

From: [Victoria Helen Southgate](#)
To: [Simo Køppe](#); [SAMF-PSY-prof-lek-adj-post-doc](#)
Subject: Re: Åbent brev
Date: 18. december 2022 14:34:42
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Pensumliste expanded 2022.pdf](#)
[FACT SHEET ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY COURSE.pdf](#)
[Developmental Lecture overview.pdf](#)

Dear all,

The developmental teaching group have spent our weekend constructing documents about the course that we hope will correct some of the (mis)information that has been circulating about the new pensumliste. These include a statement about the history and context of the course, and the reasons why it was revised and why the pensumliste now looks different. In addition, we have written an extended pensumliste with a description of each and every text that was included. I also attach the lecture structure so that it is easy to see how each assigned reading fits in to the course. As I made clear last week, the textbook was chosen precisely for its focus on sociocultural approaches. Please do let me know if you would like to actually look at the textbook, I'm very happy to share my access.

We hope that it is clearer by reading this that a diversity of perspectives is absolutely present in the pensumliste and that the course itself gives ample space to sociocultural contexts/approaches. Furthermore, although particular texts are absent from the list, their perspectives are often represented both in the textbook as well as in other texts who adopt, expand or explicate some of these foundational theories (e.g. those of Vygotsky, Stern, Bruner, Winnicott, Butler etc.).

Finally, while I hope these documents will help, I would like to appeal to you all to be mindful that we have a number of junior tenure-track assistant professors teaching on this course (some for the first time), and a primary concern of mine is that their ability to teach with authority is not compromised.

Best
Victoria.

From: Simo Køppe <simo.koeppe@psy.ku.dk>
Date: Sunday, 18 December 2022 at 13.49
To: SAMF-PSY-prof-lek-adj-post-doc <PSYK+psy-vip+@ibt.ku.dk>
Subject: Åbent brev

Fra en gruppe af humanvidenskabelige forskere og undervisere på Institut for Psykologi (Sofie Boldsen; Frederik M Bjerregaard-Nielsen; Anders Essom-Stenz; Bjarne Sode Funch; Andrea Hyldeg; Torben Bechmann Jensen; Benedikte Kudahl; Simo Køppe; Tone Roald; Lea Isabel Sidenius; Sebastian Tobias-Renstrøm; Katrine Zeuthen)

Dansk og English

Kære kolleger og studerende

Vi er en del kolleger (bl.a. fra den humanistiske forskningsklynge), der gerne vil bidrage til den debat, der verserer i øjeblikket, med vores syn på de problemer, som vi oplever, de studerendes blokade kan ses som en reaktion på. Vi vil derfor søge at sætte nogle ord på vores opfattelse af, hvad det er for udfordringer, vi som uddannelse står overfor. Dette vil vi især

gøre, fordi vi har gode erfaringer med, at vi som kolleger kan blive klogere på hinandens forskellige perspektiver på psykologien, og derigennem kan opnå relevant samarbejde med forbedrede forståelser og dermed fag til følge. Vi håber derfor på, at vores indlæg i diskussionen vil blive taget som en opfordring og invitation til yderligere udveksling og debat om psykologien, dens status og fremtid på instituttet.

Vi er enige i de studerendes grundlæggende påpejning af, at uddannelsen i stigende grad mangler perspektiver fra den kritiske samfundsvidenskab og humanvidenskab. Dette skal forstås ud fra en habermasiansk opdeling i samfundsvidenskab, humanvidenskab og naturvidenskab, hvoraf vi mener at psykologien har et ben i alle tre lejre. Udviklingen væk fra en bred repræsentation af alle disse forskellige perspektiver går langt tilbage, og allerede afskaffelsen af faget "Genstand og metode" medførte en kraftig nedprioritering af den retning eller disciplin, man kaldte for almenpsykologien, som var et forsøg på at danne helhedsorienterede og samlende teorier om, hvad 'det psykiske' som sådan overhovedet er. Dertil ser vi også en udfordring i, at studiet i tiltagende grad har mistet undervisere, som har forstand på, erfaring med og forskningsmæssig interesse i netop de praksissammenhænge, som mange af vores studerende skal ud og agere i. Mange studerende skal ud og arbejde i PPR, og vi har mistet flere kolleger gennem årene, som har haft stor ekspertise inden for områder, som er vigtige at kende til, når man som PPR-psykolog skal arbejde tværfagligt med udviklingsarbejde i en særlig skolemæssig sammenhæng. Det er vores opfattelse, at vores studerende på den ene side mangler større integrerende teoretiske perspektiver og på den anden side mangler forståelse for de praksisfelter, de skal navigere i som professionelle efter studiet.

