

English summaries

Ewa Andersson, 2005: University students' views on the Swedish Scholastic Assessment Test (SweSAT) and strategies for admission to higher education/ Högskolestudenters syn på högskoleprovet och strategier för att antas till högre utbildning/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 2, pp 81-98. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

In Sweden today, students are admitted to higher education either on their grades from upper secondary school or on their scores from the Swedish Scholastic Assessment Test (SweSAT). From various points of view, it is important that the admission system fulfill its ambitions. However, the ambitions of the admission system are numerous. One of the most important ambitions is to select students with the potential to successfully complete university studies. Another important ambition of the admission system is the attempt at achieving equality in higher education. Furthermore, it is important that the admission system has legitimacy among its interested group of users.

The aim of this study is to illuminate the impact of the admission system. This is carried out by investigating how different groups of university students view the relevance of SweSAT as a selection instrument and whether the regulatory system has the effect that students develop and apply strategies, in terms of repeated test taking and supplementation of grades from upper secondary school.

The presented result is based on a questionnaire answered by 374 freshmen and senior students at Umeå University in four different university programs; Business Administration and Economics, Engineering Physics, Medical Education, and Social Work. The questionnaire contained questions regarding SweSAT and the relevance of its five subtests: Vocabulary (WORD), Data sufficiency (DS), Swedish reading comprehension (READ), Interpretation of diagrams, tables and maps (DTM), and English reading comprehension (ERC). Furthermore, the students were asked questions about test taking and supplementation of grades. The study is conducted within the VALUTA-project (Validation of the University Entrance System) and is funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.

The results from this study indicate that students seem to think that the subtests of SweSAT are relevant in a test for selection to different kinds of university programs. However, the results indicate that READ seems to be the subtest that most students view as the most relevant. The least relevant subtest seems to be WORD. These results are valid regardless of gender, social background and study program with the exception of the students in Social Work.

Furthermore, the students' tendency to attend SweSAT and to repeat the test, mainly seems to be related to the type of study program but also, to some extent, to gender and social background. The highest proportion of test takers is found among the students in Medical Education. Over 90% of freshmen as well as senior students have taken the SweSAT among the medical students. As a comparison, the proportion of test takers among students in the other programs is in the interval of 6482%. Furthermore, there is a tendency for students from social class I and men to take the test to a greater extent than students from social class III and women. As for repeated test taking, the results indicate that a majority of the students have repeated the test once. A small group of students, mainly medical students, have taken SweSAT on numerous occasions.

In recent years, a large number of students have attended adult upper secondary education in order to supplement their grades, directly after finishing upper secondary school. Supplementation of grades can be conducted either in order to meet requirements for eligibility, or in order to raise one's grade point average (GPA). However, the massive increase in the number of supplemented grades is reflected by the fact that a large number of applicants cannot be admitted although they have reached the highest possible GPA.

The results from this study indicate that the patterns for different kinds of supplementation are similar to one another. Supplementation of grades has mainly been used by students from social class III. Nevertheless, there are some differences. Supplementation for the purpose of meeting requirements for basic or special eligibility is most frequent among women and among students in Social Work. Supplementation for the purpose of raising grades and hence raising their grade point average is, on the other hand, most frequent among men and among students in Medical Education.

The overall conclusion is that SweSAT has legitimacy among the students. Most students consider the subtests included in SweSAT to be of relevance for selection to different kinds of university programs, although some subtests are considered to be more relevant than others. Furthermore, the impact of the regulatory system is reflected in the way in which different groups of students use, or are forced to use different strategies; i.e. their inclination to take the SweSAT and inclination to supplement grades from upper secondary school, to reach their goal.

Whether the strategies applied by the students are regarded as desirable or undesirable consequences of the admission system is ultimately a question of perspective in relation to the ambitions of the admission system. For instance, from the perspective of the ambition of admitting students having the potential for successfully completing their studies, an unwanted effect is that supplementations of grades has led to a situation where students cannot be admitted, although they have the highest possible GPA. From the perspective of the ambition of promoting equality in higher education, a desirable effect might be results showing that it is mainly students from social Class III that have supplemented their grades. However, it might be argued that the students from social Group III have been hindered on their way to higher education in

the first place. Hence, supplementation of grades has just become another obstacle.

The presented results may be viewed as a contribution to a validation of the admission system, by focusing on the social consequences from the perspective of one important interested group of users of the admission system, i.e. students admitted to higher education.

