The challenge of sustaining change: contradictions within the development of teacher and librarian collaboration

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Teacher and librarian collaboration has relatively low priority in schools and in educational research. This is a paradox, as teachers and librarians share a common social and educational mandate of literacy education. The purpose of this paper is to examine this paradox through exploring systemic contradictions in teacher and librarian collaboration within literacy education. Our data consists of discursive interaction between project leaders in an educational intervention project in Norway. The aim of the intervention is to develop teacher and librarian collaboration in two primary schools. Our analytical starting point is a critical conflict that occurred in one of the project leader meetings. The conflict arises from differing discourses of literacy education held by the local education authority and by the intervention project. We analyze how the project leaders respond to the conflict, how the conflict triggers new tensions and dilemmas within the project leader group and how the conflict creates obstacles to sustaining teacher and librarian collaboration in the project schools. We argue, that sustainable change can be achieved by tracing conflicts, dilemmas and tensions to systemic contradictions within and between activity systems.

Keywords: teacher and librarian collaboration, contradictions; cultural–historical activity theory; critical pedagogy; expansive learning, literacy education

Introduction

Collaboration between teachers and librarians can lead to increased reading engagement and increased reading achievement (Tonne and Pihl 2012, Montiel-Overall 2008). Teacher and librarian collaboration has, however, relatively low priority in

schools, in educational policy and in educational research (Carlsten and Sjaastad 2014; Pihl 2012). This low priority points to systemic contradictions as being obstacles to the development of teacher and librarian collaboration in schools. The purpose of this paper is to explore contradictions in teacher and librarian collaboration within literacy education. Our aim is to develop a better understanding of how systemic contradictions obstruct and energize change and development.

Systemic contradictions are viewed, within the materialist dialectical tradition of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), as being obstacles. They are also viewed as being potential energizers of change and development (Engeström 2015, 66-73). The ways in which contradictions obstruct or energize change and development have been highlighted in a number of studies of inter-institutional and inter-professional collaboration (e.g., Edwards, Daniels, Gallagher, Leadbetter and Warmington 2009; Yamazumi 2007). However, how systemic contradictions affect efforts to develop teacher and librarian collaboration in schools is an under-researched topic.

Contradictions must be resolved by practitioners if they are to act as energizers. The resolution of contradictions in practice presents a significant challenge. Contradictions are systemic and have developed through historical processes. They cannot, therefore, be directly observed. What can, however, be observed are the conflicts and dilemmas that arise in action, interaction and discourse that can be *manifestations of* systemic contradictions (Engeström and Sannino 2011). Finding ways to resolve conflicts and dilemmas can therefore be a move towards resolving systemic contradictions of an activity.

We, in this paper, explore conflicts and dilemmas as possible manifestations of contradictions in a four year long intervention project. The project encountered a critical

conflict in its fourth year between the project leaders and local education authority officials. The analysis is guided by two research questions:

1. How did the project leaders respond to the conflict with the local education authority?

2. How did the conflict affect the sustainability and further development of teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education in the project?

We briefly present the status of school libraries and teacher and librarian collaboration in Norway. We then explain our theoretical approach to the concept of contradictions. This is followed by a description of the context of the intervention project and a detailed account of the conflict with the local education authority. Lastly, we analyze how projects leaders respond to the conflict and the effects on sustainability and further teacher and librarian collaboration.

School libraries and teacher and librarian collaboration in Norway

School libraries and teacher and librarian collaboration have a relatively weak position within educational policy and practice in Norway (Carlsten and Sjaastad 2014). School libraries have been largely invisible in pedagogical planning (Rafste 2005). Norwegian school libraries in primary schools are often closed during school hours and only a few primary schools have full-time librarians (Barstad, Audunson, Hjortsæter and Østlie 2007). This is a paradoxical situation. Collaboration between teachers, school librarians and public librarians increases the range of books and other materials students have access to and to topics that they find meaningful and interesting. Access to exciting and engaging books is, furthermore, a precondition for the development of student reading engagement (Tonne and Pihl 2012) and free voluntary reading (Krashen 2011). Data from large-scale surveys in the Nordic countries of 15 year old students

shows that reading engagement has a greater impact on reading achievement than socio-economic status. High reading engagement can therefore compensate the low socio-economic status of students' parents (Roe and Taube 2009).

A precondition for students having good access to exciting and engaging books is that school libraries and classrooms are well stocked with books. Many school libraries, however, have limited materials and lack qualified staff. Public libraries can therefore play an important role in mitigating this lack of resources at the school library level. Public libraries have the expertise required and can offer a wide range of up-to-date physical and digital books (Ingvaldsen 2012) and this is an argument for improving inter-professional tripartite collaboration between teachers, school librarians and public librarians.

