

## What is meant by social pedagogical research into foster children?

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### 1 Introduction

The way in which foster children grow up and develop is a subject dealt with by various disciplines with widely varying epistemological positions and research methods. In many countries, there are well-developed, well-established clinical research methods based on medical and psychiatric paradigms. In such cases, quantitative studies are generally carried out to examine how disorders occur and can be treated among children in care, and the results are published in corresponding international journals. The research results are also frequently used to make further enhancements in practice, thus affecting the programmes implemented in that field. Their aim is often to improve children's developmental opportunities by developing and applying effective forms of therapy. Following the medical paradigm, the focus is then on targeted treatment using programmes which have been clinically tested and evaluated in terms of their effectiveness.

This article on social pedagogical research into foster children will present a different research programme developed over the past ten years by the University of Siegen's Foster Care Research Group. While this will by no means replace clinical research, it will add another perspective to the interdisciplinary professional discussion.

In Germany, the development of a specific social pedagogical theory is linked particularly to works by Klaus Mollenhauer (1974 and 1983), Hans Thiersch (1977), Michael Winkler (1998) and Christian Niemeyer (2015). Their theoretical reasoning thus forms the basis for the following reflections on social pedagogical research on foster children. The references and roots are not explicitly described here, in part as they have not yet been systematically reproduced in the international, English-speaking debate on social pedagogy, for example in the UK (with the exception of some pieces by Klaus Mollenhauer). In the German professional discussion, over the next few years I will do my best to give social pedagogical research into foster children a more prominent role in the development of social pedagogical theory; this remains to be done.

This first section is intended to explain the structural characteristics of upbringing (*Erziehung*), as a reference system for the characteristics of social pedagogical research into foster children, dealt with in the second section. These structural characteristics are: personal perspectives and interpretative schemes, multiperspectivity, processes within networks of interdependency, embeddedness in social processes and biographical perspectives.

Social pedagogical research falls under pedagogical research. For well-known anthropological reasons, human beings depend on others for their care and protection to a great extent and for a very long time, and have a relatively low supply of instincts, giving them a wide range of variation when it comes to the development of their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, in a process which lasts throughout their lives. In order to develop, they rely on necessary resources provided by other people, first of all simply to survive, and later, in the long run, to

make the most of their opportunities. Many of these resources are made accessible through upbringing. This shall now be substantiated.

## **2 Structural characteristics of upbringing**

The structural characteristics of upbringing affect all people in general. As foster children are first and foremost children and young people, girls and boys, this section describes general structural characteristics, with variants specific to foster children only being dealt with occasionally. This approach is essential for social pedagogical research: foster children are not socially constructed a priori as a homogeneous group with different characteristics, but are seen above all as girls and boys solving developmental tasks and overcoming problems, just like any others.

Their upbringing affects them as people who constantly learn and develop throughout their lifetime; it takes into account the fact that these processes of learning and development always occur in certain conditions, and it offers those learners stimuli which they can acquire in order to develop.

### **2.1 Development as an internal activity which relies on stimuli**

All development is something which people achieve themselves; educators cannot intervene into others' heads or hearts. All they can do is to provide good material and arrange good conditions to encourage developmental processes, leading people to "take on their own lives and their own forms" (Nohl, 1973: 39). Educators cannot simply transfer their data onto a child's hard drive, however attentive, motivated or skilled they are. That is just not how it works, and that should in any case not be the aim if the other person is supposed to be taking on his or her own form. The beneficiaries of pedagogical work develop by themselves; they learn by themselves – often not learning what was intended, as they interpret it in their own way, integrating it into their existing knowledge and arranging it in terms of relevance in the manner which life has taught them.

Between the educator's actions and the results of upbringing, there are always processes of appropriation, and these processes cannot be determined through pedagogical practice. Taking the example of the impossibility of instruction, Niklas Luhmann (2004: 174) formulated it thus: "That means nothing other than training children to be trivial machines, which is something which they are not, and which they cannot become. Evidently, upbringing is thus acting in the service of the kind of reliability which society demands. After all, only trivial machines are reliable people who (as long as they do not break down) constantly transform the same inputs into the same outputs."

This is what makes the effects and influences of pedagogical actions so hard to measure, as a model of their effects which ignores these complex processes of acquisition might be measuring something, but it is not the effects of pedagogical actions. These actions are, after all, exerted on thinking, feeling, acting people who develop their own will at an early age – they are not exerted on a malleable material.

