

Subproject 3 - Migration and Transformation of Powerful Knowledge

Subproject 3 problematises the transformation processes in the relationship between discipline and school subject taking the discussion of the so-called Powerful Knowledge as starting- point. As mentioned above the concept of Powerful Knowledge has developed in disciplines regarding a certain knowledge domain and how this knowledge can be part of teaching (Young 2011; 2013). Migration is the knowledge domain we will discuss, as it is one of the most urgent issues today and of great relevance to schools.

Knowledge in most subjects is built on conceptual knowledge. Knowledge is demonstrated in the ability to use it in different contexts, to see how concepts are related and how they form meaningful units (Husbands 1996, Bruner 1970). All concepts, however, are not as challenging (central) in a knowledge domain such as migration, and certain concepts can be labelled threshold concepts (Meyer and Land 2003). If students have knowledge of difficult threshold concepts, it means that they have a new understanding and have acquired knowledge of a certain domain. In line with the conceptual approach, language perspectives become central. Concepts are the very foundation of the language of a subject and the ability to use concepts in the subject and in relation to everyday language is a challenge, not least in terms of a second language perspective (Cummins 1996). Based on the discussion of powerful knowledge and the threshold concept, the project aim is to study the representations of threshold concepts in the knowledge domain migration, as these are manifested – transformed

– in teaching, and to analyse the interplay of representations and the understanding that students develop of threshold concepts and the knowledge domain as a whole.

Concretely, two research and development circles of cooperating practicing teachers will be initiated and a content theory of how the theme of migration could be learnt (Andersson 2005) will be developed. In the next stage (2018-2019), when the research and development circles have been initiated, the development continues in cooperation with the teachers active in the circles. Later, when the teaching sequences developed are being tested (2019), the researchers will participate by observing and collecting empirical data. The circles will run for one academic year. The empirical material will consist of audio recordings from the circle meetings, teaching material, video recorded teaching, video recorded focus group interviews with students and other student produced material (such as various types of texts). Since migration is an interdisciplinary knowledge domain, ROSE researchers with different backgrounds (History, Political science, Human geography, Swedish as a second language) will work together. A post doc will be advertised and the successful candidate will lead one of the circles. A visiting professor with expertise in the area of language developing subject teaching will participate in all part of subproject 3.

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