

ABSTRACT

Title: *Värdegrund, demokrati och tolerans. Om skolans fostran i ett mångkulturellt samhälle*
(Fundamental values, democracy and tolerance. On public school education in a multicultural society)

Author: Pia Nykänen

Language: Swedish

Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Philosophy, University of Gothenburg, Box 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden, 2008

Series: Philosophical Communications. Red Series no. 41

ISSN: 0347-5794

This thesis is a critical examination of themes relating to the idea of fostering certain sets of ethical and/or political fundamental values in schools. The Swedish national curriculum, and curricula in many countries, states that education should be carried out according to such fundamental values.

Democratic, multicultural, and citizenship education are all put forward as educational ideals in contemporary western societies. They can be seen as attempts by politicians and educationists to deal with societal pluralism. They are also prominent themes in the field of philosophy of education today.

However, the justification of these ideals is often unclear and sometimes includes components that do not sit well together. Some of these tensions are explored here. This is (partly) done by examining Swedish guidelines concerning education in the compulsory school.

After presenting some formulations concerning fundamental values stated in the Swedish curriculum (Chapter II) I discuss and criticize a deliberative-democratic ideal emphasized by some scholars of pedagogy as suitable for schools (Chapter III).

Chapter IV discusses liberal-democratic versions of multicultural education. Multicultural education has to deal with problematic questions regarding the concept of culture and how to evaluate cultural practices .

Tolerance is often included as a positive value in democratic and multicultural education but the concept of tolerance, reasons for tolerance and where to draw the legitimate boundaries regarding what to tolerate, are notoriously difficult issues. Chapter V deals with these and the tension between promoting fundamental values and advocating tolerance.

Educational ideals need to refer to a particular fostering unit. In Chapter VI questions are raised concerning the scope of this unit. This is done in relation to citizenship education.

KEY WORDS: citizenship education, culture, curriculum, deliberation, deliberative democracy, democratic education, Dewey, fundamental values, Habermas, inquiry, justice, Kymlicka, multicultural education, philosophy of education, societal stability, tolerance.