

## ABSTRACT

Title: On 'desire to learn' in school: An analysis of documents and class 8y

Language: Swedish with an English summary

Keywords: Desire, emotion, expression; desire to learn, learning, teaching; situations for learning, critical aspects, interplay, meetings/contacts, object of study, value, space for individuality; arena, space, room; assignment, democratisation, modernisation, curriculum; case study.

ISBN: 91-7346-446-5

The main purpose of this study is to investigate and describe the relation between an expression in the Curriculum for the compulsory school system, the pre-school class and the leisure-time centre, Lpo 94/98, and pupils' lives in a local school. In the document it is stated that "The school should strive to be a living social community that provides security and a will and desire to learn" and "The school should support the harmonious development of the pupils. A sense of exploration, curiosity and desire to learn should provide a foundation for education. /.../ The school should strive to ensure that all pupils: develop a sense of curiosity and the desire to learn,..." The main questions in the study are How do pupils' 'desire to learn' in school relate to the directions set out in the national curriculum? Which significant conditions exist for a 'desire to learn' in the local school arena? Which situations in the classroom can lead to a 'desire to learn'?

As a starting point, desire to learn is seen as a link between the two societal assignments that school has been meant to fulfil since the second world war: the modernisation and the democratisation. Desire to learn is traced in documents back to the 1940's. The notion of 'desire to learn' disappeared in the texts during the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's to return on the agenda in 1994. During those times it was replaced by the notion of motivation. Earlier research indicates that the intentions, expressed in national documents, "drown" when reaching school. Desire is seen as an emotion and desire to learn as a natural part of human nature. Desire to learn in school is seen as a part of the dynamic process of learning.

To answer the questions a case study was carried out. A class in grade 8 consisting of 27 pupils was chosen. Data were obtained through observations and spontaneous field interviews. As the national direction isn't specified towards any special subject, the study wasn't either. Data from school documents and pupils' written assignments complete the data. Data were interpreted and analysed through the use of different forms of writing inspired by Writing across the Curriculum. Life in the class is seen as framed by inner and outer regulations.

The results of the case study show three main categories and ten sub-categories of 'desire to learn' in school. The main categories are A. 'Desire to learn' as possessed by the individual (subcategories: intuitive, integratively directed, instrumentally tactical and standard adjusted desire to learn); B. 'Desire to learn' slumbering in indifferent pupil (subcategories: engaging, absorbed, transient desire to learn); C. 'Desire to learn' vaguely perceptible (subcategories: repudiated, "secondary", gradually declining desire to learn). The local school is acting within three spaces: school, control and classroom. The requirements in the national documents are not fulfilled.

In order to fulfil the requirements of 'desire to learn', focus in a discourse should be placed on the prevailing conditions in school. Such a discourse could take the critical aspects in situations that give an opportunity for desire to learn in this study as its starting point.