

English summaries

Gunnel Colnerud, 2004: »The foundation of values» as educational practice and discourse of research /Värdegrund som pedagogisk praktik och forskningsdiskurs/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 9, No 2, pp 81-98. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.

The Swedish concept »foundation of values» (värdegrund) has come to collect most issues of values, morality, ethics, norms, democracy, relations and questions of belief. Consequently problems appear concerning the relations between the phenomena and concepts referred to. The practitioners, the teachers, often define the concept operationally and pragmatically, by which is meant that those moral and social problems, which attract attention, are named as »issues of foundation of values». The attributions are often decided by the limits of moral or ethical breach, like racism, bullying and antidemocratic acting.

However, research of the value issues requires conceptual and theoretical distinctness, which hitherto remains to be disentangled. The aim of the article is to distinguish the objects of the practices, which have come to be adopted by the concept »foundations of values». Furthermore, the article discusses the variation of educational research carried out under the heading »foundation of values research».

In British educational research several concepts are used to denominate the teaching interventions directed to students' moral or democratic values, such as moral education, character education, value(s) education, civic education and citizenship education. The concepts often overlap and do not form any distinct categories. However, these concepts are used in this article to sort out the various purports of the Swedish concept as they make some differences visible and this differentiation is made in relation to the educational object of the teaching intervention.

The educational objects in the moral domain can vary. Sometimes the teaching focuses questions of beliefs, sometimes the aim is to affect the students' moral acting. Sometimes the teacher's aim is to influence the explicit values of the students. On other occasions the educational objective is the civic identity of the students or it can be to foster democratic participating citizens. In order to discriminate between these objectives they are classified in relation to each other on the variable private-public issues. Private questions are intraindividual and are of nobody else's concern. Questions of beliefs are classified as private, as this is how they have come to be regarded in the Swedish culture of today. Democratic education is classified as public, since it

involves the individual as citizen with shared values and common concerns. The public values issues are interactive in contrast to the private ones, which can be kept hidden to the people around the student if she or he wants to.

The point of the classification made in the article is not mainly to find excluding categories, but rather to facilitate at least a temporary differentiation between educational ideas, objects and models. »The foundations of values» runs the risk of becoming an empty concept if without distinctions, collecting all social, religious and moral issues, which school has – or is attributed to have – problems with.

The research in the field is classified in the article in relation to the same variable as above, added by a classification of the main aim of the research. Research in the field can differ in interest according to theoretical or empirical focus. Furthermore, the projects held in mind differ in these two rough categories. Mainly theoretical research projects can focus metaquestions like the mere existence of common values or normative questions. The empirical research can, e.g., investigate the use of fiction in teaching questions of existential character. Empirical research also focuses on implicit moral phenomena in the classroom practice.

The article concludes that the normative issues of school can be regarded as embedded in all teaching. However, to discriminate phenomena, which are internalized in a complex practice, demands even more analytical clearness than studying separated phenomena.

Robert Thornberg, 2004: Values education /Värdepedagogik/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 9, No 2, pp 99–114. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.

The aim of this article is to discuss Swedish research terminology in regard to the aspect of the teaching practices in which moral or political (i.e. democratic) values, as well as norms and skills built on these kinds of values, are mediated to the pupils. In the international discourse the concepts *moral education*, *values education*, *character education*, *civic education* and *citizenship education* are commonly used. Some researchers use the term *values education* as an umbrella concept including the other terms. In Sweden, however, these terms are not very much used. Instead we are talking about »värdegrundsarbete» (work on the foundation of values). In the article this term is criticised for its shortcomings, and »värdepedagogik» (values education) is suggested instead as an umbrella concept. It refers to all aspects of the educational practice in which teachers, pedagogical materials, and educational arrangements and settings mediate moral or political values, as well as norms and skills built on these values, to the pupils. As is the case with the concept *special education*, values education can be used at two levels, referring to (i) the practice, or (ii) the knowledge of the practice.

In the article some basic distinctions of the concept »värdepedagogik», in the further text called values education, are made. A first distinction is between *formal* and *informal* values education. Formal values education refers to values or moral influence at school as a result of teachers' practice. Informal values education refers to values or moral influence in families, peer groups, sports clubs, church, mass media etc.

A second distinction is made within the values education at school *explicit* and *implicit* values education. The moral or values influence at school is far from limited to the official curriculum or teachers' explicit intentions and efforts about values education. Values are expressed in the way teachers organise and manage classroom activity: In the way teachers present, value, and choose educational content. In what teachers choose to permit or encourage in the classroom. In their teacher style, discipline procedures, attitudes, treatments and relations to the pupils. In how they relate to school rules. In the way they respond to infringements, conflicts, and rule transgressions. And in how they handle ethical conflicts in their teaching practice, which has to do with the structural conditions, specific characteristics of the teaching profession, and personal preferences.

