English summaries

SALSA is not only a dance, but also the acronym for an instrument aimed at stimulating local debate and improvement about school improvement in Sweden. Ranking of schools is not the intention, according to the National Agency for Education, who uphelds the web-service for anyone who want to look at schools' values. But the statistical model is based on school comparison. The instrument produces value added-measures on school results in marks (total score or number of passed subjects in grade 9 of the comprehensive school) adjusted for the social background (parent education), sex and ethnicity (born outside the country or having parents born abroad).

The article summarizes certain kinds of critique raised against the instrument: The latter deals with aggregated pupil data per school, and not individual data, it uses traditional regression analysis instead of structural equation modeling, it does not present data as floating means or any such device for leveling out out-lier data to which small schools are especially vulnerable. The critique points to the great problem of using the residual as indicator of school effect, when there is no firm knowledge about what reasonable values such residuals could have. There is also a critique pointing to the inadequacy of using only the mentioned indicators of social back-ground, when in fact the real social circumstances for students in school and neighbourhood millieus is far more complex. The residual contains influence for which also the administrative and political governing is responsible, but which it does not keep separate from school influence. The school is therefore the only one to be blaimed or praized by this instrument. Lastly, there is a critique about the adequacy of marks as a quality indicator, when it is known that the marking system in Swedish is not robust enough to secure reliable and valid indicator data. On the other hand, it is the indicator which is widely used in public debate and school statistics, and its practical use for climbing the educational ladder is great. Lately the SALSA-instrument has been brought forward as a useful technique in the hands of the new, and more powerful, state inspection of schools set up during 2008.

In order to explore some possibilities to improve the SALSA-instrument this article gives an account of an attempt to complement the present model with one mediating measure and one outcome measure based on individual student questionnaire responses. Both are established by confirmatory factor analyses, and then put to work i structural analyses by two level structural equation modelling. When the NAE-model has two alternatives indicators we choose the indicator born outside the country (far stronger than only parents born abroad), and total mark scores (about the same results as with the other one). The schools used for the study is not a representative national sample, but heterogenity has been strived for in social background and geographical location.

The mediating measure is a version of the concept cultural capital. Instead of Bourdieu's definition of legitimate capital, our measure focus on the extent to which parents transfer such capital by involving themselves in talks with their children about politics, environmental and cultural issues, and the future for the youngsters themselves. Our nested model separates the transfer of a societal kind from parent support in general. The underlying assumption is that schools can hardly influence this transfer, which is therefore nothing of their responsibility. The original NAE-model produces an explained variance of about 40 per cent (38% in our sample of 70 schools). By using structural equation modelling we raised the figure to 44 per cent, and by adding the factor cultural capital transfer to 55 per cent (in a reduced sample of 52 schools). Residuals in the NAE-model and in our model was based on factor scores. If a ten point difference in residual scores is important than ten per cent of the schools got another residual placement in our model.

The new outcome measure is a combined model of items about academic self-concept and school motivation (the latter items by themselves are not significant at the school-level). We name it school adjustment and argue that it is an important result measure for comprehensive education. In a model with social background from the NAE-model, and cultural capital transfer as a mediating measure, 68 per cent of the variation in school adjustement was explained. Another comparison of school residual scores have been made, and a difference (of 1 point in stand. res. scores) have been seen for 40 per cent of the schools in the sample of 52. We thus see that schools differ more in the achievement culture than what they do in achievement measures when social background, ethnicity and sex are taken into account.

By complementing measures and changeing methods in the residual analyses, we achieved considerable improvements. It is likely that further refinements may be made. We still have strong considerations against the measure as such. It is crude, even in its improved state. The discussion could, however, be put into a somewhat different context.

What is the benefit of using such an instrument when it is judged in the context of governing? We think that the present market system for educational choice in Sweden needs checks and balances. From our point of view a danger with the present system is a tendency towards oligopoly at the market, i.e. customers and schools divide themselves up within self-contained clusters and within them produce values and morals about schooling which separates them

from other clusters. To a rather high extent this has already happened with schools with affluent and poor surroundings respectively. Further such divisions may come up with clusters based on reform-ideologies, religion and ethnicity. The possibility of educational and other sciences to interact with such clusters, that define themselves against each others, will be decreased. There are, however, moderating forces already working as checks and balances. We refer above all to a common teacher education and to national tests. If marking is such a force may be questioned, as seen above. Marks are already under the press of market forces.