Med ovenstående som udgangspunkt vil vi først forsøge at udfolde de teoretiske diskussioner af videnskabelighed og faglighed og efterfølgende diskutere udfordringerne, som vi ser dem i praksis på instituttet.

Almenpsykologiens tilgang som disciplin er karakteriseret ved grundlæggende at arbejde nonreduktivt med psyken. Psyken opfattes som en entitet, man ikke kan reducere til summen af dens bestanddele. Psyken er ikke "blot" biologi, men mere end det, om end den selvfølgelig står i et meget særligt og vigtigt forhold til biologien. Både psykoanalyse, fænomenologi og kritisk psykologi er således eksempler på retninger inden for psykologien (og andre felter), som arbejder med, at psyken grundlæggende ikke kun kan forstås som et udtryk for hjerne eller andre biologiske begreber (eller organer). Men vigtigere endnu, så er det også retninger, som arbejder helhedsorienteret med spørgsmålet om psyken. De er således grundlæggende sat i en form for videnskabelighed, hvor man forsøger at forstå det enkelte menneske og dets subjektivitet med udgangspunkt i en kontekstualiseret og helhedsorienteret tilgang. Spørgsmålet består således for alle disse retninger ikke i at afdække specifikke sammenhænge mellem klart afgrænsede variable, men snarere at forstå dannelsen af

komplekse og særlige fænomener og udtryk som resultatet af en helhed af mange forskelligartede processer. Denne form for videnskabelighed mener vi er essentiel for at forstå psyken og bør derfor også være en essentiel del af psykologiuddannelsen, da denne type af videnskabelighed bidrager til en forståelse for nuancerne og det særlige ved de enkelte mennesker og deres liv. Psykologer vil i de fleste praksissammenhænge skulle forholde sig til mennesker med særegne problemer og med særlige nuancer, og en forståelse for sådanne subjektive problemer kræver en reflektiv tænkning med baggrund i teorier og metoder, man blandt andet finder inden for det almenpsykologiske felt.

Uanset om der er tale om klinisk behandling i ambulatorier eller arbejdet med en skoleklasse fyldt med vanskeligheder, så er det vigtigt, at vi klæder vores studerende på til deres deltagelse i forskellige praksisser med almene teorier, der hjælper dem med at overveje, hvordan de skal gribe forskellige problemstillinger an, når de møder dem i virkeligheden. Det er således efter vores opfattelse ikke kun et spørgsmål om, at de skal lære "hvad der virker bedst" (hvad de selvfølgelig også skal), men også at de skal lære tilgange, der hjælper dem med at forstå, *hvordan* de får noget til at virke godt i en sammenhæng med andre aktører. Sagt på en anden måde; hvis det, der virker bedst, ikke virker, hvad gør man så? Da har man brug for teorier, der hjælper en med at tænke alment psykologisk. Her er det især retninger inden for psykologien, der specifikt forstår subjektet som betydningsfuldt engageret i praksisser og som et subjekt, der tænker, beslutter og udvikler sig igennem disse, der kan hjælpe de studerende med at arbejde sammen med eksempelvis folkeskolelærere om, hvordan man udvikler praksis på måder, hvor en intervention kan virke efter hensigten. Vi mener selvfølgelig ikke, at disse perspektiver skal stå alene, men at der bør være en ligelig vægtning mellem disse og andre (eks. mere klassisk naturvidenskabelige) tilgange. I samme ombæring er det vigtigt at understrege at vi værdsætter den faglige diversitet som alle vores kolleger bringer til bordet i fællesskab. Samlet set er disse perspektiver uundværlige for en uddannelse, der skal uddanne psykologer til det danske arbejdsmarked.