Michael Tholander, 2005: Moral training between students: A perspective of conversation analysis/ Moralisk fostran mellan elever: Ett samtalsanalytiskt perspektiv/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 2, pp 89–123. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

Throughout the history of psychology and pedagogy, scholars have advanced models of moral development that draw on and reproduce common-sense notions of morality. This article presents an alternative, conversational approach to morality, and applies it to interactions collected among Swedish secondary-school students. Drawing on a social constructionist form of conversation analysis, the criticism of traditional approaches to morality runs along three lines of reasoning.

First, traditional approaches tend to essentialize morality, both by taking morality more or less for granted and by narrowing down the moral domain. In contrast, the conversational approach adopts an inclusive view of the moral domain and treats morality as an interactional phenomenon, oriented to and shaped by the participants themselves. This, in turn, calls for a detailed examination of the practical methods through which the participants jointly accomplish a variety of morally imbued actions within mundane interaction.

Second, traditional approaches often tend to view morality as a causal mechanism preceding actions, i.e., as something that resides within human beings and that governs their behavior. In contrast, the conversational approach treats morality as the participants' resource for accomplishing situated actions. The purpose thus becomes to demonstrate how moral orders are invoked and acted upon by the participants in their pursuit of practical, interactional goals. Along with this, morality is not seen as something that participants »have», but rather something that they »do». This, in turn, implies a view of morality as an interindividual phenomenon.

Third, traditional approaches are typically developmentally oriented and put great emphasis on explaining how morality is transferred across generations. In contrast, the conversational approach examines people's moral practices as phenomena that are interesting in their own right.

As already pointed out, the conversational approach is heavily inspired by conversation analysis, a sociolinguistic school of thought that originated in

California in the mid-1960s. Below, three key methodological influences from conversation analysis are delineated.

The first influence is that a focus on the small phenomena of speech can reveal how people accomplish highly sophisticated actions, e.g., in relation to morality. In line with this, researchers within this field always work with recorded interactions that can be played over and over again, and that can be transcribed in all their details. Already during this transcription phase, much analytic work is performed, and it is therefore of importance that the researcher himself/herself engage in this time-consuming task.

A second methodological influence from conversation analysis is »the proof procedure«. The rationale behind this procedure is that the analyst should use the ongoing flow of talk as a way of discovering what kinds of actions, meanings and orientations the participants produce. By focusing on how participants respond to each other's turns, it is possible to get a sense of how they understand each other. In short, the proof procedure thus means that the participants' understandings of each other's turns are both the analyst's resource in the analysis of prior turns, and the proof of credible analyses. In principle, the procedure also means that the reader has as much information as the researcher and can reproduce or criticize the analyses.

Finally, a third important influence of conversation analysis is the principle of »methodological indifference«. This principle implies a methodology that seeks to describe the activities of participants while abstaining from all judgments about them. More specifically, this primarily means that the researcher has to abstain from morally evaluating the analyzed talk. The analyst should merely use his or her cultural competence to identify moral sequences of talk. Morality shows itself in talk, and the analytical task is simply to make it more visible.

The present analytical demonstration of the conversational approach shows that secondary-school students often engage in talk imbued with morality. More specifically, the focus of the study was directed at episodes of teasing that occurred during small group work. One argument for focusing on teasing was that it occurred on a regular basis in most of the groups, thus forming a significant interactional pattern. A more important argument, though, was to apply the conversational approach to a practice that has often been attacked morally, e.g., by being characterized as a form of bullying. In contrast to this, the present study analyzes teasing as a moral practice in its own right.

Studies of morality in school have often focused on how teachers, using various means, teach students to behave properly and get them to internalize such proper behavior. In such a view of morality, there exists an apparent teacher bias that foregrounds adults as the sole transmitters of values. In contrast, the following study shows how students, by staging, participating, and responding to teasing, contribute to each other's upbringing and moral development. Teasing may thus be seen as an ongoing, interactional accomplishment that displays both the results of previous socialization and how socialization proceeds.

More specifically, the analyses show that teasing is a rich and versatile discursive resource that students can exploit in many different ways. In staging

their attacks, the teasers often parasitically exploited material in prior turns and caricatured the attributed style of prior talk. The analyses also show the importance of defensive work in response to teasing. Earlier studies of teasing have often neglected this vital aspect of teasing episodes. In contrast to teasing attacks, this defensive work almost always had to be undertaken individually by the students. Thus, it seems as though it is easier to align in staging teasing attacks than in helping attacked parties.

