English summaries

Sven Persson & Ingegerd Tallberg Broman, 2002: »That's a quite different job» – The delimitations of the teacher profession and the teacher's social education responsibility /»Det är ju ett annat jobb» – Läraryrkets avgränsningar och lärarens socialpedagogiska ansvar/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 7, No 4, pp 257–278. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.

In this article the task of the teaching profession in relation to the role of the family, both at present and in historical terms, is discussed. Considerable changes in the tasks teachers are given have occurred within recent years. Schools have been given increasing responsibility not only for education but also for the upbringing of children. This has confronted teachers with a variety of new tasks and problems. Giving teachers much of the responsibility that parents traditionally had for the bringing up of children can be viewed against the background of a critical attitude which the pluralistic society of today has shown toward the role of parents and of the family.

In the social and educational professions as these have developed, criticisms of parents and of their manner of bringing up their children have been voiced repeatedly (Donzelot 1997, Johansson 1993). This has been accompanied by an increasing professionalism in the care of children. Criticisms of the parental role have paved the way for an increase in the tasks the schools are given. Schools are expected to create a holistic context and a sense of citizenship based on the values generally accepted in society. This is seen as calling for more comprehensive work on the part of teachers.

As a result, teachers are faced with difficult and complex problems today. The postmodern pluralism of childhood, with the many different forms it can take, calls into question the demands for homogeneity, stability and normality that institutionalised ideologies make. This confrontation between schools as they presently exist and postmodern conceptions of childhood leads to a questioning of the goal of creating normality (Hargreaves 1994).

The basic aim of the project in which we are engaged is to analyze how the responsibility for reproducing the goals and content of society is divided up at present, and has been divided up earlier, between the home and the school. The results of two investigations are presented:

- In the one study, elementary school and preschool teachers from schools in two areas of differing socioeconomic level described in open-ended interviews their thoughts regarding their professional task, as well as children

generally, childhood and the role of parents. That study had a clear perspective of change. Those interviewed have also been asked to report their views on the changes that had occurred in the teaching task and in the content of their profession.

- The other investigation was a questionnaire study of teacher-training students in either their first or their final semester of training. The questions involved were based on statements the teachers who had taken part in the interview investigation had made.

The statements made in the interview by the teachers from schools in the two areas of differing socioeconomic level, regarding their tasks being much broader than they had been earlier, were very much alike. It thus seems to be factors other than those of the character of the area involved that affect how changes in the role of teachers are experienced. It appeared that the flexibility of the women teachers was taken advantage of. The new expectations placed on teachers were seen to involve a redefinition of the teaching profession that those interviewed were unwilling to accept. As they expressed it the content of their work was being transformed from working with children to working increasingly with groups of adults and they explained of there being no adequate rationale for the changes that had occurred. They considered that the demands placed on them failed to correspond to certain deeply rooted conceptions of their profession, representing a clear threat to their professional identity, creating a sense of insecurity in their day-by-day work. They also regarded it as being a change for the worse in their professional status through its degrading their position from their being educators to their providing children help and support on an individual basis (Johansson & Pramling 2000).

Those teaching at both the preschool and the primary school level provided a negative account of childhood and parenting today, describing children as being less empathetic and less concentrated today than earlier. The preschool teachers in particular felt that children had difficulties in playing with each other, whilst the elementary school teachers emphasised marked difficulties children had in following norms.

The preschool and the elementary school teachers from the ecnomically less privileged area agreed closely with each other in describing children as being unconcentrated, being inept in their use of language, showing a lack of empathy and having difficulties in playing with each other. Although the elementary school and preschool teachers from schools in the economically prosperous area likewise considered childhood to be particularly problematical today, their major criticisms differed from the views just reported. They described children as having an overly scheduled and planned existence, one that differed from what they considered to be a happy childhood situation. They considered children to have too structured an existence and to be overly exposed to stress.

The teachers as a whole felt that the conditions with which parents are faced today have changed. Parents do not have the same possibilities for bringing up their children as earlier and have partly given up the responsibilities in this

respect that they once took. This result was independent of the socioeconomic status of the parents.

