

Original Paper

Adolescents within Risk Zones. Moreover, does it also Have an Influence on Further Biographical Unfolding?

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Abstract

Alternative School Day (ASD) is a project for adolescents with difficulties in several areas. The pupils attended ASD one day per week, and the content in the program was more practical and adjusted. In this study thematic analysis was conducted. Principal inclusion is formulated in educational legislation in many countries worldwide; however, different special initiatives may have positively affected adolescents in risk zones. Some theorists have emphasized that regular school is based on middle-class values, and for pupils with other class backgrounds, the school represents “represent an away ground”. Further, we have debated whether reflexive modernization is an important topic in the general knowledge within society nowadays, with globalization, extended consumption, and several risks associated with modern society. We are questioning whether the students could experience the immersive turning points and fateful moments in the biography, where they started to look upon themselves as clever and competent pupils while attending ASD. The positive attention and expectation from the teachers and the tasks were more practical-oriented, representing the core factors in the positive outcome measures found through this study.

Keywords

The alternative school day, adolescents at risk, marginalized youths, globalization, new risks within modern society, reflexive modernization

1. Introduction

Teenagers' dropping out of school is a major problem in Norway, Scandinavia, and many other European countries today. This article will examine a particular school initiative, namely “Alternative School Day” (ASD). The ASD is a preventive project for adolescents who engage in antisocial behavior and who have difficulties in several areas, for example, at school, within the family, or in their

leisure time. Processes of marginalization at a young age are important, not only because adolescents are in a vulnerable situation, but also because exclusion at a young age can have long-term consequences. The question is whether one is included or excluded from what is recognized as important social arenas and activities in society (Heggen, Jørgensen, & Paulsgaard, 2003; Shifrer, Callahan, & Muller, 2013). Pupils who attend the ASD are between 14 and 16 years of age and all have working-class backgrounds. The ones who were picked out have been out of school for a long time, so based on these terms, there is a great challenge to get those students back into the ordinary school arrangement again. The schools pick out the students who will have the opportunity to participate, but the students and their parents must give their admission. The students took part in the ASD one day per week throughout the school year, during the era from August to June. In fact, most of the time, the students show up on Alternative School Day (ASD). Important goals during participation in ASD are to promote the adolescent's capacity for learning, coping, and personal responsibility, as well as risks associated with the new challenges within society nowadays. Individual goals for each student are developed in cooperation with the schools based on individual educational plans. By identifying the students' life situations, plans are worked out for how one best can work with each of them. The students must obtain reliable and positive contact with the counselors at the ASD. Consequently, there are two adults and a maximum of six pupils in each group. Scholars have argued that school reproduces differences that already exist in society, and in some cases, the gap increases (Nordahl, 2010, 2013). Bourdieu (1996) introduced the concept of habitus, which refers to the subjective dispositions that reflect a class-based social grammar of tastes, knowledge, and behavior inscribed in the "body schema and the schemes of thought" of each developing person. Since many teachers come from the middle class, they tend to favor students from the same background and inherit the same habitus as themselves. Therefore, students coming from other conditions and exposing different behaviors and comportments offer teachers greater challenges in communicating, understanding, and organizing education for them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Giroux, 1983; Anyon, 2011).

The school has become more theoretically oriented (Reform 94), and some students seem to fall more easily outside of the school because they come from a more practical background, which many students prefer (Heggen, Bævik, & Olsen, 2000; Markussen, Løddingen, Sandberg, & Vibe, 2006). Research has also shown that Norwegian pupils don't thrive in school as much as we could have hoped for. There are nuanced and extended explanations for why the situation is like this (Pisa, 2000-2012), (Elstad, 2008/2012). The problems presented in this article are as follows: This paper aims to see whether ASD can enhance an adolescent's ability to learn more school-related knowledge by presenting it in a more practical way. It also creates "a kind of atmosphere and learning environment" where the students have a qualitative, different, and positive learning experience. This can create a kind of "turning point" or "fateful moment in the biography" regarding their own experiences of their school curriculum and their

learning abilities (Giddens, 1991, 1994). Moreover, if some experienced these magic “turning points,” what would the characteristics of these students be? We also aim to map out how Alternative School Day (ASD) may enhance the pupils' general awareness and consciousness about the “new risks” in society. For instance, risk related to globalization, extended consumption, and incorporating it into generic knowledge and continuous reflection. This reflection is something that the student can bring with them as a kind of prerequisite and abilities into the grown-up life.

