

# Abstract

**Title:** Pupils' responsibility for their own learning. Intensions and realities in a Norwegian upper secondary school

**Language:** Norwegian

**Keyword:** case study, ethnography, responsibility, school organization, school improvement, self-regulation, disciplining techniques, self-discipline, individualization.

**ISBN:** 978-91-7346-703-2

Education policy in Norway is currently emphasizing personal flexibility, responsibility and freedom of choice for learners. Concepts are modern, but also derive from traditions of progressive education. Pupils' responsibility for own learning relies on self-regulation theory. Self-regulation skills are vital not only to guide one's own learning during school, but also to educate oneself and up-date one's knowledge after leaving school. The purpose of this work is to investigate how responsibility in learning and work is talked about and constructed in a context where pupils are invited into such activities. The empirical study was conducted during a period of 1 year. Data were collected by a case study and ethnographic research involving participant observation in two classes in one school. Data were also obtained through document analyses, field notes and individual interviews with pupils and teacher, and group-interviews with pupils.

The thesis demonstrates how new education policies were reflected in both architecture and the schools' curriculum. Teachers were invited to influence the planning process by working collaboratively in teams, but much of the decisions and activities were described as centrally controlled planning. In spite of heavy leadership investment in architecture and pedagogical vision building, teachers' work organization did not manage to find a common improvement strategy for a vision teachers found both right and impossible at the same time. The school's official ideology emphasized pupils' own responsibility. This constructivist view of learning has implication for teaching because it suggests an active role for pupils. Teachers were required to offer an environment that stimulates pupils' to take responsibility for their own learning and skills. Pupils' perceptions of learning environments were related to their motivation and use of self-regulation skills. About one third of them managed to show responsible own learning with most tasks. I call their capacity a general self-regulative orientation. The others, the majority, only succeeded with this under special circumstances, thus I call it a specific self-regulative orientation. Within that group some did not manage the demands on responsibility at all, in sum 15 per cent.

The result shows that not all teachers were well equipped to create conditions in order to foster the development of effective self-regulative skills. The learning context did not stimulate pupils to create their own goals; instead the learning tended to be steered by teachers' goals. These goals did not always capture the pupils' interest, or activate prior knowledge or steer the learning process. Pupils' perception for taking responsibility for their own learning were related to their appreciation of learning tasks and self-efficacy. Pupils' autonomy is an important condition for active self-regulated learning. Lack of support, expectations and engagements from teachers had great influence on pupils' attitudes and motivation. Teachers' behaviors are essential to create a self-regulated environment. Since many pupils had difficulties in managing their studies and cope with the learning environment, disciplinary actions from the teachers were necessary.

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

**Ansvar for egen læring**  
Intensjoner og realiteter ved en norsk videregående skole

av

Aud Torill Meland

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

som med tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid  
Göteborgs universitet för vinnande av doktorsexamen i pedagogik  
framläggs till offentlig granskning

Onsdagen den 15 juni, klockan 10.00 i Kjell Härnqvistsalen,  
Pedagogen hus A

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