

## English summaries

**Mattias Nylund & Per-Åke Rosvall: Consequences of the upper-secondary education reform concerning the social distribution of knowledge at the vocational programmes/ Gymnasiereformens konsekvenser för den sociala fördelningen av kunskaper i gymnasieskolans yrkesorienterade utbildningar/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 81–99**

The article analyses the ongoing reform of Sweden's upper-secondary education (Prop. 2008/09:199; SOU 2008:27) in terms of its implications for the organisation of knowledge at vocational programmes. Applying Bernstein's (2000) concepts of horizontal and vertical discourses, the article analyses the contextualisation of knowledge as defined in the reform. In short, if the selection and organisation of knowledge is strongly related to a local, specific context it is organised in a horizontal discourse. In contrast, a vertical discourse is characterised by being less context-dependent, with emphasis on theoretical, abstract and conceptual knowledge.

The reform's framework for acquiring knowledge is then discussed in the light of existing practices at a vocational programme, highlighting its implications for the social distribution of knowledge in society more broadly. In a class society, the social distribution of knowledge is organised in such a way that already subordinated groups encounter a curriculum where knowledge is mainly organised into horizontal discourses, without much access to vertically organised knowledge. This is problematic since vertical knowledge is central for critical thinking and for partaking in 'society's conversation' about what it is, and could be.

Since there is a strong connection between which knowledge we possess and who we become, i.e. knowledge creates possibilities and limitations of agency, the article goes on to argue that the organisation of knowledge in vocational programmes has important social and political implications. Even more so since these programmes mainly attract students from, as well as socialise them for, working class positions. Then, what changes are being implemented with the reform, and how could they be understood against this background?

First of all, the reform introduces a range of changes to the curriculum. Not only is the space for individual choice and more theoretical subjects reduced, but the content is narrowed down to more specific, specialised work contexts. This is clearly motivated by a market principle where the curriculum is demand-driven and the needs of employers are put at the centre of its organisation, development and evaluation. In an such approach, knowledge is

not treated as a value in itself but as a mean to an end, i.e. to become employable and equipped with the context-specific knowledge called for by employers at any given time.

These curriculum changes, it is argued, are in an almost unison manner driving the organisation of knowledge towards a horizontal discourse. Not only because of the reduced space for theoretical subjects or that the historical experience suggests that employers are unlikely to prioritise knowledge of a critical or theoretical kind, but also because the organisation of knowledge at a workplace often is of a more horizontal than vertical character, i.e. contextualised in relation to specific tasks. Furthermore, since the curriculum has this design, the relevance of this knowledge becomes time and place specific.

When relating these changes to the students in the vocational programme, a paradoxical divergence arises between how the students experience and talk about the content of their education and how the reform organises the content. The students refer to a labour market that stresses the importance of language and math skills, and thus want more academic knowledge. In different ways, they express a critique towards horizontal knowledge practices. Thus, we find an epistemological gap between the students' understanding of what constitutes important knowledge, and that which is expressed in the reform.

An analysis of the pedagogic practice of the vocational programme also points to a learning environment with characteristics of a horizontal discourse, i.e. doing tasks bound to specific local contexts absent of analysis or criticism of the sources. The likelihood of these horizontal knowledge practices, the article argues, is further reinforced by the suggestions put forward in the reform.

We conclude the article by claiming that by failing to recognise the importance of more context-independent knowledge, or the type of reasoning that characterises it, the reform separates vocational knowledge from more vertical discourses. This separation exclude students from access to a content that can provide increased control over their own knowledge, fundamental to question »how it is» and reflect on »how it could be». The democratic aspiration for the upper-secondary vocational programmes, we believe, should be higher than merely offering highly segmented and context-bound knowledge.

From the perspective of Bernstein, and also according to the students in the vocational programme studied, vertically organised knowledge is central to vocational education. From such a perspective, the organising of content in the ongoing reform appears very problematic. Not only is it relatively unlikely that the removal of content opening up for critical thinking and theoretical reasoning leads to the creation of more employable workers. But more seriously, the reform is also likely to reinforce the class-based social division of labour and the distribution of knowledge and power that perpetuates it.

**Goran Puaca & Adel Daoud: An Inquiry into wants in relation to educational choices/ Vilja och framtid i frågor kring utbildningsval/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 100–117. Stockholm: ISSN 1401-6788**

This article introduces the concept of *want formations* in order to explain how upper-secondary school vehicle and social science students' expression of future ambition are embedded in certain school specific practices of sense-making. In so doing it explores some of the underlying mechanisms of upper secondary students' decision making in relation to their future career and study paths. The concept of *want formations* is significant in the article but is not discussed at length there. It was theoretically developed in a previous study by the authors, and in the present study the focus is on application and underlining the importance of micro-politics in students' wants formation and decision-making. Through interviews with students, teachers, principals and student counselors, we were able to analyse how structural conditions in the investigated school contexts encouraged want formations as either collectively anchored (vehicle program) or as reflexive and elaborative (social science program).

In the investigated cases the structural space of distinct school environments evidenced different practices and possibilities for sense-making in the two studied programs. The vehicle program's educational practises showed an adaptation towards requirements formulated by the conditions in the labour market; these conditions are largely interpreted and thus set in to practice by the school staff. Most notably they are focused on students' punctuality, diligence and trading skills. In accordance, student perceptions are formed by disciplining and correctional practices in order to incorporate cognitive and moral dimensions recognised as indispensable at the industrial workplace. This contrasts to the social science program's environment where independence and self-willingness are underlined both by students and school staff as a necessity.

