers’ knowledge functioned as a link between activities. Our analysis of the field notes and observations focussed on how pieces of information from texts and PowerPoint slides were made intelligible in the integration workers’ interactions with the newly arrived immigrants, for example, how chunks of text were transformed into verbal statements that were addressed to the class members. Our interest was to identify how the different learning materials were integrated into the activities when the integration workers construed and juxtaposed crucial information concerning the immigrants’ new country. More specifically, the analytical focus was to identify recurrent patterns of interaction and to describe how the integration workers interacted with the immigrants and what kinds of knowledge integration workers need to contribute in order to make sense of past and future activities in civic orientation.

From the initial individual analysis of the interviews, themes were abstracted from narratives about the integration workers’ performance and dilemmas in everyday work. These parts were transcribed for deeper analysis in group with specific focus on how the integration workers accounted for challenges involved when making use of dialogue. To understand how joint interactions were accomplished, we scrutinised the categorical work employed in both preparing for and performing the activity. To shape our analysis, two questions were projected onto the data: what turns into resources in the use of dialogue and how are the resources used in dialogue? The bridging work between different domains, experiences, expectations and so on stood out as salient features in the narratives about everyday work. Thoughts and reflections about identified patterns and categories were summarised and connected to the theoretical perspectives of knowledge and learning. In line with the theoretical assumptions of the importance of institutional culture, the analysis emphasises the similarities in the integration workers’ narratives rather than differences between them. As a final step, the analyses were linked to the analysis of the field notes and observations of interactional patterns, allowing a shaped analysis of the integration workers’ knowledge in practice.

4 Results

Our results highlight three aspects of the use of dialogue in civic orientation. First, dialogue is understood as a pedagogical method that is used to meet individuals where they are. Second, artifacts are described as tools that are used in dialogue to bridge the gap between different contexts. Finally, through dialogue, the immigrants’ understanding of artifacts, opinions and experiences is used to bridge the gap between different systems of norms and values.
4.1 Dialogue as a pedagogical method

Although, dialogue is a prerequisite for the activity referred to in the legislation, it is not something that automatically occurs when people meet. On the contrary, dialogue takes both effort and knowledge to perform or be a part of.

Our interviews show that the integration workers regard dialogue as a complex activity that involves active listening, respect for different opinions and engagement. In an interview, one of the integration workers says that:

'It's really important that we constantly talk to each other in the classroom, that we have a dialogue concerning each topic (in civic orientation). It is not just important that I have informed the class about something, it is even more important that the participants (the immigrants) have understood what the issues I'm talking about mean to them. Therefore they themselves must ask questions, talk to each other, and be prepared to provide answers.'

This utterance shows that dialogue is used to stimulate patterns of interaction in which the immigrants are encouraged to talk to each other. One example from our observations illustrates how the integration workers actively encourage the immigrants to talk to each other about what the possibility to choose schools for their children means to them. In this particular case, the integration worker started by informing the class about various regulations and then asked the immigrants to discuss in groups of four or five what the regulations meant for them as parents and what they thought about them from a broader societal perspective. After 5 minutes, each group presented their discussions. One group had discussed the possibility of remaining in the same apartment, but still choosing the best school for their children. Another group had discussed how the free choice opened up for Swedish people to move their children from schools with many immigrant children, which complicated every attempt to achieve integration. The integration worker picked up both perspectives and asked the group to discuss consequences for individual and collective responsibility and opportunity.

The dialogic exchange takes place within the context of the relational engagement created by the integration worker. By creating situations where the immigrants can ask questions and bring their opinions and experiences into the conversation, the integration workers are distributing the task and positioning the immigrants as active participants in the meaning-making process. These processes are initiated and given direction by means of the professional dialogue in terms of questions, support, affirmations and interests and so on. The aim is not consensus and, as shown above, the integration workers make use of dialogue to motivate the immigrants to provide personal examples to make the information intelligible and various understandings possible. Such use of dialogue also involves knowing when to take a step back and entrust the conversation to the immigrants.

What is at stake here is the aim to support the immigrants' orientation in the Swedish society and their responses provide resources for the integration worker to know how to proceed with the dialogic process. In the example above, dialogue is used to stress the boundaries between individual and collective responsibilities and opportunities, which are recognised as relevant by both the immigrants and the integration worker. Thus, the unfolding of the activity makes evident the situatedness of the integration workers' knowledge.

