



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG



Platform for Research on
Inclusive Schooling (PRIS)
Inaugural symposium

12-13 March 2013

**Inclusive Education and
School Development
- national and international
dimensions**

Welcome to inaugural symposium in Gothenburg

This symposium will launch the Platform for Research on Inclusive Education and School development (PRIS). The event, which has a Nordic and international focus, is intended to be interactive. To encourage discussion and debate, papers will be pre-circulated, and each presenter will speak for 10-15 minutes, followed by a 30 minutes discussion. Prior to the event, papers will be available on the PRIS website <http://ips.gu.se/forskning/forskningsmiljoer/pris/>

The symposium is arranged by the Department of Education and Special Education and is financed by the Faculty of Education at University of Gothenburg, CREID at University of Edinburgh, and Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

Venue:

University of Gothenburg, Pedagogen Hus C;
Läroverksgatan 5, Gothenburg, room: Margareta
Hvitfeldt Auditorium



PROGRAMME

12th March 2013

Registration and Coffee 10.00 - 10.30

10.30 – 11.15 Introduction: The development and focus of PRIS

Professor Peder Haug, Volda University College; Professor Sheila Riddell, University of Edinburgh; Associate Professor Eva Hjörne, University of Gothenburg

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

11.15 – 12.00 Conceptualising inclusive education Professor Claes Nilholm, Malmö University

Caught between a rhetoric of radical change and the everyday realities of special needs education the inclusion concept has acquired a range of different meanings. Three such different meanings of inclusion are discussed in the talk. Inclusion may be understood as : 1) the creation of communities; 2) the right for each child to participate in education; and 3) the physical placement of children in mainstream classrooms. It is argued that the discussion about inclusion is a discussion about educational philosophy rather than about technical issues. Thus it becomes very important to be clear about what we mean when we speak about inclusion and to realize that we might not agree upon what we want schools to be like. Consequently, it is also claimed that the discussion about inclusive education has to be related to issues of power and democracy.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 13.45 Opportunities for learning in inclusive education Professor Peder Haug, Volda University College, Norway

Equal opportunities are central in defining inclusive education. This presentation deals with opportunities for learning in class, comparing pupils identified as requiring additional support with those who have not been so identified. This is a part of an extensive Norwegian classroom research project carried out between 2007 and 2012. Forty five classes were observed each during one week of teaching. An observation scheme with 65 categories was adopted. There were noticeable differences between the two groups in relation to engagement with classroom activities, to the disadvantage of those pupils identified as requiring additional support.

13.45 – 14.30 Inclusive education in free schools – for whom and for what? Associate Professor Eva Hjörne, University of Gothenburg; Professor Ann-Carita Evaldsson, Uppsala University

In this presentation we focus on the local social processes through which the ideology of inclusion is implemented in and out of classroom activities within two case study free schools. How do the schools organise classroom activities for children in need of special support and what pedagogical strategies and communicative activities correspond to the idea of being more inclusive? The research is based on video-recorded classroom activities within two free schools in Sweden. The findings show that the schools do not use categorization to exclude children who are in need of special support and all pupils are engaged in classroom activities. However, the analyses also indicate that inclusive strategies invoked by teachers or pupils are not always accepted by all children in the class. Rather, these strategies need to be negotiated by the pupils in the classroom. Some pupils argue for not being included while others argue for the opposite. In this discursive work the teacher is central by pragmatically guiding the pupils towards being more inclusive. The question is whether the paradox of inclusive education inherent in everyday classroom activities leads to an improved education for all.

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee

SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

15.00 – 15.45 Building inclusive schools: learning from the margins Professor Martin Mills, University of Queensland, Australia

This presentation will draw on data from a range of alternative education providers in Australia and the UK to explore the ways in which schools can become more inclusive. It will draw on the work of Nancy Fraser to argue that socially just schools need to work towards a 'parity of participation'. The data for this presentation will primarily come from schools variously known as 'second chance', 'flexi-schools' and 'flexible learning centres'. These schools regularly cater to the needs of young people who experience severe social and economic disadvantage through, for example, poverty, homelessness and caring responsibilities. Many of these young people have been failed by the mainstream education system, yet now demonstrate a great enthusiasm for learning. It will be argued that in some instances these schools demonstrate how *all* schools can take up the challenge of addressing the economic, cultural and political injustices faced by such young people.

15.45 – 16.30 Exclusion from school: Compounding or tackling inequality? Dr Gillean McCluskey, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

This presentation reflects on the findings from a recent national study which looked at disciplinary exclusion from school in Wales. The study involved analysis of administrative data, key informant interviews, a survey of local authority staff across the 22 local authorities, and case studies of 'good practice' in nine alternative education settings across the country. The findings are considered in the context of known outcomes for children and young people who experience exclusion from school in the UK, but also within the context of Wales as a recently devolved nation with an explicit commitment to children's rights.

16.30 – 20.00 Mingle and buffet

13th March 2013

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES

9.00 – 9.45 Does inclusive education presuppose a school for all teachers? Associate Professor Ulf Blossing, University of Gothenburg

The aim of the presentation is to elaborate on the relationship between inclusive education and school development. School development is here focusing on the internal improvement processes in school organisations including teachers' professional development. Inclusive education is understood as a school for all in which every student can participate. In the democratic sense, inclusive education also stresses participation and respect. Research on professional learning communities indicates that school organisations which are characterised by a participative and respectful culture can drive forward improvement processes and raise student attainment. Research on reflective school cultures, where teachers practise an experimental learning strategy and challenge their presupposed ways of instruction, suggests that this is a successful way of attaining curriculum goals. However, questions arise as to how students in ostensibly inclusive schools experience the classroom environment and the extent to which they feel respected, included and challenged in their daily work. In order to tackle these questions, we need to find out how variations in professional learning communities coincide with an inclusive education for students. The presentation will illustrate the complex relationship between school development and inclusive education by drawing on some empirical studies.

