

English summaries

Allan Svensson & Bo Nielsen, 2005: Law education in Sweden: Who is admitted and who is successful/ Vilka kommer in på juristutbildningen och hur klarar man studierna/? Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 1, pp 1–23. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

Law education is offered in Sweden by the universities in Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm, Göteborg and Umeå. The education comprises 180 credit points, which implies that the education normally is to be completed in four and a half years. However, few admitted students complete the program according to these expectations and only about two thirds of the students admitted in the late 1980s had completed their studies seven years later.

Previously this education was dominated by male students. However, since the 1960s the proportion of women has increased from 20 to 60 per cent. Children from Social group I (Academic professions) have always been strongly overrepresented and children from Social group III (Skilled and unskilled workers) underrepresented. In our study more than 50 per cent belongs to Social group I and less than 10 per cent to Social group III.

There are about five times as many applicants as there are places available. About 65 per cent of the places are appointed on the bases of the grades from upper secondary school and 35 per cent via the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT). The aim of this investigation is to study if there are any differences in academic performance among students admitted on the basis of their:

- grade-point average from upper secondary school (GPA)
- SweSAT scores (SweSAT)

The data used are taken from the VALUTA-project. This database includes all Swedes born during the period 1972–84, in all about 1,4 million persons. In this study most of the students admitted to the law education program between 1993 and 2001 are included, in all 4 600 students.

The results show small but consistent and systematic differences in study progress between the two selection groups. If we scrutinize the average number of credit points the students have obtained during the first academic year the GPA group is found to be somewhat superior to the SweSAT group. The difference amounts to between one and two points or about 15 per cent of the standard deviation.

What happens after the first academic year? Will the GPA group continue to be more successful? To be able to answer these questions we have looked at cohorts that have been possible to follow at least five academic years, i.e.

cohorts that started in 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997. Three criteria of academic performance are used:

- the number of students enrolled during each academic year
- the number of credit points achieved after the second, the third, the fourth and the fifth academic year
- the number of university degrees taken

In all respects the GPA group is found to be superior. The students in this group continue their studies to a greater extent and the average credit points obtained after each academic year is higher as well as the examination rate. The differences are not very large but they are found among both male and female students and among students from all socioeconomic groups.

However, there is one important exception – among those who started their studies at the age of 25 or later (so called adult students), individuals who have been admitted in the SweSAT group tend to be more successful. This finding is of interest bearing in mind that the aptitude test up to the beginning of the 1990s was used for adult students only.

Lars Owe Dahlgren & Andreas Fejes, 2005: ECTS – to measure or counteract learning/ ECTS-skalan: att mäta eller mota lärande/? Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 1, pp 24–34. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

The ongoing Bologna process has as its aim to harmonise the European systems of higher education as a means to become a leading knowledge space. One of the main goals is to make education compatible and transferable between different countries, therefore making it easier for students to move between countries. The process consists of several parts; the introduction of a Diploma supplement as a means to make degree diplomas easier to read and compare; the introduction of common degrees for the Bachelor, Master and PhD level. Furthermore, it is suggested that a new system for measuring the extent of the studies and the achievements of the students is applied; the so called ECTS – European Credit Transfer System. It consists of two parts; a system of determining credits and a system of grading. It is the latter part; the system of grading, that is the focus of this article.

The argumentation on the European level and in Sweden as well, is that a joint grading system will lead to comparability between programmes and students from different countries. In Sweden it is suggested that a system of seven criterion related grades will be applied in the assessment process. The seven graded scale used by some countries, and the original idea, is suggested to be group related. In a report published by the Swedish Ministry of education, the arguments lead to the conclusion that a criterion related seven-step grading system is comparable with a group related seven-step grading system. In this article we argue that this conclusion is neither logical nor possible. In a criterion related system the different grades are defined by cer-

tain criteria against which the student's achievements are assessed and compared. This is not so in a group related system.

In a group related system there is an assumption that there will be a certain distribution of performances in a population. The students are graded in relation to each other, not in relation to the goals of the course. Our foremost disagreement with this line of reasoning is that comparability between countries assumes comparable educations and a common set of criterion. Higher education differs between countries within Europe concerning notions of knowledge, learning, assessment etc. This fact makes it difficult, and in some cases, impossible to make programmes comparable by using the same grading system. If the aim is to make the grading systems comparable a group related system is required. Moreover, the use of a common grading system necessitates central tests in all subject matters throughout Europe. We do not think this is a realistic way to proceed, and even if this proposed system were workable, there are no guarantees that the grades will be comparable.

Grades have a close relation to assessment, in that the latter is the basis of the former. Therefore, they cannot be discussed isolated from each other, especially if one wants to understand what effects the grading system has on the students' approaches to learning. In this article we argue that student assessments have several functions. Tentatively we can categorize assessments as ›assessments as control of‹ and ›assessments as supports in‹ the learning process. During the last few years there has been a focus on finding qualitative ways of assessing courses as an integrated means of enhancing learning. One reason for this is the growing awareness of the difficulties of combining the control and support functions of assessment in a conventional assessment.

