

Saskia Bender

Helping in Inclusive Education

Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion
in Cooperative Learning

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Saskia Bender
Fakultät für Erziehungswissenschaft
Universität Bielefeld
Bielefeld, Germany

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Preface

Special thanks are due to the schools and teachers who agreed to provide insight into their daily efforts to implement inclusive education in highly heterogeneous classrooms for this study. This is not an easy task and, as this study attempts to demonstrate, in many respects it proves to be an unresolvable (ongoing) challenge. At the same time, inclusive or integrative education remains a guiding principle that cannot and should not be abandoned in contemporary democratic societies. Whenever the following discussions address the risks and precariousness of efforts to realize inclusion through forms of group interaction, cooperation, and helping in a rather direct and straightforward manner, readers might get the impression that no consideration is given to the involved actors and their individual efforts to address this challenge in the best possible way. However, the discussions do not intend to criticize the educational practitioners themselves: Rather, the analyses in this study are designed in such a way that those educational practitioners are precisely not assumed to control the practices they are supposed to shape in their entirety. Instead, this study attempts to show how the constitutional conditions of the social generate relatively stable parameters or else social orders that cannot easily be overridden by teachers in the classroom. Even contemporary democratic societies oriented toward plurality (Ranci re 2008) can be understood as such orders that are operating with certain normative commitments, learning requirements, and behavioral expectations, in short: demands for subjectivization (Raimondi 2019). These factors can precisely not be transformed by changing individual dispositions or beliefs on the part of the teachers. This study thus aims to better understand these relatively stable parameters in order to adjust the attributed responsibility and transformation placed on educators by gaining a deeper understanding of the tensions that arise from working together in settings of cooperative learning within

highly heterogeneous classrooms, and thereby unburdening and supporting these educators in certain respects. Unresolvable expectations, in particular, seem to rather contribute more to withdrawal and resignation than to taking responsibility for what can be shaped. Thus, the criticism contained herein (Flügel-Martinsen 2021) is not directed at educators but rather grapples with the discourse that partly assumes inclusive settings can be established by introducing seemingly simple solutions (such as the forms of cooperative learning focused on here, which are often presented as broadly effective for achieving inclusive goals) and thereby implicitly and explicitly attributing all “failures” and resulting “missteps” to the teachers in charge.

My deep gratitude also goes to all colleagues who, through their feedback and informative contributions, especially in joint research workshops, have made these present findings possible and helped to develop them continuously.

Bielefeld, Germany

Saskia Bender

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
	References	3
2	Perspectives on Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping	5
2.1	Forms of Helping in Relation to Reciprocity and Balance in Inclusive Instruction	5
2.2	On the Transformation of Forms of Helping	11
2.3	Forms of Helping Between Selflessness and Social Positioning. . .	15
2.4	Interim Conclusion and Transition: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Forms of Helping in Inclusive Education	24
	References	27
3	Empirical Design	31
3.1	Defining the Cases	31
3.2	Selection, Collection, and Evaluation of the Data	32
3.3	Case Overview and Cumulative Findings.	34
	References	37
4	How Group Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping in Inclusive Education Establish Difference and Address Inequality	39
4.1	Teachers Establishing Help Interactions.	39
4.2	Interactions between Students.	44
4.3	Balanced (Help-)Interactions	47
4.4	Interim Conclusion: Structures of Group Interaction, Cooperation and Helping in Inclusive Education	53
	References	54

5	Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping Over the Course of Lower Secondary Education	55
5.1	Fifth Grade: Covering by Delegating	56
5.1.1	Establishing: The Game of Helping (RB5/RM5/RH5b)	56
5.1.2	“totally boring”: Enacting as Capable Help-Givers (RB5/RM5/RH5b)	58
5.1.3	Summary: Covering by Delegating	61
5.2	Seventh Grade: Visible Emergence of the Structural Problem of Inclusive Classroom Interaction	62
5.2.1	Establishing the Interaction: Partner Work as a Moment of Reflection.	63
5.2.2	“we=did=it=together”: Strategically Reframing the Cooperative Setting (RB7)	66
5.2.3	“you say it like that”: Partner Work as a Careful Effort of Integration (RM7)	69
5.2.4	“I tried”: From the Game of Helping to the Plaything of the Group (RH7)	73
5.2.5	Summary: Visible Emergence of the Structural Problem of Inclusive Classroom Interaction	78
5.3	Ninth Grade: Dealing with Difference in a Permissive Way in the Light of Established Social Roles and Positionings	81
5.3.1	Establishing the Setting: Tasks and Working Together	82
5.3.2	“in case YOU are wrong”: On (the Possibility of) Addressing Non-Cooperation (RH9)	86
5.3.3	“I define it like that for myself and tell [you about it then too]”: On the Limited Possibility of Topic-oriented Cooperation or on Integrating the Special Role of the Skilled (RM9 and RB9a)	90
5.3.4	Summary: Dealing with Difference in a Permissive Way in the Light of Established Social Roles and Positionings	95
5.3.5	Conclusion: “purple sweater” – Cooperation as Concealment of the Special Role and Release from the Context of Teaching and Learning.	97
	References	100

6	Group Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping in the Context of Relatively Stable Orders	103
6.1	Reflections on Educational and School Theory	103
6.2	Reflections on Inclusion and Exclusion in the Context of Gift, Recognition, and Contingency	109
	References	111
7	Final Summary	113
	References	115
	Literature	117



Introduction

1

In light of highly increased heterogeneity the method of cooperative learning is discussed and recommended as an effective pedagogical approach for inclusive education and forms the starting point for the study¹ underlying the following discussions². In cooperative learning, reciprocity, balancing, and equality are expected to manifest in collaborative practices (Avci-Werning and Lanphen 2013) (see Chap. 2 for a detailed discussion). Whilst acknowledging these assumptions of success this study, however, questions whether and how asymmetric interactions might also develop within these didactic learning arrangements. Hence, it was hypothesized that instead of mutual and balanced cooperation, stable asymmetrical practices of helping might emerge, closely intertwined with classroom dynamics, which would mean that the roles of help-receivers and help-givers might not smoothly switch between participants³. This hypothesis is linked to existing

¹This study builds on results from the research project “Hilfe in Interaktionen im inklusiven Unterricht. Rekonstruktionen zur Etablierung und Prozessierung von Hilfepraktiken“ [Help in Interactions in Inclusive Education. Reconstructions on Establishing and Processing Help Practices], funded by the German Research Foundation from 2017–2020.

²The present volume constitutes a translation of the German edition “Hilfe im inklusiven Unterricht. Ein- und Ausschlussdynamiken kooperativen Lernens”. The data material of this empirically reconstructive study has likewise been translated into English. As a result, minor shifts may occur in the presentation of the fine-grained analyses. The original data, however, can be consulted in full in the German version, which is available open access: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-45818-8>.

³The empirical data of this study was gathered in classes of secondary schools in which – following corresponding changes in school laws – students with and without special educational needs are taught together. These classes are simultaneously characterized by further

empirical work that examines the implementation of pedagogical intentions and programs. Often, such pedagogies of aspiration (Reh 2008) remain at the level of the imaginary (Helsper et al. 2001), to such an extent that they obscure the actual practices and thus cover their empirical constitution (Wernet 2018; Breidenstein and Rademacher 2007; Bender et al. 2023). It was assumed that this also applies to inclusive pedagogical endeavours attentive to intersectional as well as other lines of differentiation and that aim to view “diversity and individual differences of students as normality and a resource” and to enable “all children and adolescents to fully participate in school life”⁴ (Amrhein and Badstieber 2013, p. 8). Therefore, the question arose as to how these orientations, grounded in human rights, relate to the practices of social interaction in highly heterogeneous educational contexts.

Consequently, this study approaches the practices and patterns of group interaction and cooperation, more specifically helping that take place in classroom interaction through a reconstructive method. Before clarifying the relation of these three terms via the reconstructive analysis, they are frequently used together, but also selectively on their own, as they each address different dimensions of the topic at hand: While the term *group interaction* descriptively refers to the observed practices, the term *cooperation* invokes normative expectations of inclusion, and the term *helping* refers to (relatively stable) interactional patterns in teaching and learning processes that accompany the implementation and enactment of cooperative learning.⁵ For that reason, this volume is titled ‘Helping in Inclusive Education’ – with the different terms indicating the analytical perspective.

Whilst focusing on the reconstructive analysis, this study also outlines relevant previous theoretical considerations and draws upon them for further theorization. First of all, the hopes associated with the approach of inclusive education through

lines of differentiation. The discourse around inclusive education is attempting to reflect this by using *broad conceptualizations of inclusive education*. Accordingly, the following explanations are also based on such a broad concept of inclusion. However, to describe these educational settings, the term “highly increased heterogeneity” was chosen. This accounts for the attempt not to invoke a success perspective – such as through the concept of inclusive learning settings – as well as not to overemphasize the situated character of differentiation practices. The chosen term is thus an attempt at describing, which, of course, cannot avoid carrying perspectives of its own.

⁴ Unless when quoted from an English original text or a published English translation thereof (as indicated by an English title in the references), all originally German quotations are translated by the author.

⁵ Breidenstein (2006), by contrast, assigns the term *helping* specifically to peer-to-peer interactions (ibid., p. 192), rather than to pre-structured group instruction, and further distinguishes the mode of *supporting*. In this study however, the use of the term is exclusively focused on the empirical findings regarding the structures of interaction.

cooperative learning are invoked. Additionally, results from existing empirical research on classroom interaction are incorporated, already relativizing expectations regarding equal participation and the formation of a solidary community, as well as the support of learning processes through the intensive involvement of peers. Since this already suggests that we are dealing with specific forms of helping as a social practice within group interaction and cooperation in inclusive settings, these considerations are complemented by a brief, historically informed perspective on the discourse of helping and, accordingly, on the particularly relevant subform of the gift. This discourse – marked by internal tensions and contradictions – partly refers to the assumption of a potentially altruistic community-building form of giving, but also to the idea that the gift bridges a fundamental difference between self and other. The act of giving establishes social orders that may at any time erupt into conflict. Following this theoretical foundation and the subsequent introduction of the methodological framework, parts of previously published findings are summarized in a first step and complemented with further analyses. The overall findings are thus transferred into an overarching case systematization through which the specific research question concerning the development of helping practices across different grade levels and relations of reciprocity is given particular emphasis.

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Perspectives on Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping

2

2.1 Forms of Helping in Relation to Reciprocity and Balance in Inclusive Instruction

The concept of cooperative learning (or collaborative learning, reciprocal learning, team learning, study groups or circles, or peer teaching, see Udvari-Solner 2012, p. 631) was initially known, tested, and researched in the USA and Canada before it was more intensively taken up in Germany in response to the PISA studies (Bonnet and Hericks 2020, p. 35). Particularly following efforts to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), cooperative learning became widely disseminated within the discourse on appropriate teaching methods for inclusive learning settings. Kullmann, Lütje-Klose, and Textor summarize in 2014 that cooperative learning represents a central element of inclusive didactics aimed at creating commonalities (ibid.). Thus, cooperative learning features prominently in the influential works on the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth and Ainscow 2002; Boban and Hinz 2003) “as *the* [emphasis in original] teaching method for inclusive learning groups” (Kullmann et al. 2014, p. 99).

In summary, cooperative learning focuses on interactions in smaller groups that work together in various constellations and processes over different periods of time. Key figures in the USA are David W. and Roger T. Johnson. Their approach already integrates different theoretical strands; albeit, the main thread consists of a cognitive-behavioral line of reasoning. According to their own accounts they combine elements from a theory of social interdependence with regard to the works of Jean Piaget and Lev S. Vygotsky, as well as behavioristic learning theories (Razzouk and Johnson 2012, p. 813). In summary, Johnson and Johnson (1994) assume that groups are dynamic relational structures in which interactions always

affect and modify the entire group structure. Following their central thesis, the structure of the group vice versa determines how individuals interact with each other and, accordingly, what kind of outcomes emerge. In connection with Piaget, they also assume that joint *activity generates socio-cognitive conflict*, resulting in imbalances that, in turn, stimulate cognitive development. Thus, subjects particularly learn in social situations; learning and knowledge acquisition consequently always depend on social interactions and are constituted within them (Vygotsky 1978). Deriving again from behaviorist learning theories, Razzouk and Johnson (2012) assume that groups and group rewards increase the willingness to invest effort¹. Based on these models, Johnson and Johnson eventually developed five basic principles that subsequent authors usually adopt with slight modifications (Yang 2023): “(1) positive interdependence (achieved by sharing goals, resources, roles, workload, and rewards); (2) individual accountability and personal responsibility; (3) promotive interaction; (4) appropriate use of social skills; and (5) group processing” (p. 721; see also Johnson and Johnson 1999). They also propose different methods of collaboration, such as “The Jigsaw Method” (Johnson et al. 1994, p. 19) or “Intergroup Tournaments” (ibid., p. 21). These methods design various roles to be taken on within the groups in order to tackle specific tasks. For example, among many others, there is the “Turn-Taking Monitor (ensures that group members take turns when completing an assignment)” (ibid., p. 34), the “Observer (records the frequency with which members engage in target skills),” the “Researcher/Runner (gets needed materials for the group and communicates with the other learning groups and the teacher)” (ibid., p. 35), or the “Prober (asks in-depth questions that lead to analysis or deeper understanding)” (ibid., p. 36). The works of Johnson and Johnson (1994), clearly focus on performance and performance enhancement and thus, address terms such as “achievement,” “effectiveness,” and “learning outcomes” (ibid.). In the frequently cited meta-analysis by Johnson et al. (2000), it is consequently emphasized that, compared with individually competitive formats, cooperative learning leads to better performance outcomes.

The central illustrative video on the Cooperative Learning Institute’s website², however, clearly depicts that differences among students are unlikely to vanish through the adoption of flexible roles but rather become visible in other forms, while placing new demands on students: In a classroom scene with students ap-

¹ Given that cooperative learning theory combines a “variety of theories in anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, psychology and other social sciences” (Razzouk and Johnson 2012, p. 813), it is also criticized for a lack of theory.

² <http://www.co-operation.org/videos>.

proximately 10 to 12 years old, the teacher promises a group reward to the individual groups. The groups that meet 100% of the requirements are allowed to play 15 min of dodgeball in the gym. Subsequently, a student asks the teacher again: S: "What if we all get one hundred percent except for one person?" L: "You mean like eh everybody in your group gets a hundred percent except for Ryan?" S: "Yeah" L: "Okay then your group will not be over to be (hard to understand) part of the dodgeball" (7:50-8:23). The performance expectations as such are not nullified in this scene. However, it changes substantially, in that the students are now being held largely responsible for the learning achievement of their peers, while the teacher primarily orchestrates the structure of the group work and allocates rewards.

Beyond the criticism that can already be sketched from this brief illustrative scenario, scholars repeatedly point out that cooperative learning environments promote not only knowledge and skill acquisition but also a range of social aspects:

The research clearly indicates that cooperation, compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, typically results in (a) higher achievement and greater productivity, (b) more caring, supportive, and committed relationships, and (c) greater psychological health, social competence, and self-esteem (Razzouk and Johnson 2012, p. 813)

The reason cooperative learning is ultimately recommended as a central methodological element within classroom teaching in settings with highly increased heterogeneity can be traced back to a line of reasoning underlying this approach. From this point, the concept becomes linked in subsequent programmatic and methodological designs, as well as in theoretical frameworks of the corresponding studies, with a critique of individualistic performance orientation, the demand for mutual accountability, and participation in the group, which in terms of joint learning is possible for all members through the adoption of different roles (Avci-Werning and Lanphen 2013). Supporting these lines of reasoning, references additionally link to research on peers, whose interactions also tend to be conceptualized based on equality and recognition (Salisch 2016). As a result, diverse publications on cooperative learning, (in the German-speaking countries and elsewhere) portray cooperative learning as egalitarian, balancing, and participation-oriented (Büttner et al. 2012). The essential lines of reasoning that lead to cooperative learning being ultimately identified as a central method for inclusive education can thus be broadly summarized as follows: Forms of cooperative learning are expected to foster socially affirming interactions (Felder 2012), which are based on the assumed egalitarian peer relationships (Youniss 1994; Youniss and Smollar 1994/1989). These forms of learning are thus contrasted with traditional school role expectations, in-

tertwinced with performance rankings and teacher-student relationships, which imply power imbalances. This implies the expectation that peer interaction balances differences by having participants support one another according to their respective strengths (Salisch 2016). Based on the cognitive-behavioral studies it is further suggested that no disadvantages in learning outcomes and students' willingness to perform are to be expected. It is even hypothesized that peer explanations, due to similar language and developmental stages and the absence of social hierarchy, can improve understanding and acceptance (Zander et al. 2017; Kreutzmann et al. 2021; Zimpel 2014). These positions however, do not ask whether these roles are still tied to specific expectations regarding behavior and knowledge acquisition, which is hence, taken up as a desideratum in this study, distinguishing its analytical focus from that of previous research. Empirical research focusing on student collaboration thus assertively turns to questions and desiderata regarding *successful* cooperation as defined above. For example, Sabine Campana Schleusener (2012) inquires about the fundamental prerequisites for this in her comprehensive study on mixed-age learning groups with children aged four to eight. She highlights that even relatively young children can help each other in learning contexts and develop various strategies of helping. However, it is already noteworthy that children prefer to give help rather than receive it, and that older and higher-performing children offer their help more frequently. This suggests that helping also tends to carry potential for conflict (see *ibid.*, p. 267). However, the author notes that the help interactions in the study were predominantly unproblematic, and "interactions with children with special needs [...] were not frequently classified as problematic" (*ibid.*, p. 269). This apparently casual distinction between problematic and unproblematic help interactions is interestingly already present in the well-known study by Krappmann and Oswald on "Everyday Life of Schoolchildren" (1995), which collected data in the 1980s and 90s at an elementary school in a central district of West Berlin (*ibid.*, p. 26). They were primarily interested in peer interaction relationships and pragmatically conducted their research in a classroom, which seemed to present a dense observation field for their area of interest. However, these observations focusing on peer relationships do not primarily appear to be cooperation-oriented: teasing, exclusions, and mutual sanctions seem to be part of the children's interactions. The focus seems to be on negotiating normative or social orders, which relate both to interactions with each other and to school norms (*ibid.*, p. 120). For interactions with classmates with whom one is not close friends, this means:

You must not sit on someone else's chair, bump into them, poke them in the butt, trip them, damage or take someone else's property without permission, insult, humiliate,

criticize, disturb while working, forget tasks, make silly mistakes, and should adhere to school rules (ibid., p. 121).

However, the boundaries are not entirely clear and are constantly negotiated. What constitutes a “norm-breaking mischief” (ibid., p. 120) and when do “warning sanctions” or actual sanctions apply (ibid.)? Krappmann and Oswald already noted that these interactions are associated with efforts to save face – i.e., not positioning oneself outside the social order or being positioned as such – or with attempts to gain dominance. For example, apologies are only “advisable to those who do not exploit it” (ibid., p. 118). These peer interactions are thus permeated by various tensions, always involving a more or less flexible handling of social orders, thus intertwining social or peer-related demands with instructional ones. Under the heading “Cooperation in School” (ibid., p. 141), the topic of helping takes on significant importance. According to the authors, helping does not occur as frequently as expected, with Krappmann and Oswald classifying almost half of the occurrences as problematic help interactions, which reveal a “structural problem in helping” (ibid., p. 169): help is – especially when it comes to solving tasks – often rejected, questions are ignored, and insight is blocked, (ibid., p. 144). Rejections are also accompanied by arrogance and insults (ibid.). However, help interactions generally appear less problematic with well-integrated children – those with a secure status. According to the authors, helping creates an “imbalance of influence opportunities [...], which the helper can exploit and the recipient can preempt or meet with counter-strategies” (ibid., p. 163). This involves not only skills and abilities but also the “prestige” and “status” within the group (ibid., p. 169). Even Krappmann and Oswald however maintain the perspective that unproblematic help is considered meaningful and thus established in interaction practices when the situation and expectation arise that one might also need help and that help will be provided, just as one has previously provided it to others (ibid., p. 170), so that “in the long run, performance and counter-performance even out” (ibid., p. 171).

As stated above, such references to balanced help interactions entail a search for conditions and influencing factors of **un**problematic help – particularly to establish settings that support learning. Even if, for example, Wagener (2014) states how many studies indicate that help situations inherently consist of an asymmetric structure which needs to be addressed, the pedagogical focus is rather on the question of how this can be “overcome” (ibid., p. 97; see the following quote). Following a review of the existing research on the relational aspect in help interactions Wagener (ibid.) summarizes:

By considering the multilayered facets of the relational aspect, it becomes clear that the type of relationship between individuals can significantly influence the course of help processes. Initially, the help situation was considered viewed in its asymmetric structure, which triggers an imbalance between the helping person and the help-seeking one. According to studies, this asymmetry can be overcome when children alternately help each other or when help occurs by mutual consent. This seems to be particularly successful among children who are friends. Regarding the age-related understanding of roles, the studies suggest that children seem to have the notion that older children take on the role of the helper towards younger ones and that younger ones are entitled to this help and fit into this role. (ibid., p. 97)

These works thus focus on searching for the conditions of these seemingly balanced and thus “successful” forms of mutual help (Wagener 2014; see also Hackbarth 2016, p. 143). This perspective is complemented by evolutionary biological, evolutionary psychological, and anthropological models that explore whether cooperation and helping are considered “natural” behaviors (Tomasello 2010). According to Tomasello (ibid.), humans live in cooperative groups where solving common tasks has always been central (ibid., p. 66). In this regard, prosocial behavior would not be “the exception, but the rule” (Bierhoff 2010, p. 225), as people want to appear reliable and helpful (ibid., p. 227).

This seems to be particularly successful in friendships, whose interaction structure thus becomes a model for establishing unproblematic help interactions. Krappmann and Oswald find examples of contexts within friendships where the precarious aspect of help relationships seems to be mitigated (Krappmann and Oswald 1995, p. 170). Friendships can thus be understood as relationships in which an expectation of reciprocity and reliability has been established more securely. Age differences seem to mitigate the problem of asymmetric interactions in help relationships as well.

Thus, in the works conducted so far, the asymmetric dimension of help interactions, which can lead to various problematic manifestations, is normatively treated as a phenomenon to be avoided. This is also indicated by attempts to pedagogically delimit and define good and appropriate help among students by aligning it with the facilitation of learning processes (Naujok 2000; Wagener 2007; Hackbarth 2016). However, further works point to hierarchies that are present even in open classroom settings, which unfold along the distinction between those who know and those who do not, and between those who give help and those who receive it (Reh and Labede 2009, see also Hackbarth 2016, p. 142; Breidenstein 2006; Benkmann 2005; Merl 2019; Bender 2014). In this context, the school setting seems to be guiding more than the peer relationships (Reh and Labede 2009, p. 173). At the same time, studies show that hierarchies and status differences also

exist in peer interactions or peer cultures (Eckermann and Heinzel 2013; Eisewicht et al. 2022; Bennewitz et al. 2021). At the beginning of the project however, none of the existing studies systematically examined this asymmetry which is presumably also inherent between help-receivers and help-givers in highly heterogeneous or rather inclusive teaching settings. From this perspective, the challenge in inclusive contexts also lies in “addressing this asymmetric constellation” (Breidenstein 2006, p. 201). This study aimed to address this desideratum. It was assumed that the asymmetry is very likely to manifest itself as a consistent difference, especially in highly heterogeneous or inclusive settings, and may additionally appear less flexible under classroom teaching conditions. The asymmetric element would thus become a condition of interaction that must be addressed continuously, especially in highly heterogeneous settings.

In addition to studies focused on teaching and learning, works from social sciences and social anthropology regarding the concept of helping and help relationships are explored and will be briefly addressed in the following, in order to further specify and differentiate these considerations. This however displays yet another controversy, disputing whether helping practices will show relations of balanced harmonious reciprocity, or whether this assumption already implies a certain position, thus representing a specific approach of the very tensions that emerge when engaging in help interactions. For even the emphasis on ‘balance’ and ‘reciprocity’ points to this presumably necessary engagement with difference. The following section selectively highlights key positions within this discourse. Luhmann’s considerations on different forms of helping serve as an initial orientation. It becomes clear with Luhmann that the idea of balanced reciprocal helping, which in inclusive settings is associated with forms of cooperative learning, is most likely found in the subform of the gift. Consequently, the discourse on the gift relationship is examined, before briefly returning to other forms of helping

2.2 On the Transformation of Forms of Helping

The elaborations of Niklas Luhmann (1975) on different forms of helping over the course of changing societal conditions allow us to further clarify possible manifestations of helping, as he points out that helping actions do not follow a consistent conception or dynamic of interaction. Since it depicts helping in a historically and sociologically differentiated way, this position will be presented in more detail. Subsequently, it allows this study to deepen its preliminary considerations and theoretical focal points regarding the subject of ‘help’ as it relates to cooperative learning. Luhmann asks how “help is understood in different societies, how it is

institutionalized, and how it is actually practiced” (ibid., p. 168). For him, all forms of helping are based on the problem of “the balancing of needs and capacities over time” (ibid). To distinguish these forms of balancing of needs and capacities over time, he analyses the historically differentiated forms of gift, alms, and modern help as corresponding to different types of social differentiation, outlining the respective structures of expectations that organize helping in each context.

For Luhmann, the gift as a form of help belongs to archaic societies. In these, he locates mutual help as an institutionalized normative duty (cf. ibid., p. 170). According to Luhmann, these societies have little time, as their “basic needs are imminently threatened in unpredictable ways” (ibid.). This results in “small-scale” handling of the balancing of needs and capacities, or more specifically appears as an “institutionalization of reciprocal personal help among community members³” (ibid., p. 170), which does not yet follow a consciously negotiated connection or institutionalization, e.g., in the form of a contract. This reciprocity or immediate mutuality thus becomes the central element of the gift, and the gift thereby also becomes, the, so to speak, minimum form of an “institutionalization of time-stable reciprocity,” the “central point” of the “legal moral structure” of archaic societies (ibid., p. 171). These structures are often intertwined with “magico-religious notions, which essentially serve as a functional equivalent for foresight” (ibid.). Luhmann speaks of “duties of help or duties of giving” and “duties of gratitude” (ibid., p. 172). These are mutually dependent and also triggered by this reciprocity, thus positioning each other in a dynamic relationship. Concrete situations that cannot be objectified or systematized trigger the gift and call for an immediate counter-performance or obligation of gratitude:

Duties of gratitude remain unspecified and can be triggered by need and by circumstances: they can be fulfilled through economic counter-services, labor, submission, assignment of prestige, assistance in combat, or however – thus across all functional areas of society. The lack of specification of what triggers the need balancing (except for the feature of surplus) and the lack of specification of the duty of gratitude bring high elasticity and low susceptibility to disturbance of the institution [of the gift] into play (ibid., p. 172).

