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Beneath the surface of compliant pupil behaviour: On how individuals in heterogeneous classes position themselves towards lessons' content-based requirements

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Abstract: By complying with their "job", i.e., completing the tasks set for them by teachers, pupils develop their subject skills. They do this in a classroom setting where they can perceive each other regarding their abilities. Besides content learning, pupils, thus, also have to position themselves emotionally and action-practically towards the content-based tasks in the class context. Which corresponding reaction patterns are observable is an open research question, especially concerning the comparison between pupils taught curriculum-accordantly and those with special educational needs in learning (SEN-L) when educated in inclusive classrooms. Therefore, for this preliminary study, twenty semi-structured interviews were examined, in which the pupils were asked about what and how they had learned in the previous lessons. Data analyses were carried out using a mixed-methods approach. Distinct positioning patterns could be reconstructed, which were not strictly linked to the pupils' level of content understanding. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between the positioning patterns of pupils with and without SEN-L, which could also be due to the comprehensive use of differentiated instruction methods in the respective lessons. In about half of the interviews, reaction patterns emerged that indicated superficially compliant participation in class but inward distancing.

Keywords: social and affective processes, psychodynamic theory, mixed methods, Inclusion, Germany

Introduction

Qualification, understood as desired subject knowledge and skills (Biesta, 2015, p. 77; 2023), has a twofold character (Crouzevialle, Darnon, 2019, p. 1262). On the one hand, it has the function of a lighthouse, as a legitimising argument, especially for public education, and as an individual goal to become well-educated. On the other hand, qualification's desirability entails its effect as an "institution", according to Searle (Maiwald, Suerig, 2020, p. 96): The meaning-generating power of qualification as a "constitutive rule" arises from the fact that one has to react to it – deliberately, by deciding in favour of or against education, and beyond one's own will by experiencing more or less success in becoming educated. Therefore, qualification as an institution not only drives communities' educational aspirations to higher levels but also fulfils the function of differentiating individuals for the continuance of complex societies (Fend, 1980).

While some find it relatively easy to follow the lesson, others may need to make more effort not to be left behind. Moreover, pupils with general learning difficulties can frequently only participate in inclusive lessons if differentiated instruction methods (Pozas, Schneider, 2019) are used or "extra educational support" (de Boer, Kuijper, 2021) is provided for them. Asking pupils, especially those struggling with learning problems, whether they feel well supported by their teachers leads to predominantly positive assessments (de Boer, Kuijper, 2021; Lindner, Alnahdi, Wahl, Schwab, 2019). In particular, pupils with general learning difficulties seem to benefit from the transnational reform toward inclusive schooling because they usually acquire higher skill levels in inclusive settings than in special schools (Krämer et al., 2021) – even if inclusive schooling, for them, is associated with stronger negative reference group effects concerning their academic self-concept and enjoyment of learning (Kocaj, Kuhl, Jansen, Pant, Stanat, 2018; Fleischmann, Hübner, Nagengast, Trautwein, 2023).

Remarkably, serious refusal to participate in class occurs rather seldom (Straehler-Pohl, Pais, 2014). Instead, it is the norm that pupils try to accomplish the tasks they are given (Martens, Asbrand, 2021). On the surface, describing pupils as "doing their 'job'" is often accurate (Breidenstein 2006; Jackson [1968] 1990). However, doing a job still does not save one from perceiving oneself during this. Particularly the condition that everyone is supposed to do 'the same job' in a learning group may evoke "reflexive positioning", i.e., "assigning positions to oneself" (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018, p. 81). Surprisingly little explorative research has been done on how pupils

deal with the content-based tasks in lessons and which attitudes are involved (Pollmanns, 2019; Colognesi, Gouin, 2022), especially concerning the comparison between curriculum accordantly taught pupils and those with special educational needs in learning (SEN-L) when educated in inclusive classrooms (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018, p. 90). This is where the present preliminary work comes in: first, to provide teachers with clues about less apparent types of pupil participation and, second, to close a bit of the gap between philosophical and psychological approaches in educational research (Gruschka, 2019; Biesta, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Relevant but also questionable: The "job" perspective

Teachers and pupils have to conduct specific tasks in the classroom. Even if it is a maxim of didactical practices that the contents of the lessons should be selected with an orientation towards real life and conveyed interestingly (e.g., Faircloth, 2012; Klafki, 1995), it is not necessarily the case that a class of pupils experiences the lessons as being attractive. Instead, boredom seems a regularly perceivable and perhaps even functional part of everyday teaching (Breidenstein, 2007; Mugon et al., 2019). Following Jackson, who talked about pupils having specific "jobs" to do – above all, "to behave in such a way as to enhance the likelihood of praise and reduce the likelihood of punishment" (Jackson, [1968] 1990, p. 26) –, Breidenstein argues that dealing with boredom is also part of the "pupil's job". For Breidenstein, doing jobs generally is characterised by "a proper amount of pragmatism, routine and a matter-of-course nature of what is done, which does not depend on any current and situational state of being motivated" (Breidenstein, 2006, p. 263, own translation). In accordance with this perspective, Martens and Asbrand (2021) have systematised findings from qualitative observational studies, ranging across primary and secondary classrooms as well as various subjects, on how pupils respond to the tasks set for them by their teachers. They found four types of pupil responses towards the requirement to work in class: (1.) "delivery of a task result", (2.) "participation in the lessons' performative staging", (3.) "knowledge reproduction" and (4.) "pupils' original subject-specific constructions" (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, pp. 64–67; own translations). The strength of Martens and Asbrand's systematisation stems from analysing both levels in their interdependence: the pupils' modes of dealing with the lessons' requirements and the teachers' choice of actions. For instance, while Type 1 seems to be associated with superficial instructional formats, such as filling in cloze texts on worksheets (Martens,

Asbrand, 2021, p. 64), Type 4 appears to be elicited when teachers focus less on the work formats but on the subject content and simultaneously express confidence in the pupils' capabilities to understand the subject matter (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, p. 67). As the overarching theme of the pupil's response types, Martens and Asbrand consider an "orientation towards the completion of tasks" (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, p. 56).