The interviews indicate that making use of dialogue in civic orientation implies considering the immigrants' previous experiences of education and authorities. The immigrants' experiences of educational settings are often asymmetric relationships between teacher and students and to encourage participation in a mutual activity, such aspects play a central role for the integration workers' organisation of dialogue. In addition, the integration workers explain that many of the immigrants have experienced severe difficulties and been exposed to strict regimes and traumatic situations that have led to a lack of confidence in societal authorities. Thus, the understanding of the immigrants' experiences and feasible anticipations plays a crucial role for the integration workers' knowledge of how to bridge the gap between the goals of civic orientation and the immigrants' previous experiences. Dialogue thereby becomes a tool to develop interaction patterns in educational settings that are new to some of the immigrants. The context- and situation-specific knowledge involved in such bridging work is argued by Lasonen (2010) to be crucial elements of intercultural expertise. Thus, the manners in which dialogue is used to stimulate a sense of belonging in the classroom are fundamental for increasing the ability of everyone to participate. In an interview, these social dimensions of dialogue are by one integration worker directed as:

'Trust means that they (the immigrants) feel that they may ask questions and that there is a freedom to speak. That's important. But sometimes I have to drag them (change the culture in the classroom) to the point where they feel that they can ask questions, say what they want, and reveal their beliefs and feelings.'

The utterance indicates that it takes time and effort to develop a sense of trust where everyone feels that they have the right to their own thoughts and opinions. Thus, there is a relationship between the integration workers' understanding of their task and their respect for individual conditions, which is an approach similar to what Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) refer to as inclusive.

The examples above stress the interactional aspects of dialogue and also that the immigrants respond to the content from their own cultural and knowledge perspectives (which also involves feelings, opinions, needs, etc.). These social and reciprocal characteristics of the dialogic activity, which are acknowledged in intercultural interactions (Teräs & Lasonen 2013), imply that civic orientation becomes a generative social practice (cf. Lave & Wenger 1991) where the immigrants are involved and are mutually responsible for the development of the activity. This corresponds to Säljö (2005) who argues that, as well as expressing knowledge, knowledge is also developed by being a part of social activities and is found in the changing relationships between individuals and activities. Dialogue can, therefore, be seen as a tool for the integration workers for establishing an arena for reflection. As we can see during our observations, the integration workers regularly use uptakes and comments to process the activity further and thereby the intersection and negotiation of different thoughts, values, experiences and opinions turn into a prerequisite for the activity. That is also a way where all individuals are being engaged in a social practice where all immigrants' individual knowledge and experiences become what Säljö (2005) calls 'intellectual resources for the collective development'.

4.2 Bridging practices

In civic orientation, the textbooks and PowerPoint slides are standardised forms (cf. Star & Griesemer 1989) as they become
tools of communication and stabilisation across topics. Subjects and values in the course material are examples where experiences and knowledge among the immigrants are used by the integration workers to develop a common platform for understanding Swedish society.

4.3 Artifacts as bridging tools

The integration workers need to establish links between different practices to enable the immigrants to share experiences in discussions. One integration worker argues in an interview that Swedish legislation becomes central in such a process:

…and break with the thoughts about the old system; that we no longer are in Somalia or Iraq or Afghanistan. We are in Sweden, and because of the law we can exchange experiences and knowledge with each other.

In this utterance, Swedish law is used as a tool to develop a common situation by showing how it can be understood in the situation at hand. The integration workers use the law as an opportunity for dialogue about norms and values. Such use of the law is similar to how course material, for example, PowerPoint slides, textbooks and schedules are used. Thorn (2003: 57) means that ‘artefacts take their character from activity’, and how they are used becomes consequential for the development of intercultural communication. According to our observations, tools, such as PowerPoint slides and so on function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer 1989) as they work as means, not goals, which are used to transform not only the understanding, but also work as an outcome that even transforms the procedures and routines in situ as they invoke dialogue among the participants.

Our observations show that before each session, the integration workers sorted out and structured information from the course material. Such knowing how to adapt the information to make it locally meaningful to the situation at hand, is characteristic to the integration workers’ work and involves what Fitch & Desai (2012) call cultural sensitivity. Even though the course material is the same across different groups, the meaning of information changes in a new context. The layer of context becomes interactionally significant in intercultural communication (Liddicoat 2009) and implies for the integration workers that the organisation of a learning situation involves re-contextualisation of the information to function as a means in dialogue. This means they need to take into account the relationship between the pre-made course material, the immigrants’ needs, the organisation of a session and the engagement in the activity, that is, the dialogic process.

