Master's Thesis

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Teachers' perception of their relationships with pupils

A study of teachers' personal views and experiences about the teacher-pupils relationship in terms of classroom management criteria.

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Faculty of Art, Folk Culture and Teacher Education

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Abstract

In a multicultural country, and especially in schools where teachers meet different students, the role of teachers and their beliefs have important effects on children and their learning. A relationship based on trust between a teacher and a pupil is one of the most important factors contributing to learning (Hattie, 2009).

This research thesis is built on a qualitative, phenomenological study design which analyzes the personal experiences of teachers from Norwegian schools. Against this background, the research question is: *How do teachers perceive their relationship with their pupils in relation to their teaching role?* The research question embraces the different concepts that are enlighten in the master thesis. Thus, the research is focused on the relationship between teachers and their pupils in a classroom, and precisely how teachers perceive this relationship.

The theoretical framework is built on a pedagogical perspective where classroom management is one of the aspects of the teaching profession. Within this, authority, communication and the teacher's positive outlook on the pupil are three critical areas in the development of a teacher-pupil relationship (Nordahl, Hansen, & Hemmer, 2012; Nordahl, Lillejord, Manger, & Helland, 2013). Secondly, the skills of the teacher are developed to clarify the teacher's role in the relationship (Drugli, 2012).

The method used to collect data is interview. The interviews are conducted with four teachers from different Norwegian schools that meet academic and social challenges on an everyday basis.

The main findings in this study imply that the teachers' personal skills have a variable influence in their perception of the relationship with their pupils. Findings show that classroom management and teachers' skills are two important elements in the teacher-pupils relationship. They also demonstrate that communication, the positive outlook on the pupil and the authority of the teacher should be used carefully in order to create a positive relationship. Indeed, the question of authority is raised in order to understand the significance of the concept in the teacher-pupil relationship. Furthermore, findings venture an empiric balance between professional and personal skills, establishing a stable classroom atmosphere and favorably affecting the teacher-pupil relationship.

In relation to the findings, the analysis of data finally reveals heterogeneity as well as homogeneity among the respondents' perception concerning the relationship with their pupils.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The relationship between teacher and pupil has changed through the ages. The last centuries, the teaching profession was highly valued especially due to the staging of his authority with a suit and tie. This symbolic and significant loss contributed to the change in the students' attention and completely changed the image of the teacher that became more of a "good teacher" and less "strict" with her pupils. The relation between pupil and teacher has been long an under focused field in pedagogy because of the personal and emotional side. But today in a PISA-era, where each country tries to demonstrate the best educational system, the different aspects of classroom management are questioned. In recent years, international studies have shown that the quality of the teacher-pupils relationship affects teaching and learning; (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009). In particular, it has been shown that a positive relationship has a large effect on pupil's social and pedagogical learning (Hattie, 2009).

The "macro" evaluations conducted by researchers in sociology of education lead us to know what really happens in a classroom. It seems to be interesting to understand what the actors (teachers, in the research) feel on a micro plan. Schools are places where everything happens for pupils. And as a future teacher, one of my duties will be to encourage pupils in social and academic success. Throughout my different practices in schools, I have noticed that teachers adopt different behaviors toward their pupils in particular situations. The results of these differences will, of course, influence the construction of pupil's knowledge.

From that point, this research will allow me to expand my knowledge of the profession by gathering information from teachers. In this context, it seems interesting to dwell on the question:

How do teachers perceive their relationship with their pupils in relation to their teaching role?

In the present study, it will be necessary to collect views and representations conveyed by teachers on their relationship with pupils. To lead the discussion it will be of interest to answer some sub-questions:

- *How do teachers situate themselves on the scale of classroom management?*

- *What is a professional teacher and which skills should he/she have?*
- *What do teachers think about the distance between teachers and pupils?*

First, this thesis will comprise the different theories that are necessary to defend a discussion about the research question. Secondly, it will present the phenomenological design chosen for the research and a description of the sample underlined by ethical questions. With the help of interviews, a third part will be consecrated to analysis. The last part will discuss the findings and give a possible answer to the question research.

1. Education and Relationship

The examination of the links between education and relationship will be carried out by the exploration of three areas: the previous research, the institutional framework and the classroom practice. It is important to present what is known about education and relationship by using previous research to understand the context of the study. The educational texts and guidelines will give an overview on the decreed teacher's position given by the government.

1.1. What do we know?

Over the last decade, educational studies have flourished, especially in the EU, USA and Canada. Researchers are focused on learning and they analyze all the possible factors. The will to understand education is growing as societies evolve (Mialaret, 1987). From a pedagogical relationship defined by its impersonality, structured only by the knowledge and norms of behavior rather than by the attention to the child; there is now a desire to see pupils blossom, while they learn and obey. Today, we know a lot more about education and relationship in relation to learning; and classroom management is an appreciated field of research in Education.

Classroom management can be analyzed from different theoretical perspectives (ecological approach, social constructivist approach, etc.) that emphasize different aspects, but classroom management is mostly practical. This means that classroom management it's about what teachers do to create an environment that supports and facilitates learning. According to Hattie (2009), classroom management is about creating good conditions for both academic and social learning in schools. The New Zealand researcher has studied more than 800 meta-analyzes, which shows which factors that, individually, promote or inhibit learning. According to this research, the teacher is then the most important determinant in the success of pupils. Hattie discovered that one of the influential factor is: the relationship of trust between teacher and student (ibid, 2009).

Indeed, studies reveal that a positive relationship between teacher and pupils can be described as the cornerstone of classroom management (Marzano, 2003). Pupils who have positive relationships with their teachers are more motivated to work on academic activities than other pupils.

Cornelius White (2007) finds in his meta-analysis, that it is generally a positive learning outcome for pupils, when teacher and pupils have a positive relationship. Then, it is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate fostering a positive relationship with their pupils. The study summarizes that a positive teacher-pupils relationship promotes students' critical and creative thinking, participation, motivation for learning, good self-esteem, social connectedness, social skills, positive relationships between pupils, reduction in negative behavior, and a reduction in absenteeism and dropouts . Furthermore, it is specified that the teachers who promote good teacher-pupil relationship have the following characteristics: empathy, warmth, a supportive attitude and non-executive behavior (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013). Indeed, a warm and supportive attitude from teachers might influence the pupils 'behavior. A wide Norwegian study sheds light on the impact of emotional support on pupils in relation to academic success (Bru, Stephens, & Torsheim, 2002). Another study shows that *«love and care from a teacher seem essential elements for students and teachers to communicate and establish a positive relationship»* (Liu, 2013, p. 37). Drugli (2012) underlines that small attentions (supportive comments, humor, etc.) can mean a lot in the pupils' life, inside and outside of the school. It seems to be a clear leadership and an efficient cooperation that leads teachers and pupils to create relationships.

Teachers must be clear on their expectations and respect must be established from both, teacher and pupil. Moreover, a teacher that has control over his/her class and over academic knowledge can also be helpful and affectionate (Nordahl et al., 2012). For the teacher, the contact with students is described as the biggest challenge and as one of the greatest satisfactions of this profession.

On the other hand, it has been observed that certain attitudes and practices of teachers can have negative consequences on pupils. Pupils demonstrate more social difficulties when they perceive their teachers as being cold and severe. Treating pupils in a disrespectful and humiliating way can have an impact on their willingness to perform (Bernstein-Yamashiro, 2004). Additionally, the use of control methods over/on /toward pupils' behavior can become excessive when the student-teacher relationship is engaged in a power struggle (Davis, 2003).

The aforementioned studies demonstrate that the teacher-pupils relationship is a determinant in the pupils' personal life and school career. Education and relationship are in a dynamic process, which is under pressure from various sources of influence related to the pupil, the teacher and the school context.

1.2. The institutional framework

The context in which the teacher establishes a relationship with his/her pupils is stabilized by the Educational Institution and designed to be integrated into the school system. Teachers have a given role because they are representative of the society which requires respecting certain rules. That's why teachers are not free in their relationship with pupils; they are driven by the educational institution that regulates the teacher-pupil relationship.

Nevertheless, if the institution does not address the guidelines of teacher-pupil relationship, the risk will be that teachers choose traditional teaching as pedagogy. But if it is too prescriptive, the risk is to have a too normalized relationship. Then it will become artificial and therefore ineffective.

1.2.1. Report to the Storting No. 11

This Parliament's report no.11 called "The teacher – the role and the education" presents a contemporary description of the teacher role in relation to education (St.meld. nr. 11, 2008-2009). The teacher role is exposed from different perspectives: historical, formal and practical with a new teacher education program for primary and lower secondary education. It raises the question of the complexity of the teaching role by giving a very wide and multifaceted explanation. In chapter two "Assessment and measures" the government firstly gives a definition of the teacher's role: *«The role of the teacher can be defined as the sum of expectations and requirements which are set for the exercise of the profession»* (St.meld. nr. 11, 2008-2009, p.12).

The White Paper on Teacher education (English version of the Parliament's report presenting the principal elements) sets out the fundamental areas of teaching competence essential for all teachers:

- Competence in school subjects and in how subjects may contribute to the learning of basic skills
- Understanding the school's purpose and its significance to society at large
- Ethical awareness in line with the school's value base
- Educational theory and subject didactics, i.e. insight into how children and young people learn, and the ability to plan, deliver and assess instruction to promote pupil learning
- Authority and skills in guiding learning processes in a diverse, complex group of pupils

- Ability to cooperate and communicate with pupils, parents, colleagues and other partners inside and outside the school
- Change and development skills and the ability to reflect critically on their own and the school's practice.

(Report to the Storting No. 11, 2009)

Two of them hold our attention: the competence about authority and skills in guiding learning processes in a diverse, complex group of pupils; and the ability to cooperate and communicate with pupils. In the first one, the role of a teacher is defined in a perspective of classroom management where teachers have to guide pupils toward learning. He/she also has to adapt learning to each pupil. It means that teachers should be attentive to their pupils to offer the best learning situations. The relationship is a bit covered up by the teacher professional skills in this case, but we claim that it is clearly implied. The second competence reflects more the concept of relationship. Cooperation and communication are abilities directly connected to relationship. Communication is especially connected to relationship in the way that, whether bodily or orally, it is an essential basic skill (Dysthe, 2013). It is the essence of the creation of a relation, and in that case, learning will take place through interaction between teacher and pupils.

We can see that the definition of the role of the teacher takes another shape as long we go along reading, because *«the role of the teacher will always be changing»* (St.meld. nr. 11, 2008-2009, p.12). A large part of the paragraphs set forth the institutional side of the teaching function in achieving both local and national objectives. But it appears several times that teachers have an impact on pupils both socially and academically: *«Teachers […] must often make decisions that can have an important significance for the pupils»*; *«the teacher is the influence source that has the greatest impact on pupils' school performance»* (ibid, 2008-2009, p. 12). Later in the text appear furtively the concepts of emotional and social development and social learning. One part is also dedicated to the concept of respect, which is a quality that the teacher should have. Respect is an important aspect in the creation of the teacher-pupil relationship (Prairat, 2005).

The relationship between teacher and pupils is highlighted in the chapter "What do we know about how the teacher exerts its role?". This part describes classroom management skills that a teacher should have and it assesses the relation today between teacher and pupils. It gives some facts about recent studies of classroom management that show that some teachers

nowadays manage to reach, motivate and have control over their pupils. It happens to teachers who are very great storytellers, teachers with specific knowledge, teachers that master various teaching methods, and teachers who can improvise effectively (St.meld. nr. 11, 2008-2009, p.44).

It is clear that the Report to the Storting No. 11 has presented the values of relationships and aspires to evolve the teachers' competences in their profession. The role of the teacher is defined from an instructional view, where the teacher has to achieve the goals and requirements set up by the Government. Furthermore it provides a recent overview of the inner social skills that teachers should possess. Overall we think that the report is a positive support to teachers and educational intuitions to understand the meaning and importance of relationship.

1.2.2. The relationship in the Educational Reform of 2006

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training is a Norwegian Educational reform. The Norwegian school reform is often called KL06 or K06. It encompasses the whole basic education (primary, secondary and adult education) and was set up in August 2006. The reform led to changes of school content, organization and structure. An English version of the Norwegian reform is available which makes it easier to analyze the present document (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006).

Firstly a learning poster is proposed. It underlines the main responsibilities that schools and teachers should fulfil. It follows the legislation and regulations as well as the principles of human rights. Giving outlines, it is explained that the school administration and teachers must collaborate to promote a good learning environment for all. The preamble of the Quality framework sets broad and vague goals that can lead to a difficult interpretation. In contrast, the learning poster set forth strict guidelines. We feel the will of the Institutional Government to assert itself giving directives related to education.

Secondly, the school reform presents sub-themes that detail certain aspects of the learning poster. In the topic "Motivation for learning and learning strategies" it is noted that teachers and instructors should be inspired, confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable to awaken the desire to learn within pupils (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). It requires concretely several competences to fulfil the role of a teacher.

These four "qualities" requires a high level of expertise in the teaching role. We can link two of these competences with the notion of relationship. Teachers who have confidence in themselves show that they create better relationships. These characteristics may play a role in relational experiences (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). Pupils will automatically take advantage of the teachers with low confidence, because they will see a weakness in the teacher. The confidence among teachers favors the establishment of emotional or behavioral boundaries for pupils. On the other hand teachers should be enthusiastic to enhance learning and develop positive self-perception among pupils. It is important that teachers show their pleasure and enjoyment of pupils (Rimm-Kaufman, 2011). The enthusiasm and passion of a teacher often goes along with the transmission of knowledge. These characteristics are so communicative that they can encourage pupils to get involved in learning, and sometimes without even realizing it.

The second topic, that clearly underlines the position given to teachers, is "The competence and roles of teachers and instructors". In this chapter several responsibilities and characteristics are required to fulfil the position or role of a teacher. Once again, it is highlighted that teachers *«shall be seen as […] enthusiastic guides»* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). A list of abilities is given toward professionalism, but none meet directly the idea of relational skills.

The educational reform elaborates a sort of sketch of a responsible and competent teacher which should be a model to pupils to encourage them to learn. After a careful reading of the Educational reform, we find out that it raises the professional aspect of teachers as THE main priority. Social abilities are less pointed out; with regard to the educative relationship; it is clearly absent. Education is meant here to be essentially intellectual, cognitive, and very little emotional.

1.3. In practice

By representing the goals of education and the teacher's intentions toward his pupils, we can consider what's involved in the relationship inside the classroom. Today's society has a project in training future citizens and, in parallel, the teachers also have a project for his/her

pupils as future citizens. The meeting of these projects can then characterize the essence of relationship.

The concept of classroom was formed at the intersection of two movements: the individual method with a master-pupil model and the collective mode with a group-lesson model. The relationship has been, influenced by this double movement: individual and collective (Morandi, 2008). It is underlined by internal factors when it takes place in the classroom. Conversely, it can be named outside of the classroom with multiple external factors.

1.3.1. Internal influences

The organization of relationships in the classroom concerns all adults in the school, but specifically teachers. They are also supported by the general atmosphere that reigns in the classroom. These relationships initially occur through visible signs that strengthen social cooperation and academic learning.

- The structural organization of the class: organization of the pupils' desk, the place of the teacher's desk as the classroom map.
- The position of the teacher in the classroom: walking around, standing next to the blackboard…
- Routines: Entering the classroom, asking to speak, changing subjects…

These different signs are observable inside the classroom and take part in the creation of relationships. Likewise, it depends on goals set by the teacher and the school. The difference between pedagogical methods is a good example. These visible signs are the heart of classroom management and are factors in the development of interaction inside the classroom.

