

# Introduction

– Knowledge qualities within the field of sloyd

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The theme for this Techne A-series report is *Knowledge, Qualities and Sloyd*. Research results show that individual and collective values and traditions often have a remarkable influence on one's vision on sloyd (Nygren-Landgårds, 2000; Porko-Hudd, 2005). The lack of research results or insufficient insights into existing research add to the fact that many knowledge qualities within the field of sloyd remain hidden. It is therefore a challenge to make visible how versatile the learning situations can be when making sloyd objects. Knowledge and experiences in sloyd practices develop by giving and taking in interaction with other persons, with materials, tools and artefacts (Johansson, 2002).

The Swedish term *slöjd* comes from *slöghp* (known from the fourteen century), an old Nordic word meaning cunning [slughet], diligence [flitighet], skilfulness [skicklighet], knowledge [kunnighet] and wisdom [klokhet], and *slögher*, the quality of being handy [händig], deft [flink], craftsmanlike [hantverksskicklig], dexterous [fingerfärdig-händig], experienced skilful [konstfärdig], resourceful [påhittig] and ingenious [fyn-dig]. Otto Salomon (1849–1907), who started teacher training in craft and design at Nääs outside Gothenburg in 1874, translated the Swedish word *slöjd* as *Sloyd* in English. Salomon's basic ideas about sloyd made him internationally famous and his teaching ideas spread to several parts of the world. Sloyd was made an obligatory subject at an early stage (1866)

in Finland by Uno Cygnæus (1810–1888), and Finland has also been a pioneer in research on sloyd, craft and design. Sloyd can be domestic (domestic arts and crafts) [husbehovsslöjd, hemslöjd], professional (handicraft) [yrkesmässigt slöjdande, hantverk] or artistic (arts and crafts, art handicraft) [konsthantverk, konstslöjd] or as *a generic term for teaching about different materials used in craft and design, education-related craft and design at all levels in the education system* [ett samlingsnamn för utbildningsrelaterad slöjd på alla nivåer i utbildningssystemet]. (Johansson, 2002; Lindfors, 1992, 1995).

The five articles in this report are written by some of the researchers that took part in the first international research conference on sloyd *Tradition in transition – teaching Sloyd, Arts and Crafts in Contemporary Society*, 2006, that was arranged by Umeå University, Sweden and Åbo Akademi University, Finland. In the articles the researchers reflect on the view and complexity of *Knowledge, Qualities and Sloyd*.

*Mikael Alexandersson*, professor at the Faculty of Education, Göteborg university, Sweden, discusses learning in sloyd in his article called "*How to do a thing into something? Learning sloyd through interactions with artefacts*". In the article he discusses how we create or transform meaning into artefacts and what are the possibilities of the sloyd subject in relation to techné as a knowledge form in our postmodern era.

*Lois Heltland*, associate professor at the Harvard graduate school of education and the Massachusetts college of art, USA has together with colleagues Kim Sheridan and Shirley Veenema at the Harvard graduate school, and professor Ellen Winner at the Harvard graduate school of

education and Boston college, written an article called "*Developing artistic mind: The studio thinking framework*". The article describes three "structures" in which instruction occurs in studio arts classrooms (demonstration-lecture, students-at-work, and critique) and eight "studio habits of mind" that describe what art teachers intend to teach.

*Seija Kojonkoski-Rännäli*, associate professor emerita at the university of Turku, Finland, emphasises questions concerning quality and quality awareness in her article called "*The concept of quality awareness in crafts*". She discusses that consumers prefer downmarket products, that quality interests no one, and especially that young people do not even recognize what quality is. Furthermore she discusses the sloyd subjects possibilities to take into account teaching good quality work and quality awareness.

*Eila Lindfors*, lecturer at the Faculty of Education, University of Tampere, Finland, discusses teacher students' attitudes and values regarding teaching in sloyd in her article called "*Sloyd in education? – Student teacher perspective*". The research results open an interesting perspective to university teachers as well as to comprehensive school teachers about their students' thoughts on sloyd and why they like or dislike the subject.

*Viveca Lindberg*, PhD at the Stockholm Institute of Education, Sweden, discusses and explores aspects of Swedish textile-related upper secondary school programmes as social practices in her article called "*Same syllabus in two contexts: vocational / liberal knowledge?*" The focus is on the similarities in content in the two contexts in relation to what has been interpreted as the object of the activity within each of the programmes.

Whereas the content within one of these programmes contributes to vocational competence, the same content within the other programme contributes to liberal education.

Altogether the articles point at the complexity regarding *Knowledge, Qualities and Sloyd* at the same time as each article focuses on one particular aspect of the problem. As editors of this *Techne* report we hope that the texts will contribute to reflection and deeper insight into the knowledge qualities of making sloyd objects. We also hope that this report will be valuable in both education and research within the field.

### References

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