

English summaries

Elisabeth Elmeroth, 2006: Monocultural studies of multicultural pupils to assess and explain school results/ Monokulturella studier av multikulturella elever: att mäta och förklara skolresultat/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 11, No 3, pp 177–194. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

This article discusses the theoretical basis for the evaluation of education for pupils with an immigrant background. The national evaluation conducted in Sweden in 2003 (NU 03) aimed to assess compulsory school education. In the evaluation Swedish as a Second Language (SSL) was involved for the first time as a subject. However, results from the evaluation of SSL, were only reported summarily due to some uncertainty regarding the subject. The most important reason for this was the difficulty in demarcating which pupils should have been involved in the evaluation of SSL. One of the problems as regards the demarcation of the group was, for example, that there were pupils who were tutored in Swedish as a first language (SFL) who received grades in SSL. Another problem was pupils with partial attendance of classes in SSL, and partial classes in SFL.

The course syllabus for SSL was written in attendance in 2000. A survey of the »target goals» that serve as the foundation for planning teaching, shows that they are almost identical with the goals for SFL. More over, the common syllabus structure with »attainment goals for the ninth year in school» and »goals to aim for» has therefore not taken into consideration the pupils' length of stay in Sweden. This structure goes against findings of language research concerning the time required to reach academic language proficiency. The demand for a uniform structure in the syllabus shows a monocultural perspective on the subject devoted to the multicultural pupils.

In order for the topic SSL to be considered as a subject with a unique content, the course syllabus needs changing, and methods of measurement need to be introduced directed towards the acquisition of a second language and not towards the development of first language. A basic requirement of assessment instruments is that the instrument used should be sensitive to the interim language as well as its development.

Second language pupils are often assessed with the same test as pupils who have Swedish as their first language. This means that requirements for reading comprehension in, for example, the national examinations and in PISA can possibly be regarded as encompassing pupils who have reached the advanced level. This in turn means that they must have begun their language training in Swedish when they were about six years old. Pupils who have come to Sweden

after starting formal school education are disadvantaged on these examinations.

Assessment instruments for second language education are necessary for national examinations, diagnosis, and grading. They are also necessary in order to place pupils in learning groups according to ability, or to determine whether pupils should be trained in SFS or in SSL. This article presents a model for assessment of language development that takes into consideration the interplay between cognitive degrees of difficulty and context dependency. Basic communicative ability is enough for concrete situations with a low degree of cognitive difficulties while use of language as a thinking tool is cognitively demanding and must be managed independently of context. The model can be linked to language levels and used in the development of assessment instruments.

The majority of surveys and evaluations of education for pupils with an immigrant background shows poor school results for the group as a whole. Often the poor results are explained by family related factors. Researchers and evaluators point out that immigrant parents are often unemployed, have low education, low socioeconomic status, and few books in the home. From these reports one could come to the conclusion that it is parental failure that leads to poor results. However these forms of explanation should be problemized.

Pupils with an immigrant background are a significantly more heterogeneous group than pupils with a Swedish background. Naturally, socioeconomic background, propensity for study in the home, gender, etc are important factors even in groups with an immigrant background. However, these explanation variables need to be complemented with background data that take into consideration the conditions that are specific to the group; above all concerning the pupils' language and concept development, which in turn depends on variables such as country of origin, length of time in Sweden, cause of immigration etc. Different factors correlate in complex patterns and thus contribute to major difficulties in measurement and specification of explanatory variables for pupil groups with an immigrant background.

When pupils' poor results are explained by the parents' low education, weak establishment in the labour market and few books in the home, research shows a remarkable unconcern for multicultural perspectives. Researchers seldom discuss what unemployment or quantity of books mean from a discriminatory perspective. The ethnocentric explanation variables, e.g. parents' education, are an excuse for schools when it comes to second language pupils. By exploiting these explanatory variables in order to explain insufficient school success for pupils with a Swedish background, the schools' treatment of pupils with an immigrant background is not put in question.

Ethnic blindness results in a disregard for the resources and special competency that multilingualism and multiculturalism entails. The idea of a monoculture and monolingual society still exists and pupils with an immigrant background are seen as exceptions in school. Behind discrimination in school are the established Swedish norms which lead to the life conditions for pupils with an immigrant background being neglected. When explanations of pupils'

insufficient school success are sought among the pupils instead of in the system we have an example of structural discrimination in education.