Thus, the gift is embedded in spatial and social relationships of proximity – the house, the neighborhood, the village, the community. Gifts can in these contexts indeed lead to increased prestige. When one gives and hosts celebrations, one reaps those obligations of gratitude or counter-performances that enable one’s own dominance and leadership. However, more complex needs that cannot be addressed

³While the original text refers to “tribes,” this study uses the term “community.”

through such relationships of proximity limit the gift. Luhmann also points out that due to the immediate reciprocity of the gift's and counter-gift's, and their lack of objectifiability, capital formation is impossible, and overall, the respective social situation remains relatively unsecured and unstable:

Whoever accepts help must expose themselves to unforeseeable counter-expectations. The more possibilities society constitutes, the more the elasticity of gratitude becomes a problem, the more it unpredictably encroaches upon different functional contexts. One accepts a coat as a gift in need and later, having become a great king, faces the demand for the governorship over an entire island (ibid., p. 172).

In highly cultivated societies, these forms of need-balancing change and correspond to functional social systems with a stronger division of labor and a more clearly established stratified distribution of goods. Additionally, more differentiated forms of governance emerge, now following generalized normative ideas that Luhmann refers to as 'cosmic-religious morality' (cf. ibid., p. 173). By establishing differentiation processes in this way, a specific aspect of the gift, namely the "reversibility of situations" (ibid.) is lost. This means that help is no longer given by assuming one might also find oneself in need of help, especially in similar situations. Reciprocity becomes less rigid, and thus, according to Luhmann, the motivation to help must be "secured on detours" (ibid.). In highly cultivated societies it eventually turns into a moral demand and is legitimized as such. The good deed of the higher classes gets directed towards the lower classes, which in turn contains an interesting dimension of stabilizing the established situation. At the same time, the gift is no longer central to constituting the social fabric, and the obligation of reciprocity significantly loosens. This structure is manifested in the form of alms. Here, according to Luhmann, reciprocity implements itself in terms of recognizing the differences of situations or status differences:

Help is no longer, as in elementary interactions or even in archaic societies, a *status-constituting* principle; it merely expresses a status that is solidified by class, it is a status symbol, status-based duty, and in more domestic-patrimonial relationships, also a caring responsibility (ibid., p. 174).

In alms, the duty to give persists, to which the help-seeker is so to speak morally entitled. On the other hand, the act of almsgiving is an institutionalized confirmation of the wealthy, for which the poor provide a welcome occasion (are even 'needed' as such), and with which they are confirmed in their societal role and function, but also recognized in a certain way.

In modern society, functional differentiation continues to assert itself, and with the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, the practice of giving alms also comes under moral pressure. Luhmann sees another important driver in the shift of the market to the “monetary mechanism” (ibid., p. 175) and the resulting increased focus on capital formation. Money becomes the “generalized medium of help” (ibid.), as through money, capital formation, or a certain liquidity, the satisfaction of needs can now be secured into the future. Money takes the place of gratitude. In modern societies, organized social systems emerge that specialize in helping. Help thus becomes an expected, organized service. Luhmann particularly emphasizes that, specific help programs, as a core element of this organized help, now determine what is carried out as helping and what is not. This leads to working out to which of the programs the now so-called “case” of help (ibid., p. 179) can be referred to, but also to refining the programs themselves, as they and their specific “peculiarities” determine the “horizon of what is possible” (ibid., p. 178).

Within this framework, the decision to help or not to help is not a matter of the heart, of morality, or of reciprocity, but a question of methodological training and the interpretation of the program, with which one is occupied during limited working hours. (ibid.)

However, this leads to certain matters only being ‘seen’ as long as programs are available to address them. The specific form of organized help thus also controls what can be made visible as a ‘case’, and accordingly, it is also, conversely, about adapting the case to available programs.

Yet, even though Luhmann is certain that the organized form of helping has currently prevailed, he also points out that, at the same time, other forms of helping continue to exist. This becomes evident in still existing forms of reciprocal help, for example, in families or rural communities. Alms are also still present, for instance, in appeals for donations, which often call upon giving something to the weaker and less fortunate.

From this perspective, the expectations and hopes regarding the use and implementation of mutual help in the context of cooperative learning in inclusive education can now most plausibly be located in the domain of the gift. This form of interaction seems to describe those patterns of reciprocal giving and receiving based on the equality of interaction partners, which also serve as a model for the proposed (appropriate) modes of cooperative interaction in inclusive education. Assuming that if everyone needs help and support at some point, this equality of situations would manifest in mutual helping, where other societal or physical norms and deviations no longer take precedence.

However, Luhmann already indicates that there may not be an ideal form of help (as a gift) based on natural equality and reciprocal balance, but that all forms of helping are dependent on the respective societal and social orders or, to some extent, co-constitute and stabilize them. The educational recourse to the gift would thus attempt, on the one hand, to strengthen a form of helping in interactions in inclusive education that is not institutionally dominant in modern societies; at the same time, it might call for an orientation towards orders and forms of immediate reciprocity in social interaction, which, likewise, could temporarily generate inequalities and differences and thus be accompanied by expansive duties and role expectations. An interesting hybrid form arises where it must be considered that these forms of reciprocity in contexts of cooperative learning are to be established through a rather complex, so to speak, didactically enforced *organization* of teaching and learning. What becomes clear from these thoughts regarding the current attempts at developing inclusive instruction is the tension, potentially inherent in the gift relationship and accordingly the remaining question about the practices of related interactions: Is the gift, as Luhmann puts it, a “normative duty” (ibid., p. 170) or a spontaneous act of support and compensation based on equality, reciprocity, reversibility, and proximity?

2.3 Forms of Helping Between Selflessness and Social Positioning

This question directly leads to the fundamental epistemological questions of the social sciences and, on the other hand, calls attention to current related fields of discourse. Without wanting or being able to provide a comprehensive overview of a broad field of existing research at this point, the essential tension is already evident in Marcel Mauss’s famous work “The Gift” from which the opposing interpretations that are linked to this work can be traced exemplarily.

Mauss published his essay on the gift in 1925. It comparatively examines forms of gift exchange in different so-called archaic societies. He himself underscores the significance of this work when he writes that by reflecting on the gift, he has “found here one of the human bedrocks on which our societies are built” (Mauss 2016, p. 59). He works comparatively using documents and reports from these so-called archaic societies from very different regions of the world – particularly from the Pacific Islands and societies on the northwest coast of Canada and Alaska – and traces the paths of the gift through ancient precursors of modern legal and economic systems into his present. One of Mauss’s first sentences focusing on the topic already seems indicative of his entire text: “exchanges and contracts are made

in the form of a gift (*cadeau*), in theory voluntary, in reality *obligatorily* [emphasis added] given and received” (ibid., p. 57). Through many slightly different examples, Mauss shows that in gift relationships, especially between different communities⁴, it is not primarily about balancing needs. From the observation that a gift *must* be reciprocated – the element that in Luhmann’s descriptions appears as the duty to thank and give back – Mauss establishes that the gift relationship inheres agonistic characteristics, which do not rest on the initially seemingly reciprocal but ultimately antagonistic relationship between the participants. For Mauss, the gift is thus an alternative to open and violent conflict and to killing and eradicating the other and strangers; at the same time, this potential conflict, continuously negotiated, lives on in and through the gift:

To refuse to give, to neglect to invite, as to refuse to take, is equivalent to declaring war; it is to refuse alliance and communion. (ibid., p. 74)

Especially using the example of practices and rites in Northwest America, called potlatch, Mauss makes it clear that the gift is a form of dealing with conflict through which this conflict is always also expressed. These communities, described by Mauss as very wealthy, spend the winter months during which they retreat to their ‘towns’ – after the summer, when they hunt, fish, and gather materials and fruits in dispersed groups – in an “endless celebration” (ibid., p. 62) or a “perpetual agitation” (ibid., p. 111). During this time, they spend extensively what they have accumulated over the summer. On all possible occasions, people from their own clan are invited, or visits occur between clans. This creates a long series of potlatches, given in all directions (Mauss 2016, p. 112). These follow an inherent logic of escalation, as not only something is given, but in these festivals, what goods are available are also symbolically destroyed. This means it is not about the question of balancing what the other needs or can make use of, but something is given away to demonstrate that one is capable of giving and more specifically can even exceed the existing social rules: Some must permanently outdo others with their gifts. On the one hand, to pay them the same honor, but on the other hand, to maintain or improve one’s social position in this order of gift festivals by showing that one has more goods that can be given or destroyed through the gift. In and through gift-giving, social order is constantly enacted. According to the documents Mauss relies on, the potlatch especially was associated with severe exaggerations: Besides the ritual destruction of wealth or cultural goods, such as blankets, there is demonstrative killing of slaves, slaughter of entire packs of dogs, burning of villages, etc. (cf.

⁴While the original text refers to “tribes,” this study uses the term “community.”

Därmann 2010, p. 49). However, Därmann (ibid.) also notes that these forms of exaggeration and destruction, the symbolic killing of property to outdo the other, may already reflect specific consequences of colonization. At the time of the observations documented in the sources used by Mauss, the colonial government had already banned the actual wars between the social communities of Northwest America. The pacifying aspect of the gift may thus give way to a structure of symbolic combat. The potlatch itself thereby evolves into an “instrument of warfare” (ibid., p. 55). This development clearly illustrates how gift exchange exists on a “constantly precarious threshold between war and peace.” “It is the pacific practice of pacification through the permanent ‘interpénétration’ of mutually alien societies, which owe each other ‘everything’” (ibid., pp. 22–23).

In these works, the gift thus becomes even more clearly an element of interaction that – when faced with the alternative of confronting the other destructively or interactively, i.e., through forms of exchange – establishes sociality. This, in turn, gives rise to the distinct and culture-specific, often lengthy and complex rituals and regulations of gift and counter-gift (cf. Mauss 2016, pp. 86–87).

As mentioned above, Mauss’s seminal work has subsequently been received and adopted in markedly different ways. Each of these interpretations can be traced back to his essay, or builds upon aspects that remain ambiguous and unresolved. On the one hand, this is due to (a) his own answer to the question he himself poses – what might be the force in the given thing that compels the other to reciprocate (Mauss 2016, p. 58) – and, on the other hand, due to (b) the moral conclusions he himself draws in closing his discussion of this question. (a) According to Mauss, the giver, in a way, also gives something of themselves within the given thing or the gift in general. This element is inherent in the given object and thus remains a lasting presence of the foreign within the familiar, which constitutes a permanent threat to the other (the recipient). Mauss states that gifts therefore “create a magical and religious hold over you” (Mauss 2016, p. 73) as well as in any case or in “an equivalent that replaces it”, “tends to return” (ibid.). This dimension of his theory of the gift goes beyond a social theory, as it contains ideas of specific personal, non-material qualities that can be given and experienced. Reinforcing this aspect in his concluding discussion, he himself (b) argues for a not solely commercial morality (Mauss 2016, p. 177), but for strengthening and rediscovering the principles of selflessness (giving something of oneself) and corporate solidarity as precisely those personal, non-material qualities that can be given and experienced within the design of interactions and contracts.

This already illustrates how much the following readings of Mauss tend to differ. Focusing on the presupposition of the gift as a ‘bedrock’ that offers insights into key aspects of social interaction, the consequences arising from subtle differ-

ences in readings of the interactional structure prove to be highly relevant for the objective of this study and decisively inform its further development.

On the one hand, there are positions based on the idea that equality and solidarity are essential elements to be restored in social interaction. These positions are present in inclusion-oriented research on teaching and learning within the educational sciences, as well as in the cultural and social-scientific discourse. They are partially modeled on the gift relationship, particularly on the aspects emphasizing that the act of giving also involves giving something of oneself. In this reading, the gift also serves as a model for reestablishing reciprocal exchange relationships. A prominent example of such a position can be found in the work of Alain Caillé (2008) and the resulting *Convivialist Manifesto* (Adloff and Leggewie 2014). Caillé closely follows the work of Marcel Mauss and identifies in it a principle of “mutual recognition through gift exchange” which is based “on social bonds and mutual indebtedness” (Adloff and Papilloud 2008, p. 15). He aims to distinguish this position from purely structuralist, as well as purely utilitarian readings of Mauss’s work. In this regard, the understanding of the gift moves away from an exclusive focus on social interaction structures. The point of departure in Caillé’s considerations similar to Mauss’s lies in the encounter between strangers, who can either meet cooperatively through the gift or antagonistically through conflict or battle and the annihilation of the other. This is seen, on the one hand, as a fundamental element of sociality, which would not come about without constant acts of giving and receiving (ibid., p. 17). But gifts, according to Adloff and Papilloud, also entail trust in counter-gifts. Gifts thus represent not only a relationship, which remains agonistic and is dealt with in a specific form through the gift, but they also symbolize community and connection. Caillé further links his ideas to notions of civil society as he argues further that this very civil society could be strengthened by orienting itself towards “transferring forms of primary sociality of the gift into the public sphere” (ibid., p. 26). His critique is thus directed against the “functional and impersonal secondary sociality” (Caillé 2008, p. 212).

One thing therefore seems certain to us: The world today will only be able to escape ultimate chaos if, in the face of the penetrating power of the universal world of commodities, it continues to rely on state regulations, and is, at the same time, able to confront both the market and the states with an international civil society that fights for global democracy. Gift and democracies would thus arrive at a new understanding of one another. Is globalization in the spirit of both gift and democracy conceivable and possible? How can one contribute to this? These are the fundamental and specific challenges for an anthropology of the gift. (ibid.)

It is encouraging to see how the hopes for inclusion in reciprocal forms of learning correspond with these anthropological assumptions of a primary gift relationship in sociality. This perspective becomes accessible through the idea that in the act of giving, one always gives something of oneself. This highlights a primary connection with the other, inherent in sociality – expressed in concepts such as trust, recognition, civil society, and community. This movement is ultimately expressed in the publication of the *Convivialist Manifesto* (Adloff and Leggewie 2014), in which the authors and signatories advocate for a “new art of living together” (ibid., p. 3). Regardless of whether one agrees with the proposed measures, they are argumentatively and epistemically linked to Alain Caillé’s interpretation of Mauss’s work “The Gift.” Accordingly, the gift represents the mutual recognition of people as human beings. A resulting sociality would thus also recognize a common humanity and shared sociality, which would form the basis for a “convivial global coexistence” (ibid., p. 16). This critique of the functional and capitalist modernity and its utilitarian foundations also involves establishing new meanings. These are still present in the retained forms of the gift within social orders – in families and friendships, in civil society projects, in volunteer engagement, and in an economy of solidarity – and would only need to be strengthened (ibid., p. 24) to lead to a “positive vision of coexistence” (Adloff 2014)⁵.

Thomas Bedorf (2010) now explicitly critiques this understanding of the “social gesture of the gift” (ibid., p. 159). He also emphasizes the “swaying presentation” (ibid., p. 168) in Mauss’s work, which he characterizes as “interpretative hesitation.” Bedorf intensively discusses the social gift relationship, which he develops through a complementary recourse to Simmel drawing on preceding discourses following Derrida, Levinas, Lévi-Strauss, and especially Hénaff, aiming for a significant contribution to a philosophical concept of recognition (ibid., p. 159). He outlines a more specific and independent character of the gift, according to which it “bridges the gap of alterity in an act of uncertain outcome” (ibid., p. 178). This position clearly distances itself from assumptions that see the gift as an expression of a generally human, generous, or altruistic gesture. Instead, the gift expresses the intention to “ally oneself in the field of the foreign, even if this can be risky” (ibid., p. 178). Bedorf treats Simmel’s considerations of the gift as central and outlines three specific dimensions of it: (a) the independent structure of the gift, which he does not trace back to a non-economic character, (b) the simultaneously necessary response and openness of that response incorporated in the gift – reciprocity is thus not inherent in the gift, but only one possible form it can take – and finally (c) its constitutive significance in the context of sociality (ibid., p. 162). Without being

⁵ <https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-2898-2/das-konvivialistische-manifest>.

able to adequately present the detailed explanations here, I attempt to briefly illustrate these points. Bedorf openly distances himself from the discourses surrounding the M.A.U.S.S. movement, which finds its central organ in the journal ‘La Revue du M.A.U.S.S.’⁶ founded by Alain Caillé. The debates conducted there, in turn, form the theoretical focal point of the argumentative framework of the convivialist manifesto, discussed previously. However, Bedorf opposes the assumption that the social gesture of the gift can serve as a point of orientation to break through the utility-oriented societal structures, the focus on individual progress and interests, and the accumulation of success and capital. For Bedorf, gestures of the gift and the economy do not exclude each other but can coexist, and accordingly the gift is often accompanied by exchange and economic gifts, as can be seen in Mauss’s own representations. The attempt to conceptualize the “homo donator” (ibid., p. 176) in terms of a “primary sociality” (ibid., 184) as an alternative to the “homo economicus” (ibid., 176) (which tends to resemble another possible reading of Luhmann) must come to nothing. What the gift is about exists, so to speak, parallel to the economic sphere. In this respect, the gift does not conflict with other forms of exchange, as it has its own structure. According to Bedorf, the gift receives its specific character particularly through its agonistic dimension already brought up by Mauss, and in this, he sees a specific assumption about the constitution of sociality. The three-part structure of the gift, as Mauss elaborates, consists of *Giving – Receiving – Reciprocating*. However, Bedorf rejects the assumption that through the act of giving, something of the giver is also given. He points this out by referring to the criticism by Lévi-Strauss, who argues that Mauss did not analytically distance himself enough from the mystical practices of gift rituals. Bedorf now sets out to examine the motivation for the gift itself. According to Bedorf, the gift is a risky element of interaction. Essentially, it is a risky test to determine whether the respective other is a monster or a being similar to oneself (ibid., p. 173). Through giving, the other is addressed and accordingly recognized as such a being of similarity, and at the same time, respect is shown towards them as a potential counterpart (ibid.). One does not know if the other is human or a monster? Hence, the response of the other is completely open; the counterpart is challenged to respond but may prove to be an aggressive monster or fail to respond. Thus, according to Bedorf, the gift already inherently contains the very agonistic structure that turns it into a gesture with aggressive undertones. The other is addressed as that very being of similarity, which in turn, imposes the expectation of reciprocity, and this – evident in Mauss’s various descriptions – comes with specific expectations regarding the display of this behavior.

⁶<https://www.revuedumauss.com.fr>

The alterity of the other can only be overcome through the risky gift, without the response of the other being predetermined [...]. Thus, to repeat, no moral action is performed that equates to a generous, altruistic gesture, but rather the intention is expressed to ally oneself in the field of the foreign, even if this can be risky (ibid., p. 178).

Social interactions consist precisely of this agonistic play of giving-receiving-reciprocating and accordingly are established through it or aggressively ended by their destruction of the counterpart. This is what makes the gift that “bedrock” as well as the very “foundational contribution” at the core of socialization. The social bond thus does not need to be renewed or rediscovered, as it appears to have been buried and lost. There are no assumptions about a primary sociality; but instead, it must be “constantly renewed” (ibid., p. 189).

With this, Thomas Bedorf ultimately develops a contingency-oriented perspective on the gift and recognition. As a result, one can no longer assume that social interactions or individual developments would or should follow ultimate religious, moral, anthropological, or other universal reasons. Instead, social structures emerge that are historically relatively stable but always only establish “provisional coherences” (ibid., p. 213), as expressed in the gift. Bedorf emphasizes that the gift relationship does not clarify “*which* normative order should be preferred over another, but how and why we exist together with others at all” (ibid., p. 199; see also Därmann 2010):

The struggle for recognition, when traced back to the risky gift exchange, does not lead to a reconciliation of antagonisms but is understood as a connection via difference (Bedorf 2010, p. 199).

This emphasis on “connection via difference” (ibid.) points to these missing ultimate reasons and the fact that the place of the real cannot be filled essentially (Žižek 2008). This perspective, drawing on contingency theory, has several implications, some of which influence the understanding of community and society (Delitz 2019). A harmonious unit of the community, e.g., as civil society, cannot arise from this perspective and has not existed. Social orders generate corresponding inclusions and exclusions, as well as experiences of exteriority (Nancy 1988, p. 45). Delitz (2019), following Badiou, speaks of experiences of ‘being-with’, understood as being together with others (ibid., p. 336).

Hence, social orders constitute themselves within the gift or rather are expressed within it. According to Bedorf (2010), gift relationships, interactions, or cooperative actions can thus *refer not to the absolute Other but to the social other* (ibid., p. 212). This means that others or any counterparts cannot be recognized, experi-

enced, or acknowledged as such, so that the other cannot be perceived beyond rule-governed coherencies. In this respect, recognition exists only as *misrecognition* (ibid.) in the context of always contingent, but yet specific social orders.

Reflecting on Niklas Luhmann's observations that under the current concept of helping, we likely find different forms (the gift, alms, modern forms of helping) that have not replaced each other but still coexist, then there is no need to assume any qualitative differences between these forms (e.g., the good personal gift versus estranged organized forms of helping). Instead, all these forms express specific orders and are, as Luhmann writes, intertwined with the respective dominant societal formations. Interactions with others in the mode of helping (or rather: helping, alms, and the gift) are thus always specific addressings in which the rules of the social are developed or stabilized.⁷

This means that on one hand, the gift-recipients or those in need of help and support (the poor, the clients, the cases) are constituted differently by these orders, and on the other hand, that accepting the offered help, alms, or gift simultaneously expresses consent to the positionings of givers and receivers (who are possibly givers themselves) established by these social orders or cultures.

To further illustrate this interpretation following Bedorf, it is worthwhile to look at the work of Helmut Scherpner (1962/1974) on the "Theory of Welfare" as an example of different forms of almsgiving and modern aid. He compellingly analyzes the shifts regarding the transformation from medieval doctrine of almsgiving to modern forms of helping: Within the belief in a God-given natural law and an attainable paradisiacal primal state (ibid., p. 85), almsgiving is a religious-ethical duty (ibid., p. 26). In this order, similar to Luhmann's explanations, the person in need is merely the "object of the almsgiving act" (ibid., p. 27), meaning the act of giving is not about changing their situation or transforming their social (earthly) status (ibid., p. 38). Likewise, poverty, according to Scherpner, is not a (deficient) "economic circumstance" (ibid., p. 29) but an ethical task:

One must willingly bear poverty, submit to it in humility. And through this humble submission, taking on the contempt of the world, one acquires special merits. [...] Being poor is already a piece of meritorious asceticism, renunciation of earthly pleasures (ibid., p. 29),

to enter the kingdom of God (ibid.). Scherpner then describes in detail the social dynamics that eventually lead to a change in the dominant image of the poor. From

⁷The discourse invoked here does not advocate the predetermination of the social. Rather, it holds that social orders can change and transform – albeit only from one order to another – without moving closer to or further away from an essential cause of the social or a core of the subject (Flügel-Martinsen 2023).

the emerging bourgeoisie, they are increasingly viewed critically, and their ‘genuine neediness’ is contrasted with possible ‘laziness and aversion to work’ (ibid., p. 49). This results in a sharper emphasis on the “obligation to work” (ibid., p. 52) and initial attempts to divide the poor into deserving and undeserving, taking into account their “peculiar situation in individual cases” (ibid., p. 60):

all in all, systematic regulation and coordination of all measures, under the predominant aspect of public welfare. Thus, the principles of proper distribution of alms as well as the purely repressive measures against the socially harmful elements among the poor, the idle beggars, are drawn into the sphere of secular law and are no longer exclusively subject to the moral commandments valid for the individual Christian (ibid., p. 62).

This ultimately changes the objective of welfare. It no longer aims to achieve a transcendent paradisiacal state. As Scherpner analyzes based on the writings of Vives, the idea of a good social order is increasingly conceived attainable within historical contexts (ibid., p. 85). Consequently, human interventions against the given conditions are conceivable and possible. This rests on the assumption that human beings are fundamentally good and possess the capacity to overcome both structural and individual causes of poverty – that is, conditions that hinder full participation in social life (ibid., p. 91). It is now about ending and eliminating the condition of needing help (ibid., p. 94). Efforts extend beyond the material condition and encompass education towards becoming a good citizen and Christian. Finally, Scherpner, as already shown in Luhmann, concludes that “the care for the poor, welfare, or whatever one wants to call forms of social assistance” (ibid., p. 120) is not carried by the impulses of individual helpers but ultimately depends on “the convictions of human coalitions large and small” (ibid.):

the objective meaning of an act of helping is thus determined by the social situation in which it occurs. [...] who is in need of help, who is considered to be in need of help, which purposes are attributed to the act of helping, all of this is not determined by the individual helper alone, but is conditioned by the conceptions of the society in which help-giver and help-receiver live together (ibid., pp. 123–124).

According to Scherpner, the recipients of caring modern help are those who “for some reason fail to fulfill the requirements of the community, who are unable to maintain their place in community life, [...] and who are therefore in danger of slipping out of the community” (ibid., p. 138). In this respect, caring help is not only or primarily about those in need of help, but additionally always about society or the social order itself, which becomes fragile if too many of its members fall out or “slip out” of it (ibid.).

2.4 Interim Conclusion and Transition: Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Forms of Helping in Inclusive Education

With the exemplary insight into the discussion on forms of helping in the context of social orders, this study has so far focused on both historical changes between gift, alms, and helping, as well as on the significance of the triad of giving, receiving, and reciprocating for the establishment and stabilization of social orders. Following Luhmann (1975), it has been shown that forms of helping develop differently across societies and social orders. This observation already contains the important sociological consideration that practices of helping do not build on natural altruism or a constitutive willingness to cooperate, but as Scherpner (1962/1974) describes, are always specifically linked to how each respective social order is structured and how it deals with those who cannot or do not want to keep up with it or are at risk of slipping out of it. In this regard, the gift finds expression in immediate small-scale helping, alms refer to a class-based order where the poor and needy have their own dedicated place, and modern forms of helping appear as organized help that nowadays addresses the conditions of neediness as avoidable and seeks to overcome them with programs organized by the welfare state.

Following Mauss's (1925/2016) theory of the gift, specific forms of helping are however not only a consequence of social orders, but also practices that establish a specific sociality. Thus, any engagement with cooperative learning or with group interaction, cooperation, and helping directly raises questions about the constitution of sociality. In the discourse following Mauss's central work, there are different arguments and interpretations that are most clearly visible in analyses of the gift relationship:

On one hand, following the works of Caillé (2008), it is understood as a possible renewal of social bonds beyond differences. The gift as a mutual act of help potentially opens and provides opportunities for interaction outside of social dynamics which are understood to be oriented toward individual achievement or benefit. These gift relationships are not functional, but reciprocal and personal and hence, methods of cooperative learning could possibly deliberately establish and support their formation.

On the other hand, there is the assumption that the triad of giving, receiving, and reciprocating operates as an agonistic grounding of sociality (Bedorf 2010). The difference between subjects becomes constitutive (independent of specific further attributions of poverty, (dis)abilities, disorders, and skills). It is only ever bridged provisionally by social rules. All forms of helping are thus interwoven with

(historically) different, but nevertheless always specific social orders (Scherpner 1962/1974). Accordingly, Tomasello (2010) states that through “ultra-cooperative tendencies, not only knowledge but also ‘conformity norms’” (ibid., p. 12f.) are conveyed. Thus, human cultures are “not only [based] on selfish but also fundamentally cooperative processes” (ibid., p. 56), albeit they remain embedded in a social order that stems from cooperation and simultaneously structures this cooperation accordingly.