1.3.2. External influences

The relationship can also be characterized by external signs. They are made up of all the things that revolve around interpersonal action. It is all that goes from legislative laws up to the art of teaching through motivation, confidence and error. In the following table appear all the imperceptible signs that relate to relationships. Categorizing it gives a better view overall but doesn't mean that they are engrained. External signs are reversible and can be located in several categories (see Figure 1).

Wondering about the essence and functions of the relationship between teacher and pupils retrieved back to analyze the role of the teacher, the purpose he/she has, and the functions that the state assigned to him/her. Institutions and teachers have a common value; it is to pay attention to the consequences of relationships. Besides, the democratic society edits educational Act and laws to form young citizens, who must fit in the society by creating relationships. Teachers should then focus on relationship in the classroom, so that each pupil takes part in the micro-society: the school.

Going out of the institutional framework and considering the relation in to practice, puts the concept of relationship in the field of values. The will to control the relationship in practice shows the teachers' desire to reflect their action connected to pupils and learning.

Pedagogical and societal aims	Classroom climate, values, Act/ law, learning methods; meaning of learning, place and role of the student; citizenship; democracy; socialization, feedback	
Teacher's attributes	Values Authority Professional ethics	Motivation Confidence Communication
Pupil's attributes	Autonomy Intellectual activity Metacognitive activity Faith in the pupils Empathy Power Art of teaching	Error Student needs Influence Cooperation Success Self-esteem

Figure 1: Table listing the external signs in relation to pedagogical and societal aims, teacher's attributes and pupil's attributes.

2. Background reflection

During theoretical, practical classes and during practice in schools in my education I always had questions about being a teacher. This profession attracts me in many ways and reawakens my curiosity. All the student teachers will one day fulfil this position and during their formation will try to learn from professionals. But what make this profession so special? Maybe it is the fact to pass down knowledge or maybe it is the fact to work with human beings as in the health sector. Everyone has its own motivation and value about teacher's profession, but most of us share the vibe of teaching.

2.1. Internships in schools

Through practice in schools student teachers observe, analyze, and try out. They observe the way the teacher move in the class, how he speaks to his students, how is his attitude upon them. The teacher is a model that we, student teachers, try definitely to reproduce.

Since my first practice in school I analyzed all the small things that make us as a teacher. In the role of the teacher everything is mutable, portable and progressive. That's why I often questioned myself why the teacher is doing that? Why he/she is answering like this? And I finally find out that everything happens in human interaction. It is them who encourage the instability and the richness of educational situations. Then why did it not appear to me early in my studies? Why nobody teach or told me? Is it something students should discover by themselves? The question has so far no answer for me.

During my different internships in school I produced several reports that had more or less links to all forms of interaction's topic. For example I analyzed feedbacks during a lesson of physical education. It appears to me that the French model of teacher was a basis in my teaching studies but it also shows me some limitations in the way of teaching. My experience as student in Norway completely disrupt me and left me perplexed on the way social relationship were seen and handled. Furthermore in both countries I felt that relations were understated and possibly seen as something apart from teaching. I was in front of these questions shoving in my mind: why cover the affective dimension in the teaching profession? Does it fear because it may dethrone knowledge or because it is so intangible that we couldn't be trained in interpersonal skills?

2.2. Development of the research question

Finding a topic and a research question that target my several questionings was not a simple task. I started to think about a theme that includes a comparison between France and Norway. Sliding on that side I also wanted to focus on physical education, especially on motor development and the influence of landscapes in the learning process. I have been really interested in this theme since I came to Norway. I had plenty of ideas but couldn't find a solution to gather the ideas up. Moreover it seemed to be a too important research for the specified period of time. Then I kept the idea of comparison and oriented myself on pedagogical and didactic topics. My previous works on feedbacks and my interest for relationship lead me to think that there was something to look after on that side.

The research question was then meant to be about comparison. The first draft of the research question has not been approved. The teachers responsible for theses stated that comparing two countries asked too much work. I chose to focus on one country, Norway. Then the process to write a research question that made sense for me started. I wanted to analyze teachers' perceptions about relationship with their students. I didn't want to make a long question with difficult words, that's why I focused on writing a simple question with precise words. It appears as an evidence to me that, after several tries, the research question that is written down today completed to open wide the door of reflection that drives me every day since.

2.3. Limitations

The study will be seen from a phenomenological perspective. The information collected from interviews will then be the essence of the research. Lived experiences are the core of phenomenology framework and lead to a conscious and clear delimitation. The research will be led by the collection of data. It is the speech of teachers that are the most important factor in this research. The meanings and subjectivity of teachers outline and influence the research question and the theoretical framework. The description of experiences will be our base to emerge theoretical concepts, approach and ideas. The data will be relevant the case research because the content of the responses from the interviews is deeply personal. You must then pay attention to progress carefully writing the dissertation.

The teachers that have been interviewed are form the same area in Norway. This is neither an advantage nor an inconvenience, but it is true that it is difficult to get in touch with unknown

teachers. Moreover, the fact that relationship between teacher and pupils is a personal theme restricts the participation from teachers.

This research fits in topic of classroom management, which is a really large theme. Even if thousands of studies have been carried out, there is still place for all kinds of questions and reasoning due to the vastness of the subject. For example, it is modern to study the learning environment, the importance of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), or the discipline promoting academic success, but we will try not to digress in your research. Avoiding while being aware of the actuality, the theoretical part will include perspectives from classroom management focusing on the variety of interaction between teacher and pupils. The gender of the teacher or home-school collaboration (themes related to classroom management) will also not be broached in this research.

Besides, pupil's meanings about relationship will not be analyzed in this research. It appears that views are significantly different characteristics that reflect teacher-pupils relationship (Liu, 2013). The boundary here is that the thesis will analyze perspectives form only one group: the teachers. The focus toward teachers will allow us to be more specific in our argument.

3. Summary

The researches on the relationship as educational tool are squarely booming. We have noticed that a majority of the research findings maintain that the social aspect of the relation is a factor in teaching and learning. Researchers brought out factors that can play in favor or in disfavor of the teacher-pupils relationship. Most of the time, conclusions emphasize the positive factors in order to explain « how to do it » and to advise the educational actors. The multitude of researches offers us a wide range of information, and which all are more significant than each other. The relationship is definitely a feature that we cannot put aside if we want to see learning as a successful task.

The review of the institutional framework provides information on the direction given to the relationship by official texts. The relationship is primarily considered as cognitive, and it is highlighted by the teacher's knowledge that enables pupils to progress. The relationship visualized in the classroom practice, put the relation in a dimension beyond the school boundaries. It implies the practical action placed in the field of values. Indeed, this understanding does no longer assign the relationship as an ordinary educational use, but as a principle resulting in a very specific layout of roles and positions.

The development of the research question has been an opportunity to reflect on the importance of a Master Thesis. The reflection took some time because it is necessary to be truly sure about the choice of the subject before taking a final decision. Choosing the topic of relationship is a great challenge owing to the modernity of the theme. That's why it was fundamental to define the research question as clearly as possible. Looking at teachers 'perceptions was an interesting side, and it became a possible perspective afterwards. Setting limits to the research question make it possible to sketch the outlines of the research. Here, the theoretical framework will focus on some aspects of classroom management, but always related to relationship, and only few teachers in a limited area will be interviewed.

The thesis is structured in a transparent manner. The content consists of the following chapters: introduction, theoretical framework, methodological approach, findings, and discussion. To create a common thread in the research; we based ourselves on a structure including the following themes: the definition and importance of the teacher-pupils relationship, the creation of a relationship, several aspects of classroom management, and the teacher's skills.

4. Theoretical framework

The first part of the theoretical framework chapter will focus on relationship. More precisely, the concept will be presented in a scientific and historical perspective before giving several definitions to try to understand the ins and outs. The second part will include the relationship in relation to classroom management, with particular emphasis on authority, control and closeness. Then, we will show interest in the communication between the teacher and his/her pupils. The last part will examine the diverse teacher's skills that refer to the teacher-pupils relationship.

4.1. Relationship

The first paragraph, with the theme relationship, begins with a contextualization of the concept within time and research. After, definitions will be given to clarify the components of the concept of relationship, especially here between teacher and his/her pupils.

4.1.1. A relationship model that evolved

From a historical perspective dating back to the seventeenth century, the individual relationship model master-disciple places the teacher in a high position in the relationship, and the founding principles of the relationship are given by the lesson (Morandi, 2008, p.580). In the years that follow, the position remains unchanged; the teacher is still the mirror of culture and humanity. The relationship is set up from knowledge to pupils through the teacher who embodies the humanist ideal. At the same time, for sociologists, the Education is intended to socialize youth in a formal manner. Thus, the relationship is seen as all social relations established between the teacher, the one who is educated and the state (Postic, 1994, p.24). The teacher is then placed in a high position because of its institutional authority.

The Norwegian school has historically evolved in step with society. Today the pupil stands at the center of teaching, and knowledge are developed from the pupil's abilities. Then, the teacher (mediator of knowledge) is based directly on the child/pupil's needs (Telhaug, 2006).

4.1.2. Scientific directions within a professional-pedagogical thinking

In the middle of the 18th century, Dewey and Vygotsky's where already making references to relationship between teachers and children. Shortly after, studies showed that *«instruction is something more than simply demonstration, modeling and reinforcement, but instead a*

complex, socially and psychologically mediated process» (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003, p.200). Then, the behaviorist theories were developed focusing on behaviors, emotions and social environment. Often, negative pupil's behavior was analyzed to find regulatory solutions (Sylte, 2013, p.145).

In the late 90s, studies began to bring out the relationship as an intrapersonal and interpersonal level. Pianta raised the issue on value of relationship for human development, showing that contexts and human development are linked (Pianta et al., 2003, p.200).

Research on the relationship took another turn the last ten years. The teacher-relationship is seen as a separate entity incorporated in a complex dimension. Researchers analyzed the relationship from teacher, pupils, school, parents… and today, and through the recent researches, we know that the teacher-pupils relationship has an impact on children's learning (Hattie, 2003, 2009; Marzano, 2003).

In the professional pedagogical thinking, learning happens through practical and theoretical understanding, experience, interaction and reflection, which contribute to the development of individual skills, at individual, organizational and societal levels. The sociocultural perspective is an interesting angle to analyze the teacher-pupils relationship. It allows the researchers to focus on the social aspect of learning, and to interest themselves on the interaction between several people. Communication and dialogue are then two primordial topics (Sylte, 2013, p.157).

A rapid evolution in the relational field shows that the concept of relationship is nowadays studied interdisciplinary and it can be approached from different perspectives.

4.1.3.   What is a teacher-pupils relationship?

The relationship between pupils and teachers goes far beyond the pedagogical relationship. First, it is a relationship between two people, which implies everything in terms of joys and difficulties.

According to Røkenes and Hansen, a relationship denotes a mutual relationship where both parties consider each other as independent individuals, and where one is part of a common reality (Drugli, 2012, p.15). Considering that a relationship is what happened between two individuals, the teacher-pupil relationship is the product of the interaction between an

individual teacher and the child characteristics. Pianta assures that those two reciprocally influence each other (Pianta et al., 2003).

The relationship (its existence, its characteristics) filters and colors the perception and the understanding of the teacher and the pupils (Cosmopoulos, 1999). Researches qualify it as a dynamic system, because it involves several components and procedures. The complexity of the concept makes it in constant motion. To understand better how and where the teacher-pupils relationship is, we chose to represent it in a concentric schema (see Figure 2).
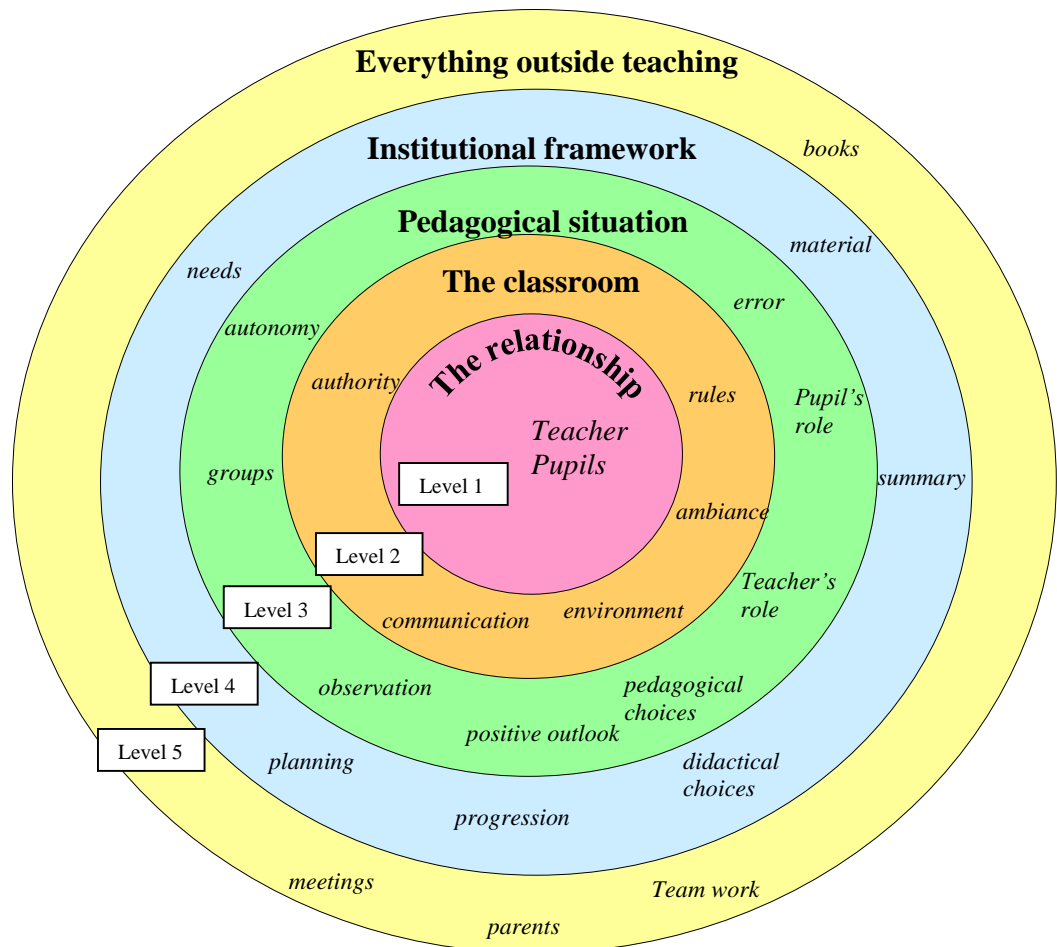
Figure 2: The 5 levels highlighting the place of the teacher-pupils relationship

Relationships are embedded within a multilevel system represented here by circles, which come on top of each other (see Figure 2). This system is composed of *«multicomponent entities, involved in reciprocal interactions across and within multiple levels of organization and influences»* (Pianta et al., 2003, p.205). The levels include everything from family or

what is outside of school, to the individuals directly concerned in the relationship. Each level has an influence on the relational processes. *«The within- and cross-level interactions shape the patterns of interactions between pupil and teacher that are the basis for the formation of teacher–child relationships»* (Pianta & Sabol, 2012). The different levels and the interfering interactions form the primary context in which the teacher-pupil relation takes place. It is from the correlation of all these relationships, and especially through the one with the teacher, that pupils develop/grow and learn. We notice that the term of interaction comes frequently in works, when it comes to relationships. Nordahl (2010) says that the core of a relationship is about interpersonal, including interaction and communication with others. The term "interaction" seems to be less difficult to define. This term designates the teacher's activity in the classroom, in the presence of his/her pupils (Bressoux & Dessus, 2003).

