

Institutionen för pedagogik, kommunikation och lärande

I den betraktades ögon
Ungdomar om bedömning i skolan

av

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AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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Abstract

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The present study examines how young students in the last year of comprehensive school make sense and use of the formal assessments they are given regarding their school performance. By interviewing 28 students in year nine of the Swedish compulsory school, "talk about assessments" is analyzed as speech acts enabled by the assessment discourse. The research questions are: What meanings do the students attribute to education and the formal assessments? How are the students affected by assessments? What alternatives do the students have to navigate among the assessments made in school? The study has a specific interest in illuminating how assessments impact on subjectification and condition student's possibilities in school. The study takes a discourse analytical approach, and a theoretical framework based on the theories of Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman is used to analyze how students' possibilities are conditioned by assessments. The result shows that students are aware of constantly being under their teachers' gaze. They consider the assessments to be serious and fair and depict their will to follow the guidelines given to them through assessments. However, the assessment discourse creates and reaffirms teacher and student positions. This means that students adapt to teachers' expectations in order to receive positive evaluations and better grades. Thus the assessment discourse contributes to disciplining and normalizing students and their everyday life in school. The language used in the assessment discourse is an obstacle for the students when it comes to gaining full access to the tools for improvement and change, which they understand is expected of them.