If one pursues this thought, then group interaction, cooperation, and help, as well as support, are not only linked with specific orders but especially with inclusions and exclusions within these orders (depending on the specific form of helping) and additionally, always with social *positional systems* (Stegbauer 2009). Hence, for the individual they are connected with mechanisms of status or prestige acquisition or loss. As Mauss shows, it not only matters whether one is or becomes part of the social order but also which specific place one occupies within it. Stegbauer (ibid.) addresses this topic using the example of an analysis of collaboration in Wikipedia contributions, which Caillé uses as an example in his discussions as *new forms of non-economic reciprocity*. Although the Wikipedia project is not about financial incentives, positions of higher and lower status, and thus also positions of more and less power and influence seem to develop within this form of group work and are not tied to the necessary expertise alone (ibid.).

Such studies indicate that helping does not express a generally human, egalitarian reciprocity. From this perspective, even the distinction between personal (non-economic) and functional (economic) relationships only reflects what develops as a dominant structure in any specific order. Social orders based on closeness, openness, or care would likewise establish hegemonies (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) and be accompanied by (mis)recognition:

all of them are contingent social logics which, as such, acquire their meaning in precise conjunctural and relational contexts, where they will always be limited by other – frequently contradictory – logics; but none of them has absolute validity, in the sense of defining a space or structural moment which could not in its turn be subverted. It is, therefore, impossible to arrive at a theory of the social on the basis of absolutizing any of those concepts. If Society is not sutured by any single unitary and *positive* logic, our understanding of it cannot provide that logic (Laclau and Mouffe 2014, p. 128–129)

In this respect, the heterogeneous discourse on group interaction, cooperation, and helping legitimizes the empirical question of how teachers and students interact in inclusion-oriented classroom settings that are classified as cooperative.

Given pedagogically anticipated effects and developments, it is also important not to narrow the focus on the subject of analysis too much – i.e. by overly conflating the aspirations of pedagogically framed interactions and the corresponding instructions and interventions with the actual (Weber 1904/1988) nonetheless symbolic (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) social structures that are to be observed and reconstructed (Bender and Rennebach 2021).⁸ The methodologically guided, transparency-oriented approach of this study makes it possible to distinguish the hopes directed at a specific practice from its specific empirical manifestation. All empirical results presented below were obtained by using the reconstructive method of Objective Hermeneutics, which targets latent structures of meaning.⁹ This means that the empirical reconstructions are not about what someone intended to achieve with a certain statement, interaction, or program, but rather about which social rules underlie this ‘life practice’ (Lebenspraxis) beyond any attributions that are intended or hoped for (Wernet 2021). The ideal of this practice should not mask the analysis of the “logics” (Laclau and Mouffe 2014, p. 128) of its symbolic practices.

While social as well as learning-related participation through forms of cooperative learning entails expectations regarding balanced and harmonious reciprocity, as in some readings of the gift relationship (Adloff and Leggewie 2014), the specific analyses of the observed interactions should nevertheless leave room for observations of conflict. Within the interactions this could be negotiated through inclusions or exclusions regarding specific social orders, as well as status positions and prestige associated with them (Bedorf 2010). So far it also remains an open question, whether peer interactions and those in the specific contexts of educational classroom settings differ significantly, or whether the negotiation of such patterns of interaction is repeatedly intertwined. Especially in highly heterogeneous teaching and learning settings, where a wider range of behaviors and learning styles can be assumed, negotiation processes within these cooperative teaching methods are most likely to be particularly demanding.

⁸From the perspective to be developed here, this does not mean that an objective and positionless observation of social conditions is considered to be possible, nor does it aim to search for irrevocable fundamental social structures (Flügel-Martinsen 2022).

⁹For a critical examination of the methodology of Objective Hermeneutics and a framing of the reconstructive process beyond an essentialist assumption about the structure of sociality or autonomous life practice, see Bender (2023): Oevermann uses the term ‘community of solidarity’. In this regard, he and the M.A.U.S.S. movement share the idea of a reconciling essential understanding of the social.

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3.1 Defining the Cases

The present study assumes potentially historically and contextually relational helping practices. Although the collection of the empirical data was specifically linked to forms of cooperative learning and the interactions that develop within them, the concept of helping was chosen as an overarching term for the project. As shown above, the term helping reflects the empirical question of how cooperative practices within group work take shape and whether they inherently contain tensions that interfere with inequalities, inclusions, and exclusions, as well as status positions, similar to those that surface in terms such as gift, alms, and other, modern forms of helping. Thus, the study ultimately asked how practices of helping are established and enacted within forms of cooperative learning in inclusion-oriented classrooms.

On the one hand, the project focused on how the *teachers guide* practices of group work, cooperation or helping. It concentrated on the specific speech acts of teachers whenever they intended for students to work in pairs or groups and to support each other, and further asked which kinds of logics of social practices underlie these implementations of cooperative learning. Additionally, the study examined how these attempts to establish egalitarian and mutual forms of social participation through forms of cooperative teaching relate to other elements of teaching that are more oriented towards other norms or knowledge transfer. Specific instructions and hints, as well as praise and criticism, may open or close opportunities for interaction for students, which in turn could indicate points of inclusion and exclusion.

Regarding the practices of helping on the other side, the *interactions between students* were also of interest, since in inclusive education these are expected to display different relations of reciprocity. This difference in reciprocity was selected as the main criterion to contrast the cases. This was done in order to move away from pre-structured diagnostic and more specifically difference- and disorder-related criteria and categories as well as to be able to consider them intersectionally. Based on the material the differences that emerged in the cases could thus be linked to each other along their respective relations of reciprocity. The selection of the cases distinguished between balanced relations of reciprocity and relations of reciprocity with medium and high differences. This differentiation was developed as inductively as possible from the material, and the selection of the cases was initially based on manifestly perceived differences in interactions. It was therefore by no means objective or categorical, but as far as possible grounded in the specific data at hand. This also raised the question of whether it is possible to map patterns across interactions and cases, which, more or less clearly, appear within the observed group interaction, cooperation, and helping, and furthermore, what challenges, opportunities, tensions, and possibly impositions are inherent to these from both a help-giver's and a help-receiver's point of view.

Overall, two complementary perspectives were thus established: On the one hand, it was asked to what extent the teacher practices harmonize or conflict with the resulting interactions among the students. On the other hand, a diachronic perspective focused on whether the described and reconstructed teaching and helping practices change across different grades and thus in response to the students' presumed stages of life and shifts regarding educational requirements. The latter is the focus of this publication.

3.2 Selection, Collection, and Evaluation of the Data

At the beginning of the project, previous studies on cooperative learning in the German-speaking area mainly focused on elementary education. In order to complement these, the empirical data of this study were collected in secondary level I (grades five to ten). This initially allowed the use of the diachronic contrasting criterion, i.e. the changing stages of life for generating empirical material. In this regard, as stated above, it was assumed that forms of group interaction, cooperation, and helping may evolve throughout students' school careers, both due to the increasing relevance of peers and in relation to a shifting orientation toward school demands, understood as growing role conformity (cf. Breidenstein 2006; Krappmann 2010) and positional security (Raimondi 2019).

For this reason, classroom interactions were recorded in Grades 5, 7 and 9 at inclusive secondary schools, before students with special educational needs – especially those with learning difficulties – sometimes leave school after Grade 9 in Germany for vocational training. Additionally, care was taken to include both more rural and more urban catchment areas,¹ with the secondary school in the more rural catchment area necessarily located in the nearest larger urban area or district town. The initial sample of two schools was expanded to three during data collection, as access to one grade level at the school with an urban catchment area could not be obtained. The sample ultimately consisted of one school that applied for the Jakob Muth Prize² (rural), a Jakob Muth Prize-winning school (urban), and a German School Prize-winning school which was also an applicant for the Jakob Muth Prize (urban). All schools indicated in their school programs that they use forms of cooperative learning to provide for inclusive teaching and learning. Two of the participating schools were located in the western federal states, and one in the eastern federal states.

The data were collected over two weeks in all classes where spatial conditions allowed for and where participants consented to recordings, specifically in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades, using video and audio recording devices at all tables and activity centers (reading corners, breakout rooms, etc.). In higher grades lesson-related groupwork outside the classroom decreased. In practice, a recording device was placed on each group table at the beginning of each lesson, partially ‘camouflaged’ with a cloth bag to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to the display and its level indicator. Additionally, two video cameras were positioned in the room. Since it was planned from the beginning not to evaluate video data, these served solely to assign the audio recordings to the corresponding speakers, which would have been very difficult otherwise due to the often large and changing configurations of the groups.

To prepare for the selection of the scenes to be reconstructed, the collected material was reviewed with particular attention to sequences in which teachers address helping, group work, and cooperation, that is, where they discuss these interactional practices or shape the corresponding social relations. With regard to the corresponding helping interactions among students in the second phase of the proj-

¹ Since inclusive secondary schools were assumed to have highly heterogeneous teaching and learning contexts, the contrast criterion urban/rural was added to represent a broad spectrum of catchment areas and possibly school cultures.

² The *Jakob Muth Prize for Inclusive Schooling* is a German national award recognizing schools for exemplary inclusive education, i.e. joint learning of students with and without disabilities.

ect, eight instances of teacher-initiated implementations of such interactions were ultimately selected. They were extensively reconstructed using the method of Objective Hermeneutics and written up as case studies.

In the second phase of the project, the reconstructions focused on the help interactions among students. Overall, cases were selected, transcribed, reconstructed, and documented as case studies for each grade level, where a high, medium, and low difference in reciprocity appeared during the review of the data material. By the end of the project, three case reconstructions were available for each grade level, totaling nine case reconstructions overall. Additionally, two scenes were included in the sample for the fifth grades, where all differences in reciprocity (balanced, medium, high) were depicted in the documented group interactions, allowing to trace important logics of these practices as well as the possibilities and tensions associated with them.

3.3 Case Overview and Cumulative Findings

In advance of the reconstructions at the core of this publication, Chapter 4 will summarize the key results of the case reconstructions that have already been published elsewhere. This allows for an empirically comprehensible cumulative development of the findings and an overall picture of the study.

The summaries begin with the reconstructions in which the teachers establish help interactions. At the conclusion of the first research phase, three typologically distinct cases were presented in a related publication. They will be summarized in Sect. 4.1 to reflect the findings and in order to be able to consider them in the upcoming discussion. This is followed by a synopsis of the case reconstructions that address the overarching, relatively stable logics of working together among students in highly heterogeneous classrooms against the backdrop of the discourse on practices of helping (Sect. 4.2). Finally, previously elaborated findings are incorporated that examine those cases which, during the review of the material, appeared to proceed smoothly and in which no tensions or conflicts – or only successfully managed ones – seemed to arise in the interaction despite differing degrees of reciprocity (Sect. 4.3).

Regarding Sect. 4.1 For the reconstruction of the cases with teachers implementing help interactions, one case from the fifth, one from the seventh, and one from the ninth grade were consulted. Since this marked the first step into the data material, this initial access and the associated publication (Bender and Rennebach 2018) focused on asking which forms of helping (gift, alms, modern forms of helping) the

teachers might refer to and whether further patterns become apparent when it comes to evening out differences through forms of cooperative learning. The agnostic character of the gift itself, which is presumably also intertwined with the creation of social orders that, in turn, involve specific inclusions and exclusions, was not yet addressed in detail here.

Regarding Sect. 4.2 The second analysis was based on the cross-sectional case from the fifth grade (**RB5/RM5/RH5a** – group of four around Lynn, Table 3.1),

Table 3.1 Case matrix

Yr.	Balanced relation of reciprocity (RB)	Medium difference in reciprocity (RM)	High difference in reciprocity (RH)
5.	Addressing the delegation of inclusion via cooperation through the simulation of friendship and by delegating to the next smaller interaction unit (RB5/RM5/RH5a – Group of four around Lynn)		
	Conflictual handling of the formal distribution of status (help-giver/help-receiver) with structurally balanced relation of reciprocity (RB5 – Dennis and Thomas)	Striving for cooperativeness on both the factual and peer level in order to address differences on both levels (RM5 – Justin and Michael)	Cooperativeness via allowing for the special role and smoothly integrating into it (RH5 – Dennis and Ahmad)
	Helping students: Self-stylization as help-givers, rejection of help, dilemma of the non-direct teachability of content (RB5/RM5/RH5b)		
7.	Utilization of positions / strategically functionalizing the objective of cooperation (RB7 – Valerie and Anne)	Mediation of the assumed quasi-teacher position via the peer dimension (help-givers), while insisting on the special role (help-receivers) (RM7 – Stefan and Markus)	Manifest withdrawal of help (help-receiver) following the staging and exploitation of the help relationship (help-giver) as part of peer interactional play (RH7 – group of eight around Sarah)
9.	Cooperation as peer integration of a subject-expert type of self-positioning (a special role) (RB9a and RM9 – Group of four around Julian)		Compassionate and lenient handling of the specific individual case (help-givers) while misrecognizing the concomitant special role (help-receivers) (RH9 – Lina and Marius)

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Cooperation as a safe space or as a misrecognized stabilization of the special role (RB9b – Mia and Sandra)		
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Source: Own survey

and also considered the case with high difference in reciprocity from the seventh grade (**RH7** – group of eight around Sarah, Table 3.1) (see Bender and Rennebach 2021). These approaches allowed to incorporate the findings that had emerged from the analysis of the teachers implementing help interactions, while also outlining the structural problem of inclusive education (see also Bender and Dietrich 2019). In addition to increasing evidence that interactions in cooperative learning groups do not automatically even out inequalities in social and learning-related educational participation, this reconstruction also reveals various strategies used to mask the apparent failure to achieve the ideal of inclusion (see also Bender et al. 2023).

Regarding Sect. 4.3 Eventually, the question arose as to how, given the prevailing logics, a smooth handling of the established differences in the respective working groups is possible against the backdrop of high, yet not fully achievable, requirements of cooperation. What forms of interaction and subject positions contribute to addressing these differences in reciprocity in such a way that conflicts do not erupt on a manifest level between the involved actors? Since a case from the fifth grade had already been comprehensively reconstructed, focusing on tensions and their management, three cases from the fifth grade were also selected for this perspective (**RB5** – Dennis and Thomas; **RM5** – Justin and Michael; **RH5** – Dennis and Ahmad, see Table 3.1), in which interactions initially appeared to be examples of unproblematic helping interactions (see Bender 2020). Against the background of the previously generated findings, these cases were analyzed to reconstruct the conditions under which “successful” forms of mutual help (Wagener 2007) emerge despite differing degrees of reciprocity.

In this volume, the final step is undertaken by comparatively reconstructing, from a diachronic perspective, the transformations in the forms of cooperation, and help practices across different grade levels. In order to do so, firstly, Sect. 5.1

presents the reconstruction of another case from the fifth grade (**RB5/RM5/RH5b**, see Table 3.1).

This particularly highlights how the participants (still) strive to meet the expectations of cooperation and mutual help and how these efforts to realize them are shaped by the nature of the practices of helping. It thus allows to unfold the relatively stable structural problems of these practices in school contexts. Secondly, the reconstructions of the three cases from the seventh grade are presented (**RB7** – Leonie and Anne; **RM7** – Stefan and Markus; **RH7** – group of eight around Sarah) with the case “**RH7** – the group of eight around Sarah” taken up again here (see Table 3.1). The tensions and conflicts are particularly pronounced in this grade and developmental stage and are exploited for purposes of prestige and status acquisition. Thirdly, the two cases from the ninth grade however (**RM9** – group of four around Julian; **RH9** – Sina and Marius, see Table 3.1), present a calmer handling of potential tensions and dynamics. This is related to the now apparently relatively stable subject positions that have been established within the framework of the social order, against which fewer negotiations in forms of group interactions and cooperative learning take place (or need to take place). The cumulative development of findings concludes with an additional impression from the 9th grade (**RB9b** – Mia and Sandra, see Table 3.1), which once again draws attention to the flip side of these diminishing tensions.

As far as possible, each case will also include how the instructing teachers initiate the respective group interactions. Accordingly, the following reconstructions altogether focus on the diachronic perspective, as mentioned above: (How) Do the reconstructed formations and unfolding enactments of group interactions, cooperation and helping practices vary across grade levels?

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How Group Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping in Inclusive Education Establish Difference and Address Inequality

4.1 Teachers Establishing Help Interactions

To appropriately implement cooperative learning, teachers are precariously challenged to establish egalitarian practices in highly heterogeneous contexts. The reconstruction of such processes in which teachers establish groupwork and cooperation confirmed the assumption that these processes are unlikely to be implemented beyond social orders and associated positions, and thus, orders of difference. These findings were consistent across the three different grade levels that were examined.¹ The pedagogical justificatory patterns for reciprocity and equality that emerge empirically lead, in the teachers' speech acts – this being the overarching result that can be anticipated here – to a continuous thematization of difference and of the appropriate way of dealing with it. In the cases examined, however, three different variants can be identified in this regard, which can be related to the earlier attempts to distinguish between different forms of helping. These are also reflected in the different grade levels.

For the fifth grade, the following case was reconstructed, which structurally relates to the modern forms of helping. In mathematics class, a phase of group work follows a phase of whole-class instruction and the previously explained subject matter is now practiced and further developed. The teacher initiates this change between instructional formats as follows:

¹For more detailed results please consider Bender and Rennbach (2018).

T1: so (-) we will form groups shortly in fact varying groups that's why I just asked who has already understood it really well (-) there will always be one expert in the group↑ and (--) two to three other members hERe you don't need to do number one (-) that (-) is (-) nonsense so if anyone's bored they can do it but don't have to (-) for number two it say:s the expert explains the examples how are the lengths converted there are three times of only examples (-) and I don't want anyone asking what do we have to do there (-)

With the phrase “we will form groups shortly”, the teacher initially declares themselves as part of the group formation process. It is hence not left to the students to decide in which composition of groups they want to enter this phase of group interaction. At the same time, this teacher-initiated formation of groups is based on an initially vague criterion. There are supposed to be “varying groups”. Compared to ‘different’ or ‘several’ groups, which would be assorted according to certain criteria, it is yet unclear whether these groups should differ externally or internally. In terms of a difference within the group, however, ‘mixed’ groups could also have been mentioned. It can be assumed that in case of an external difference following a certain criterion, terms like ‘different’ or ‘several’, as well as explicitly naming the criterion, would have been possible at this stage. Further, it seems likely that the phrase ‘mixed groups’ is avoided due to its discriminating connotations. At this point it can be assumed that the groups will not differ externally, but somehow internally. Thus, the attribute of difference dominates, which is expected to relate to the composition within the groups. Additionally, it can be noted that the focus is not on the subject matter, but on the process of group formation. The missing criterion is finally mentioned. There should be students in the groups who have already understood the previously explained subject matter really well, and two to three “other members”. The focus is thus on those who – after the joint phase of introduction – have already understood the subject matter “really well”. In this setting, these experts are set up as a kind of multiplier of the superior position, which have already mastered the subject matter. This is usually the teacher. The small groups are hence not egalitarian groups aiming for mutual help, but rather miniature class structures. The designations “experts” and “other members” sharpen the attributions even further by dividing them into those who have outstanding knowledge, which can only be acquired with great individual effort, and the unspecific and undefined others. It is very interesting that the teacher simultaneously suspends their own role. They may not be addressed for explanations, support, and questions during this phase of groupwork. This means that difficulties in taking on the assigned roles cannot be addressed either. The teaching method and the transfer of knowledge delegated into it are thus assumed to succeed, or vice versa, it is at-

tempted to hide its likely or rather even anticipated failure. On the one hand, this variant of establishing help interactions reflects modern forms of helping: Due to their special skills and characteristics help-givers are supposed to be capable of achieving the objectives given in the respective context. At the same time, this seems to exacerbate the structural difficulties inherent in this form of helping, as the help appears to exhaust itself in its organization. Any interest in its evaluation or even actual learning outcomes is pushed into the background.

In the seventh grade, the scene takes place in a compulsory elective course, in which different subtasks and subprojects were worked on during the collection of the data. The case also focuses on the way in which the groups are formed.

- T1: and your task is <<prolonged> shortly> in a group work (--) first (-) to gather as a group↑ (-) and <<loud>THEN> (--) <<loud>so> (-) that everyone is satisfied with the allocation↑ (-) you have to form groups of FOUR↑
- S: mhm
- T1: think about not to<<prolonged> exclude> anyone

In this case, however, the students are supposed to form groups by themselves and pay attention to certain aspects in the process for which they are made responsible. Forming the groups is clearly framed as a “task”. It is thus not established as an autonomous and helpful practice, however, the students are required to master it in the context of this lesson. The goal is a social one. Firstly, it is about ensuring that everyone is satisfied with how the groups are formed, and secondly, it should be taken into account not to exclude anyone, although it is unlikely that any students will actually be left out, due to the additional announcement that groups of *four* should be formed. In this additional explanation of the group division, exclusions are addressed again. If the teacher did not choose groups of four because conveniently this way no students would actually be left out (which would also be guaranteed by groups of two and three), the potential exclusion is unnecessarily mentioned again. The group of students is thus reminded that exclusions are part of the usual practice, just as it seems to be inherent to it that there are divisions that are either more or less satisfactory. In this case too, the focus is on dealing with difference, although it could have been solved formally by dividing the students into groups of four. But how is this process to be handled here? The phrase “think about not to<<prolonged> exclude> anyone” can shed light on this. In case exclusions occur in their practice, the students are supposed to ‘only’ think about the exclusion, while excluding someone is at the same time identified as having already occurred or as being unavoidable. What is required in response is a kind of contemplative retreat, a repentant attitude, which, however, does not call for any

change in positions. This group work is thus about practicing a moral attitude that admonishes a humble, non-exploitative handling of the differences and differentiations inevitably inherent in social practice. As in the explanations on alms, no change in the situations is aimed for, but these are rather confirmed by establishing certain ways of dealing with them while also providing a vehicle for practicing certain social positions.

Finally, the last scene is part of a science lesson in ninth grade.

T1: okay↑ (-) then (--) um (2.0) <<prolonged>we have> (2.9) a working plan for you (---) and that is (--) um (-) there is in the book↑ (-) the text page two hundred and sixty-two to sixty-three↑ (--) this: you should read (-) accordingly the others one hundred and ninety-two=three and ninety-three in the Stark in...book↑ there is also once more the illustration (---) of the (-) coal-fired power plant↑

[...]

T2: okay and as usual um (--) you have um (--) you have (-)these:: double lines show you (-) that then there is always a phase of comparison a so (-) who has the (-) now here at one star who has completed the first three um tasks um would write their name on the board again comp=and compare with the next one who is finished the same applies here for these two star tasks right↑

Initially, the students are supposed to work alone and read the relevant texts in the learning materials. In doing so the students work in two different books or workbooks, or rather, the students with special educational needs as “the others” work in the “Stark in ... book”. Apparently, the subject matter has been covered already, since a certain illustration is mentioned “also once more”. In this respect, reading the texts may not be equally necessary for everyone. This becomes all the more relevant as the working plan implicitly rewards the students’ working speed. When the students have finished the tasks of a work package, they write their name in the first column on the board. It is checked there who has also written their name and as a next step pairs of students, whose names are in the same column, are supposed to compare their results. This is followed by them returning to their individual work on the two-star tasks and so on. On the board, it is thus displayed who has already advanced into the several-star columns and at what pace. This is not unusual within school contexts, but it does not fulfill the assumption of compensatory interactions in cooperative learning, because in this very case, students of similar performance levels work together, while differences with slower students become apparent. This orchestration of cooperative learning also repeatedly pushes the actual subject matter which is to be conveyed into the background. The difference between no-star, one-star, and multi-star students, as well as their speed, be-

comes visible. It does not become clear how a lack of understanding is dealt with in the slower groups (see Sect. 5.3.5). Ultimately, this setting is thus no longer about leveling out differences among the students.

The compensatory and community-oriented developments hoped for in inclusive teaching through the use of cooperative learning empirically appear as different references to the forms of helping. It is however noticeable, that neither intentional nor structural references to the gift-relationship reflect within them. The contrastive, cross-grade comparison allowed to distinguish three types of social interaction in the context of help and difference:

(1) a stylized form of ‘modern’ helping in the fifth grade, which in this case does not seriously pursue learning success as a (re-)integration via the reproduction of the teaching setting; (2) the practice of almsgiving, which admonishes to an appropriate handling of unalterable differences in the seventh grade, and (3) the (simulation of) cooperation in the ninth grade, which dissolves asymmetries but does so through separation, and thus not by focusing on social compensation processes (Bender and Rennebach 2021, 416).

Despite the differences, recurring modes of delegation across the cases are striking, and they seem to stem from the approach of cooperative learning. In the fifth grade, expert-students are put in charge of the highly heterogeneous learning settings, in the seventh grade the groups, who are heterogeneous in performance are made responsible, and in the ninth grade the handling of the situation is handed over to the working schedule. In addition, it becomes clear that the establishment of “positive dependence” and equality (see Johnson et al. 1994) prove difficult. Instead, difference becomes a reoccurring theme (see Sturm and Wagner-Willi 2016; Martens 2015; Emmerich 2016), which is not attempted to be addressed seriously. If one understands the ninth grade as the ending of attempts to be dealing with a highly increased heterogeneity, in which inclusions and exclusions occur, then the specifically organized cooperation finally allows to avoid heterogeneity within the groups and thus also to avoid dealing with clearly asymmetrical help interactions altogether. If one follows the results of this synchronous longitudinal study, then help interactions as mutual forms of helping in the sense of a gift relationship seem to have no place in instructional practices.

If one assumes at this point that the interactions among the students do not contradict these variants of arrangements, then such establishments of non-whole-class instructional formats of organized cooperation would not advance the processing of difference, but rather constitute a process of *socialization into dealing with difference*. This includes the additional aspect that a (re-)integration into the social order of the classroom, as well as a serious engagement with learning and

processes of understanding, is structurally not the primary aim in these settings. Instead, such arrangements merely invite a moment of reflection that neither calls for nor envisages genuinely inclusive practices.

4.2 Interactions between Students

The question that arose subsequently, then, was whether students might be able to balance out these differences within the forms of cooperation – differences that, for the teachers, clearly constitute an ongoing problem to be addressed. To investigate this question, a case from the fifth grade was used in which all previously assumed differences in reciprocity presented within a group of four (RB5/RM5/RH5a – group of four around Lynn).² It is a German lesson embedded in a teaching unit on parts of sentences. A whole-class instructional phase is followed by a phase of group work. The students are supposed to jointly complete a fill-in-the-gap-text, where the text simultaneously constitutes a puzzle. It is a letter in which it is described to the fictional recipient (Linda) where she should go and what she should do to find something specific there. This means a slightly increased level of difficulty, as the words to be filled in do not directly result from the context. Instead, the students actually have to pay attention to the appropriate parts of sentences and grammatical cases, who justify the placement of the individual elements within the letter. What is special about this constellation from which the observed group of four finally emerges, is that in the classroom, pairs of tables (each designed for two students) are not arranged opposite each other, but at an angle. The students are thus not seated face-to-face; instead, two tables are arranged in an L-shape, and these table pairs are distributed throughout the classroom. There are also individual workstations where students sit alone at a two-person table (because their neighbors, for example, are sick) and there is one single table that is not integrated into an L-structure, but is placed at the edge of the room with a view towards the window (cf. Bender and Rennebach 2021, p. 241). The phase of group work at first creates the problem of integrating the students at these individual workstations into the arrangement of cooperative learning. The teacher addresses this issue rather vaguely: *“your task is now (.) to solve the puzzle in a minute (---) in partner work (--)”*. As in the previous cases, the constellation in which the students are supposed to work together is declared part of the task. But since there are students who are not in partner constellations, a student (Mert), who sits alone at a two-person table in an L-structure, asks for so-called “partner cards”, basically a lottery system to create group constellations. This is denied to him, and he gets the following answer: *“you do it i-in sets of three or alternatively mert (.) you can also go to justin”*. Mert is thus referred to the trio in his

²For a more detailed presentation of the cases please consider Bender and Rennbach (2021).

