

## English summaries

**Johannes Lunneblad & Maj Asplund Carlsson: A time of testing. High stakes testing in the subject Swedish in year 5/ En provningens tid: Om det nationella provet i svenska i Skolår 5/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 81–96.**

Standardised testing has become the central tool for educational reform in many industrialized nations, and can be viewed as a global »policy epidemic«. As interrelated educational reforms spread, they permeate and re-orient educational systems in different social and political contexts. The new package of reforms are offset against older policy technologies of professionalism and bureaucracy and thereby help to re-align the public sector towards the methods and ethics of private markets and forms of »privatisation«.

Given the demands of the tests, teachers are forced to pay less attention to the real pedagogical needs of their students and devote more time to »impression management«. Our aim is to analyse the impact of the standardised test in classroom practices in a compulsory school covering K2 and K3 in West Sweden, thus enabling an understanding of how high-stakes, standardised testing regulates classroom discourse and teachers' and students' behaviour in the classroom. The perspective of the study as a whole can, according to Ball (2008), be characterized as policy ethnography since focus is directed to how political aims and intentions are transferred into and impact upon school practices.

The data production for the study took place in 2006–2007 as part of a larger ethnographic inquiry. The results demonstrate how the demands from the test affect the daily work in the classroom. In the neo-liberal approach to governance, standardised tests have become an important measure of quality. School practices run the risk of being viewed as valuable only relative to the performance of teachers and students at the individual level.

This view moves the focus from a discussion about a societal responsibility to ensure that all children have equitable access to education, to a debate about the individual's responsibility to perform. The data produced reveal how the teacher and her students handle the test situation and avoid the sincerity of the situation in a performance as if the test mattered.

In one of our conversations with the teacher staging the test, before the test is going to take place, the issue of the tests and the impact of the test procedures on school life emerge. The function of the tests is said to evaluate to a school's quality and goal achievement. However, the teacher tells us that the accuracy of the procedure is, to a large extent, dependent on the types of

support she gets from the school leader and the other teachers. Her experience of the test procedures is that they fail to meet expectations.

The standardised test is not, contrary to what some politicians might believe, an efficient tool in measuring knowledge in a way which enables comparison between different schools at a national level. On the contrary, the prerequisites for assessing the students' achievement are dependent on the support given by the school leaders.

Indeed, the tests provide the teacher with little real support in order to make diagnoses of the development of individual students, which was one of the arguments for introducing the system of standardised tests in the first place. Furthermore, the test does not only evaluate the student's performance, something that can also be seen as an indirect evaluation of the teachers and the school; as our talk with the teacher reveals, the tests also regulate how she is supposed to read, see and interpret the student's performance.

The teacher expresses an apparent tension and inconsistency between the way the tests measure the student's knowledge and the way she is monitoring the student's skills based on the day-to-day knowledge she has about them. In this field of tension, Ball observes a rift between belief and appearance. The teacher believes that one reason why students who are expected to do well on the test do not achieve better, is the fact that these students are less used to the situation than they should be. It is her experience that students find the testing situation stressful. Part of this stress is based in parents' expectations.

According to the National School Agency, the national tests should provide schools with an indication of how many and which students are less likely to achieve the national standards without the benefit of special support. It is a matter of fact that failure relates not to the individual student, but rather to the school itself. However, parents expect their children to do well while they, at the same time, are not aware of the tests being constructed in a different way.

In Sweden, as in many other Western countries, students' suggested decreasing abilities have caused grave political concern, resulting in a policy where the three R's have gained renewed political attention. For students in K2 and K3, literacy is considered to be the foundation of future school success and thus literacy programs are designed to promote reading and writing skills in many countries.

Knowledge in the other schools subjects is also acquired through reading and thus literacy is considered a prerequisite for entering the world of fiction and for students' personal development. From political quarters, this has led to a cry for a new regime of stricter knowledge transmission and a more consistent use of standardised tests. This has also had an impact on the conditions for schools, teachers' work and for classroom practice.