Assessment has a substantial impact on the students' learning. In a study by Fejes, Johansson and Abrandt Dahlgren (2005) it was obvious that students, during seminars, tried to make their contribution as fast as possible, taking into consideration the amount of contributions that would be sufficient to pass the seminar. In this case the outlined demands to be active participants in the seminar encouraged students to think more of when »their« contribution could fit in, instead of following the discussion and trying to contribute as the seminar progressed. The effects of assessment as mediated by the grading system are even more visible in a study by Trowald and Dahlgren (1993) where 400 students answered an inquiry concerning assessment. Approximately half of the students could only receive a pass/fail, while the other half were subject to a graded system of some kind.

The result showed that the students with only pass/fail, for the most part, saw the assessment as a learning opportunity; described the questions in the assessment as more essential and more open for elaboration and discussion, while the other group, to a greater extent, described their assessment tasks as more irrelevant and more reproduction oriented. Moreover, students in pass/fail systems for the most part studied previous course assessments as preparation for their own assessment. Our conclusion is that grading systems with several steps leads to, at least according to the students themselves, assessments of another character than those applied in pass/fail systems. The criteria for the assessment will vary depending on how many steps are used. Taken together these circumstances influence students' to adopt a surface approach to learning instead of a deep reflexive approach (Marton, Dahlgren, Svensson & Säljö 1999). If the arguments above are reasonable we can draw the con-

clusion that a scale such as the ECTS jeopardises students' deep and reflective approach to learning.

Based on the research discussed in this article, it is reasonable to conclude that if the ECTS scale is used in Sweden there will be:

- *More work for the teachers where they will have to put more energy into grade issues instead of pedagogical ones.* The total amount of working hours has after all an upper limit. The demand that the students be differentiated more than is the case today will lead to more work, no matter what kind of assessment is used. This will consequently lead to a redistribution of the teachers time, from interaction with students to more time used for assessment related issues.
- *More written assessments will be used, eventually with a renaissance of multiple choice questions, which often require factual knowledge to be answered.* Several studies have indicated that there seems to be a strong relationship between the grading system and the format of the assessment. The task to differentiate the students even more leads to assessment where quantity is emphasised rather than quality. This will probably lead to the elimination of questions that focus on more qualified knowledge and competencies.
- *The students will focus more on the grade itself than on learning.* Several of the quoted studies show how grading forces students to put more effort on anticipating the demands outlined in the course and its assessment. With a highly differentiated scale these activities will probably take even more time.
- *The development of qualitative assessments will be more difficult.* It is of course possible to translate qualitative assessments to highly differentiated scales. But there is a risk that the criteria for the different scales will focus merely on the amount of factual knowledge in a response.
- *A risk of more superficial approaches to learning instead of deep reflective approaches.* This statement is thoroughly supported in the research quoted.
- *No real comparability.* Only illusory comparability will be attained and even then at the cost of the negative consequences elaborated in this article. The conditions for comparability are to make programmes of education identical or very similar and to apply the same set of criteria not only the grading scale but for the assessment as well.
- *Selection process will be hazardous.* Employers or post graduate programmes at other universities that are to compare applicants from different universities and countries may be deceived into thinking that the applicant with the highest grades is the one with the deepest and most extensive knowledge, an assumption that may not be correct.

Birgit Lendahls Rosendahl & Karin Rönnerman, 2005: Facilitation as a challenge to school improvement/ Med fokus på handledning i skolors förändringsarbete/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 1, pp 35–51. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

This article focuses on the meeting between schools and universities, specifically on facilitation as it is used in collaboration between universities and schools. Facilitation in these cases are usually related to the teachers' competence development and seen as a stage in the improvement of the school. Facilitation can therefore be seen to constitute a meeting between different parties where differing expectations are found regarding what facilitation involves and how it should be carried out. Since facilitation is now central to competence and school development, we regard this as a matter of urgency to emphasise what can be seen to be characteristic for this meeting.

The article is based on an interview study concerning facilitation in relation to competence development, and school improvement. The aim of the study was to develop knowledge about pedagogical facilitation as a phenomena and how this is shaped for schools as well as institutions of higher education from the perspective of teachers, school leaders and academics. Selection of interviewees came about from a number of projects where facilitation has been a feature in the collaboration between schools and Göteborg University. In total, four projects were chosen to be part of the study from which four school leaders, nine teachers and six academics were interviewed.

The study clearly points out the area of different expectations from school leaders, teachers and academics respectively. The teachers expected outlined specific tasks while the facilitators needed dynamism where each working team develops there own questions accordingly. Teachers want new knowledge, whereas facilitators wish to help teachers to make evident and reflect on the knowledge they had already possessed. Teachers indicated that they, above all, needed something new in order to be able to change their working practice, for example good lectures, ideas about books, the latest research findings. The facilitators felt that teachers needed to discover their own capabilities and what they have done by way of describing their activities, analysing, interpreting and drawing general conclusions. The school leaders had weak expectations of the teachers and neither teachers nor academics had expectations of the school leaders. Both teachers and school leaders were anxious to be informed about current research. Research was seen as an additional aspect of knowledge, as a means of support and information.

