

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

Interkulturell undervisning – ett pedagogiskt dilemma

Talet om undervisning i svenska som andraspråk och i
förberedelseklasser

av

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Abstract

Title: Intercultural education – A Pedagogical dilemma. Professional talk about the teaching of Swedish as a second language and in preparatory classes.

Language: Swedish with an English summary

Keywords: second language learning, bilingual education, special education, inclusion, exclusion, social constructionism, difference dilemma.

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A central point of departure in this thesis is to investigate how schools deal with the difficult and complex task of 'a school for all' while some students are being taught in Swedish as a second language (SSL) and in preparatory classes. How teachers and principals justify and describe a separate teaching of SSL for some students is examined through a theoretical perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social constructionism and is complemented with theories that concern profession, interaction, inclusion and exclusion.

The study was conducted at a primary school and used ethnographic research and document analysis. The fieldwork focused on the 'professional talk about' a separate teaching of SSL and in preparatory classes and how such discourses are formulated by teachers and school principals. The empirical material was collected during a two-year-period, and includes analysis of interviews, observations and documents. For analytical purposes, terms such as Fulcher's 'inclusive and divisive discourse' and Minow's 'difference dilemma' were used.

The document analysis shows that on a general level multicultural and multilingual skills are emphasized as assets while the documents otherwise reflect that diversity is considered as a problem implying multicultural and multilingual skills to be dealt with within a divisive discourse. The teaching of SSL as well as in preparatory classes is conducted 'by the side of' or separate from other school activities. If discourses could also be adopted to include the spatial, apart from what is said and written, then the premises could be seen as an expression of a divisive discourse.

All professionals, regardless of mission in the educational activities, are doing their best in order to legitimize the separation of second language education. The reasons why some students are taught in separate groups and classes are formulated in terms of their different behavior, special needs of peace and quiet, the need for basic education, and upbringing. The results indicate that students are 'formed' in order to fit within a separate educational activity. With the exception of the SSL teachers, the other participants in the study express a sense of the 'difference dilemma' and harbor an ambivalent attitude towards this kind of separation. What therefore appears as a paradox is that SSL teachers, whose mission is to contribute to and facilitate integration with the help of second language education do not justify the SSL activities primarily in terms of language development. Instead it seems to be the case that it is the professionals in SSL who emphasize that the students are different from others and therefore need something else.

Ideas and perceptions of students depend on the context and the institutional based activities, where 'talk about' a separate education is expressed. It is in the regulatory texts, curricula and syllabi that the conditions for institutional workings are created, which leads to specific discourses and 'talk about' pupils' different abilities and needs.