

Institutionen för didaktik och pedagogisk profession

Vaghet och vanmakt
- 20 år med kunskapskrav i den svenska skolan

av

Gunnar Hyltegren

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Abstract

Title: Vagueness and powerlessness - 20 years of national knowledge requirements in Swedish schools

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This thesis poses three questions about the Swedish national knowledge requirements, which have been in place in Swedish schools since 1994: How do teachers understand them? How do members of parliament understand them? How useful are they as teaching assessment tools? Edmund Husserl's concept of intentionality provides a perspective on these knowledge requirements as meaningful phenomena. Martin Heidegger's conceptual framework highlights usefulness as a statutory prerequisite to be able to see the knowledge requirements as a tool for assessment and national governance.

The empirical material for the three parts of the thesis come from conversations with thirteen teachers who award grades, a review of 197 parliamentary bills from 1990 to 2010 and a review of the knowledge requirements for the subject of Swedish in primary and secondary school curricula from the years 1994, 2000 and 2011.

The study's first results section shows that teachers understand the national knowledge requirements as corresponding to either qualitative or quantitative differences in the level of knowledge, or as a combination of the two. These different interpretations entail different ways of using the knowledge requirements in different assessment situations. The second results section shows that members of parliament have very high hopes for what the knowledge requirements will accomplish in Swedish schools. The results of the study in Part Three demonstrate that the national knowledge requirements are so vague that their usefulness is questionable.