L-structure, alternatively he can go to Justin, who is in the same situation as him. Mert finally stays where he is (as does Justin), but Lynn, who sits at the individual workstation at the window, now joins the trio around Mert after briefly calling out and making eye contact. This way, a highly heterogeneous group of four is emerging, which should now with regards to the requirements of cooperative learning, strive for egalitarian group work which should compensate for differences between the group members.

The following sequence begins with Lynn's arrival at the trio. However, she does not sit down next to Mert at the outer free place at his table, but at the head of the table where Mariella and Natalie already sit, diagonally and thus very close to Mariella. Mert is now sitting almost offset from her and Natalie is the furthest away.

- Lynn: ((inhales)) oh: how <<prolonged> cute> look she [positions herself there (unintelligible)]
- Mariella: [(<loud> yes yes yes later]
- Lynn: oh: I HATE that (.) [when you do that (<<soft> sometimes))] (--) ALWAYS this arrogance-stuff (-) [that's arrogant]
- Mariella: [bye (.) bye]
[dear linda (-) you] [huh ? you're leaving the ((mumbles))]
- Lynn: [(((clicks)) maN: I don't have a sheet (2) oh yes I do still have a sheet]
- Natalie: what's the date today ? (1) <<laughing> the ninth)
- Mert: [the ninth]
- Mariella: [yes (.) the] [ninth]
- Lynn: [guys] could we maybe also work together instead of [that-]
- Mert: [=ohno:]
we're doing <<prolonged> [also]
- Natalie: [=huh ?] I'm just writing down the date [right now]
- Lynn: [you
CAN see that]
- Mariella: I 've- (-) just read that (1)
- Lynn: [what is] that (.) what is that: ?
[...]
- Mariella: mert (.) are you guys working together then I'll work here with-
- Mert: no we're doing five [I mean four]
- Natalie: [we can] do it as four
- Mariella: we're supposed to do partner work
- Mert: table work is also possible
- Lynn: <<high pitched> MA-RI-ELLA but you always WORK AHEAD> that's cra::p
- Mariella: huh ? I haven't worked ahead at all
- Lynn: not at all you've just read it [just now]
- Mert: [<<prolonged, very loud> GOD>]

Immediately upon Lynn's arrival at the group table, the cooperation proves to be socially difficult and complex, which rather impairs a focus on the task to be solved and perhaps even makes it impossible. Lynn challenges Mariella to a peer-cultural interaction through the choice of her seat, as well as through the first speech act, which Mariella fends off more or less strongly. She does not engage in a peer interaction with Lynn, although interestingly she rejects her clearly, but not so aggressively that Lynn leaves the group manifestly. A kind of tussle is thus sustained that allows Lynn to interpret the rejection as one of Mariella's idiosyncratic quirks (i.e., arrogant behaviour), while Mariella, in turn, does not preclude Lynn from interpreting the situation as her merely being the addressee of Mariella's generally brusque manner. Differences and conflicts are thus present in the group, but are not made publicly apparent in class. This seems to be carefully avoided by all group members, who also have the "task" of working together. Lynn presents herself as a group member who, through a fixation on forms of social interaction, which are denounced as unfairly and unsolidarily, consistently hinders, and even prevents their classmates from swiftly and possibly also individually completing the task. Insisting on solving the task together, almost in lockstep, proves to be dysfunctional both socially and in terms of content, even though this appeals to the norms of cooperative learning on a manifest level. Mariella finally attempts to divide the group once again, according to the possibility, to also work in pairs. However, this attempt fails because Mert does not want to take responsibility for the group interaction in a smaller group.

With this case we were able to show in detail in Bender and Rennbach (2021) how the interactions in the group do not fail in ways publicly visible to the class, but internally since no balanced or self-balancing cooperative forms of mutual help are established – as had been suspected on a latent level by the teachers when establishing the interaction. For this case that means Lynn can neither be socially integrated into the group nor in terms of work content. Interestingly, this does not apply to Mert, even though he is a student with special educational needs. The special educational needs do thus not provide sufficient information about possible difficulties regarding social or educational participation, which confirmed the assumption that those needs are not suitable as an empirical contrast criterion. With regards to the ideal of inclusion, the interaction rather shows how the demands on the students in these complex situations increase. They must not only care for their own process of understanding, but also for that of the other students as well as for the social integration of the group. That they succeed in doing so seems unlikely, as can be seen in this case as well as in the instructional phrase of the teachers. Nor is it seen that any of the involved orders adapt to the specific characteristics and needs of the individuals. Regarding the content, the interaction is about the fill-in-

the-blank text, which obviously cannot be abandoned by Lynn's reference to the fact that she finds it difficult to get into a working mode that leads to a valid result. Other conceivable alternatives, e.g. a switch to working in lockstep etc., seem impossible as well. The delegation of dealing with difference, or rather the delegation of integration and inclusion to student groups thus proves to be a permanent and insoluble conflict, which presents as more or less confrontational. Interestingly, even this student group attempts to deal with these difficulties by delegating them to a smaller group. The efforts to realize inclusion in cooperative learning thus seem also to involve attempts at making differences less visible or rather at making them invisible via delegations to student groups, i. e. by covering up the unfulfilled expectations of inclusion.

In the different constellations from the fifth grade, it becomes clear that they fulfill the norm of cooperation by making great efforts not to let the internal group tensions and frictions and their effects on the disputes regarding the content become publicly manifest to the class. Temporarily, the phases of group work thus lead to a suspension of a public exclusion within the class, which is, however, transferred to the group and continues there. Yet the actual interactions take place beyond an inclusive moral norm. The cooperation does not take place in the mode of subject-related social-integrative learning. What is empirically derived as a delegation of the issue, thus allows to address the norms of inclusion, without transforming teaching and social orders (or being able to do so) since, as can be seen in this case, they are likely to always go hand in hand with inclusions and exclusions.

4.3 Balanced (Help-)Interactions

To secure these findings, the next step was to look for cases in the fifth grade where interactions at a first glance seemed particularly smooth, conflict-free and balanced on a manifest level. On the one hand, the question arose whether even these seemingly "unproblematic" (cf. Sect. 2.1) cases display differences that are connected with the classroom order and that the involved students have to address with regards to both peer culture and subject matter in order to at least keep up appearances of cooperation. On the other hand, these interactions could possibly fulfill the expectations of egalitarian cooperation with the students addressing each other as equals and supporting each other's work and comprehension throughout the educational tasks at hand. In both cases, we also focused on the different and specific social structures of those interactions that appeared successful in terms of cooperative learning, or at least did not seem problematic despite differences in reciprocity. In particular, the interaction between Justin and Michael (RM5 – Justin

and Michael) was selected for this purpose, which (following the reconstruction) was assigned a medium difference in reciprocity. As a contrasting case, another scene between the students Dennis, Thomas and Ahmad served as a focal point, with a high difference in reciprocity between Dennis and Ahmad (RH5 – Dennis and Ahmad), while also displaying an unproblematic interaction between the two of them, whereas Dennis and Thomas (RB5 – Dennis and Thomas) get into a problematic situation despite showing a balanced relation of reciprocity.³

The first sequence of interaction between Justin and Michael takes place during the same German lesson as the previously presented case and thus also follows the already mentioned speech act of the teacher: “*your task is now (.) to solve the puzzle in a minute (---) in partner work (--)*”. Justin and Michael are sitting at two different tables arranged in an L-shape next to each other. Michael’s neighbor at the table is not attending school that day, while there is usually an empty seat next to Justin, which is why he also sits at a single workstation. The beginning of the protocol also marks the beginning of the interaction in this constellation.

- Justin: dear linda (5)
 Michael: so I’m getting it ((drink)) (-) wow it’s so easy dude (-) justin we’re doing (11) so Justin (-) where- we’re doing
 Justin: hm?
 Michael: <<singing> we=ee are doing uh (-) partner work> (1.5) okay?
 Justin: huh?
 Michael: <<prolonged> we’re doing partner work>
 Justin: okay um
 Michael: dear linda
 Justin: YOU (-) leave (-) the HOUSE
 Michael: you leave the house (.) yes
 Justin: so you then leave the house

Contrary to the previously presented case, Justin directly starts working on the worksheet and reads its beginning aloud. He thus sets the start of this (group) work phase, without really being interested in his potential partner. After a pause of five seconds, in which Justin probably tries to identify the correct word to fill in the gap in the text, Michael’s first speech act follows on a peer level by mentioning that he will get himself a drink without having explicit permission. He thereby signals to Justin that he is breaking school rules, which were neither previously nor immediately thematically mentioned in this scene. Michael’s attempt to engage on a peer-cultural level against a possible rule in class thus falls flat and is not picked up by Justin. Michael continues to try to establish an interactional relationship with Justin

³For further details on the following, see Bender (2020).

by finally emphasizing how easy the task at hand is. However, as a speech act at peer level, this is not necessarily an obvious choice. One would rather expect a social connection resulting from the difficulty of the task to be mastered - again in opposition to the instructional framing and in accordance with the already shared criticism against it.⁴ Since Justin is indeed thinking about the first gap in the text, this attempt also seems to be a poor candidate to initiate a phase of joint work. Michael finally repeats his request after a pause of eleven seconds (“(-) *justin we’re doing (11) so justin (-) where- we’re doing*”). A reaction from Justin on peer level, for example ‘*yeah really easy*’, is just as absent as even a short response to the requests for cooperation addressed to him. Contrary to the intention of appearing peer-culturally casual and non-conformist, Michael’s attempts to establish a peer-related or subject-matter-oriented interaction thus appear quite forced.

Over the course of the transcript, the impression of disconnection solidifies. While Michael repeatedly attempts to persuade Justin to cooperate (with different strategies – singing, speaking quickly), Justin does respond more frequently, but beyond his own engagement with the task, he does not seem to show further interest in Michael. However, Justin eventually confirms the request for cooperation on a manifest level: “okay um”. At this point, it is noticeable that Michael’s somewhat clumsy efforts are not brought up in any way:

Without emphasizing the existing asymmetry, Justin engages in the partner work in a conciliatory manner – like an older friend – and thus accommodates the evident effort to establish an equal relationship and a symmetrical position with regard to the instructional task. (Bender 2020, p. 28)

However, cooperation regarding the instructional task is only staged or feigned in the following, as Michael merely repeats – albeit not inapt – the references to the subject matter already brought up by Justin. This keeps the interaction structurally asymmetric, as both remain in their respective positions: Justin takes a strongly *autonomous* position, which results from a very close reference to the educational requirements, and shows little interest and sense for Michael’s attempts at community on a peer-level, while Michael does not explicitly ask for the interaction and support he needs, as he would then have to bring up the difference between him and Justin. The successful outcome in this form of group interaction thus does not consist in balancing or reducing inequalities through cooperation. What is striking on Justin’s part, rather, is that the differences between him and Michael along the axis of performance and status are not exploited or put on display either in peer-cultural terms or within the instructional context. In contrast, Michael’s

⁴Although school affirming peer-cultural interactions can also be found (Zaborowski et al. 2011).

contribution consists in the explicit effort to participate, i. e. to both enter a partner constellation and to participate in the work process, although the differences in status and performance are obvious. The question of why Justin occupies a single workstation in the class structure can thus either be explained by the fact that he can perhaps more strongly refer to his individual learning strategy of working independently, or that in such phases of group work, he works as a ‘floater’, for the students at single workstations (that have been set up for other reasons), as is also indicated by the teacher’s speech act from the previous scene about Lynn (Sect. 3.2): *“you do it i-in sets of three or alternatively mert (.) you can also go to justin.”*

The cases of balanced relations and high difference in status in the following are part of the same scene. It takes place in the mathematics class. It is taken from the same lesson in which the teacher establishes the expert groups in Sect. 3.1. Following an instructional unit directed at the class as a whole, which supposes to establish the subject matter of ‘lengths’ and ‘conversion of length’, the selected experts are now to explain the conversion of length units to the other group members. As shown above, the experts thus become delegates of the teacher and a status difference on the performance axis is thus already established via the teachers’ set-up of the interaction. The following passages present three different excerpts of practices developing in relation to help interactions between the selected expert Dennis and the group members Thomas and Ahmad.

- Dennis: so: (.) do you want it explained? or do you ALSO want to participate in [this task]
 Thomas: [<<loud> I need to go to the bathroom> ((Laughter))]
 Dennis: <<very soft>then ask>
 Ahmad: hey man (.) I’ll leave in a minute (---)
 Dennis: so:-
 Ahmad: so RIGHT
 Thomas: then leave [...]

Dennis immediately takes on the role of the explainer, thereby presupposing a lack of understanding among his group members. Structurally, he is only concerned with delivering an explanation that does not include any further interest in comprehension. Through this opening, he establishes his assigned expert role in a very high difference to the classmates in his group. In contrast to this, Thomas chooses the role of a rebellious student. He clearly demonstrates student-like disinterest in the learning material represented by Dennis. At the same time, this expresses Thomas’ refusal of the position in which he could receive an explanation from Dennis. This puts Dennis in a dilemma, because despite his assigned role of an expert, he cannot discipline Thomas. He could only turn to the teacher and ac-

cuse Thomas of ‘disobedience’, whereby he would also admit that he cannot fully implement his assigned role even right after the beginning of the group work. In accordance with the previous case reconstructions this option is predictably not chosen. Instead, Thomas is referred to the fact that he would have to ask the teacher in order to go to the bathroom, which refers to the classroom order established by the teacher, and which is also maintained by Thomas. Thomas’ intervention thus has no immediate effect.

Before further disputes about the assigned roles arise, Ahmad intervenes by threatening the two competitors to quit the group work himself. Dennis uses this opportunity to pick up his explanation again, whereupon Ahmad once again insists on implementing the assigned roles as intended by the teacher: “For Ahmad, the asymmetry of the arranged roles is unproblematic, the other group members not giving in to them is not” (Bender 2020, p. 30). The status conflict at peer level is stressing him. This intensifies when Thomas takes Ahmad’s threat to leave as a welcome opportunity to involve him in the quarrels and even to use Ahmad’s attempts to maintain the setting to the contrary, as an opportunity to advance the dissolution of the group: “then leave [...]”

A short time later, Ahmad presents his worksheet to Thomas during the group work:

Ahmad:	look what I got (.) do you=want something like this too? (-)
Thomas:	is it easier?
Ahmad:	<<prolonged> yes> [...]

Ahmad labels the differentiation of tasks, which provides him with tasks more adequate for him – presumably at least adjusted in quantity – as a received gift. This sequence is hence a confirmation that Ahmad takes on the role of the help-receiver without any problems. He is not offended by it, but even sees it as a particular attention and an asset. Possibly, this is also an attempt to appease Thomas, who might also be pleased to receive such special treatment. However, this does not appeal to Thomas, as he structurally claims the higher status position. Thomas does not particularly exploit Ahmad’s lack of understanding of the social situation, he does however reveal the relation of Ahmad’s gift compared to the other requirements – it is easier. At this point, Thomas leans towards the peer conflict rather than putting himself in the role of an expert or displaying a superior attitude towards Ahmad, e.g. by confirming Ahmad’s joy about the special worksheet.

Shortly before the end of the work phase, Dennis now takes the opportunity to point out his difficult situation to the teacher.

- T: <<loud> you have THREE more minutes>
 Dennis: Mrs. Meier [Mrs. Schmidt] (.) I can- couldn't explain anything to Thomas because Ahmad always <<slow> asks> (.) he- he doesn't get what I'm saying (1)
 Thomas: [three=comma?]
 Ahmad: COME (.) get yourself a CHAIR (.) yo[u can join us-]
 Dennis: [because ahmad always asks]
 me what I- ((inhales)) how the (.) result is and then I have to- I always explain it to him but then I [have to-] in the end I have to [say it again]
 T: [okay]
 [now that I'm here (.) now] you start OFF again [and I] will take care of Ahmad

Interestingly, Dennis does not refer to Thomas' obstinacy, but to Ahmad's process of understanding. This allows him to potentially remove himself from the responsibility assigned to him and to do so by referring to the special role already taken on by Ahmad, and without further fueling his conflict with Thomas. At the same time, he also criticizes Ahmad, who seems to have settled into this special role. For Ahmad, it is not about gaining comprehension, but about fulfilling the role of the non-understanding. In doing so, he also does not want to hide his lack of comprehension, which quickly pushes Dennis's strategy of providing an explanation to its limits. There is no real success in terms of learning and understanding, and Ahmad has no interest in suggesting that there is in order to present himself as a 'good' student.

While Dennis and Thomas are vying for the higher status position, such an effort for symmetrical interaction or even its simulation is irrelevant for Ahmad. Instead, he demands special addressing and settles into his position. However, he is indeed interested in being involved in the social situation beyond the educational expectations, in which a peer can be accepted by him as superior in terms of peer culture and performance without any problems.

Guided by the focus on cases of group interaction which appeared "unproblematic", i.e., smooth and apparently conflict-free on a manifest level, the following findings can be noted: (a) The successful participation of group members who differ in performance and status in the instructional setting depends, among other things, on the willingness, accommodation, and restraint of those students who are already established along the peer and performance axes, particularly their refraining from displaying or exploiting these differences. (b) On the other hand, successful participation also requires an effort for involvement and integrative interactions from those who deviate from the peer and performance-related orders of interaction. (c) A third variant of smooth interaction seems to unfold when students accept the assignment of a special role or actively want to take on such a role.

The interaction structures mentioned here have in common that they confirm the peer-cultural and educational orders. Even if these orders prove to be only relatively stable and shifts and variations might be detected, the findings of these reconstructions clearly demonstrate that even in those cases that appear to be successful in terms of unproblematic cooperations, the educational and peer-cultural order is not adjusted to the students. Rather, they have to arrange their specific abilities and subject structures in relation to this order.

4.4 Interim Conclusion: Structures of Group Interaction, Cooperation and Helping in Inclusive Education

Contrary to methodologically and didactically informed hopes and expectations regarding egalitarian, peer-mediated interactions, status inequalities in relation to the educational and peer-cultural order also emerge in cooperative learning in inclusive education (cf. Bennewitz et al. 2021). Thus, no separate sphere of a supposedly natural, reciprocal, and altruistic gift establishes. Those who depend on help and support structurally have no opportunity to reciprocate what they have received in an egalitarian way. However, as mentioned above, within this theoretical line of thought, putting in an effort can be read as expressing the intention to reciprocate (and thus as a counter-gift). This would recognize the existing order and the practices established in it. Likewise, this recognition of the order applies, when a special role is assumed or demanded for, which can only take place against the backdrop of specific norms. The reconstructive findings of the cases that appear successful and smooth on a manifest level in terms of conflict-free interaction thus structurally connect to those of the teachers' speech acts in which they establish the settings of cooperation, support, and helping: They show a *cooperation based on inequality* (Bender and Rennebach 2018). Since no conflicts regarding the existing structures arise and thus, the continuity of the educational order is maintained, the setting of joint learning with peer-mediated support appears proportionate. For students who can barely or not at all meet the educational requirements, the settings of group work among peers in inclusive learning groups seem beneficial: They allow these students to be involved in basic social interactions, which also receive more space within these formats of group interactions.

Regarding all cases that have been reconstructed up to this point within the framework of cooperative learning, it must be pointed out that the aspect of teaching and learning, which is expected to be a focal point within these educational settings, has receded into the background in all cases, so much so that it can (and will) no longer be met or worked on. In the very heterogeneous settings, the conflicts and negotiations regarding the existing social orders and peer-cultural dynamics seem to

dominate, while both – as research has shown – cannot be considered in isolation from each other. If interactions regarding peer-culture as well as performance are understood as part of the same dominant hegemonic social order, it cannot be assumed that both exist in completely separate spheres. Looking through a wider lens, it seems that the challenging tasks of dealing with inequalities and potential inclusions and exclusions are delegated to the students through the objectives and norms of cooperative learning, without any work on participation or compensation of differences becoming apparent. Instead, the students strive to fulfill the task of cooperative learning by ensuring that the differences and exclusions that continue within the groups do not become publicly visible to the class. In addition, teachers seem not to involve themselves as mediators during these phases. Without being able to prove this within the framework of the chosen methodological approach, it can be assumed that this reduction and abandonment of teaching also impairs the learning achievements of those students who cannot compensate for this through habitual adjustments or other forms of support services and learning opportunities.

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Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping Over the Course of Lower Secondary Education

5

The summary of the findings available to this point, has so far disclosed important, relatively stable structural aspects regarding the questions of how help interactions in the classroom are established and how they play out. The following chapters present additional and hence more detailed case reconstructions. They primarily focus on the changes that occur over the course of lower secondary level, both in terms of the further course of school attendance and an educational order that possibly becomes more and more prevalent throughout (Wenzl 2014, 2022) as well as in terms of the age of the students in relation to their interactions with each other. How group interactions, cooperation or helping are established and carried out is in each case presented as an interrelated interaction. This means specifically, that the reconstructions of the students' speech acts are always preceded by the reconstruction of the teacher-initiated framing of each respective work phase – i.e. their framing of the specific social form and form of work dependent on the grade of the students – to which the students then respond (see Bender and Rennebach 2018).

With regard to the presented case matrix (see Sect. 3.3), the reconstructions begin with a case from the fifth grade, in which all three variants of difference in reciprocity are represented (RB5/RM5/RH5b, Sect. 5.1). This analysis clearly shows the tensions and challenges that students face when required to help each other in very heterogeneous learning settings.

These findings are followed by reconstructions of cases with high, medium, and balanced differences in reciprocity from the seventh and ninth grades. Across these three grades levels, tensions and challenges initially intensify before finally subsiding. This however, seems to be based on the fact that social orders in their various dimensions have become relatively stable over time. Hence, against the backdrop

of relatively secure status and performance positions and clearly defined points of connection and disconnection regarding inclusion and exclusion, hardly any questions, acts of rebelliousness, defensiveness, and feelings of uncertainty keep emerging, resulting in only minor tensions and disruptions.

5.1 Fifth Grade: Covering by Delegating

For the fifth grade, an exemplary case is selected in which the call for mutual helping or cooperation within the lesson is combined with a playful competition among peers, which simultaneously establishes classroom-related rules. The teacher stages a complex setting on both the axis of performance and peer-culture, which must then be implemented by the students. The students have to simulate symmetrical peer relationships and address differences on the performance axis (suited for their age). Due to age and developmental factors (Wenzl 2014; Wernet 2003), there is always the risk that delegating the question of how to address these differences in status and performance in an interactional-symbolic way to students, might in some way lead to them exposing these differences within their groups as well as in front of the whole class, which would be equivalent to failing the task of cooperation and helping (Bender 2020). The following case thus initially represents the public enactment within the classroom and, with it, the practice of engaging in these complex settings of group interaction, cooperation, and support, and therefore marks the beginning of practicing a particular way of dealing with inequality.

5.1.1 Establishing: The Game of Helping (RB5/RM5/RH5b)

In ‘Sachunterricht’ (primary-level integrated subject combining science and social studies) the students had begun to create a profile about reindeer in the previous lesson. Using the textbook, they were to transfer and sensibly structure essential characteristics (habitat, population, etc.) into this profile. The beginning of the recorded lesson, focuses on completing these fact sheets. The students are seated at tables for groups of four and six.

Tm: uh (-) the following task is for those who are DONE (.) to support THOSE (.) who are not yet finished (2) because we want to later in a second step (-) present our own animal and we will do that with the iPad but in order to do so at first everyone needs to be finished (.)

Before all students can move on to the next task together, those who have not yet extracted the essential characteristics of the reindeer from the textbook and transferred them into a profile should be helped. In the verbal request for help, helping is literally made into a task of the lesson (“the following task”). At the same time, the speech act of “the following task” also indicates that we are dealing with an unusual, atypical, or marginal task. Calling for the *support* of individuals is probably semantically tentative, as the task is in fact clearly focused on finishing. Those who are finished are supposed to show those who are not yet finished which aspects still need to be extracted from the textbook to create a sufficiently differentiated solution of the task. The idea that individuals are supported by their classmates, for example, in becoming less distracted or in reading and isolating content in a more focused manner is thus pushed into the background. Instead, the focus is on finishing together and progressing to the next task together, which is why the students are now required to enable this progress under the label of support. This setting is thus not concerned with (case-specific) assistance but promotes a practice of prompting and copying results that tends to operate independently from individual understanding.

At the same time, the way that this task is set, it establishes a certain number of individuals, who are potentially in need of help. There are those who are finished and those who are not yet finished. At this point still vaguely, students are marked as help-givers and as those in need of help. In this respect, the logic of helping is intertwined with that of competition: The *game of helping* is now probably about achieving the position of the winner and thus the help-giver, to (1) secure an advantageous position on the performance axis and consequently also (2) not to be the one who ends up in need of help. The playful nature downplays the implications inherent in these attributions for both sides. On one hand, those in need of help are assigned unfavorable and undesirable positions within the performance spectrum (measured by the pace of their work) (Reh and Labede 2009), which, especially the younger the children, always interfere with peer-related status positions (or prestige). On the other hand, the role of the help-givers becomes precarious, as they threaten the others by taking on these roles, thereby turning them into those in need of help. Under the label of support, these differences are seemingly normalized – yet, a double threat scenario develops latently due to strong role attributions. On the one hand, the established setting is closely tied to the presumption of some participants being in need, or, as in this case, to the presumption of the slower students requesting help, which establishes uncomfortable and presumably socially unpleasant roles in the classroom. On the other hand, those who have completed the task early or on time and are now supposed to provide support also run into difficulties: They are confronted with the expectation of providing help, and it can

be assumed that they will have difficulties constituting those in need of help who (have to) refuse to accept this positioning. In contrast to a practice that, for example, would have given the entire class five more minutes to finish (during which students might also copy results and prompt each other), this arranged support shifts these peer-related opportunities for interaction into the public sphere of the classroom. It thus intertwines them more closely with the demands on the performance axis, thereby making differences even more perceptible, emphasizing them, as well as allowing for them to be attributed even more clearly.

