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Governing citizenship for students with learning disabilities in everyday vocational education and training

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Abstract

In recent decades, disability policy programmes and conventions have been underlining how improving educational opportunities, especially for post-compulsory education, improve the employability and independence of disabled people, and thus their position in society and as citizens. However, little attention has been paid to actual educational practices and how they relate to these policy objectives. This article focuses on post-compulsory education for students with learning disabilities in Finland, more precisely on a vocational training programme called Preparatory Education for Work and Independent Living (PEWIL). In our ethnographic study of the programme, we scrutinise how daily educational practices govern citizenship for its students. We argue that even though these students are perceived as 'trainable' mainly in sheltered work and as only able to live in an institutionalised setting – thus reproducing their marginalisation – they have internalised the idea of a neoliberal labour market citizen with an emphasis on independence and employability.

Keywords: Vocational education and training; learning disabilities; citizenship; ethnography; governmentality

Points of interest

- The subject of this article is a vocational education and training programme for young people with learning disabilities. The aim of the programme is to give students skills for working and independent living in mainstream society.
- We are interested in how citizenship is understood on the programme.
- The first author participated in the everyday life of the programme and interviewed students.
- We found that the programme prepares students to work in sheltered workshops and to live in group homes.
- In interviews, the students said they want to have regular paid jobs and live independently in their own flats.

Introduction

In recent decades, the main objective of international and national disability policies has been to improve the social position of disabled people and guarantee their equal rights to participate in society as citizens (UN 2006; European Commission 2010; MSAH 2010; cf. Kauppila, Kinnari, and Niemi 2018). These policies have systematically focused on education as one of the key means to reach this objective, based on the view that improving educational opportunities, especially in post-compulsory education, will make disabled people more employable and independent (see Kauppila, Mietola, and Niemi 2018). In Finland, the context of our discussion, legislation passed in the late 1990s guarantees every person with learning disabilities the right to post-compulsory education in the general education system (Vocational Education and Training Act 630/1998; cf. Kauppila, Mietola, and Niemi 2018). Therefore, nearly all young people with learning disabilities are in post-compulsory education, and the overall education level of people in this group has been improving in Finland as a result (Sjöblom 2016).

Despite these improvements, people with learning disabilities still are in a different social position from the rest of the population in Finland. Overall, experienced poverty is typical in households with one or more members with a disability (Vesala, Teittinen, and Kaikkonen 2014). Furthermore, despite the emphasis on community care since the 1970s, people with learning disabilities commonly live in residential settings (Pitkänen, Huotari, and Törmä 2018), most typically in a group home located in a cluster of group homes (see Mietola, Teittinen & Vesala 2013). This is in stark contradiction with the policy emphasis on independent living. Similarly, in terms of employment, only approximately 3–4% of people with learning disabilities – who are using intellectual disability services (sic) – are employed on the open labour market (Vesala, Klem, and Ahlstén 2015; cf. Act on Intellectual Disabilities 519/1977). Instead, most people with learning disabilities work in sheltered workshops and other non-paid supported employment settings or participate in other day activities (FAIDD 2020). All of these settings are organised by or in a collaboration with social services. In sheltered workshops and supported employment settings, the ‘reimbursement’ is commonly around five euros per working day, up to a maximum of 12 euros (Act on Intellectual Disabilities 519/1977). Therefore, people with learning disabilities typically receive income from social benefits, such as a disability pension (see Vesala et al. 2015; Vesala et al. 2014).

In this context, we focus on the post-compulsory education provided for students who have been ‘assessed’ as not (yet) able to participate in vocational education and training. Using ethnographic data from a vocational college for people with special educational needs, we analyse how educational and social position is constituted in educational and institutional practices for students with learning disabilities, and how the students experience these practices. To do this, we use the concept of citizenship, understood as a tool for governing subjects in a specific context (Mitchell 2016).

The article is a contribution to the scholarly debate on the transitions and social position of young people with learning disabilities (e.g. Burch 2018; Hughes 2015;

Snyder & Mitchell 2010). We argue that everyday educational practices do not meet the disability policy objectives of independence and participation in society, including work. Drawing on theorisation of governmentality (see Foucault 1988; 2009) as an analytical approach, we highlight how students are governed in everyday educational practices, and how they perceive themselves within these practices. First, we describe the Finnish post-compulsory education system from the perspective of students with learning disabilities.