Municipalities have the political responsibility for public and school libraries. There are no national requirements for school libraries or teacher and librarian collaboration in Norway. Whether, and to what extent teachers and school leaders can engage in collaboration with librarians, turns out to be a controversial issue, which we explore in this article.

Contradictions

We are inspired by a socio-critical approach to contradictions, as developed and discussed within Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström 2015; Engeström & Sannino 2011). Interest in integrating CHAT into the different strands of action research has increased in recent years (e.g., Darwin 2011; Wells 2011). The strength of using CHAT in action research lies within its usefulness as a theory for practical action. This application of CHAT can assist researchers and practitioners in resolving contradictions that interfere with desired outcomes. The application of CHAT is often referred to as Developmental Work Research (Engeström 2005) and formative

interventions (Engeström 2011, Eri 2013). In formative interventions, researchers and practitioners question and analyze contradictions in past and present work practices and model future forms of practice that can resolve contradictions. Formative interventions require a type of dialectical thinking that is referred to as "ascending from the abstract to the concrete" (Ilyenkov 1982). This is the application of an initial "germ cell" of abstract ideas and theoretical models, that expresses a problematic relation to specific procedures and that can instigate collective practical action that can handle the problematic relation (Engeström 2015, 248). The collective learning process behind resolving contradictions in formative interventions is referred to as "expansive learning" (Engeström and Sannino 2010).

  CHAT interprets systemic contradictions through dialectical materialism, the primary contradiction being the contradiction of capitalism and the use value and exchange value of any commodity (Engeström and Sannino 2011). The market economy, which is structured by production for profit, is the ultimate manifestation of the exchange value of commodities. However, not all phenomenon are commodities structured for the production of profit. Culture and education are phenomenon which are primarily characterized by their use value to citizens. Neoliberalism, however, increasingly treats education as any other commodity within global capitalism, subjecting culture and education to competition and accountability requirements similar to the requirements in the market place (Giroux 2011). This shift in priorities within the field of education from the use value of education to the exchange value of education has profound implications. Neoliberal policies emphasize short-term goals in terms of a narrow pedagogical focus on basic skills, rigorous testing and the ranking and sorting of students (Apple 2000). This is at the expense of qualification for more long terms goals, which include critical literacy (Janks 2010) and democratic citizenship (Biesta 2011).

The achievement gap between children with high socioeconomic status and children with low socioeconomic status is increasing in Norway, as it is in most other western countries (Bakken and Elstad 2012). In a critical pedagogical perspective, this form of social stratification is an effect of increased competition and standardized assessment in schools. Following this line of thought, the primary systemic contradiction of education within capitalist and neoliberal societies is evident: On the one hand, education within capitalist societies enables access to occupational opportunities; on the other hand, it produces a stratified workforce.

Contrasting the role of schools with public libraries is a viable approach in this paper. Public libraries are first and foremost cultural institutions with a social mandate to foster cultural enrichment and diversity and be a social meeting place (Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim 2010). Public libraries are therefore primarily characterized by their use value, and this is something librarians are acutely aware of. Their mandate is to serve the needs of the public and to facilitate the development of democratic citizenship (UNESCO 1994).

The mandate of the teaching profession is ambivalent and characterized by the contradictions between the use value and the exchange value of education. Teachers are concerned with the needs of the individual child and use value of education to children. Teachers are also obliged to rank and sort students based on competition between them. They are under pressure to focus on increasing student performance in standardized tests rather than focus on the long term goals of fostering lifelong learning and democratic citizens. This change in focus is partly a result of educational authorities basing their assessment of teaching quality on student performance in standardized tests. Contradictions related to increased demands on teachers' accountability trigger contradictions between short term learning and lifelong learning in local teaching

practice. It becomes difficult for teachers, within the context of neoliberal educational policies, to prioritize collaboration with librarians and student work with library resources, as the educational benefits of this collaboration (in terms of student achievements) are long term. Teachers are under pressure to "produce" student achievement on a short term basis.

Contradictions often occur as effects of power relations within and across activity systems (including institutions, organizations and all other forms of collective human activity). They mediate social relations and can create obstacles to human empowerment and development. We, however, want to draw attention to an important point we made in the introduction. Contradictions cannot be directly observed. They can only be studied indirectly through their manifestations as dilemmas and conflicts in human actions, interactions and discourse (Engeström and Sannino 2011).

