

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

I kamp med skriftspråket
Vuxenstuderande med läs- och skrivsvårigheter i ett
livsvärldsperspektiv

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

som med tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid
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Abstract

Title: In Struggle with Literacy. Adult students with reading and writing difficulties in a lifeworld perspective
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All citizens must be constantly prepared to renew their knowledge in a lifelong learning process to be of interest to and find a place in the labour market. Adult education offers opportunities for this but implies an advanced command of the written language. This causes adults with reading and writing difficulties problems of various kinds. They have to engage in constant struggle to master the written language at a sufficiently high level to acquire knowledge of different kinds. Knowledge of what it means to the individual to live with reading and writing difficulties is important and it is the aim of this study to make a contribution to this.

The aim of the study is to describe, from a phenomenological lifeworld perspective, how a number of adult students with reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia have experienced and understood their situation and ensuing consequences. My own pre-understanding is based on long professional experience as a special education teacher in contact with a great number of dyslexic students. The study comprises 56 students.

The problems I have studied are:

- What are the difficulties that the students meet?
- In what situations do these difficulties occur?
- What are the consequences of the difficulties?

The results of the study point to three different fields of tension, linked to each other, that the students struggle to master:

- a societal dimension characterised by constant clashes with generally established requirements
- an educational dimension where the individual struggles with his/her own failings
- an existential dimension coloured by comparison with others, possibly including a feeling of not being good enough

The importance of the concept lifeworld to master the difficulties is demonstrated in the study. Difficulties manifest themselves differently and are experienced in different ways and this implies that everything to do with the written language – in which learning is a part – has to be stimulated in various ways. Knowledge of dyslexia is thus important to present guiding principles for the learning process.

The added knowledge that the study offers helps to widen the established research on reading and writing difficulties/dyslexia. To feel included is a legitimate claim in a democratic society and people with reading and writing difficulties have a right to respect and consideration. As a means to achieve this, the feeling of otherness should be counteracted and the importance of difference and diversity stressed. The study clearly shows that dyslexia does not in any way imply that the student must fail in his/her studies. Measures of true understanding of the situation are, however, required by the school management and by the teachers in particular to arrive at successful learning results.