In general, the findings of this study suggest that socialization must partly be seen as a by-product of children's intermingled conversational activities, and that it consists of acquiring a vast number of practices – e.g., offensive and defensive teasing practices – that can be employed for a variety of situated interests. Thus, by participating in fast, dialogical exchanges, students may be assumed to acquire an increasingly broader repertoire of techniques and strategies – linguistic, rhetorical and dramatic – from the available cultural reservoir of resources. Ultimately, students' (local) moral standing largely depends upon acquiring such techniques and strategies.

At the end of the article, the studied interactions are compared to so-called »deliberative conversations», which have often been seen as the ideal way of teaching students about morality. In contrast to these deliberative conversations – which may be described as planned, teacher initiated, ordered, rare and peace oriented – the studied exchanges are spontaneous, student initiated, chaotic, frequent and conflict oriented. Yet, the argument is that they may be assumed to be at least as important as deliberative conversations with regard to morality and moral development. One pedagogical implication of this is that teachers must begin to reconsider the models of morality ›normally used‹. Instead of merely defending realistic notions of morality, they must also start to incorporate postmodern notions of morality into their educational projects.

Claes Nilholm 2005: Special education: Which are the fundamental perspectives/ Specialpedagogik: Vilka är de grundläggande perspektiven/? Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 2, pp 124–139. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

The focus of the article concerns how to understand research about special education in terms of a few, basic perspectives. It is argued that the traditional and the alternative perspectives discerned by several previous commentators should be supplemented with a third perspective, a dilemma perspective.

Research into special education is often considered as belonging to one of two different perspectives. On the one hand, a more traditional, individualistic perspective with its roots in medicine and psychology. In this perspective, the child is considered to be the locus of the »problem». On the other hand, an alternative perspective which to a large extent claims uniformity and identity

in a critique of the traditional perspective. The alternative perspective emphasises the importance of social factors in the genesis of school problems. These two perspectives are of course not entirely homogeneous entities and variations found within the perspectives are discussed in the article. One trend is that several proponents of the traditional perspective tend to become less inclined to suggest segregated solutions for children in problematic school situations even if the child is still considered to be the source of the problem.

However, the alternative perspective is even more heterogeneous. Dissimilar variants of the alternative approach indicate a number of different processes as being pivotal to special education. These include such areas as failure of schools, professional interests, social injustices or dominant discourses. The critique of traditional special education can be more or less radical depending on which, and how many, dimensions of the distinction between normal/special are being criticised. Despite the differences within both of these perspectives, it is argued that the use of these types of simplifications are necessary since they provide useful tools for structuring the field.

However, it is argued that there is a need to supplement the two perspectives. Various candidates for a third perspective are ventilated. A possible third perspective discussed by Ainscow (1998) provides a compromise between the traditional perspective and a more critical approach since it places the »problem» both within the child but also within the context. It is claimed that such a compromise should be regarded as a compromise rather than as a new perspective. Instead, the »interpretative paradigm» suggested by Skrtic (1995) is considered as being a reasonable point of departure for a third perspective.

One problem with the »interpretative paradigm» is its previous utilisation as a tool for ideological critique, thus being associated with the alternative perspective. It is argued, however, that an interpretative approach, as a form of sociocultural theorising, which accedes to basic dilemmas in education, rather than to ideological critique, seems to be a proper candidate for a third perspective. While both the traditional and the alternative perspectives provide solutions to school problems, the third perspective is concerned with dilemmas and complexity. Not least dilemmas relating to ethics, an area which must be dealt with by both society and schools due to student diversity.

The notion of »dilemma» is discussed in the article. Following Billig et al (1988), it is argued that ideological dilemmas can be seen as expressions of contradictions within a liberal ideology in modern society. The ideology expresses themes and counter-themes. One example of a central ideological dilemma is the theme of individualism and its counter theme, man as a social being. Ideological dilemmas are expressed on an ideological level and also within research. Moreover, there is no clear-cut boundary between ideological dilemmas and those dilemmas relating to everyday thinking. Further, a distinction is proposed between analytical dilemmas and participant dilemmas, the latter being dilemmas which are recognised by social actors as dilemmas.