5.1.2 “totally boring”: Enacting as Capable Help-Givers (RB5/RM5/RH5b)

As expected, helping initially emerges within the groups around a table. Gradually, however, more and more students move through the classroom, as the classmates at their grouped table have finished, are no longer (or have not been) in need of help, or no help-receivers can be identified there, while the assigned task still has to be fulfilled. This is also the case for S1, who, with her notebook in hand, offers her help to individual classmates at the grouped tables. The following protocol accompanies S1’s path through the classroom. Her statements are generally clearly audible to the class, so her ‘efforts’ to solve the task are also perceived by the teacher:

- S1: who is (.) do you now↑ need help:↑
 S2: nope:

S1 initially addresses the class publicly (“who is”), then specifically turns to S2 and offers help. The first interrupted question confirms the difference established by the teacher between those in need of help and those who are to give it, while S1 with her statement which can be extended to ‘who is not done yet’ (‘Who is not done yet, I am already done’) puts herself in the role of the help-giver. At the same time, it demonstrates that those in need of help must first be found. In this regard, the strategy of diffusely addressing the whole class is corrected in favor of specifically addressing individual classmates by interrupting the question. It cannot be answered exhaustively whether S1 shows a certain sense for the social impositions of the situation, whether she perceives emerging gestures of defensiveness, or whether the efforts to present herself as a help-giver are adjusted in favor of other rules, such as those concerning the volume in the classroom. The first assumption is contradicted by the fact that addressing S2 directly, presupposes their need for help even more strongly (“do you now↑ need help:↑”). The “now” expressed as a question even refers to impatience within the game of help, emphasizing an asym-

metry of the players or else obliging the addressee to participate in the game: S2 needs help anyway, only the timing of when the task of supporting can finally be fulfilled is yet unclear. Structurally, S1 thus indicates to S2 that they are hindering her from fulfilling her task. Hence, this scene is neither about helping among peers nor about taking on the teacher's position towards the slower classmates. It shows a game of interaction that attempts or is compelled to generate status through performance at the expense of the other. Interestingly, however, it can also be resisted just as unproblematically, as in the way that S2 does: "*nope*:". It is hence to be expected, that those declared to be in need of help will evade this attribution, (which apparently seems permissible at the level of peer interaction) in order to free themselves from this obligatory self-denouncing declaration. It is just not a teacher speaking. Once again, it becomes apparent that it is difficult for S1 to express these problems of implementing her task to the teacher ('S2 won't let me help!'), as this could be interpreted as a deficit and non-fulfillment on her side. In this respect, this implementation shifts into a quarrel among peers as well, with different ways of resisting the attributions. The less classmates allow to be made into those in need of help, the more the search for someone in need of help must be performed. The initially threatening setting is thus increasingly caricatured – performances of task fulfillment conceal a non-occurring practice.

S1: I hate it when no one needs help

Thus, S1's statement can almost only be read as an ironic commentary on the role assigned to her. While it expresses grievance, it however also highlights the problematic structural logic of the setting on its manifest level: there are no individuals in need of help. A slightly varied expression, for example: *I hate it when there's no one to cherish me*, could only be said as a commentary on one's own defeat. Through this comment, the subjectively felt distress is given an ironic expression. S1 perceives herself as failing at a practice that only produces those who fail. S1's egocentric-ironic self-presentation thus appears as a specific form of distancing herself from the demanded role by caricaturing the imposition of the setting. The fast ones must pretend there are classmates in need, or perform the search for them, while the peers predictably resist these attributions, and this resistance can also only be accepted.

S3: me too (.) totally boring

Structurally homologous to S1's opening, "*totally boring*" expresses the focus on the speaker's own needs. The criticism on the phase of the lesson is turned outward into not meeting the student's expectations of an entertaining activity. The

fact that moments of self-reference, ironic criticism, and disinterest in the other participants are reproduced in S3's communitization with S1 shows that S1 does not choose an atypical or subjectively specific reply: the setting almost invites this caricaturing form of engagement.

- S1: who needs help? (---) do you need help:↑ (2) S5 do you need help↑
 S4: S5 do you↑ need help↑
 S1: need help (.) S5 do you↑ need help↑
 S5: no
 S1: do you need help S4↑
 S6: no

Subsequently, S1 continues to move through the classroom, offering her help to students at the next group of tables – how could she not? The game unfolds in the *continuous* repetition of the same practice of addressing as well as a rejection of help on the other side – to the point where students who were not even asked themselves respond on behalf of those considered potential recipients of help (S6), or those chosen as help-givers, i.e., those who also identify themselves as having already finished, are asking again on S1's behalf (S4). S1 reproduces the irony of the educational setting by offering help to people like a merchant their goods ("*who needs help?*"). The stoic execution increases the absurdity of the already caricatured setting: offering help to S4, who in turn calls on S5 – on behalf of S1 – is remarkable. In need of help, S5 could have accepted the offer independently. Yet, the fact that S4 involves herself or himself in the game is also noteworthy. The context can now only entail one of the following: S4 can or should only receive help from S6, who in turn declines on behalf of S4 – thus securing their own help-receiver–, while S4 again tries to involve S5 in the game of helping. The specific acting-out of help performed by S1 is thus also performed by her classmates, who merely do not present the logic of the setting as openly as her. The self-referential nature of this practice, which disregards the others and any rules of social interaction – under the guise of helping – makes the absurdity of S1's practice appear somewhat more clearly.

- S1: S6 do you need help↑
 S6: I'm already done (.) I've even helped you

Ultimately, the irony transitions into the absurdity of the setting itself – not only the function of one's own role but the setting is caricatured. By now offering help to virtually all students, including the one who initially helped S1 into the position of giving help herself, the entire practice becomes futile; this way there is no one who can be brought into the role of being in need of help. On a latent level, S6 also

implies that he or she can no longer help S1. On the one hand, this simultaneously rejects a potential reversibility of roles, and on the other hand, it indicates that S1 is not particularly acquainted with the role of the help-giver, suggesting that a previous deficit might be overcompensated through this performative manner of her actions.

It is only surprising that the teacher keeps insisting on the practice:

- S1: Mr. Schmidt, may I dra:w something↑
Tm: no: (.) ((looks at the board and then points towards it with his index finger)) you could at most ((turns to a group of tables))
S1: may I draw something, Mr. Schmidt↑
Tm: no:

Thus, even the denunciation of the setting's senselessness to the teacher proves ineffective – S1 is not relieved of her duty. She is not allowed to draw, as she also requests this in the mode of an exhausted child seeking a deserved reward for the efforts of the demanding job as a help-giver or else for the legitimate termination of this work that is not needed. While the statement 'may I draw a little?' would frame the activity as a pastime, this is about pointing out an urgent need: 'May I have something to drink?' After a strenuous day's work, a request is regressively made for release from duty. Given the situation in the classroom and the case specifics of S1, the request could have been met permissively: 'Go ahead and take your seat, almost everyone is done already.' Instead, efforts are turned to finding an alternative, which is however, introduced linguistically as a last resort ("at most"). This suggests to keep searching for help-recievers, even if this help is not explicitly demanded for. The questionable practice must however provide meaning to the teacher, as his speech act is not about improving or adapting the practice: It is about not only supporting the practice but also about enduring it.

5.1.3 Summary: Covering by Delegating

The established phase of the lesson, which semantically focuses on the support of slower students by faster ones, produces their distinction in the first place by exaggerating and fixating on differentiation in terms of achievement. By organizing the lesson in this way, a relatively large group of those in need of help is produced at first and must then be assisted accordingly. This not only allows for publicly flagging status (measured by pace of work) to the whole class but also requires the slower students to identify themselves as such and accept help, even if it is not needed fundamentally, but only with regards to selected aspects. The students are

now supposed to deal with this setting. Predictably, there is a tendency to resist the role of help-recievers and, complementarily, to produce a *type of self-stylization as help-givers*. Consequently, a game of helping is enacted, which trivializes the threat of the help by ironically and playfully presenting oneself as a capable student and help-giver, overshadowing the independence of those in need of help. The precariousness of the setting is thus used for the self-enhancement of capable students. At the very least, however, the absurdity of the setting is clearly highlighted by the caricaturing notion that accompanies it, and which thus also reveals the purpose of the setting (or lack thereof). Thus, the students can and must distance themselves from the precarious positions of help-givers and help-recievers. The blurring (Wernet 2018) of this setting consists in the fact that students are not only judged in a specifically limited segment—e. g., their reading competence—but more comprehensively as those who need help. This also makes it more difficult to establish an alternative peer order through which one could potentially distance oneself from the educational demands. However, this seems to be just about successful in this case.

Overall, the challenges of dealing with increased heterogeneity are also delegated to the students through the seemingly compensatory semantics of helping. This also covers that specific differences and those that are likely more subtly nuanced still exist on the performance axis, but are no longer addressed in this setting. The teachers (seemingly) hand over this task to the students, who do not implement it either, but must primarily learn how to ensure that any failure of completing the inevitably incomplete fulfilment of the task to support and help each other does not become visible, thus meaning, they also learn to cover and endure this.

5.2 **Seventh Grade: Visible Emergence of the Structural Problem of Inclusive Classroom Interaction**

In seventh grade, the mode of addressing strong heterogeneity changes through the programmatic framing of mutual helping. Like the cases within grade five, this form of mutual helping is not consistently pursued by the teachers nor is its practice demanded by the students. Rather, as demonstrated earlier (see Sect. 4.1), the situation of inequality is to be addressed sensitively. The cases are thus less about addressing inequality and more about being aware of it and dealing with it in an appropriate way (Bender and Rennebach 2018). In this grade level, formats of group work are no longer used primarily to cover significantly increased heterogeneity through delegation but rather serve as a medium to morally discipline, without giving up on or significantly transforming the requirements of educational

orders. Both the way in which the situations are established and the way in which the students respond to them show clear shifts towards an exaggerated (moral) seriousness of educational practice (tipping points included) – establishing formats of cooperative learning transforms into the reference of a duty that is required on a general as well as individual level.

5.2.1 Establishing the Interaction: Partner Work as a Moment of Reflection

The following two case constellations focus on the setup and further development of a phase of partner work in response to a classroom discussion in English class, which had, up to that point, been progressing very slowly, due to the students' minimal participation. In this context, (small) group work emerges as a medium that allows for moral disciplining.

What is specific to this context is that the class includes a student who is receiving special educational services for hearing impairments. To ensure her participation in the lesson, both teachers and students use microphones that transmit what is being said to the student's headphones. Teachers wear lapel microphones, and students – only after being instructed to do so – pass around a handheld microphone.

The lesson began by watching a short animated film in simple English. Students were then asked to describe and summarize at first in German the changes regarding a character – a cat – in the story. Subsequently, some aspects and sentences were to be reproduced in English. However, even when individual students were called upon, there were no responses that would result in gradually completing the task. On the one hand, the students struggled with the subject matter and on the other hand, they showed little willingness to speak in English in front of the class. Finally, Marie volunteered, and the microphone was passed to her by the previous speaker, even though the teacher had not yet granted her the right to speak. Since no one else volunteered and the class discussion had nearly come to a halt, it seemed likely that Marie would have been called upon anyway – at least the teacher retroactively granted her the right to speak:

T1: now marie has an idea

The use of “now” suggests a formalized situation or rather re-establishes one given the way in which the right to speak was transferred to Marie – in contrast to common forms like “Marie” or “yes, Marie” – in a somewhat more formal tone. The follow-up to this situation – that is, being granted the right to speak in a way that tends not to be in accordance with the rules – plays out by attributing an idea

in a commenting way. The speech act could, however, only be regarded as suitable in self-disclosure: 'I have an idea,' which would announce the explication of a thought or a plan, as the state of having an idea is not externally visible – it could only be inferred from facial expressions or gestures (spontaneous, dramatic way of putting one's hand up). Since the instructional context of translating individual sentences does not actually call for gathering ideas, the emphasis on an idea may respond to the various possible translations and thus also implicitly to the fact that student participation in class is low and that the task presents a challenge for the students on multiple levels. Implicitly, this anticipates Marie's solution to fall short of the task – Marie will not offer a possible full translation but instead has a spontaneous initial idea of how a sentence or parts of it might be phrased. Indicating the request for class-wide participation is thus acknowledged with a response that announces the subsequent contribution as an imperfect, vague approximation. Disciplining is thus related to maintaining established norms in the classroom in two ways: On a latent level there is *firstly* little relief that Marie wants to say something, even though the class discussion has stalled – this implies that the students are not fulfilling their task to appropriately participate in the lesson. *Secondly* it is implied that the right to speak is granted solely by the teacher. In this respect, the situation appears to be one in which a violation of the rules committed in favor of continued class discussion is not explicitly penalized but also not left unaddressed, and in which the teacher uses this to emphasize the obligation to participate in the class-wide conversation.

T1: now marie has an idea (--) you: ex-change hold on you exchange now very briefly (-) in pairs↑ (4) go in pairs↑ (.) sina:↑ (.) no↓ (--) sina andré: a:nd sabrina (.) you go in a set of three (.) VERY↑ BRIEFLY (.) how↑ can you say that in English how the cat↑ has changed

However, before Marie can position herself in terms of the subject matter and the specific form of being addressed, the teacher abruptly replaces the previously implemented teaching method with a different one. The short pause of less than a second does not allow Marie to even begin a translation idea: The student is granted the right to speak in a disciplining manner, only to have it revoked immediately. She is not even consoled with a possible future opportunity to share her 'idea'. This thus increases the previous disciplining measure and spontaneously or rather very abruptly directs it at the entire learning group. Neither low and reluctant class participation can be tolerated, nor is Marie's intrusive attempt to help – through which she, so to speak, claims the teacher's position – permitted. All of this points to a subsequent disciplining of the class by making an example.

After flimsily introducing the change regarding teaching method and form of social interaction (“you: ex-change”), the very change is without any apparent need once again highlighted clearly. ‘Hold on’ therefore does not merely serve a structuring purpose nor is Marie addressed through it; rather, the teacher acts as if there were a reason to demand attention or even silence: The inactive classroom conversation is now clearly marked as a classroom disruption and thus attributed to the students. Instead of reprimanding the students, criticizing them for their lack of commitment, persistently demanding that they engage with the task or focusing on Marie – who could have been particularly thoroughly examined due to how she obtained the right to speak – the phase of discussion, instead, serves to bring everyone in line, allowing the regular class proceedings to resume afterwards. In this respect, “hold on” precisely marks this postponement; the deferral of further references to the original task to a phase following the phase of group work. The interactional impasse is addressed by attributing an inappropriate attitude on the part of the students. The fact that this is thus primarily about maintaining an appropriate attitude, and that no shortcomings in comprehension or communication are acknowledged, is supported by the suggestion that the students should now exchange ideas. If no possible translations were available to them, such an exchange would not be productive. This approach tends to rule out the possibility of students not being able to come up with any translations, as considering this would render the phase of exchange as pointless, for the students’ lack of communication would continue in the small groups. After a “very brief” partner work, a class-wide exchange – hopefully more appropriate or more decent – will follow. The break from the plenary during the partner work thus becomes a time of reflection, rather than a time intended to create a sense of security through preparation. This is further supported by the fact that the task is not varied in any way that might highlight specific deficiencies and that no time limit for this phase of exchange is specified. This again indicates that the point is not to provide a sufficient amount of time for a specific task (such as preparing two actual sentences). The focus is on the act of reflection. This shows a seamless transition to a phase of partner or group work that does not require extensive initiation, explanation, preparation, role allocation, etc. which emphasizes how the spontaneously established phase of group work serves as a disciplining measure and a reflection on work attitude. Specifics on how the groups should be formed are thus added casually (“go in pairs ↑”) and the pending ‘phase of comparison’ becomes a test of to what extent the partner work succeeded as an act of reflection.

5.2.2 “we=did=it=together”: Strategically Reframing the Cooperative Setting (RB7)

Valerie and Anne, who are in an almost balanced reciprocal relationship in terms of academic performance and social status, had already briefly confirmed during the teacher’s instruction that they would be working together. As soon as the teacher’s briefing concludes, they immediately start a reciprocal interaction which focuses on the subject matter at hand and which even includes negotiating a ‘presentation of their results’ – all within the very brief exchange:

Anne: <<quietly>>I’m afraid that I’ll ‘ve been callpicked upon, man¹

The statement “*I’m afraid that*” is initially not an expression of acute fear or even panic. In situations that immediately trigger fear, one would rather expect affective reactions such as screaming, stumbling, or freezing. In contrast to the statement ‘I am afraid!’, which most likely conveys a pervasive, existential fear, the reference to any specific issue means the immediate or overwhelming feeling is not (or no longer) present. The very act of putting such a fear into words has as such already been processed mentally and is therefore a rational sublimation of the tension. Speech acts that already categorize fear in this form express concern: I am afraid that: (1) my position will not be extended (2) the mortgage will not be approved (3) she/he will leave me! Addressing a fear or concern thus comes with a demand for a response from the counterpart, who can hardly ignore being addressed in this way. Regardless of the specific context, the person in distress would be comforted, encouraged, and/or given advice, making it a suitable speech act in a relationship containing a request for reassurance: I am afraid that you will leave me! Tell me you will stay with me! The demand for reassurance would thus apply to Anne’s partner: as an assurance of support in the event of possibly being called upon. Notably, this situation seems to be located in the future past: ‘I am afraid that I will *have been* called upon.’ This could suggest Anne is anticipating the moment immediately after unexpectedly being called upon, so that the concern relates to the teacher and the classmates assessing her performance. In a reading focusing differently on the sequences, the misspoken part does not refer to the point in time of being called upon, but rather to the attitude towards the situation of being exam-

¹ This translation can only approximate the shift present in the German original, where it is linguistically much subtler, as it hinges on a change of just a single letter (“drangekommen,” a blend of “drangenommen” and “drankommen”). The verbs chosen in English therefore merely offer an approximation of the original expression.

ined – the difference between being called upon and being picked. While being called upon refers to a rule or right (e.g., you eventually get called upon at the doctor's, even if you had to wait a long time), being picked is more passive. It refers to a situation where you can be called up by rule, even if you would not want to claim this for yourself. You do not have the right but the duty to interact. In this overlap, an ambivalence towards the situation of being examined can be located. The concern stems from the tension between the right to put oneself on display in front of the class in order to improve one's standing based on the performance, while simultaneously exposing oneself to the risk of potential failure. The concern, one might say, does not refer to the tension of being called upon or not, but rather to the inability to present oneself favorably if called upon. This is also confirmed in the shift from duo to solo ("I"). In this way, Anne deciphers the structure of the teaching practice as the assessment of individually attributed performances beyond the rhetoric of partner work. The situation is thus about the risky responsibility for an individually 'poor' performance. In this respect, the social relationship is linked to the educational context through the appeal and is instrumentalized to secure the most favorable possible evaluation of individual academic performance – or rather to avoid an unfavorable one – by presenting oneself in need of help and attributing or demanding from the other person the competence and willingness to help them out. However, for the further course of this interaction, it is interesting to see how this situation unfolds, because if it is true that Anne is aware of how performance is attributed individually, she cannot publicly admit that she received help and must hence, despite the help she received, somehow present herself as an individual performer.

Anne: <<quietly>I'm afraid I'll 've been callpicked upon man since I [(unintelligible; several words) can]>

Valerie: [<<loud>in that case I'll help- I'll just help you then, anne]>

Anne's statement ("since I [(unintelligible; several words) can]"), which is drowned out by Valerie's remark, seems to suggest that the difficulty is merely situational, with the overly causal reasoning appearing to be already sufficiently known ("since" as in *as you know/ as we both know*). In any case, the reassurance she demands for, provokes the expected reaction from Valerie, who does not need any further explanation. However, Valerie only addresses the aspect of the requested help, which she assures Anne loudly and thus almost blatantly. The initial part of her answer can likely be located in parent-child interaction: 'in that case I'll help you'. What seems unusual, however, is the hastily offered, reassuring help, which could also be accompanied by an encouragement or a call to take the initiative 'in

that case I'll help you, but first, try for yourself'. Albeit the correction ("then") puts this into perspective by focusing on the timing of when the promised help will be provided. This results in a shift from substitutionally handling the situation or providing help in an accompanying way towards support that would be provided in the event of a failed independent attempt. Valerie thus signals willingness to help, but also demonstrates her superiority and ties her prompt willingness to help back to the organizational and structural dynamics of the lesson. If Anne is called upon, she is technically supposed to initially answer on her own. The idea of a practice of mutual helping with a shift of roles and respective needs, thus clashes with the established organizational dynamic of the lesson (and the perceived structure of schooling), which attributes achievement individually – something that the students of this case understand very well, but which now, while handling a specific situation, requires them to complexly negotiate these logics in their respective relations with each other.

Anne: ok you say- you MEMORIZE it (.) tell me what to SAY <fast>
and=then we=we=say=we=did=it=together

The solution is thus extremely clever and resourceful, and given that Anne presents this plan so quickly and coherently, one can certainly assume that this was exactly what she had in mind. The deal is thus sealed. Framing, distribution of roles, and execution are established in a manifest and clear manner: In the event of being called upon, Valerie is responsible for the contents of the response; she has to memorize the jointly prepared answer (content, wording, sentence structure, etc.) and prompt Anne – of course as discreetly as possible – so that she can pass the situation of being assessed and position herself favorably. There is even already a strategy in place in case they get 'caught': "then" one can refer to the programmatic level of (student) cooperation and to the 'collaborative' approach as demanded by the teacher. The reference to the joint development is thus by no means superfluous: Although Valerie volunteered as a substitute examinee, she is now being sworn in as an accomplice and it is reassured that, should they be caught – contrary to the logic of being assessed – there is no risk of sanctions. Being examined jointly after having worked jointly is thus excluded as a legitimate option. However, the rehabilitating reference to partner work at least allows to avoid sanctioning in terms of the solution of prompting that especially Anne came up with. It is remarkable how the manifest reference to cooperation and helping is picked up and turned into one's own individual advantage on the performance axis.

5.2.3 “you say it like that”: Partner Work as a Careful Effort of Integration (RM7)

Markus and Stefan, who are sitting next to each other, represent a case of medium difference in reciprocity. They open the phase of exchange about seven seconds after the task is announced by whispering quietly so that their words are not audible on the audio device. Their approach of dealing with the situation thus seems to play out in a different mode, which will be presented below.

Markus: <<quietly> yes=yes=yes=yes> (2) <<quietly> yes=yes=yes=yes=yes>

This speech act is initially not suitable for a substantive reference to the previously assigned task. While Markus might be reacting to something Stefan said or be introducing a transition to a new topic, the repetition of “yes” – first four times and then five – is at the very least an unusual form of such interaction, one that, above all, does not seem to fit well within the current instructional context. A subject-related subsequent response to this speech act by Stefan also seems rather unexpected. Especially the number of monotonous repetitions – which not only resume after a short interruption but also increase quantitatively – points more to a self-referential quality, that makes for a difficult interactive follow-up and for an almost impossible subject-related one. Repeating “yes” three times would have supported the interpretation of transitioning from the class-wide instruction to the phase of partner work and accordingly from ‘peer chat’ to partner work. However, due to the pause followed by repetition, it rather reveals an expression of resignation, a rejection of everything outside the speaker. Contextually, the speech act is thus directed against the setting and the associated expectations and demands. But Markus also withdraws from his partner; he is unresponsive to any form of interaction and conveys this without referring to his classmate. The statement thus invites neither a thematic transition towards the subject matter nor towards communitization on peer-level. What is specific thus shows as the self-sufficient, withdrawn attitude, which should lead to an avoidance of interaction.

Stefan: you say it like that

Almost unexpectedly, Stefan not only engages with this comment that seems to shut down the interaction – he does so in a mediating way. The present sequence merges the logics of two disparate German idioms: (1) You say it!² This serves as a

²In English, this formulation most closely corresponds to the expression “Tell me about it”.

confirming follow-up that Markus is, so to speak, ironically commenting on and reproducing a piece of nonsense, which he did not come up with by himself, but which was produced by others. Given their previous interaction, it is rather unlikely, that this is the case, and in this respect, Stefan would attribute a more complex meaning to Markus's statement than it actually holds. (2) 'You say it as if it were so easy'³ as a way of highlighting the difference between what Markus does and says and what is actually expected of both of them in this situation. Since neither the "so" nor the "easy" is said out loud, the speech act manages a skillful balancing act between communitizing affirmation on the level of peer interaction and implicitly maintaining difference ('It's easy for you to talk!'). The very fact that an attempt is made here to establish a connection – rather than leaving the other to his self-absorption and turning to the task – and to do so in a way that both maintains informal peer talk and preserves the relevance of a performance-oriented frame, without obscuring the fundamental meaningfulness of classroom instruction, can be interpreted as an engaged as well as resourceful form of uptake.

Markus: *not good now=now=now*⁴

Markus's response remains ambiguous at this point. Does the statement have something to do with the task? Is he indicating to Stefan that he is currently unable to interact, or is it a recurrence of a purely self-referential speech act? The fact that there are so many possibilities suggests that he most likely does not clearly and comprehensibly follow up to Stefan's statement. Although this form of withdrawal from the interaction does not come across as offensive or critical toward Stefan, but rather as soothing, it remains structurally problematic, especially for teaching methods of partner work and cooperation. Even if the following section were to take on a form that would resemble a conversation with changes in speakers, etc., it seems likely that Markus's singular incompatible remarks would continue. The lack of coherence and the repetitions would make it difficult to follow-up on them both in terms of their content as well as on the level of a peer relationship.

Stefan: *the cat is:.*

Markus: yes (exactly=exactly=exactly)

Stefan: *the cat is*

³The German expression "Das sagst du so einfach" corresponds most closely to the English phrase "That's easy for you to say".

⁴Transcribed passages marked with an * at their beginning and end are not translated, since those speech acts were phrased in English originally since the interaction took place through-out an English lesson.

Markus: yes (.) *the cat is=is*
 Stefan: *a cat*
 Markus: * <<loud>a cat>* yes
 [...]

Stefan disregards Markus's unclear and potentially awkward self-referential remark with an offer to interact with regards to the subject matter; he refers to him, insofar as he uses the interjection Markus utters in English as an opportunity to transfer the interaction into one that is more oriented towards the requirements of the lesson and reciprocity. In this way, Markus would be gently guided towards working on the task without having to be explicitly told to do so. The teacher's position is taken on towards the classmate effortlessly and gently, the requirements of the setting – namely, a mutual exchange or focus on the essential – are not abandoned towards Markus, although such an approach towards the subject matter or at least a joint engagement with it does not seem likely. However, within the dual structure of on the one hand teacher-like prompts and encouragements to participate (“is::”) and on the other ironic distancing that underscores his superior status position (“the cat is” – “a cat”), Stefan's persistence creates a form of participation that is definitely also oriented towards the subject matter. In this respect, Stefan neither simply ignores the peculiarity of the avoided interaction nor does he abandon the idea of transitioning to a conversation about the subject matter. Although Markus does not make any remarks that would contribute to addressing the task in a way that focuses on the subject-matter, his repetitions become less frequent and he chooses replies that substantially respond to the things Stefan says—a simulation of educational participation emerges (cf. Bender and Rennebach 2021), which requires and accordingly elicits a minimum level of engagement on both sides.