4.4 Using similarities, differences and tensions as bridging tools

The integration workers themselves say they encourage the immigrants to draw attention to the context they are coming from. One integration worker says in an interview:

I remind them that they also come from a structure, a society that in fact was functioning, like everything else. It’s important to emphasize to the individuals that, ‘you are not here for me to teach you about how nice the terms of references are in Swedish society, but you’ve brought things that are important to you, and now it’s up to us to find similarities’.

By bringing up similarities, the integration worker is trying to illustrate that there are connections between the two cultures. As before, individuals’ experiences are used as resources. The similarities function as points of reference that make it easier to reflect upon subjects and jointly handle differences between systems. For example, to help immigrants’ understand what the Swedish social insurance agency (Försäkringskassan) is, one integration worker expresses in an interview:

If we are talking about parents, the Koran says that the father should pay the mother as long as she is breastfeeding. And it is the Social Insurance Agency that pays the maternity leave. Such things can be compared.

This exemplifies how the integration workers use their cultural knowledge to find similarities and invoke vital differences. The outcome is a broader understanding of the topic. Using tensions and differences is characteristic in intercultural communication (Teräis & Lasonen 2013) and to create a common proficiency presumes that everyone understands and respects that there are relationships between opinions as well as between subjects highlighted both in the Swedish society and in the Koran. Abstract mental distinctions are integrated into the subject and become a bridge between action and thinking. This means that when the interpretation of the subject changes as in the example of the social insurance agency above, so do the cognitive and communicative conditions for the immigrants (Lave & Wenger 1991; Hutchins 1995). Part of the integration workers’ knowledge is to understand that thinking alone is not determining action, but becomes a part of the dialogue.

4.5 Bridging gaps

In civic orientation, different facts and values are brought up and considered in meaning-making processes. One example from our observations is when the topic concerned how the economic system in Sweden is based on that both men and women mutually contributing to the family’s income by paid work. The following week, the topic was care of the elderly in Sweden and the main issue was that the care is primarily a governmental responsibility. One of the immigrants asked if people in Sweden did not like their elderly relatives and asked why they did not take care of them themselves. The integration worker explained: (a) that this was a way to ensure that everyone got the help and support they needed, (b) that all elderly people could still have their individual freedom and finally, (c) that it is impossible to take care of an elderly relative in your own household when both men and women work.

Afterwards, the integration worker said he felt pleased with the explanation at the time it took place, but was unsure of how it would be perceived. However, the explanation started a discussion within the group and after a while, one of the men said (interpreted by the integration worker during the ongoing activity):

So what you mean is that if my wife starts work, our elderly relatives must be given away to a care center where they are unknown, where no one speaks their language, no one knows their religion or culture, where they cannot bond with their grandchildren, and where we will lose our connection to each other?

This question started a loud discussion during which the integration worker was quite passive. The final joint conclusion was that even
though women’s rights and financial responsibilities are highly valuable, the mutual responsibility within the family and the act of taking care of each other in vulnerable situations are a clear necessity that takes precedence over everything else. The case illustrates that the content of a session cannot be completely comprehensive on its own. As long as aspects of the content are used in partly similar and also partly different situations, there has to be openings for processes of meaning-making to develop a mutual understanding of the topics and categories that characterise the content. Dialogue here is not only an interaction between the immigrants, but also between their contributions. The plasticity of categories and presumptions that follow is, as the integration worker says ‘a fragile path to balance on’. Such plasticity is a prerequisite for civic orientation based on dialogue that is respectful towards different norm systems and enables the bridging between and change of both situations and knowledge.

There is a ‘dynamic relationship between knowledge as indefinite and unfolding on the one hand, and the need to stabilize knowledge to secure responsible use on the other’ (Nerland & Jensen 2012: 116). Knowing how information is systematised is, therefore, a part of working as an integration worker. Awareness of this fact is of significant importance since organising information determines the ability to accomplish civic orientation with predetermined purposes. As Bowker & Star (2000) and Winman, Saljö & Rystedt (2012) state, every system of categories, terminologies and values is based on some form of plasticity that, to some extent, predetermines what is relevant, possible and necessary. In this particular case, this assumption becomes apparent as the relationship between the integration workers’ knowledge and the immigrants’ understanding of women’s financial independence and care of the elderly is reflexive enough to satisfy the immigrants. This means that the conceptual distinctions are integrated into the course material and the content itself and that they are linked to human reasoning and acting.