At the same time, two differing conceptions of the problems with which parents are faced were evident. Parents from the more well-to-do area were considered to be subjected to a high degree of stress, to have very strong demands placed on them, and to work so much that they were unable to spend sufficient time with their children. Parents from the more economically depressed area were considered to likewise neglect their children, although in a different way – many of them having social problems and letting their children fend for themselves to a large extent. It was felt that the conditions for the upbringing of children in the home had declined. Teachers felt they were increasingly involved in the children's and the families' private lives and that their responsibilities toward children had increased. There appeared to be no comparable increase in the involvement of parents in matters of the preschool and elementary school education of their children.

In summary, one can say that the preschool teachers and primary school teachers from schools in both socioeconomic areas were engaged in compensatory efforts to reconstruct for their pupils more of what they regarded as being ideal childhood conditions, involving children being provided with a calm and relaxed environment, having more free time, having more outdoor activities, developing a greater degree of fantasy and greater empathy, being better able to play with each other, being more active physically and having greater respect both for adults and for other children. What was regarded as the most important task of the elementary school and the preschool was to provide children with a sense of self-confidence, joy and a desire to learn. The teacher's task was seen as being a difficult one if this was combined, in these times of reductions in educational resources, with the need of conducting psychologically problematical discussions both with children and with their parents.

Regarding the questionnaire results, a particular concern of the teacher trainees for the problems of both children and their parents and their belief that giving children a sense of security was the foremost function of the preschool and the elementary school alike could be noted. Among those preparing to be preschool teachers, those in their last semester of training showed a more critical attitude towards children and their parents than those in their first semester of training. No such differences were noted, however, among those preparing to be elementary school teachers, although there were differences between the first and last semester groups in the problems they emphasized and in their conceptions regarding the teaching profession and the school as an institution.

We plan to relate the various patterns we discovered to questions of the content of teacher training. How do those involved in teacher training view the broadened tasks that teachers are faced by today? How is the extended responsibility for children on the part of teachers dealt with in teacher training? Are the relations of teachers to the families of the children discussed in a critical way? What position is taken toward the rights of parents to influence the schools? Teacher training has been criticized for its failure to emphasize

either the importance of caring for the emotional needs of the individual child or the important role that many socioemotional relations teachers develop play (Gannerud 1999). It is often felt that during teacher training too little attention is directed at these highly important aspects of teacher work.

Regardless of the socioeconomic context in which their teaching took place, the teachers who were interviewed told of the teaching profession having changed in the direction of greater emphasis being placed on social dimensions and of the teacher's task being broadened. Despite this increase in the teachers' social responsibilities, both in preschools and elementary schools, this matter appeared not to have been dealt with either in their socialization to the role of being a teacher or in their teacher training. They described a conflict between professional ideologies they had come to accept, both during their teacher training and on the basis of traditions propagated generally in their profession, and the demands and expectations placed on them by the changed tasks they were confronted by, one which led to a sense of uncertainty in their professional identity. The conceptions they had of what a happy childhood involves collided with how they experienced the childhood of those children with whom they had contact in their teaching.

The statements of the teachers in our interviews concern a teaching profession caught up in change. The professional identity of teachers is being challenged. It is also difficult for teachers to set limits to the tasks with which they are faced. Many of the statements the teachers made can be considered to represent strategies for defining their profession, directing criticism at the family being one way of dealing with the challenges involved and of defining their task. Strong protests against being confronted with tasks of a more social character, involving the need of giving the individual children particular support and understanding, can be noted. Criticism of this sort was particularly strong on the part of the elementary school teachers, who considered the changes involved to constitute a lowering of their professional status.

A »sense of security» was a central concept we noted in the material, a concept clearly integrated into the institutional and professional ideology of both the preschool and the elementary school teachers, who obviously considered that providing children with it was a major goal of their work. The tendency to think in these terms could be examined in relation to gender, to class or to ethnicity. Both those involved in teaching and those preparing for it are predominately women, who are given a social, collective and normative task. Providing a sense of security can be regarded as an antidote to a sense of disorder and to the development of an increasingly pluralistic society caught up in a process of rapid change. Endeavoring to achieve a sense of security can also be viewed as a typical Swedish or Nordic cultural trait, one that is strongly emphasized by both teachers and parents (Gullestad 1997, Iwarsson Jansson 2001, Kvalbein 1998, Nikolova 2001).