Stefan: * <<loud> UN-HAPPY:>*
 Markus: *happy (1)*
 Stefan: ((grows)) un- a-
 Markus: *happy* not
 Stefan: ((laughs)) UN-happy (-) say it like that
 Markus: Bauer (T2) (1) ((T2 approaches and finally squats in front of Markus and Stefan))

The exchange continues as follows: Stefan maintains a certain lightheartedness whilst requesting involvement of his partner, in a way where demands regarding the subject matter and achievement (“say it like that”; growling) are interspersed with playful interjections (laughter). The fact that a more complex, serious level is avoided and a game is adhered to instead, does not seem to unsettle Stefan. The

reference to the approaching teacher (“Bauer” – hinting at Ms. Bauer) shows that Markus is indeed well aware of the obvious subversion regarding the logic of the phase of exchange. Albeit the warning is also self-referential – since the partner work is to Stefan’s interest and accordingly is integrating Markus into the setting, he does not need to be warned. Through the warning call, Stefan is thus made an accomplice; his genuine attempt to give help is misunderstood, and it becomes clear once again that although both are discussing the same subject, they are doing so on different levels. While Stefan strives for a specific form of interaction that does not disregard Markus’s needs, for example, by avoiding a disciplinary style, Markus undermines Stefan’s attempts to gradually establish a teaching and learning setting among peers that tends to be more informal – first by signaling unapproachability and subsequently by maintaining a (one-sided) game of peer interaction.

[...]

Stefan: *[fly after (.) the witch] [T2: h=hm] an:d the cat and a friends help the witch*

T2: ((inhales)) <<quietly>markus, are you listening?> [Markus: h=hm] (-)
actually do it (.) look at him while he speaks and LISTEN up

[...]

The continued interaction which is not shown here, documents a typical teacher-student interaction, in which Stefan demonstrates how he would or could translate the summary of the character’s change, which the teacher corrects, supports, and praises. Markus is excluded from this interaction. Eventually, the teacher also refers to him: She reminds him of his part in terms of the partner work, which also requires active participation in his passivity (“LISTEN up”). However, this presupposes a mental absence, since ‘are you listening?’ can only be asked if inattention has already been attributed. The speech act appears more suitable for interactions with friends or parent-child interactions, so the tension inherent in explicitly insisting on Markus’s participation in the task clashes with the diffuse way of addressing him. Markus is not expected to contribute anything on content-level either – he is precisely not being asked to present his own or the joint translation. The requirement for Markus is to watch and listen and to stay focused while doing so. This means that he should support his partner in completing the joint task to a minimal extent and thereby adhere to the educational norms (at the very least on a manifest level). The behavior that is demanded here on a practical level is more reminiscent of norms of politeness – looking at the other person when they speak and actually listening. Markus is thus required to adhere to the common rules to such an extent that the established processes are not disturbed or counteracted. It becomes apparent that no achievements regarding the subject matter are required of him.

5.2.4 “I tried”: From the Game of Helping to the Plaything of the Group (RH7)

The last case from seventh grade presented here focuses on how the students deal with high differences in reciprocity within a phase of group work to be organized by them. This phase follows a teacher-led class-wide negotiation of the cooperative setting as one that is morally justified and to be maintained symbolically, while (seemingly) providing a framework for the integration of all students, as it was presented in Sect. 3.1. The primary focus here is to sensitively address the exclusions that occur (Bender and Rennebach 2018).

A group of eight students is working on digital social networks as part of a group project. They are supposed to prepare a class-wide debate, in which the advantages and risks of a well-known social media platform are to be contrasted, based on key points and supported by examples. The debate to be conducted by the students will be graded and concludes a longer teaching unit. After about 25 minutes of the current phase of group work have passed and the students are thematically grouping the collected theses and evidence, the group offers help to one of its members – Sarah – who has so far been uninvolved in the group activity. Before Sarah’s non-participation is addressed by the students, similar offers have been made several times by the special education teacher, who urged Sarah to “somehow” participate in the group activity or at least simulate an attitude to work (cf. Bender and Rennebach 2021). The teacher is at this point no longer near the group.

Sabrina: look (.) you quite simply have to write down (-) what (.) um (--)

Sabrina’s approach, even the fact that she is trying to help Sarah, initially appears attentive towards Sarah on a manifest level: not only by temporarily suspending the part of the task that Sabrina is working on to involve Sarah in the task and thus in the group interaction, but also by Sabrina initiating a (re)explanation of the task, highlighting the simplicity of its practical implementation. Taken out of context, “look” can be read both as a child’s speech act, directing the attention of an (adult) counterpart to a shared object, and as a pedagogical speech act, also pointing to a shared (in this case abstract) object or topic. The second contextual embedding turns the pointing speech act into a metaphorically instructive one, which picks up the infantile nature of the child’s speech act – shifting from ‘follow my gaze’ to ‘follow my train of thought.’ By imitating the child’s speech act, which can only be directed at children, the attention-focusing aspect of the act shifts to a hierarchically structured, disciplining act of pointing, with the infantile speaker shifting into the infantilization of the addressee: Precisely because on a manifest

level it is followed by an explanation, only the second interpretation can be upheld. This, therefore, has a strong imperative character, which is expressed by the use of the imperative. A certain sense of urgency is already developing on a manifest level, yet it does not seem to be sufficiently driven by the subject matter or the limited time constraints under which the task is to be completed.

The focus on mere, tendentially random writing down is ultimately reproduced in the speech act of Sarah's classmate, especially in the way she breaks off before explaining what exactly is supposed to be written down: This is precisely what is left out (*write down (-) what (.) um (--)*). What is being explained thus is not the task itself, but something that is generally considered quite simple and thus should not require an explanation, as it is part of the practical process of completing a task. In this respect, this speech act compels Sarah to assume the role of a student through this infantilization. Implicitly, the role or the job of a student (Breidenstein 2006) is explained to her. This also assigns her a special position in relation to the group. She is not integrated into the group through an alternative speech act ("we just need to write this down"), i.e., this speech act thus repeats Sarah's deficits in understanding social structures and in integrating into them and particularly demonstrates her exclusion from the group – neither a movement towards integration, nor a reinclusion into the group becomes apparent.

Nicky: what is the good thing about facebook and what is the (.) bad thing
 about facebook

This simplification of the task reflects both Sarah's infantilization – which serves to elevate Nicky's own position – and the reference to the way in which the academic requirements are addressed: The more or less complex task of preparing positions, theses and evidence for a debate is reduced to compiling a list of pros and cons, which must be completed by the end of group work phase. However, the specific distinction between good and bad indicates that this can only be a translation of the teacher's assignment: This oversimplification, which distorts the task at hand, uses a childlike-unspecific distinction between good and bad, which precludes any nuanced discussion on this basis. The intellectual level that Nicky's speech act presumes thus makes it even clearer than before that Sarah has been excluded from the actual lesson and the group's work: Sarah is thus quite bluntly marked as falling short of the requirements of a seventh-grade student and is merely kept engaged in a (meaningless) work process that has been stripped of any substantial aspiration. Even though Sarah is now listing these generalizable pros and cons, and is not, for example, asked to record a nuanced analysis, she is assigned to catching up in individual work on what the rest of the student group has already discussed and written down in a different format.

Sabrina: YES (.) exactly that [((laughs))]
Nicky: [((laughs))]

Sabrina's clearly relieved reference seems to relate to the content – an excellently concise summary by Nicky, that Sabrina herself did not manage (“what (.) um”). Sequentially, however, the statement can also be read as Nicky having expressed something that Sabrina still found difficult – namely, to so clearly highlight Sarah's difference by rephrasing the actually more complex assignment, and thereby rejecting Sarah as a seventh-grade student: The statement then does not stem from a temporary difficulty of rephrasing the actual task but from the precarious situation of having to say it in this way. In contrast to the possible speech act ‘exactly like that,’ which one could have linked to the explanation of the mode, Sabrina specifically refers to the way in which Sarah is being addressed, a way with which she agrees. However, choosing the statement ‘exactly like that’ would have shown a distanced and disparaging attitude towards the matter and also towards Nicky. The girl's agreement is further highlighted by their shared laughter, which would have conveyed all of this implicitly even on its own. As a communitizing element, the laughter underscores Sarah's exclusion, which is now carried out by both of them with relish and pleasure. Although Sabrina and Nicky are also in the situation of having to produce something presentable in their group work with Sarah, there was no need to display their superiority so explicitly and to foster their process of peer affiliation by excluding a third person.

Sabrina: look (.) I'll even help you (.) go ahead take your PEN↑ (-) ((holds out a pen to her)) COME ON I'll help you (-)

Since there is clearly a commitment to dealing with Sarah, the moments of infantilization and self-aggrandizement not only reproduce themselves, but they are further intensified: Sarah is “even” helped. This now openly paternalistic call to action, accompanied by a physically intrusive gesture, is even on a manifest level virtually impossible to perceive as well-intentioned help. The denunciation of the counterpart through the display of attention or help is hard to beat. The act of helping is also presented as a privilege: “even.” The supportive engagement with Sarah is thus characterized as a form of special attention and, as such, as an exception. In this way, Sabrina makes it clear that this attention is not to be taken for granted, though by voicing this, she patronizingly demands that her classmate gratefully acknowledges the special nature of the situation – namely, that the classmates deign to help her or temporarily release Sarah from the obligation to work independently. This kind of help can definitely not be regarded as a compensatory act. The

students use this form of interaction – which is on a manifest level associated with positive moral connotations – to display affiliations and non-affiliations in a stigmatizing and humiliating manner.

Structurally, this illustrates how help, or the game of helping, and in this case, unsolicited, imposed helping, can also be used to demonstrate superiority and inferiority. The focus is on the act of helping, not on the subject matter, and certainly not on the recipient of the help, though failure is ultimately anticipated, if not compelled (“go ahead take your pen”).

If Sarah were to actually take a pen and perhaps even let someone guide her hand, she would completely surrender to the intrusive others who are acting out their superiority and power – this potential progression of events clearly illustrates the dangerous dimension of this interaction, as Sarah is or becomes the plaything of the group. However, other responses are more likely: Sarah could defensively endure the tirade and refrain from opposing the role she has been assigned. She would thus react to the fact that, given her position, it is hardly possible to actively break free from the role assigned to her. If she were to resist, for example, by saying ‘I can do that myself!’, she would be structurally conforming to the infantilizing form of address. Even a response on the peer level ‘Oh, feeling generous again today, huh?’ would probably not allow her to return or be accepted into the group – especially since such a remark from Sarah seems unlikely, because if she were capable to defend herself in this way, she probably would not have gotten herself so far into this situation in the first place. Another option, though equally challenging, would be an open or loud confrontation, audible to the teachers (‘What do you think you’re doing?’/‘Leave me alone’), which, however, would run the risk of being interpreted as ungrateful in the context of the performative display of help among peers and thus disarmed.

Nicky: ((laughs)) <<laughing, indignant>sabrIna>

It is ambivalent what Nicky is referencing: On one hand, she laughs at the game Sabrina is playing with Sarah, on the other hand, she calls out her name in an admonishing way, which at first might be taken as a command to stop. On a latent level, however, this ambivalence resolves in favor of the pleasure derived from the shared game. Sequentially, Nicky’s laughter already signals her complicity in the unfolding interaction, so that her admonishing call merely marks the taboo-breaking nature of the blatant humiliation. It thus further reveals elements of admiration and something like awe for this boundary-crossing behavior within her feigned outrage. Nicky is thus aware of how Sabrina stylizes herself as a help-giver – who gleefully highlights Sarah’s exclusion from the educational order –

Nicky however, neither criticizes nor puts an end to it. Instead, it seems likely that the interaction, which on a manifest level is linked to the positive idea of mutual help among students, continues with a turn on the latent level – as a medium of bullying.

Sabrina: saRAH↑ (-) I will help you (.) nicky will help you too↓
 Nicky: YES (-)
 Sabrina: sina will help you too
 Sina: <<prolonged>yes> (-)
 Ina: me TOO
 Anna: and me too
 Nicky: we will ALL help (-) and those two WON'T
 Valerie: [WHAT↑]
 Xenia: [WHAT↑]
 Nicky: ((laughs))
 [...]

The following sequence shows not only how the game continues, but how there is an expansion of those involved or obligated to participate. Although at this point not all students of the group can be assumed to fully understand the actual practice, the recruitment of additional willing participants adds to their quantity, and by that seems more than threatening – all against one (“we will ALL help”) – even if the practice itself does not change.

Sabrina: we will help you I will even tell you how to spell it but first you have to pick up the pen
 Sarah: <<very quiet>you have to talk to me> ((to the school assistant))
 School Assist.: come outside with me ((the school assistant and Sarah leave the room))

The relentlessness of the help-givers continues even during the pause (of about 2 minutes) until Sarah addresses the school assistant, who is responsible for all students with special educational needs and who is now approaching the group's table. Sarah explicitly phrases a request to her: The school assistant has to do something. which has to do with her. Even on the manifest level, this request appears puzzling, as one would have expected something more along the lines of ‘I need to talk to you/Can I talk to you?’ instead. Sarah thus falls into line of being paternalistically determined by others, remaining at their mercy as their plaything. Even in expressing a need, she does not articulate what she wants, but rather what seems necessary from an objective point of view: The school assistant has to do something, she has to take care of Sarah, she has to rescue her from the situation.

Interestingly, she does not address the school assistant as someone who might potentially impose discipline on the group, but rather presents herself as someone in need and as a special case. The situation seems to be sufficiently addressed and resolved when she leaves the group and receives an individual interaction. And indeed, the school assistant leaves the room with Sarah without a word to the group.

Nicky: okay (.) then- I'll- I'll continue
 Sabrina: ((deep exhale))
 Sina: what was that actually↑
 Nicky: no IDEA (--) That took some doing!
 Sabrina: I tried

The resolution of the situation through the school assistant, however, does not mark the end of the game; apparently it still requires to be closed by the players. The remarks that shift the responsibility for the 'escalation' back to Sarah prove to be structurally homologous to Nicky's laughingly indignant 'Sabrina!' – the ending thus also marks the breaking of the taboo that has been committed. The successive declarations of innocence that follow and Sabrina ostentatiously displaying her attempt at helping ignore the tension of the preceding group interaction that is palpable on a manifest level and turn it one last time into a constrained gesture of care. Structurally, they no longer occur within the framework of peer interaction but rather within that of classroom interaction. The taboo-breaking game is concluded by demonstrating an attitude that conforms to inclusion and to the classroom demands ("I tried"). The inclusion-oriented expectations placed on practices of helping among students, are thus very cleverly used for the previously carried out humiliation of a classmate. At a first glance from the outside or else on a manifest level likely no breach of the valid norms becomes apparent. Implicitly, however, the norm of mutual help is used to legitimize a game of peer interaction that turns the counterpart into plaything within the context of inclusive education.

5.2.5 Summary: Visible Emergence of the Structural Problem of Inclusive Classroom Interaction

When examining the individual results in detail once again, it becomes clear that, in the first two cases presented here, the teachers establish the phase of group work and cooperation in a way that is already and primarily a disciplinary measure urging the students to adopt an appropriate (ethic) attitude to work. Here, we see yet another form of cooperative learning that does not aim for evening-out differences

but rather for (re)establishing the educational order. In short, the pedagogical message is: *If you have had the chance to exchange and support each other, then you should be able to participate in the class.* However, as has been shown, the cooperation of the students does not focus on the subject matter, because if subject-related difficulties would indeed occur, these could not be resolved through the ad-hoc pairing of students. Regardless of the cooperative arrangement however, the teacher does indeed approach individual group tables to accompany working processes.

The following two cases fall in line with this. In the interaction between Valerie and Anne, the increased focus on being examined particularly is reinforced by their awareness that, following this phase of exchange, any performances will be directly attributed to their originators, and will therefore have a lasting impact on their grading. A period of self-disciplining reflection in preparation for the class-wide discussion takes place here, though it also takes a varied form of group interaction, cooperation, and helping: The programmatic aspect of this cooperation is intertwined with an educational order that attributes performances to individuals. Moments of help and reciprocity are thus translated into school-based performance dimensions of individual proving, whereby the logic of the programmatically cooperative is not counteracted but rather reoriented in line with a logic of competition. Within peer interaction in the classroom, school-based positions thereby become consolidated – counterfactually to Anne’s skillful efforts to configure these positions – establishing and reaffirming Valerie as a competent performer and Anne as one in need of help. This type characterizes the logic of having to position oneself in the struggle for status based on individual performance, to which the demand for cooperation is linked functionally. In this regard, this mode fits particularly well with how the teacher established the setting.

With Markus and Stefan, different roles or positions in the context of partner work become apparent in a steadier way. While Stefan imperturbably, with higher status but also cautiously, maintains a focus on the subject throughout his (peer) interaction with Markus, the latter works against precisely that. Stefan – while considering the specifics of Markus’s case – explores how to address the clash between their disparate approaches towards the setting ‘phase of exchange’, by trying to integrate Markus into the educational interaction, which Markus is willing to follow to a certain extent. Although compromises subsequently show on both sides, the task is not carried out in a way that focuses on its subject matter. In this respect, their case presents as the type of an asymmetrical-uncooperative special role, in which Markus shifts the cooperative aspect towards maintaining the peer dimension. Contrary to the idea of a supportive and helping relationship, in this case, the difference does not become a good foundation for partner work, as Markus does

not conform to the role of the one in need of help. In this case, Stefan's willingness to compromise keeps the interaction going, at least until the teacher arrives. Markus, who has special educational needs regarding the area of speech and language, is eventually asked by the teacher to minimally participate in the class.

Finally, in the last case, which is taken from a different lesson, the group work setting becomes a vehicle for unopposed exclusionary practices. Not that it needs inclusive education for this to happen, but it is indeed remarkable, how subtle the policies of inclusive education are twisted to produce exclusion: All of this can occur without any deviation from educational norms, at least on the manifest level. On the contrary, when it comes to the point, the principle of mutual help may even be explicitly put forth ('Aren't we supposed to help each other?!') – and it is unlikely to be further questioned by the teacher. If it is, then at the cost of exposing the inconsistency that lies within the demand for help in the classroom: 'You're not supposed to help each other like THAT!'

The three selected cases from the seventh grade illustrate how the approach to the requirement of helping one another is changing. In the fifth grade, the fundamental difficulties and tensions regarding the norm of mutual helping come to the fore. These consist of the fact that help interactions apparently do indeed rely on differences and inequalities, which are rather solidified through the roles of help-giver and help-receiver, while offering little room for these roles to be reversed within the immediate situation. These differences and inequalities are closely linked to the educational order and the expectations brought forward therein. On the one hand, these cooperative formats enable and allow for more opportunities of peer interaction. On the other hand, being labeled either a help-giver or a help-receiver is extended beyond the limited role of the student to the whole person, which thereby increasingly expands the educationally established order into the peer interactions. This hinders and impairs the development of peer-based counter-cultures. While in fifth grade, students still clearly attempt to meet the expectations placed on them to help one another and join to collectively cover tensions, in seventh grade, it can be observed how the connections between seemingly compensatory demands for help and the order regarding academic achievement are cleverly and strategically dissolved and exploited in favor of the required academic performance (Valerie and Anne RB7), or how the initially covered tensions increasingly become apparent and can no longer be handled (Stefan and Markus RM7) or are even twisted into gloating over the inequalities and positions of power that have become visible (Group around Sarah RH7). It is always ensured that these conflicting forms of dealing with the situations or rather dealing with difference do not become visible to the class.

5.3 Ninth Grade: Dealing with Difference in a Permissive Way in the Light of Established Social Roles and Positionings

For ninth-grade students, it can now be assumed that they tend to have become familiar with the specific practice of cooperation, and helping in the context of teaching and learning as ways of dealing with difference in the respective partner and group work, and that the principle of differentiation regarding academic achievement (which also includes speed, independent learning, etc.) has become the dominant principle in this setting (see Sect. 3.1; Bender and Rennebach 2018). It is precisely this approach towards formats of group or partner work that sometimes limits cooperation to a comparison of results and thereby implicitly fosters a “competitive practice of individual work” (ibid., p. 413). Furthermore, in ninth grade, we are at a grade level where classroom interactions can also – beyond addressing pseudo-teacher questions (Hausendorf 2008, p. 950) – claim a (rudimentary) discursive, i.e., rational-argumentative exchange (Wenzl 2018). If this generates potential for exchanging ideas with one another regarding a given subject matter, then the question arises as to how this practice relates to the pedagogical activation (among others, Avci-Werning and Lanphen 2013) of group work, cooperation, and helping. Does the pedagogization, i.e. deliberately fostering this exchange, hinder this discursive approach or contribute to it in a way so that it can establish? And how are those students dealt with who no longer want to or are unable to participate in these potentially discursive formats? The following will again depict how teachers establish and support group work, cooperation, and helping within this framework of conditions. Subsequently, three cases of how students handle this specific educational setting will be examined, with cases of medium and high differences in reciprocity depicted once again within the context of a slightly larger group constellation (Sect. 5.3.3).

This perspective of the ninth grade concludes with a case that illustrates how students are dealt with who – as part of the process of establishing and handling specific demands and rules – are ‘released’ from the educational requirements with the help of the very mode of team or group work, cooperation, and helping. Ultimately, in connection with forms of helping, there are thus dynamics of inclusion and exclusion at play. On the one hand, there are forms of working together in which relatively stable social orders and corresponding positions are established, and on the other hand, there are special spheres outside these orders, where interactions take place under the guise of cooperation, but which on a latent level no longer pursue (re)integration into the dominant order (Sect. 5.3.4).

5.3.1 Establishing the Setting: Tasks and Working Together

In German class, Dürrenmatt's classic "The Visit" is discussed. This is a course set up according to the principle of external differentiation, meaning, in this case, that it consists of higher-achieving students from across the entire grade. After reading excerpts from the book section by section, the following step involves clarifying individual words and terms to ensure reading comprehension. Initially, students worked individually to develop a definition for the adjective 'grotesque.' For this first step (lasting eight minutes), students could refer to a worksheet with a list of synonyms for the term 'grotesque' (excerpts from a lexicon). This phase is concluded with the following speech act by the teacher. Students are asked to compare their individually drafted working definitions with those of their seatmates and use them to develop a joint "version":

Tf: NOW↑ (--) second step (1.1) <<prolonged>EXchange↑> now (-) with your <<prolonged>NEIGHbor> (-) potentially> (--) cross OUT something (.) add something (---) REVISE (.) develop (-) the version you want to in a manner of speaking WORK with↑ (--) ANOTHER FIVE minutes in=with your direct neighbor↑

The task at hand sets up a phase of exchange, during which the synonyms gathered into a definition are to be compared or collated. This phase is embedded in a broader schedule with an overarching timeline, which is however not made fully transparent at this point ("second step"). The fact that during the first step all students had access to the same list from the worksheet does not allow for too much variance in their compiled definitions, so the instructions to "cross OUT" and to "add" seem sufficient as a task for the revision phase. In this case, there is no explicit reference to terms closely associated with the idea of cooperative learning. Semantically, there is no mention of partner work, pairs, etc., but rather a pragmatic reference to working together "in=with your direct neighbor↑". In this way, this mode of working together is not particularly framed in pedagogical or didactic terms. The conversation is with those sitting next to you. While in seventh grade, a specific allocation of the groups was abandoned in favor of discipline, reflection and introspection, here this is largely secondary to the dignity of the task. It is the discourse or exchange regarding the appropriate definitions that structures the conversation, not the negotiation of specific roles and responsibilities.

Thus, explaining or group work *as such* is no longer part of the task. While in this situation, students could certainly engage in a purely formal or symbolic exchange, it becomes clear that they would fall short of the expectations and would likely be unable to follow through with the next step. The actual work would not be

sufficiently prepared in that case. The task itself allows for a certain degree of flexibility; there is no ‘model solution,’ so working together is closely linked to developing the joint version. The decision for or against individual synonyms calls for a judgment of appropriateness and in that respect goes beyond clear-cut, standardized operations; the nature of the task thus structurally sets up a discursive exchange. It also remains unclear whether everyone will continue to work with the same version afterwards or whether each person is supposed to only revise their own versions. The comparison or negotiation of a definition can thus – in case of consensus – above all provide a sense of security.

The task, thus, not only allows for multiple solutions but also requires students to justify their choices. This seems to be indicated by the lack of emphasis on forms or terms of cooperation.

Before this phase of work can begin, however, a question – or rather a counter-question – is raised publicly in class. It refers to the open-ended nature of the task and, in doing so, it seems to fundamentally challenge the setting. Hence, prior to focusing on the ways in which the students handle the specifics of this work phase, it is examined how the announced teaching method of working together is publicly being negotiated in class:

Lina: but if the neighbor has it wrong then I have=it wrong too

On a manifest level Lina’s objection appears as a witty remark, namely as an (explicit) exposure of the weak point of all forms of cooperation in educational contexts. It is presumably meant to suggest that the assigned work mode seems unhelpful, as the quality and correctness of the drafted version cannot be ensured by working together with the neighbor, thereby essentially making a cooperation among classmates obsolete. Overall, however, the actual message of this speech act remains somewhat vague, so that what comes to the fore is what Lina reveals about herself and how she positions herself in this situation. Above all, this statement makes it clear – or rather she ‘gives it away’ quite openly – that she will, in any case, copy from her neighbor.

This way she does thus not convey herself as adopting the position of a student that opens up a question or problem regarding the task and teaching method at hand and intends to address it, because – as demonstrated – the task itself does not require a narrow focus on a right or wrong solution, but is open to processes of negotiation in which there is no need to agree on just one solution. In case of doubt, students could, for the time being, stick with their own versions. However, if Lina is going to copy in any case, this implies that she has either not produced a definition of her own or will set it aside anyway, in order to adopt that of her neighbor. In

this respect, the seemingly witty remark – her self-presentation as a critical, non-conformist, and sharp-witted student – comes at Lina's expense. Above all it reveals how she herself relates to the academic requirements. Even an interpretation that would construe her statement as criticizing the possibility of copying does not hold up, since this too presupposes that she will copy *in any case*.

What thus rather becomes apparent is that Lina is having difficulties understanding the structures of classroom interaction – its specific demands and the ways in which these can be addressed and met – and, on this basis, positioning herself within the role of a student.

At the level of speech acts, the shift from the abstract (“the neighbor”) to the concrete (“I”) is significant. She neither remains consistently on an abstract level (“if the neighbor has it wrong, then one has it wrong as well” or “if one person has it wrong, the other does too”) nor on a concrete level (“if Anna has it wrong, then I have it wrong as well”). Nor does she resort to a “we.” Lina thus imagines – or constructs – her own performance as generally dependent on others. What is risky regarding this matter is that these others remain abstract others whose help is not reliably available. Neither independent nor a joint cooperative-discursive engagement with the task, as envisioned in the opening of the work phase, appears to be accessible. Instead, the concern about failing dominates, due to the unreliable help. She thus requires a form of helping that is not intended within this phase of work. In this respect, her case-specific concern is activated, manifesting itself as resistance to this more discursive situation.

This resistance, which is publicly expressed as criticism in front of the whole class can hardly be ignored by the teacher. However, responding to this pseudo-critique would presumably also entail a way of addressing Lina's self-thematization or self-disclosure.