Any specific behaviour by the educator thus does not automatically or generally help subjects develop; at most, it has the potential to do so. It is only through appropriation, through processes of adaptation, assimilation and accommodation, that it becomes a means of helping an individual. This should be imagined as a complex process of learners transforming the educator's material, rather than grasping a tool that is being offered, or having their perceptions guided by looking in the direction indicated. All kinds of stimuli and signals pass

through the filter of the child's perceptions in any case, with the child interpreting and processing things based on his or her experiences, the way they have accumulated and the representations the child has developed. Any idea that educators could intervene directly into the learner's thoughts and feelings is thus far off the mark. The same is true of behaviour. Here, it is important to distinguish between feigned conformity and internalisation. It may be possible to directly force subjects to briefly feign conformity to avoid sanction, but internalisation is a private process of interpreting and integrating experiences. It is also worth mentioning that directly acting to deliberately manipulate people's thoughts and feelings would not even be permissible on ethical terms, as it would violate the dignity of a developing human being. This is known as conditioning, and would not be a subset of education, but quite the opposite.

Though the child is thought of as an independent actor, in a pedagogical model he or she is not constructed (any more than adults are) as an autonomous individual who can or has to live separately to others, without relying on other people or being dependent in any way. However tempting it might be today, any such construction of autonomy would warp our view of the network of relationships and the characteristics of the material world in which individuality is initially developed, encouraged and blocked. Children's particular vulnerability also remains an important factor. This is especially obvious with very young children. Among adults, who are, after all, also extremely vulnerable, it is less obvious or acknowledged, but is nonetheless still there.

Processes of appropriation cannot simply be imagined as an open playing field. People rely on others to fulfil their needs, and the threats, risks and dangers they perceive often bring them up against new developmental tasks and new problems which they again rely on others to solve or to cope with. In upbringing, this relative dependence is asymmetrical between the people who are made the subjects of pedagogical interaction and the educators.

As I have reasoned in various pieces, with reference to Norbert Elias (1978), power is a structure common to all relationships (Wolf, 1999). When people are related to one another in some way, they are not (entirely) indifferent to what others think, feel or do. As such they are dependent on one another, relying on others to satisfy their needs and give them motivation. The asymmetries in this mutual dependency are the basis for differentials of power, when one person is more dependent on the other. To that extent, power necessarily plays a role in pedagogical relationships and is especially important in relationships which are particularly relevant to children, i.e. during their primary socialisation (Wolf, 2007).

In the case of upbringing, in addition to this, asymmetry to the advantage of the educator is a necessary prerequisite. Educators need to know and be able to do something which the subject of the pedagogical interaction does not yet know, or cannot do, so should be "stronger and wiser", as Bowlby (1982: 159) described it with reference to an attachment figure. This necessary advantage means that the child is more dependent on the educator. This means that the focus needs to be on the following questions: What means and sources of power create this advantage, and how is the power advantage reduced during the upbringing process? After all, if this power advantage is meant to be pedagogically justified, then both the learning targets and the selected means of power must be justified (Wolf, 2007).

From a pedagogical point of view, children are the producers of their development and educators are the (often indispensable) coproducers. This is what makes a fundamental difference from a treatment-based point of view, which sees the educator's influence as

directly shaping the subject. This difference is not only semantic; in fact, these two modes of changing people produce different ways of dealing with them – not least how to deal with resistant children – and different aims. From a pedagogical point of view, the central aim cannot be to ensure that children function smoothly, but to ensure that they have access to developmentally relevant resources and can indeed take on their own form. This is thus seen not as a final step but as an open-ended process – perhaps not entirely open-ended but always involving every available option.

## 2.2 Developmental tasks and problems

Upbringing is both about solving developmental tasks and about tackling problems. Developmental tasks refer on one hand to the kind described in developmental psychology, for example. However, a more precise description is needed of the developmental tasks to be carried out at any specific time, in any specific society, and in specific socialisation configurations. General lists such as those written by Havighurst (1976) or models such as that developed by Erikson (1973) contain interesting descriptions of how to categorise developmental tasks, or the stages they involve, but generally provide too rough a guideline.