2. Theoretical Contribution to Understanding Adolescence as a Transitional Phase and its Possible Exclusions from Central Arenas

Adolescents have been described as a marginal social category. The marginality points to the adolescent period as a transition phase and that adolescents have a peripheral role in society (Frønes & Solvang, 1991). To understand the processes of marginalization, one must consider significant institutions, such as the family, friendships, schools, and organizations. Roberts (1995) claims that while a railway journey might have been a suitable metaphor for youth in modern society, driving in a private car is a more relevant image today. Thus, we have moved from a situation where short, collective, and predictable transitions to adulthood were dominant to a long, twisting, and individual path (see Buchmann, 1989). Through a series of important choices or turning points in adolescence, youths encounter the risk of society. They must make momentous choices. They can succeed or fail. This individualization of the youth stage can be grasped through reflexive modernization, which refers to an increasing pressure on youth to reflect on the subjective consequences of their actions (Giddens, Bech, & Lash, 1994). Another example of this phenomenon can be taken from the media and the appearance of fake news (NUPI, 2018). The consequence of this societal development is that it puts pressure on everyone to do their reflected deliberation concerning which news to rely on. This phenomenon was not common only some years ago. We hypothesize that the student's participation in the ASD might help them to understand several aspects of their personalities better.

In the youth theory of the 1990s, one frequently encounters the terms choice, individualization, risk, globalization, and reflexivity (Bauman, 2001; Beck, 1992, 2002; Bernstein, 2000; Furlong & Cartmel, 1997; Giddens, 1991, 1994, 1999). More than in previous social systems, youth scenes in post-industrial society might be characterized by dissolving tradition, diversity, individual solutions, uncertainty, and risk. A central concept in this pronouncement is “disembodying mechanisms,” which is the impairment and dissolution of the earlier strong structures, like social classes, local society, church society, etc. (Giddens, 1991). These perspectives reveal that education and other forms of qualification activities to an extended degree will get a weak characteristic which the parents monitor. It is important to make the right and deliberate choices: the right schools and teachers, the accurate subjects and marks, the appropriate friends and manners, the accurate leisure activities, and the right time. When

institutions are dissolute as behavior cooperation, local knowledge will also be affected as this cooperation produces dissoluteness. In increasing several arenas, I will be met with a more locally developed understanding and knowledge and meet more public and non-place anchored expertise (from nursery schoolteachers to social workers to doctor specialists and flight leaders). In order to function in such a society, we must develop a certain degree of confidence that these expert systems are functioning correctly. Life will become tough if we go around with fundamental doubt in every context where we depend on such expertise. Giddens (1991, 1994) emphasized knowledge, competence, and choices as the basic challenges in entering the risk society. On the other hand, Ulrich Beck (1986) links this entrance to concepts like increased globalization, new lifestyles, and the increasing use of world resources and consumptions and modern technology (Beck, 2000) as the new challenges. These can be exemplified by nuclear threats, environmental pollution, for example, through air, water, or groceries, and risks associated with modern traffic systems (Beck, 1992). However, there are contexts where theorists have attributed several main characteristics to post-modernity that will still be challenged by tradition, local culture, class, and social organization. Moreover, marginalization, although deeply connected to what has been termed the fateful moments of biography, or “turning point” in the curriculum. This cannot be understood without considering traditional sociological variables like problem identification, false communication, stigmatization, and multiple problems (Furlong, 1997; Carrigan, 2013; Øia & Heggen, 2005). This sociological perspective, incidentally, does not use marginalization as a central concept but depicts identity problems, for example, as an effect of a series of discontinuities, “critical moments,” or “fateful moments in the biography” (Giddens, 1991, 1994). Along with the dissolution of the old social structures, increased globalization, “dis-embedding” mechanisms, and more impulses and choices, every person is going through a period of individualization.