The teacher-pupils relationship is quite hard to define because of its multidimensional aspect. To address the teacher-pupils relationship as we desired, we must choose to present the most relevant parts for our research. For that, we will talk in terms of classroom management and skills, highlighting the teacher's role in the relationship.

4.1.1.   What meaning has a relationship?

In the last decade, books, reports and articles shows that, what teachers do has a big impact on the learning environment and the learning achievement at school (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.29). *«The relationship between teacher and pupil should work such that it contributes to pupils' learning»* (Drugli, 2012, p.67). The pupil is the first affected by the consequences of the relationship, whether it's positive or negative. Drugli maintains that the relationship is a central factor (Drugli, 2012, p.66).

One on side, the relationship has a meaning for the pupil(s). It promotes pupils' satisfaction and positive behavior in general. In addition, the relationship is socially and emotionally meaningful for pupils. Sometimes a hug from the teacher can contribute to the concentration of the pupil, making him/her feel safe and confident (Drugli, 2012, p.66-69). On the other side, the relationship also means a lot to the teachers. A positive relationship can increase teacher's motivation, thus benefits pupils of his/her involvement in their learning. Whereas a conflictual relationship will lead the teacher to focus on regulating misbehavior which deprives pupils of learning opportunities (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.78).

The relationship in question has an important signification for both parties. Indeed, the teacher-pupils relationship, negative or positive, has direct impact on people and on the situation. It therefore remains from the teacher and his/her pupils to build a relationship in a way that any individuals get physically, socially and academically their bearings.

4.2. Classroom management

First and foremost, Ogden defines classroom management as the teachers' expertise in keeping order and creating productive working atmosphere, through the promotion of teaching and learning activities in collaboration with pupils (Ogden, 2012, p.17).

To create relationships leads to create a classroom climate in which children feel safe, learn to become responsible and allowing them to acquire a large number of skills and knowledge. The classroom management involves naturally relationship in its main areas. It also implies that the teacher should be a clear growing person who shall have a good relation with his/her pupils (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.107).

This theoretical part presents the relationship seen in a classroom management perspective. It includes the different dimensions of the teacher-pupils relationship, enhancing the ideas of the authority, the communication and the positive outlook toward the pupils.

4.2.1. Control and closeness

The teachers have the control on the teaching and the activity of the pupils, but they also have to focus on the quality of the relationship with each pupil. The teacher that can combine these two dimensions of the classroom management will appear as a teacher with authoritativeness (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2012) .

In the following graphic (see Figure 3), Nordahl (2012) exposes the different "categories" where a teacher takes place according to his/her relationship with pupils and his/her type of classroom management.

The figure of Marzano is used as a support to define the two axes. Even if he handles other concepts, we can clearly understand that he is talking about the same topic (Marzano, 2003, p.43).
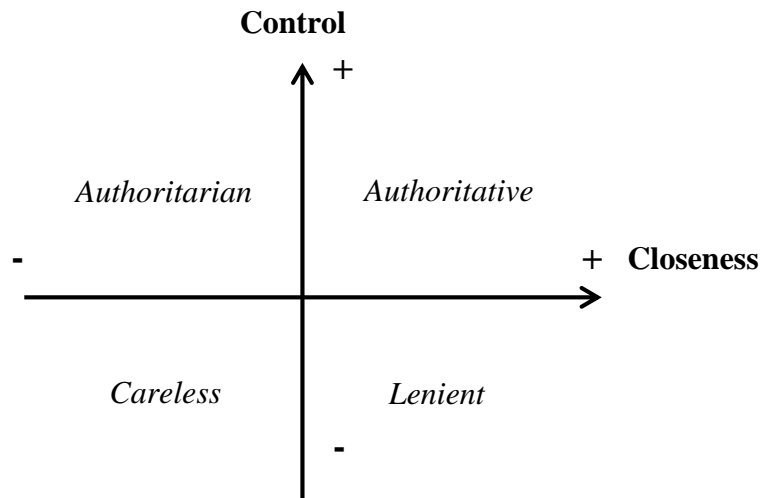
Figure 3: The dimension of the classroom management (Nordahl et al., 2012)

The axis control represents the teacher's ability to manage the classroom. The more the teacher approaches the plus sign, the clearer he/she is in his/her purpose and the stronger is his/her academically and behaviorally guidance. On the contrary, if the teacher approaches the minus sign it shows his/her lack of clarity and his/her slackness in the classroom management (Marzano, 2003, p.42). The horizontal axis, named closeness represents the teacher's relationship with his/her pupils. On the same system as the last axis, the plus and minus signs gauge the distance between a teacher and his/her pupils. The plus sign indicates that the teacher is concerned for the needs and opinions of his/her pupils; otherwise the minus sign is characterized by active antagonism toward others and a desire to thwart their goals and desires (Marzano, 2003, p.43).

The four dimensions giving by Nordahl characterize a teacher according to his/her control and his/her closeness (Nordahl et al., 2012, p.31). A teacher with a low closeness and a low control is defined as careless. This teacher's position represents a risk in the kids' development and can damage pupils if it lasts too long. A teacher characterized as lenient is concerned by his/her pupils' demands and wishes. He/she definitely has a close relation to them, but is an imprecise leader. An authoritarian teacher uses strategies to have the power over his/her classroom. This kind of teacher shows a distant relationship to their pupils. The authoritarian management can lead pupils to feel unsafe and are generally afraid of the teacher. An authoritative teacher is a confident adult who shows that he or she cares about students and dare to set requirements to them. He/she has the ability to set clear learning

goals, challenge pupils at the level they are, and provide encouragement and precise feedback when they learn what they should, or in underperforming (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.29).

The last important point to achieve good classroom climate and relationship is to be able to provide a flexible discipline in the classroom. Wubbels and his colleagues describe an optimal teacher-student relationship profile in terms of control and closeness:

> *Briefly, teachers should be effective instructors and lecturers, as well as friendly, helpful, and congenial. They should be able to empathize with students, understand their world, and listen to them. Good teachers are not uncertain, undecided, or confusing in the way they communicate with students. They are not grouchy, gloomy, dissatisfied, aggressive, sarcastic, or quick-tempered. They should be able to set standards and maintain control while still allowing students responsibility and freedom to learn.* (Wubbels et al. in Marzano, 2003, p. 44)

4.2.2. Authority

In relation to control is important to practice an efficient classroom management. Learning is established by the teacher, who sets precise goals for learning and clear expectations of behavior. The teacher works as well performance and learning, by giving clear signals and enforcing rules and instructs as the same time (Nordahl et al., 2012). At its height, the control may be associated to the idea of authority.

Historically the teachers (often doctors, priests or philosophers) had a certain degree of authority in itself. They were automatically respected and valued due to their knowledge and their position.

Today, the authority can be interpreted in different ways considering the field. In pedagogy and education, we discern two major categories:

- Professional authority: the teacher shows commitment, masters his/her subject and receives gratitude and respect through that.
- Personal authority: it is based on the attitudes and values of the teacher, which is closely, linked to his/her identity.

(Nordahl et al., 2013, p.117)

Teachers have first a position of authority as a result of their position. The authority of the teacher is also a personal quality and the exercise of this authority is a prerequisite for any teacher. The authority is used as a tool for the organization and control of individual behavior (Ivic, 2000). It also falls within an effective classroom management, built with structure and clearness. Authority results also from supportive relationship on behalf of the teacher (Nordahl et al., 2012).

Furthermore in a relational perspective, Nordahl (2012) maintains that the personal authority of the teacher has a direct impact on pupils. He says that a teacher with authority is a teacher that pupils like because he/she is friendly, communicative, and see them for who they are. So, if authority lies in the teacher-pupil relationship it can either be negative or positive. A teacher that manage authority at a fair degree will develop trust and learning among his/her pupils; but a teacher that has too high or low authority will meet relationally and pedagogically difficulties. Teachers must find the right balance adapting to the pupils, creating a good atmosphere and ensuring learning.

4.2.3. The verbal and non-verbal communication

Effective teachers are those who communicate using good social distance: they stand close to their pupils, use touch in a socially approved way, are more expressive in speaking, smile more, exude opening by their bodily attitudes, frequently use eye contact and organize the class in terms of interactions.

Relationship is understood as an interaction which is related to communication. Here, it is how a teacher and a pupil communicate together in a school environment. There are two notable ways of communication: verbal and non-verbal (Marzano, 2011 ; Nordahl et al., 2013, p.82; Schmuck, Schmuck, & Osnes, 1983, p.216). Teachers must associate with the both to have optimal communication with their pupils. Dysthe (2013) emphasizes that dialogic interaction between teacher and student is very important. Teachers must engage in daily activities that communicate to pupils that they like them and are there to help them learn. That's why it's natural in their practices, that teachers address comments to their pupils as for example, "Nice job!" and "Thank you for doing that" (Marzano, 2011).

Communication can then have three directions: emotional, academic and educational (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.81). Pupils and teachers need the three dimensions to establish a comfortable relationship. The emotional dialogue is necessary to reassure, joke or simply to

express his/hers frame of mind: sad, happy, disagree, etc. The verbal communication creates social and academic learning for the entire class and for each pupils (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.98).

Non-verbal communication consists of body movements, gesture or facial expressions. Often, a gesture is interpreted in the right way, but it may sometimes create misunderstanding in the relationship. A non-verbal expression can for example cover several emotions (Schmuck et al., 1983). In this case, it requires from the teacher a long and deep work on each relationship with a pupil. Teachers are also here to support and put pupils at ease (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.108). Usually, small gestures are made to keep that special contact, such as a pat on the back or a nod (Marzano, 2011).

It is necessary that teachers respect these communications codes, which of course have ethical limits, because teachers are a model for their pupils. Doing all these verbal and non-verbal communications, leads the pupils to find evidence for their own behavior (Schmuck et al., 1983). It allows them to regulate their behavior afterwards with the aim of becoming a better person and adapt to society. Finally, verbal and non-verbal communications are very important in the teacher-pupils relationship, because it represents the base of the relational creation. Communication or interaction includes the teacher professionally and personally, together with the pupil in its entirety.

4.2.4. The positive outlook on the pupils

The third characteristic that seems important to create relationship between a teacher and a pupil, is the positive outlook on the pupils by the teacher. Drugli states that it is meaningful for pupils what the teacher think and believe toward them (Drugli, 2012, p.49). The teacher has an important place in the pupils' development and he/she must let them feel valued as humans. That's why the teacher has the power to build up or tear down the pupils' perception of their own values. To look positively at pupils has then an impact on pupils' life.

Hattie (2009) informs in his research that positive expectations from the teacher mean a lot for the pupils. These expectations are sometimes affected by preconceived ideas on the characteristics of a pupil in the classroom, the school level policies, and the characteristics of the individual pupil. Bressoux (2001) indicates that "the teacher effect" undoubtedly aims to describe, explain and understand the effect of teaching practices on pupil's learning. Indeed, the teacher forms his/her first judgments on pupils during the first week of the school year.

The author also describes that the concept should be analyzed as a product of the teacher-pupils relationship. Therefore the outlook on the pupils can have an influence into the relationship afterwards.

This approach is similar to the one of Talbot (2008) who advances the hypothesis of the pedagogical and didactic differentiation according to the school status of a pupil. The author examines the practical management of the teachers on the heterogeneity of the pupils in their classes (Talbot, 2011). He claims also that a challenge for the teachers is to promote the progression of the weakest pupils. Moreover, in a classroom, the pupils who will make greater progress are those where the teacher sets high expectations. Jussim (1989) and Pianta (2003) shows that the teachers have a general idea of their pupils: "a good pupil" (high expectation) would be a skillful and autonomous child making efforts, whereas "a bad pupil" (low expectation) would be a weakly competent and little autonomous child, and would provide little effort.

It's important for the teacher to look upon every individual pupil, and give the same chance to evolve each one. Choosing to see "the glass being half full rather than being half empty" forms the basis of the metaphor for the educational attitude. It's a necessary condition in the relationship, but not sufficient. This teacher's attitude should go along with a desire to make his/her pupils succeed, and to hope the best for them while accepting the worst. In other words, it is to express a double demand: for oneself and for the other.

4.3. Teacher's skills

Today, teachers in schools have a big challenge: They have a central role in students' learning, and a huge social responsibility. This social responsibility is perhaps the teachers' main role. Thus, as skilled workers, teachers have to respect the characteristics of the profession. But that isn't so easy, because the profession involves individuals. Also, the characteristics of the teacher as a person will naturally be a key factor, and this will have a bearing on how the relationship between a teacher and his/her different pupils evolves.

For Nordahl (2012) a skilled teacher is a teacher who is able to combine structure, control, closeness and relationship.

The chapter will expose the two side of the teacher's profession: the professional side and the personal side. For that, the theory part will give an overview of the skills that teacher's should have in order to create an efficient relationship with pupils.

4.3.1. Professional skills

Teachers are distinguished by their dedication to the pupils and to the teaching profession. They must feel responsible for the achievement and success of their pupils and their own professional development. Nordahl and others affirms that it is always the teacher's responsibility to facilitate that relationship become as good as possible (Nordahl et al., 2013, p.69).

According to the National Curriculum of Education (Utdannings og forskningsdepartementet, 2003), responsibilities as cultural mediator, advisor, role model and inspiration, implies that the teacher requires solid professional expertise. In relation to the curriculum, teachers should possess teaching skills, in order to facilitate and adapt the knowledge to all their pupils. A teacher that has good content knowledge might inspire the pupils' confidence in the teachers abilities (Moreno Rubio, 2010). If a teacher is close to his/her pupils, he/she must take responsibility for the work and progress. This requires that the teacher has an insight into subjects and pedagogy (Haug, 2011).

Secondly, teachers should have social skills that include the ability to interact in a broad sense, which involves both communication skills and relationship skills. It is not just the teacher's relation to individual pupils that is essential, but how teachers can facilitate the pupils' learning of social skills. Hattie (2009) informs that social skills are factors in the learning process, promoting pupils' mutual communication and interaction, as well as the teacher's relationship with pupils.

To deepen the professional dimension, it is described below some particular skills to the teaching profession. In terms of classroom management, teachers must be the leaders in their own classroom (Nordahl et al., 2012, p.6).

- **Leadership skills**

The teaching profession implies a leadership position as a teacher's skill (Nordahl et al., 2012, p.9). Marzano raises an interesting question: *« Are effective classroom managers born, or can you become one if you are not one already? »*(Marzano, 2003, p.10). For him, effective

classroom leaders are made. He points out that teacher with leader skills are those who understand and use specific techniques in their classroom. Several skills are presented below; focusing on those that can be related to the social attitude of the teacher's relationship with his/her pupils.

On a professional level, teachers must organize the classroom as a warm and optimistic space for children (Moreno Rubio, 2010). To promote interaction, teachers must create an optimal learning and social environment where pupils feel comfortable in terms of decoration, accessibility and mobility (Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004).