Yvonne Gassmann (2010 and 2015) describes and analyses developmental tasks specific to foster children. This reveals that an arena of socialisation with two parental systems – that of the birth family and that of the foster family – produces particular tasks and difficulties when children are developing an identity. As, in this case, their general developmental task takes on a very specific shape, and society hardly provides them with any interpretative schemes with which to find a solution, they have a very specific task to deal with and rely on specific resources.

During our research, one aspect which was especially fascinating was when the foster children, now adults, discussed the particular form of their developmental tasks as a group and told one another how they dealt with them. This showed very clearly how the subjects developed solutions in unmapped territory.

There can be little question that upbringing is responsible for developmental tasks. It is when we come to other kinds of task and problems that things become interesting. These other problems which occur in children's living environments are, after all, also developmentally relevant; they are learning tasks, and learning processes are required to cope with them. However, they often occur outside of pedagogical situations and are not tailored to the children's capabilities. They are not developed by a responsible adult: life itself confronts the children with these tasks. The children have to cope with unusual, critical life events; they may be overwhelmed with frightening experiences, and their agency and strategies to preserve their self-esteem may suddenly be placed at risk.

Foster children almost always have to deal with this kind of additional, serious tasks and pressures, whether because they have spent time growing up in comfortless families, or have had fractured biographies because of constantly having to break off relationships and move home. and have to get by with a very limited range of options in a world where they are by no means guaranteed to receive sufficient care from adults; a world which may look very different tomorrow to how it looks today.

## 2.3 Learning in context

As the source of specific tasks and pressures, people's living environments are always relevant. Context is, however, even more fundamental, as development and learning always

take place within certain circumstances. Any kind of decontextualisation, ignoring these social and material interconnections, is incapable of seeing, let alone effectively explaining important phenomena. From a pedagogical point of view, living environments are learning environments, meaning not only that they can produce challenges, contain obstacles and block learning processes, but also that they can create learning opportunities and provide resources. The structure of people's living environment affects their lives and development. Both dimensions always occur at the same time: even inhospitable places create learning opportunities. This should not be underestimated. Children who grow up in conditions of extreme violence or severe neglect also learn in these conditions: they develop interpretative schemes to explain the phenomena in their living environment, and develop strategies to retain or gain agency. In other living environments – for example in another family or in school – these interpretative schemes and strategies for action seem misplaced, disturbed and alien. Here, they are dysfunctional; there, they were functional. If their ways of behaving, thinking and feeling are not understood in the context of their living environment, then these strange ways of behaving, thinking and feeling may be ascribed to them as permanent personal characteristics; they are constructed as disturbed people.

Another consequence of taking context into account is that when the focus is widened to include the learning environment, the material aspects of people's living conditions and the consequences these have for their developmental opportunities become very clear. In the case of the additional pressure and lack of resources when children grow up in conditions of poverty, for example, the restrictive, blocking, sometimes ruinous consequences of poverty and other forms of disadvantage rooted in social structures become particularly clear (Chassé, Zander & Rasch, 2010).

When pedagogy is not interested in the material basis of children's living environments, and only interprets their problems in psychological terms, ignoring any interdependencies with, for example, poverty, social and cultural capital, experiences which affect self-esteem, and restricted access, then it is restricted to a psychologising approach (Wolf, 2015: 95–111).

As well as disadvantage – which always involves interdependency between purely material disadvantage and other dimensions – psychological and biographical pressure and, ultimately, the mental illness of an important attachment figure give the learning environment a particular shape, confronting children with unusual tasks which would require particular resources in their extended social environment (for more detail see Wolf, 2015: 111–135).

### **3 Social pedagogical research into foster children**

Considering this understanding of upbringing, social pedagogical research into foster children needs to observe, understand and research into topics related to the children's learning, development, education and upbringing. A description of the basic characteristics of this research will now follow.