Because of the technical uncertainces in the SALSA-instrument it is doubtful wether it can be counted as another such check-mechanism. But the need for such mechanisms may be increasing. And if the new national inspection starts using it massively then we have a problem never-the-less. In this situation it is a pity that Swedish educational research has been relatively uninterested in issues like the ones we have raised here. We want that to change. A possibility may be that the inspection opens up for cooperation with scientists, and that qualitative inspection data may be triangulated with value added-data and put under scientific, as well as practical analysis.

Björn Haglund, 2009 – Leisure as discourse and content: A critical discussion of the activities at after-school programs and leisure-time centres/ Fritid som diskurs och innehåll: En problematisering av verksamheten vid afterschool programs och fritidshem/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, **Vol 14, No 1, pp 22–44. Stockholm. ISSN 1401-6788**

This article focuses on afterschool programs in the US and leisure-time centres in Sweden and is based on a literature survey pertaining these institutions. The survey compares how the activities in afterschool programs and leisure-time centres are described. The comparison is integrated in a discussion concerning how these texts are dealing with the concept of leisure. The analysis takes its point of departure from a critical discourse perspective and discusses five different definitions, discourses, pertaining to leisure within the framework of afterschool programs and leisure-time centres.

Different disciplines showed an increasing research interest concerning US afterschool programs during the last years. This attention origin in three different reform interests: welfare, crime prevention and education reform. The first study that used data based on national representativity was carried out by Seppanen, de Vries and Seligson. They tried to document the existing activities at the afterschool programs and found that there, for various reasons, were many differences between them.

One reason for the variety was that afterschool programs were supported by different sponsors and had different goals by their activities. The govern-

mental interest in afterschool programs was, during the early 1990s, amongst all grounded in a conception that children needed high quality care when their parents were at work. The difference between various afterschool programs remains but the discourse concerning these institutions have changed.

The transformation of the discourse means that afterschool programs now often are viewed as a complement to school instead of institutions for care. This change can be seen as a transformation from a child care discourse to a knowledge discourse. It is also possible to observe a power struggle within the knowledge discourse. This struggle is exercised by a narrow way to conceive knowledge and a broad perception of knowledge. The former way of perceiving knowledge, in relation to afterschool programs, emphasized knowledge that could be related to school subjects while the latter emphasized social competences.

The continuing interest for afterschool programs in the US seem to derive from the idea that these institutions can facilitate knowledge and competences of various kind. Leisure as a notion is, however, not discussed and staff with a background in park and recreation services have not stand out in this discussion.

The activities at afterschool programs have become an object of increasing interest while the interest for Swedish leisure-time centres has been neglected. Research and political discussions have mainly concentrated on other parts of the activities in school. The task of a leisure-time centre is, according to Skolverket (the Swedish National Agency for Education), to function as an educational group activity that should be a complement to school, offer a meaningful leisure and contribute to children's development.

Skolverket does, however, not give a closer definition of leisure or what a meaningful leisure involves. The highlighted activities (play, physical activities, creative activities etc.) are furthermore described in a rather concise way. It seems as leisure, as a discourse and a knowledge area, doesn't have a substantial impact on the content in afterschool programs and leisure-time centres. A more detailed discussion concerning some of the existing definitions of leisure, within the frameworks of afterschool programs and leisure-time centres, could contribute to develop and illuminate the content in these institutions.

If leisure should increase peoples' satisfaction with life, then leisure should be seen as »a multidimensional construct in which one feels relatively free from constraints, has a feeling of positive affect, is motivated by internal forces, and allows the exercise of perceived competence». This way of perceiving leisure is similar to John Neulinger's view of leisure from a subjective perspective; leisure as a state of mind. Children should, from this point of departure, have good opportunities to decide the activities, and what activities to join, in the leisure-time centres.

