

Institutionen för didaktik och pedagogisk profession

# Lärares arbetsglädje

Betydelsen av emotionell närvaro i det pedagogiska arbetet

av

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## Abstract

Title: Teachers' work enjoyment. The significance of emotional presence in the educational work

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This thesis aims to explore teachers' 'work enjoyment' and thereby deepening our understanding of teachers' work and professionalism. Positive emotions in teachers' work are an underestimated and under-researched dimension of teacher practise and professionalism. Through interviews that have generated the empirical material, the work enjoyment of nineteen teachers is focused on and analyzed from a phenomenological lifeworld approach.

The results are presented in two parts; the first one consists of descriptions of teachers' work enjoyment that reveal seven themes of meanings that signify joy in teachers' work. The themes include *Supporting meanings*, which are *mood*, *power source* and *presence awareness*, as well as *Widening meanings*, which are *context and connectedness*, *rhythm and balance*, *opening* and *after beat*. In the second part of the result the meanings of the phenomenon are interpreted further and conclusions are drawn. The conclusions highlight the importance of the relation between lived experiences and teachers' work enjoyment. These themes are *To be present*, *To feel a rhythm*, *To be "occupied" by work*, *To be both personal and professional* and *Teachers' work as a tapestry of life*.

Enjoyment of work is fundamental; i.e. like a safe floor to stand on. The experience of joy also means opening and involves an expectant foreshadowing. Based on a safe floor, teachers can open up to different options of how to be or to act. Joy as opening extends across time and space through the longing and hope that it is connected to. In times of struggle, joy enables teachers to find their way back to what is meaningful in their work. Teachers' work enjoyment is related to the involvement in children's development and learning. The result shows how work enjoyment provides emotional presence in teachers' work, both letting oneself be involved by work and involving oneself in the work. Emotional responsiveness is enjoyment of work; it makes the teachers relate to their work with openness and insight. Such responsiveness contributes with sensitivity to the whole classroom situation and towards what is essential in their work, and shows how the emotional and the rational are intertwined.

This study provides an understanding of the meanings of teachers' work enjoyment and what lived experiences of joy can imply for ordinary schoolwork. Given the results of this study it is problematic that positive emotional dimensions of teachers' work are a relatively unexplored area. The study indicates that work enjoyment is of fundamental importance to teachers' work.