#### **3.1 Experiential perspective and interpretative schemes**

All pedagogical processes are filtered through learners' perceptions, their interpretation and integration into the structures of their knowledge, feelings and actions. All involve active appropriation. As a result, the far-reaching effects of pedagogical interaction can only be measured with sufficient accuracy on the level of learners' experience; on their own, the educator's intentions are not enough to fully explain processes of learning and development. For that reason alone, an interest in experience is indispensable in pedagogical research. Moreover, as topics and motivation are always guided by the subjects' system of relevance,

their experience of events is also indispensable to understand processes extending beyond direct pedagogical interaction. On one hand, the subjects' self-will is the result of previous processes of education and development; on the other it is a membrane which filters useful items of knowledge, interpretations and emotional patterns out of a flood of information. After all, the emotional nuances of people's experiences also lastingly affect their learning – as neuroscience is now also telling us. These are the reasons why pedagogical research has a basic interest in the questions of how people perceive and experience themselves, their current living situation and their imagined future – plus how they interpret their past, and especially how they have got where they are. These perceptions can be examined by their articulation through speech, facial expression and other ways (Mollenhauer & Uhlendorff 1992; Krumenacker 2004), and using methods which are particularly suitable to record experiences, such as observation, narrative interviews and processes based on other forms of expression, e.g. drawing or photography.

People's experiences and how they interpret them include the development of interpretative schemes and subjective theories. They develop their own explanations, meaning that people who have especially unusual experiences face particular challenges (Reimer, 2016). These individual interpretative schemes build upon and modify collective interpretations which currently appear plausible in a certain society and at a certain time. They then give structure to people's future experiences. The kinds of text which can be used to analyse people's experiences and interpretative schemes are different (sometimes narrative passages, sometimes overall explanations which contain causal attributions), but people's experiences and the interpretative schemes they develop are closely interlinked.

The Foster Care Research Group focused particularly on foster children's experiences during several research projects. Data was collected using extensive biographical and narrative interviews with current or former foster children (Reimer & Schäfer, 2015). During these interviews, often lasting two or three hours or longer, the foster children reconstruct their biographical process. This frequently involves very specific memories of relevant experiences, described as in a film. These experiences, the patterns they contain and the interplay of various influences can then be interpreted.

Daniela Reimer (2008 and 2010) used this method to investigate how a child is placed in a foster family, interpreting the event as a cultural change. The experiences described by children who were older at the time of their placement showed that they perceived the foster family as an alien world and initially felt they were entering a totally alien environment. Reimer was then able to examine in more detail how children coped with this experience of alienation and got used to this different living environment. This went as far as developing recommendations for foster parents (who themselves often felt that the poor child was now finally coming into a normal family) on how they could support the child through this process of transformation in terms of their thoughts, feelings and actions (Reimer, 2011).

On another research project, interviews were held with former foster children from four ambitious fostering services (Pierlings, 2011). The biographical and narrative interviews were evaluated in terms of the pressure placed on the children and suitable resources they needed to cope with them constructively. Based on this, for example, it was then possible to describe a range of problems related to contact meetings. From the impressive descriptions by former foster children, the experts then held workshops to develop professional standards, e.g. for preparing, supporting and following up on contact meetings. These interviews can be used to look into fundamental questions around growing up in extremely unfavourable circumstances

and coping processes, and also to advance professional practice (for example by developing professional standards within the profession itself). This kind of research also involves professional policy, in that standards for professional practice are expected to be developed based on the discipline's own reference system, rather than an outside source.

Analysing foster children's interpretative schemes is the focus of a complex case study by Judith Pierlings (2014 and 2015). This made the different layers of the interpretative schemes particularly clear: from specific explanations to complex views of their life histories, with crucial biographical statements as the key to understanding their biography.

In his investigation into foster parents' constructions of meaning, Dirk Schaefer (2011) showed how important foster parents' personal constructions of meaning are when they are caring for children with significant problems. If they consider the pressures this involves to be meaningful, foster mothers and foster fathers can cope well with surprisingly intense pressure, but if their constructions of meaning are undermined or fall apart, the child is frequently excluded from the foster family before long.

### **3.2 Multiperspectivity**

In addition to this, research into social phenomena also needs to take perspectivism into account. Only a constructivist approach allows this to be reconstructed. This goes hand in hand with understanding and analysing people's experiential perspectives. When multiple actors are involved, social phenomena can and will be perceived in totally different ways from different people's perspectives. The basic idea of the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) is fundamentally disassociated from a clinical, scientific view of people and social processes. It is not only specific to social pedagogical research (it is shared with many sociological theories), but in international research into foster children, there is a clear separation between constructivist and clinical approaches.

