

English summaries

Andreas Nordin: From bildung to quality? About discursive shifts in Swedish curriculum work/ Från bildning till kvalitet? Om diskursiva förskjutningar i svenskt läroplansarbete/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 1–17.

In short there will be a new curriculum launched for the Swedish compulsory school. In 2007 the official report (SOU 2007:28) was handed over to the government with suggestions on how to increase goal fulfilment and reach a higher knowledge level. In this study this official report is compared with the corresponding official report (SOU 1992:94) that formed the foundation for the current curriculum (Lpo 94). These two reports have been analysed in order to see if there are any significant shifts when it comes to the steering, organisation and content of pedagogical practice.

The study takes its methodological point of departure in critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992, Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, Wodak 2002). Habermas concepts *system* and *lifeworld* have been used in the analysis of the texts, when understood as different rationalities working within discourses. In a specific discourse different actions are legitimised in different ways and draw upon different kinds of reasoning. Within this theoretical framework discourse is seen as a social practice where the subject at the same time contributes to the reproduction as well as the transformation of the social reality of which he or she is a part. Aspects of discursive shifts, how different discourses relate to each other and how teachers are positioned in the discourses, have been focused on in this study.

In SOU 1992:94 the concept of bildung is used as a foundation for the discussion on how to organise pedagogical practice and how to understand knowledge in a school context. In the official report goals instead of content are put forward as a steering instrument and two goal levels are being introduced. One level, called »goals to reach» and the other »goals to strive for». By working with goals as the steering principle, teachers were given increased freedom to plan the teaching themselves.

In the new official report (2007:28) the mission formulated by the Government was to strengthen the new decentralised goal steering. The report talks about the two goal levels used today as a fundamental failure, much too confusing for the practitioners, once again introducing content steering as an instrument for governance. At the same time as the report works on a coherent system using only one goal level, other principles are introduced which works in a contradictory direction. Altogether a blend of two fundamentally diffe-

rent principles for governing that runs the risk of draining the pedagogical practise of much of its communicative potential. When reading the official reports three major discursive shifts have been found.

From goal steering to goal and content steering

In SOU 1992:94 the goal steering principle became the new fundamental steering principle for the Swedish compulsory school system. The government hands over control of how to organise the content of the teaching to the local teacher. Instead, national tests and improved follow-up systems are developed to serve as control instruments in the service of the government. In the SOU 2007:28, which is supposed to enhance and sharpen goal steering, a problematic blend is made between the two steering principles. There is an explicit urge for a stronger involvement by the state also when it comes to the content of the pedagogical practice between teachers and pupils.

By introducing a coherent curriculum, which also contains curricula and pedagogical examples, a more standardised pedagogical practice is supposed to take shape. By doing so, teachers become more like civil servants working with already formulated texts and control instruments, and the civil servant becomes the one who reflects on the content needed in the classroom. Aspirations to reduce the possibility for individual interpretation are explicitly expressed in SOU 2007:28, a logic consequence that emanates from a centrally governed school rather than the decentralised and goal steered school it was supposed to strengthen. This is a shift towards a more bureaucratic rhetoric when it comes to the pedagogical practice and an increased political influence over this.

From bildung to quality

Both official reports have the ambition to improve the quality in the school although the means of getting there differ and are legitimised within different discourses. In SOU 1992:94 the concept of bildung is put forward as a metaphor and a starting point for a discussion on how to understand and organise knowledge. Drawing on a classical understanding of bildung that goes back to Kant and Humboldt the idea of the pupil as an autonomous young researcher is put forward.

Although they have goals to achieve in common, the means of getting there might differ between individuals. In SOU 2007:28 there is now elaboration on how to understand knowledge, the interpretation that it has to do with well defined subject matters, easily measured and evaluated, is very much taken for granted and seen as a warrant for a school with equal opportunities. Therefore, the main issue is not how to understand knowledge but how to measure it. Quality becomes an issue on how to measure in order to get a fair and equal evaluation system all over the country. Knowledge that is outside what is measurable in the standardised national tests is seen as invalid or meaningless.

Bureaucratisation of the teaching profession

In comparison with SOU 1992:94 the teachers become positioned in a different way in SOU 2007:28. As mentioned before the professional role of the

teacher becomes increasingly connected to the use of standardised control instruments. The former freedom to plan his or her teaching is being reduced through already formulated examples in the curriculum; especially new teachers are encouraged to use these. If teaching is considered a well-thought-out-practice this must be understood as somewhat of a de-professionalisation of this.

As a result of this shift important aspects of education might get lost along the road such as democracy, citizenship and solidarity: issues of uttermost importance in a globalised world. The standardised notion of quality expressed in SOU 2007:28 where knowledge is reduced to well-defined entities, easily measurable by the teacher, runs the risk of losing the wider perspectives of the education system that has to do with preparing pupils for active citizenship and how to handle the complexity of life.

The article concludes by suggesting that further research is needed when it comes to the problematic use of quality and equity in curriculum texts, the hybridisation of steering principles and the de-professionalisation of the teaching profession.