Although it may be in line with the common perceptions of classroom teaching, it is not a triviality that pupils in class generally try to complete the tasks given by their teachers. Strictly speaking, it must be seen as astonishing that most pupils – each with various characteristics, especially with varying competence levels and motivation – nonetheless try to accomplish the set tasks, seeing as their prospects of success are likely to differ considerably. However, systematic examinations of associations between observed ways of doing the "pupils' job" on the one hand and individual pupils' achievement and motivational characteristics on the other have been lacking so far. In addition, the "job" perspective assumes that every pupil is, at least to a certain degree, capable of affectively distancing themself from the lessons' requirements (Pollmanns, 2019, p. 69). In contrast to this assumption, based on analyses of interviews conducted with pupils after observed lessons, it was shown that not all pupils react with distancing strategies, such as consciously accomplishing only the bare minimum of what is necessary in class. Instead, there were also pupils with an attitude of taking the lessons' contents more seriously than the teachers did during the lessons, and moreover, even seemed to try and compensate for the teachers' lack of seriousness (e.g., Pollmanns, 2019, p. 511). Moreover, pupils with general learning difficulties (Krämer et al., 2021) and the respective repetitive experiences of failure could have less effective distancing strategies and thus be vulnerable to taking the lessons' requirements too seriously. So far, there has been no explicit research on these issues, even though they are practically relevant because schools worldwide increasingly try to work inclusively (Letzel-Alt, Pozas, 2023). It has not yet been sufficiently clarified which theoretical constructs and research methods can be considered promising for exploring this subject area.

A key challenge not only for inclusive teaching: Dealing with heterogeneity

Teachers are trained in their education and obliged to be aware of pupils' heterogeneity in their classes (e.g., Everitt, 2017; Schmitz, Simon, 2021). Since the school's most evident purpose is to transmit knowledge and skills to the next generation (Biesta, 2023), noticing the pupils' subject-related

learning prerequisites is crucial in providing them with the most appropriate learning opportunities to participate in content-related processes and to achieve their best possible learning outcomes (e.g., Simonsmeier, Flaig, Deiglmayr, Schalk, Schneider, 2022). Despite the importance currently attributed to the heterogeneity of learning prerequisites when it comes to lesson planning and teaching, quantitative estimates on the exact amount of heterogeneity classes display on average in terms of their subject achievement are scarce. According to her sample of German fifth- and seventh-grade classes across different school types, Scharenberg found that the achievement differences of individual pupils within a classroom in reading and mathematics are, on average, equivalent to between two and two and a half years of schooling (Scharenberg, 2012, pp. 162–166). In addition, in Germany, as in many other countries, the reform towards inclusive education has led to an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs being taught in regular classes, which now is possible at primary schools as well as in the different types of the secondary school system, i.e., basic vs academic track, or comprehensive (Pozas, Letzel, &Schneider, 2020, p. 219). Especially between the various German secondary schools, there are differences in inclusion rates (Steinmetz, Wrase, Helbig, Döttinger, 2021). However, concerning the most prevalent special educational need in Germany, namely in the area of learning (SEN-L) (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2022), it can be assumed that, except for schools in the academic track, statistically, one child with SEN-L is being taught in every school class (Kocaj et al., 2018, p. 67; Steinmetz et al., 2021). Like "moderate learning difficulties" (Norwich, Ylonen, Gwernan-Jones, 2014), SEN-L is an imprecise label. For Germany, it can be summarised that there are not only differences between the federal states' guidelines regarding diagnostics (Koßmann, 2020) but also associations between the probability of SEN-L being identified and contextual factors, such as the average achievement of the attended school classes or the proximity of the attended school to the next special education one (e.g., Kölm, Mahler, & Gresch, 2020; Ebenbeck, Rieser, Jungjohann, Gebhardt, 2022). These have so far been ignored in all local official diagnostic guidelines. Nonetheless, the central theme is that the pupils with ascribed SEN-L – despite extensive pedagogical efforts – show substantial learning gaps in several subjects compared to the curriculum-accordantly taught pupils in their classes, which correspond to a learning delay of two to three school years on average (Koßmann, 2020; Mähler, Grube, 2018). In a nutshell, pupils with SEN-L in inclusive education are often 'simply' the lowest-achieving pupils at the class level, for whom curricular adaptations can be made based on the SEN-L-label's ascription (Koßmann, 2020). Since the beginning of the 21st century, numerous findings have shown

that a broad range of teaching strategies explicitly constructed for pupils with SEN could not be seen as fundamentally different from those used for pupils without SEN (Davis & Florian, 2004, pp. 33–34). In particular, pupils with general learning difficulties, like SEN-L or moderate learning difficulties, do not require alternative curricular content and teaching strategies but adaptation of content to their subject-related learning prerequisites and higher-density teaching (Fletcher-Campbell, 2005, pp. 188–189; Norwich, Lewis, 2007; Koßmann, 2019). Accordingly, current studies show that using differentiated instruction methods is increasingly perceived as a general feature of quality teaching (e.g., Maulana, Smale-Jacobse, Helms-Lorenz, Chun, Lee, 2020).