Teachers must also have the competence to regulate classroom behavior. It takes from the teacher to be clear in their expectations and to fix rules to avoid misbehavior (Moreno Rubio, 2010). The pupils expect generally to meet a teacher that takes control of the classroom and sets limits to create an atmosphere of equality (Nordahl et al., 2012, p.7). In this way, respect, fairness and equity are three essential characteristics for the teacher and the pupils. A mutual respect enables to create a positive relationship, but it requires from the teacher to demonstrate commitment and be turned towards the pupils' development. Skillful teachers understand also that there are individual differences among pupils. Teachers should use techniques to engage each pupil to achieve their personal best. That's why, teachers must acknowledge particular culture, background and abilities of each pupil (Moreno Rubio, 2010).

As presented earlier, communication skills are important in a relational context. Competent teachers have the ability to show enthusiasm. They also have the energy to conduct challenging activities and make the learning enjoyable for pupils (Moreno Rubio, 2010). In this sense, body-language and the use of appropriate tone of voice are two vital features for the teacher (Marzano, 2003, p.49). Moreover, teachers must be aware of how they behave and react in interaction with different pupils. Drugli maintains that in a relationship, teachers must be able to adapt their behavior to the different pupil's needs (Drugli, 2012, p.47).

Although the teacher should be professional and fully accept his/her role as leader, it is natural that *«leaders appeal […] to the heart by connecting to the emotional needs of their people»* (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

4.3.2. Personal skills

The teacher profession implies interactions between people, especially between adult and children. In this case, teaching may require more personal involvement than most other

professions due to the importance of the social climate of the classroom (Pianta et al., 2003).The teacher and pupils are marked by their personal experience, so emotions easily interfere with teaching and learning; and can hardly be put aside. Thus, the characteristics of the teacher as a person are naturally a key factor that has a bearing on how the teacher-pupils relationship evolves (Drugli, 2012, p.37). The personal attention of the teacher is often a motor in pupils learning. Marzano confirms that *«virtually anything you do to show interest in students as individuals has a positive impact on their learning»* (Marzano, 2003, p.5).

Teachers that engage themselves personally show care to their pupils inside and outside of the classroom. This means that teachers display interest about pupils' particular lives and/or personal problems. It requires from the teachers *«to be good listeners, paying attention to, and showing understanding through tenderness and patience»* (Moreno Rubio, 2010). Marzano (2003) adds that it's important to talk informally to pupils about their diverse interests before, during, and after class. In the pupil's eye, effective teachers are those who express kindness, gentleness and encouragement (Stronge et al., 2004). That's why Marzano (2011) reveals that compliments from the teacher in and outside of school (such as participation in sports, drama, or other extracurricular activities) enhance pupils' achievement.

Furthermore, teachers that know the pupils individually will develop productive relationships. It is natural to greet pupils for instance, at extracurricular events or at stores (Marzano, 2003). Stronge and others (2004) adds that teachers' personal interest goes beyond listening, understanding and knowing them. To bring attention to pupils, it is also to be patient, kind, warm, sensitive and human; showing honesty, trust and encouragement. The teachers' personal skill is to be adaptable to individual pupils' situations (Moreno Rubio, 2010).

After all, teacher-pupils relationship takes place not only inside the classroom, but outside too. However, it's not an obligation that teachers involve themselves personally in their profession, in fact teachers vary in their ability and desire to become personally close to pupils. For some teachers, to become too close to pupils means to take the risk of being rejected. Another characteristic to take into account is the fact that teachers also have emotions. Drugli states that how teachers generally have it in their life, will affect relations with pupils (Drugli, 2012, p.38).

A teacher should definitely use personal skills; with a certain degree to create relationship with his/her pupils. Indeed, a teacher who spends more time interacting socially with the

pupils and knows them individually in and outside the school, demonstrates effectiveness. Teachers with personal skills as humor, care and willingness pull the relationship one step forward.

4.3.1. A balance

Teachers are all different, but they all have the same goal: develop kids socially and academically in a democratic context. Some teachers appear as instructors tending to speak more about the importance of organization in the classroom; whereas the others, as socializers perceive their role as emotional supporters of pupils (Pianta et al., 2003, p. 207).

In this sense, personal and professional skills should be distributed evenly by the teacher. Nordahl (2010) argues that the authoritative dimension is the ideal practice for teachers to adopt. These kinds of teachers score high on both axes. They show a balance between control as structure, and closeness as warmth to their pupils. In other words, if a teacher exercise discipline over a pupil, he/she should also increase on the relational axis afterwards to keep a pleasant relationship. It can be challenging for some teachers to care while setting limits. In teaching and education, it's an important point that the teacher is able to give pupils freedom, since he/she has the control of the class (Nordahl, 2010).

Drugli (2012) insists on the point that teachers are instructive but also possess emotions. The emotional, social and academically intern's patterns of a relationship are working together. The author tells that pupils need the two types of skills (professional and personal) from the teacher, with more or less for some of them. She also let teachers know that they have to keep a distance and don't be too friendly; to be sure that learning happens.

Getting too close to the pupils is a risk in a way that a teacher could let his/her emotions go over the pupils. Stress is a factor that can be devastating for teacher-pupils relationship. Teachers have bad and good days, like everybody. In this context, it results in the teachers' professionalism to inhibit impulses that are not appropriate to the school situation. It is not suitable to yell at a pupil or to use sarcasm to get out frustration (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013).

Even if the essential role of teachers' social and emotional competencies is often overlooked, to be an effective teacher it requires to have a series of qualities, in terms of professional and personal skills (Moreno Rubio, 2010).

5.   Summary

An effective classroom management requires managing different elements as management of time, space, behavior, learning, work and conflicts. In other words, teachers have to develop a climate in which children feel safe, where they can flourish and be motivated to work. The act of teaching is not just a succession of teaching methods, but also depends on the ability of the teacher to build a relationship based on trust with his students, considering their emotional universe and his/her own.

The role of the teacher is to be professional, that means to take responsibilities and have the control over their own communication and behavior. Teachers must take responsibilities, they must go through what they undertake as solving problem, step back, assume their authority, grasp the meaning of the interactions with pupils, observe and help, or make pupils account of their action. It requires also that the teacher is attentive toward their pupils. For example is the teacher's responsibility to promotes pupil's involvement, giving positive and constructive feedback and enhancing autonomy (Drugli, 2012).

But the teacher also has to give an emotional support advising a better understanding of a task, like visual contact, physical proximity or vocal modulation. Stronge makes the point that teachers interact mostly academically owing to their first role: transmitter of knowledge. But to cultivate a positive learning environment it is also necessary to focus on social interactions (Stronge, 2002). It's important that teachers communicate and convey the message that they are interested in the concerns of their pupils, as individuals and the class as a whole (Marzano, 2003).

Teacher's abilities or skills are supposed to create a dynamic and rich social interaction to promote better cognitive development. It means that pupils, in an efficient relationship with their teacher, will understand better the meaning and importance of a task during the interplay (Drugli, 2012).

Teachers must be able to show warmth in contact with others, they should also be spontaneous and available to express feelings and to receive some. They should have the skills to be attentive to their pupils and to communicate their enthusiasm to them. Finally, they should always be honest and clear in their interpersonal relations.

6.   The methodological approach

A research is about achieving certain knowledge, and the purposes can be diverse. The reason for this can be: to test whether existing knowledge are still valid, to search or discover new knowledge, to describe or identify a thematic area, to understand or explain a phenomenon, and so on (Lund & Haugen, 2006).

This chapter will present the method used to analyze teacher's views and meanings. The method heads for the type of study the researcher want to use. The term "method" means to follow a particular path towards a goal (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2010). It is somehow the "backbone" of the research itself.

 First, it the methodological approach outlines the type and the design of the study that match what we want to observe: the teachers 'perception of their relationship with their pupils. Later, the chapter presents the sample and the material used to collect the data. Another part will display the ethical reflections link to the research question, and the remaining parts expose the validity and reliability of the data. Finally, analysis and theory development will be exposed to make the transfer with the discussion section of the study.

6.1.   A qualitative study

Qualitative research can be defined as an activity that allows an individual, or group to acquire accurate knowledge about the cultural and social reality that is experienced on a daily basis. Such knowledge can be acquired by the application of one or more of the following methods: analysis of documents, observations, interviews and meetings with individuals or groups, and the analysis of collected data (Suter, 2012).

Qualitative approach states something about the qualities and special characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. It is especially appropriate to use a qualitative perspective when researcher wants to get a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. Qualitative methods are related to data in terms of sound, image and text, and their interpretation. The qualitative method commonly uses observation or interview as tools for data collection (Johannessen et al., 2010). The researcher has also an important place in the qualitative study, because he/she wants to get a deep understanding of a phenomenon. It means that the researcher has to involve himself/herself; hence the difficulty of the task. The researcher is presented as the main research instrument due to the aim of qualitative studies, which is to understand "the

other" (individual) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Denzin & Lincoln (2011) describes qualitative research as a situated activity, which means that the researcher is directly involved in the research field. It makes the reality for him/her becoming visible. Qualitative research is described as a study of social systematic actions in their natural background.

In the goal of the study is to analyze teachers' personal views on their relationship with their pupils. I wished to interpret different meanings and the experiences of teachers in their everyday teaching role. In addition, the choice of the method depends on the research question (Johannessen et al., 2010). Therefore, a qualitative method is the logical path to end up with a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon.

6.2. The design

The approach in this study is defined as phenomenological. It will be described "what" teacher's experiences and "how" they experience the situation of the relationship between them and their pupils. Creswell affirms that *«a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon»* (Creswell, 2013, p.76).

The method of phenomenological analysis is rather recent. Indeed, no definitive agreement is established about its structure, its procedures and its presentation of results. Creswell presents a psychological phenomenology approach by relying on the publications of Moustakas (Creswell, 2013, p.80-82). The theoretical background of the research presents the essence of the problem; and the type used to collect and analyze data shows that a phenomenological strategy should be chosen. One of the characteristics of a phenomenological approach is in the form of data collection. In the table 4.1 Creswell exposes that a phenomenology primarily uses interviews with individuals. The qualitative method encourages a phenomenology to have a textural and structural description in the analysis of data (Creswell, 2013, p.104-106). The research is based on the different steps exposed by Creswell, knowing that bracketing personal experiences is a difficult task. Indeed, in the context of a phenomenological approach, the participant is called co-investigator, because the understanding of the phenomenon is both constructed by the researcher and the respondent. That's why it is difficult to gather life world experiences, because researchers also bring assumptions to the topic (van Manen in Creswell, 2013, p.83).

As we seek to uncover and understand the teachers' thoughts about their relationship experiences, phenomenological analysis is an appropriate method to achieve these goals. This approach makes it possible to reveal the status of the teacher in and through the adult, in order to capture his/her experience. In addition, it is well suited to our research because of its openness.

6.3. The sample

The category of persons selected for this research is teachers. They are all active teachers at this time, and are from an elementary school or a middle school in Norway. This kind of sample is a nonprobability sampling; the researcher select individuals in a non-random but purposive way. The classroom level in which they teach does not have an influence on their meanings.

The public interviewed for this research consists of four school teachers. According to a phenomenological approach, the sample size can be between five and twenty five people (Creswell, 2013). Firstly the sampling plan was to interview five teachers, but the amount of collected information after four interviews seemed to be sufficient in this case. In qualitative interview studies, the number of interviewees depends on the purpose of the study. Commonly, a researcher can interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what he/she needs to know (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.140).

6.4. The data collection

As said above, a method means "path to the goal". Then, which material works best to answer my research question? Observation and interview were my only two alternatives. Otherwise, it appears that to gather personal information on a delicate topic, the interview was the best tool for this study. Social phenomena are complex and interview makes it possible to reveal this complexity, the nuances and the multiple perspectives (Johannessen et al., 2010). Then, how can interviews contribute to resolving the research question?

Interview research gives the teacher the opportunity to explain their meanings and actions. It allows the teachers to reflect on their role and position, as well as let them consider their own relationship with pupils. Interview gives more information in this case, than using an observation tool.

6.4.1. The material

In order to highlight aspects of the teacher-pupils relationship, we chose the method of the interview in a qualitative perspective. Our goal is to analyze the meaning and recurrence of teachers' responses. The qualitative research interview seeks an understanding of the world viewed from the interviewees' side: *«The interview aims at nuanced accounts of different aspects of the interviewee's life world; it works with words and not with numbers»* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.33). In the book InterViews, an interview is defined as *«a conversation that has a structure and a purpose»* and its purpose *«is to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives»* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.5, p.27). Likewise, Johannessen et al. (2010) describe it as revealing a description of interviewees' everyday life; in order to interpret the significance of the described phenomenon.

An interview is, first of all, a conversation between two (or more) individuals. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p.4) define it by giving the following synonyms: inter-action, inter-view, inter-change. An interview has generally a structure, where the interviewer has prepared his/her questions in advance. Research interview is a professional conversation, because it goes deeper than the typical chat of everyday. The interview is then characterized by a structure and a purpose.

6.4.2. Leading the interview inquiry

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, pp. 128-129) give seven stages to lead an interview inquiry: **thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting**. They describe a linear progression to facilitate *«the chaotic interview journey»* of the researcher. Following the seven steps, it will be described how it has been done in this study. It's clear that the better prepared you are before the interview, the higher the quality of the interview will be, and the easier the treatment of data will become. Some stages are more elaborated than others, depending on the weight given to each of the steps throughout the method process.

- **Thematizing**

The first stage is thematizing, it *«refers to the formulation of research questions and a theoretical clarification of the theme investigated»* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.131). In the

planning of an interview, research questions may be constructed following three directions: the "why", the "what" and the "how".

The "why" is equivalent to clarifying the purpose of the study. In the research, interviews are conducted to obtain teachers' personal views and experiences of a given topic. Interviews can have different purposes, but they are primarily descriptive and seek to follow key aspects of the subject's lived world. Secondly, the "what" means clarifying the theme of the study. Before to investigate, it is necessary to do some research on the theme. It is essential to create the basis to add new knowledge later on. The chosen aspects of classroom management are then an example on the "what" of the study. Finally, the "how" is related to the planning of the procedures and technique. In other words, researchers must become familiar with different theories and techniques of interviewing and analyzing to choose the appropriate one(s). The qualitative study was evidence here, but the phenomenological perspective joined later in the work progress.

The method steers the interview preparation, and it is important to think through how the interview should be analyzed before its execution. The interviews were also planned as one-on-one interviews hoping that teachers were not reluctant (Creswell, 2013, p.164).

- **Designing**

The second stage falls within the temporal dimension of an interview research. The goal of this stage is to develop an overview of the entire research; it means to have in mind to push forward, to spiral backward and forward, to keep the end point in sight and to get wiser. In this process, a work journal was an intelligent solution to keep a frame of the reflection progress. From the very beginning, all thoughts and ideas have been noted down to bring a plus in the writing of the Master Thesis. The details of the interview, which was planned at this stage, described below interviewing.

- **Interviewing**

This stage is assimilated to the action in the field. It is altogether/quite simply/purely and solely *«to conduct the interviews based on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interview as context, and consider the interpersonal relation of the interview situation»* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.129).

The interviews are based on classroom management criteria link to teacher-pupils relationship. Several categories were used to structure the interview guide: relationship,

authority and communication; as well as, educational, social, personal, professional and leadership skills. A semistructured interview guide (see Appendix 2) was elaborated, aiming to let the subject describe as freely as possible (ibid, 2015, p.150). This type of interview allows the teacher to develop its unique perspective by using his/her vocabulary. The questions are open but precise, which clearly defines the subject of the question. This tool, opens the questioning on the complexity of the subject, and allows being astonished.