Post-compulsory education for students with learning disabilities in Finland

In Finland, the post-compulsory education system is divided into two streams: (1) academic general upper secondary education, and (2) vocational education and training. Within this system, unlike in other Nordic countries, students with learning disabilities have post-compulsory education options, but only in the vocational education and training sector. These students have the opportunity to participate in either a) vocational education and training (VET), b) preparatory education for vocational training (PEVT) or c) preparatory education for work and independent living (PEWIL) (cf. Kauppila, Mietola, and Niemi 2018). All these programmes follow the Vocational Education and Training Act (531/2017), but their objectives vary: VET programmes lead to vocational qualifications, whereas PEVT and PEWIL are aimed at students who are seen as unable to cope with vocational education, either at present or at all. However, all these three programmes have adjusted objectives, and the vocational qualifications they lead to are rarely recognised on labour markets (Hakala, Mietola, and Teittinen 2013). The focus of this article is on the PEWIL programme.

Although the PEWIL programme is organised within the vocational education and training system, it differs from VET and PEVT in two ways. Firstly, PEWIL is primarily delivered as an individualised study programme designed for students who ‘cannot manage VET due to their health condition or disability’ (Vocational Education and Training Act 531/2017). Secondly, in accordance with the Constitution of Finland, its societal function is to guarantee a post-compulsory education option for students who are seen as unable to cope with VET (Kauppila, Mietola, and Niemi 2018). Therefore, the primary objective is not to prepare students to continue in education but to prepare them for ‘independent living’ and ‘work’. However, studying in PEWIL does not automatically stop students from qualifying for other educational programmes and in some (exceptional) cases it is possible for a student to continue to vocational education. The PEWIL programme lasts one to three (usually two) years and is always organised as special education (Vocational Education and Training Act 531/2017; FNAE 2015; 2018).

PEWIL students follow their individual education plan – since 2017 called a personal competence development plan – which defines their individual educational aims in relation to the objectives of the national PEWIL curriculum (FNAE 2015; 2018). Each student’s individual education plan is closely linked to their service plan, which is a long-term plan for organising social and disability services for a person with learning disabilities (Disability Services Act 380/1987; Act on Intellectual Disabilities 519/1977).

Therefore, education is organised in close collaboration with social and disability services (FNAE 2015; 2018). Vocational special education colleges are primarily responsible for organising PEWIL education. Due their historical background in social care and ‘poor relief’, some of the vocational special education colleges are still in somewhat remote locations in a boarding school style, with students living in residential accommodation on weekdays (see Hakala et al. 2013).

Governmentality of citizenship in vocational education and training

We consider citizenship a historical process that helps constitute and govern subjects in a specific context (Mitchell 2016). In order to analyse how citizenship is constituted and how students are governed in the everyday educational practices within the PEWIL programme, we base our theoretical and analytical framework on Michel Foucault’s (1988; 2009) conceptualisation of *governmentality*.

According to Foucault (1988), governmentality refers to the contact between the *technologies of power* and *the self*. Within this framework, *technologies of power* refer to practices that ‘determine the conduct of individuals, submit them to certain ends or domination and an objectivizing of the subjects’ (Foucault, 1988, p. 18; cf. Foucault, 2009). *Technologies of the self*, in turn, are practices that ‘permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being’ (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). These technologies, together with rationalities, form networks for exercising power, and in these networks, we learn to govern the conduct of others and of ourselves: the conduct of conduct (Foucault 2009). Therefore, governmentality concerns the processes and practices of exercising power and governing individuals’ conduct and their freedoms in legitimate ways, in different networks of technologies and rationalities in advanced liberal societies (Foucault, 2009; Rose, 1999). Within this framework, we focus on how PEWIL students are governed in the everyday practices of their education as citizens, and on how they perceive themselves within these practices.

Whereas technologies refer to methods and procedures for governing individuals (Behrent, 2013), rationalities, and especially political rationalities, refer to the ways of reasoning, reshaping and responding to particular societal situations in order to legitimise specific practices and techniques for governing individuals’ freedoms (Foucault 2000; Rose 1999). According to Nikolas Rose (1999, 26–27), political rationalities have a distinctive moral form, an epistemological character and a distinctive idiom or language. Therefore, governmentality is associated with knowledge, power and truth. This means that every society has its regimes of truth that reflect a moral vision of that society, and there is a constant ‘battle around the truth’ (Foucault 1980). Taking this perspective, we understand that the objectives and practices of vocational special education and training and PEWIL are the results of battles around the truth regulated by political rationalities. Moreover, the forms of governing that the students are subjected to on the PEWIL

programme, and how they form expectations of themselves as a result, present and produce a moral vision of our societies.