Consequently, the individual must be related to oneself to an increasingly extended degree and his/her placement in society—thus self-reflection. Thus, this dissolution of social arrangement transfers new demands, like freedom, expectation, control, and challenges, to the individuals. This gives many individuals an exceeded number of choices but can also mean that the individual becomes more vulnerable and adjoined for marginalization. This allows the individual to create their biography but amplifies the possibility that they will not have the power to deal with the pressure. Moreover, the risk of developing what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) have called a total “collapse biography” is the most current.

3. The Context

Eight boys and one girl, their parents, and teachers were interviewed about several topics connected to ASD. The pupils were interviewed twice, during autumn (T1) and spring (T2). In this program, the

emphasis is to make the tasks more concrete. In that manner, it can be easier to visualize, for example, mathematical magnitudes. For instance, during the school kitchen session, the teacher shows how much 10 dl of milk, and 600 grams of butter are. Then, the students can see, feel, and measure the content of the liquid or populace, making it more comprehensible to understand and fully relate to the different mathematical magnitudes.

4. Method

The method at use is thematic analyses, evolved by Braun and Clark. We used a semi-structured interview and inductive reasoning as the method. The qualitative interview is defined as a dialogue to obtain descriptions of the life world of informants concerning their interpretation of important phenomena (Kvaale & Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interview has a sequence of themes to be covered and suggested questions. It is open to changes in sequence and forms of questions to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects. The interview has the advantage of covering deeper essential meaning compared to quantitative approaches. In this study, meaning condensation or an abridgment of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations was utilized. For example, several teachers formulated, “he does not understand anything regarding theoretical subjects, but he is very clever in gymnastics and mechanical subjects.” This statement was condensed to “he is very weak in theoretical subjects, but he manages quite well in practical subjects.” Regarding trustworthiness, there was a relatively strong correspondence between what the pupils, parents, and teachers reported. However, it must be noted that regarding school problems, the students and their parents often meant that the teachers or the school represented the challenge. In contrast, the teachers, on their side, looked upon the students as being problematic. Further on, it is possible that the questions were not always adequate since it was common for the pupils to answer, “I do not know” or “I have not thought about this.”

The Interview Guides

At both T1 and T2, three interview guides were constructed. These contain questions for the pupils, their parents, and teachers. The first interview with the pupils covers the school situation, well-being, mastery experience, and self-esteem related to theoretical achievements. Further, questions concerning the relationships between parents and friends were elaborated, and questions concerning the reflected deliberation due to the new challenges within society are at risk. At T2, the focus was on possible changes since T1, for example, if the students shook school if their relationships with parents and teachers had improved, and if they had changed themselves in any way. Further on, they were asked whether the lessons about the risks related to extended consumption and risks associated with globalization were helpful for them. They also questioned whether the knowledge about the countless possibilities nowadays led them to do more deliberate reflection before choosing, for example, an

educational trajectory or making decisions concerning other important topics. Questions directed to parents at T1 involved whether they thought their children would benefit from participating in the ASD and the conditions regarding their children's school, leisure, and family situation. The questions to teachers at T1 involved what kind of influence they think ASD will have upon the students, their social competencies, school subjects coping, level of truancy, and general societal concern. Additionally, they were asked if they had been involved in mockery and if they conflicted with teachers and other pupils. At T2, questions primarily focused on potential changes in the students' lives since T1 from the perspectives of parents and teachers. Moreover, whether the students had become more socially engaged.