However, activities are mainly described from an objective point of departure. Primarily, normative functional activities are emphasized within the order of discourse. These activities, both in the US and in Sweden, are expected to develop children. However, the governmental document *Allmänna råd och kommentarer. Kvalitet i fritidshem* (General Recommendations

with Comments. Quality in Leisure-Time Centres) from 2007 can be interpreted in different ways since it is not describing leisure, or the activities at leisure-time centres or the staffs' subject positions in an articulated way.

The design of the discursive practice is therefore depending of how officials at the municipal level, among other things, consume this governmental document. The National Agency for Education strongly criticised many municipality's treatment of the leisure-time centres since they found the existing activities circumscribed and poor. The activities did not correspond to the official strive for functional activities. This can be seen as part of a power struggle and an indication of competing discourses, e.g. leisure activities are seen as residual time, used by some municipalities and schools.

It is likely that staff, during their social practice in afterschool programs and leisure-time centres, comprises several of the discourses within the order of discourse. It is also possible that some discourses have more power and are more prominent in the everyday work than others. The varying discourses could contribute to differences between different leisure-time centres both concerning their social practice and the staff's subject positions. The conception of what leisure is in a leisure-time centre or afterschool program gives, in that way as an extension, also educational implications.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the researchers' relation to empirical material in phenomenographic research. This is also a question how to practice phenomenographic methodology. A methodology assigns a position in relation to the research object and describes the abilities the researcher needs to develop in order to handle specific kinds of research. In a phenomenographic perspective learning is viewed as a process of variation and discrimination. This is also a process of creating connections and relations between parts and wholes.

As human beings we become aware of the world when we point our attention to aspects' of the world. This means that we see something *as* something. We are afraid of something, we are in love with someone and so one. This mean that we also become aware of something related to a background, to a context, which is created through a web of relations. To learn something is to discern the parts and the relationships between parts in order to be able to se the whole picture of something in a new way. The process of decontextualisation and recontextualization in learning creates the opportunity to integrate

the expressed phenomenon in a new way. In a phenomenographic approach knowledge about something is manifested in a relation between the subject and the phenomenon that is understood. Knowledge in general could therefore be understood as a web of relations between different expressions about the world. This could also be described as web of relations between parts and wholes.

The purpose of phenomenographic research is to describe overarching structures of meaning based on individual statements about phenomenon or aspects of the world. These structures of meaning are seen as descriptions of some parts of the web of relations that constitute individuals' knowledge of the world. When the phenomenographic researcher analyzes an individual's statements about aspects of the world, for example, the content of their work, the signification of political power or how one should teach, the researcher has to identify the different means of expressing the phenomenon that are described through these statements.

The aim is to describe and categorize the variations' of expressions of a phenomenon. This process of interpretation by the researcher can also be seen as a learning process, a process of variation and discrimination. The researcher tries to find the variation of expressions by shifting focus in reading the interviews. It is a dynamic process. But as a researcher one needs to come to an end, to find results. One needs to stop this dynamic process at some point. The phenomenographic researcher must develop an ability to know when the research process is finished, when the overarching structure of meaning is fully described. But how could one know that? This leads us to the discussion about validity and reliability in phenomenographic research.

As a phenomenographic researcher one could establish a communicative validity by an ongoing dialogue with the material. This dialogue could be a way of establishing reliability as interpretative awareness. This means, in short, that the researcher must be aware of his or her interpretations of the material. But interpretations are the only way to develop some kind of new knowledge about a phenomenon. The researcher must to some extent interpret the material. But that leads us back to the problem of knowing when the interpretation of the material is complete. When should one stop the dynamic analysis and decide that one has identified the informant's expressions of the investigated phenomenon?

One could take a phenomenological position and strive for the core of the expressions. One could also take a constructive position and view the research results as the researcher's description of the content in different statements about phenomenon. This means that the research results could only be viewed as one way to describe the overarching structures of meaning that constitute different ways of expressing a phenomenon.

One could therefore compare the phenomenographic research process with a game, where the researcher tries to catch a research object with the potential to escape the attempts to give it a full description. The categories of expressions should be viewed as situated to a specific research context. As a researcher one must be aware of the position one takes towards the empirical material. The research results are situated in the research context