Several studies provide evidence that teachers, in inclusive as well as in non-inclusive classrooms, regularly use differentiated instruction methods, such as tiered assignments and types of within-class grouping (Pozas, Schneider, 2019), to deal with the heterogeneity of subject-specific skills within their classes (e.g., Pozas, Palacios Tovar, Pozas Guerra, Rivera Armendariz, Lomelí Zubiría, 2023; Maulana, Smale-Jacobse, Helms-Lorenz, Chun, Lee, 2020; Pozas, Letzel, Lindner, Schwab, 2021; Pozas, Letzel, Schneider, 2020; Lindner et al., 2019). Differentiated instruction methods are associated with small to medium positive effects on learning outcomes (Smale-Jacobse, Meijer, Helms-Lorenz, Maulana, 2019; Deunk, Smale-Jacobse, de Boer, Doolaard, Bosker, 2018) as well as improvements in pupil well-being while at school and participation (Pozas et al., 2021). In particular, using differentiated instruction reduces adverse reference group effects on the lower-achieving pupils' academic self-concept (Roy, Guay, Valois, 2015). Nevertheless, "teaching to the middle of the class" (Fields, 1999, p. 12; see as well Labhart, Pool Maag, Moser Opitz, 2018, p. 82; Colognesi & Gouin, 2022) – or even to a level below the class average (Rieser, Decristan, 2023, pp. 10–11) – seems to be the standard orientation, whereas differentiated instruction methods are used as ancillary instruments (Labhart et al., 2018; Pozas et al., 2020). However, pupils, especially those with learning or behavioural problems, are generally positive about the additional support they receive inside or outside the classroom (Pozas et al., 2021), even if some of the learners consider the already adapted learning opportunities as not sufficiently meeting their needs (de Boer, Kuijper, 2021, p. 636).

What is going on beneath the surface when pupils do their "job"?

The pupil's "job" can be considered to be performed whenever behaviour can be observed among the pupils with "orientation towards the comple-

tion of tasks" (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, p. 56). In order to find out more about the attitudes towards the lessons' requirements associated with the superficially more or less successful pupil's "job" performance, one encounters a multitude of methodological research approaches and theoretical constructs. Frequently, surveys with questionnaires for self-report are utilised. The constructs employed here relate primarily to achievement goals (e.g., Senko, Tropiano, 2016) but also, among others, to academic coping (e.g., Skinner, Saxton, 2020; Sullivan, 2010). Concerning achievement goals, there are already numerous studies indicating mastery approach goals tend to be associated with higher learning gains, while all avoidance goals, such as performance-avoidance, are associated with negative impacts (Wirthwein, Sparfeldt, Pinquart, Wegerer, Steinmayr, 2013, p. 76). However, with a few exceptions (e.g., Köller, 2000), the causal relationships remain widely unclear (Wirthwein et al., 2013, p. 86). In addition, there are considerable variations in the operationalisation of performance goals in particular, which correlate with significant differences in learning success depending on whether they were defined as normative goals, i.e., aiming to outperform others, or as appearance goals, i.e., aiming to appear competent (Wirthwein et al., 2013). Nevertheless, with the categories of achievement goals as well as with the differentiation of academic coping strategies, elaborated constructs and instruments are available to assess favourable, but also less advantageous attitudes (e.g., Senko, Tropiano, 2016; Skinner, Saxton, 2020). Of particular note is the study by Schwab and Hessels (2015) in which an analysis sample of intellectually similar pupils showed, even after statistical control for a broad set of variables, a significant difference between the achievement goals of inclusively taught pupils with "developmental disorder of school achievement" (Schwab, Hessels, 2015, p. 465) and those without this SEN. They found the pupils without this SEN were more often mastery goal-oriented, and those with SEN, in tendency, performance avoidance-oriented. Thus, this difference can be interpreted as an effect of the label. However, Schwab and Hessels relativise their interpretation by pointing out "that differences in goal orientation exist between students with and without SEN. Further research should aim to find out why this is the case" (Schwab, Hessels, 2015, p. 471). Meanwhile, it can be considered well-proven that categorising a pupil with an SEN label negatively affects social and learning-related aspects of subjective well-being (Goldan et al., 2022). Nonetheless, Schwab and Hessels' statement points in a similar direction as the dilemma pointed out by Urdan and Kaplan that while theorems have become more precise, the perspective of this research on the complex field of classroom instruction has narrowed (Urdan, Kaplan, 2020, p. 9). The advantages of this type of research are obvious: large samples can be acquired, with clear

operationalisations, a broad range of variables and even multiple measurement points. In addition, questionnaire surveys result in lower tendencies to respond in a socially desirable way compared to, e.g., interviews (Paulhus, 2017). For explorative studies, however, predefined items are disadvantageous because they significantly limit opening up phenomena beyond the theorems and instruments used (Oevermann, Allert, Konau, & Krambeck, 1987; Maiwal, Suerig, 2020).