The manifestations of contradictions as conflicts and dilemmas and the obstacles they impose on collaborative activity and developmental work need to be questioned, analyzed and resolved by the actors involved in the activity if they are to be transcended. Contradictions therefore do not simply *obstruct* change but may also *energize* change and development (Edwards et al. 2009; Engeström 2005, 2015).

A number of studies have shown that practitioners' motives, theories, attitudes and values are shaped by their professional knowledge cultures (e.g. Goodwin 1994, Nerland 2012). Professional actors in a collaborative activity may therefore share the same *objects* but have different and contradictory *motives* for their participation in the activity (Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006, 157). It is therefore important to emphasize that the concept of "object" has a double meaning in CHAT. "Teacher and librarian collaboration" and "literature-based literacy education" are the objects of activity of the intervention project discussed in this paper. They should therefore be understood to be

both objects in a material sense and object(ives) in the ideal sense that give direction to the work of the participants. Differences between the field of educational sciences and library and information sciences and between the professional knowledge cultures and mandates of teachers and librarians therefore impacts upon how the participants understand "collaboration" and "literature-based literacy education".

The Multiplicity Project

We now turn to the context of the intervention project studied in this paper. The project was researcher initiated, in collaboration with leaders from schools and libraries. Teachers, librarians and researchers from two primary schools, a main public library, a branch public library and two faculties of education participated in the four year long intervention project: "Multiplicity, empowerment, citizenship" (2007–2011) (referred to here as the Multiplicity Project). Three classes at each school, their contact teachers, the head teacher and the school librarian were involved in the project. Third and fourth grade classes were initially involved in the project. Two public librarians collaborated with the teachers and the school librarians. The leaders of the public library and the leaders of the two primary schools were invited by the researchers to collaborate in the project. Six researchers from the faculties of teacher education were involved.

The rationale behind the Multiplicity Project was the general problem of systematic differences in reading achievement between students due to their socio-economic and socio-cultural background (Pihl, 2011). One approach to this problem is to give students access to books they find interesting and provide them with opportunities to share their reading experiences with others. Theoretical support is found in New Literacy Studies, which assume that development of literacy is a form of social practice (Street 2000). People engage in literacy practices that are meaningful to them. The content of reading is therefore vital to development, engagement and literacy.

The aim of the Multiplicity Project was, based on this, to stimulate reading engagement and literacy through students' voluntary reading of fiction and non-fiction books in schools, at home and in libraries. The researchers proposed "literature-based literacy education" to achieve this goal. This involved extensive voluntary reading, and post-reading activities such as book sharing, writing, dramatization, artwork, and digital book blogs and wikis. The researchers also proposed collaboration between school librarians, public librarians and teacher to realize literature-based literacy education. The aim of the project was therefore to achieve teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education by the end of the four year project period and that this was sufficiently well established to insure it would continue after the researchers departed from the project.

Teacher and librarian collaboration was negotiated and developed in regular project group meetings. All project participants took part in the group meetings and all institutional leaders took part in project leader meetings. The developmental work methodology used in these meetings was inspired by Developmental Work Research (Engeström 2005) and formative interventions (Engeström 2011, Eri 2013). It was important to the researchers that the teachers and the librarians gained agency and took charge of the pedagogical interventions.

The teachers organized literature-based literacy education in periods of six weeks. Each six week period addressed a specific topic around which the pupils' reading and work was concentrated in language learning, social science and the arts. The pupils got access to a wide range of literature within the topic in class and at the school library and the public library. One result of teacher and librarian collaboration in the Multiplicity Project was that students read books they had selected themselves instead of reading textbooks. The teachers also used fiction books in school subjects, for

example a series of books about "Svein and the rat" in which the plot covered many of the topics in the social and natural sciences curriculum. The teachers and the librarians were inspired by reading programs such as "book floods" (Elley 2000) and "extensive reading" (Bamford and Day 2004), which have contributed to development of voluntarily engaged readers. The programs have also generated improvements in writing and listening proficiency, vocabulary and general language skills more quickly than traditional reading instruction. An important feature of these reading programs is that students read self-selected materials. The content of these books in turn forms the basis of pedagogical work.

Time was allocated to teachers reading aloud, students' free voluntary reading and book sharing in the classes. The public librarians also read and introduced new literature to the students and teachers.

Methods

The primary data used in this paper is audio recordings of discursive interaction in project leader meetings. Meeting 15 was the meeting in which conflict with the local education authority arose. We took field notes at the meeting. We decided, after meeting 15, to audio record subsequent meetings, to allow us to explore in detail how the project leaders dealt with the conflict, and analyze the effect on the sustainability and onward development of the project. In this paper we analyze the discursive interaction between the participants in project leader meeting 16, 17 and 18 (six hours of dialogue).