5. Data Analysis

At T1, all the pupils were interviewed face-to-face at the ASD. At T2, five were interviewed at the same place, one at home and three by telephone because they had traveled away on summer vacation. The teachers received the questions via email before they were interviewed. Because a tape recorder may distract the respondents, it was decided to do the notetaking on the spot. The interviews were transcribed, and the written texts became the material for the subsequent interpretation. By transcribing the interviews from oral to written, we make the interview conversations more amenable for closer analysis. Structuring the material into text facilitates an overview and comprises a preliminary analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The pupils were split into three groups over three days. As mentioned, there was one girl in the sample. This represented an anonymity problem, and the solution was that all the pupils acquired boy names. All the students had working-class backgrounds.

5.1 The Participants

The pupils were divided into three tentative groups: The marginalized (M-group), the twilight zone (T-group), and the integrated (I-group). This was one way to structure the material. Some of the pupils were easy to place while others were not. Two students could, for example, be referred to as marginalized but were placed under the twilight zone because they were better off in some areas. The integrated students were easier to place. However, all the students had two factors in common. First, they did not cope with the theoretical subjects at school, and second, they did not feel at home in the regular school environment.

5.2 Marginalized

Joachim, Jonas, and Tom showed negative development during the school year. Joachim and Jonas quit school, and Tom attended a special school. Tom resided with both parents, while Joachim and Jonas cohabited with their mothers. All three had a bad relationship with their parents. Heggen and colleagues (2003) found that marginalized adolescents who had problematic relationships with their parents developed close relationships with friends. Among their friends, they got confirmation of themselves,

and such positive experiences were important regarding the adolescents' sense of belonging and identity. This was not the case for Tom and Joachim. They gave the impression that friendships were unimportant; they seemed to have problems establishing close relationships with friends and adults. Further, they were depressed and seldom took the initiative themselves. The distant relationship between Tom and his parents might have been the reason why he found excitement in drugs. Thus, it worsened an already bad relationship. For Jonas, the situation was somewhat different. His mother had psychiatric problems, and they were poor. Additionally, he seldom met his father. Jonas was also into drugs, but he had friends outside this milieu as well. He conflicted with his mother, but they were in contact, and he often brought friends home. Tom chose another strategy; he seldom went home to avoid quarreling and fussing. Tom and Jonas had been in contact with the police several times. Tom was arrested for using drugs, and Jonas for stealing. All three boys had withdrawn from family and school, which can be seen as an attempt to avoid social control in arenas important for adolescents' social integration.

5.3 The Twilight Zone Lars and Adrian quit school. Lars started to work, and Adrian attended a special school. Even though they were no longer at the ordinary school, they were better off in other arenas than the students in the marginalized group. This was the case, especially regarding their relationships with their parents. Lars and Adrian reported that they had a good and close relationship with their parents. Lars lived with both parents, while Adrian resided with his father. It was shared that the students had the most contact with their mothers, so the bond between Adrian and his father was an exception. Lars played football, which meant a lot to him, although he had few friends in this group.

5.3 Twilight Zone

Lars and Adrian quit school. Lars started to work, and Adrian attended a special school. Even though they were not at the ordinary school any longer, they were better off in other areas, compared to the students in the marginalized group. This was the case especially regarding their relationships with their parents. Both Lars and Adrian reported that they had a good and close relationship with both of their parents. Lars lived with both parents, while Adrian resided with his father. It was common that the students had most contact with their mothers, so the bond between Adrian and his father was an exception. Lars played football, which meant a lot to him, although he had few friends in this group.

5.4 The Integrated

Andy, Sam, Martin, and Tony were still at the ordinary school, and they did not work hard, and sometimes they came late to school. All four showed positive development during the year. Moreover, all were engaged in sports activities that meant a lot to them, and they had friends in these milieus. They had relatively good contact with their parents but felt most attached to their mothers. All of them, except Andy, reported quarreling with their parents. Andy was the only one who did not reside with both parents. All of them also had good relationships with other students.