Explicit values education refers to: The explicit moral and political values and norms that the pupils should comply to or internalise, according to teachers' explicit intentions and schools' official curriculum or policy documents, and to teachers' strategies or methods in their efforts to accomplish these explicit intentions and aims. Implicit values education is associated with the hidden curriculum and refers to implicit moral and political values and norms mediated to the pupils as a result of the teachers' behaviour, activities, or arrangements, including the pedagogical material they are using. This is about values and norms, and an acting repertoire based on those values and norms, which are learnt during schooling in addition to the explicit values education.

In the article the concept of values education is also discussed in terms of maximal, minimal and professionally oriented interpretation of the concept. Possible distinctions within the research on values education are also suggested. First, the research area can be described in terms of context (e.g. kindergarten, compulsory school, lessons, and schoolyard). Secondly, the research area can be described in terms of mediating actors or factors (e.g. kindergarten teachers, schoolteachers, teaching materials, peer groups, and discourses). Thirdly, the research area can be described in terms of specific phenomena (e.g. democracy education and pupil participation, bullying and anti-bullying intervention, conflict management, peace education, school rules, and classroom discipline). Research on values education can also be categorised in regard to the research approach, such as intervention research, descriptive research, and critical research.

Agneta Ljung-Djärf, 2004: Play and the computer: the dynamics of peer activity around the computer /Spelet vid datorn: Dynamiken vid barns samvaro runt datorn i förskolan/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 9, No 2, pp 115–128. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.

The use of computers has become part of the daily activity in pre-schools in recent decades. One of the most important benefits of the computer and its use within these settings is its potential for use in collective activity. Previous research describes cooperation, communication, and interaction as fairly consistent aspects of computer use in different educational settings. There is a need, however, to take a closer and more critical look at the sometimes unproblematic picture of children's cooperation at the computer. The purpose of this study was to focus on positions and positioning in peer activity around the computer in pre-school.

Data were collected in three different municipal Swedish pre-school units with children from three to six years of age. Video recordings were made in addition to field notes of what took place around the computer. The activity in each unit was followed for 10 to 12 days over a period of three to four weeks. Approximately 13 hours of video documentation were collected and transcribed into written text. At the time of the study, each pre-school unit had access to one computer. The software in use was predominantly a range of »edutainment» or, as sometimes called, »pedagogical» software. The majority of the children had access to a computer at home, but the children's previous experiences with computers were varied.

In the study, the perspective of a positioning theory, as described by Harré and van Langenhove (1999), was used as the point of departure. This theoretical framework implies that interaction is a dynamic process, in which individuals are included or excluded through the positions they either adopt, are allowed to adopt, or are given. The individuals' ways of acting imply different ways of positioning themselves, each other, and the computer within pre-school practice. Such positions and ways of positioning constitute the ongoing play around and in relation to the computer within the pre-school practice.

The analysis showed that the children's ways of acting were more or less enforced by the construction of the computer (one screen, one keyboard, and one mouse) as well as by the design of the software (the voice in the program addressing one player). Three positions, described as the owner, the participant, and the spectator, were identified and discussed. Each position implied a space of action with specific possibilities and expectations:

The owner is the child who is in charge of the mouse and the keyboard. It is the owner who is defined as »playing» and is the one who is central to the activity. It is also the owner who has the right to decide which suggestions and wishes should be fulfilled. It is the owner's right to accept, refuse, or ignore the suggestions made by peers. The owner is also expected to play – but if not, there is an

opportunity for the other children to propose someone else to take the position of owner.

The participant is the child situated near the owner, who is trying to or being invited to participate in a common play activity at the computer. If the participant presents suggestions and wishes which appears to be acceptable to the owner, the child is invited in or accepted as participant in a collective play activity at the computer. But if the proposals are too challenging or inappropriate, they may be refused by the owner. The participant is expected to present suggestions, and to be engaged and interested in what is happening on the screen.

The spectator is situated nearby the computer but does not participate in the common play activity. The position is described as peripheral. It may be a self-choice but also a result of being refused by the owner. Being a spectator could imply the possibility of watching and learning without risk of appearing ignorant or of incurring blame for a failure. The spectator is expected to act as an interested audience, but not to disturb or interrupt.

The three positions are static in that they constitute a specific space of action including rights, obligations, and expectations. They are also dynamic as, in relation to previous experiences, they appear to imply different opportunities to use the afforded space of action. The play around the computer implies that positions and positioning are continuously defined and changed in relation to each other.

The study scrutinized positions and positioning around the computer in pre-school. Its purpose was not to maintain that cooperation was non-existent or might not be a possible and productive part of the activity around and with the computer, but rather to provide a contrast to the sometimes unproblematic picture of children's cooperation around the computer as something more or less obvious.