To avoid that the interview has a tense atmosphere, it is important to be conversant with the interview guide from the first minutes of the meeting. My wish was that the interviews take place as a conversation between respectable persons, without fear or prejudices. I also attempted to maintain good eye-contact, thinking that it is important for the person who is speaking to me.

During the interviews, most of the planned questions were asked. Sometimes, it was added useful and natural follow up questions to look deeper into the reflection. Other times, it was spontaneous to jump over some questions that had been answered earlier in the interview. It has to be a balance between following the interview guide and moving freely around it.

The different interviews took place in neutral locations: university or schools. They were carried out with an interval of about one week. The average time of the interviews were about 30min, some teachers talked longer and some expressed themselves less on the subject. The interviews were tape recorded with the help of a personal smartphone. The recording tool was easy to manipulate, and we could make pauses when respondents wished it. It is common to record the interviews in the context of interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon. It is an advantage at the interview time, because it leaves the researcher to concentrate on the ongoing discussion (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.205). Previous test are necessary to assure that the audio recorder works. It is also important to check that the smart phone is always recording throughout the interview.

As a researcher, I informed the teacher how the interview will happen, and what we will talk about. Because of the choice to undertake interview in English, the interviewee and me went through the interview guide to clarify the different questions. I also let the teachers know that the conversation was audio recorded and that the data will be deleted at the end of the research process. Teachers also received information on account of the request's letter to participate in the research project (see Appendix 1).

At the end of each interview, I let the word to the teacher and asked if he/she had something to add. Some came with comments about the interview questions; another added friendly comments and one finished off the interview with a poem. I thanked warmly every teacher after each interview, saying that I had heard a lot of interesting things in their answers. All of them commented back that it was helpful and constructive for them, making them reflect on their own practice.

- **Transcribing**

The fourth stage of the interview inquiry is transcribing, it is related to prepare the interview material for analysis. This stage includes generally a transcription from oral speech to written text. The initial analytic process enables the researcher to get closer to the analysis. It is a long and tiresome job that sum up every word of the respondents. It is a personal task that allows plunging back into each interview session. It also tells us what kind of interviewer we are. An interview that last 30min, gives around 8 pages of text on typical computer writing software.

There are different forms or codes of reporting an interview. Transcriptions totally decontextualized representations of a direct interview conversation, in favor of analyzing life's world experiences. One of the advantages of transcribing is that it becomes more structured and clear, which makes the material better appropriated for the analysis. I started to transcribe after finishing all the interviews. I noticed that it refreshed my memory and from there, it helped me to create links between each interview. I succinctly discerned similarities and disparities between teachers' answers, as well as unexpected remarks. When it comes to the transcription itself, I decide not to write any doubts moments like "uuuuh". It wasn't useful in the type of analysis I wanted to undertake, focusing on meanings, ideas and thoughts. Therefore, my transcriptions are done verbatim.

The last three stages of the interview inquiry will be shortly presented, because they will be broach significantly later in the chapter.

- **Analyzing**

The stage of analyzing concerns the decision of appropriated modes of analysis for the interviews. Researcher must choose a technique to analyze the transcribed data, on the basis of the purpose and topic of the inquiry. Here, the coding and categorizing was made manually by color code. I printed out all the written data from the transcriptions to clearly visualize the work at once. Analyzing will be deepened in the part "Analysis and theory development".

- **Verifying**

This stage encompasses the concepts of validity, reliability and generalizability of the interviews findings. It is important to appraise the quality of the interview knowledge, to not digress from the realization of a research. Verifying is clarified in the chapter 4.6 named "Quality of the interview knowledge".

- **Reporting**

The last stage of an interview inquiry is reporting. It is the fact to communicate the findings of the study and the methods applied for the purpose of a scientific research. Here, the research entails writing a Master Thesis. Form my viewpoint, it is an assignment theoretically and scientifically based, which generates the production of interesting results to personal and academic purposes.

6.5. Ethical and methodological reflections

Ethical and methodological reflections lie in the entire research process, both during the interviews and throughout the upstream work. As a novice research, the methodological pre-work is unavoidable. The clearness of the methodological choices can offer the possibility to do a strong and valuable research. *«Interview research is a craft that, if well carried out, can become an art»* (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.19).

Ethics reflections concerns the principles, the rules and the guidelines assessing whether an action is right or wrong (Johannessen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2004, p.87). In a context of social research, ethics is particularly interested in relations between humans. The impact on participants is considerable in social research, which is why we must conduct cautiously the investigation. Creating a safe social relationship between interviewer-interviewee seems essential in order to talk of private events for later public use.

The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (NESHs) published a document tracing the general guidelines for research ethics. It defines four central principles serving as a gateway for researchers. The principles are the following:

- Respect: People who participate in research, as informants or otherwise, shall be treated with respect.
- Good consequences: Researchers shall seek to ensure that their activities produce good consequences and that any adverse consequences are within the limits of acceptability.

- Fairness: All research projects shall be designed and implemented fairly.
- Integrity: Researchers shall comply with recognized norms and to behave responsibly, openly and honestly towards their colleagues and the public.

(The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2014)

Johannessen et al. (2004, p.89) suggest another version of ethical guidelines for research, but which distinctly resembles to the ones of the NESHs.

The right to self-determination and autonomy is related to the entire voluntary participation of a person in a study. The person must feel free to express his/her participation or not in a research, without possible negative consequences. In the research, I asked several teachers to participate by sending them a request to voluntary participation (see Appendix 1). It was especially specified that teachers could withdraw from the project at any time. It is primordial to conduct a research *«without making the subject feel like under the microscope»* (Senett in Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

The study implies the right of confidentiality, through the principle of respect of privacy. The researcher must prevent any use and communication of information that might inflict damage on individuals (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2014). Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) highlight the importance of saving safely the recordings and the transcriptions, as well as deleting them at the end of the project. With this in mind, personal information about participants was stored in my personal computer secured by a password. In addition, none of the personal information will be disclosed in the report.

To protect the privacy of the respondents' teachers, I used pseudonym, as T1, T2 or T3, T4 instead of their own name. This enhances the confidentiality of the processed data in the analysis. It is a research ethics principle that should not be possible to identify, directly or indirectly, the person who participated in the study (Johannessen et al., 2004, p.93). Another point was to be sure that the interviewees were comfortable during the interview process. The fact is that an interview is not a conversation between equal partners (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015); and to avoid any negative consequences I treated the respondents with a genuine respect. It is ethically fundamental to not ask questions that could be unpleasant to answer for the participant.

There are also laws and regulations that researchers and research institutions must abide by, as the notification of the project by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). I reported my project to the NSD and it has been validated in due time (see Appendix 3). At the end of my research, I also took the time to give the results to the main stakeholders (the teachers who took part in this study).

6.6. Quality of the interview knowledge

There are different ways to measure the validity of a study. Many perspectives and strategies are feasible depending on the question research and the methodological decisions. This chapter will focus on the importance of validity, reliability and generalizability in a qualitative research; and why and how it has been done in the present research. It will also present the possible sources that can cause errors in a research.

6.6.1. Validity

As we saw above, verifying is a part of the interview inquiry. Brinkmann and Kvale states that *«validation should not be confined to a separate stage of an interview inquiry but rather permeate all stages from the first thematization to the final reporting»* (2015, p.277). The validity of a research is defined if the collected data gives a true picture of the studied issue. To present the validity of our research, we based ourselves on the equivalent concepts used for the quantitative validity, as internal validity or external validity. The concept of construct validity is added to strengthen the validity of this inquiry.

Construct validity, introduced by Cronbach and Meehl, pertains consistency between the concept employed and the operationalized factors that represent these concepts (ibid, p.282). It is the process to go from the general to the specific, where a measurably correlation can be done. Through interviews, we were looking to specific points that were central in classroom management theories. This will be developed later, because reliability is an aspect of construct validity. The internal validation founds its establishment on statistical analysis rather than on qualitative analysis. Its purpose is to check whether the explanations provided are accurate and whether the treatment of data is able to determine the certainty. The external validation of a study is the possibility to deduce the results to the entire study population and the entire field that was the subject of the inquiry. The questions that arise are whether the sample is representative of the studied market, if the results are transferable outside the

sample and how can they be extent to a broader approach. Qualitative studies do not meet these criteria and are hardly generalizable (Lincoln and Guba Creswell, 2013, p.246). This will be explained more specifically in the part "Generalizability".

We can then ask ourselves, with some enthusiasm, if our research is "valid" or not? There are multiple elements that can weaken the validity in qualitative studies. People have different thoughts about the topic of teacher-pupils relationship, and opinions differ. Because it is based on human beings, there will always be unpredictability in the given answers. The validity also resides in the researcher's skill, when it comes to interviewing. Through interviews, I ensured to keep a "stiff upper lip", as well as leaving plenty of room to the interviewed teacher. The way the research act in the interview moment has a major influence on the way statements are being collected (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Then, how to be sure to analyze what we want to analyze? Messick assumes that the importance doesn't lie in the validity or invalidity but in the degree of it. He defines validity as *«[…] an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationale support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores and other modes of assessment»* (Messick, 1993). He advocates that, over time, validity evidence will continue to gather, either enhancing or contradicting previous findings.

> *The complexities of validating qualitative research need not to be due to an inherent weakness in qualitative methods but may on the contrary rest on their extraordinary power to picture and to question the complexity of the social reality investigated.*
> (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.288)

Finally, this research is "valid" in a way that it has relevant construct validity and a large volume of empiricism. Used literature is recognized in recent work and in many researches. Thus, my reflection on methodological choice was modeled on previous methods.

6.6.2. Reliability

Reliability pertains to the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings. It's the fact to be able to reproduce research results in similar or different contexts from their initial production. It is through the availability of data and computer codes that allowed the analysis of these data, that we can attain identical results (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.281).

Firstly, reliability indicates the requirement to review the independence of the approach (in all its steps) from technical or instrumental means; and on another hand from theoretical or ideological choices. This verification of the reliability goes through a transparent explanation of the procedures and by an anticipation of the effect of means (Van der Maren, 1996). If two researchers use the same interview guide, it is a fact that they will not necessarily collect the same answers. With identical parameters, the results are different in a qualitative research (Johannessen et al., 2010). The reliability in its original meaning is virtually impossible to assess in qualitative research.

To show the transparency of my work, I used usual data programs to convert sound recording to text. It's important to listen several times to the audio recording, to be sure of the correctness of what we write. I repeated bits and phrases several times and I even listen the entire audio recording once the transcription was done. It also avoids recording mistakes trying out the material before each interview. I transcribed the interviews and I think that if it was another person, it would scarcely be identical transcripts. But I attest that my transcriptions are amply reproductions of interviews that were held.

The reliability of a qualitative research is difficult to evidence due to the flexibility in the process.

6.6.3. The question of generalizability

In everyday life, people tend to generalize more or less naturally. Individuals are able to bring out expectations from a situation to another, from a person to another. We need these representations to compare the things around us. This is what, most of the time, represents our prejudices. The concept of generalizability is borrowed from the quantitative literature; therefore it is hardly to copy and paste.

The authors and researchers agree on that the findings in qualitative studies, especially leaded by interview as a method, cannot be generalized at a larger public scale. They state that there are definitely too few subjects for findings to be generalized (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p.295). If it is a requirement that qualitative research should be generalized, it means that scientific knowledge must apply to all people in the same situations, at the same time, and then be universal. Consequently, it's not current here to ask yourself if the results of the interview can be generalized at a global level. Instead of talking of generalizability, it is astute to see if the findings can be transferable. The findings knowledge of a research, discovered in

a particular situation can eventually be used in another one (ibid, p.297). The previous authors call it "analytical generalization"; where the context of the situation is the major factor in transferability.

Additionally, the generalizability of findings depends on the choice of categories or themes. It is important that the researcher defines categories that measure the ideas of what he wants to find out, in order to transfer knowledge in other circumstances. It means that my findings can be used in other contexts, even if they cannot be generalized for every teacher, in every Norwegian school. However, teachers might possibly recognize themselves in some of my findings. And this is what characterizes the generalizability of this research.

6.7. Possible misunderstanding

In qualitative research, like other forms of study, there might be some analysis and interpretation errors. The internal validity may be limited by bias for the methodology of the study, and it can lead to errors in the interpretation of statements. However, qualitative inquiry is more sensitive to some aspects than others, and particularly the ones link to the researcher.

The selection of the sample has an effect in the quality of the findings. The sample should always be representative to the study. Furthermore, the material effect is a source of errors in qualitative research. The interview can be alternate direct questions and indirect questions, if follow up questions are not specified; or if the interviewer or researcher is incompetent and does not adapt himself/herself to the interview guide. A high number of participants, as in international studies, can lead to numerous biases in the findings.

A qualitative study may also be affected by the consequences of the interaction between the interviewer and the respondents. Here, the effects are not desired, that's why it limits the internal validity. Other factors can interfere on the validity of a qualitative study but are less common.

6.8. Analysis and theory development

This chapter will focus on why and how the analysis and interpretation has been made in relation to the interviews.

First of all, the study follows the procedures of a phenomenological analysis. It means that the analysis is purely descriptive and that it does not include any interpretations or discussion of the findings (Creswell, 2013). It is necessary to do this step in a research because it makes the data more understandable and transparent. Then, it is easier for the researcher to present the findings (Postholm & Jacobsen, 2011). It appears that it was challenging to not interpret data, and that is why it's important to set yourself limits.

Johannessen and others (2010) notice that the organization and systematization of data are important steps to follow for the smooth running of research. Moustakas (1994) explains that the presentation of data should include topics containing verbatim examples of data collection, data analyses, a synthesis of data… and a textural and structural description (Creswell, 2013, p.227).

In the present study, we choose to have a thematic analysis, or more accurately a thematic content analysis. It is a method of analysis that spots verbal or textual expressions establishing general themes (Mucchielli, 2009). Johannesen and others recommend that researchers reduce, categorize and organize the data collection by theme or categories (Johannessen et al., 2010, p.165-177). A generic coding was used to establish the different themes that will be addressed. The researcher must carry out data reduction by quantifying meanings and concepts which come from theories. But, this type of coding leaves also the possibility to discover unexpected themes through the work process. (Miles & Huberman, 2003, p.133-140).

A color code was employed to discern the different meanings and to appreciate the recurrence of ideas. Thus, the groupings, rankings and organization in categories were possible, meeting the following requirement: to reflect the content of the interviews' answers helping to answer the research question.

The chapter 8 discusses the presentation of finding to highlight the research question: *How teachers perceive their relationship with their pupils in relation to their teaching role?* The task is to interpret the data by developing critical perspectives to discuss according to the information obtained in the collected data (Johannessen et al., 2010). In relation to theories and the data collection, it will be interesting to comment and argue the interviewees' meanings. The discussion will be led by a similar structure used in the description of collected data. This discussion will aim to generate constructive ideas about the teaching-pupils relationship, seen by four teachers.

7. Presentation of findings

After the toil of the transcription process, it is important to report the interviews to bring out their strengths. It is also an essential transition reaching the discussion. This part will describe the findings by highlighting quotes in a relevant way. A balance between text and quotes will be observable to keep the interest in this presentation. To represent these findings, we will make use of the questions from the interview guide. The succession of the questions will be our starting point to raise significant elements collected during the interviews. Our goal is still to understand the look of the four teachers bring to the relationship with their pupils.

The quotes, in italics, are used to deepen, and confirm the findings of the interview process.