However we need to understand how different rules determine the communication and acquisition of school knowledge as prevalent in classroom discourse. In this case, on the express orders from the Ministry of Education and the National School Agency, the test creators, the Scandinavian Language Department at Uppsala University, construct regulations concerning the nature of legitimate knowledge for eleven-year-olds in Sweden.

In the classroom, the instructive discourse is embedded in a regulative discourse; that is, a discourse of moral and values mixed with a discourse of what students should know and have to do. In the test situation we could observe how the teacher practices a kind of pastoral power in making the students aware of their feelings about a poem or an image.

The students and the teacher handle the test situation in a way that contains resistance and contradictions. Although the teacher is ambivalent about the test procedures but she nevertheless conducts careful preparations and hopes that the students will do well whilst, simultaneously, questioning the whole idea of testing. The students are distancing themselves during testing but appear before the teacher as if the test has been carried out in a serious way.

However, both the teacher, as well as the students, act as if the test were a real measure of knowledge. In this way the discourse governs the knowledge system through its claims of truth. The standards of the classroom are determined by the testing practice, which, in their turn, determine the social relations, the teaching and the learning in the classroom. Thus the teacher is forced to maintain the illusion of the tests reflecting the students' knowledge and skills as if the tests were valid and reliable.

Through the testing practice, focus is transferred from learning and development to measurable results. In a culture of performativity, learning and social relations are deprived of meaning and purpose and thus focus is transferred solely to achievement. On the other hand, both teacher and students respond with a certain amount of autonomy in the subversion of the actual test procedures.

**Andreas Nordin: The counter language of *bildung*: A movement towards a discursive concept of *bildung*/Bildningens motspråk: I riktning mot en diskursiv bildningsförståelse/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 97–118.**

The concept of *Bildung* is one of many attempts to capture the process of human cultivation. *Bildung* is about the ability to understand and handle the present, and the kind of knowledge that is needed for this. In the history of education *bildung* has been used in different ways and has been formulated differently according to the current context.

From a reconstructive point of departure, using critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework, *bildung* is elaborated in this article in terms of *counter language*. The reason why I have chosen to talk about education as counter language is twofold. First, it is about how *bildung* can be seen as a counter language in relation to contemporary, neo-liberal, educational discourses. Secondly, how the very concept of *bildung* can be understood in terms of counter language.

Talking about *bildung* in terms of counter language clarifies how individuals should not only be seen as passive victims of compelling discursive structures but also as co-creators of them. Through their participation in communicative practices individuals always have the real possibility to influence and act against dominant discourses.

The first part of the article discusses globalisation and how it hampers long-term relationships. As the world changes ever faster, higher demands on individual flexibility are engendered. In order to meet the need for flexible citizens lifelong learning is brought forward as the main solution, learning discourse which in Europe is largely connected to the goals of economic growth launched within the Lisbon strategy.

Because of its close links to the labour market, lifelong learning has over time increasingly come to be interpreted in terms of formal education. Learning needs some kind of validation, otherwise it has no merit rating. Development, where an increasing part of people's lives is slotted into various forms of formal education, is problematized in the text using the concept of *the extended classroom*.

The concept of *counter language* is elaborated in the second part. In many different traditions meeting the unknown has served as a starting point for a discussion about what learning is all about, situations in which past experience is not sufficient for interpretation and where new learning takes place. Resistance might then be seen as a kind of engine for learning. This text speaks about resistance in terms of meeting a new language, a language you do not already have.

Then the article moves on to its main focus, how a discursively oriented notion of *bildung* might be understood in terms of *counter language*. The discursive practice of *bildung* is discussed both in relation to an everyday setting and to a more formal research practice. In order to distinguish itself from the notion of socialisation *bildung* is said to include all intentional communicative relationships.

From a discursive point of departure these relationships may be direct as well as indirect; direct as the physical meeting between two subjects or indirect as in mediated communication which implies a time-spatial separation between the communicating subjects. In a discursive practice the individual is involved in communicative relationships of both types, and both are involved in the process of *bildung*.