It should, nevertheless, be noted that in the pre-school practices studied cooperation was neither expected nor demanded by the educators. The children's main task was to be friends and not to fight at the computer nor disturb or interrupt the owner. Beyond these aims, it was left to the children to decide whether or not they would cooperate.

Christina Cliffordson, 2004: The predictive validity of goal-related grades from upper secondary school /De målrelaterade gymnasiebetygens prognosförmåga/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 9, No 2, pp 115–128. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.

The efficacy of goal-related grades in the selection of candidates for higher education is both topical and extremely controversial. According to the current rules, grades from upper secondary school and the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT) are the primary selection instruments used in admission to undergraduate programs. The efficacy of such a grade system has, in this connection, been questioned. One reason that is advanced, is that, in a goal-related system, all students can, in principle, get the same grade and this would imply that the possibility to use such a grade system for selection is restricted. Another reason that is given, is that the system has limitations in the relative comparability of grades as a result of the variation in grade-setting between individual teachers, schools and municipalities. As a consequence, proposals for new admission procedures for admission to higher education that reduce the importance of grades in favour of the SweSAT, have been tabled.

As a means of predicting study success, grades from the previous educational level are often considered to be the most valid instrument for selection to further education. At present, there is no published research available that indicates that goal-related grades would have less predictive validity than norm-related grades. There are, however, reasons to believe that the prognostic power of the selection system to higher education will be reduced if the importance of grades decreases, since the alternative, SweSAT scores, shows considerable less predictive validity.

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the predictive validity of goal-related grades from upper secondary school. This will be performed, on the one hand, by examining the efficacy of goal-related grades and SweSAT scores to predict achievement in the first academic year of civil engineering programs, and, on the other, by investigating the predictive validity of norm-related grades and SweSAT scores correspondingly. The results make it possible to compare the both grade systems with each other and with SweSAT scores.

The data used are taken from a large scale longitudinal project (VALUTA), which contains information from different official registers and includes all individuals born in Sweden during the period 1972–84 (about 1.4 million individuals).

The prognostic validity of a selection instrument is not equivalent to the extent to which it can predict achievement among those actually admitted to higher education, but the extent to which it can successfully select those who have the best chance of succeeding from among all applicants, or by rights, among all potential applicants. The classic problem is that the measure of achievement is available only for matriculated students. In the case of the present study, this means all students who were matriculated onto civil engineering programs between 1993 and 2001, and who were born in the

years 1974–83, a total of 37 137 students. Among those, 19 693 students have goal-related grades, and 17 444 students have norm-related grades.

Matriculated students, generally speaking, have higher grades than the entire class of applicants and, moreover, the variance of their grades is less compared to the entire class of applicants. Consequently, the predictive validity will be underestimated, which, statistically, can be corrected for. However, the selection procedure to higher education in Sweden is compensatory in so far as the students are selected either on the basis of adequate grades from upper secondary school or on the basis of adequate SweSAT scores. Thus there are two ranking lists, and the applicants are assigned to the list where he or she has best chance of being admitted. Hence, it becomes considerably more difficult to estimate the predictive validity of each individual instrument.

However, by making use of the modeling procedure based on theory and methodology for improving validity in studies with missing data it becomes possible to obtain very precise estimates of each respective instrument's predictive validity. By using missing data modeling as a correction method, all cases, including those who have not been admitted, are used in the analysis. In this case, this will include all potential applicants, i.e. all those students who meet the admissions criteria for civil engineering programs on the basis of their track of study from upper secondary school. Thus the data analyzed in the study are from individuals born in the years 1974–83 and who have graduated from science or technology programs at the upper secondary school level between the school years 1991/1992 and 2000/2001, in all a total of 152 839 students. Of those, 88 091 students have goal-related grades and 64 748 students have norm-related grades.

The predictive validity is examined by the use of missing data modeling of regression models with achievement, measured by credit points for results achieved in the first academic year of undergraduate studies in civil engineering, as the dependent variable, and grades from upper secondary school and SweSAT scores as independent variables. The results from such an analysis provide the degree of correlations between grades, SweSAT scores and achievement that would have been the case if all potential applicants had been admitted through both selection groups, i.e. grade and SweSAT.

The results show that both grades and SweSAT scores are positively correlated to academic achievement. The correlation for goal-related grades is on a level with, or somewhat stronger than, the correlation for norm-related grades. The correlations for SweSAT score are, however, considerably weaker. That is, the results show that doubts expressed about the predictive validity of the goal-related grade system are unjustified. Thus, the results do not provide support for the rationale underpinning the proposal to decrease the importance of grades in favour of SweSAT scores when selecting students to higher education. Even if there are reasons to believe that the results from the present study also are valid for other undergraduate programs and subsequent academic years, further research is required in order to examine this matter more closely.