((quiet laughter, side conversations))

Tf: SHh::

Noah: there is no – there is, there is in
 [THIS task no right [or] wrong]

As was to be expected, Lina's remark has the effect of interrupting the lesson. The other students laugh quietly and begin talking among themselves, beyond the task they are supposed to work on. The teacher's response addresses this general disruption of the class: “SHh::”. In doing so, she appears to address the entire class, if not primarily the other students, since she could have addressed Lina directly; a ‘shh::’ directed at Lina would be inappropriate, as it would effectively declare her entire speech act to be devoid of any relevance. The almost maternally soothing

“SHh:” however, is likewise not entirely appropriate when addressing ninth-grade students. Nevertheless, it constitutes a moderate form of disciplining, admonishing the others not to childishly or immaturely join in with the disruption – effectively urging them: *you remain within your roles!* The students are not to find the remark amusing and thereby use it to reproduce Lina’s deviation in a different form or to highlight it further. In this respect, it is Noah who takes both the comment and Lina seriously by engaging with it: he explicates the logic of the setting and thus cannot avoid resolving Lina’s inconsistent remark regarding a potentially wrong answer in the course of this partner work. According to Noah, the dichotomous distinction between correct and incorrect cannot be maintained for this type of task, which also means that there is no need to fear that the solution will be entirely incorrect. In doing so, Noah calls for precisely that openness (as opposed to arbitrariness) in possible solutions that the task and its subject matter may claim. On the one hand, it thus becomes evident that this assignment – unlike others (“THIS task”) – does not rely on a single correct solution. On the other hand, the way in which Noah does this is neither directed at exposing Lina. After all, a mocking response – ‘Lina didn’t get it again’ – would also have been possible. Instead, his explanation appears to have more of a reassuring and clarifying potential than the teacher’s soothing (“SHh:”): Don’t worry; you can’t fail at this task. He helps Lina by summarizing once more the variability of academic performance and requirements. The specificity of the case – which structurally entails a need for help and an inability to jointly address a task – is thus addressed in a collegial manner.

David: [it’s MARIUS—he DOES [not] have it WRONG]

David, too, takes up Lina’s remark, engaging with her irrational critique and picking it up through the issue she raises – namely, the possibility of having it wrong due to the partner work. The focus here lies on the generalized remark, which is countered by a reference to the specific neighbor.

This approach does not address the question of right or wrong or the type of the task, however it also addresses Lina’s unnecessary concern. Both Noah and David do not share Lina’s explicit criticism of the teaching method nor do they use it to make other remarks regarding this matter. Instead, they direct their supportive comments towards Lina. David is particularly determined and confident: “It is MARIUS” – ‘He can handle it,’ clearly marking Lina’s unnecessarily raised concern. By emphasizing the specific other (Marius), it is acknowledged that such a concern is not, in principle, unfounded, but that in this case it is obsolete, by which the criticism brought up by Lina is also dismissed: After all, she is sitting right next to the top student.

Noah's and David's remarks oscillate between the role of teacher and that of a peer, or rather, they present as a blend of the two; which seems possible in the first place because the teacher does not provide such an explanation. It is noteworthy that both do not particularly exploit Lina's self-induced exposure or try to use it in an outperforming way for their own presentation and positioning, and that neither of them further provokes Lina, etc. Although they do take the opportunity to speak out but remain on a level where they attempt to clarify the matter. Consequently, this demonstrates a mediating approach to differences and those who hold a special position. These remarks made in front of the class could now be backed up by the teacher or, alternatively, be considered as another disruption of the work phase.

Tf:

[NOW] ((rings the bell three times)) [...]

The teacher then calls for silence again, using a loud, structuring "NOW" followed by the immediate ringing of a bell. This concludes the class-wide clarification process. However, with the choice of the bell, the students of this ninth-grade class are once more addressed in a regressive manner. By being reminded with a calming ritual to return to their actual task, they are denied the ability to cognitively and rationally understand the situation and their role in it, even though precisely this was expressed by Noah and David earlier. This thus shows a disconnect between the demanding nature of the task and the style of teaching and intervention. At this point, a clear reminder that would have called for the students to focus on the task would also have been appropriate. However, the teacher's response only addresses the aspect of classroom disruption. No further comment is made on Noah's and David's remarks, but neither of them is specifically sanctioned. The teacher's stance regarding Lina's question remains somewhat open. If the students restrained from any subsequent, class-wide remarks, this might have been addressed via the mild and regressively framed way of disciplining, and the task could have been resumed since the classroom disruption were, so to speak, off the class's table. But now the teacher (Tf) moves over to Lina and Marius, who sit next to each other. Thus, similar to the beginning of the task, the *mode* of working is not commented on further.

5.3.2 "in case YOU are wrong": On (the Possibility of) Addressing Non-Cooperation (RH9)

Following this somewhat extended introductory phase of the teacher establishing the interaction, this section first of all continues to follow the constellation around Lina and Marius – characterized by a high difference in reciprocity (RH9) – which

develops immediately after the teacher joins them. At first, the focus is on how the teacher handles the situation. Strong case specifics of both Lina and the teacher become evident in this interaction, which, however will not be discussed in further detail in the following.

- Tf: now
Marius: <<immediate>I don't even know how she assumes that I [am wrong>
Tf: [(laughs))
Lina: <<prolonged>what↑>
Tf: Marius is quite- (--) indignant (-) is quite (--)
((Students at the neighboring table laugh))
Tf: aghast

Once again, the teacher begins her speech act with “now.” Since nothing else follows, she thereby signals – as well as with her arrival at Lina and Marius’s place – that, contrary to her previous, merely disciplining reaction, she now clearly considers the situation to be one that needs to be addressed. However, she now leaves it up to the students to initiate the exchange on this matter. With regard to Lina, it is thus clear that she did not raise an issue of disproportion that universally applies to the whole class. However, and this is noteworthy, she is not addressed directly, but through the openness of the teacher’s speech act the issue is now to be potentially located in the constellation between Marius and her. Lina must now deal with the fact that her objection did neither resonate in terms of the subject matter nor on a social level and has put her in a special role. The real challenge, however, lies with Marius. Having remained completely uninvolved until now, he is now drawn into the constellation of the problem. He responds to this with a justificatory speech act, which on a manifest level means ‘I don’t even know what’s going on here,’ but also remains ambiguous. It is worth noting, however, that through the wording “I don’t even know,” as opposed to ‘I don’t know,’ no actual question, but rather a refusal to participate, precisely a justification is implied. This is reproduced in “how she assumes that”. Lina is not directly addressed here; instead, the speech act is directed at the teacher in a justifying manner and points to a misunderstanding and misplacement on Lina’s part. Marius thus seeks to align himself with the teacher in opposition to Lina. However, the closing remark again shifts the focus back to the speaker and – through the allegation of not having worked properly – brings up a (seemingly) offended and indignant reaction. Thus, several logics intertwine here. This seems clever, as it avoids drawing attention to the teacher’s indecisive and unclear handling of the situation, Lina’s case-specific non-handling of the tasks, or the speaker’s own stance on the matter. Marius, who has found himself in a very complicated situation, seems to be managing to successfully extricate himself from it without causing any further disruptions. Yet, in

this case, neither Lina nor the teacher appears capable of doing the same. While Lina remains resistant and stuck in her own case-specific perspective (she does not understand the interrelations), the teacher is not very helpful either. By laughing, she initially engages with the situation as if it were a giggly conversation, and with the remark “Marius is quite (--) indignant (-) is quite (--) aghast,” Marius eventually gets involved directly and is in turn addressed in a childish regressive manner that exposes him. This statement thus does nothing to further clarify the situation. Case-specific to the teacher, she seems to address the students as if they were small children in order to discipline them. She also appears unable to cope with the overall situation. This means that Marius now potentially bears the entire responsibility for the further course of events. He would now need to react with extraordinary confidence and sensitivity so as not to expose the inequality between him and Lina, to protect himself or rather extricate himself from the situation, and not to say something like, “Well, you just can’t work with Lina. She just said she won’t participate.”

- Marius: OH I SEE, you asked that for YOURSELF↑
 Lina: yes:
 Marius: so in case (.) YOU are wrong
 Jan: <<laughing>ah::[haha:>]
 Tf: [you should now just come to an agreement]
 Lina: [in case YOU are wrong]
 [...]

Marius thus gives in or rather redirects the conversation once again, framing the event as a misunderstanding, although it remains unclear what exactly the misunderstanding might be. Still, it offers at least a possibility to concede with a statement like, “Well, I thought this would be difficult in partner work.” Yet the communication does not reach a point where a shared interpretation of the situation can be agreed upon – Lina’s inability to refer to the specific but complex speech acts again contributes to the growing amusement of those listening in. Once again, the teacher’s remark is not really helpful in ending the predicament for everyone, as she just appeals to both students without further clarifying or resolving the issues of the interaction, instead, merely repeating the task that has caused Lina’s confusion in the first place.

The omission in the transcript thus sustains the structure of the interaction. Only after the teacher has left the table does Marius introduce a phase of jointly working on the task, willingly offering to read of his definition:

- Marius: what is said in the TEXT↑ (1.8) should I read mine aloud↑
(--)
- Lina: yes
- Marius: as grotesque (-) one understands a peculiar action or OBJECT (-)
((inhale)) the action or object (1.0) are mostly (6.5) are mostly NEW
(.) funny (.) ba=bizarre macabre or strange↓ (-) for the oth:=or
<<quiet>for outsiders> (1.8) out-sid-ers (-) who see or observe it
(20.5)

Thus, it is still Marius, the student at the top of the class, who keeps up the task and the relationship with Lina without putting further pressure on her or exposing her. He skillfully keeps the interaction flowing smoothly without violating any of these aspects. He achieves this by presenting a coherent, finished concept and not asking for any discussion or exchange about the definitions, nor does he ask about Lina's part of the task. Lina can at least briefly agree with this attempt at a definition, so that a minimum level of cooperation is still maintained without causing further effort for either party. Contrary to Lina's concern, which is case-specific on her part, Marius proves to be a reliable cooperation partner, and thus overall someone who carries and guarantees for the entire situation, which also involves practicing an evidently well-rehearsed, mediating approach to difference, even if individual teachers do not get far in terms of that themselves.

- Lina: but <<prolonged>EXACTLY THAT IS> written up here
- Marius: <<loud>YES:↓> (1.0) but up here there are still twenty more words ↑
and here it is (.) embedded in a <<quiet>text> (9.4) <<very
quiet>look, he is studying us> (1.1) ((about the project researcher))

Yet Lina cannot act upon this minimal requirement, and now also even criticizes Marius's work: 'Surely this cannot be right in that form'. On a latent level, she is still caught up in her line of reasoning and her concern regarding the assigned task. In this respect, her statement is structurally an expression of an inner reality that cannot understand or engage with the external one, nor trust another person. Marius responds smoothly to this as well: He points out that he has followed the instructions of the task. Since Lina (finally) leaves this uncommented, the joint task is abandoned, and the topic is changed: The pause that lasts almost for ten seconds marks the conclusion of the topic, and the peer-level interaction shows a conciliatory approach regarding the outcome of the work phase. If the context of the task does not provide a basis for commonality or cooperation, then after attempting to create such a basis, the focus is allowed to shift to extracurricular topics by referring to the present researcher as a form of situational communization.

5.3.3 “I define it like that for myself and tell [you about it then too]”: On the Limited Possibility of Topic-oriented Cooperation or on Integrating the Special Role of the Skilled (RM9 and RB9a)

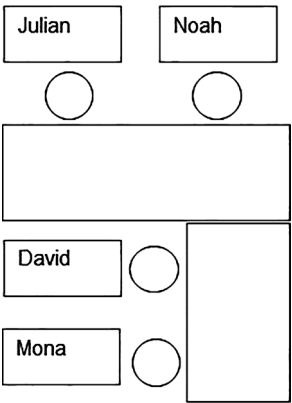
This case constellation also unfolds following the task of developing a working definition for the adjective ‘grotesque’ “with the <<prolonged>NEIGHbor>”. In this case, relations of (1) balanced and (2) medium differences in reciprocity are depicted. These involve two pairs interacting as a group of four.

In this course, students are mainly seated in pairs at tables for two that are arranged into L-shapes. The following scene also takes place at such an L-shape. At one table that runs parallel to the wall sit Julian and Noah. Viewed from the door and teacher’s desk, Noah is seated at the front. The second table is arranged on the inner side of Noah’s table, in front of where Noah’s place is facing. David sits facing the teacher’s desk and the door, essentially in the corner of the formation, and Mona sits outside at this two-person table (Fig. 5.1).

In this arrangement, the pairing around Julian and Noah, extended by Mona and David, experiences a disruption and expansion of the demand for cooperation and of the relations of reciprocity. As soon as the work phase begins, the social arrangement of the setting – specifically working with direct neighbors – is immediately dismissed, as David turns not to Mona but to Julian:

David: alright julian whatcha got written there↑

Fig. 5.1 Two pairs at a seating arrangement forming a group of four. (Source: Own survey)



David thus not only disregards the specific assignment of his teacher but also seems to exclude both Mona (his neighbor) and Noah (Julian's neighbor) from the phase of partner work. The way Julian is addressed reveals itself to be a teacher's speech act ("alright Julian"). However, this clashes with the phrase "whatcha got written there↑" which seems to be disparaging towards the subject matter he refers to. The introduction, which with regards to speech act theory can be described as pedagogically and slightly disciplining, is followed by an informal, reference that averts the subject matter. Contextually, this introduction can be interpreted as the initiation of an interactional game inviting its participants to collectively distance themselves from the subject matter – by imitating or caricaturing the teacher in charge, David not only parodies the teacher but also satirizes the setting, the phase of partner work. Thus, David may probably not be all that interested in collaborating with Julian, but this farce might succeed best through addressing Julian, although, in principle, Mona or Noah could have been called on in a teacher-like manner just as easily. However, addressing Mona would have had limited reach for the joke, and choosing Noah would have much more strongly established a pair constellation rather than primarily setting a stage for the joke. Staging the interactional game like this, namely by addressing Julian, is the way that most likely involves the entire group. Thus, the pedagogically disciplining address directed at Julian becomes part of the performance, for which general attention must be established. Setting up the initial speech act like this, thus above all addresses the general issue of taking up the required communicative position. At first, there is no discursive exchange, or even one that corresponds with role and subject matter, but at the same time, a transition to a group-oriented way of dealing with the situation is carried out in a specific way, even if an exchange focusing on the subject level is not necessarily to be expected at this stage.

Mona: what else 've you got written with it then↑

Before Julian can respond, Mona joins the interactional game. It is not entirely clear from the speech act whether she is addressing David, Julian, or possibly Noah. In short, her speech act in all three variants tends to copy David's statement without achieving a similar effect of persiflage. The speech act thus becomes more of a follow-up question that can be asked after someone else has already said something. The somewhat bumpy follow-up does not hit the same tone but revokes David's role distance while maintaining the focus on the subject at hand, so that it thus now opens up a way to engage with the task in a serious and interactive manner.

If she were to address David, it would be implicit criticism and end the interactional game. In terms of Noah, it would primarily be a clumsy copy of the farce. Addressing Julian again would most likely mean to participate in the group's interactional game, while at the same time bringing up a stronger focus on the subject matter. The video recordings show that she looks at Julian, and accordingly it is he who responds:

Julian: um one understands something as grotesque (.) that appears to us
 <<prolonged>unfamiliarily distorted>↓ (-) regardless of whether it is a
 perSON(.) a PICTURE <<prolonged>or another> (-) or other
 impressions (1.8) [...]

Julian thus follows up on what is likely a dual address, and which, at least on the manifest level, calls for a response in relation to the subject matter. A literal interpretation of this contribution seems of little value at this point—the focus of the reconstruction should instead be the mode in which it is carried out. While reading the notes aloud in the established group of four is certainly appropriate in terms of the subject matter, the unhesitant jump into the practice of comparison is perplexing. Passing the notes around is not suitable in the larger group, unlike in partner work, nor is an impromptu summary, since the task requires to come up with a definition. However, one would mandatorily expect a somewhat social embedding within this response, which solely replies to the subject-related aspect of Mona's request to interact. At the very least, one would expect a meta-comment while taking up the role assigned to him ('Well, what I have here...') as well as on the fact of being called upon by two classmates ('Okay'). This would allow him to tailor his response to both previous ways in which he has been addressed – in between peer talk and classroom interaction. Instead, Julian almost immediately engages in a response focused on the subject matter. The absence of any speech acts that respond to the social situation of group work allows for various interpretations. Firstly, it could be seen as engaging with David's invitation to the interactional game: Julian would skillfully be playing along by portraying himself as a particularly diligent student and thus ironically distance himself from the situation. However, an introduction or any indication of an ironic twist would be necessary to signal the staged nature of the speech act as such: The seamless and thus undistanced, diligent, goal-oriented fulfillment of duty is therefore not part of the performance. It may point to a personality structure that (1) structurally cannot connect to the game of peer interaction or serve it, or (2) has by the ninth-grade already moved beyond the phase of adolescent peer interaction and established a confident adulthood, thereby abandoning the exerted role distance. Finally, it could also be read as (3) a retort to David, dismissing the provocation by changing the level of meaning within their conversation with a shift towards the subject matter. However, it seems likely that

there is an inability to structurally connect to peer interactions, as social elements also appear indispensable even in role-based interactions of the adult world. In this respect, the responder would be unable to pick up on the typical elements of peer interaction and the response solely addressing the level of subject matter would thus be structurally specific to the case of this student. Regardless of the explanation, there is an unconditional focus on duty and subject matter. The irritation thus lies beyond the performance axis. Regardless of the level of performance or ability – ranging from special educational needs to giftedness – the issue can be located at lacking a socially appropriate role within social interaction. In this respect, concerning the group dynamic, it can also be noted that David's and Mona's addresses likely already anticipate Julian's reaction. David's opening line would thus not be an introduction to an ongoing humorous game. This also applies to Mona, who linguistically transforms the playful prompt into a serious subject-related one: Both address Julian with the expectation that he will behave as he does. Mona and David thus take part in Julian's capabilities but also actively and not in an overly intrusive or exploitative manner integrate him into a social situation: David through a quasi-playful approach and Mona through translating it, thereby first preparing the ground for the kind of reference that Julian provides. An adept integration of Julian into the phase of group work, purely focused on subject matter and functionality could also have straightforwardly demanded his definition: 'Julian, do you just want to read yours aloud, that'll be the fastest way.' Instead, David and Mona allow to address the, so to speak, foreseeable tension between subject-related and socially appropriate interaction, which Julian is unable to deal with.

Noah: no it has=it just has (--) z- a lot of meanings (3.0)

Julian: yes I think (-) all the WORDS↑ (-) are (.) have NO fixed meaning you know (.) you can REALLY from experience [(unintelligible; several words)]

Noah: [<<loud>you can (.) you just can>] not with a hundred percent say grotesque (-) whether- WHAT it just [Julian: exactly] (-) exactly is

After Julian has read his definition aloud, the group continues to primarily work with it further. The discussion unfolds around the appropriateness of individual synonyms and is oriented towards the subject matter. However, the interpretative dispute is already being closed by Noah at the cited point of the transcript. On the manifest level, he suggests a conciliatory coexistence of the various interpretative offers, which on the latent level makes a statement that effectively closes the discussion: One cannot develop a clear definition because grotesque just has a lot of meanings! The ongoing indeterminacy of the word's definition would thus not be due to the group but rooted in the matter, whereby further attempts at definition and consensus would inevitably come to nothing. Thus, the group touches on the deep

structure of the task: Contrary to a situationally pragmatic collection of individually possible, more or less fitting synonyms, the group highlights the ambiguity of the adjective's meaning thereby, framing their interactional problem as if it were actually rooted in the subject matter and accordingly framing the use of the adjective as to be interpreted dependent on respective contexts ("from experience"). What is implicated by the task, namely, not pushing for a clear solution but allowing to engage with social rules, becomes the subject of the group work. Noah commenting on how these positions or attempts at definition (must) remain unconnected can be interpreted, after all, as closing what has now become an idle discussion. Ultimately, there is agreement in terms of the socialization-based acquisition regarding the knowledge of rules: Through use of language or "experience", an understanding of the contextual appropriateness of word usage is finally established. It is noteworthy that during this joint focus on the subject matter, Julian is integrated into the group setting.

Julian: ABOVE all (-) the <<prolonged>ALL THE WORDS> (-) well (-) it is really OFTEN the case (-) that with MA:NY words here I say (.) okay where (I ask myself) okay what is that↑ that he can say=it (-) like that (--) but since that is also (-) from some experience↑ and not because it (-) because I read it somewhere (.) because it (.) IS LIKE THAT WAY or ANOTHER↓ (-) now 've (-) I don't know↓ (---) I define it like that for myself and tell [you all about it then too] [...]

Driven by the opening line of this form of interaction, Julian's subsequent remarks reveal an unrestrained sharing of both personal and generalizable interpretations of the world. The initial presentation of a clear-cut definition of the term now gives way to a reveling in proposed interpretations or rather in the mode of how they are being generated through self- and world-references. His classmates can certainly take part in the insights gained. Calmly and without any attempt to distinguish himself from the group, he turns to his peers on the level of the subject matter drawing on his subject-related expertise. This special role is filled confidently. However, in the context of partner- or group-based arrangements it relies on an audience that allows it to proceed: If you don't know, then I'll tell you!

Julian: because (-) there simply is NO (--) in the German language there is no (-) unanimous (.) it is (.) it is like↑ these are (--) and (.) IN CASE (.) it would be uSED differently anyway (-) the words because-
 Noah: can I for one second/just have your [school ID↑]
 Tf: [who needs more] [time now↑]
 Julian: [what↑]
 [...]

The argument that definitions are difficult to establish is reproduced by a case for vague usage of words— it even intensifies to the form of a thought experiment: Even if people were in agreement, that is, that they reached an irrevocable “unanimous,” simply binding system for assigning words to specific situations, they would probably still not adhere to it.

These continuing reflections, which increasingly distance the working partners Julian and Noah from the necessity of completing the task – and thereby straining the common mode of group-based peer interaction within teaching and learning – are now even more directly called off by Noah. Even prior to this, the discursive practice was supposed to end by referring to the level of the subject matter, that is, by demonstrating that it is impossible to develop a clear-cut definition. The abrupt change of the subject still allows for this to happen in a mediated and peaceful manner. Instead of intervening on the manifest level (‘Okay, that’s enough now’) or labeling Julian as a know-it-all type or something similar, which would expose Julian’s digression and thus his position as a knowledgeable weirdo, he is allowed to behave this way to a certain extent. Once again Julian’s lack of awareness of the others’ fatigue highlights his special role and the socially unappealing in favor of engaging with the subject matter. The resolved, conciliatory, and at times accommodating manner in which the other group members deal with the continuous practice of the special role allows such a role to proceed in the first place.

5.3.4 Summary: Dealing with Difference in a Permissive Way in the Light of Established Social Roles and Positionings

The kind of task and the subject of the partner work phase require a cooperative approach through a reasoned choice (the discussion of suitable synonyms as a judgment of appropriateness). However, the way in which this phase of partner or group work is introduced (framed as a phase of comparison) does not meet the actual requirements. In terms of subject-appropriateness and the process of reaching a consensus, the students must go beyond the teacher’s instructions when focusing on understanding the synonyms and their respective meanings in order to draft a definition for “grotesque.” This kind of task cannot aim for an unambiguous and thus comparable answer, so in order to fulfill it, the students must be able to decipher it as deviating from the structures of other school tasks. Lina cannot make this differentiation. She does not grasp that tasks do not specifically aim for a comparable individual performance, but notwithstanding this, rather enable or require cooperation. This is not primarily due to a lack of understanding of the variation of kinds of tasks, which do not focus on performance attributable only to the indi-

vidual, but due to an internal reality that cannot meet a minimum level of cooperation: Regardless of the quality of explanations, she depends on a neighbor or on assurance from others, which is why she is, so to speak, structurally unable to engage with the open and discursive task and its understanding. This task thus becomes her dilemma: having to copy things down without being able to rely on a dependable partner who can solve this specific task. However, the references to Lina made by and in front of the class mostly appear as a comradely way of dissolving the boundaries of the educational setting. Through them, Lina is identified as belonging to this group, even when the specific kind of task is addressed in an explanatory manner. Reactions to this are mediating. They do not address the issue but smooth it over by shifting the focus. Differences in status and role are not ignored, but they are no longer, as in seventh grade, used as an occasion for exploitation, and are rather addressed in a peer-typical, comradely manner. Marius, too, addresses Lina's inability to cooperate in a mediating way. Structurally this shows that, the setting's cooperative aspiration is maintained, which, however, does not come at the expense of the peer level, so that if this expectation is not met, any subject-related engagement can be suspended without having to make this explicit. This form of dealing with a clear difference in reciprocity appears to be prudent and composed – and this, as it were, despite the teacher's contributions to the interaction.

The second case also depicts a special treatment that addresses a conditional ability to cooperate. Initially, Julian is addressed in a way that allows him the opportunity to contribute. This is achieved by explicitly addressing him, by tolerating his subject-focused lack of distance, and by largely accepting the violation of common rules of social interaction. In return, Julian shows a minimum willingness to reciprocate by being willing to lecture, that is, to engage with the situation and the relevance regarding the subject matter as set by the others. This generates a serious offer of exchange that does not disrespect the counterpart: Although Julian (only) addresses the logic of the subject matter, he neither speaks to his classmates as if he were in the position of the teacher nor as if he were speaking to one (in a form of what would be referred to as a geek).

It thus seems that by ninth grade, students have practiced how to deal with differences (as it had been initiated earlier), in a way which succeeds at not unnecessarily exaggerating existing differences or exploiting it for their own gains of status and prestige. We are thus, still not dealing with forms of equalizing help-interactions. Instead, balance is achieved through a permissive approach towards these deviations.

It must certainly be added that the presented cases were taken from a performance-oriented and relatively high-performing setting or course. On the other hand, there are constellations in which the opportunities for group interac-

tion, cooperation, and helping do not facilitate permissive reintegration but rather provide alternative opportunities for interaction that are detached from the school context or are gradually being released from it. The compilation of the findings concludes with an example from such a setting, which is somewhat longer and will not be reconstructed in detail.