Although discourse has a constitutive role in the process of human cultivation, it does not mean that the force of the discourse is directed in one direction only. From a reconstructive point of departure people always have the possibility to counteract and thus influence the discourse by their actions. A reciprocal and reflexive approach is highlighted in the text and presented as an educational ideal, as such, always out of reach, but an important aspect of education in danger of being lost in the dehumanized race rhetoric of the extended classroom.

*Bildung* has to do with perspectivisation and the widening of horizons. In contact with what is unfamiliar the subject acquires new perspectives that enrich and broaden his or her understanding of both the other and him- or

herself. Although it is reasonable to think that some kind of co-ordination of horizons always occurs when people meet and try to understand each other. In everyday practice there is no immediate need for consensus.

In a more formal communicative practice other requirements may be imposed on the result of the communication. What they agree on should then provide the basis for joint action; the act of speech has a co-ordinating function that is not needed in the same way in everyday practices. The reciprocal approach is described as free for everyone's arguments and open for those that want to participate, and critical in the sense that everyone has a mutual interest that the better argument shall win. Moreover the reciprocal communicative practice is located within discourse, which implies that it can never be more than an ideal, an important pedagogical ideal, however, if education is to be about something other than mere adaption to an ever-changing environment.

By elaborating with a discursively oriented notion of *bildung* I have tried to broaden the discussion of what *bildung* might be about. By combining elements from different theoretical traditions it is shown how *bildung* can be understood as a cultivating process that takes place within the context of all the communicative relationships that a person is involved in, directly or indirectly, and how power and counter-power go hand in hand in this process.

**Ann Quennerstedt: The political construction of the child's right in education/ Den politiska konstruktionen av barnets rättigheter i utbildning/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 119–141.**

Education has been increasingly discussed from a perspective of rights in Sweden as well as globally. In international human rights legislation, education has been acknowledged as every person's right. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) explicitly claims that the child has a human right to education and that education has specific aims. However, international legislation does not provide any details about how education is to be understood as a matter of rights or which aspects of education are particularly important from a rights perspective.

Instead, it is up each state to interpret what the universal claims in transnational agreements mean. The study presented in this article aims to (i) examine how issues of children's rights in education are constructed in Swedish policy, and (ii) qualify the analysis by reconsidering the results by placing them in a rights theoretical perspective and applying the vocabulary used in this theorising.

In this study children's rights are understood as part of human rights generally and rights for children are seen as essentially indistinguishable from human rights. The idea that children are people in their own right and there-

fore holders of human rights is actually rather new. An examination of the development of rights for children also reveals that the different types of rights – civil, political and social – have developed in a reverse order for children compared to adults.

The study involved a text analysis of 13 authoritative political documents spanning the years 1997–2009. The analysis identified 11 issues deemed as essential in the political construction of children's rights in education. These have been grouped as *major rights issues* and *minor rights issues* as follows:

*Major rights issues:* Student influence, Participation in early childhood education, Teacher's knowledge about children's rights, Value formation, Bullying, Right to education, and Education outcome – knowledge.

*Minor rights issues:* Educational rights of disabled children, Economic resources, Educational rights of minority group children, and Children's knowledge about their rights.

The major issues stand out as important matters of rights in education in that they are frequently discussed in the documents and are more thoroughly elaborated on. Recent reforms are often related to the major issues and the issues are often couched in a language of rights. The minor issues are less present in the documents, given that they are rarely elaborated on or dealt with using explicit rights terminology and references to human rights instruments. In the following the major issues are developed in brief (and in this English version without quotes).

### *Student influence*

That children and students have a right to influence is perceived in policy as a prominent rights issue. Influence is connected to the important assignment of Swedish education to foster democratic attitudes and capacity. The arguments as to why influence is a rights issue take the following three directions: (i) student influence aims to cultivate the future citizen, (ii) influence has a generally positive effect on the learning environment, and (iii) influence is a right of the child. The first argument dominates the discussion, which turns student influence into something that is mainly directed towards the future.