5.5 Reflexivity

The second researcher in this paper conducted the interviews and transcribed them. She is, unfortunately, deceased. Her background was as a sociologist, and she invited me to participate in the project to gain a more psychological understanding of the research field. We have been cooperating closely, and she told me about ASD daily during the interviews. As a sociologist, I would assume that she was colored by her theoretical background, with discourses like the agency-structure perspective. That I, as a psychologist, found absorbing. Because I was trained within a tradition preoccupied with looking after pathology on the individual and putting up diagnoses on pupils with behavioral or adjustment problems.

6. Findings

The ASD as a Comfort Zone and Relationships to Adults. Quality of life is related to a subjective feeling of comfort or its absence. To feel comfortable refers to different conditions: to feel at home, to be seen, to be taken seriously, and to have something that one experiences as meaningful in one's life. The adolescents felt they were at home at the ASD and that this represented a significant contrast to how they experienced school. All the adolescents said that they felt comfortable with ASD. Tony reported, "We are like a big, happy family." Joachim said he often had significant problems getting out of bed in the mornings, but he always showed up at the ASD because this day offered him a day with positive experiences. However, the ASD was not only a comfort zone. The project also gave the students a feeling of freedom, i.e., freedom from school and a place where they could change their ways. Joachim said it meant a lot to him being there because the adults treated him respectfully and mutually, and he respected them. They also reported that the societal topics they were discussing were exciting. All the students reported that the experience in the ASD was in great contrast to their experiences and relationships with the teachers in the ordinary school. Martin expressed how it was much easier talking to the adults in the ASD, compared to the teachers at school, because they understood him much better.

It is obvious that the adolescents' satisfaction with ASD was related to a break from school but also the opportunity to do something meaningful. They participated in activities they otherwise had no chance of taking part in. A central factor related to the students' contentment was their significant contact with the adults. All the students reported that the teachers both listened to them and helped them. They were regarded with respect and understanding. Jonas' teacher said it was important for Jonas to be acquainted with adults, as they could not care for all the students. She also claimed that he did not want to talk to her but believed that the adults at the ASD managed to get in close contact with him. In addition, Adrian's teacher gave a similar report. She meant it was essential for Adrian to get support from the adults at the ASD. She also claimed that the ASD had given him better self-esteem,

and he seemed more reflected and content. Similarly, Martin's teacher said that ASD had given Martin better self-confidence because he was coping better with the theoretical subjects at school. The ASD had a positive effect on the I-group. All four got better marks, did not skip school anymore, and functioned better socially. Their teachers are very positive when discussing ASD and its meaning for the students. Andy's teacher says that he has become more motivated to work with different subjects, and she relates this to his role at the ASD: "He says that at the ASD, he is a resource and an important person. He feels he is very clever there, which is very different from what he feels at school. He also seems to like the subject, which is more practical. Moreover, the themes concerning consumption and globalization, he finds absorbing". From this expression, it seems like we can conclude that the students in this group have experienced a kind of "turning point" accordingly that they started to look at themselves in possession of good abilities, and that their efforts matter. The students in this group have better prerequisites than those in the two other groups.