Want formations in relation to social structures are theoretically addressed by applying Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, in our case as a specific school habitus, and Margaret Archer's emphasis on how our internal affairs and deliberations are shaped by structural conditions. Depending on how a school habitus is inculcated within the study programs, different practices are seen as valid and realistic, providing different conditions for students' reflexive action, which then give rise to different patterns of want formations between the two groups of students. This indicates differences how education credentials are interpreted and internalised as individual or group specific dispositions among the students in the programs.

We also noticed that the social science students strive for confirming their individuality and relative uniqueness in the group, and contrastively, the vehicle students seek to incorporate individuality within general concerns shared by the group. More space is consequently given for reflexivity within the academic study programme. Theoretically speaking, this means that academic students overemphasise their reflexive ability and downplay their habi-

tus compared to the vehicle students. Similarly, vehicle students downplay their reflexive ability and overemphasizes their habitus.

In contrast to rational choice assumptions of wants, denoted as stable and hierarchically ordered wants or preferences, our results indicate that want formations in the school environment should be considered as measures of students' varying ability to handle micro-political affairs in educational contexts. Students are negotiating and renegotiating the benefits of schooling based on specific boundaries of how to interpret and understand educational merits. Basically, this is an assessment of how students interpret relationships outside of school in relation to what they choose to do in school. Therefore we also see students' want formations as an expression of different micro-political negotiations.

Want formations in this respect are not given on the basis of rational and stable preference but are instead to be regarded as a social struggle for space. By varying conditions in the school environment, and how students form a school habitus, different possibilities for a reflexive space for interpretation is created that then forms different understandings of the future, and how to incorporate school knowledge and merit as an inner concern.

**Glenn Hultman, Jan Schoultz & Karin Stolpe: Student teachers and mentors: The practical part of teacher education/ Samspelet lärarstuderande–handledare: Den verksamhetsförlagda utbildningen/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 118–137. Stockholm: ISSN 1401-6788**

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the interaction and linkage between the theoretical part of teacher education and the practical part, with a focus on what happens during the latter and how the student teacher makes meaning out of the process. We have looked at research reviews that focus on the Swedish and Scandinavian fields. A number of reviews note that the practical part of teaching has an interpretive priority, i.e. suggesting that teaching models and conceptions of the profession are reinforced rather than questioned.

When observing the interaction between the actors, one finds that it is decidedly informal and probably also, to some extent, invisible to the outsider. For example, the interaction is not always seen when university representatives are present, which is especially apparent if their visits are few and far between and do not include classroom observations. We do however find, in earlier studies, interesting and applicable empirical approaches that we link to our own experiences.

The researchers conclude that research on teacher education does not deal solely with how student teachers acquire knowledge and skills. They find in

their analysis that the field has changed in character and that the research can be divided into three different phases, from viewing the education as a training problem, to seeing it as a learning problem, and, finally, an educational policy issue, where efficiency and quality issues are the focus. A more recent review, from 2008, notes that »there is relatively little attention in the empirical research literature on how teachers establish pedagogical relationships with students and how they use these relationships to engage students in learning» and that should be in focus in teacher training, according to them.

Some researchers advocate an alternative view, where they talk about *craft knowledge*, which the teacher develops in the everyday mysticism of teaching. The situation serves to create an informal network that provides the foundations for a knowledge base. The teacher does this from his or her own perspective as an »apprentice in context».

To sum up, earlier research demonstrates the need for further insight into the dynamics that occur during the practical part of teacher education and that many researchers point out the importance of the practical training and the mentor, in particular the importance of the complexity of the classroom and relationship-building work.

Our particular interest involves the linkage between the university (the student) and the practical field (the school) such as it takes form during the practical part of the education. The organizational linkages can be perceived as a meeting between cultures. Negotiations, interpretations, and considerations take place at this dividing line and are guided by the respective systems. An interesting part of the interplay between theory and practice is how the teacher student becomes socialized and established in the receiving culture. How does the student teacher gain insight into the norms and patterns of behaviour that prevail in the schools?

In the analysis presented here, our focus is on how they communicate and the actions performed. In the communication between the actors, we can figure out both what is actually said as well as what is said between the lines (i.e. the informal message). We apply the research that says that newcomers are confronted with a new situation, which can lead to an element of surprise, which in turn leads to attempts to fit this into a meaningful whole (i.e. sense making).

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the interaction and linkage between the theoretical part of teacher education and the practical part, with a focus on what happens during the latter and how the student teacher makes meaning out of the process. In order to achieve this purpose, we use two types of data: experienced teachers' reflections on their own teacher education and the experience of their own practicum periods, as well as the impressions and reflections of student teachers as expressed in interviews and logged in their journals from their practicum periods. By using earlier studies with similar empirical methods, we gain a thirty-year perspective of the processes under analysis. Our aim in doing so is to broaden the empirical base.

The results show that not only does an adaptation occur, but that there can also be innovative elements in the meaning-making process, in part through the ambitions a student teacher harbours from the theoretical part of the edu-

cation, and in part through the divergence between one's own experiences, those of the mentor, and examples of other teachers. The socialization that occurs can be described as a *situational apprenticeship*, which means that student teachers interact with the context and the pupils. This is what moulds them, becomes their »master«, resulting in a form of apprenticeship. The student teacher learns by way of an individual aptitude that makes him/her act in a certain way. But he/she also learns by being able to actually observe and be with the teacher in his/her context for an extended period of time, which generates (shapes) an attitude.

Some of the earlier studies give the impression that the principle is one of learning to swim by being thrown into the deep end. When we examine other parts of the earlier research, a somewhat different picture emerges, and we see a clearer link between the mentor and the student. Thus, the material as a whole yields a spectrum ranging from learning »on one's own« to a stricter guidance. Part of our conclusion is that we find the interaction between the student teacher and his or her mentor to be learning that contains elements of corrections and alternative interpretations.