These expectations are sometimes totally contradictory. Should these expectations be neither visibly nor consciously made there is a risk that the project does not succeed and doubts or even negative impressions of facilitation as a form of competence and school development will flourish. If however time is used to make the expectations visible and discuss these expectations then this can be seen as a pre-requisite for developed work. In order for the meeting to be meaningful and the results to be beneficial, an insight is required into the expectations and concepts of the parties involved. But this also requires knowledge, will and the courage to develop together a new discourse, a facilitation discourse with mutual learning as its goal.

In this article we have tried to emphasise and point at the specifics for the facilitation of the pedagogically professionally active connected to school

development. That groups of pedagogues meet for facilitation where both thinking as well as dealings in practice are challenged and reflected upon, we see as being essential for school development to take place. The fact that facilitators are academics with knowledge of theory about learning and experience from research in and about school and its development, is an important feature in the development of the school. To conclude we raise a question which point out the areas which we consider need further elucidation and systematic study of facilitation enabling professionally active pedagogues to find their own form and achieve their aims. How can facilitation be developed into a discursive meeting between teachers, school leaders and academics resulting in reciprocal learning and school development?

J. Ola Lindberg & Anders D. Olofsson, 2005: ›Eduktion›: a possible research object in the discipline of pedagogy/ ›Eduktion›: ett möjligt studieobjekt i pedagogik/? Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 1, pp 52–64. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

In issues number three and four of this journal, there is a debate in several articles concerning research within the field of ›pedagogik›, teacher education and educational research. The lack of public discussion and theoretical analysis concerning pedagogik as a discipline is also discussed. This article can be seen as a contribution to this discussion.

The article consists of three parts, firstly an overview of the content and scope of pedagogik is given, secondly some of the possibilities with the research object ›eduktion› are presented, and in the third and final part an argument is presented for a research approach that could be used to study eduktion.

In the discipline of pedagogik, issues of identity and change have been the subject of discussion for many years. One way to describe pedagogik has been to consider the challenges and diversifications from within the discipline itself. Another approach has been to describe pedagogik in relation to the content, organisation and structure of teacher education. It also seems possible to ascribe certain differences in the definitions and scope of the discipline that prevail over time to location and geography. If history is regarded as being linear, then the influence of a quantitative natural science initially seems to be apparent, whereas from the seventies onwards a more qualitative and hermeneutic influence can be discerned. Therefore differences in pedagogik can perhaps also be ascribed to differences in attitudes towards science. Lately there has been an increase in the influence of philosophy on pedagogik. Initially, it is also claimed, pedagogik to have been reliant on philosophy, subsequently psychology, thereafter sociology, and ultimately philosophy comes back into pedagogik as a valid point of departure.

The concept of eduktion is defined by Sjöstrand (1968) as a joint understanding of the processes of upbringing and education. From this standpoint

man's formation in its entirety can be taken into account. Thereby the processes of upbringing and education could be understood as a whole. *Eduktion* enables an understanding of man regardless of context, and education can therefore be studied everywhere. *Eduktion* could also embrace a process that is ongoing throughout life, an understanding of man from birth to death. Based on Sjöstrand, education enables the understanding of man as part of a community formed with others. This standpoint encompasses an understanding of man as a social being. It is thus possible to regard the processes of upbringing and education as inculcation into a certain way of life, into the norms and values which are developed and upheld, in common, in specific cultures at specific times.

In this article, research from a hermeneutical stance implies an approach to science and knowledge in which interpretation and understanding are central features (cf. Gadamer 1997, Ricoeur 1993, Ödman 1979). We argue that philosophical hermeneutics could be seen as useful within the discipline of pedagogik. In agreement with Vattimo (1996) we argue that the object of study can only be understood through interpretation. Thereby facts are always also interpretations.

Research approaches based on interpretations always incorporate a certain amount of relativity, which makes necessary a distinction between science based on objectivity and openly subjective sciences (cf. Bernstein 1991, Winch 1958). Here we attempt to move beyond the distinctions of objectivity and relativism. It seems that a philosophical hermeneutical stance implies an argument for the validity of interpretations and standpoints legitimated by dialogue, which are made more distinct but never become absolute. Instead they open the possibility of posing a further question.

The philosophical hermeneutical stance depicted above, creates an opening for the possible use of education as an object of study in pedagogik. It implies an understanding of the processes by which man has been and continues to be formed regardless of whether the geographical location is Sweden, China or Västerbotten and regardless of whether the timeframe is the Second World War or the teacher education of today. It also implies openness to understanding the norms and values inculcated within communities past and present. Since education can never be accounted for definitively it is in some sense always ahead of itself.

Our belief is that as philosophical questions and accounts are common and accepted grounds for research in pedagogik, education could be used in order to generate knowledge and understanding built on philosophical assumptions about man and the world. Claims about understanding and knowledge would ensue. Therefore one possible claim about education, made from a philosophical hermeneutical stance, can better be understood in terms of a dialogue or conversation, rather than in terms of absolute truths.