7. Discussion The ASD represents an effort to prevent antisocial behavior, but the findings in this study show that not all the students benefit from attending this project. One of the employees in ASD said: "We have to confess that we cannot help all the students, but for most of them, I think we can prevent further negative development". However, even though a negative development occurred among three of the students, ASD represents a sanctuary in a chaotic life phase. The adults at the ASD are important to all the students; they support them and show respect, and the youth feel secure and comfortable among the other adolescents. Further, ASD offers them coping experiences. Some of the teachers report that their students function better at school, and both pupils and their parents confirm that attendance has positively influenced their relationships. One may, therefore, conclude that ASD has succeeded in its work. This study has focused on the school as a middle-class arena, and for students with working-class backgrounds, it is regarded as an "away ground." The findings may indicate that adolescents from the working class do not feel at home in regular school to the same extent as those from the middle class. Participating in the Alternative school day might also strengthen the adolescents' capacity to make the right choices at the right time and better prepare them to create their own bibliography. Concerning their lessons about consumption and the new risks in society today, most students said that they found these societal topics engaging, interesting, and advantageous. Regarding the "turning points" in the biography, it seems like especially Adrian came to a state where he had those experiences. Moreover, these immersive experiences happened in the special school. His father reported that his son had learned more in the special school within a year than in all the other school years. The other students who placed themselves in the integrated group also benefited extensively from participation in the ASD. They have better self-esteem and are more content, so from this description, it seems like they might have experienced a kind "turning point" and have started to look upon themselves as competent agents, not losers in the academic field. However, the students in the integrated group were better off in terms of

different factors than those in the twilight and marginalized groups. It seems like it was easier for the pedagogues to give a little extra so that the students could significantly change their pedagogic experience when offered better and more positive conditions. The ASD had a positive effect on the I-group. All four got better marks, did not skip school anymore, and functioned better socially. Their teachers are very positive when discussing ASD and its meaning for the students. Andy's teacher says that he has become more motivated to work with different subjects, and she relates this to his role at the ASD: "He says that at the ASD, he is a resource and an important person. He feels he is very clever there, which is quite different from how he feels at school. He also seems to like the topics that are more practical and the notions about consumption and globalization, which he finds very "interesting". From this expression, it seems like we can conclude that the students in this group have experienced a kind of "turning point," in that way that they started to look at themselves in possession of good abilities, and that their efforts matter. The students in this group have better prerequisites than those in the two other groups. In the discourse about the agent versus structure perspective, some theorists have argued that when the students fail, it is the schools and the teachers who are not able to arrange the school into an adequate arena for all pupils (Christie, 1973; Giroux, 1983; Nordahl, 2010; Nordahl, 2013). Regarding the critique of the individualization thesis, it has been postulated that it empathizes with free choices to an extent and does not notify the restrictions within already established structures (Furlong & Cartell, 1997; Brannen & Nilsen, 2005). Theorists have also pinpointed that the individualization thesis requires a well-established welfare state to offer each alleged choice and possibility (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005).

7. Limitations Connected to the Study

One limitation of this investigation was that only students from the working class participated in this study. It is, therefore, impossible to say anything about how students from the middle-class experience school. Many middle-class students experience school as boring and may also have problems in different areas. However, it is thought-provoking that only adolescents from the working class attend the project. Further, the individuals under investigation have problems in one or several areas, which means they generally do not represent working-class students. When it comes to studying "the fateful moment" and "turning points" in the biography, there are challenges for an inquiry that seeks to avoid taking professions of agency and self-narratives of transition at face value. However, this becomes particularly problematic given what Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel describe as the "epistemological fallacy of late modernity": the tendency to diversify individual experience to give rise to an individualized self-understanding of its underlying causes. This allows us to step back from the actualism inherent to "fateful moments" and "turning points" while still retaining a focus on the role played by human action in shaping biographical unfolding. Therefore, the realist approach to

biography thus involves understanding and explaining how individuals are shaping biographical unfolding. It also allows us to take subjectivity seriously while avoiding the empiricist temptation to “give voice” to the narrative of a participant. To this end, Derek Layder’s (1997) notion of psychobiography has proved useful in thinking through exactly what a biography is in an ontological sense. He offers this concept to avoid conflation in understanding individual transition over the life course (Carrigan, 2007).

