

Abstract

Title: Integration as text, discursive and social practice

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Integration between the formal school and child day care has been discussed in Sweden since the beginning of the 1940ies. However, it was first during the 1990ies that these discussions gained impetus. This was firstly through the introduction of a flexible school start (Government Proposition 1990/1991: 115) and secondly via Government Proposition 1996/1997: 112 and a new curriculum proposal (Lpo 94/98), within which the first important years of learning during early childhood were expressed as an integral part of life long learning. The purpose of the present thesis has been to investigate integration in relation to the National School Curriculum (Lpo 94/98) with special regard to the notion of expanded teaching expressed there. This has been done through a policy ethnographic case study at one particular school (Ravenhill School), where the activities of one teaching team, Ash, have been focussed on in particular. The thesis has had a specific interest in issues of social reproduction and social change.

The teaching team of Ash comprised three teachers, three recreation and leisure educators, one pre-school-teacher and seventy-five children. My interest in the case study was for how this team developed understandings of the intentions of Lpo 94/98, what it was that primarily seemed to influence the development of these understandings and how pedagogical practices (praxis) within the team were related to these understandings. Critical discourse analysis has been important in the research, which has been influenced in particular by Norman Fairclough's work (1992, 1995). Fairclough's analytical dimensions of policy as text, discursive practice and social practice have been crucial.

The intentions of the curriculum in relation to integration and expanded teaching were shown in the thesis to be difficult for educators to concretise within actual classroom practices and the results from the investigation suggest that social reproduction has taken precedence over social change, as conventionally articulated discourses have dominated the discursive order of the local arena, as

the school as an organisation has been predominantly organised around an economic model, without particular recourse to the intentions of Lpo 94/98, and as education work has had a reproductive character within which the extended concept of teaching from Lpo 94/98 has been compromised. This finding is problematic with regard to the notion of active agency, but on closer examination a more variegated picture emerges.

Local practices are characterised by both reproduction and change and aspects of time, space and the embodiment of practice are significantly important for reform outcomes. These are two substantive findings that are both grounded and then explored and developed in the thesis. One of these concerns how the implementation of a curriculum is a complex and contingent process where the curriculum itself is not only locally interpreted and applied, but is also locally negotiated and transformed. The other concerns the position of agency in decentralised education systems. Here it is suggested that whilst agents are the makers of local pedagogical identities (including their own), local educational activities and local institutional histories, they do make these under historical conditions that they have made themselves or that they actually expressly desire for themselves. Furthermore, these historical, material conditions may not necessarily be shaped in the agents' own interests and the agents are usually not in full control of them. Active agency is in other words a situational condition and a contingent issue to be struggled for not a universal, historically and materially independent fact of life for all humankind.