Members of the project leader group were the head teachers of the two project schools (Westside primary and Eastside primary, which are pseudonyms), the director of the main public library, the lead researcher of the Multiplicity Project (the second author of this paper) and the dean of education at one of the two teacher education

institutions involved in the project. The first author of this paper assumed the role of researcher in the second year of the project and participated in the project leader meetings as an observer. The researchers also took part in meeting discussions. Meeting participants were not fixed. The head teachers sometimes could not attend and were represented by another member of the school's leadership team and the public librarian who worked at Westside primary school took part in meeting 17 and 18 instead of the public library director who resigned after meeting 17.

We have used Engeström and Sannino's (2011) methodological framework for the identification and analysis of different types of discursive manifestations of contradictions. Data from the project leader group meetings was coded and categorized in two stages. General dilemmas and conflicts were first identified in the dialogue. These were then analyzed to determine which could be interpreted as being discursive manifestations of contradictions.

Results

A critical conflict

We will now briefly describe the conflict that arose in project leader meeting 15.

The lead researcher invited two local education authority officials to meeting 15. The meeting was called to discuss expanding teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education to more schools in the district. It, however, became very clear in the meeting that the attitudes towards the Multiplicity Project of the two officials were different. One was in favor of the project and had suggested to the school district director that teacher and librarian collaboration, as developed in the project, should be expanded to include more schools. Her positive attitude was based on preliminary project results that showed an increase in reading engagement among

students at the schools that had participated in the project. The second official, however, clearly stated that the school district director had changed his mind. He had made it clear to the second official that introducing teacher and librarian collaboration to more schools in the municipality in line with the Multiplicity Project, was out of the question. The school district director had stated that it was the local education authority that decided the form of literacy education that the school district would prioritize. The second official furthermore explained that the local education authority had a long-term strategy for literacy education in the district and that the Multiplicity Project was therefore not required, unless it could demonstrate reading achievement improvements as measured by national standardized reading tests.

The project leaders' response to the conflict

We present and analyze here some important conflicts, dilemmas and tensions contained in selected transcripts from project leader meetings 16, 17 and 18.

The local education authority's unwillingness to support the project meant that plans to expand teacher and librarian collaboration to more schools were put on hold. The discussion in meeting 16 centered on the conflict with the local education authority officials in meeting 15.

NOTE: We have translated the original transcripts from Norwegian to English. See Appendix A for an explanation of transcription conventions.

Excerpt 1: Meeting 16:

1 **Public library director:** I felt that there was a strange atmosphere at the meeting with
2 the local education authority officials **. I don't know if you felt the same way? Can we
3 spend a couple of minutes on this, as I think it's important to all of us. At least to me?
4 **(.) I was really astounded, eh::, as she [the local education authority official] began by
5 saying that she had worked as a teacher and because of that she knew much better than
6 us what was right for the schools. That's how I understood her. So. I just listened. And I

1	got the impression that she disregarded everything the Multiplicity Project has done.
2	That everything we had done in the project was nonsense. And when she talked about
3	our proposal to include two more schools in the Multiplicity Project, she rejected the
4	proposal out of hand saying there was "no way the local education authority would
5	prioritize such an initiative". She implicitly emphasized that the work of the local
6	education authority in developing systematic reading instruction programs in all the
7	schools in the district is much more important than what we have done in our two
8	project schools. It was as if we spoke two different languages. Both I and you [referring
9	to the lead researcher] clearly said that we want the best for the pupils. We all want the
10	best for the pupils. It's about raising good people who then go out into the world. It
11	should be what they, the local education authority, want too. So, it's a pity you
12	[Eastside's and Westside's head teachers] weren't at the meeting as I felt I was pushed
13	right up into a corner.

The critical conflict was caused by the fact that the local education authority suddenly had changed position, from support of the Multiplicity project, to withdrawal of support. The educational authority refused expansion of literature based literacy education and teacher and librarian collaboration to more schools in the school district. Critical conflicts are often identified as emotional accounts that use rich metaphors to express feelings of being silenced or violated (Engeström and Sannino 2011). The account of the public library director is a typical example. She was "astounded" (line 4) and felt "pushed right up into a corner" (line 18-19) by the local education authority official. A CHAT view of the emotional experience of critical conflicts is influenced by the concept of *experiencing* (Vasilyuk 1991). "Experiencing" directs attention to the emotional dimensions of professional practice and identity in settings where different professional and institutional motives and interests are at stake (Edwards et al. 2009). From this perspective, the library director *experienced* that the local education authority official viewed the Multiplicity Project as "nonsense" (line 8) and that the local education authority was doing a much more important job than the Multiplicity Project (line 11-14). The handling of this type of *experiencing* is characterized by resistance

and disagreement (Engeström and Sannino 2011), which is evident in the library director's statement that "It was as if we spoke two different languages" (line 14).