Contrary to a strict definition of coping (Sullivan, 2010, p. 114), it can be assumed that dealing with the requirements of school does not only take place through conscious strategies but also, according to the above-mentioned "job" perspective, with strategies that the pupils are not fully able or willing to make explicit or that even take hold unconsciously (Cramer, 2006; Paulhus, 2017). Tendencies to express oneself in a non-private context about school issues in a socially desirable way may strongly depend on the socially anchored ideals concerning school. Very few terms are as suitable for illustrating the gravity of such ideals as the German term "Bildung". It combines both the component of desirable knowledge and skills as well as the ability to think critically and autonomously (e.g., Sjöström et al. 2017). This combination is so unfavourable because, in its all-encompassing desirability, it conceptually offers no room to explore the deviations and detours that pupils in everyday lessons have to take if they do not already habitually fulfil the ideal and belong to the ranks of 'the good' within their concrete classes (Garner, Hancock, 2021, p. 165–167; Straehler-Pohl, Pais, 2014). Thus, assuming that education and teaching occur in schools to achieve the pupils' desired "formation" (Gruschka, 2019) is, above all, teleological. In contrast, an empirical concept of character formation also has to be open to the unintended effects that might occur against the background of teaching within schools. Compared to other terms, such as education or qualification (Biesta, 2015; Gruschka, 2019), "formation" has the advantage that – while a specific positive goal perspective is brought into the analytic process by thinking of school as its context – it does not already linguistically focus solely on what should be. In contrast to "habitus", which describes something persistent, a neutral term for temporary attitudes towards specific topics and social circumstances, thus being suitable for describing formation processes, is "positioning" (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018). In general, there are two central modes of positioning: self (or reflexive) positioning and positioning by others (Green, Brock, Baker, Harris, 2020, p. 122). An individual's identity concept can be reproduced or updated through situation-specific addressing and negotiations in the respective social settings as well as the individual's self-positioning by reflexive operations. Even if a position

can be consolidated through recurring acts in the social context (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018, p. 83), a specific position is not static (Green et al., 2020, p. 121). With regard to education, numerous studies already use this theoretical lens, especially on positioning in the context of gender issues, social status and multilingualism (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018). However, especially concerning the meaning of SEN, there still is a research gap that needs to be filled (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018, p. 90).

Even though positioning theory is an established lens for examining identity development in discursive practices (Green et al., 2020), it should be noted that there is often, at least implicitly, a focus on power relations. Particularly when scrutinising self-positioning, considering additional theorems could facilitate the systematic classification of the individual's perception processes. An appropriate complement to positioning theory and the topic of this study can be found in concepts based in psychoanalysis (Evans, Morgan, Tsatsaroni, 2006). In contrast to studies on academic coping, in which pupils are specifically asked how they would react to per definition problematic situations using fixed items (e.g., Skinner, Pitzer, Steele, 2013), here, the classroom situation is understood as continuously challenging; both in terms of content and behaviour. Challenges that, on the surface, might be seen as similar can arise for different reasons for various individuals. For example, boredom can arise from individually-felt overburdening as well as not feeling sufficiently challenged by tasks and thus result in entirely different situational perceptions and reactions (Breidenstein, 2007). Therefore, it is expected that empirically, a set of more or less advantageous positioning patterns can be reconstructed from observational data (Kayi-Aydar, Miller, 2018). Concepts of psychoanalytic defence mechanisms seem to be a particularly suitable theoretical starting point for exploring this spectrum (Di Giuseppe, Perry, 2021; Cramer, 2006; Baumeister, Dale, Sommer, 1998; Adorno, 1993). These mechanisms show similarities to the idea of coping (Silvermann, Aafjes-van Doorn, 2023; Cramer, 2006, p. 8; Skinner, Saxton, 2020), explicitly and systematically take unconscious processes into account and at the same time encompass an extensive range of unfavourable (less adaptive) to favourable (adaptive) attitudes to the demands of the outside world as well as the emotional reactions that go along with them (Di Giuseppe, Perry, 2021). With a view to the socially desirable idea of being well-educated, Adorno already derived three noteworthy patterns of attitudes from a loose collection of observations and with recourse to psychodynamic models. He outlines the pattern of the naïve individual who, "not fully domesticated" and due to a "lack of knowledge", would still be utterly receptive to cultural contents (Adorno, 1993, p. 24–25). Further-

more, there would be two types that have already come into contact with education, distinguishing between the pattern of the "pseudo-cultured", understood as "failed identification" with culture (Adorno, 1993, p. 23), and the type of the free individual, described as having refined their self in such a way that it converges with culture without disappearing as a distinct self (Adorno, 1993, p. 19, 27). The pseudo-cultured are assumed to act primarily strategically, despite all their knowledge and skills. For them, educational content would, above all, serve to present themselves as knowledgeable and secures their competitive success (Adorno, 1993, p. 33). Adorno attributes to the pseudo-cultured a defensive attitude going so far that hiding behind cultural goods ultimately entails an inability to experience (Adorno, 1993, p. 35). Unfractured cultivated individuals, in contrast, would act autonomously and be able to do so because they have the cultural content not only cognitive availably but affective accessible. They, therefore, neither need to permanently display their skills to feel superior (Adorno, 1993, p. 33) nor leave their knowledge undigested, like exclusive commodities have to be left untouched for the sake of exchange (Sohn-Rethel, 2019). The oppositeness of the essential purpose of cultivation and its instrumentalisation as cultural goods with a primarily competitive purpose is just as inherent in society as in school teaching (Urdan, Kaplan, 2020, p. 4). To ensure character formation in the context of classroom teaching proceeds in the desired direction, it is necessary to explore how pupils, especially those that differ considerably in achievement, react beneath the surface of compliant behaviour.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the main types of pupils' positioning towards the lessons' content-based requirements?

RQ2: Are there group differences in the positioning patterns between pupils with and without special educational needs in learning (SEN-L)?

RQ3: Is the extent to which a pupil comprehended the taught content associated with the positioning patterns?