7.1. Control and warmth

Early in the interview, the teachers were asked to place themselves on the following scheme; illustrating the relationship between the teacher's control, structure and clarity in teaching, associated with the warmth and closeness the teacher shows, and the relationship the teacher has with the pupils (see Figure 3).
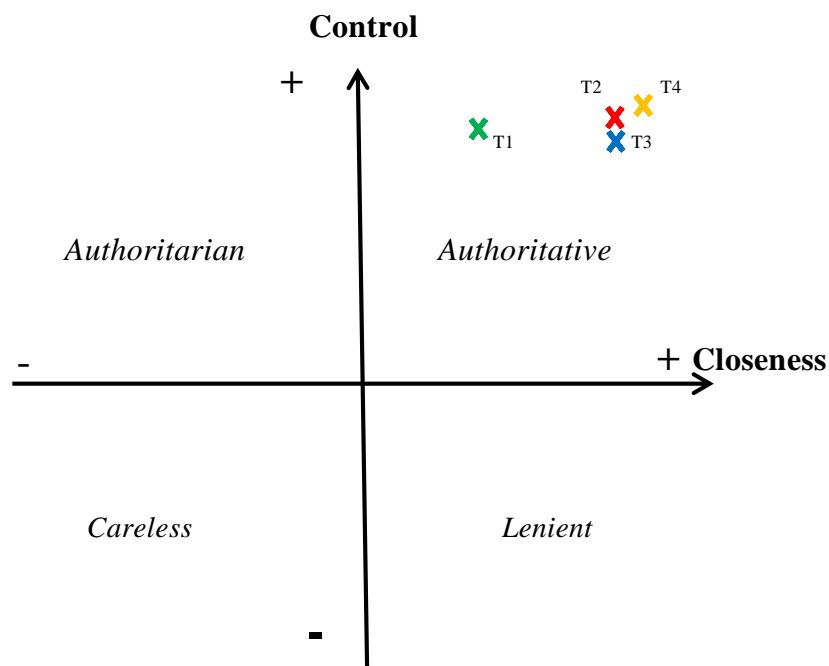

Figure 4: The positions of the four teachers on the schema of Nordahl (2012)

All the teachers placed themselves in the dimension: Authoritative. The teachers see themselves as teachers that can teach and guide at the same time.

T4 clarifies why he/she placed himself/herself at this place:

> T4: *I feel that, I have a fair amount of control also that I'm on the higher level on warmth, so I will place myself here*.

T2 and T3 are almost at the same position and it looks like that they have as much control as closeness. We notice that T1 stands a bit out from the others. Placing himself/herself there shows that he/she thinks that he/she has more control than warmth.

7.2. Creating a relationship

The second question of the interview raised the importance of creating relationship with pupils: "What do you think about the importance of creating relationships with your pupils?" Teachers state that it is *«very»*, *«quite»* important to create relationship with their pupils. T2 and T4 mention that it has something to do with creating a good atmosphere in the classroom. Pupils in a relation of trust with their teacher will be a part of developing, as T4 say, *«a favorable learning climate in the classroom»*. They also talk about involving the pupils in the creation of a relationship, because a relationship is constructed by two or more people.

T4 add that it is a power for the teacher because he/she reflects on what the pupils can or cannot do in the classroom. As we see from the interview statement from T4, he/she thought that he/she is a mirror for students.

> T4: *You're a mirror to them as well*.

Creating a relationship is a very special thing, a must as they say; even though it looks like that they are not completely sure about why it is important. T1 and T2 also talk about a good relationship that should not be too strict, but well-formulated.

Overall creating a relationship is important for the four teachers. It is created by the interaction between them and their pupils, but the teacher is the head of this creation by leading it. They agree that the creation of relationship between teacher and pupils is a matter that enhances a good learning environment for everyone in the classroom.

7.3. Aspects of Classroom management

In the interview, the third question outlines several characteristics of the concept of classroom management: "Which aspects of the classroom management fall within the teacher-pupils relationship for you?". It was here asked to each teacher, which aspects of the classroom management fall for them, within the teacher-pupils relationship. A list of several aspects was offered, to give ideas to the interviewees. Despite the complexity of the concept of classroom management and the varied list, we find that the answers do not differ completely.

At first sight, they all say that it is *«many things»* that can be included and which is related with classroom management. But after a quick look through the list, they picked two or three aspects that appear the most important to them.

The interviewed teachers mention the following aspects in their answer:

The verbal communication emerges in most of the answers. T1 and T3 are concerned with the fact of reading the pupils and understanding their emotions. They point out that positive or negative comments are essential in interactional situations. Moreover, one of them clarifies that negative comments are also necessary, because it helps the pupils to improve and to do better the next time. In contrast, the positive comments are given to motivate them in a task.

> T3 explains: *« I try all the time to push them and let them know that is not bad to have a wrong answer, that it is part of the learning process and that it's normal to have wrong answers. So they can improve all the time; the most important thing is to try to make better things all the time and to make efforts. And if they have good answers, I try to let the pupils know that it is very good, and to encourage them. »*

Meanwhile, T1 is more focused on the non-verbal communication. He/she says that to read the pupils and to not misunderstand them, he/she uses eye-contact and body language.

On another hand, T2 and T4 formulate the aspect of the authority of the teacher. These two teachers maintain that is a great aspect in the relationship, but that it should be used in a certain way. T4 commentates that it should not be the teacher's position that reflects an authority, but the genuine interest in pupils' well-being.

> T4: *So I think, yes, authority as a teacher is important but it's the way you do it, with what sort of warmth and what sort of control and what sort of involvement do you do, or do you bring to the table, sort of.*

The aspect of the chosen approach is also ventured by several teachers. They see it as a means in the relationship. For them, it is a source of engagement or motivation, and it is a way to captivate their pupils one by one.

> T1: *So, I think you have to know your students by relation and then you have to establish the method by doing different exercises, tests, kartlegging (if you can say it like that in Norwegian) to find out the best approach, the best pedagogic approach for each subject, for each student.*

The last aspect stated is the positive outlook on the pupils. T4 and T3 show that it is essential in the relationship. They mean that the positivity lies at first in the teacher, and secondly in the relationship enhancing a *«positive discipline climate»*. The two teachers indicate that the positive outlook on their pupils affect several sides of the relationship.

> T3: *I think it's important to have a positive outlook at them to let them know what we, as teachers, think of them and to let them know that we know that they can improve and what they do is good.*

7.4. Skills

We gathered the statements from the question 4 and 7 of the interview guide as starting point. The topic concerns skills related to teacher-pupils relationship. Within this, we have addressed the item of the professional and personal skills, as well as leadership skills. The teachers have been very engaged in these issues, giving us a wealth of information.

7.4.1. A role model

When we asked the four teachers about their opinions of the most important skills to build a good relationship with pupils, they spoke of the subject in a general matter. It appears from the interviews that the teachers are concerned by adopting the right attitudes in front of pupils. According to teachers this requires several skills.

> T1: *As a teacher you have to demand yourself to find the good things in everybody, to know them and to interact with them, to make you understand the person you're talking to.*

> T2: *Also, I think humor is an important factor while you must be specific and show who simply the boss is.*

> T3: *I think that we have to have teachers that show the best behavior, to show what we are expecting to see in our pupils.*

> T4: *He will still have a value though, no matter how the subject goes.*

All the interviewees prioritize different skills, but if we combine them we can get a clear image of the role played by the teacher in the teacher-pupils relationship. T1 says that a teacher has to be genuine in the sense that he/she has to strive to find the good things in every pupil. T2 focuses on the kindness of a teacher. He/she means that a teacher should have some humor and be firm at the same time. T3 affirms that teachers should behave in an appropriate way to show what they expect from pupils. The interviewee also says that respect and communication are two mains skills that a teacher should have. Finally, T4 expresses that teachers should see pupils first for who they are and not only on a knowledge scale.

According to the four teachers, a teacher should behave correctly, see the good things in his/her pupils, see them for who they are, and be kind while being decisive.

7.4.2.   A balance

The next question that reinforced the former was about personal and professional skills. We wanted here that teachers focused on those two parameters since they talked about skills in general.

> T1: *I think it's a mix.*

> T2: *You have to balance there in the middle because the both are important.*

> T3: *We have to use our personal skills in the best way and to mix it with the professional skills that we learned at school.*

> T4: *You need to be personal and you need to professional, and it has to be a line between there.*

T1, T2, T3 and T4 all say that both personal and professional skills are very important, but that it has to be a balance to make a teacher effective. Even though the teachers agree that it has to be a combination of professionalism and personality, they have different opinions on proportioning.

> T2: *You have to be professional, also must have personnel properties relative to the relationship.*

> T1: *Because you can be personal and professional, but you can't be personal and not professional.*

T2 confirms that it is a real balance for him/her in this teacher's role, whereas T1 explains that *«professional should always be over personal»*, but that is difficult to follow because of emotions.

> T4: *That's what I said 'I'm not your friend'.*

> T3: *If you're tired, sometimes you can be in a bad mood and so it will be more difficult to teach and you will lose patience.*

T4 interrogates himself/herself about a certain limit in the personal skills. He/she gives an example in which he/she had to set limits because his/her pupils were feeling "maybe" too friendly, too comfortable with him/her. T3 is on the same wavelength as T4. The interviewee talks about his/her personal feelings getting over his/her professionalism.

The four teachers are utterly agreed when it comes to the importance of finding a balance between personal and professional skills. Their opinions diverge when it is matter of degree. They modestly attest that one can take over the other. In fact, T1 is more focus on the professional skills, whereas T3 and T4 concentrate on the personal skills; meanwhile T2 is certain of the possibility to achieve a prosperous balance between the both.

7.4.3. Being a leader

The question that was asked to the interviewees is related to leadership skills. The four teachers had to describe their leadership skills, which characterize them as teachers.

> T1: *I think my biggest quality as a teacher is the fact that I can adapt to the situation faster than many other.*

> T2: *They know what kinds of rules are applied, and as long as they know them it becomes safe for them.*

T1 admits that she/he has an intuitive vision which allows him/her to adapt quickly. In the same way, T2 insists that he/she anticipates situations and he/she claims to be a proactive teacher. T2 adds that he/she uses a pleasant tone to have a good communication with his/her pupils. He/she also attests that there are strict rules in the classroom, to make his/her pupils feel safe. T3 describes himself/herself in the same way and with similar adjectives.

T4 emphasizes that objectivity and equality in his/her relational practice contribute to enhance his/her role of leader in the classroom.

> T4: *I think is important to be as good as fair, no matter what, and that you treat everyone respectfully and treat everyone the same, they are very aware of equality I guess, you know, so…And I can be determined, I can be very precise and clear and I think that is important. I think it is important for kids to know that they are frames, sort of, to what is…to be very specific of what is expected because that makes it easier for them to learn, I think, by making it very clear what I'm am looking for, I guess.*

7.5. Authority

The primary asked question on the topic of authority was: What are your experiences with authority and social and/or educational relationship in a classroom? The four teachers gave interesting answers often illustrated by examples.

> T2: *I am authoritative towards my pupils. They know that I'm the boss of the class, but at the same time I'm very social and have a good relationship with them.*

> T3: *I think it's important to teacher to be close, to have a close relationship, but I think that you have to be careful not to be too close because you're not just a friend and you're a person of authority.*

> T3: *The kids aren't the same so they don't behave and respond in the same way, so as a teacher you have to try those things and sometimes authority can be good and sometimes it can be dangerous.*

T2 expresses his/her authoritative feeling by saying that he/she is the «boss» in the classroom. He/she also confesses that he/she has social relationships, even though he/she has authority. According to T3, a teacher is a person of authority which does not stop himself/herself from having a close relationship with his/her pupils. On another side, T3 warns us that the authority may have positive and negative sides. In overall authority as they describe it, is an important aspect to handle carefully.

To get closer to the correlation authority / teacher-pupil relationship, we offered follow-up question to the interviewees, like: How do you think that a close relationship with your pupils can affect the teacher's authority? And how "too much" authority can affect the relationship?

The relevant statements from teachers' answers are:

> T2: *If a teacher is too authoritative then I think that you can get pupils that become afraid of you and are anxious around you.*

> T1: *If you have a teacher that is just authoritative, he uses is power and his role as a classroom manager, not abusive, not at all, he is just authoritative, you will lack the knowledge you get from being friendly.*

> T1: *If you're too authoritative you will have problems and the problems will be that they don't learn.*

> T4: *So I think, yes, authority as a teacher is important but it's the way you do it, with what sort of warmth and what sort of control and what sort of involvement do you do, or do you bring to the table, sort of.*

> T3: *I think that having authority in a classroom isn't that easy, I think that I learned through the years since I began to teach. And everything is quite different from a class to another, from an age to another, so we have to make sure to adapt ourselves.*

T2 is clear in his/her remarks explaining that pupils can become afraid of the teacher if he/she is too authoritative. To strengthen T2's statement, T1 gives a more elaborate answer but always with the same opinion about excessive authority. And he/she ends up his/her answer with the feeling that authority can simply have a negative influence on pupils' learning. T4 and T3 let us know that authority is a difficult aspect to master because it must be used in a suitable manner.

To sum up the findings on authority, T1 describes well the complexity of the matter by the following statement:

> T1: *It is room for being authoritative and a human in a classroom.*

7.6. The effect of experience

The length of experience in teaching was our following topic. It was a plus in our interviews, which ultimately gave us necessary information concerning the teacher-pupils relationship. The following quotes are heterogeneous because of the age gap between teachers in the profession.

> T1: *So, me as a fresh teacher, I experience, learn and have to adapt to new things all the time, things I have never experienced before.*

> T2: *« You learn from experiences and you have, like I said, tried and failed. »*

> T4: *You're never, as a teacher, fully trained. You have to improve and improve because you'll never get the same student.*

> T4: *It's good that you get more experiences; you get more things you can pull out of your bag pack to use, like you have more options.*

> T3: *So, I think that most of the time it is a good thing to have experiences but isn't the only condition to have good relations.*

T1 as a novice teacher, as he/she says, has to experience new thing in the interaction with pupils. T2 seems more determined in his/her answer claiming that we learn from our mistakes and that experiences are built by trying and failing. Furthermore, T4 explains that a teacher is always learning throughout his career. The reason for him/her is that every year a teacher changes class and therefore pupils. To illustrate the positive side of having experiences, T4 explains that a teacher is equipped with a multifunctional backpack filled with tools to interact and communicate. On the contrary, T3 tells that experiences aren't always synonym of achievement in relationship, on account of old traditions that do not match with today's child population. He/she says that even old teachers can have bad relationship.

The four teachers agree on the fact that experience is a non-negotiable factor in building relationships with the pupils, but that is a lifelong learning process.

7.7. Definition of the teacher-pupils relationship

At the end of the interview, I asked the interviewees to give a definition of the teacher-pupils relationship. All agreed that this was not an easy question, but after reflection their answers were really constructive.

> T3: *I think is the link, I would say, and I would say that is an important link that can be the key of learning and making pupils learn and feel good, feel confident, feel better and learn a lot of things about themselves also.*

> T2: *It is the relationship I have with my pupils, how we communicate with each other, how we live together. The respect we have for each other, yes.*

T3 defines the teacher-pupils relationship as a link in the service of learning. He/she also emphasizes that relationship prompts trust and self-confidence, and therefore learning. T2's definition reflects more the everyday interaction side of the relationship. The interviewee also names the notion of respect, which in his/her opinion should go both ways. The answer of T4 shows that he/she is a role-model for his/her pupils. The interviewee maintains to be a *«kid's mirror»* when it comes to promote learning. He/she defines the relationship as a *«symbiosis»*, evoking confidence, equality and not authority.