Men hvorfor synes det så svært at få diverse tilgange til at sameksistere ligeværdigt på vores institut? Som på alle andre arbejdspladser skal de forskellige hensyn og interesser på et institut søges samlet i praksis. Spørgsmål om, hvem der kan varetage hvilken undervisning hvornår, er relevante, når det handler om, hvilke perspektiver, der kan være til stede på et pensum i et fag. Spørgsmål om, hvorvidt en godkendelse af et pensum i et studienævn er udtryk for en billigelse af et pensum afhænger af, om studienævnet har haft tilstrækkelig mulighed for at sætte sig ind i det pågældende pensum og vurdere, om de er enige i, at det lever op til de rimelige forventninger. Spørgsmål om, hvem der ansættes på instituttet, afhænger af, hvad man vægter højest i disse ansættelser, og hvilke strategier for Københavns Universitet, der sættes af rektoratet, men også af hvilke formelle bestemmelser der er; hvilken status ansættelsesudvalg og studienævn har. Det er vores opfattelse, at der på tværs af alle disse mange sammenhænge er sket glidninger, der over lang tid har skabt den situation, vi befinder os i. Derfor er det også svært at placere "forklaringen" entydigt et sted. Snarere bør man

opfatte den samlede udvikling som et kompleks samspil af mange forhold, hvor enkeltpersoners konkrete deltagelse ikke i sig selv udgør *den* forskel, der udmønter sig i den nuværende situation, de studerende problematiserer.

Vi har også sympati for de af vores kolleger, som starter på instituttet og ikke kender til de perspektiver, der tidligere er blevet udfoldet for de studerende, og som kun kan undre sig over, hvorfor den psykologi, som de er eksperter inden for, ikke synes at være nok i sig selv til at dække den faglige bredde, vi søger. Det er vores oplevelse, at meget af den udfordring, der handler om ansættelser og pensum blandt os kolleger på instituttet også er afstedkommet af manglende dialoger og udvekslinger af forskellige syn på videnskabelighed og på psykologien. Kolleger imellem har mange af os har sikkert en forestilling om at vores syn på videnskabelighed og psykologien enten afviger - eller flugter - mere end det egentlig gør. Derfor bør vi tage disse diskussioner. I denne sammenhæng er den afsluttende debat på socialpsykologifaget for 1. semesterstuderende et udmærket eksempel på, hvordan forskellige forskere fra diverse traditioner har meget, de er enige om, og meget de er uenige om, og at vi som kolleger bliver klogere, når vi engagerer os aktivt i disse diskussioner. I den forbindelse er fordelagtigt at tænke denne uenighed som et samlende udgangspunkt for vores uddannelser. Det bør være sådan, at i alle de fag på uddannelsen, som oplagt har forskellige videnskabeligheder tilknyttet, tænkes forskelligheder ind, som en del af faget i sig selv. Ikke dermed sagt, at man bør læse Victor Frankl i faget Kognitionspsykologi, men det er vigtigt, at de studerende både hører om social decision making og kritisk psykologi i socialpsykologi. Vi undrer os over, at udviklingspsykologien ikke længere rummer psykoanalyse og sociokulturelle tilgange. Især fordi en del af udviklingspsykologi handler om, hvad udvikling overhovedet betyder, og om man meningsfuldt *kan* adskille menneskets udvikling fra den kulturhistoriske sammenhæng, det udvikler sig i. Vi mener ikke at hverken vi selv eller vores kolleger er i stand til at komme med et endeligt eller fyldestgørende svar på store spørgsmål som dette, hvorfor de studerende må præsenteres for flere mulige måder at tænke udvikling på.