Method

Context and Materials

After the research project's comprehensive examination and approval by the responsible school authority on the federal-state level, inclusive classes

from secondary schools with multiple educational tracks were selected for the study conducted in Germany. Participation in the study was voluntary for all participants. Informed consent was obtained from the pupils, their parents and from their teachers. In three inclusive classes, lessons in history, German (as the first language) and mathematics were videotaped. Differentiated instruction methods were used in all lessons, especially heterogeneous within-class grouping and tiered assignments (Pozas, Schneider, 2019; Koßmann, 2022a, in preparation). After the lessons, interviews with pupils were conducted on the lessons' content. Most of the data material – the videos, interviews and teaching materials – is already accessible for research and teaching purposes via the HILDE platform after registration.[1] The interviews were semi-structured and used Pollmann's guiding questions (Pollmanns, 2019, pp. 604–607), especially to have the pupils explain what and how they had learned in the previous lesson, e.g., "Please recount as precisely as possible what you did in the lesson! What was it about? What is its meaning?" (Pollmanns, 2019, p. 604, own translation). Even though the pupils were assured that the interviews would be pseudonymised and performance assessment by the teachers would not be allowed, the participants may have tried to present themselves well (or at least not unfavourably). The way the interviews were conducted allowed for more openness in the pupils' answers than if they were primarily asked about specific aspects of the teaching process or particular problems (e.g., Ableitinger, Anger, Dorner, 2022; de Boer, Kuijper, 2021). In this way, expectable answers could be kept to a minimum, and at the same time, the openness made it possible to reconstruct tendencies towards socially desirable verbal behaviour in the details.

Participants

The current analyses are based on 20 interview transcripts (8th grade: $n_{history}$ = 11; 6th grade: $n_{mathematics}$ = 5, n_{German} = 4), which stem from 10 pupils without SEN-L and six pupils with SEN-L. Interviews with the same persons included in the analysis sample were conducted after different lessons, thus referring to different contents. To achieve a comparable group size of cases, choosing one interview as the unit of analysis was necessary, especially concerning pupils with SEN-L because the percentage of pupils labelled with SEN-L in Germany is around 3% (Kultusministerkonferenz,

[1] The database can be accessed via *https://www.uni-hildesheim.de/celeb/projekte/fallarchiv-hilde/hildeonline-streaming-server/*. In particular, interviews from cases 128-135 were used. Only the interviews from the subject German are not yet stored on the platform.

2022). Due to the history class containing four pupils with SEN-L (Koßmann, 2022a), which was favourable for small-budget data collection, there is a preponderance of interviews after history lessons. Finally, the analysis sample consisted of eleven interviews with conventionally taught pupils ($n_{history}$ = 5, $n_{mathematics}$ = 3, n_{German} = 3) and 9 with pupils with SEN-L ($n_{history}$ = 6, $n_{mathematics}$ = 2, n_{German} = 1) over three subjects.

Data analysis

First, an in-depth analysis of four complete interviews (two pupils with and two without SEN-L) on one of the history lessons (Koßmann, 2022a) was conducted using Objective Hermeneutics (Oevermann et al., 1987; Wernet, 2013). This approach systematically supports the investigation of case structures as patterns of "tensions and contradictions of manifest and latent meaning" (Wernet, 2013, p. 245). Based on the line-by-line analyses (Maiwald, Suerig, 2020) of edited texts as well as fixed texts as precise records of interactions, the individual actors' logic of decision and justification concerning a specific practical challenge can be inferred.

> "Objective hermeneutics interpretations basically focus on what was said and not on what somebody might have wanted to say. […] Metaphorically speaking, objective hermeneutics treats every text sequence which shows a difference between intention and literal expression as a Freudian slip by never trying to normalize expressions to make them more familiar and therefore easier to interpret. Instead an interpretation always has to be grounded in the literal meaning of the text." (Wernet, 2013, p. 241)

What can be gained from such reconstructions of individual logic of decision and justification are empirically found reaction patterns in more abstract social challenges, such as the pupil's obligation to position themselves towards lessons' content-based requirements.

Based on the four case structure analyses, two coding schemes were developed: one nominal for the positioning pattern and one ordinal to assess content-related understanding. The scheme for positioning was extended by a fourth category due to theoretical considerations regarding types of "high adaptive defences" (Di Giuseppe, Perry, 2021, pp. 5–6): 'defensive distancing', 'offensive distancing', 'non-resistant engagement' and, derived from theory, 'reflected engagement' (see Table 1). The second scheme, with which the pupil's expressions were compared with the differentiated didactic ma-

terials used, consisted of a four-level assessment of content understanding from 'unrecognisable', 'fragmentary', 'reproduction' to 'understanding' (leaned on Anderson, Krathwol, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, 2014, pp. 64–76). The unit of analysis (or recording unit) for the coding procedure was the first part of each interview transcript, containing the pupil's initial and, therefore, less influenced recounting of the lesson's content (Mayring, 2014, p. 51). Coding for both categories was done for segments of a predefined size as the coding unit (every 20 transcript lines) (Eubanks, Lubitz, Muran, Safran, 2019, p. 311). Segments in which the interviewer spoke predominantly were treated as missing values. Per interview, codes could be assigned for, on average, eight segments ($M = 8$, $SD = 4.40$). Since pupils with SEN-L tended to make shorter utterances, there are differences in the average number of codable segments for these two groups ($M_1 = 7$, $SD_1 = 3.71$; $M_2 = 9$, $SD_2 = 4.68$). Examination of inter-coder reliability showed $\kappa = .63$. for positioning patterns and $\kappa_W = .61$ for content-related understanding, which points to at least fair to good reliability (Cicchetti, 1994, p. 286).

