

Institutionen för didaktik och pedagogisk profession

# Performativa lärarpraktiker

av

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# Abstract

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The preconditions for teachers' practices in Sweden have dramatically changed during the last few decades. Since the 1990s, processes of decentralisation, marketisation and privatisation have rapidly transformed the educational system from being one of the most regulated to one of the most deregulated in the western world. Recent changes have included a greater focus on performativity, which includes various forms of outcome controls, state-funded career services, inspections and evaluations. This thesis addresses this increased focus on performativity and how it gives rise to fields of tensions in teachers' practices. The main part of the data was collected through interviews and observations with teachers who implemented new standardised tests and grading in their practices. The main focus in the dissertation's four papers is on how performativity affects teaching practices. Article 1 set out the thesis methodological framework, which aims at contributing to an understanding of how performativity can be studied in teachers' practices. It is argued that Ricœur's discussion of the concept of practical reason can be used to depict teaching as existing in a field of tension. Further, it is argued that critical hermeneutics can frame a study of teaching, understood as practical reasoning. Article 2 studies the standardising influence of performativity on teaching practices in relation to different contextual preconditions. The article problematises the assumption that reforms such as grades and national tests in lower years can function as an impetus for educational equity. Article 3 studies a similar standardising influence of performativity in relation to social studies teaching, which, at its core, has highly diverse and sometimes conflicting aims and purposes. It is shown how teaching practices shifted from social studies' extrinsic dimensions (emphasising an open and individual understanding of social issues) toward social studies' intrinsic dimensions (emphasising knowledge about a predetermined content) as a result of policy changes, teachers' meaning-making of the reforms, and in relation to external constraints. Article 4 takes a broader perspective on teachers' practices and uses the concept of fairness as a lens for illuminating changes in social relations, changes in the organisation of teachers' practices, and teachers' struggles with these changes. The results show that there is an increased focus on individuality in the everyday working lives of teachers, where result-centred practices, relations and professional identities have replaced notions of equality and compensatory interventions.