9.45 – 10.15 Coffee

10.15 – 11.00 Special education support – extent, forms and effects Associate professor Joanna Giota, University of Gothenburg & Professor Ingemar Emanuelsson, University of Gothenburg

This presentation draws on longitudinal data to examine the educational outcomes of children receiving different types of special support in special schools or mainstream classrooms over a thirty year period. Findings reveal that boys and pupils from families where parents have lower levels of educational qualification and with non-Swedish backgrounds are over-represented among the groups that have received special education support. The findings also suggest that pupils who have received support, in general, tend to achieve educational goals in core curriculum subjects to a lesser extent than those who have never had any kind of support. Analysis of questionnaire responses from head teachers show that even though most pupils are supported by special education teachers in regular classes or groups, the most common forms of support are one-to-one tuition, described as the 'old traditional ways'. Social background and context as well as schoolwork content and approaches to teaching are identified as key factors behind the pupils' difficulties and need for special education support. In general, head teachers see students' difficulties as caused by student characteristics and disabilities rather than as shortcomings of schools and teaching.

THE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF SPECIFIC GROUPS

11.00 – 11.45 Boys' Anti School Culture? Narratives and School Practices Associate Professor Rickard Jonsson, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm University

Boy's underachievement and oppositional behavior in school has for a long time been the target of various public debates. As noted by several gender scholars, boys' under-achievement is often portrayed as constituting a crisis in education. Moreover, the category of "rowdy boys" is often taken for granted in dominant public discourses on the subject: the category is used to explain rule breaking activities and disciplinary problems in classrooms. Yet, it is precisely this category that needs to be deconstructed. In light of the above, the following study takes as its point of departure Judith Butler's (1990) call for reversing the relation between deeds and identity in order to critically discuss dominant conceptions of the crisis of boys in school. More specifically, drawing on ethnographic data from two studies of Swedish secondary schools, this paper explores how the influential theory of boys' anti-school culture, can be interpreted as a master narrative that is being reproduced but also contradicted and subverted in small stories, jointly constructed by students and teachers, in local school contexts.

Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

11.45 – 12.00 Educational experiences and outcomes of Muslim pupils in Scotland Dr Elisabet Weedon, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

This presentation draws on data from a 3-year study of the educational experiences and outcomes of Muslim parents and children in Scotland and England funded by the Alwaleed Centre, University of Edinburgh. A relatively low proportion of the Scottish population (about 1%) are from minority ethno-religious backgrounds, with Muslims forming the largest group. Major within-group and between-group differences are apparent in the educational experiences and outcomes of Muslim pupils. As noted by Hills et al. (2010), educational and economic differences between minority ethnic groups have been diminishing over time within the UK, but differences within groups relating to social class have been widening. This is consistent with the general trend across Europe, where economic inequality has been widening since the 1980s, particularly in countries like the UK (OECD, 2007). In this paper we investigate how these social class differences are reflected in the educational aspirations and school choice strategies of Scottish Muslim parents and explore the impact of education on their social class position.

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

NEO-LIBERALISM, GLOBALISATION AND THE EXPERIENCES OF LOW ACHIEVING PUPILS

13.00 – 13.45 Twelve years of upper-secondary education in Sweden: the beginnings of a neo-liberal policy hegemony? Professor Dennis Beach and Associate professor Marianne Dovemark

In this presentation we discuss data produced about learning practices and learner identities during the past 12 years of upper-secondary school development in Sweden based on ethnographic fieldwork that has examined these issues with respect to two sets of pupils from these schools: one successful, one unsuccessful. Two things are considered in particular. One is how these pupils and their school activities are described and positioned by teachers. Another is how pupils describe their own activities and position themselves. Some policy changes have been noted across the researched period. Questions relating to participation are considered in relation to them and there is also an attempt to make a connection to a possible social-class relationship. Our main concern however, is for how recent policy changes have been enacted in schools and classrooms and what effects this enactment seems to have had on learner subjectivity and learner identities.

13.45 – 14.30 Globalisation, the economic crisis and patterns in the identification of pupils with additional support needs in Scotland Professor Sheila Riddell, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

This paper provides a brief overview of the trend towards growing levels of economic and social inequality across Europe over the past twenty years. There has been a particularly marked reduction in the number of jobs available for school leavers with low levels of educational qualification, particularly in areas such as manufacturing and mining, where working class boys traditionally found work. Within European and Scottish policy documents, the growth in unemployment is blamed on supply side factors, particularly skills deficits, with little attention paid to demand side factors, specifically the stripping out of jobs for low-skilled workers. Over the past two decades, coinciding with growing levels of unemployment amongst low-skilled workers, there has been a large increase in the proportion of children identified as having additional support needs in Scotland, particularly in non-normative categories such as moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Accompanying this trend has been a reduction in the proportion of children issues with a statutory support plan, which provides some guarantee that additional resources will be allocated. Children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are therefore stigmatised within the school system through the use of socially stigmatising labels, but without the additional help which might be secured through the allocation of additional resources. These trends are consistent with Tomlinson's (2012) arguments with regard to the expansion of the special education industry, but also with Stone's (1982) argument about the retrenchment of the category of disability during economic recession.

14.30 – Closure with coffee and drinks