The case above illustrates a gap that has to be bridged between domains and values, general definitions of categories, values, topics and local circumstances. From such a point of view, there is an inseparable relationship between the content and the aims of the course and the process of making sense in and of the contiguous activities in civic orientation. This social sense-making presumes that the immigrants express how they understand the categories and topics that constitute the civic orientation. This can be compared with what Nes & Moen (2010: 389) refer to as various knowledge resources that, from different perspectives, negotiate ‘local universality’, which does not necessarily imply shared understandings.

5 Conclusion

Our point of departure is that integration work is developing into a new field of practice and that we need to understand what constitutes its knowledge base. As outlined in the framework of this case study, the formal expectations of the Swedish integration workers’ pedagogical skills (SFS 2010:1138) are based on a generic approach to knowledge. Though, our study reveals that such approach does not alone cover all aspects of the integration workers, on the contrary, as shown in the result, various dimensions of knowledge were identified that are important for integration workers.

We found that the skilful conduct of dialogue depended on the integration workers’ knowledge in and about the responsibility as well as the heterogeneity and contingencies that characterised the situations that were brought to their attention. Thus, such conduct involves the integration workers’ prior understanding of situations based on their personal cultural competence (experience) and expectations of their work. What we can see from our results is that the integration workers’ prior understanding becomes a resource in organising the activity and brings perspective to the judgments that are made in situ, nevertheless for how they prepared for unpredictable situations.

As shown in the result, the integration workers’ preparations in the form of gathering information, codifying categories and classifications to frame and introduce various topics in relevant manners are just a first step of a sequential procedure. The dialogue is thereafter moved forward by various questions, comments, encouragements and understandings, which enable to take action orienting and adapting to the contingency of the situation. Such actions reveal the contextual, historical and developmental character (Teräs & Lasonen 2013) of the integration workers’ professional knowledge. That is also tantamount to Martín & Nakayama (2015), who are emphasising that intercultural competence is dynamic, historically and contextually situated. Thus, the professional dialogue enacted implicated that their prior knowledge, that is, their knowing that, is, intertwined with knowing how information is processed by continuously contextualising and re-contextualising categories. Drawing on Duguid (2005), who argues that knowing how is a prerequisite for knowing that, we can see in the result that the interpretational work of bridging different systems of norms and values presupposes knowing how to contextualise and re-contextualise meaning. Such bridging work constitutes vital aspects of the integration workers’ professional knowledge involved in the use of dialogue.

The professional dialogue is, to a large extent, dependent upon artifacts with a stabilising function between topics, different groups and between integration workers. But one needs to have in mind that the stabilising functions are sometimes fragile. Just as shown previously when one participant drew the conclusion that working women cause lonely elderly people. In this case, the PowerPoints, to some extent, caused problems as the upheld information were to narrow contextualised, which means that the relation between different topics became unclear and left ahead. So, although the content within different topics might be correct, the information on the Power Points as well, and the orientation appears to be properly performed, one can never know in advance what interpretations that will be made. As seen, resources are no more than potential until they are used (Feldman & Orlíkowsk 2011), and it is the integration workers’ knowledge of how to apply the information upheld in the artifacts in a way that it becomes intelligible, that makes standardised forms a resource in work. The tightrope walk of both maintaining structure and making use of information in a dialogic form presumes intricate organising skills. Nevertheless, artifacts, such as PowerPoint, become tools for structuring work and mediating institutional concerns.

In the example of when the free school choice was discussed, we can see the integration worker’s knowledge manifested in the organisation and mobilisation of a ‘dialogic’ contextual foundation. The integration worker’s contextualisation of the situation is revealed in the distribution of the task and positioning of the immigrants to make inquiries and relate the topic to individual and societal perspectives. The different understandings, based on diverse perspectives, were linked to the course material and became a resource for the integration worker for further exploration of the topic and its meaning in relation to the immigrants trajectories. The way the integration worker attended to the situation shows that the course material was used as a tool to bridge gaps between different understandings to
civic aspects of rights and obligations and facilitated meaning-making processes and understanding of new situations in Sweden. The conduct of the activity was effective in transforming the immigrants’ position as recipients and aliens in relation to Swedish culture and welfare system to a position of participation by developing learning trajectories based on their own experiences. Yet, the immigrants’ different understandings were needed for the integration worker to know how to continue the activity in a relevant way. From this point of view, differences are not only used as resources in the activity, they also become prerequisites for meaning-making (DePalma 2009). Consequently, professional knowledge involves the ability to listen, recognise and adapt explanations to the cultural as well as the individual experiences articulated in the learning group at hand.