An overarching ideological dilemma of education is that schools are required to provide pupils with a similar education whilst at the same time attending to individual differences regarding interests, motivation and knowledge. Related to this overarching dilemma is the issue of whether individuals should

be treated as individuals or as members of specific groups, such as »boys», »girls», »pupils in need of special support» and so on. Additional dilemmas involve e.g. individual differences and whether they should be seen as assets or shortcomings. The dilemma perspective places the problem in a social sphere, where differences are negotiated dependent upon how they should be handled and talked about. In different sociocultural circumstances, some kind of balance is constructed with regard to these dilemmas. Most importantly, it does not seem feasible to deconstruct these dilemmas. On the contrary, it is argued that such dilemmas highlight our understanding regarding the value of human beings and should therefore also be regarded as moral dilemmas.

Jörgen From & Carina Holmgren, 2005: Pro EU. Reflections concerning the adult education that is administered by local authorities in Sweden/ För EU i tiden. En betraktelse över svensk kommunal vuxenutbildning/. Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol 10, No 2, pp 140–147. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

This article is an attempt to understand today's ongoing reorientation of the Swedish adult education that is administered by local authorities and to discuss the adult education of tomorrow. Historically, education systems that belong to the modern nation-state, as part of the ongoing globalisation, deep structural changes have occurred within the European Union in the last few decades.

The direction of these changes is towards more emphasis on both the international and local levels, and less on the national, which, in turn, leads to a process of a simultaneous diversifying and homogenising of education. For instance, the neoliberal ideology, with its stress on the autonomous individual and freedom of choice, is combined with international systems of evaluation and measurement. Such findings from international research on globalisation and education are used to analyse and discuss different national and international (EU) policy documents regarding (Swedish) local authority administered adult education. The process of simultaneously diversifying and homogenising is expressed in the policy documents in a uniform way, independent of the kind of document. In other words, the documents talk with one voice, and the message is clear:

Diversifying; There is a strong focus on flexible learning, individuals are to make their personal projects come true according to their individual plan for their own studies. The opportunities to learn, independent of time and space, are underlined. The same goes for the individual's right to take the time needed for his or her learning. There must be no obstacles for learning in the organisation of education. On the contrary, there must be every possibility to meet individual requests, needs and circumstances. The flexibility of learning possibilities must be optimised. Every kind of education has to be available at

all times, in any conceivable way and form, to allow individuals to reach their own goals. The need for individual courses, and even the possibility to take part in just a small part of a course, is stressed.

Homogenisation; There is a new concept of learning with European roots, lifelong learning. The will to make the European Union competitive on the global market involves agreed-upon strategies among the member states. Therefore, a central part of lifelong learning is evaluation and measurement by means of a limited number of indicators, the same ones for the whole of Europe. Adult education is a way, as fast and efficient as possible, to ensure the flexible working force needed for economic growth. To secure this, quality assurance and supervision are fundamental. This will ensure individual free learning to be done in a reasonable time and with efficient use of existing resources.

So, on the one hand documents underline the individual's free, constructivist and flexible learning, independent of time and space, and on the other hand, they underline the necessity of a limited number of indicators, common within the European Union, for the measurement and evaluation of this »free« learning. This may seem like a contradictory situation for adult education. However, there is a possibility to understand it in accordance with the process of simultaneously diversifying and homogenising. The focus on individual and flexible learning cannot be separated from the focus on control, or vice versa.

Possibilities for local or individual initiatives increase, but mechanisms for steering and control also increase at the same time. And these control mechanisms have the function of normalising, that is, they set a standard to which everyone can relate. When all learning everywhere in Europe is measured in a standardised way, it will become obvious for all Europeans what is worth knowing and what is not.

Finally, with the discussion above as the starting point, some words on tomorrow's adult education as administered by Swedish local authorities. Perhaps its normalising function is the fundamental condition for tomorrow's Swedish adult education. Lifelong learning is a European project, which is probably here to stay. For adult education, demands for individual learning, freedom of choice and flexibility go hand in hand with being the object of intensified and/or new forms of surveillance, steering and control. In other words, formulated as a message to a future adult student, one might say: Learn whatever, however and whenever you want, as long as the learning is in line with the directives! So, one way to understand this, is that the Swedish local authority adult education of tomorrow will no longer be a part of the modern nation-state, it will be Europeanised. The specific task for Swedish adult education will be to make it possible for Swedish citizens to become Europeans, or even to make sure that it happens.