### *Participation in early childhood education*

That every child is to be given an opportunity to take part in preschool education is constructed as an important rights issue in policy. The view of early childhood education as a matter of rights grows gradually during the studied period, and during this time participation in prepreschool is increasingly connected to the right to education and to ›learning‹ as an essential activity.

### *Teachers' knowledge about children's rights*

Ensuring that adults in occupations related to children have good knowledge about children's right is considered important in policy. Teachers are seen as one of the most important groups and throughout the studied period teachers' lack of knowledge is a concern in policy. However, what teachers are actually

expected to know about children's rights is unclear; is knowledge about the existence and content of the Convention enough?

### *Value formation*

That students develop a value base in which democracy and human rights are intertwined is constructed as an important rights issue in education. Education has to provide children and students with the knowledge and capacities they need in order to claim and enjoy rights themselves and to respect and protect the rights of others.

### *Bullying*

Bullying is constructed as a rights issue with the argument that bullying violates several of the rights of the child; the right to be treated with respect and the absolute right to be protected from violence and abuse. That bullying often includes elements of discrimination is another argument.

### *Right to education*

The very right to education is constructed as a major rights issue. Elementary and secondary education is well provided for in Sweden, is cost free and with equal access. However, whether the right to education includes all children residing in Sweden is a matter of some concern, since children in hiding (from expulsion) do not have a right to receive education in Sweden.

### *Education outcome – knowledge*

That students have a right to knowledge and skills is constructed as a major rights issue in education. In focus is the *result* of education in terms of knowledge outcome and goal achievement. It is not clear in the documents how extensive the right to knowledge is; are only basic literacy and numeracy included in the right or does it encompass a wider body of knowledge?

In a second analytical step the result of the text analysis was reconsidered from a rights theoretical perspective and the identified rights issues were grouped in a new way:

*Civil rights issues:* Bullying, The right to education, Educational rights of disabled students, and Student influence.

*Political rights issues:* Student influence.

*Social rights issues:* Participation in early childhood education, The right to education, Value formation, Education outcome – knowledge, Economic resources, Educational rights of disabled students, Educational rights of minority children.

The issues belonging to the civil rights sphere mainly connect to the civil rights to equal value and (to some extent) to life and security. Non-discrimination, equal access and possibilities and protection from violence are accordingly held forth as important arguments for rights. It can be noted that the civil right to freedom (of speech, conscience and religion) is not a platform from which to claim rights for children in education.



One right's issue, *student influence*, acknowledges children's political rights in education. That students are to be given influence in education is forcibly stated in policy, and this political right is connected to the democratic value base of Swedish education. However, given that the understanding of political rights for children is affected by a lingering image of the child as a future citizen, student influence is possibly more perceived as a practice for the future exercise of political rights than as a way of meeting the child's political rights here and now.

The main part of the identified rights issues belongs to the social rights sphere, which is about the distribution of societal goods and welfare. An overarching question of what kind of education is to be arranged and financed by the state and made available to everyone connects to several of these issues. One example is early childhood education, which is not stated as a right in international human rights legislation, but which in Sweden is pronounced as a right of the child. Sweden has accordingly expanded the meaning of the social right to education compared to demands from the international society.

**Helena Ackesjö & Sven Persson: Preparation for school in preschool class – being a *teacher-in-relation* in the borderland/ Skolförberedelse i förskoleklass: Att vara *lärare-i-relation* i gränslandet/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 142–163.**

For just over ten years Sweden has had a separate form of school for six-year-old children, known as »preschool class». This is not compulsory but it is subject to the school curriculum. The teachers in preschool class are mostly preschool teachers who have formerly worked in preschool. One task that they have been given as a result of this reform is to introduce preschool pedagogy into school. Both the political and the pedagogical rhetoric therefore stress that the preschool class should act as a kind of bridge between preschool and school. This means that teachers in the preschool class must relate both to the preschool tradition and to the mission of preparing the children for school.