In this analytical context, we focus on welfare, i.e. social liberal and neoliberal rationalities, because PEWIL is organised in close collaboration with social services. The ways of reasoning, constructing and governing individuals' freedom vary in these two administrative domains. Although the Finnish education system has strong roots in the ideology of the welfare state, a major shift to neoliberal reasoning has taken place in recent decades, in resonance with other Nordic countries (e.g. Beach, Gordon, and Lahelma 2003). By neoliberalism, we refer to a historically formed reasoning in which economic calculative practices of the economy and the state constitute autonomous and self-sufficient subjects whose success and failure ultimately lie in their own hands (England and Ward 2016). According to neoliberal reasoning, freedom is construed and governed by political and economic thinking, prioritising the state's task to promote the functioning of individuals in the free market economy, that is, the entrepreneur-self (see Simons and Masschelein 2015; Rose 1999). This reasoning generates a more individualised, responsibility-based idea of citizenship, which has had a particular influence on young people whose future prospects are under negotiation (Aapola, Gonick, and Harris 2005, 170). Moreover, economic responsibility predominantly requires employment, and neoliberal argumentation emphasises participation in the labour market regardless of whether this is economically or socially rewarding for the individual (Soldatic 2018).

Although a similar tendency is also evident in disability policy, the social services regime has a more ambivalent relationship with neoliberal reasoning, as it is simultaneously influenced by social liberal reasoning (see Kauppila, Kinnari, and Niemi 2018; Morris 2011; also Helén 2016). According to this reasoning, the subject's freedom is governed through society (see Rose 1999). Therefore, political authorities, professionals and the state are primarily responsible for overseeing societal order, which includes citizens' wellbeing, economic productivity and social participation, in the sense of a welfare state based on a social liberal rationality (see Rose, 1999; Simons & Masschelein, 2015). By focusing on social liberal and neoliberal forms of reasoning, we analyse the tensions in the PEWIL programme, which is located in the intersection of these two regimes of truth and administrative domains.

From the perspective of governmentality, education is an institutionalised way of forming and governing subjects' citizenship (Mitchell 2016). The primary objective of Finnish vocational post-compulsory education is to educate a blue-collar workforce for the needs of the market and train subjects to operate within the market (see Brunila, Lahelma, Hakala, and Teittinen, 2013). Therefore, we approach PEWIL as an assemblage of technologies that are designed to shape and regulate the conduct of students defined as having learning disabilities, through various practices and techniques shaped by the objectives set for it. Within this context, we understand the vocational special education college as a disciplinary institution shaped by various formal and informal daily activities, rules and regulations, i.e. governing techniques (see Foucault 1995).

Ethnographic dataset and principles of analysis

We analyse everyday practices on the PEWIL programme using an ethnographic dataset produced by the first author in a vocational special education college in southern Finland during the academic year 2015–2016. This dataset is based on 37 days of fieldwork and includes field notes on participant observations and informal conversations with students, teachers and other staff; recorded and transcribed interviews; and steering documents concerning PEWIL. During the fieldwork, the first author followed the everyday education of two PEWIL groups. Altogether 13 students (six in one group and seven in the other), two teachers (one in both groups), four assistant teachers (two in both groups), one personal assistant and one interpreter participated in everyday educational practices on the programme. In this vocational special education college, roughly half of the students were weekly boarders and the other half were local day students. Hence, the fieldwork was not limited to daily educational activities. Instead, the aim was to explore how the whole college functioned in terms of its educational and societal aims. Therefore, the themes of the interviews were based on the objectives presented in the PEWIL curriculum¹ – especially ‘work’ and ‘independent living’ – and were discussed in relation to daily educational activities.