One can note, finally, that discussions of problems in a personal and thoroughgoing way with both children and their parents, as well as considering the most important goal of education to be that of providing children a sense of security through use of educational methods that are very much individually oriented, represent a sociopedagogical approach that is partly new. It is

one that requires a considerable degree of rethinking on the part of many educators.

Joanna Giota, 2002: Direct and indirect school influences on pupils' motivation, learning and development /Skoleffekter på elevers motivation och utveckling/. **Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 7, No 4, pp 279–305. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788.**

This article considers among other things the evidence concerning the direct effects of school on pupils' academic attainment, their acquisition of specific knowledge and skills, social behaviour and cognition. In the fist section a few of the major studies on the effects of primary as well as secondary school are referred to. In one of these studies (Heyns 1978) pupils' academic attainment during term time was contrasted with that during the summer vacation while in another the impact of schooling was investigated by comparing the effect of different schools on the development of their pupils whilst controlling for intake ability.

When differences were found, or better still explained, the researchers concluded that it was a given type of schooling that affected pupil outcomes (such as academic attainment, school behaviour or attitudes). In the last two decades there has been an explosion of studies with this approach, i.e., on »school effectiveness». Although, school effectiveness research has been extensively criticised for its methodology (e.g. Nesselroade & Baltes 1985) and the lack of a more comprehensive theory, school effectiveness researchers have shown that schools do matter in pupils' development. In particularly that (i) scholastic attainment varies considerably among schools regardless of the individual and social characteristics of pupils entering them, (ii) school characteristics influence pupils attitudes to school as measured in attendance and feelings about classes and subjects, and (iii) effective schools influence rates of attendance.

After establishing school effects, school effectiveness researchers have tried to find processes that could explain the success and failure of individual schools. The most sophisticated research deals with »process» by attempting to pinpoint those aspects of school functioning (e.g. leadership, curriculum, staff expectations) that differentially contribute to effective or ineffective role in enhancing the development of pupils (see Edmonds', 1979, list of factors associated with successful schools).

The emphasis of the present article is on the indirect effects of school on pupils' development because research findings have shown that social cognitions and feelings are also influenced by school and these may be as powerful in predicting later outcomes as intelligence or school curriculum. Such indirect effects of school are however more elusive because they are

mediated by motivation to learn or avoid learning, their conception of themselves as pupils and the attributions they create for explaining success and failure (e.g. Giota 2001).

Given the fact that cognitive and motivational mediators of indirect effects continue to exert influence on individual development outside and beyond school (e.g. Andersson & Strander 2001), in the second section of the article, a few of the theoretical as well as methodological »weaknesses» associated with the concept of pupil motivation are outlined and discussed. The point of departure for this section is the assumption that pupil motivation is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon, referring to a variety of theoretical constructs such as goals, feelings and personal agency beliefs, and that academic achievement does not only reflect pupils general and domain-specific skills and aptitudes, but also their motivation and overall adjustment to the school system, referring to factors such as the neatness and the manners of the pupil (summarized in the concept of social responsibility), which is thought to influence the grades assigned by different teachers (e.g. Wentzel 1989, Giota 2001).

The remainder of the article gives an example from school effectiveness research of how teacher expectations of pupil performance might influence academic achievement and classroom behaviour (Blatchford, Burke, Farquar, Plewis & Tizard 1989) and goes on with examining the means by which the classroom context may shape motivation, and a mastery goal orientation or intrinsic motivation in particular. The research on goal orientation and intrinsic motivation has often conceptualised these two types as context dependent or classroom situated constructs that are very amenable to change, depending on the environmental cues and presses.

The research on how the features of the classroom context may influence pupil motivation and cognition has been summarized by Ames (1992) who has organised the research findings around three dimensions of classrooms: (i) tasks and learning activities, (ii) evaluation practices and use of rewards and (iii) distribution of authority and responsibility. These features are the same as the ones that have been proposed as important for the shape of intrinsic motivation by intrinsic motivation theorists (e.g. Deci & Ryan1985).

The article ends with the conclusion that in order to get to know, understand and adequately describe the variety of concerns that motivate pupil behaviour and affect development in school it is of crucial importance that we focus on factors related to an overall person-situation adaptation over time (the interactionist perspective on human motivation and development; Giota 2001) and pay respect to pupil perspectives, thoughts and beliefs about today's school as well as the needs, interests, goals, disappointments and frustrations pupils feel in and outside school.