This article analyses how teachers in the preschool class experience and relate to this task. Our interpretation is that the preschool class can be placed in a borderland between preschool and school, where cultures and traditions should meet and cross-fertilize each other. To understand and analyse the dilemmas and possibilities that are built into an institution that is in the borderland and is supposed to harmonize and function in the tension between different cultures and traditions, we apply borderland theories.

Borders need not mean fences, walls, or frontiers on a map. They can include boundaries that are invisible to the eye yet still have a powerful influence on our lives. These boundaries give us guidelines for how we should live and



work. Between the activities of preschool and school there are clear dividing lines, with the different curricula as an illuminative example. When new boundaries are drawn and new arenas arise, as in the case of the preschool class, communities and practices must be revised and reappraised. Something new is constructed in relation to the new boundaries, in the borderland.

On the basis of borderland theories and boundary markers, we analyse the teachers' descriptions of their work in terms of what they consider to be unique about the preschool class. The teachers in the preschool class emphasize that their relation to the children is what distinguishes them from teachers in preschool and in compulsory school. There is something in the preschool class teachers' narratives about their attitudes to the children that can be understood from a relational perspective. Our theoretical premises come, above all, from Buber's ontological assumptions about relations and interpersonal encounters, but also from Biesta's (2004) research. In the relational perspective suggested by Biesta, teaching consists of interaction, relation, and participation.

The empirical evidence for the article was constructed by means of conversations with 14 active and formerly active teachers in preschool class. In the form of »dialogue seminars» the teachers met in three groups, three times each, to talk about their professional life and work. The aim was to start a process through which the teachers were stimulated to articulate concepts for a professional practice and know-how that can be regarded as complex and difficult to conceptualize.

In the results the position of the preschool class in the educational system is problematized, in the tension between existence- and future-orientation. The preschool's child-centered and present-oriented attitude has to be harmonized with the task of preparing children for their future schooling.

What the teachers' narratives have in common is that the children's interests here-and-now must be foregrounded. The teachers do this via their relation to the children; we call this an endeavour to be a *teacher-in-relation*. We believe that the teacher-in-relation is the teachers' response to the challenge of being both existence- and future-oriented in the preschool class. It is a socially oriented relation to the children that the teachers strive to maintain, the reason being to make a distinction: the focus on knowledge in the surrounding preschool and school activities. Constructing oneself as a teacher-in-relation becomes a part of the profiling process by which the teachers establish a boundary between preschool class and school.

The existence-oriented activity in the preschool class could be ascribed a dimension of intentional and purposeful »interval teaching». The teachers in the preschool class plan their teaching on the basis of the subjects that will be taught in school, but they constantly assert that the children's interest must steer the content. This requires them to be very attentive to the children, but it also calls for flexibility and acceptance of uncertainty about the object of knowledge in the pedagogical relation.

One of the goals in the preschool class is that teachers should prepare children for a new form of school. The children are supposed to acquire competencies from one activity which they can use in another. We call this the

*future-orientation*. Preparation for school, according to the teachers, is not done chiefly in adult-steered teaching situations but in freer, child-steered activity which is adapted to the situations that arise. Preparing for school therefore becomes a security-creating social practice that is something other than teaching.

The teachers in the study stress that they are not like »other teachers», those on the other side of the boundaries. In their narratives the preschool class teachers position themselves vis-à-vis preschool and school. By describing the activities in preschool and school as individual- and knowledge-focused, the preschool class teachers have the scope to describe themselves as group-oriented and socially oriented. In the article we show how their relations to the children are stressed as being (institutionally) identity-creating for the teachers and as the core of their professional task in the preschool class.

Describing oneself as a *teacher-in-relation* is simultaneously a way to mark a boundary with the teachers in preschool and compulsory school. The borderland, that is, the preschool class, between preschool and school is maintained by the teachers by dismissing formal adult-steered teaching and placing themselves in the intervening space, in the borderland, between the knowledge-orientation of preschool and school.