Since the ethnographic data was generated in an educational context that operates in close collaboration with the health care and social services system, approval was sought from the University of Helsinki Ethical Review Board in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences. Written research consent was obtained first from the relevant institutional stakeholders and then from the participants. The parents of underage students were informed. In order to secure the participants’ privacy, all names have been changed. Besides adhering to the above ‘procedural ethics’, during the fieldwork special attention was paid to ‘ethics-in-practice’ (see Renold, Holland, Ross, and Hillman 2008). This meant that the researcher and participants continuously reflected on ethical questions during the fieldwork. Therefore, the concept of informed consent was approached holistically (Mietola, Miettinen, and Vehmas 2017): voluntary participation and anonymity were repeatedly discussed with the students. Interviews were carried out at the end of fieldwork when the students knew the researcher; again at this point, the interviewer stressed that participation was voluntary. Additionally, during the interviews the interviewer sought to be sensitive to indirect expressions of willingness to participate, such as bodily expressions of being (un)comfortable about being interviewed in general or on specific topics.

¹ Due the multiple reforms of VET in Finland between 2015 and 2018, the term ‘curriculum’ was replaced with ‘qualification requirements’ or ‘education requirements’ in the context of VET and PEWIL in 2015 (see Vocational Education and Training Act 531/2017; 630/1998). However, as neither of these terms are commonly used anywhere else except Finland, we use the term ‘curriculum’ in this text.

We analysed the data collaboratively, using the ‘analysis through discussion’ approach (Gordon et al. 2006; Lahelma, Lappalainen, and Mietola 2014). The analysis included two phases. During the first phase, the first author read through the data gathered during their own fieldwork and selected excerpts related to living and working for joint analysis. Next, all authors read the steering documents, field notes and anonymised interviews side by side. Then we discussed these extracts. As a result of our first joint reading, we noticed a contradiction between the students’ future prospects for ‘work’ and ‘independent living’ and the everyday practices and objectives of PEWIL. During the second phase of the analysis, we chose five interviews for closer reading, in which students illustratively reflected on their current situation and future prospects in terms of education, work and living circumstances. These five interviews were read in relation to the field notes concerning everyday educational practices and objectives presented in the curriculum. During this phase, our analytical questions focused on how everyday education constructs concepts of ‘work’ and ‘independent living’, and how the students perceived these concepts in their own lives. Through these questions, we analysed how governing functions within institutional and everyday practices in relation to the social purpose of the PEWIL programme (see Dubois, 2015).

Governing marginal future work prospects

The aim is that a student gains competences for work by familiarising themselves with various work tasks, discovers ways of working that suit their abilities, and identifies a suitable job. A student works in as authentic a work environment as possible, training themselves for work and conducting work tasks. The student knows how to follow the guidelines of the work community. The student utilises the forms of support that suit their needs in order to gain employment. (FNAE 2015², p. 6; cf. FNAE 2018, authors’ translation)

The previous curriculum excerpt frames how participating in ‘work’ is one of the main objectives of the PEWIL programme. In relation to these objectives, two different and intertwined aims are set for the training, which govern it in everyday practice. Firstly, students should become aware of their own abilities, and according to these, ‘find’ a way of working. Secondly, students should learn to ‘follow the guidelines’ of the work community, that is, the correct *worker’s morality* (see Foucault 1988). These two aims direct governing to modify students’ selves, so that they ‘learn’ to understand how their abilities restrict their employability.

In everyday education, these objectives were carried out through ‘work’ training, which was organised in two ways: students had both longer periods of individual on-the-job training and workplace training with their class as part of daily educational practices.

² The 2015 curriculum was valid when the fieldwork was being conducted. The aims of the current curriculum are nearly the same (see FNAE 2018).

Individual on-the-job training usually lasted from a few days to a few weeks and it was commonly organised in a sheltered workshop in the student's municipality. However, the individual on-the-job training was occasionally organised at the college. In these cases, the students usually worked as cleaners or janitors' assistants. The type of work training each student received depended on their individual educational plan, service plan, and phase of their studies. Workplace training as part of daily education commonly took place on Wednesdays. It was organised at the school or on commercial premises such as the warehouse of a wholesale company or a grocery store that had on-the-job training contracts with the college. As compensation for the latter 'work training', the classes received things like money for organising field trips, or goodies.

The work tasks in these training contexts varied from cleaning to other duties. For example, in the warehouse of a wholesale company approximately half an hour's drive from the college, the students organised and prepared products for sale. They carried out these tasks in a corner of the warehouse, usually two to three students at a time. During work at the warehouse, the students received coffee and buns, which one teacher described as 'wages' (field notes, spring 2016). Mike, who was a first-year student and lived in the school accommodation, reflected on the training and common work tasks in the warehouse as follows.