Table 1: Coding scheme for the positioning patterns

Positioning category and description	**Indicators**
1. Defensive distancing: Avoiding perception of the content	- Description of lesson formats instead of content, e.g.: "We didn't do any group work today.", "First, we worked on the blackboard; then we did a worksheet…" (No evaluation in this way if the previous interviewer's question explicitly asked about the work formats.) - Attempts at avoidance, e.g.: With short answers, long pauses in speech or portraying themselves as incapable
2: Offensive distancing: Strategies to show and perceive oneself as superior	- Attitude of being knowledgeable e.g.: "Sure, I still know that…", "Of course, this is…", also "Naturally…" - Treating the content as obvious, boring and not worthy of further discussion; also implicitly by using particles like "simply", "just", "anyway", e.g.: "We just did X.", "That's simply the way it is." - Excessive emphasis on how interesting and important the content was or how well (or poorly) the teacher taught it
3: Non-resistant engagement: Endeavoured task completion without primary interest in self-presentation	- Fluent expression in the everyday speech of not entirely precise, but not incorrect, content-related utterances - In contrast to offensive distancing: No pronounced expression of being knowledgeable - Open, but not self-derogatory, handling of passages in the lesson that one has not (yet) understood

4: Reflected engagement: Confident handling of the pupils' "job"	- Elaboration on content during the interview following own questions - Asking content questions frankly to the interviewer - Good-natured humour towards content and its presentation by the teacher - Explicit distinctions between crucial and non-crucial aspects concerning the content and task format demands - Description of emotional self-regulation processes during the lesson in dealing with the content and with task formats

Statistical Analyses

For each interview (N = 20), three values were set. The *performance level* was dichotomous, with curriculum accordant taught (n = 11) versus SEN-L (n = 9). The *positioning pattern* was determined by the mode of one of the four categories per interview. The *content-related understanding* was estimated by the median of the ratings per interview. Due to the sample size and the characteristics of the variables, nonparametric procedures (Fisher's Exact- and Kruskal Wallis H-Test) were performed to answer RQ2 and RQ3 (Corder, Foreman, 2009). Additionally, the nonparametric tests were again conducted without doubling among the participants to prevent erroneous conclusions. Reported here, however, are only the results which, as described, refer to the interview as the unit of analysis.

Results

Through the explorative analyses, the following latent meaning structures (Wernet, 2013) for cases[2] A to D could be found:

Case A

Alissa (SEN-L): 'Avoiding engagement with the content by recourse to content-independent working formats to be able to participate superficially'

Extracts from the interview:

I: What do you spontaneously think of the lesson you just had?
Alissa: Um (pause) well, we didn't do any group work. We got a sheet (pause) with a dialogue on it (pause).

[2] The transcripts (in German language) can be found under case number 131 in the HILDE-archive.

I: Aha, um, yes, tell me a little bit about it. […]
Alissa: Yes, we got a dialogue (pause).
I: Can you tell a little bit more about it?
Alissa: Um, it's about (pause) the peasants and so on so about (pause) about the mh uh thing, Middle Ages (Ln. 12-23)
I: Can you briefly explain what you were working on?
Alissa: Well, in the first picture, you had to mark um, um, like, um, what kind of problems they had um in year (pause) in so in France, and then you should write down the marked text in headwords. (Ln. 154-160)

Positioning pattern: Alissa could not sufficiently comprehend the lesson's content to report even fractions of it. Therefore, she tried to deny the content perceptually (Cramer, 2006, p. 46) or, at least, to treat it as secondary as possible. Complementary, she showed concrete expectations and a good understanding concerning content-indifferent forms of work and types of tasks. Participating in class in this way also could allow her to ‚look away' from being categorically assigned to the group within this class for which content-related didactic reduction is offered.

Case B

Franziska, (taught curriculum-accordantly): 'Disguise of content-related interest to avoid showing oneself as ignorant if something just was merely partly understood'

Extracts from the interview:

I: Can you spontaneously think of anything about the lesson?
Franziska: Um, yes, so we did the situation in France in the blackboard.
I: Mhm
Franziska: So the ((clicks tongue)) we have some headwords; we got a sheet, um
I: Mhm
Franziska: Where um where we made um headw- the um reasons
I: Mhm
Franziska: Why they, for example, don't have any money or something, pick out
I: Why they what?
Franziska: No money
I: Ah, have no money, mhm

Franziska: And um um how it is there, and then we wrote it down on the blackboard in headwords.
I: Mhm
Franziska: That was um um weak king, I think we wrote something about that.
I: Mhm, what's that about, with the weak king, why was he
Franziska: Um
I: Weak?
Franziska: Because he um, the taxes, so the taxes he had to pay, I think?
I: Mhm
Franziska: And ((clears throat)) he could not assert himself.
I: He had the taxes, so what do you mean, he had the taxes?
Franziska: Uh tax, um, ((clicks tongue)) no, right? That was there, what is that, taxes? Um, I think he has the, he should pay the taxes, or
I: He wanted the nobles to
Franziska: Yes
I: That they also
Franziska: Yes
I: Pay the taxes, yes
Franziska: Yes
I: But, did they do that?
Franziska: N-no because he
I: Hm yes
Franziska: Could not assert himself (Ln. 27-68)

Positioning pattern: Franziska engaged with the content but could not fully understand its inner coherence. At the same time, she showed an attitude of not asserting her own emerging questions. For example, she did not ask the question about taxes in class, which is essential for the overall understanding of the content, but only in the interview, and quickly dropped it. She did her "job" as pupil by being attentive and fulfilling work assignments. At the same time, she seemed "dissociated" (Di Giuseppe, Perry, 2021, p. 9) from her spontaneous content-related interest while fulfilling her "job", although school should be the place to get answers to content-related questions. The risk of openly showing herself lacking knowledge when asking something was deemed too costly compared to the potential gain of a more profound understanding of the content.