T1 gives a broad and concise definition, addressing different aspects concerning the teacher-pupils relationship. We can summarize his/her comments using the following key words (from his/her own answer): pupils that like to go to school, pupils that enjoy my lessons, the pupils respect me as a teacher, authority, mildness, best education and best time in school, make the pupils feel like they accomplished something.

7.8. Summary of the findings

The main findings show that the respondents describe their relationship with pupils from a genuine personal perspective. The two categories that appears interesting, depending on teachers' statements, are classroom management and teachers' skills. Indeed they delineate their practice and role in order to make us understand the roots and the contexts of the teacher-pupils relationship. What we retain is that it is a balance between all the stated features. Finally, the diversity of the statements reports the complexity of the phenomenon.

8. Discussion

The starting point of the discussion is our research question: *How do teachers perceive their relationship with their pupils in relation to their teaching role?* The main findings will be highlighted by the theories and the researches to bring out the most interesting ideas.

The chapter is structured as the presentation of findings chapter, but the part "Control and closeness" and the part "Definition of the teacher-pupils relationship" are exchanged. We think judicious to start with the definition of the teacher-pupils relationship, because it is the most important concept in our study. Besides, the figure of Nordahl (see Figure 4) is a mean to find out if the position of teachers in the schema is in accordance with what they declared. The other categories will mainly be related to classroom management and teacher's skills criteria.

The discussion argues rationally the different findings of the four teachers against the theories and previous researches. The reflection will be often formulated in the form of questioning or comments, to tempt reader's attention on the complexity of the phenomenon.

What is the teacher-pupils relationship for the four teachers?

One of the main facts is that teacher-relationship has an influence on learning (Hattie, 2009). In the statements, T1 and T3 remind us that there is an obvious influence on pupil's learning. One of them even confesses that it can be THE key to learning; however the teacher only talks in terms of social learning. Then, it makes sense how this teacher see the relationship as a factor. Regarding to Hattie (2009), learning is what a child learns in general. In this way, we can ask ourselves what it is this relationship and how can it have such a significant influence? It will be interesting to understand what this relationship is made of before to contemplate that it has a well-justified effect.

The findings and the theory show that there is no tangible definition of the teacher-pupils relationship, but there is a variety of ways to approach it. Authors as Drugli (2012), Nordahl (2013), Houssaye (1992), Pianta (2006; 2003; 2012) discuss and interpret teachers-pupils relationship in their work, but they always broach it from different perspectives. This is also reflected in the interview data. The four teachers gave their own definition with different point of view. In the question, I did not give any other information or comments that could influence their thoughts, so the findings truly represent what they said and feel right for them.

Teachers have therefore defined the relationship in their own way, by using different terms that seemed important in their eyes. T2 gave us a relevant statement; the teacher discerns the communication as a motor to teacher-pupils relationship. He/she maintained that to talk to pupils enhance the relationship positively. She noted nevertheless that it is a particular way to communicate to kids, and asserted that his/her social practice is based on this dimension. It's a good point for this teacher because according to Nordahl (2010) communication is the core of a relationship. Due to the importance of the concept, the topic of communication is deepened later in the discussion leading to more details.

In addition, T2 putted the notion of respect in his/her definition. He/she also indicated that the respect has to go both ways. As the Report to the Storting No. 11(2009) foresees, a mutual respect enables to create a positive relationship. We can imagine that if the teacher respects his/her pupils demonstrating a certain ethics toward each one, he/she will easily be respected in return. Pupils will automatically identify in him/her, a person who shows skills. T1 agreed with T2 on the notion of respect, but T1 notified only that the pupils respect him/her as a teacher. In this way, we can ask ourselves if he/she also respect his/her pupils. However we can understand from others statements that this teacher is aware of the mutual respect in the relationship. In a similar perspective, T4 emphasized that the teacher-pupils relationship is based on confidence. It is true that teachers who have confidence in themselves show that they create better relationship (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). The confidence gives a certain emotional security among pupils, and provides the teacher the power to assume its role in fixing limits.

Finally we note curiously that some teachers used synonym to define the teacher-pupils relationship. One said that the relationship in a link between a teacher and his/her pupils. We think that it is an ingenious way to describe the relationship and agree that given synonym or metaphor helps to understand the concept. For T4, the relationship is a symbiosis. He/she implied that the teacher-pupils relationship is an intimate and lasting collaboration, with mutual advantage between two people. This study shows that this synonym is quite advanced and lacks certain degree professionalism.

These different definitions create a conundrum of a concise definition. This therefore leads us to an indistinct understanding and simply opens the doors to a great academic concept.

The teacher-pupils relationship in the service of promoting learning

Asking teachers on the importance of creating relationships, we wanted to arise the purposes of the teacher-pupils relationship.

The four teachers are likeminded and sure that it is important to establish relationship in a classroom. Two of them went fortunately further in their reflection, evoking the idea of classroom atmosphere. Actually, the Educational Reform of 2006 outlines that the schools administration and teachers must collaborate to promote a good learning environment for all (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). In this perspective, T2 and T4 discern one of the objectives to have relationship in their classroom. According to theory, the teacher-pupils relationship is and essential pedagogical aspect because it can create a favorable learning climate in the classroom. But, is it a specific aspect that brings out this auspicious atmosphere inside a classroom? Definitely yes, T4 stated that trust encourages pupils' positive behavior. Hattie (2009) indicates that a trustful relationship between teacher and pupils is an influential factor in the creation of favorable academic and social learning conditions.

Owing to the interpersonal dimension that lies in the teacher-pupils relationship, T4 insisted that pupils should also be involved in the creation of a relationship. Even if, it is the teachers' responsibility to foster positive relationships (Cornelius-White, 2007), Ogden (2012) expresses that to create a productive working atmosphere, teachers needs the collaboration of their pupils.

Findings in relation to theories assume that to create a relationship with pupils are extremely important and are built gradually, if trust is present. One of the main goals of creating relationship with pupils is then to promote a positive climate which enhances learning.

Authority, communication and positive outlook: three significant aspects

Due to the multitude of aspects that implies in the teacher-pupils relationship, and in accordance with the findings; three features are in focus in this discussion. We then concentrate the argumentation on the authority of the teacher generating positive or negative effects, on the importance of the communication within interactional situations, and finally on the way teachers look at their pupils. Initially, the study had not planned to focus so much on classroom management, but eventually realized that it was impossible to ignore certain aspects.

- **The authority of the teacher**

The authority is understood in term of control. Nordahl (2012) affirms that an efficient classroom management requires control, structure and rules. The aspect that contributes to carry out classroom management is the authority of the teacher. Indeed, the authority becomes a tool when it comes to organize the classroom and control the pupils' behavior (Ivic, 2000). Let us recall that classroom management is defined as the teachers' expertise (Ogden, 2012). In this way, authority in classroom management has an effect on the classroom atmosphere, but what about the influence on the teacher-pupils relationship? Moreover, what role affects this aspect? Three of the interviewed teachers addressed the notion of professional authority. They see the authority as an element of the profession. Educationally, the authority is a fundamental area of the teaching competence (Report to the Storting No. 11, 2009). Their answers are first and foremost correct because teachers have a position of authority, as a result of their professional position (Nordahl et al., 2012). T3 said that a teacher is a person of authority. At the same time, T1 told us that authority is included in the role of a classroom manager. Nordahl (2012) corroborates that expectations and requirements, which are set for the exercise of the profession, should define the role of the teacher. T2 has given us one comment that caught our attention: "*They know that I'm the boss of the class*". We can ask ourselves what this teacher means by "*the boss*" of the classroom. The term can be interpreted in several ways, but if we keep it in perspective the fact that the teacher accepts his/her professional position, means the concept is understood in terms of classroom management. This teacher then might mean that her/she assumes his/her role of manager setting rules in his/her classroom, prohibiting misbehaviors.

On another side, T3 has a different understanding of the notion of authority. This teacher broached the subject with moderation, underlining that sometimes authority can be good and sometimes it can be dangerous. We can link this meaning with the personal authority. Nordahl (2012) says that the personal authority of the teacher has a direct impact on pupils. He explains especially that the attitudes and values of the teacher can influence the authority, so the classroom management, and then the relationship. In the same way, T3 raised the difficulty of the task, and assumed that effectiveness can be found in the implementation of the authority. T2 and T4 also agreed, formulating that it is a great aspect in the relationship, but that it should be used in a certain way. Besides, T2 and T1 are in agreement about the fact that authority can destroy relationships. In relation to researches, Yamashiro (2004) has proved that a cold and severe teacher can contribute to a decrease in the pupil's willingness to

learn. T1 underlined well this side, explaining that if a teacher makes use of excessive authority, pupils will not learn.

To summarize, T4 and T3 gave us significant meanings, saying that authority is a difficult aspect to master because it has to be execute in a suitable manner. In other words, authority is an important aspect, but it is the way you do it, that matters. Naturally, we understand that if authority lies in the teacher-pupil relationship it can either be negative or positive.T2 has more focus on the authority on the professional side, as well as T1 who sees authority serving educational finalities. On another hand, T3 is embarrassed about the harmful effects of authority and T4 is neither convinced of the power of the authority in the teacher-pupils relationship. On both sides, there is nonetheless a deep understanding of the aspect of authority, and all the interviewees perceive that they must find the right balance suited to themselves, as individual and to their practice as professional teacher.

- **The verbal and non-verbal communication**

Some of the findings refer to a second aspect of classroom management: The communication. The four teachers all mentioned this in their interview; there are only two teachers that pinpoint this characteristic. This is somewhat surprising, especially when the topic of the interview is the teacher-pupils relationship. For us and according to research (Liu, 2013) and theory (Dysthe, 2013; Marzano, 2003), the communication between a teacher and his/her pupils is an obvious relational feature.

Findings reveal that there are two types of communication: the verbal and the non-verbal. Several authors confirms that there are two notable ways to communicates with pupils (Marzano, 2011 ; Nordahl et al., 2013; Schmuck et al., 1983).Two interviewees addressed that the verbal communication help the teacher understanding their pupils, as much on the educational scale as on the emotional one. Nordahl (2013) certifies that communication can then have three directions: emotional, academic and educational. Another point revealed in the analysis of data shows that comments, remarks are necessary in interactional situations. Even if teachers give positive or negative (also constructive) comments, they will always contribute to create a relationship. It does not mean that the relationship will always be effective, but communication still creates a link between two or more individuals. T3 then said that he/she gave comments to make his/her pupils improve. In this way, the teacher talks in term of instructional comments toward learning. This teacher fulfills then one of the professional guideline which consists in having the ability to cooperate and communicate with

pupils (Report to the Storting No. 11, 2009). So our preference will go to the findings of T2, because it refers more to the emotional side of the communication.

Only one finding unveils the aspect of the non-verbal communication. However, theories don't speak about communication without describing the non-verbal communication. Marzano (2011) presents the both side in his book, and assents that teachers must associate verbal and non-verbal techniques to have optimal communication with their pupils. T1 meant in his/her interview that his/she actively uses eye contact in relational practice, to understand better his/her pupils. Compare to theory, which states that bodily and facial emotions can cause misunderstanding (Schmuck et al., 1983), T1 clarifies that it helps him/her to understand the expectations and needs of his/her pupils.

We decided to focus on this aspect because relational theories put the communication as a central mean in the teacher-pupils relationship, but findings are limited on the topic. It seems that this aspect is an embedded part of the relationship, and that it is such a great evidence, that teachers do not necessarily think to bring it to the surface of the reflection. Anyway, findings display verbal and non-verbal communications that are very important in the teacher-pupils relationship.

- **The positive outlook on the pupils**

This aspect of classroom management shows in several findings, but it is mostly the statements of T3 and T4 that seem the most relevant. We choose to bring out this topic in the discussion because it appears that the way teachers look at their pupils interferes in the creation of relationship (Drugli, 2012). Knowing that teachers have an impact on pupils learning, we can formulate that expectations must be clear and judgments should be put aside. T3 is not wrong in saying that teachers must let the pupils know what they think of them. As we said above, a relation based on respect, leads to a better relationship.

The finding indicates also that the positive outlook on pupils is an issue where the teacher is involved directly. Theoreticians, as Drugli (2012), do not deny that teachers with a sense of humor or smiling are example of showing interest in pupils. Then, it is natural that T2 said word for word that humor is an important factor. This statement is verified, because the Educational Reform highlights correctly that teachers should see as enthusiastic guides (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). The data analysis demonstrates as well that it is a great quality in teachers to be able to find the good things in everybody. This certainly means that you have to encounter the positive abilities either than the defaults in every pupil.

In overall, we lack some information for this particular aspect, even if some teachers perceive it. However, we can say from theories that to look positively at pupils has then an impact on learning and the general academic life of pupils. Drugli (2012) says to conclude that it is meaningful for pupils what the teacher think and believe about them.

I am an effective teacher because...

This part of the discussion targets directly the practice of the teacher and what kind of teacher he/she is. Taking the findings as a starting point, we will first discuss the role of the teacher as a model for the pupils to move toward leadership skills.

- **I am a role model**

The results of the study describes that the teachers are role models to their pupils. The way they walk, the way they speak, their attitudes, theirs comments…everything that characterize a teacher as a person is perceived by pupils. In this way, teachers have to adopt a role that represents them individually and professionally. The interviewees are totally concerned by adopting the right attitudes in front of their pupils. Undoubtedly, the National Curriculum of Education, states that a professional teacher has the responsibility to be a role model and an inspiration for the pupils (Utdannings og forskningsdepartementet, 2003).

In this way, T4 targeted fully his/her role maintaining that he/she is a "kid's mirror" and T3 explained that teachers should behave in an appropriate way. Here, is what we were previously talking about, the teacher's attitudes and behavior should represents what they expect from his/her pupils. And, what they expected from pupils is to behave correctly in daily situations, mainly at school but not only there. One of the objectives of the school is to create citizens (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006), and adults, in particular teachers are society representatives. Therefore it is their responsibility to give a clear image of the role and behavior that citizens of tomorrow should possess.

Secondly, and in relation to a previous discussed topic, findings express the necessity to see pupils first for who they are, before to see them on a knowledge scale. This is reflected in the theory of Nordahl (2012) that exposes an authoritative teacher as friendly, communicative and as somebody that sees the pupils for who they are as children.

The link that we can make between being a role model and relationship is perhaps hinted. The understanding of a teacher as a role model is like a domino game. Government sets objectives and guidelines, teachers apply their civic duties by facing the pupils in school, and there, in

schools, relational situations happen. Through these relations, pupils reproduce teacher's attitude. That's why teachers are role models in children's education.

- **I am a leader**

Based on findings and in concordance with theories, we will try to argue what kind of skills the four teachers possess and lack. Following the same idea of a role mode, teachers have the position of a leader (Nordahl et al., 2012).

T1 and T2 claimed to be adaptive teachers that find quick solution to challenging situations. It is a remarkable skill in terms of pedagogy. The Report to the Storting No. 11 (2009) particularly requires that teachers should adapt their teaching to each pupil. It is also a significant quality if the teacher is also capable of adapting himself/herself to pupils' social needs (Drugli, 2012).