Interviewer: What have you done there [in the warehouse]?

Mike: I've mainly put Finnish language instructions on food packets.

Interviewer: Have you enjoyed it?

Mike: Yes.

Mike's description of the training at the warehouse demonstrates the kind of work duties PEWIL prepares students for. Mike's answer that he liked the work at the warehouse was similar to the other students' responses when they spoke about 'work training' in the interviews and during the fieldwork. However, when the conversation turned to future prospects, Mike did not appear to want to do these or similar work tasks in the future.

Interviewer: If you could choose, would you rather work at the warehouse or in logistics or catering?

Mike: Maybe logistics.

In this excerpt, Mike explicitly expressed his interest in other study and work opportunities than the one he was being trained for. However, despite being uninterested in the work in the warehouse, Mike adjusted to his limited work and study options. In the guidance Mike received, vocational studies in logistics or catering had been suggested as his only possible options (cf. Niemi & Kurki 2014) besides sheltered work. In these everyday educational practices, governing concentrates on modifying students to internalise the kind of work society sees as suiting their abilities and to acknowledge their limited work and study opportunities.

A similar logic can be seen in the future working prospects designed for Jenny, who lived in her childhood home and was in her second and final year in PEWIL at the time of the interview. During her studies, she had participated in one- to two-week individual on-the-job training sessions in a sheltered workshop in her municipality, and the plan for her was to start working in the same workshop. In the discussion about her on-the-job training, Jenny highlighted how her ability to manage work tasks had been assessed as improved.

Interviewer: What did they say to you in the assessment?

Jenny: Well, they said that I've done really well there [on-the-job training].

Interviewer: Who said that?

Jenny: Err, I've, like developed from last autumn, I was there then too.

Interviewer: Okay. How have you developed?

Jenny: I didn't say no to everything anymore, I've started to do what they tell me to do.

The way in which Jenny described her progress in on-the-job training illustrates the kind of expectations the daily educational practices set for her as a 'worker'. In this training, the assessment functions as a governing technique directed to modify her attitude towards work, producing the right kind of worker's morality (see Koski 2009). In the PEWIL context, the correct morality includes humility and taking responsibility, that is, a worker carries out their assigned work tasks without questioning them, as Jenny described.

In a similar vein Nick, who was also in his second and final year in PEWIL and whose future plans were to continue in vocational education and training or in a sheltered workshop in his municipality, described his on-the-job training as a cleaner's assistant at the college. During his studies, Nick had done this kind of on-the-job training multiple times and he described how he could work as a cleaner's assistant in the future because of the good assessments he had received during the training.

Interviewer: When you're working, are there some duties you're really good at?

Nick: Cleaning and shelving.

Interviewer: Why are you good at them?

Nick: Cleaning and shelving, I get good assessment results.

Interviewer: Have you seen your assessment? Have you had many assessments?

Nick: Yes, or at least the (college's) cleaner said that I've done well in my cleaning duties.

Interviewer: Who did they (cleaner) say that to? To you?

Nick: To me.

Interviewer: Did they write some [assessment]?

Nick: No, but they said it last autumn when I was working with them. They said that this is going to be your job then.

The way in which Nick described his strengths demonstrates how assessment modifies the students' future prospects and selves. As in the previous example, Nick also framed

his options for future work according to the assessments he received during his on-the-job training. From the perspective of governmentality, the PEWIL regime governs and naturalises students as ‘deserving poor’ citizens (see Snyder & Mitchell 2010; also Hughes 2015) by training and preparing them for ‘work duties’ that are organised as part of social services on the margins of or outside labour markets in a capitalist economy (see Vesala et al. 2015). Within this regime, students are expected to internalise the correct worker morality to perform their duties.

Educational practices constitute the marginal position of people with learning disabilities on the labour market as an individual concern if the students’ future prospects are in conflict with the objectives of PEWIL, as the curriculum requires students to find a workplace or a way of working that suits their abilities (FNAE 2015; also 2018). Hence, the students are trained to be willing to work and understand what kind of work opportunities are available to them. For example, the way in which Nick speaks below about the meaningfulness of the workplace and on-the-job training for his future work prospects demonstrates how students take responsibility if their future prospects are in conflict with the objectives of the programme.

Nick: Well, it’s [workplace training] nice. We get goodies and so on, but our class gets all the money. Do we even get money from it [the training], maybe not.