Case C

Armin, (taught curriculum-accordantly): 'Trying to present oneself as

knowledgeable by expressing the contents as given facts and not worthy of further consideration'

Extracts from the interview:

Armin: Uh, the topic of the lesson was uh simply Ludwig uh the Fourteenth respectively Ludwig the Sixteenth. (Ln. 17-18)

Armin: So, of course, I think of money, uh Ludwig the fourteenth uh, uh pillars of the uh, uh I have now uh forgotten the names, uh so these pillars these four pillars. (Ln. 22-24)

Armin: Mh, mh, yes, so of course, I learned something new, but uh, I, I'm honest now so, I, I, I'm just not that interested in it.

I: Hmhm, yes

Armin: Yes, but apart from that, I, I, I don't have the impression that I have learned something new, but I know I have learned something new.

I: Hmhm, yes, OK, um, you just said you are not interested in that. Is there nothing about this topic that interests you?

Armin: So school in general, so

I: Oh ((laughs))

Armin: I think most pupils feel this way. […]

I: OK, hmhm, yes, but you still just said that you learned something new. What was that?

Armin: Yes, I know that. Ah, yes, that for example now, um yesterday was also like that, so we had Christoph Columbus before.

I: Hmhm, yes.

Armin: Yesterday I watched Big Bang Theory and um with my brother.

I: Hmhm, yes

Armin: And they also talked about the man who actually wanted to go to India and then found America, and I also mentioned that.

I: Hmhm, yes

Armin: In front of my brother, that this is Christoph Columbus

I: Hmhm, yes

Armin: Yes, and that's how I know that I'm learning something new. (Ln. 372-406)

Positioning pattern: From Armin's perspective, the school provides – in the best case – those fragments of knowledge with which one can present oneself as well-educated. School is thus experienced as rather boring, which, according to him, would be seen by most pupils that way. With this argumentation, Armin acted projectively according to the pattern of the false

consensus effect (Baumeister et al., 1998, p. 1090; Cramer, 2006, pp. 70–74). The attitude that the whole world would feel this way is used as a distractor. This allows Armin to avoid thinking about what among the things that have to be learned might actually be relevant to him. He seemed to be chasing recognition, being perceived as educated. Consistently with the fact that Armin dislikes school, he deems himself under pressure to conform and sees himself "persecuted" by the others, or rather, his idea of the others (Adorno, 1993, p. 34).

Case D

Arif, (SEN-L): 'Relating to content without pressure for perfection and self-portrayal, but thereby swimming in the flood of information'

Extracts from the interview:

I: What do you spontaneously remember about the lesson you just had?

Arif: Um, we were talking about peasants and nobles and about Ludwig the Fourteenth.

I: Um, what's that about?

Arif: Um, that (pause) uh (pause), uh, that the peasants and uh, um, and the, uh, peasant, fourth, the fourth estate and then third, uh, had to pay taxes, so, had to pay taxes, and the, first and second estate didn't.

I: And can you tell a bit more about that?

Arif: Uh the, uh, the peasants, they worked, and, uh, they didn't get much money either, and they had to pay half of it, (pause) because of taxes, and, uh, they became poorer and poorer, and the rich got richer and richer, and, uh, (pause) uh, ((clicks tongue)) (pause) and, um (pause) and after that, uh, that's how it was and then also always, uh, after that, uh, is then always further, after that it was, was, uh, it got, so to speak ((stutters)), died? After that, uh, another one came, I don't know his name, and after that, uh, when he died, another one came, then Ludwig the Sixteenth, (pause) and um, who so, uh (pause) who so um, ((clicks tongue)) uh, no, the peasants and so, uh, then refused, so, they said, uh, so what's going on? Uh, they still had to pay taxes and fought with them. Uh, civil war, (pause) yes, something like that. (Ln. 8-34)

Positioning pattern: Arif engaged with the lesson's content, even if he could only convey it with vague heuristics ("four estates") and commonplaces ("they

became poorer and poorer, and the rich became richer and richer"). With his (given the SEN-L status) relatively extensive and fluent expression, as well as his reference to the approximate nature of his explanations ("yes, something like that"), he indicated that with this attitude, he worked along in class: thinking about the subject without pretensions to perfection and exaggerated self-presentation. He may have been swimming in an information flood offered to him during the lesson, but without fear and in the right direction (corresponding to developmental identification Cramer, 2006, p. 95).

Systematisation

Case structures A and B were merged into the positioning pattern 'defensive distancing'. Case structure C formed the basis for the category 'offensive distancing' and case structure D for 'non-resistant engagement' (see Table 1). None of the interviews from the analysis sample could be comprehensively assigned to the theoretically derived category 'reflected engagement'. The following table provides an overview of the frequency with which categories one to three occurred.

Table 2: Types and frequencies of positioning patterns (N = 20)

	Positioning patterns per interview			
	Defensive distancing	**Offensive distancing**	**Non-resistant engagement**	**Row total**
curriculum accordant taught	3	3	5	11
SEN-L	2	1	6	9
Column total	5	4	11	20

Concerning the analysis sample, the pattern 'non-resistant engagement' was found most frequently. However, there were also five reactions to lessons according to the pattern of 'defensive distancing' and four according to the pattern of 'offensive distancing'. Moreover, the Fisher exact test was not statistically significant (p = .72, Cramer's V = .24), indicating no group differences in the positioning patterns between pupils with and without SEN-L.

The link between the *positioning pattern* and *content-related understanding* was tested with a Kruskal-Wallis test. This test did not reveal a significant difference in content-related understanding between the three groups (defensive distancing, Mdn = 2; offensive distancing, Mdn = 3; non-resistant engagement, Mdn = 3), $H(2) = 5.20$, p = .07, η^2 = .19.