5.3.5 Conclusion: “purple sweater” – Cooperation as Concealment of the Special Role and Release from the Context of Teaching and Learning

The following scene is from a science class in a basic level course. It is a scene that takes place in connection with the lesson described in Sect. 3.1, which is structured by a work schedule. Following the phases of partner work, the solutions to the tasks are partially discussed in front of the class. The tasks that have not yet been completed are to be continued afterwards. Overall, this suggests individual work, but partner work or work within the table groups is also tolerated. The following scene was recorded in such a constellation of partner work and its transcript is shown below in great detail, although it will not be reconstructed as comprehensively as the previous cases. In contrast to the previous cases from ninth grade, it becomes clear that the opportunities for interaction granted through forms of cooperative learning, which indeed allow more opportunities for social integration among peers within the framework of the lesson, are simultaneously potentially opportunities for interaction beyond the context of teaching and learning. While the peer level can be used to mediate between educational requirements and subjective peculiarities as long as the educational context can still be handled and maintained, another possibility allows students to, so to speak, ‘unnoticedly’ be released from the academic requirements by granting them alternative spaces of interaction:

- Sandra: I want to get a sweater from (brand name) (.) it's pur=violet (-) LIKE:↑
 ((Sandra points to her fingernail)) such a color (2.7) [I will get]
- Mia: [I wouldn't] do
 that (-) .h what you have to get↑ (--) if (-) like your eye color (.) scht
 (-) uh order [online]
- Sandra: [no::] (1.0) I swear such a color ((Sandra points again to
 her fingernail)) that looks <<prolonged>really COOL >
- Mia: <<prolonged>green> would suit you (---) [so]
- Sandra: [I::h]
- Mia: like (.) like like your eye thing like <<prolonged>green> (-) what is it
 called what .h I don't know what eye color like that THING you have
 (.) like BLUE (---) grAY right↑ (3.2) NO you didn't unDERSTAND
 what kind of green I mean (---) LIKE THIS you know this khaki green↑

- Sandra: nope (-) I don't want that↓ I find that <<prolonged>ug-ly> (---)
- Mia: O:kay↓ [Sandra]
- Sandra: [I'm getting] purple↑ (2.0)
- Mia: PUR:PLE: ↑
- Sandra: mhm
- Mia: does that look good↑
- Sandra: <<loud>YES SUCH A PUR:PLE:>> ((Sandra again points to her fingernail, which she colors with a pen))
- Mia: <<prolonged>I can't IMAGine that (-) I think like (.) of (-) dark purple>
- Sandra: mh=mh: (-) (1.5) <<loud, prolonged>SUCH A PURPLE>> ((Sandra now holds her hand in front of Mia's face and points to her fingernail))
- Mia: oh: (-) does that exist↑ (-) [in that color]
- Sandra: [YES: man] I immediately fell in love
((Tm2, sitting diagonally across from Sandra and Mia at a table group, turns to them and makes eye contact))
- Tm2: ALRIGHT ladies (explains [inaudible.])
- Mia: [YES we::=uhh] (.) I'm still thinking (.) so
(-) [I'm=I'm not getting how-]
- Tm2: [at the moment] you're talking a lot with Sandra ((Mia raises her hand to signal)) and not about what (-) about (.) about the SUBJECT MATTER (.) SO (1.4) ((Mia lowers her hand)) LOOK it UP in the text and (-) [try to solve it together]
- Mia: [we're done but::] (.) this (.) with task two we're now
(-) I=we have <immediate>so I have I have> US (.) we've read it through <<immediate>then we again> so (.) through it again we re-(-) and yeah↑ now we're task two
- Tm2: EXACTLY↓ (-) and if you've (.) <<prolonged>reAD> the text↑ (.) then you need to (.) do task two NOW um (.) directly
- Mia: oh↓ <<quiet>okay>
- Tm2: no [it refers EXACTLY TO↑ the text]
- Mia: [well then I'll read it] again
- Tm2: yes (-) ((Mia crosses her arms on the table and rests her head)) GOOD
(.) discuss it together and then hurry up
((Tm2 turns around))
- Mia: Sandra, read the text again properly where we can do task two (4.5)
((Mia laughs softly, then a quiet sigh))
- Sandra: I swear why do I have such <<prolonged>pain>↑
- Mia: <<very quiet> honestly (.) we took our exam (.) so then I'm not coming to school tomorrow>
- Sandra: HH:↑ (3.6)
((Jawad walks past Sandra and Mia's table. Mia lifts her head and turns to him. Jawad stops in front of Sandra and Mia's table))
- Sandra: no (.) we're not done yet
- Mia: where=where did you tick these: (-)
- Jawad: here
((Jawad points to a sheet of paper he's holding))
- Mia: how did you do it↑

- Jawad: you have to (.) you- (1.1)
 Mia: <<quiet>okay> (3.6) the questions
 Sandra: copy it
 ((Jawad sits at the table. Mia laughs softly))
 Mia: okay (-) it's probably wrong anyway (2.8) HE does one two three
 right
 Sandra: one [three]
 Mia: [<<loud>not like that>]
 Sandra: two ((yawns))
 Mia: show me how you did it (1.1) give it here
 ((Jawad hands the sheet over Sandra's place to Mia))
 Sandra: <<very quiet, prolonged> ONE three> and <<faster>two five four six
 (-) seven> (2.4)
 Mia: two (4.2) [five four]
 Sandra: [I swear I want to] <<prolonged>TO SLEEP>
 Mia: five (-) four (-) six (-) seven

A quick review of the scene first of all shows a relatively long phase where Mia and Sandra engage in questions unrelated to the lesson until the nearby teacher finally intervenes. After a brief interaction with the teacher, however, they quickly turn away from the task again. Eventually, they copy Jawad's solutions, even though they suspect he might have chosen a method of solving that does not fit the task. Nevertheless, they simply copy the ticked answer choices without considering their underlying meaning.

If one takes a closer look, particularly at the interaction with the teacher, it becomes apparent that the teacher does indeed point out once more what needs to be done in relation to the lesson and how to proceed. Ultimately, however, instructions are only repeated: The text is to be read, and then questions about the text are to be answered. The references to each other are not reciprocal. While the teacher admonishes the students, Mia at first begins to justify herself and then suddenly raises her hand, thereby simulating regular participation in the lesson, which virtually takes place during the teacher's disciplinary intervention. The teacher continues speaking and does not respond to her raising her hand. Mia eventually lowers her hand again. Even this scene alone does not seem to suggest a serious interest in participating in the lesson, and the subsequent remarks also lack a meaningful connection to its context. Mia at first claims they are done, have read through everything, and then concludes by saying "[well then I'll read it] again." While the teacher confirms this plan and repeats the task once more, Mia finally rests her head on the table and tries once more to get Sandra to read the text. Sandra however, also identifies herself as 'unable to work' (I swear why do I have such <prolonged>pain>). Instead of choosing to do nothing at all, they eventually opt for the previously described alter-

native of copying the task's solutions from Jawad. What seems relevant about this scene is that, the teacher primarily disciplines the two students only to the extent that their lack of participation does not disrupt the lesson too strongly. There is neither any addressing of the fact that both have obviously not sufficiently engaged with the subject at hand to take the next steps – not even by discussing it with each other – nor is there any intervention at a later point, when it becomes quite obvious that they are copying the solutions to the assignment as if from a blueprint. How the teacher releases the two students from the lesson in this context becomes particularly apparent in his address “ALRIGHT ladies.” This expression might be suitable in a women's travel group, where the travelers occasionally address each other in this manner. It would then serve as a reminder that it's time to head to the bus, make a decision about dinner, etc. It calls for a brief moment of reflection to allow events to proceed. However, after such an address, no truly meaningful topic can be discussed. Applied to the present context, this would mean that the special situation and the special roles of Mia and Sandra are already accepted within it. They are merely expected to restrain themselves enough so that the progress of the lesson is not disrupted. This speech act does not aim for a serious and structured participation regarding the subject matter of the lesson. If one additionally applies the statement to the context where a (male) teacher is speaking to two approximately 15-year-old female students, one can, on a manifest level see a (failed) attempt of an approach at peer level and, in that, also a certain acceptance and granting of legitimacy for this level. On a latent level, however, it is also a statement that attributes only limited accountability to those addressed and thus also expresses a certain condescension towards the sphere in which “ladies” move (fun, idleness, appearances). Unlike when one actually belongs to the women's travel group and just briefly deviates into the world of everyday necessities, here the others, specifically Mia and Sandra, are addressed as being peculiar.

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Group Interaction, Cooperation, and Helping in the Context of Relatively Stable Orders

6.1 Reflections on Educational and School Theory

Across the body of results, the finding is reinforced that forms of cooperative learning, mediated through mutual peer support, do not help to mitigate differences in inclusive perspectives. By enabling joint action in highly heterogeneous groups, equity and solidarity do not flexibly emerge on their own. Instead, all forms of group work, cooperation, and helping are always oriented towards what is continuously required and established during each class in terms of behavioral and learning expectations. These rules are not rigid or unchangeable, but they form relatively stable patterns that guide the social practices. Thus, even in settings designed to be inclusive, social orders do not align with the students' needs. This issue regarding the alignment between the demands of cooperative learning and the resulting interaction practices is most pronounced in interactions in fifth grade. There, students face the immediate problem that offering help potentially also creates and solidifies differences between those who can independently maintain their position within the social order in terms of knowledge and behavioral requirements and those who rely on support in order to do so (RB5/RM5/RH5b). At the same time, they lack both adequate access to structured mediation mechanisms for dealing with classmates and the corresponding disciplinary power, as well as the legitimate authority to employ such means (RB5/RM5/RH5a; RB5).

In this respect, regarding the applied contrast criterion of reciprocity, it was shown that it is not a more or less pronounced difference in reciprocity that influences the practices of helping and working together among students, but rather that the essential mark of distinction between the failure and success of working to-

gether in heterogeneous contexts lies in the relation to the educational order. This design of the study thus allows for a sociological and intersectional detachment from specific (special) educational categories of difference. Regarding the question of inclusion and exclusion within specific orders, it is thus not decisive whether there is a special educational need or another diagnosis. What is crucial is rather, whether students accept or conform to the social orders. They do this both by being able or willing to participate, or by accepting or demanding special roles and exclusions. These positions do not align with the classification of special educational needs, but it can be assumed that mismatches may lead to such classifications. Accordingly, even in balanced constellations, there are strategic orientations towards one's own position within the classroom order, that functionally serve the demands of cooperation, as in the constellation between Valerie and Anne (RB7). In doing so, students (although not entirely without making the higher status position visible) also strive to integrate the partners in need of support into the educational setting, such as Stefan (RM7). Unproblematic in terms of conflict-free and smoothly or cooperatively proceeding interactions are all constellations in which students do not question the prevailing educational orders through their interactional contributions (RM5). As mentioned previously, this is the case when they strive for participation or accept – or even demand – to take up their special roles beyond the framework of the educational orders (RH5; RM7). However, especially in seventh grade, students also use their ability to connect to the educational order, (that emerges as working together in asymmetrical constellations as a means of helping) in an exploitative way to gain status and prestige even within their peer group. This, in turn, is difficult for teachers to sanction as boundary-crossing behavior, since interactions based on inequality are, as it were, inherent to the programmatic demand for help (RH7). These findings also apply to the data from the ninth grade. However, all participants now seem better able to handle the tensions arising from the programmatic demand for mutual inclusive helping. Routines for dealing with inequality have thus emerged, so that the resulting differences in status within the context of partner or group work and helping are no longer displayed and exploited (RM9 and RB9a).

The transformations presumed on the basis of the criterion of age (cf. King 2013) in terms of how the students handle support, cooperation, and helping become apparent across the grades and throughout secondary school: *In fifth grade* as summarized within the type of *covering through delegation students tend to orient themselves* according to their life and developmental stage toward the structural demands of the interaction contexts and their actors. Mediated by their teachers' interaction structures (see Sect. 4.1), they attempt to meet the demands of the social context of teaching and learning and school. They also face the challenge of ad-

addressing the disconnect between the ideals programmatically associated with helping and support and the prevailing social orders within school education and accordingly the logics of social orders, which always generate various positionings. In this process, positions emerge in which such a highly complex educational setting – structured around helping – can be dealt with. However, these positions do not immediately correspond to the roles of those in need of help and of those giving help, as these prove to be precarious to occupy on the level of latent meaning structures in conjunction with the social order of teaching and learning, since they reinforce inequalities and thus, in turn, contradict the programmatic goals. Instead, we find

1. those who *stage* themselves as help-givers, that is, those who publicly assume the role of the help-giver in front of the whole class (without any counterpart in need of help) (RB5/RM5/RH5a),
2. Those who attempt to evade these delegations of an inclusion-oriented program, which structurally manifests itself as the incompatibility between inclusion-oriented demands and the normative orders of classroom instruction (Bender and Rennebach 2021) (RB5/RM5/RH5b),
3. those who – on the axis of integration into the educational order (which relies on specific norms of knowledge and behavior) refuse (or must refuse) the role of help-receiver (RM5; RB5/RM5/RH5b), and
4. those who attempt to address this precarious position through efforts towards egalitarian cooperation (RB5).

Ultimately, there are few who are willing to accept the special role (RH5), and consequently, show little interest in (re)integrating themselves into the logic of the dominant educational order. In accordance with this, students generally attempt publicly in class to cover the dilemmas within interaction and help practices, in order to fulfill both the moral norms of the demand for cooperation and the norms of the social order within the educational setting.

In *seventh grade* this inability to reconcile these different norms (norms of cooperation and inclusion vs. the social educational order) increasingly and on a manifest level emerges as a *structural problem of inclusive educational interaction* (see Bender and Dietrich 2019). Typologically, scenes emerge, in which differences are publicly displayed within and in front of the whole class, following the logic of the classroom order (see Budde 2012, p. 529) – particularly through the deliberate exaggeration and exploitation of the status asymmetry inherent in help interactions (RH7). In conjunction with the structure of the dominant educational setting, the trickiness inscribed in these demands for help becomes apparent on the manifest level, for help interactions tend to highlight the relatively stable logics of

social orders and can thus be exploited precisely for this purpose. In addition, or also mediated by this, the roles of the integrated, of those striving for integration, and of the disintegrated appear to solidify along the axis of the norms of the classroom's social order through a more deliberate focus on meeting the requirements of the educational setting (RB7; RM7).

A surprising finding of the study, however, is that these performances no longer appear to be necessary by the end of *ninth grade*. Regarding the demand for partner or group work and cooperation, a *permissive approach against the backdrop of established role conformity* emerges. Class-wide references to students who, due to their own case-specific dynamics, struggle to consistently relate to the dominant social order of the educational setting, emerge at the peer level and blur the line of what formally counts as educational. Additionally, mediating reactions now emerge that do not address the issue of inequality and exclusion but smooth it over by shifting the focus to the peer level. Status and role differences are not ignored, but they do not (any longer) provide an occasion to exploit the differences (RH9). Structurally, the setting maintains its demand for cooperativeness, which, however, does not come at the expense of the peer level, so that when it is not fulfilled, addressing the subject matter gets suspended and – without making it explicit – students can still *socialize* at the peer level, even if they do not act as 'equals' on this level either. Consequently, even at this point, the educational setting does not conform to the case-specific needs of those students who cannot consistently relate to the educational order. Rather, students who largely endorse this dominant educational order by fulfilling the role requirement manage to simultaneously achieve the integration of these other students at the peer level by creating a certain distance towards these very roles. Although teachers allow less room for these parallel peer interactions, these alternative spaces of interaction persist due to the legitimization of cooperation and partner or group work, which thereby also create opportunities for social interaction beyond the educational context. Conversely, a permissive approach is rehearsed with those who, in terms of interaction structure, demonstrate insensitivity and lack of boundaries in peer interaction (RM9). The thesis that no change in the logic of the social orders of the classroom is discernible in this case is supported by the case type that fails to uphold the rules of social orders in terms of knowledge acquisition and behavioral expectations, and that, by the end of ninth grade – supported by addresses from teachers – is comprehensively released into interaction spaces beyond the educational context (RB9b).

When the findings of the reconstructions in which the teachers establish these practices are combined with the interactions regarding cooperation, helping, and support among students, a dynamic interplay emerges. It manifests as a tension between normative expectations of inclusion by adhering to the programmatic con-

cept of inclusion and upholding the logics of the educational order at the same time. Both aspects mutually stabilize each other. The delegation of inclusive expectations to students' interactions through cooperative learning initially prevents the non-mediability from being addressed openly at the classroom level. Despite the teachers' reminders to take moments of reflection in terms of this risk, however, this eventually leads to students' boundaries being crossed and violated in front of the whole class. Only against the backdrop of established role expectations, internalized role assumption, and the resulting ability to distance oneself from one's own role (Krappmann 2010), it allows 'competent' students to cushion the contradictory demand in favor of those who hold a special role by the use of the legitimate opportunities of social participation beyond the classroom; at the same time, in the processes by which teachers set things up, instructional demands come back to the fore more strongly.

Consequently, the study's findings do not reveal any structural change in teaching and learning, even in the context of efforts to transform towards an inclusive school. On a latent level the practices of subjectification remain intertwined with the requirements of the educational order through specific dynamics of recognition and misrecognition. Contradictions do thus not appear within the underlying structures of classroom interaction but rather between the programmatic ideals and practices of teaching and learning that center around help practices or inclusion. We do not see any "shifts in the boundaries of teaching" (Reh et al. 2015) between diffuse and holistic practices on the one hand, and specific and performance-related practices on the other, but rather a stabilization at the level of explicit programmatic framework and implicit social orders that make use of various mechanisms of covering and masking (Bender et al. 2023). However, the demands on the student's role (or their 'job') are shifting – they are no longer limited to only class-wide discourse or an ability to conform to a specific vocational orientation (cf. Wenzl 2014), but in the light of changing conditions of work structures, it seems that also propaedeutic teamwork is increasingly being called for as part of the necessary achievements regarding socialization. Just as Sennett (1998/2000) puts it:

Modern forms of teamwork are in many ways the polar opposite of the work ethic as Max Weber understood it. [...] Time is scheduled flexibly by the teams and geared towards specific short-term tasks (ibid., p. 142).

Sennett also mentions that in such team-oriented structures, "masks of cooperation" are established, which "force individuals to manipulate their demeanor and behavior towards others" (ibid., p. 150f.) to maintain those superficial forms of

working together (ibid., p. 142). This “culture of cooperation” is supported by “egalitarian symbols” (ibid., p. 150).

Here, too, it becomes clear that these forms of collaboration do not involve personal connections, but are rather about meeting specific interaction requirements through behavioral patterns. The clear and visible difference and competition between individuals thus give way to the dispositive of positioning oneself as a group within the respective requirement orders, which establish not only norms regarding the subject matter but, above all, norms of behavior in terms of how interactions are structured. Not *only* must individuals position themselves within this order, but they must *also* ensure that others do so as well and additionally make sure that it goes unnoticed if this effort fails. This depicts how disruptions and misdemeanors are transferred into the groups. Due to this greater distance between the space of interaction, (where these levels of socialization are to be achieved), and the teachers as representatives of school and teaching and learning, the structures of the increasingly modernizing school seem far from undergoing transformation; rather these structures appear to be established even more strongly and stably. The power structures are just less visible:

Thus, a fiction is created in modern teamwork: employees do not really compete with each other. And more importantly, the fiction arises that employees and supervisors are not adversaries; instead, the boss moderates the group process. The power game is played by the team against the teams of other companies (Sennett 2000, p. 149).

Thus, slightly varying lines of differentiation emerge, which, however, structurally continue to produce rankings within this social order based on the performance that is expected of each individual (cf. Rennebach 2021). This is indicated by the students’ efforts to avoid at all costs to reveal to the teachers or the class at large when they are unable to fulfill the requirement of cooperation due to specific circumstances. Behavioral standards are thus not loosened in any form. The spaces of interaction beyond the educational order which are indeed increasingly granted do not have any inner connection to the ranking based on ‘performance.’ They form distinct spaces and thus also spaces of differentiation. Accordingly, the way in which practices of help are carried out across grade levels is accompanied by increasingly established role expectations and a separation of interaction spaces, rather than a logic of increasing informalization and decentralization (see Reh et al. 2015, p. 322ff.).

The findings also touch on the theory of a school culture specific to individual cases (Helsper et al. 2001), although this line of theorization was not the focus of the work conducted here. Sorting the cases along individual schools does not result

in any changes regarding the already mentioned “deep structure” (ibid., p. 23) of how help practices are established and dealt with in inclusive education. However, there are culture-specific differences concerning how well and how intensively efforts are pursued to stabilize the respective programmatic and structural orders without the internal contradictions emerging on a manifest level. In this regard, there are sometimes slight variations in the occurrence of the respective phases – (a) covering by delegation, (b) visible emergence of the structural problem of inclusive classroom interaction, (c) dealing with difference in a permissive way in the light of established social roles and positionings. Depending on the school’s milieu affiliation, the structural problems emerge sooner or later or else are covered more intensely, more effectively, and thus for a longer period of time. The more reform-oriented comprehensive school with a higher-status milieu affiliation consequently brings about a later and more moderate emergence.

6.2 Reflections on Inclusion and Exclusion in the Context of Gift, Recognition, and Contingency

With heuristic approaches to forms of helping, especially through the concept of the gift, it has already been pointed out that mutual giving and receiving can only address the other as a social other. In this respect, what is recognized or disregarded is structurally linked to those norms of social practices – which have also been specifically identified within the project:

The recognition of the other is always merely a recognition of the social other and to this effect a misrecognition of their absolute otherness. [...] The normativity at work in recognition relates to the way in which the response is carried out and simultaneously involves both attributing an identity to the other and defining the situation in which the recognition process takes place (Bedorf 2010, p. 212).

In the discourse on inclusive education, also with regards to forms of cooperative learning, “the normative and the constitutive understanding of ‘recognition’ [...] is blurred” (Menke 2009). As empirically demonstrated by the project’s findings, recognizing and disregarding addresses (Röhr and Ricken 2020) can for that reason only be understood and identified against the backdrop of the explication of those relatively stable structures or logics of the hegemonic orders of social practices (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). Accordingly, teachers respond to students based on the normative orders of the social practice of *teaching and learning*, dependent on whether they are inclined or disinclined to this practice or prove to be conform-

ing or deviant interaction partners. The demand for help or cooperation does not initiate transformations. This examination of gift and recognition thus invokes, as briefly mentioned at the beginning, a contingency-theoretical perspective. From such a perspective, there is no ultimate reason, no anthropological or ontological script that determines the development of the individual or the social. All social orders thus emerge from hegemonic struggles over these orders (Laclau and Mouffe 2014), which always also produce inequalities as well as inclusion and exclusion. In this light, the idea of a fully inclusive society remains part of the semantics of contemporary democratic societies.

This clarification further reveals that in pedagogical contexts, the vague invocation of the concept of recognition, especially in the call for “recognizing pedagogical relationships” (Prengel 2019), suggests that the shaping of this practice – as one that recognizes and levels differences in an egalitarian manner – depends on a certain willingness in this regard and the necessary attitude and/or reflexivity that goes with it on the part of the involved individuals. The idea of mutual recognition and help thus programmatically transfers to the individual actor how the inclusive practice is shaped and carried out, *thereby obscuring the relatively stable logics* of social (see Bender and Dietrich 2019). The problematic conclusions that can be drawn from this are, accordingly, that on the one hand, any failure is attributed exclusively to the actors involved, while on the other hand, the seemingly ‘correct’ attitude appears to guarantee good practice, which then apparently no longer needs to be questioned with regard to the practices that take shape within it. Through these shifts, which lead to coverings and masking, pedagogy, as shown, implicitly contributes to the stabilization of the educational and thereby of the social order – structures of reproduction are hence inherent to these efforts toward participation (ibid.; Bender et al. 2024). This is, of course, highly functional. However, corresponding desiderata arise from the question of why these deep structures of teaching – speaking in terms of social psychology – are still not (and cannot be) actively reflected upon, so that implicit practices of recognition and misrecognition operate on a latent level and, consequently, awareness of *unnecessarily* dismissive practices cannot be heightened (cf. Wernet and Rademacher 2015). This may also be a reason why contemporary democratic societies are increasingly addressing the impossibility of fulfillment of their own aspirations in a covering manner (Bender et al. 2023). Projects of modernity – such as inclusive education – that invoke equality, freedom, and individuality must hence, from a contingency-theoretical perspective (cf. Flügel-Martinsen 2017), be understood as interwoven with the covering of the inescapable power-based nature of social orders.

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Final Summary

7

The project explored how helping practices emerge in inclusive education as key teaching approaches in increasingly heterogeneous, cooperative learning settings. The central question was how the inclusive moral norms – modeled on human rights – relate to the helping and supportive practices among students in inclusive educational contexts. These helping interactions are assumed to be based on peer relationships which are themselves assumed to be egalitarian, and thus to be mitigating differences through practices of social recognition oriented towards the respective strengths of those involved. At the beginning of the project, there were no studies systematically examining the structural asymmetry between help-receiver and help-giver inherent in helping relationships, or investigating the inflexible status difference that is particularly likely to arise in highly heterogeneous settings. In order to complement the existing studies on cooperative learning that had so far mostly been conducted within elementary education, the research design focused on the level of the secondary school, which had, up to this point, hardly been considered with regard to cooperative learning in the German context. The goal was to develop a structural typology of how help-giving practices are enacted between students and to systematically link these to how the teachers establish such help interactions. Through the contrast criterion of life stages, it was assumed that the patterns of working together, cooperation, and helping change over the course of school attendance, on the one hand, due to the increasing relevance of peers, and on the other hand, in connection with a changing individual relation to academic requirements. The second contrast criterion – the difference in reciprocity – was used to move beyond existing diagnostic approaches and to develop the typology further beyond existing categorizations, while considering intersectional dynam-

ics, and to inductively derive the emerging lines of differentiation from the material itself.

Overall, it was shown that, whenever cooperation was established, across all cases, strategies of delegation emerged to address heterogeneity. Hence, there is a persistent focus on inequality without any serious attempt to address it in terms of educational participation. The ways in which the interactions are established, thus already anticipate the creation and maintenance of difference against the backdrop of the relatively stable structural logic of the school. In this respect, they do not advance the resolution of inequality in ways that would increase participation but rather facilitate socialization in dealing with it. The focus on the dominant educational norms of social practice continues in the interactions among students. In this context, the structural problem of inclusive education becomes apparent: The educational norm of social order requires, unless explicitly suspended, that it be upheld even toward those whose participation in this practice cannot be fully realized due to case-specific aspects. Whether participation is possible thus depends upon whether pedagogical support makes it possible to relate to this dominant social educational norm or not. The delegation to students' interactions initially prevents a publicly visible articulation within the classroom of the incompatibility between the normative expectations placed on a practice and its concrete enactments. However, over the course of the process – supported by the stabilizing arrangements that contribute to it – this gives rise to publicly observable boundary dissolutions and violations within the classroom. Only against the backdrop of consolidated role expectations, as well as internalized role-taking and the associated capacity for role distance, are those students who are 'competent' in this respect able to manage the contradictory demands in favor of the holders of special roles within the legitimate spaces of social interaction beyond the instructional setting.

Even in the context of efforts to transition toward an inclusive school system, the study's findings do not indicate a structural change in teaching and learning. On a latent level, the practices of subjectification remain intertwined with the requirements of the educational or societal orders through specific dynamics of recognition and misrecognition. Contradictions do thus not appear within the underlying, relatively stable logics of classroom interaction but between the programmatic ideal and practice of teaching and learning that center around help practices. We do not see 'shifts in the boundaries of schools and classrooms' but rather practices of stabilization at the level of programmatic and implicit normative social orders. The spaces of interaction beyond the educational order, which are indeed increasingly granted, do not have any intrinsic connection to those rankings deriving from norms of social and knowledge-based achievements. They form distinct spaces and thus also spaces of distinction. Structurally, neither the established arrangements

nor the processual dynamics exhibit, in line with the concept, professionalized forms of case-specific support (Ulrich Oevermann 1996). Rather, help is organized in such a way (Bender and Rennebach 2022) that it provides opportunities for substitute forms of integration whenever it is not possible to align with the contingent yet relatively stable social logics of the classroom.

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