Interviewer: Would you like to get the wages for yourself?

Nick: If I was in a real job then I’d get paid.

Interviewer: Why you would like to have a [paid] job?

Nick: I just have to apply for one then [workplace]. Yes.

Interviewer: Is wages the reason you’d like to have a job?

Nick: Yes, well, yes.

In the excerpt, Nick narrated himself as a subject who is responsible for his future employment and economic situation, by emphasising how he is going to apply for a job with decent pay. Nick’s argumentation is well in line with neoliberal reasoning, in which an individualised, responsibility-based idea of citizenship is appreciated (Aapola, et al. 2005). In this sense, it is arguable that a neoliberal governing technique based on this valued citizenship is present in the educational practices. It produces a situation in which future social position looks like an outcome of the individual’s own choices, decisions and failures (cf. Lappalainen, Mietola, and Lahelma 2013), even if the opportunities for education, training and ultimately work actually result from multi-professional negotiations. These negotiations mainly take place in a social liberal regime of truth and are materialised in students’ service plans and individual education plans.

The everyday practices of the PEWIL programme constitute work as a significant part of citizenship and a civic duty, even if the work opportunities are commonly restricted in sheltered workshops and in similar settings without employee status or, occasionally, in employment with a low income (see Vesala et al. 2015). From the perspective of governmentality, these everyday practices govern the concept of ‘work’ through the double-bind process of individualisation and totalisation (see Foucault 2000;

Simons & Masschelein 2015). Within this double-bind process, governing is directed to the students themselves so that they internalise their ‘work opportunities’ and learn the ‘correct worker morality’. Hence, education governs every student’s individual opportunities for and routes to work, leading to positions on the margins of or outside the labour market; that is, a neoliberal inclusiveness, in which everyone has individualised objectives, but they are designed in relation to the same totalised objectives (see Kauppila, Kinnari, and Niemi 2018).

‘Training’ students to live within institutional order

The PEWIL objectives concerning ‘independent living’ follow a similar neoliberal reasoning of taking responsibility to the objectives concerning ‘work’.

The aim is to enable the student to cope as independently as possible with daily tasks related to everyday activities and living. They use social services and support for everyday living, appliances and assistant services and take responsibility for their own lives according to their abilities. (FNAE 2015, p. 3; cf. FNAE 2018, authors’ translation)

The education aims to modify students’ awareness of their ‘abilities to manage daily living and their need for assistance’. In this context, ‘independent living’ means living as self-sufficiently as possible (cf. Yang, 2014). Thus, governing aims to modify students as subjects who are responsible for taking care of themselves so that they can act as independently and self-sufficiently as possible in relation to other people and social services. In the everyday education, ‘independent living’ was the subject of formal daily lessons, such as home economics, and above all, integrated into the daily activities outside the classroom. The students’ individual education plans included aims that were embedded into daily activities and living at the boarding school. Therefore, in this section, we focus only on how daily activities and practices outside of formal lessons at the boarding school train and govern students to ‘live independently’ and how the students perceive these practices.

In this setting, educational aims extend from formal education to governing daily living and free time, so governing functions through *pedagogising* (see Pykett, 2010) and *structuring* daily activities and everyday living (Foucault, 1995; also Goffman, 1961). The conversation below with Tom about his individual educational aims demonstrates this logic of governing. At the time of the conversation, Tom was a first-year student living in the boarding school, and one of the individual aims set for him was to learn to keep time. When we discussed this aim, Tom explained what keeping time meant to him and why he needed to learn it.

Tom: I’m not able to go to bed on time.

Interviewer: You’re not able to go to bed on time?

Tom: Yeah.

Interviewer: Not able?
Tom: Not yet.
Interviewer: Do you stay up too late?
Tom: Until 9.30 pm.

After this, the discussion continued to whether it is mandatory to go to bed at 9.30 pm, at which point Tom clarified what he meant by staying up until 9.30 pm.

Tom: In my room.
Interviewer: You have to be in your room at 9.30 pm?
Tom: Yeah.
Interviewer: Okay. Does somebody come to check that you're sleeping?
Tom: The night nurse.
Interviewer: Okay, do they do this often?
Tom: Yeah.