A constructivist approach also entails a specific means of treating data from files, medical diagnosis and professionals' descriptions. Like other data, these are also treated as social constructions: subjective experiences (e.g. by the foster children) are not contrasted with objective observations (e.g. data gained using clinically recognised measuring techniques). This can lead to a deconstruction of facts which are known in the profession or by professionals, e.g. when the question is raised of who stands to gain from a certain point of view or construction. Power issues thus necessarily become a cross-sectional dimension of social pedagogical research and reflection.

Methodologically, this reveals quite how questionable it is whether one person's perspective can be gained by asking someone else what they have experienced. In what is often the paternalist world of fostering services, adults frequently explain what children want and need and how they experience situations, such as their relationship to their parents. The children themselves do not have a voice; data is gathered from easier sources, such as by systematically questioning adult attachment figures. This does not take into account the fact that these data are second-hand, i.e. of lower quality. Research was once carried out in this way, and sometimes still is (e.g. Kötter, 1994).

In a living environment with widely diverging interests, especially, it is simply not possible to understand and investigate phenomena without systematically considering that different actors each have their very own perspectives, which differ from those of other actors.

This was made particularly clear in a research project on children being returned to their families after long-term care (Schäfer, Petri & Pierlings, 2015). This investigated how foster parents, parents and professionals from various social services experience the process of children being returned from long-term care to their families of origin. In one case, the family court decided that the parents could return to making their own decisions about their child's principal place of abode. The different actors' descriptions, comments and explanations of what was technically the same subject differed widely and it would have been impossible to understand the different people's actions without taking those differences into account. Other aspects of the case (such as why it picked up or slowed down pace, why coalitions formed or broke up, et cetera) were based on people's different perceptions and experiences, and can only be properly interpreted with that in mind.

### **3.3 Processes in networks of interdependency**

Developmental opportunities and obstacles come about in networks of interdependency related to socialisation. Even the dyadic relationships and attachments which are, for example, particularly relevant to very young children are embedded in other relational networks. Another central characteristic of social pedagogical research is that it takes these contexts into account, investigating and assessing how relevant they are generally and to specific cases. This kind of research tries not to de-contextualise individual relationships and interactions. I used the example of birth families and foster families to show how the structural characteristics of each interact to form specific configurations (e.g. tense, competitive configurations, configurations revolving around the foster family, et cetera), structuring the environment in which the child lives and learns (Wolf, 2015). Research cannot negate this complexity; instead, it needs to reflect the situations of embeddedness and interaction on different levels. This extends from dyadic relationships to family networks, from the relationships between the two families to those extending beyond them, e.g. with peers and other adults (such as those in school) or social structures on a larger scale. Thus, on one hand, examining processes of socialisation in networks of interdependency means studying direct relationships between and among people within their close environment and beyond.

To take a more abstract point of view, it is also a plea for theoretical models which attempt to understand the interplay of different factors, to work out how individual causes and effects fit into networks of causes and effects, feedback and systems, and thus to identify long chains of interdependency and develop multi-layered models.

One study which looked into a previously underestimated element of foster children's relational networks investigated the experiences of siblings who were cared for together or separately (Petri, 2014 and 2015). German practice long followed the principle of placing siblings separately in different foster families. The idea behind this was that the children's unfavourable experiences in their family of origin would lead to pathological relational patterns being repeated in the foster family. This principle clashed with several studies showing that foster children frequently describe being separated from their siblings as a long-lasting burden. The investigation by Corinna Petri shows the importance of sibling relationships, especially among children from problem families, showing among other things how older children brought up in parentifying family structures can gradually give up the special responsibility they feel for their younger siblings if the adults in the new family support them and that older siblings can set the pace of this development themselves.

An investigation currently being carried out into processes of placement breakdown shows the advantage of theoretical models which explain and predict breakdown processes, but rather



than examining individual factors separately (such as children being older when entering care) instead look at how they interact, for example, with family concepts (close-knit family models versus more open family models). Investigations analysing the different factors and revealing the importance of individual variables call for these findings to be integrated into a complex interdependency model.