**Ingemar Bohlin: Systematic reviews, scientific cumulativity and evidence-based education/ Systematiska översikter, vetenskaplig kumulativitet och evidensbaserad pedagogik/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 164–186.**

In all academic disciplines, the relation between new findings and previous results is of fundamental importance. Whether a new study is hailed as groundbreaking or considered unexciting run-of-the-mill stuff, the verdict depends on an appreciation of what has previously been achieved. Almost every scientific publication, and certainly every application for research funding, includes a summary of earlier research in the field concerned. Regardless of discipline or specialty, researchers are expected to be well appraised of the work of their colleagues. Cumulativity is widely regarded as a defining feature of the scientific enterprise.

This is not to say that the traditional, rationalist notion of a cumulative development of scientific knowledge is tenable. Kuhn challenged simplistic ideas of cumulativity in the early 1960s, and subsequent research has largely confirmed his conclusions. For all the dissension between research cultures, however, knowledge tends to grow in cumulative fashion within specialties.

A normative sense of cumulativity must be distinguished from a descriptive one. Cumulativity, whenever and wherever it occurs, is not attained without effort. The normative aspect of cumulativity is evident, for instance, in the

requirement that adequate summaries of previous research be offered in PhD dissertations and in applications submitted to funding agencies.

Cumulativity in this normative sense is manifested in pleas for evidence-based practice. A major theme of such pleas concerns the need to summarise research findings of potential relevance to the professional practice of physicians, nurses, social workers and other groups. This might be referred to as the external argument for cumulativeness, as distinct from the internal considerations mentioned above.

In the mid-1970s, meta-analysis was introduced in quantitative social science, by researchers who found the traditional, »narrative» form of research reviews uninformative and unreliable. Meta-analysis is a statistical technique by which data from series of individual studies can be pooled. The method was soon established in quantitative social science, and by the mid-1980s a handful of textbooks had appeared.

The results of clinical trials of drugs and other medical interventions often diverge, and hence the need for separate studies to be brought together is no less in medicine than in social science. During the first half of the 1980s, medical scientists started to employ meta-analysis for this purpose. The use of the method was controversial at first, but now it is well established. In the early 1990s, meta-analysis was generalised into the format of systematic reviews. Where studies are too heterogeneous to be pooled by meta-analysis, results can still be synthesised in a systematic review. Meta-analysis, systematic reviews and randomised clinical trials are now the central methods of evidence-based medicine.

In a 1996 lecture, David Hargreaves argued that the concept of evidence-based medicine ought to serve as a model for educationalists: the practice of teachers, too, ought to be firmly based on research findings. The lecture elicited a lively debate, and in the following years a number of initiatives to make education evidence-based were taken in the UK and the US. Given the purposes of this paper, the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Centre in London is of particular interest.

The EPPI Centre, as it is commonly called, carries out systematic reviews of educational research. From an early stage, methods synthesising both qualitative and quantitative data have been developed at this centre. Quite independently of the EPPI Centre, moreover, a range of methods for the synthesis of qualitative studies are available in nursing research, under the umbrella term »meta-synthesis».

One of the most vociferous critics of evidence-based education in general, and of systematic reviews of educational research in particular, is Martyn Hammersley. On two levels, Hammersley argues, recent efforts at synthesising educational research rely on positivist assumptions. Not only is priority given to randomised experiments, Hammersley maintains, the reviews themselves are carried out in the formalised manner typical of the natural sciences.

With respect to the first level, Hammersley is right that some of the bodies carrying out systematic reviews of educational research give precedence to randomised experiments. At the EPPI Centre, however, a far more favourable view is taken of qualitative studies. As for Hammersley's second level, the issue

is not whether or not reviews ought to be carried out in accordance with explicit principles. What is really at issue is the degree to which procedures ought to be formalised: a balance must be struck between informal judgments and explicit principles, and Hammersley himself is concerned that educational research is not cumulative to the extent that it ought to be.

In conclusion, formal methods for synthesising educational research cannot be dismissed on a priori grounds. The strengths and weaknesses of methods for research synthesis have to be assessed carefully, and educational researchers have every reason to be well-informed about these methods.