Løsningen må være at sørge for, at der etableres klare strukturer for praksisser omkring ansættelser og også fagtilrettelæggelse, på en sådan måde, at mangfoldigheden af udgangspunkter for forståelse af psykologien kan diskuteres i demokratiske fora. Arbejdet med en klarere praksis for studienævnet er hensigtsmæssigt i denne sammenhæng, men der bør også arbejdes på, at de studerende får mere medbestemmelse flere steder i processen. Som institut skal vi ikke være lukket fra omverdenen, og det er berigende at have en mangfoldig kreds af kolleger, der forstår psykologi ud fra forskellige videnskabelige udgangspunkter. Og vi har samtidig en forpligtigelse over for de studerende, vi uddanner, til at kunne indgå i en dansk praksissammenhæng. Vi skal levere undervisning til de studerende, som klæder dem bredt på til de mange typer af videnskabelighed, der er vigtige for et virke som psykolog, og vi skal kunne formidle relevant viden om netop de praksissammenhænge, de skal indgå i som psykologer.

Dear Colleagues and Students,

Several of us (including staff from the Humanities research cluster) wish to contribute to the current debate about the students' blockade. We will try to put into words our perceptions of the challenges we are facing as educators. Our motivation is especially derived from good collegial experiences, where we have learned about each other's perspectives on psychology. We hope to achieve a fruitful collaboration with improved understanding and, as a result, improved courses for our students. We hope that this document will be received as an encouragement and invitation to further exchange and debate about psychology, its status, and future at the department.

We agree with the students' fundamental point of view that their education increasingly lacks perspectives from critical social science and the humanities. This is to be understood from a Habermasian distinction between social sciences, natural sciences, and humanistic sciences, of which we believe psychology to be entrenched in all three. The trend of some of these differing perspectives lacking goes back quite a long way with the discontinuation of the course "Area of Inquiry and Method" (Genstand og metode). This led to a decided deprioritization of the discipline of General Psychology (Danish: almenspsykologi), which centers around holistic and unifying theories attempting to answer the question of what psychology actually is. In turn, we have also to an increasing degree lost teachers with experience and research interests in practical contexts in which several of our students must navigate. Many students start their careers in PPR, and we have lost a number of colleagues over the years who have considerable expertise in relevant areas in which PPR psychologists need to have thorough knowledge when working across disciplines in diverse school contexts. We believe that our education lacks an integrative theoretical perspective as well as an understanding of the fields of practice in which many of our students will have to navigate as professionals after graduation. With the above as our point of departure, we will discuss the theoretical challenges of scientific practice and professionalism followed by the challenges we see in its practice at the department.

General Psychology is characterized by a non-reductive (or as non-reductive as possible) approach to the psyche. The psyche is perceived as an entity that cannot be reduced to the sum of its constituent parts. It is e.g. not only biology, but exists as a relation to the world. Psychoanalysis, Phenomenology, and Critical Psychology are schools of psychology (and of other disciplines), which work to ensure that the psyche is fundamentally understood, not only as an expression of the brain or other biological concepts (or bodies), although biology certainly is very important as well. Essentially, they are approaches that posit, rather non-reductively, questions about the nature of the psyche. They are variations of attempts to understand the singular individual and its subjectivity with a point of origin in a contextualized and unity-oriented approach. A common denominator for these traditions

is that they do not attempt to reveal specific connections between clearly defined variables but, rather, attempt to understand the creation of complex and particular phenomena and expressions as results of a greater whole comprising many different processes. We view this kind of science as essential to understanding the psyche and therefore it should be an essential part of the psychology education, because such a scientific approach contributes significantly to an actual understanding of the nuances and particularities of individual people's lives. Psychologists meet people with unique problems, and a thorough understanding of their issues demands reflection grounded in theories and methods existing within the field of General Psychology and its focus on subjectivity.