Lena Sjöberg, 2009: The ›professional‹ teacher: A governing technology in transition in Swedish education policy/ Lärarprofessionalitet på glid – performativ förskjutning av statlig och lärarfacklig utbildningspolicy/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 18–32.

From a classical sociological perspective, the teaching profession has never fulfilled the criteria characteristic of a profession. In the nineteen nineties, however, the Swedish government began for the first time to describe teachers as ›professionals‹ in articulations of its educational policy. Further, the rhetoric of teachers as professionals is also emphasised in the policy texts drawn up at the time of the teacher education reform in 2001. At the same time one of the teacher unions, Lärarförbundet, launched a high profile campaign under the banner »Teachers lift Sweden» (Lärarna lyfter Sverige) aimed at professionalizing the teaching profession and enhancing the status of the profession.

This article has its focus on the rhetoric of the ›professional‹ teacher and adopts a critical policy with a sociological perspective inspired by Stephen J. Ball (1994, 2007, 2008). My aim has been to study how the teachers, through discursive, naturalizing and normalizing practices, are represented as professionals and, consequently, are disciplined through governmental technologies, including performative technologies (Ball 1994, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008; Foucault 1977, 1991, 2003).

I also make the discursive transition visible, which the professional teacher is submitted in the policy texts during the time span between 1995 and 2008.

The producers of the empirical material are both the Swedish government (government bills and proposals) and policy texts from the largest teacher union in Sweden, Lärarförbundet. Altogether, five governmental and seven policy texts from the teacher union are analysed.

The discursive concept *teacher professionalism* began to be used within the process of decentralization in Sweden in the early nineties. The first time the concept appears is in the policy material about the new responsibility distribution (SOU 1988:20). In 1996, the first policy text concerning a future teacher education is published. The notion of teacher professionalism was discursively very important and well-used in both that policy text and two other government bills regarding the new teacher education (Ds 1996:16, SOU 1999:63, Prop 1999/2000:135). The »new professional teacher» seems, through the policy texts, to be a necessity for the »new» school in Sweden.

Using Foucaults notion of governmentality I suggest that the rhetorics about the professional teacher in these early texts show obvious aspects of the disciplining and governmental technologies of self-governance. The individual professional teachers are in a sense obliged to show new attitudes and new professional skills in order to be a new and professional teacher.

What is striking when reading the policy texts from the teacher union texts from the campaign »Lärarna lyfter Sverige» during the nineties (Lärarförbundet 1995, 1996a, b), is that the same rhetoric and the same neoliberal governmental self regulative concepts are used by this organisation as by the government. There are some differences, because the teacher union also has a different agenda. The aim with the campaign is to professionalize the teacher profession in a classical sociological manner. The way they are doing this, however, is by working in a quite different direction, in line with the public intention of making teachers and schools more effective.

While the former policy texts had used the concept *professionslism* in a quite strictly inner self regulative manner, meaning that teachers, with their professionalism, should elaborate their work with some trust from the government, there has been a discursive shift to a much more performative attitude in the later governmental policy texts I have studied (Dir 2007:103, SOU 2008:52). The government in these later texts elucidates demands or requirements on the teacher, for the purpose of, as it says, securing the quality of the school system and every child's achievement in it.

New concepts are working in the policy discourse. These include performative concepts such as target achievement, quality assurance and competitiveness. The inner self-regulating technologies have been completed with external disciplining and governmental technologies, such as for example performative practices and accountability processes.

As a tendency for the nineties, I can discern a resemblance between the policy rhetoric of the government and the teacher union also in period. This time the common issues are about external regulations and governing, and especially about teacher accreditation and school quality issues. In the policy texts from Lärarförbundet (2007, 2008a, b, c), the neoliberal perspective of education through different governmental technologies are also completed by arguments and ambitions of professionalizing the teaching profession (in a

classical sociological perspective). In the policy texts, for example, they are focusing on questions such as professional ethics, professional influence and autonomy as well as a professional knowledge base.

To conclude, in the policy texts from both the teacher union and the government, I am able to identify a unifying rhetoric about teachers and the contemporary requirements that corresponds well with the so called »new» knowledge society. Though the terminology that classifies teachers as professional I can discern a difference in the rationality here and the professionalizing rhetorics from the nineties; from inner self regulative technologies to technologies completed with apparent external performative technologies.

Since the new (non-socialist) government acceded in 2006, there has been a tremendous amount of reforms regarding educational policy in Sweden. Using Levins (1998) notion, we could talk about an educational »policy epidemic». The whole range of the education system in Sweden, according to the new policies, are transformed towards increased external (state) governing, increased educational effectiveness and increased market rationality. The teachers within this new education system are subjected to more evaluations and control than before. Paradoxically, one of the policy texts (SOU 2007:79) mentions that increased external government control involves an increase for the teachers' professionalism.