**Stefan Sellbjer: Diversification and uniformity: The Pedagogic content at six Swedish universities 1975–2000/** Profilerings och likformighet: Om pedagogikämnet innehåll vid sex svenska universitet 1975–2000/. *Pedagogisk Forskning i Sverige*, Vol. 15, No. 2/3, pp. 187–204.

The aim of the present article is to show how departments of pedagogy at six Swedish universities in the 1975–2000 period navigated to meet general developments within the social sciences as well as catering for the discipline of pedagogy in itself. More specifically, it investigates the repudiation of positivism to the benefit of more qualitative methodological and sociological literature, and also to what extent these departments moved towards new areas of content or whether they held on to their traditional curricula.

The theoretical departure has been taken from Hofstetter and Schneuwly (2001). One dimension which makes it possible to empirically follow changes in educational sciences and also define pedagogy as a field of science concerns scientists targeting subjects that are generally recognized by other researchers within the discipline. The professionalization of research makes it, according to the authors, possible to create a constant revamping of models and theoretical concepts as well as methods for the collection and analysis of data.

This study is unique insofar as extensive empirical material having been collected and analyzed. A major part of what has hitherto been said about the development of pedagogy in Sweden has been based on personal observations made by central representatives of the discipline. The study is limited to the six »old» universities (Uppsala, Lund, Göteborg, Stockholm, Umeå and Linköping) and their departments of pedagogy, and to course literature used in undergraduate courses in pedagogy for the years 1975, 1980, 1990 and 2000. Course literature to the equivalent of 1.746 credit points in the ECTS system has been included in this study.

The course literature is categorized by means of summaries of what pedagogy can involve, namely Dahllöf's (1992) »Pedagogikens hus» (House of Pedagogy) as well as a somewhat extended version of the model presented in an evaluation of pedagogical research in Sweden initiated by the HSFR (The

Swedish Council of Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences; Rosengren & Öhngren, 1997). From each and every one of these categorizations the three categories that best represent the texts in relation to their subject matter have been chosen.

In a broad sense, the institutions compared tend to change in the same direction. However, there are some distinct differences regarding the use of quantitative and qualitative methods and of literature with an obvious psychological and sociological profile. The analysis also enables showing a number of institutional profiles regarding other contents. On one hand, they show what is typical of the entire 1975–2000 period, on the other, the institutional development within the period. In this regard categories are grouped into macro (such as social science or anthropology), meso (social psychology, organizational frames etc.) and micro (e.g., psychometrics and learning). The categories of philosophy and theory of science recur in all the institutional profiles and are hence also accounted for.

The result of the empirical investigation shows that Linköping, in the first instance, and Lund, in the second, are very sensitive to general theoretical and methodological currents within the social sciences, while Stockholm shows the least sensitivity in this regard. The other three departments might be regarded as average.

As regards changes that may be referred to as currents within the discipline of pedagogy, Stockholm, Lund and Göteborg show similar tendencies, in that there is a movement across the entire micro-macro field and in the inspiration they gather from philosophy and the theory of science. Göteborg's macro emphasis is somewhat stronger. Uppsala starts with a philosophic turn, but later focuses primarily on meso and somewhat on micro. Umeå, and Linköping in particular, are more immobile but at the same time more homogenous, with the philosophy and macro perspectives distinctly underrepresented. Perhaps these two relatively new university departments are somewhat afraid of pushing the limits. The »field» concept might be relevant to Linköping and Stockholm in their orientation towards practice and working life.

In 1990 the students of Stockholm and Linköping were given the possibility to choose among a great number of courses. On the one hand, this procedure could be seen as way of renewing a discipline in stagnation, because of theory development and a changing global situation. Stockholm has also achieved a closer connection between research and teaching, as more of its lecturers now teach their special fields. On the other hand, the introduction of a great many eligible courses left the field open to multifarious courses that could be given a pedagogical touch. In that sense, pedagogy tends to have become an umbrella concept or a scientific field.