8. Conclusion

The ASD represents an effort to prevent antisocial behavior, but the findings in this study show that not all the students benefit from attending this project. One of the employees in ASD said: “We must confess that we cannot help all the students, but for most of them, I think we can prevent further negative development”. However, even though a negative development occurred among three of the students, ASD represents a sanctuary in a chaotic life phase. The adults at the ASD are important to all the students; they support them and show respect, and the youth feel secure and comfortable among the other adolescents. Further, ASD offers them coping experiences. Some of the teachers report that their students function better at school, and both pupils and their parents confirm that attendance has positively influenced their relationships. One may, therefore, conclude that ASD has succeeded in its work. This study has focused on the school as a middle-class arena, and for students with working-class backgrounds, it might be regarded as “a detour.” The findings may indicate that adolescents from the working class do not feel at home in regular school to the same extent as those from the middle class. Finally, ASD exists in the “battlefield” between integration and segregation, and one question is whether students exposing antisocial behavior should be offered help from school or be assisted in ordinary classes. We recommend that the ASD offers a full-time project for those not fitting into the ordinary school. However, at the same time, ASD can succeed quite well for some if its methods and philosophy are integrated into the regular school system. Some of the teachers have shown a tendency to blame parents who have “problematic” children. The pupils’ future situation can only be improved by trustworthiness and equivalent cooperation. When children and youths encounter positions of power, how they are seen and heard, evaluated and sanctioned, is decisive. Participating in Alternative School Day might also strengthen adolescents’ capacity to make the right choices at the right time and, hopefully, create their own bibliography. However, this is only claiming speculation. Will it be possible to enhance young people’s awareness regarding issues like education and jobs to apply to? Which partner should you marry and continue to stay married with, and which habits concerning training and food consumption should you choose in a chaotic, globalized, and changing world? It becomes a difficult task, although the pupils at ASD claimed that they found these problem positions exciting and engaging, and “that is a kind of extended their thinking and reflection.” Although, some of the students

reported that they had not thought about all those issues before. As mentioned earlier, regarding the “turning points” in the biography, it seems like Adrian especially came to a state where he had that experience. Moreover, these immersive experiences happened in the special school. His father reported that his son had learned more in a special school in a year than in all the other school years. The other students who placed themselves in the integrated group also benefited extensively from participation in the ASD. They got better self-esteem and were more content, so from this description, it seems like they might have experienced a kind of “turning point.” from this experience, they started to look upon themselves as competent agents and not losers in the academic field. However, the students in the integrated group were better off in terms of different factors than those in the twilight and marginalized groups. It seems like it was easier for the pedagogues to give a little extra so that the pupils could significantly change their pedagogic experience when offered better and more positive conditions.

The fact that ASD can be characterized as a “ghetto”, or a “sanctuary” is not necessarily a problem. As a middle-class arena, the school has and still will have huge problems with offering fundamental support to “difficult” pupils. If this is the case, students exposing antisocial behavior will be those who need ASD the most as protection. The problem is, however, that this protection is too weak. The ASD should, therefore, be developed into a more comprehensive project, for example, through a full-time arrangement. As we have seen above, this resolution was chosen for two special school students. For the others, especially those in the I-group, the ASD functioned very well. However, the integration work could function better for these students if the ASD was included in the ordinary school. Based on this, it would be interesting if the ASD develops both offerings, i.e., a full-time educational offer for those who do not fit into the school and an arrangement in the schools for those who will benefit from integration.

However, establishing a full-time offer represents a considerable challenge economically because the professional pedagogical arrangement must be changed significantly compared to the existing praxis. At the same time, ASD has some serious weaknesses. Since the ambition is integration, it is alarming that five have quit school after they attended the ASD. This might happen due to reactance, and it might be elevated due to the pupil’s attainment in the program, where they felt they were being seen and understood. It is also a result of the pupils’ feeling of many years of playing the looser role, alienation, and boredom in the regular school. Therefore, these pupils quitting normal schools can be seen as a reaction to their negative feelings within the normal school for many years. The pupils quitting school can be interpreted as not wanting to participate in an activity where they feel that they are not respected or positively valued and do not feel at home anymore. Thus, the ASD represented an upgrade in their self-worth through their attendance in the ASD.

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