Next, the statements of T2 and T3 attach importance to classroom management skills, thus leadership skills. They confessed that strict rules in a classroom make the pupils feel safe. Theories say that teachers should have the skill to regulate classroom behavior, fixing clear rules (Moreno Rubio, 2010). But, is this the only skill that is related to classroom management? Here for example, T3 does not mention that he/she has authority as a skill, even if she talked about the notion throughout the interview. It's is true that it is sometimes difficult to analyze our own practice and even to characterize ourselves in our teaching profession. But, T2 continued to describe himself/herself and added that he/she has the skill to use a pleasant tone of voice when he/she communicates with his/her pupils. Like Marzano (2003) says, to use an appropriate tone of voice is a vital teacher's skill. To finish, T4's findings shed light on his/her leadership skills, which embraces the competencies of enhancing equality among pupils. This is also a capacity that not everybody has; it takes usually years of practices to see the pupils equally. Nordahl (2012) defends that fairness and respect are skills that create an atmosphere of equality.

The findings represent heterogeneity among the interviewees. This is not surprising according to the infinity of characteristics that we can find in leadership theories. That's why our theories don't include all of them. We understand however that this topic is closer to personal feelings, and so it appears to be more difficult for respondents to open up on their feelings, than on their professionalism. We notice even though, that T2 knows better than the other teachers which kind of leadership skills he/she possesses.

- **I have balance**

Staying in the skills area, it is interesting to discuss the two sides of skills that get directly into the teacher-pupils relation. On one side there are the professional skills including a part of leadership skills, and on the other side there are the personal skills that liven up the teacher in himself/herself.

The study shows that all participants agreed on one point: there must be a balance between professional and personal skills. Indeed, Drugli (2012) affirms that teachers are instructional and have emotions at the same time. In this way, the two dimensions should work together to hold the continuity in the class and the well-being of the pupils. T2 clarified then that teachers have to be professional but must have personal properties inherent in relationship with their pupils. Despite this harmony, the findings notify that the balance is not the same for all respondents. T1 meant that for him/her a teacher can combine personal skills and professional skills, but that it's impossible to practice only personally, without being professional. An article explains that teachers have emotions and that they have highs and lows in their work, like all people. In a bad day, the authors advise that the teachers should be able to use his/her professional skills to keep his/her feelings for himself/herself, to not affect the pupils (Jones et al., 2013). And T3 agreed on this, maintaining that, yes, teachers are sometimes tired and in a bad mood and that can affect the pupil's learning.

On the contrary, findings about T4 expounded another reality of the teaching profession. This teacher consents that it must be a mix between professional skills and personal skills but, he/she does not really know how it should counterbalance each other. T4 demonstrated uncertainty about his/her balance, because something happened in her classroom and she had to explain to his/her pupils that no, he/she was not their friend. This teacher reflected on his/her practice and supposed that he/she shall have been more clearly in his/her professional role. In relation to this idea, Nordahl (2010) argues that if a teacher scores high on the relational axis, he/she also should exercise higher discipline over a pupil. Drugli (2012) also warns teachers to keep a distance and to not become too friendly; to be sure that learning happens.

The last findings about this topic set out the statement of T3, who admitted that his/her personal skills sometimes takes over his/her professional skills. Therefore, it is necessary that the teacher understand the power of his/her emotional capabilities, bringing disadvantages or benefits to pupils. The emotional dimension in educational practice might contribute to a

better understanding of the emotional resources that can definitely also be mobilized around professional skills.

Findings precisely draw differences in respondents' opinions, and allow us to say that finally the difference between teachers as individuals is not due only to the mastery of knowledge, but also to the emotional control.

Novice or expert, does it really matter?

The argument of the experience in teaching is a relevant factor in the effectiveness of the teacher, and in consequence in relationship. We take the risk here to comment the findings without determinant theories. What leads us to do this is the pertinence of the statements collected during interviews. It is definitely a plus in our discussion, which ultimately give us necessary information concerning the teacher-pupils relationship.

In reality, and apply to every work, individuals progress, evolve in their professional career. Teachers, in particular, learn throughout their teaching life because societies change, learning aims change and pupils change as well. The four respondents all agree that the process of expertise is made of tries, fails and adaptations. In this way, this chain is repeated continuously. Besides, the metaphor of T4 that characteristic the teacher with a multifunctional backpack is interesting to go through. We appreciate the image because it, in some ways, represents all the skills that the teacher have. It actually means that a novice teacher starts with an "empty" backpack concerning experiences, whereas an expert teacher, with years of service, has a backpack full of options.

But, we notice that is not fully true. Indeed, T3 gave rise to a significant element that faces reality. This teacher told us that it is not because you have seniority that you necessarily have the skills to have favorable relationship with your pupils. We understand that the children population evolves and that teacher must adapt to their current needs.

The teacher between control and closeness

The last findings of the study are related to the Figure 4 in the chapter 7.1. The discussion part will try to enhance the perception of the four teachers of themselves compare to the two main lines called control and closeness.

According to theories (Marzano, 2003; Nordahl et al., 2012; Nordahl et al., 2013), an effective teacher is situated in the dimension "authoritative" (see Figure 3 and 4). Findings

represent that all the interviewed teachers are situated in this given dimension. Indeed, the four teachers see themselves as confident adults that have the control of their pupils. Nordahl (2013) confirms that teachers defined as authoritative are the most efficient teachers when it comes to classroom climate and relational competencies, providing a flexible discipline in the classroom. Thus, every respondent scores high on the both axis.

Then, according to the schema and theories, T1, T2, T3 and T4 characterize themselves as effective teachers. In this context, why can ask ourselves if the interview findings match their position on the schema. The first teacher (T1) is a little bit a part from the others and his/her position is higher on the control scale than on the closeness scale. We have to remember that this teacher was more influenced by his/her professionalism than his/her personality. Throughout is interview data, we also notice that he/she talked widely about his/her teaching profession and does not provide much details on his/her emotional or personal skills compare to the others teachers. We do not find explanation for this, but his/her position on the drawing represents well his/her responses. We can definitely say that the perception of T1 on his/her relationship with his/her pupils tends toward credibility.

There is hardly anything to choose between the three other teachers, their positions are almost the same. They placed themselves as high on the control line as on the closeness line. This means that these teachers can achieve a perfect balance between the two features. If we go back to the definition of Wubbels and his colleagues (in Marzano, 2003), a teacher that shows effectiveness should be friendly as well as a good classroom manager. The authors outline also the faculty to communicate to pupils. If we remember well, T2 and T3 were the two teachers who highlighted the importance of communication in a relational context. But we have also in memory that T2 defined herself as professional as personal in his/her relationship with pupils. Thus, we can allow us to say that T2 perceive himself/herself quite adequately on the schema. At the contrary, T3 were more focused on personal skills. Therefore from statements, we objectively see this teacher a bit lower on the control scale.

Finally, T4 also positioned himself/herself at the right place. This teacher had relevant meanings on both control and closeness and even explains his/her feelings about his/her position.

In overall, the teachers of the study seem to be favorable to their relationship with pupils according to their efficient leadership teacher's role and to their personal skills. Definitely, as T1 said, *«it is room for being authoritative and a human in a classroom»*.

9. Conclusion

When answering questions about relationship, many factors were relevant for obtaining a "valid" conclusion. In this study, the qualitative design and the phenomenological perspective contributed to collect relevant information on a personal theme. Our research question was:

How do the four teachers perceive their relationship with their pupils in relation to their teaching role?

The method used to collect information was interview and it definitely helped us to cross the path of the subject "relationship" through questions and answers. After analysis and discussion, it seems that these teachers have a distinct opinion of the role they have into relationship with pupils. They understand the meaning of professional and personal skills that plays into the creation of relationship with pupils, in order to promote pupils' personal and academic development. The study showed that the teachers had experienced relationship in different ways, but that they met on several points. The creation of relationship with pupils should be turned toward effectiveness; otherwise it will not make much sense. That's why; a part is played in the professionalism of the teachers and the other one, in the interpersonal situations. Thus, the main findings of this research could be summarized in the notion of "balance".

Relationship with pupils is something that all teachers face daily, and that has a great impact on the pupils' development and learning. In this way, schools are arena for development and understanding. Nevertheless, relationship is based on interactions between people. Therefore, classroom culture, traditions, teachers and pedagogic practice have an impact on the early stages of a relationship building. It is here that we understand that teachers with a clear vision of their personal attitude in relation to their pedagogical background can promote relationship as an advantage. Indeed, the four teachers appeared as educated teachers that know how important relationship is, in relation to pupils' interest and involvement. They carry out control over the classroom and take care of their pupils at the same time. Moreover, as professional, teachers should possess leadership skills that make them confident, determined, and responsible. In this way, authority and communication are two important characteristics that a productive teacher should master. When it comes to find balance in the practice, it is necessary to not become too close to the pupils. Teachers should set limits, but this is not a reason to not be friendly.

What has to be remembered from this research is that teachers are humans as well as classroom managers.

"It is room for being authoritative and a human in a classroom"

With the findings in mind, the question is about the teachers' perception of themselves as class managers in relation to relationship that is up for debate. Studies, educational framework, and experiences show what and how teachers should interact with their pupils in order to promote the best learning. However, it is the teacher own choice to follow and believe in the educational and pedagogical aspects of the relationship. Indeed, some teachers might perceive themselves in a different mindset, or they simply do not agree with some of the pedagogical approaches. This contributes to end up with different teachers as well as different views about relationship.

Despite this, the teachers in this study did not talk about any negative experiences related to relationship with their pupils, and they also had difficulties to open up, explaining their own feelings in the success or failure of relationships with pupils.

In this sense, we can consider if teachers also apply their effective leadership when they struggle with emotions. Do teachers follow the same authoritative path, or do they let themselves be controlled by the strong human emotions that they face on a daily basis?

This master thesis has shed light on the theme of classroom management and relationship , however in a potential further research, it could be interesting to ask ourselves how and to what extent a teacher can express his/her emotions in the classroom.

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List of Figures

Front page Picture retrieved from http://exploraworld.org/

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

"Teacher's perception on their relationships with pupils"

Bakgrunn og formål

Within Telemark University College, this master thesis is focused on the relationship between teachers and their pupils in classroom and precisely how teachers perceive this relationship. It is interesting to study this subject in the context of classroom management as one of the aspects of the teaching profession. In a multicultural country, and especially in schools where teachers meet different students the role of teachers and their beliefs have important effects on children and their learning. The teacher-student relationship has many facets and is often analyzed from the perspective of students and facing emotional and educational themes. The purpose of this task is to analyze lived experiences where the teacher met challenges and improve his abilities / skills in his relationship with his students.

The sample has been chosen through personal contacts. I choose teachers that could talk in English for the interview and that I know because they could feel more confident to express themselves on a quite personal theme.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Data will be collected with interview. With help of a mobile telephone, I will be able to record the conversation during interview.
The questions will be about personal experiences from teacher on their relationship with pupils.
An interview guide will be given to the respondent just before the interview for practical reasons (English language).

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt.
I will be the only one to have access to the data collection especially the information about your personal and professional activity.
Each participant corresponds to a name code (T1, T2, T3…), names will never appears in any documents.
The collected data are protected by a password on my personal computer.

If the participant will read the master thesis, it will be possible to recognize himself because of the little professional presentation.

The master thesis has to be delivered on 1st may 2015.
At the end of the master project, the collection of data will be store in my personal computer for an unlimited time but under protection.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med Anaïs Talieu (tlf: 45009562) eller veilederen Åse Solfrid Streitlien
.Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

----
(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

☐ *Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju*
☐ *Jeg samtykker til at personopplysninger kan lagres etter prosjektslutt*

Appendix 2

Interview guide

Name: T1, T2, T3, T4   Anaïs Talieu

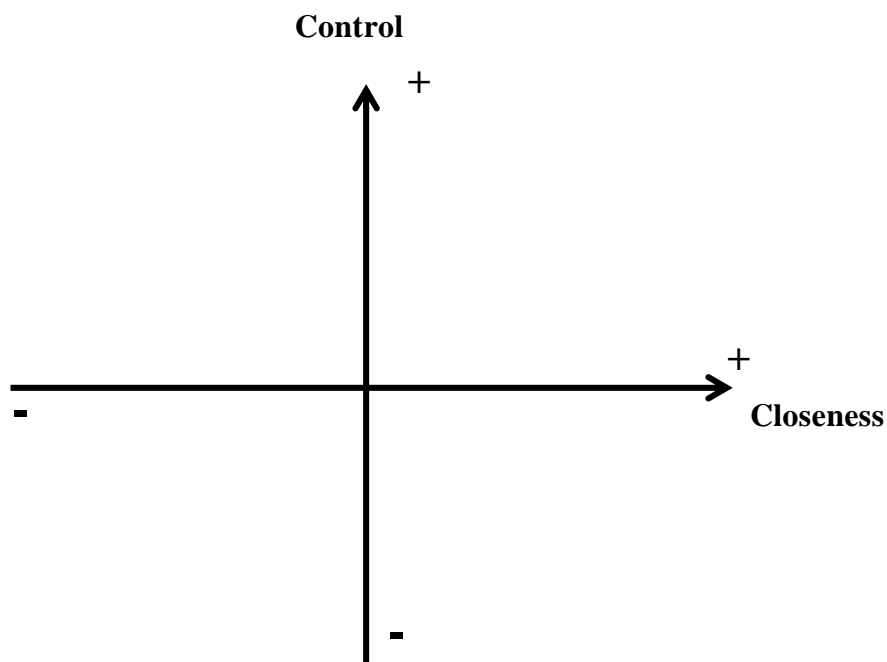**<u>Educational Background</u>**

1. What is the highest level of education you have received?

2. What are the degrees you have passed?

<u>Employment Background</u>

1. What are your main responsibilities?

2. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?

<u>The perception of the relationship teacher-pupils</u>

1. Where will you place yourself on the following form?

Control

+

+

Closeness

-

-

2. What do you think about the importance of creating relationships with your pupils?

3. **Which aspects of the classroom management fall within the teacher-pupils relationship for you?**

For example…
- *the authority of the teacher?*
- *the rules in the classroom?*
- *the variety of roles taken by the teacher during a class time?*
- *the chosen approach to learning?*
- *the means used?*
- *the verbal communication?*
- *the non-verbal communication?*
- *the positive look on the pupils by the teacher?*

4. **What do you think are the most important skills to build a good relationship with the students?**
What do you think about personal and professional skills acting in the teacher-pupils relationship? *Does one take over the other?*

5. **What, according to you, influences this perception?**

6. **What are your experiences with authority and social and/or educational relationship in a classroom?**

   How can a close relationship with the students affect teachers' authority? *And vice versa?*

7. **What leadership skills do you have that would qualify you as an effective teacher?**

8. **What do you think about the effect/impact of the length of teaching on the way to build relationships with pupils?** *Experienced teachers against novice teachers. And in what way?*

9. **Can you give me an example from your own experience that illustrates a good teacher-pupil(s) relationship?**

10. **Then, how will you define the relationship teacher-pupils?**

Do you have any other comments?

Appendix 3

Åse Streitlien

Institutt for pedagogikk Høgskolen i Telemark Postboks 203

3901 PORSGRUNN

Vår dato: 19.03.2015	Vår ref : 42117 / 3 / MHM	Deres dato:	Deres ref :

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 08.02.2015. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 17.03.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

42117 Teacher's perception on their relationships with pupils Behandlingsansvarlig

Høgskolen i Telemark, ved institusjonens øverste leder

Daglig ansvarlig   Åse Streitlien

Student   Anaïs Talieu

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.05.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen   Katrine Utaaker Segadal   Marianne Høgetveit Myhre