Until the next evaluation we expect:

- that the educational area of Swedish as a Second Language will have a clear organisation providing opportunities for study
- that pupils' language acquisition can be studied based on a course syllabus that takes into account their language background
- that assessment instruments are developed for the purpose of assessing actual knowledge of Swedish as a Second Language
- that an in-depth discussion concerning how monocultural norms affects the multicultural pupils has started as well as a discussion about how pupils' school results can be explained from a multicultural perspective.

Ann-Mari Edström, 2006: Researching in the field of learning in visual art practice/ Att forska i lärande om konst/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol 11, No 3, pp 195–213. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788

The fine arts, such as theatre, music, visual arts, etc., tend to be grouped together because of their similarities. However, a closer look reveals more differences than similarities, especially if one takes the artistic practices into consideration. The practice of theatre and music, for instance is usually of an interpretive character, while practitioners within the visual arts field tend to create their work themselves from the very beginning. It is argued that differences like these are significant in a discussion about learning in fine arts (Edström 1998). From the theoretical perspective of pedagogy the practices of theatre and music e.g. have developed theories of pedagogy, while there has been no corresponding development within the visual arts practice. Consequently the field of learning in visual art practice is an area of research that is relatively underdeveloped. Therefore, the aim of the article is to discuss possibilities of research in the field of learning in visual art practice, within the theoretical perspective of pedagogy. The problem addressed concerns how different ways of understanding and conceiving an artist's work affects the way one looks upon the education of visual artists, and how different conceptions of an artist's work relate to three dominating perspectives on learning, as seen in recent pedagogical research.

To facilitate a discussion about learning in visual art practice, three characteristic ways of understanding and conceiving an artist's work are outlined in the first part of the article. The three examples given are the artist as craftsman, the artist as born genius and the artist as explorer. The term »explorer» originates from Lars Nittve, director of the Modern Art Museum in Stockholm, when he speaks of the art of today as an explorative zone. This puts the artist in the role of an explorer into art, or of what art can be.

The choice of these three examples rests upon the fact that they are quite distinct from each other, that they are present in contemporary art as well as in a historical art perspective, and that they lead to quite different approaches to the education of artists. Furthermore, their characteristics are discernible in the literature (e.g., two examples that inspired the author are Singerman, 1999, and Sandqvist, 2002). The three examples given are simplified in order to elucidate the arguments. They can be misinterpreted as giving a simplistic picture of a historical development, say from medieval times up to today. Instead, within this context it is recommended that the characteristics of the examples are understood as simultaneously existing, integrated in each other, more or less present all through history, and last but not least still influencing our conception of an artist's work today.

Each of the three exemplified conceptions of an artist's work exists in a context. This context in turn includes certain preconditions for learning in visual art practice and for the education of artists. The first example, the artist as craftsman, relates well to art education. Historically, the education of the artist as craftsman rests upon guild systems and apprenticeship. This conception is relatively technical and technical skills can be taught. The second example, the artist as born genius, has a problematic relation to education. This is a conception primarily associated to the Romanticism in which the qualities that make an artist are hereditary. This view precludes education since the qualities cannot be taught. Therefore, a true artist is in no need of art education. The third example, the artist as explorer, is more contemporary. Today the education of artists is institutionalised. Artists are educated at university level and it is possible to take a doctor's degree in visual arts. Art is indeed an explorative zone.

In the second part of the article these examples are related to three perspectives on learning: a cognitive, a sociocultural, and a phenomenographic perspective. The main characteristics of the perspectives on learning are initially introduced. Then each perspective on learning is related to each of the three ways of conceiving and understanding an artist's work that were presented earlier. When related to these three different art contexts some advantages and disadvantages of the perspectives on learning are revealed. The pros and cons are focused, and the impact these may have on the possibilities of research within the field of learning in visual art practice is exemplified. The intention is not to cover all possibilities that the perspectives may have, rather the aim is to highlight some of the aspects that are considered by the author to be most crucial in the research context of learning in visual art practice.

In the discussion it is argued that cognitive theory primarily does itself justice in relation to a more crafts oriented way of conceiving an artist's work. The sociocultural perspective is deeply rooted in the historical aspect of learning. This is an advantage if one e.g. is interested in an overall, historical perspective of ways of understanding and conceiving an artist's work. The phenomenographic perspective on learning differs from the other two through its focus on the relation between subject and object in describing development of knowledge. The author's position is that the phenomenographic relational view is a very strong alternative to a constructionist view, especially if one

understands an artist's work as explorative. To explore implies that the creation of new knowledge is central. The other two perspectives with their constructional view of knowledge have limitations when it comes to the question of the creation of new knowledge. The article concludes by pointing out the contribution of phenomenographic research in learning on visual art practice, on one hand to the context of visual art practice and, on the other hand, the context of pedagogy.