The movement of the school system towards a clearer performative market discourse accentuates the teachers (and students) as commodities, and turns the school system discursively to a commodification system. The teacher identities in this new discourse have a tendency to change to performance identities. One important aspect of this changed governmental rationality is the focus on the individual teacher. Every single teacher is responsible for the teaching profession, the professionalism agenda and the development of the school system, as well as the Swedish educational result in international comparisons. This ›conduct of conduct‹ is in line with the Foucauldian notion of bio politics. Finally, the results suggest that in spite of the rhetoric of teacher professionalism the teacher profession, is far from being a real profession in Sweden today.

Mattias Nylund, 2010: The road to the future: The road to what future for the students on vocational programmes at upper secondary school?/ Framtidsvägen: Vägen till vilken framtid för eleverna på gymnasieskolans yrkesprogram? Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 33–52.

This article examines the inquiry (SOU 2008:27) that informed the education bill put forward by the Swedish Government in 2009, constituting the most extensive attempt to reform upper secondary education since the 1990s. The most significant changes concern the design of vocational programmes. The

purpose of the article is to examine the proposed changes and their possible implications, while focusing on vocational programmes and their content.

The tradition of curriculum theory, to which the article subscribes, argues that the curriculum is to be understood and analysed as having implications for socialization, since its content is assumed to shape students' future beliefs, values, actions, expectations etc. From this point of view, education becomes an inherently political project; what is considered good education derives from what is perceived as a good society. The article illustrates this by discussing different historical conceptions with different understandings of the purpose, role and, hence, appropriate content of education.

The radical and systematic nature of the changes put forward prompts a thorough investigation of their possible and probable consequences. The article therefore analyses the proposed changes in the light of their implications for the overall societal function of upper secondary education, by relating them to different historical conceptions of education. These conceptions expose a historical tension, implicit in capitalist democracies, between socializing pupils for their reproductive role and value in the economy and socializing them for their role as »democratic citizens», as active and critical participants in the institutions of formal democracy. In this context, vocational programmes are of particular interest, with the relatively homogeneous class background of the students typically taking them.

Four main issues are addressed in the article: (i) what the content of vocational programmes is to be; (ii) how that content is to be determined; (iii) what future society, and what role in such a society, students will be prepared for with the proposed content; and (iv) what the main societal function of upper secondary education will be with these changes.

Addressing the first issue, the author points out that a range of curriculum documents will be changed and that a new structure for programme content is proposed. Some of the key changes are: (i) an upper secondary diploma will be reintroduced; (ii) vocational programmes will not provide automatic access to higher education (the explicit goal of preparing students for higher education is to be removed); (iii) »core subjects» will be replaced by »common subjects», which will vary in both content and scope between programmes; (iv) some subjects that are especially important in a democratic conception will be given reduced importance in the curriculum, including Swedish (generally to be cut from 200 to 100 credits), social studies (from 100 to 50 credits), and aesthetic subjects (from 50 to 0 credits); (v) history will be introduced as a compulsory subject (from 0 to 50 credits); (vi) elective courses will be reduced (from 300 to 200 credits); (vii) content will generally be geared more towards professional specialization; and (viii) syllabuses will be more specific regarding content.

The article then turns to the issue of how content is to be determined. A new institutional framework is suggested that will establish closer links between vocational programmes and »working life», with a strong emphasis on employers' needs. Employers will be given greater influence in determining educational content through this new framework, while the influence of other stakeholders – such as students and teachers – will be reduced.

The proposed changes are subsequently analysed in the light of different conceptions of education, revealing an almost complete lack of any ambition in the proposed reform to relate vocational programmes to matters of democracy. The aim of creating an »employable» worker, ready trained according to the needs of employers, takes clear precedence.

The article goes on to discuss what kind of citizenship students at upper secondary school will be prepared for with this content. Students on different programmes (academic or vocational) will be provided with an education based on two very different interpretations of the curriculum; they will study different subjects, the content of common subjects will vary, and content will be steered by different institutional agents (universities/colleges in the case of academic programmes vs. employers in the case of vocational programmes), with different conceptions of education. In conclusion, the proposed changes mark a historical break from the tradition of integrating different programmes in upper secondary education.

Another historical break is that employers will by law be given greater influence than unions over the content of this education. It is argued that the increasing power of employers marks a shift in balance from more democratic governance (by elected politicians) to more business-based governance (by non-elected employers). Furthermore, there is a considerable likelihood that the shift will result in a decline in the number of students from vocational programmes continuing on to higher education. Coupled with the relatively homogeneous class background of students taking such programmes, it is argued, that the changes may be expected to compound the social imbalances in enrolment to higher education, and negatively impact social mobility more generally.

Finally, the article addresses the overarching question of what the societal function of upper secondary education will be with the proposed changes. Viewed as a whole, the proposed reform may be expected to maintain, or reinforce, the division between »intellectual» and »manual» labour, with upper secondary education preparing different pupils, from different class backgrounds, for different roles in the societal division of labour and for different future roles as citizens. In the historical tension between the various functions of education in capitalist democracies, the proposed reform leans heavily towards the reproductive function. Rather than making education an institution that addresses problems of equality and democracy, there is a danger that tomorrow's upper secondary education will be dictated by the very different and more narrowly defined needs of employers and the labour market.