Now we turn to meeting 16. The head teacher of Westside Primary School was not present at the meeting with the local education authority (meeting 15). She, however, felt an urge to defend the position of the local education authority.

Excerpt 2: Meeting 16

1 **Head teacher, Westside:** I felt that she [the local education authority official] had to set
2 prioritizations, eh::, the local education authority has its own project with a budget and
3 so on. They work within fixed cost limits. And then along comes this project from
4 outside. So, this is about her prioritization of different projects that she is responsible
5 for. And I don't think she really fully understood everything; I felt that the whole
6 situation was a--
7 **Public library director:** A threat?
8 **Head teacher, Westside:** As a (.) NO.
9 **Public library director:** Oh (.) no?
10 **Head teacher, Westside:** More like "one more thing we have to deal with" [referring to
11 how the local education authority representative thinks]. There are so many plans and
12 projects going on in this town, yes? Things that are supposed to be built on top of each
13 other. And there are some plans that are consolidated by the local education authority.
14 My understanding is that she sees this project [the Multiplicity Project] as a disruption. I
15 do not see her as a "know-it-all".
16 **Public library director:** OK. But, I tried to say in the meeting that our work is not
17 supposed to replace anything; it should supplement the work of the local education
18 authority.

Westside's head teacher talked about the local education authority having to "set prioritizations" (line 1-2) and how they "work within fixed cost limits" (line 3). We see, in the next excerpt that the head teacher reinforces her alignment with the local education authority position by her response later in the meeting. She explicitly criticizes the Multiplicity Project's new form of library use, arguing that it was not new.

Excerpt 3: Meeting 16:

Head teacher, Westside: The local education authority may have rejected the Multiplicity Project because of the long tradition of libraries in schools. We can't overlook this dimension. It could well be that the local education authority has the same view as I have. Which is "Why on Earth should we spend a lot of time on this? We have always used libraries in schools (*raising her voice*)".

Westside's head teacher did not recognize teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education as being new objects of activity at the schools. She had become Westside's head teacher and had become involved in the Multiplicity Project two years after it had begun and her skepticism should therefore be understood in this context. She had previously worked in another school district before coming to Westside. Her comment in excerpt 3 above reflects her reluctance to spend "a lot of time" on developing new practices in Westside's school library. This attitude was unlike that of her predecessor and unlike that of Eastside's head teacher, both having been involved in planning the Multiplicity Project right from the start.

Turning point

Meeting 17, had a more optimistic atmosphere. The project leaders decided in this meeting that they would write a final report and submit it to the local education authority.

Excerpt 4: Meeting 17

1 **Public library director:** The local education authority has declared that its goal is to
2 become the best school district in Norway. We should be very clear about the
3 importance of developing tripartite collaborations between schools, school libraries and
4 public libraries as a means of promoting the goal of becoming the best school district in
5 Norway. This should be explicitly stated in our official report on the Multiplicity
6 Project to the local education authority. The other important point is to secure
7 leadership support for our work.

8	**Head teacher, Eastside:** I just want to add something. I think structures are important.
9	A vital element is that there is a school librarian at the school. Our endeavors otherwise
10	will just crumble away. It is important that we institutionalize some structures in this
11	collaboration - structures that will survive if key individuals leave.

The public library director emphasizes in excerpt 4 that tripartite collaboration between schools, school libraries and public libraries could be an important tool in the local education authority's quest to become the best school district in Norway (line 1-5). This statement represents a turning point in the project leader meetings. A turning point is when people begin to outline their objects and aims in new ways (Kärkkäinen 1999). A strategy that links tripartite collaboration with the aims of the local education authority and which strengthens the Multiplicity Project's position within the central activity of literacy education in the school district, was something new. This turning point came as a response to the local education authority's refusal to support the Multiplicity Project. The refusal demanded a more active strategy to try to convince the local education authority of the positive effects of teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education upon literacy achievement.

We also notice in excerpt 4 that the question of how teacher and librarian collaboration could be consolidated and sustained at the two project schools was still an unsolved issue. Eastside's head teacher emphasized the importance of having appointed a school librarian to support the structure and development of literature-based literacy education (line 9-10). His main point was that literacy education developed within the Multiplicity Project should be consolidated within the structure and organization of the school and should not be confined to the participating teachers, to ensure that literacy education developed beyond the Multiplicity Project (line 10-11).