### **3.4 Embeddedness in social processes**

One essential aspect of social pedagogical research which sets it apart from psychopathological, clinical research is that it systematically takes into account interactions between social microstructures and processes, on one hand, and interactive and intrapsychological processes, on the other. Many phenomena which occur as foster children grow up and live in foster families cannot be understood without taking into account disadvantage and poverty, stigmatisation, exclusion and participation, the social aspect of power balances, the struggle for acknowledgement and legally codified organisational processes. If the link between psychogenesis and sociogenesis – the central theme of Norbert Elias's work (Elias, Jephcott & Dunning, 2010) – is ignored and difficulties, limits and pressure are interpreted purely from a psychological point of view, this seriously limits their understanding, i.e. certain insights are impossible. In the German discussion on foster children, for example, professionals often follow a pared-down psychoanalytical theory (e.g. see Nienstedt & Westermann, 2011) which has lost any potential for social reflection.

Social categories and those based on macrostructures are found in many projects in this research group – not yet all, but heading in that direction. These subjects are explicitly addressed in studies on birth families' experiences and their role after the child has been placed in care (Wilde, 2014 and 2015). The outstanding investigation by Daniela Reimer (2016) on constructions and balances of normality also tackles many aspects explicitly.

The investigation by Andy Jespersion (2014 and 2015) on how same-sex foster parents experience and deal with general and specific topics can also be understood as examining the interactions between the social discussion on same-sex parenting and the opportunities and othering of same-sex foster parents. Specific questions about how foster children can develop well with same-sex foster parents have long been answered by studies in the USA. If these questions were not integrated into the general social discussion, it would be impossible to understand the answers.

### **3.5 The long run: the biographical perspective**

Finally, the dimension of processes and development is central to pedagogical research. People are constantly learning, developing and changing. The way that they think, feel and act at any moment in time can only be understood in the light of their previous experiences and how they have been integrated into their patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. What their behaviour means, particularly, can only be understood by looking at the conditions under which it has come about. This applies especially to people who have spent time growing up in unusual circumstances and had experiences in their living and learning environments which were not conducive to their development; whose particular impressionability and vulnerability was not met with sufficient care or benevolent encouragement – situations which many foster children have experienced at some time. Pedagogical research needs to understand and reconstruct these developmental processes. By this means, among others, it can prevent too hasty pathologisation which, by taking things out of context and ignoring the learning environment and the steps children take in order to cope, reduces cases to personal deficits.

The research at the University of Siegen, which studies longer biographical processes, used biographical, narrative interviews to record and assess how biographical trajectories were constructed in the children's descriptions of their experiences from their first memories to adulthood. The assessment specifically related to pressures and resources (Wolf & Reimer, 2008), coping with critical lifetime events and experiencing turning points (Reimer, Schäfer & Wilde, 2015). When foster children are placed in a foster family, many have already dealt with not just one unconventional transition but also other transitions such as placement moves, returning to their birth family or moving to other organisations, e.g. residential treatment centres or homes (quite apart from the transition to independent living in their own flat). Reconstructing the dramas of these often unusual biographies involving different aspects of growing up in unfavourable conditions is particularly interesting.

Last but not least, one current research project is revealing how, when children have spent the first few years of their life in extremely unfavourable conditions, foster families can nonetheless help them develop well and become socially integrated. Five to seven years after the first interview, another interview was held with the former foster children, many now roughly in their 30s. This made it possible to examine how they were integrated into their job, whether they had founded a family, what contact they had to their birth family and foster family, and their health. Once again this revealed interesting turmoil, especially regarding their relationship to their long-term foster family and their birth family.

#### **4 Summary**

Social pedagogical research into foster children studies children's developmental processes through adolescence into adulthood in a living environment which subjects them to particular pressures. It thus falls into the category of research into development in unfavourable conditions and relates to some central structural characteristics of child raising: lifelong development as an internal activity carried out by the subjects, and processes of appropriation taking place in an asymmetrical network of relationships, in living environments which are affected by social structures and by the interplay of developmental tasks to be fulfilled and problems to be tackled. Following this understanding of upbringing, this kind of research is particularly interested in the subjects' experiences and the schemes they use to interpret them. It expects different actors to have multiple perspectives, investigates processes in networks of interdependence, observes the interplay of social and psychological processes and focuses on life-long paths of biographical development. It tries to take into account the context of social circumstances and biographical trajectories, and avoid any reduction to psychopathological ascriptions. In other words, it differs from clinical research into foster children in terms of its theoretical and epistemological approaches and its research methods. As a result, it can offer a new means of researching into foster children's development while at the same time developing a specific knowledge base to form a general educational theory. Neither project is completed; both are in their early stages.

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