

ABSTRACT

Title: Nature-Based Activities at a Daily Activity Center and Upper Secondary Special School
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This study is about people with learning disabilities and nature-based activities. The study has an ethnographic approach and is based on observations and interviews at a daily activity center specializing in horticultural work and in an upper secondary special school specializing in farming. Totally the empirical evidence consists of 46 occasions of observation and 21 interviews. The study proceeds from three questions at issue. How can the interaction between man and nature be understood within the framework of the academic discourse, and which interpretative repertoires are found in the nature-based practice directed towards persons with learning disabilities? How are nature-based activities used in a social pedagogic perspective for social learning and preparation for work-life? How are persons with learning disabilities categorized and disciplined in the nature-based practice?

The analysis shows that within the academic discourse a *cultural* and an *evolutionary type of discourse* have emerged. The former type of discourse emphasizes the value of nature as being relative and includes a *cultural*, a *pedagogic* as well as a *social dimension*. The evolutionary discourse type instead emphasizes nature as being vital for man. The discourse type includes three directions: *nature for everyone*, *nature as medicine* and *gardening as social treatment*. Within the discourse order of the practice, three interpretative repertoires including nature are distinguished. *Nature makes us happy* consists of statements such as nature is a positive factor for the wellbeing of man. The interpretative repertoire *gardening demands motivation* implies that nature is not beneficial to everybody, but rather emphasizes the fact that an interest in gardening is needed. The third interpretative repertoire, *nature activities can lead to fellowship*, has similarities with the former in that the value is not found in nature itself. The analysis shows that when the floodlight is placed on a social pedagogic perspective in the work with nature-based activities, social learning and learning of vocational skills come into focus. The study has demonstrated that learning with the help of nature-based activities can be productive and develop the participants, who learn to take social responsibility as well as concepts and vocational skills. The value of nature in this context consists of nature-based activities becoming tools for social learning, but also for learning a trade. When another floodlight is turned on and focused on power relations, and instead problemizes the work with persons with learning disabilities in nature-based activities, something else appears. The disciplinary aspects become more manifest and more revealing. Consequently the value of nature-based activities can be explained as that of helping persons with learning disabilities find their “right place” in the distribution of work.

In Swedish with an English summary

NATURBASERADE AKTIVITETER I DAGLIG VERKSAMHET OCH GYMNASIESÄRSKOLA

En studie om personer som lär långsammare
och om trädgårds- och naturbruksarbetets möjligheter
och begränsningar i ett socialt perspektiv

av

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