The way in which Tom describes the evening routines at boarding school in relation to his educational aim of keeping time shows how 'independent living' training in PEWIL is chiefly about fitting students into the institutional order of the boarding school. From the perspective of governing, these practices include surveillance and self-control techniques (see Foucault 1995). Surveillance techniques are everyday routine practices such as the night nurse's inspections and a fixed bedtime. Self-control techniques operate through individual aims by focusing on modifying and motivating students themselves to learn the institutional rules and regulations. As in the previous excerpt, institutional practice pedagogised Tom's 'staying up too late' and constituted it an individual matter that needs more training in relation to the institutional order of the boarding-school accommodation (cf. Nunkoosing, and Haydon-Laurelut 2012).

In addition to the formal rules in the classroom and residential accommodation, daily activities and practices set structures for free time at the boarding school. After lessons, the students who boarded participated in activities organised by the school and/or just spent time in its facilities. For example, Mike described his daily living routines at boarding school as follows:

Interviewer: Which accommodation do you live in?
Mike: In the fifth student house.
Interviewer: The fifth student house? Is that what you call it?
Mike: Student house number five.
Interviewer: Okay. Do you like living there?
Mike: Well yes, I have privacy there.
Interviewer: What do you mean? Are you alone a lot there?
Mike: Yes.
Interviewer: Do you take part in activities here during the evenings?
Mike: Well, I go to the [college's] clubroom in the evenings.
Interviewer: Okay, what do you do there [at the clubroom]?

Mike: Just hang around, use the computer, read.

Mike's way of narrating his daily life at the boarding school illustrates how school settings institutionalise free time. As in the previous excerpt, Mike described how he spends free time either alone in his room or in the college clubroom, even though the college organised various activities on weekdays, such as floorball on Tuesdays and shopping on Wednesdays. However, these institutionalised daily practices functioned as governing techniques by socialising students to live in a structured environment. In this sense, the way in which daily living and activities are organised in the vocational special education college resembles what Erving Goffman (1961, 6) calls the logic of a 'total institution', in which all activities serve 'a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution'. In the PEWIL regime, this means that the aim of all the activities and practices is to make students adjust to living 'independently' in institutional settings.

Assessment was also embedded in free time. For example, once, when a student declined an assistant teacher's invitation to join a cooking session in the accommodation in the evening, the assisting teacher wondered aloud: 'What should we write then in the assessment report about your progress in independent living?' (Field notes, spring 2016.) This episode and the other descriptions of daily practices on the PEWIL demonstrate how 'independent living' training encourages students to adapt to an institutional order that will serve 'self-sufficient' and restricted living in group homes or in other institutional settings (cf. Nunkoosing, and Haydon-Laurelut 2012). However, the students did not imagine themselves living in these contexts in the future. Instead, they perceived themselves as self-sufficient subjects who would be able to live independently outside institutional settings.

An interview with Carol, who was in her final year, demonstrates the disparity between the students' subjective future prospects and PEWIL objectives for daily independent living. At the time of the interview, Carol had been studying in PEWIL for almost two years, living at the boarding school. She reflected on her experiences of living there and her hopes related to housing as follows:

Carol: My own routines and being able to do whatever I want.

Interviewer: You like that?

Carol: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, would it [your own apartment] be more pleasant [as a place to live] than a group home?

Carol: Yeah.

Interviewer: How does it feel to live there, when there's [accommodation] staff around all the time?

Carol: It's nice. They're nice.

Interviewer: But you'd prefer to live without them, alone?

Carol: Yes.

Interviewer: Why?

Carol: Well, I don't know, to have privacy...

Interviewer: Do the other residents or even the staff bother you?

Carol: Nope, it doesn't bother me when someone talks all the time, talks and...

Interviewer: It doesn't bother you?

Carol: No, nothing ever bothers me. I'm so used to it.