The public librarian's dilemma

Project leaders addressed two questions at meeting 18. The first was "How should collaborative practice between the public library and the two project schools be continued?" and the second was "Who should take over the management of the project when researcher participation and management ends?" The lead researcher, in excerpt 5, elaborates on the importance of consolidating teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education at the leadership level and in the structure of the project schools. This suggestion creates a dilemma for the public librarian at Westside.

Excerpt 5: Meeting 18

1	**Lead researcher:** I think our [the project leader's] primary goal in this phase is to work
2	on and consolidate the model we have (*Eastside's head teacher nods*) in our institutions
3	[the two project schools and the public library]. If we are able to consolidate our work
4	in our institutions, then we will also have strengthened our position with the local
5	education authority. I really think it is important to develop this way of working with
6	literacy education in every grade at both schools. We will then have two schools that are
7	using their school library as a learning arena and which integrate the library into the
8	schools' literacy education. Then we have two fantastic cases to present to the local
9	education authority. I think this is the way to go rather than expanding the project to
10	more schools.
11	**Public librarian, Westside:** Hmmm::, what I am thinking is that our public library
12	serves 19 schools and that all are to be served equally. I understand what you are saying
13	about working on the model. But should we use this level of resources on just two
14	schools? I totally agree that we will, over time, have a stronger case and much better
15	chance of getting the local education authority onboard. I am just a little concerned
16	about what the other schools will say about allocating two full-time public library
17	positions to two schools. I am not against you [referring to the lead researcher], **, its
18	just - how can I justify it?

The lead researcher argues for strengthening literature-based literacy education at the two project schools instead of expanding the project to more schools (line 1-3 and 8-10). She also argues in favour of teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based

literacy education at all grade levels in both schools (line 5-6). This argument represents a turning point because, at the start, the project worked only with grade three teachers and pupils at Eastside and grade four teachers and pupils at Westside.

The lead researcher's suggestion that all grade levels should be included in literature-based literacy education at the two schools (line 1-10) created a dilemma for the public librarian (excerpt 5, line 11-18). In CHAT, a dilemma is defined as "an expression or exchange of incompatible evaluations, either between people or within the discourse of a single person" (Engeström and Sannino 2011, 373). The main library collaborating with two project schools *at all grade levels* would demand higher levels of resources. The public librarian is somewhat reluctant to confirm extensive teacher and librarian collaboration at all grade levels at the project schools, because then similar services should be provided to all 19 schools in the districts (line 11-12). She hoped that the reading engagement documented within the Multiplicity Project would convince the local education authority that they should prioritize teacher and librarian collaboration in all the district's schools. This could also possibly result in more resources being allocated to the public library to manage such a mandate. The local education authority had, however, already decided that it would not support such an expansion.

Eastside's head teacher, in excerpt 6, follows up the public librarian's concern and argues for developing the project further at the two project schools.

Excerpt 6: Meeting 18

1   **Head teacher, Eastside:** I agree that it will take a long time for the objective of this
2   project to be consolidated throughout the entire school (.3) This is therefore a good
3   reason for not extending the project to more schools.
4   **Public librarian, Westside:** They [referring to other schools] don't know what they are
5   missing out on.
6   **Head teacher, Eastside:** They [referring to other schools] hardly know what it is. They
7   are under pressure from the local education authority. Their reaction therefore is, "oh

8	no, not one more thing to do on top of everything else". We [the schools in the district]
9	are under immense pressure from the local education authority with regard to testing
10	and teaching basic skills. There is little enthusiasm these days among teachers for
11	anything that comes down from above [referring to the local education authority]. Local
12	bottom-up development is almost zero because everybody just absorbs what comes
13	down from on high. The organization is no longer strong enough to take on any more at
14	the moment. That's why I think that no one in the other schools is missing anything. I
15	think it is you (addressing Westside's public librarian) who feel you should have done
16	something for the others.
17	**Public librarian, Westside:** Yes, no, maybe it is only we who feel this way, hmmm::,
18	but, of course, we want to continue collaborating with you.

We see that Eastside's head teacher is critical of the pressure applied by the local education authority on the schools in the district (line 8-10) and expresses concern about the negative effect this pressure has on teachers' attitudes towards local school development projects (line 10-14). He uses this as an argument for further developing the project at the two project schools (line 14-16).

We find the public librarian's response to Eastside's head teacher ambiguous (line 17-18). Linguistic cues such as "Yes, no, maybe" (line 17) and "hmmm::, but," (line 17-18) suggest that the public librarian is in a strong dilemma. This is referred to as a "double bind". A double bind is a dilemma in which "actors repeatedly face pressing and equally unacceptable alternatives in their activity system, with seemingly no way out" (Engeström and Sannino 2011, 383). From her professional perspective, the public librarian feels obliged to provide equal services to the project schools and all other schools, but lacks the resources for this.