Regardless of whether in clinical treatment, in outpatient clinics, or in a school classroom fraught with difficulties, it is important that we equip our students to practice using general theories which help them consider how best to approach different problems as encountered in diverse settings. In our opinion, it is not only a question of having to learn "what works best" – which, of course, students also should learn – they should learn approaches that help them understand *how* they can work well in context with other stakeholders. Put differently: If what works best does not work, what do you do? This means having to draw on theories of General Psychology; the psychologist needs to be able to think about what it means to be human in a particular context.

Here, it is especially the areas of psychology that specifically understand individuals as meaningfully engaged in practice, as subjects who think, decide, and develop across practices, which can help students working together with e.g. schoolteachers about how practice should be developed, whether an intervention works according to a plan. Of course, we do not believe that these perspectives should stand alone, but that we need a better balance between these and other (e.g. more classical natural scientific) approaches. Therefore it is important to underline that we highly value the diversity of perspectives that all our colleagues bring in unity. We believe that all these perspectives are essential for the education of psychologists in the Danish labor market.

However, why does it seem so hard to get it right at our department? As in any other workplace, the various concerns and interests of a department need to come together in practice. Questions of who can teach what and when are relevant when considering the perspectives that might be present in a curriculum for a course. The question of whether the approval of a syllabus by a board of studies is an endorsement of a syllabus depends on whether the board of studies has had sufficient opportunity to actually familiarize itself with the syllabus and to assess whether it agrees that the syllabus meets reasonable expectations. The question of who is appointed to the department depends on what is most important in these appointments and what strategies are set by the rectorate for the University of Copenhagen, but it also depends on what formal regulations there are; what

status the appointment committee and study board have. It is our view that there have been slippages across all these many contexts, which over a long period of time have created the situation we are in now. In this way, we also believe that it is difficult to place the "explanation" unequivocally somewhere. Rather, the overall development should be seen as a complex pattern of many factors, where the concrete participation of individuals does not in itself constitute the difference that results in the situation that the students are problematizing. We also have sympathy for those of our colleagues who start at the department and are unaware of the perspectives that have previously been offered to students, and who can only wonder why the psychology in which they are experts was apparently not enough in itself to fulfill all requirements of what is needed on the subject. It is our experience that many of the challenges around appointments and curriculum among us colleagues at the department are also a symptom of a lack of dialogue and exchange of different views on science and on psychology. If we imagine that we agree about what psychology is, then we must point out that of course we do not and should not. In this context, the final debate in the social psychology course for first semester students is an excellent example of how different researchers, from various traditions, have much they agree on and much they disagree on, and that we as colleagues become wiser when we actively engage in these discussions. In this context, we find it beneficial to think of this disagreement as a unifying starting point for our education. It should be the case that in all the subjects on the program, which obviously have different scientific disciplines associated with them, differences are considered as part of the subject itself. In this way, we do not think that Victor Frankl should be read in the course Cognitive Psychology, but that it is important that students hear about both social decision making and critical psychology in social psychology. We are surprised that developmental psychology no longer includes psychoanalysis and sociocultural approaches. Especially when part of the challenge is what development even means, and whether one can meaningfully separate human development from the cultural and historical context in which it develops. We do not believe that either we or any of our colleges can answer questions like this in an absolute and final manner, thus students need to be exposed to a wider range of possible ways to think about e.g. developmental psychology.

The solution must be to ensure that clear structures of practice are established, not only around recruitment but also around the professional organization, in such a way that different starting points for understanding psychology can be discussed in democratic fora. Work on clearer practices for the Board of Studies is appropriate in this context, but we also believe that work should be done to increase student participation at several points in the process. We believe that as a department, we should not be closed off from the outside world, and it is enriching to have colleagues who see things differently. However, we also believe that we have a special obligation to the students we educate to engage in a Danish practice context. We need to provide students with an education that equips them broadly for the many types of scientific knowledge that are important for working as a

psychologist, and we need to be able to disseminate relevant knowledge about the practice contexts in which they will be working as psychologists.

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[Sådan beskytter vi persondata](#)