In this conversation, the way in which Carol narrated herself into the institutional setting illustrates what kind of subjectivity students are constituting for themselves in the PEWIL, that is, as subjects who acclimatise themselves to the institutional order and behave according to its rationale. However, by excluding institutional settings from her subjective prospects for future living, Carol is putting herself in a paradoxical position, similar to the position in the work training. That is, on the one hand, as PEWIL 'teaches', the students perceive themselves as citizens who live their daily lives independently and make their own decisions about their needs, but on other hand, the students' future living options, conditions, and prospects are pre-arranged in their individual education plans and service plans. In Carol's case, if she continues vocational studies as planned, she will live approximately another three years in residential accommodation, after which she will most likely live in a group home or a similar arrangement (see Pitkänen et al. 2018). From the perspective of governmentality, this paradoxical position is formed in the intersection of social, i.e. welfare, and neoliberal rationalities (see Kauppila, Kinnari, and Niemi 2018). This intersection governs freedom in two distinct ways: students are encouraged to perceive themselves as 'independent', 'self-sufficient' and 'responsible' subjects in a neoliberal sense, but within the institutional context of intellectual disability services, which follows social liberal reasoning. This paradoxical position governs students to become aware of and accept that for them, 'independent living' means living in group homes, organised within disability services. The students are 'trained' to live as self-sufficiently as possible in relation to the institutional order in this position.

Conclusion

Our analysis shows how these young people perceive their future prospects and social positions and how governing functions in everyday practice within the PEWIL programme. Using the concept of citizenship, we have analysed how students on this programme envision their futures beyond the ideals and norms produced by institutional practices. In line with Soldatic (2018; cf. Lappalainen 2014), we argue that the capitalist political economy defines ideal citizenship in relation to the labour market, which influences individuals' formation as subjects, irrespective of whether or not they are working in paid employment.

On the PEWIL programme, students' education pathways and objectives are individualised in relation to the same totalised objects concerning participation in the labour market and independence. In practice, these totalising objects are adjusted by providing alternative means of 'work' such as offering opportunities to work in sheltered workshops. Similarly, the students are 'trained' to live self-sufficiently in institutional settings and to follow the institutional rules. These individualised education pathways materialise in the students' individual education plans and service plans, and in the school curriculum.

In this context, governing functions at the intersection of the neoliberal and social liberal regimes of truth, in which the freedoms are governed in two distinct ways. At this intersection, the students' education reproduces and maintains the neoliberal idealisation of labour market citizenship as an ideal mode of citizenship (see Burch 2018), in which freedom is governed in terms of an entrepreneur-self (see Simons & Masschelein 2015). This follows neoliberal reasoning in that it emphasises students' responsibility for themselves and self-sufficiency. At the same time, social liberal reasoning (see Rose 1999) frames the social and disability services (cf. Hughes 2015) in which both professionals and the state govern the students' freedoms. Therefore, PEWIL students' citizenship is formed in relation to the ideals of both a labour market citizen and a social and disability service user. We argue that this position reflects the current moral vision of the social position of people with learning disabilities in Finland as citizens who have internalised their limited options for affecting their own lives, but who can still act within these strictures as self-sufficiently as possible.

Although the training programme could be interpreted as trying to provide an alternative dignified citizenship position for the students, they themselves approach this critically. When work becomes primarily defined as paid work – as a means of individual financial independence – there are very limited opportunities to expand this notion of 'work' to include valued activities that are unpaid. The students' responses to these practices showed how they refuse to recognise these alternative work tasks as relevant in terms of their future social position and living prospects. Therefore, in relation to the wider disability policy alignments that emphasise education as a key means for improving the social position of disabled people, we raise two critical notions about the PEWIL programme. Firstly, it is questionable whether these educational practices can actually

improve the opportunities of people with learning disabilities for social participation in terms of employment, employability, and independent living. Rather than challenging the prevailing social position of people with learning disabilities and thus contributing to transformation, these educational practices actually contribute to maintaining it by reproducing docile subjects for the existing disability services. Secondly, it is paradoxical that the programme teaches students to internalise the ideal of a labour market citizen through emphasising autonomy and economic independence. Our analysis shows that the educational practices focus on preparing young people with learning disabilities for work in sheltered workshops and live in institutional residential settings. While it could be argued that, by building these ‘realistic’ paths for the students, the system and its professionals are fulfilling their duty to protect these vulnerable young people, it must be noted that these sheltered workshops and residential services cannot be considered a safe haven. On the one hand, the services are constantly subject to austerity measures, and on the other, their legitimacy is being questioned, as ongoing disability policy developments increasingly emphasise the right to mainstream living. Moreover, within the heightened international discussion the legitimacy of these kind of segregated settings has been increasingly questioned due to the number of abuse cases found in these settings (see Ryan 2017). From this point of view, some of the objectives and educational practices of PEWIL can be considered as questionable; it prepares students to live in settings that rely on an outdated ideology and cannot ensure the wellbeing of people with learning disabilities living in these contexts.

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