The public librarian, in an attempt to deal with the double bind situation, suggested developing a contract to formalize and sustain the collaboration between the project schools and the public library.

Excerpt 7: Meeting 18

1   **Public librarian, Westside:** I was just thinking that, as you said [referring to the lead
2   researcher], a solid teacher and librarian collaboration foundation has been established
3   at the two schools which can be developed further. But I would like other schools to
4   discover the good model we have developed too. Shouldn't we draw up some sort of
5   contract with you [addressing Eastside's head teacher] and Westside, so that we make
6   sure this is included in the plans of the public library? [referring to the strategic plans of
7   the public library's main activities]?

The suggestion to prepare a contract is a new turning point. The public librarian tries to resolve the double bind by balancing seemingly incompatible alternatives (line 1-4). She wants to develop a contract to consolidate teacher and librarian collaboration between the project schools and the public library (line 4-7). The other members of the project leader group viewed the suggestion as an important step in consolidating and sustaining teacher and librarian collaboration after the end of the Multiplicity Project.

The two public librarians at Eastside and Westside volunteered to start working on a draft contract. The contract was completed seven months later, after having been discussed and redrafted in the three subsequent project leader meetings. The school librarians had been important agents in developing concrete structures of collaboration with teachers at the project schools and they were given a more active role in subsequent project leader meetings. The partners agreed to establish a new project leader group which would take over after the Multiplicity Project ended. This group would consist of members of the leadership teams at both schools, the head of the children's department at the public library and the school librarians at the two project schools. The contract stated that the new project leader group should prepare an annual collaboration plan. The contract also stated that the new project leader group should meet at least twice a year (in the autumn and the spring) and that outcomes of the collaboration should be evaluated every two years.

We will discuss, in the following, the challenge of sustaining educational change, in light of CHAT and critical pedagogy.

Discussion

The local education authority's refusal to support the Multiplicity Project obstructs the project leader group's goal of expanding literature-based literacy education and collaboration between teachers and public librarians to more schools and, even more critically, to sustain teacher and librarian collaboration and literature-based literacy education in the project schools. It is interesting to note that, in meeting 15, the two local education authority officials represented ambiguous approaches to the objects of the Multiplicity Project. One was sympathetic, the other skeptical. The Multiplicity Project had received a positive evaluation from the sympathetic official in previous project leader meetings. We sense here a political battle within the activity system of the local education authority related to different opinions on educational strategies in the school district. Initial support by the local education authority of the Multiplicity project might have created positive expectations in the project leader group and may have contributed to the strong emotional reaction by the library director when the educational authority refused to renew support of project.

Contradiction between literacy discourses

The purpose of literature-based literacy education in the Multiplicity Project was to provide extensive access to books through library use and to stimulate a passion for voluntary reading. Reading engagement was viewed as valuable in itself and as an important precondition for literacy development. The priority of the local education authority is, however, the teaching of basic skills and outcome-based learning, which aligns teaching, learning and assessment strategies with student learning outcomes. The

local education authority states their vision in a strategic document: to become the best school district in Norway (Drammen kommune 2009, 4). The use of literature in school and public libraries for pedagogical purposes is, however, not mentioned in this document. The document furthermore states that the local education authority will not prioritize "upgrading and increasing school library resources" (Drammen kommune 2009, 25, our translation). The Multiplicity Project views frequent voluntary reading and the use of library resources as goals in themselves to stimulate reading engagement, whereas the local education authority looks for evidence of literacy achievements in terms of student scores from national reading tests. We therefore suggest that the critical conflict that arose from the local education authority refusing to support the expansion of literature-based literacy education to more schools, is a manifestation of a systemic contradiction between two contrasting discourses of literacy education. One discourse is dominant in educational policy. The other is counter-hegemonic in the sense that it offers an alternative set of pedagogical tools through literature-based literacy education which are not a part of the dominant pedagogical practice in Norwegian schools. This type of contradiction is referred to in CHAT as a *tertiary contradiction* (Engeström 2015, 70-73) and is often encountered by participants and action researchers in small-scale intervention projects. A tertiary contradiction often becomes evident when new objects of activity that have been developed elsewhere, are implemented in the central activity of an activity system. This occurred when the objects of "teacher and librarian collaboration" and "literature-based literacy education" were implemented in the central activity of traditional literacy education at the project schools.

