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Testing 'the other' in Danish history of education - trajectories of intervention, inclusion and the public good

Abstract:

The history of education is filled with examples of children falling outside the 'windows of normality' and subsequent professional interventions aiming to 'normalise' the education system. Viewed in a historical perspective, there have been constant challenges to inclusion due to social inequality, increases in the numbers of refugee and minority children, and students diagnosed with mental disorders. Such increases in student diversity implicating student referrals to alternate education paths are intimately connected to ubiquitous testing practices stemming from the practical application of international, national, and local testing programmes at different levels of the education systems. Different testing practices thus influence and frame the directions and means of inclusive education. In this presentation, Denmark is used as an empirical example to show how processes of othering and racializations have often been built into testing practices performed by a whole range of professionals in the 20th century. Looking at these practices offers a glimpse of the very workings of the welfare and neoliberal state formations and subsequently the imaginaries of the public good forming the very backdrop of educational inclusion.