In the example above, the integration worker only addressed the categorised information indirectly by invoking particular institutional concerns. Such conduct points to the anticipated aspects of the activity embracing both face-to-face interactions and formal expectations (cf. Mäkilä 2003). A different situation is handled in the example where elderly care in Sweden was presented. A gap occurred as the immigrants questioned the category and responded to from another cultural tradition. Thus, depending on the contextualisation of the situation, our result makes it evident that categorised information is handled in diverse ways by the integration workers. In this case, the question demanded further explanation and for the activity to continue, the integration worker re-contextualised the category by drawing on individual rights and obligations and linking to topics they had been elaborating the week before. Individual rights and obligations as well as previous joint experiences were used as boundary object that invoked further discussions that contributed new meanings to the institutional category.

The different understandings comprised various focal aspects of elderly care and the integration worker’s decision about how to translate the interests of the intersecting perspectives and understandings not only shaped the activity, but also the content of the topic. As argued by Keller and Keller (1993), new sequences of work will always constitute new events that are unique in terms of knowledge, actions and outcome. Although elderly care was approached from diverse traditions, the category was open enough for totally different ways of understanding the consequences of the Swedish system, which were equally relevant to people. The conduct of the dialogue made visible the open-ended feature of the meaning-making and the integration worker’s choice to maintain heterogeneity in the process. Such performing reduces knowing the context in which dialogue is used.

The categorised information that is used in artifacts or by an integration worker might hold different significance to the individuals in the group, implying that the contingency of the dialogue is coupled with the plasticity of categories and conceding that they can be used and understood in various ways. Such indexical plasticity of categories (for further discussion, see Winnman 2012) means that we cannot know every individual understanding of a category in advance and that is not the intention. Conducting this kind of process becomes a focal point in civic orientation and emphasises the difference between giving information to a group of people and navigating an orientation activity. The open-ended nature of categories and the interactationally significant layers of context involved in accomplishing understanding (Liddicoat 2009) highlights central aspects of practice and subsequently, relevant knowledge to the work of the integration workers.

The extensive amount of knowledge among the integration workers is poorly supported by formal education. Instead, it is the integration workers’ professional knowledge that enables them to mediate the meaning of information contained in PowerPoint slides and textual material and to transform the information into contextually situated significance. And it is this gap-bridging process from one situation to another that knowledge is developed over time and across different activities. The integration workers’ professional knowledge is mirrored when the dialogue is used to mediate experience-based meaning in and about situations. However, as shown in the results, the integration workers have extended their knowledge from those situations to understanding the significance of the meanings in other situations. This professional knowledge only becomes visible in the borderline between the textually mediated meaning and the activity to which attention is directed. By locating the integration workers’ professional knowledge as relationally embedded within the community and the institutional setting, we recognise the ongoing constituting of practice. To further develop the integration workers, professional knowledge domain, we maintain that there is a need for organised structures for learning and sharing knowledge that link past experiences to present and future actions. Thereby, individual experiences could be shared and one can learn with and from each other. By scrutinising and making patterns of knowledge and learning visible, this becomes a way to develop aggregated knowledge about integration work, not least in formal education settings and ‘the continuance of professional practice’ (Mäkilä 2012: 75).

Promoting processes of education will most likely benefit the development of a professional culture and professional identity within the field of civic orientation. For the design of higher education, this might imply a need to organise future education so that it also meets the needs of practicing professionals in order to shape further learning. For professionals and students to develop knowledge to communicate across social and cultural contexts (Fitch & Desai 2012), the educational sector is challenged to develop curricula and make these kinds of intercultural competences explicit learning outcomes in courses. Such organisation of education assumes a certain acquaintance with various practices and their contexts and a continuous discussion of challenges and problems encountered during everyday work under current standards of practice (Florian 2012).

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Knowing at work:  

A study of professional knowledge in integration work directed to newly arrived immigrants

New knowledge domains and professions emerge as a consequence of societal changes that transform the conditions for the organization of work and work integrated learning. Integration work directed to newly arrived immigrants is one example of such a new professional knowledge domain. This thesis presents a workplace case study focusing professional knowledge in an integration activity in Sweden called civic orientation. The results show that the professional knowledge encompass aspects of culture that are expressed when integration workers transform stipulated information about Swedish society to contextually relevant content in heterogeneous groups of people and bridge between different experience based meanings. It is shown that the knowledge from specific situations are developed to understand the significance of textually mediated meanings in other situations. The results contribute to our understanding of the professional knowledge involved and developed in activities aiming to support newly arrived immigrants’ inclusion and participation in social and working life.

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