Substantial international PISA survey data shows that reading engagement is a determinant of reading achievement (Roe and Taube 2009). Local education authority policy does not, however, appear to be based on this data. It can therefore be argued that

the local educational authority was therefore unwilling to move beyond a "dichotomous pedagogy" (Alexander 2008, 73-91) of reading engagement versus reading achievement. In our view, this contradiction could have been resolved if the local education authority perceived literacy more as a social practice and less as a product of instrumental teaching and assessment of basic skills. The standardization of educational assessment practices relates more to economic demands for labor than to democratic principles based on students' interests, strengths and needs. Literacy as social practice means recognizing that "all students should be able to comprehend and connect the texts to themselves and to diverse aspects of their own lives in a broader sense" (Matusov 2011, 6). From such a perspective, "reading engagement" is a *precondition* for "reading achievement" and is not in *opposition* to it. It is achieved through literacy practices that are meaningful to the participants and with multiple layers of pedagogical support.

Contradiction within the public library

The conflict between the local education authority and the Multiplicity Project also triggered tensions between participants in the project leader group. The tensions can be ascribed to different knowledge cultures, priorities, motives and expectations of the outcome of the project. Westside's head teacher did not want to use resources on literature-based literacy education at her school, as she considered it to be of low use value. This is in line with the local education authority's position (excerpt 3, meeting 16). Eastside's head teacher however prioritized the appointment of a full-time school librarian at his school. The public librarian, on the other hand, was in a "double bind" situation. She was concerned about the work load that continuous collaboration with the school librarians and teachers at the two project schools would generate. She also considered it difficult to continue this level of collaboration at the project schools

without serving all schools equally. That was impossible, due to the lack of political and financial support of the local education authority.

According to CHAT and critical pedagogy, a possible interpretation of the public librarian's double bind situation is to see this as a manifestation of a systemic contradiction within the division of labor of the public library, caused by neoliberal demands for cost-effective library services. The public library needs to participate in partnership projects with schools to demonstrate the benefits of teacher and librarian collaborations. At the same time, limited resources means that participation in such projects is incompatible with the public library's mandate to serve all schools equally. The contradiction is also linked with a long history of insufficient material and human resources in the majority of Norwegian school libraries (Barstad et al. 2007; Carlsten and Sjaastad 2014), which indicates a need for greater resources in terms of staff and funding.

The contradiction in the division of labor of the public library at the same time acted as an energizer of change. The public librarian's need to resolve the contradiction resulted in an innovation: a contract to sustain collaboration between the teachers and school librarians at the project schools, and the public librarians. The contract is an initial simple idea, a "germ cell", which has the potential to consolidate a structure of collaboration between the project schools and the public library independently when the researchers no longer are involved in the project. The contract also represents a first step in resolving the obstacles created by the conflict with the local education authority - a conflict that we argue is a manifestation of a contradiction between literacy discourses. This contradiction can be resolved by finding a way to consolidate teacher and librarian collaboration at the school level, without relying on the support of the educational authority.

Conclusion

We, in this paper, have discussed the challenges of sustaining educational changes within literacy education generated by bottom-up pedagogical interventions. We have identified conflicts, dilemmas and tensions as manifestations of contradictions and analyzed attempts to resolve them. We have argued that in this intervention project, these contradictions are systemic and related to the political hegemony of neoliberalism in educational policy. The contradictions created obstacles to sustaining teacher and librarian collaboration in the project schools. We have, however, identified a number of turning points in which participants take collective action to resolve the contradictions.

These indicate that contradictions also act as energizers of change. This illustrates that social structure and human agency stand in a dialectical relationship. They interact and influence each other but cannot be reduced to each other. The contradictions described in this paper can be localized to social and institutional structures but are observed as manifestations in discursive interaction between project leaders. We have learnt, through this intervention project that we need to take three simple premises seriously if bottom-up changes are to be sustained in inter-professional interventions. Firstly, we need to question and analyze conflicts, dilemmas and tensions as possible manifestation of contradictions at an early stage of an intervention. Secondly, we need to plan and implement a strategy for resolving contradictions. Thirdly, we need to acknowledge different professional knowledge cultures and make great efforts to develop a shared object of activity between the activity systems that are involved. The last point includes work to consolidate the intervention objects at the highest institutional levels possible.

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Transcription conventions adapted from (Linell 2009):

[ ]	Text in square brackets represents clarifying information
(*Italics*)	Context descriptions
::	Indicates prolongation of a sound
**	Laughter
(.)	Short pause in speech
(.5)	Pause with number indicating seconds (here 5 seconds)
-	Single dash in the middle of a word or a sentence denotes that the speaker interrupted him/herself
--	Double dash at the end of an utterance indicates that the speaker's utterance is incomplete

CAPITALS   Loud speech