Discussion

On the one hand, the results align with Martens and Asbrand's statement that the pupils work with an "orientation towards the completion of tasks" (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, p. 56). In about half of the interviews, the pupils tried to understand the content of the lessons in a rather unexcited and sufficiently interested manner – according to the pattern 'non-resistant engagement' (corresponding to the concept of developmental identification; Cramer, 2006, p. 95). On the other hand, the remaining interviews indicated that the pupils may be doing their "job", but beneath this surface, they had specific strategies and attitudes to avoid dealing with the content despite compliant behaviours. Two patterns could be distinguished here. The pattern 'defensive distancing' can be described as the attempt (in the interview) to avoid dealing with the content by focussing on the work formats, i.e., trying to deny more or less the existence of the content (Cramer, 2006, p. 46). This pattern could correspond to lesson observations on which Martens and Asbrand based their Type 1, "delivery of a task result" (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, p. 64). In contrast, the pupils tried to present themselves in the interview as open to the content when they engaged in 'offensive distancing'. However, at the same time, they performatively distanced themselves from lessons' content by internalising it as a collection of isolated factoids and reproduced it more or less eloquently as a neutral-in-meaning accumulation of knowledge and skills (Adorno, 1993). Especially this pattern observed in the interviews is beyond the types described by Asbrand and Martens because it is conceivable as an attitude behind their Types 2, 3, and even 4 (Martens, Asbrand, 2021, pp. 65–68). Moreover, no interviews could be identified in which the pupils predominantly dealt in a superior distance with their "job". Reasons for this may be the small sample and the fact that it did not include any pupils from the secondary school academic track. Furthermore, contrary to what Schwab and Hessels (2015) found for goal orientations, differences in positioning towards the lesson's content-based requirements between pupils with and without SEN-L did not appear to be fundamental. However, the small sample size must be considered when interpreting the results. Given the medium effect size found here (Sedlmeier, Renkewitz, 2018, p. 566), it is expectable that the difference between pupils with and without SEN-L would become significant with a larger sample size (Sedlmeier & Renkewitz, 2018, p. 558). A look at the descriptive results, especially within the two categories, 'offensive distancing' and 'non-resistant engagement' (Table 2), allows cautious conclusions to be drawn. For one thing, the comparatively high number of cases in which pupils with SEN-L positioned themselves with 'non-resistant engagement' to the previous les-

sons' content-based requirements is remarkable. In line with findings from Pozas et al. (2021), this could be because differentiated instruction methods were used comprehensively in all lessons, after which the interviews were conducted, ensuring that the various pupils had a good chance of participating (Koßmann, 2022a, in preparation). It is also worth noting that positioning according to the 'offensive distancing' pattern was found in comparatively more cases of pupils without SEN-L. This aligns with expectations because the strategic presentation of interest requires a degree of sovereignty in dealing with the content and sufficiently high cognitive abilities. Since pupils with SEN-L, at least on average, have lower content-specific competencies and tend to have lower cognitive abilities (Koßmann, 2020), it seems that their possibilities to distance themselves from the "pupil's job" are limited. This makes it even more critical to use differentiated instruction methods for this group of pupils to encourage participation – instead of risking their withdrawal by means of 'defensive distancing'.

Overall, one limitation of the present study is the small sample, combined with its characteristic that no contrast could be made with interviews after lessons in which no or less differentiated instruction methods were used. Second, collecting a set of characteristics at the classroom and pupil levels would generally be necessary. Especially an assessment of subject-specific performance using standardised tests seems required (Schwab, Hessels, 2015, p. 470; Pozas et al., 2021, p. 7). Furthermore, the findings on positioning patterns should be transferred into a questionnaire, which must be validated. The first collection of items derived from the present study is already freely accessible (Koßmann, 2022b). Such advanced investigations of the extent to which differences in subject-specific achievement are associated with the positioning patterns and other variables (e.g., average class performance and use of differentiated instruction) could be illuminating. It is indispensable to continue examining how features of teaching and characteristics of the classroom context, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, behavioural and perceptual patterns of pupils are related to each other (following e. g. Atlay, Tieben, Hillmert, Fauth, 2019; Kocaj et al., 2018; Stäbler, Dumont, Becker, Baumert, 2017). Furthermore, it should be investigated how self-positioning patterns vary over time depending on individual and classroom characteristics. Such longitudinal studies – in particular, considering the increasing relevance of high-quality inclusive teaching – could provide important insights into the interaction of individual as well as school factors with a view to identity development (e.g., Kaplan, Flum, 2012).

Opening the term "formation" to include also less desirable but empiri-

cally discoverable patterns – i.e., extending its traditional exclusive focus on the welcomed manifestations of character-formation (Gruschka, 2019) – is not only contemporary (e.g., Skinner and Saxton 2020) but necessary to further understand how "qualification" and "socialisation" go hand in hand during teaching and learning in classrooms (Biesta, 2020). Considering psychodynamically grounded theory and findings (Adorno, 1993; Baumeister et al., 1998; Cramer, 2006; Di Giuseppe, Perry, 2021) regarding pupils' behavioural and perceptual patterns seems promising. Therefore, this could provide a sustainable link between psychological and philosophical concepts for educational research. However, follow-up research is needed until theoretically plausible concepts such as "subjectification" (Biesta, 2020) have been made sufficiently empirically accessible and thus soundly applicable.

Since Jackson's ([1968] 1990) observations at the latest, not only practitioners know, but also scientists considered the strategic behaviour of pupils to be rather expectable than abnormal. The compilation of indicators on positioning patterns – especially concerning borderline ones, which contradict the intentions of teaching – should nevertheless be insightful for practice (see Table 1). For example, adaptations, additional media, or personal support may be necessary if pupils attempt to take refuge in the task formats instead of engaging with the content. For those presenting themselves as more interested in the content than they actually are, temporarily deconstructing some of 'the given facts' could be conducive to promote frankness of experience and vivid judgement of content.

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