

Education, Society and Citizenship

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Abstract

This article is about education, school leadership and citizenship and highlights preschool teachers and teachers' perception of their educational leadership with the starting point taken in schools and preschools' written policy, curriculum, school legislation, grading system and other policy documents aimed at teachers and preschool teachers. More precisely the aim is to show, analyse and discuss their perception of their ability to develop the skills young people need to obtain their learning goals. The result clearly shows that the matter of how newly-arrived children and young people in Sweden best can be integrated into our society is a real key issue for Swedish schools and preschools and also for the future of Sweden as a whole..

Key Words: Society, citizenship, education, teaching, Sweden

1. The school as a part of children and young people's childhood

Our previous image of childhood is no longer valid; transformative social changes have led to a rapidly changing childhood. Globalization, migration and information technology are noticeable changes that no one –neither adult nor child– can overlook. One example is how over the past 20 years, childhood has become increasingly institutionalised in Sweden and many other Western European countries. Jans (2004) discusses everyday life and claims that learning is an integral part of daily life for all ages and across diverse domains. Jans also suggests that the classic relationship between children and adults has changed.

Preschools and schools are an important part of childhood. In addition, childhood is determined by the children's conditions and experiences of their neighbourhood, family, resources, leisure activities, friends, experiences from distant lands, and spoken language, religion and media images. All these physical, social, individual and virtual spaces mean that it is now possible to speak of "multi-cultural childhoods". These experiences can be a tremendous source of knowledge and learning; however the conditions must be right. Learning must take consideration to pupils' different backgrounds and experiences, all related to the norms, values and ideals that apply for the current situation and in an extension the perspective of the individual pupil that can be perceived either inclusive or exclusive. Meeting all of this diversity poses a major challenge for Swedish schools and preschools as well as in other parts of the world (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010X).

School is one of the most important arenas for sharing knowledge and influencing attitudes. The community has both a social and educational responsibility for children's development and well-being. This changing view of childhood will henceforth characterize the view of education, knowledge and learning. Jans (2004) argues about the actual participation discourse and the social construction of childhood. For the schools, the increasing diversity in society has become a major challenge bringing about new demands and expectations. Sandström Kjellin and Stier (2008) claim education systems worldwide face enormous challenges, arguing that schools as socialization agents must account for local, national and global conditions equally in their education.

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Moreover, they must stimulate creativity, openness, and a relativistic outlook of the world among the pupils while promoting national and universal values; "They must foster active, critical, global citizens, who yet must adhere to a specific set of values" (Sandström, Kjellin & Stier, 2008, p. 10). In a multicultural society, the school is of great importance as a meeting place for different cultures and has a great responsibility to prevent prejudiced attitudes. Schools and preschools therefore need society to provide their pupils and children with the tools necessary to live in diversity. Such can be an intercultural approach to education.

James (2011) asserts that to change children's experiences, the unpacking of cultural discourses through which children live their everyday lives is critical, because this is a construction that is ongoing on a daily basis. James (2011) suggests a need for changes to adults' ideas about childhood, including about what children are, what they can do and their relationships with adults. In a similar way Sandström Kjellin and Stier (2008) claim that learning in the classroom is produced through teachers listening to children's voices.

Jans (2004) argues that today childhood years present themselves as a very ambivalent reality because on the one hand children are surrounded with care, and on the other hand, children are stimulated to present themselves as individuals within their own rights. These different social and cultural notions of what childhood is and should be are made manifest in laws, policies and a range of steering documents, such as curricula and institutions that contextualize the everyday lives of children in any society. Six years later, Alexander (2010) claims that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be the accepted framework for all policies relating to young children and their education. Furthermore childhood should be understood in terms of children's present needs as well as their future needs and capabilities, combined with their right to a rich array of experiences. Alexander (2010) concludes that all of that will lay the foundations for lifelong learning and prepare them for secondary schooling.

1.1 Sweden as an example

During the school year of 2013/14, approximately 921,000 pupils were enrolled in the Swedish compulsory school system. Projections show this number is likely to increase to almost 1 million in 2018/19.

Sweden is a part of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results have declined dramatically, from near the OECD average in 2000 to significantly below the average in 2012 for all three core subjects (reading, mathematics and science). No other PISA-countries have seen a steeper decline than Sweden over that period. These disappointing results have led to a national debate on the quality of school education, leading to a broad consensus on the need for change. Sweden has responded with a range of reforms designed to reverse the negative trend in student performance and set the country on a trajectory towards educational excellence. A newly published report from the OECD claims that "more consistent and coherent efforts are required at both national and local levels to make Sweden's commitment to excellence and equity in education a reality for all schools and all pupils" (OECD, 2015, p. 7).

This article examines preschool teachers and teachers' perceptions of their educational leadership with the starting point taken in the schools and preschools' written policy, curriculum, school legislation grading system and other policy documents that teachers and preschool teachers are supposed to relate to in their profession. More precisely the aim is to highlight, analyse and discuss their perception of their ability to develop young people's skills so that they can reach their learning goals. Of particular interest are teachers and preschool teacher's thoughts about their own leadership and how this can contribute to pupils' and children's development of their social and knowledge skills, their citizenship.

A questionnaire was sent out to both municipal schools and independent schools in three local councils. The questionnaire included both open and closed questions. Participants were asked about the number of years in the teaching profession. They were also asked questions related to their leadership and school development. All participants were asked to answer the questions, *What do you think is the hardest part of the teaching profession? What do you consider the most important in the teaching profession? Finally, what does school development mean for you?*

2. Disposition

New reforms are presented under the first heading, *New reforms towards educational excellence* followed by a chapter on the national steering documents for the Swedish school system. The article's point of departure is presented under the heading *Educational leadership* together with a presentation of the theoretical framework titled *Citizenship*. This is then followed by themethodologysection.

Results are presented under the heading *The result, voices from the questionnaire*. The chapter is divided into two parts, *What do you consider to be the hardest part of the teaching profession? What do you consider the most important in the teaching profession?* The first presents the results from the multiple choice questions, followed by the free text responses. At the end of the article follows the chapter Discussion and final words.

3. New reforms towards educational excellence

In 2010, work to change the Swedish education system began and can be described as the most far-reaching changes to Swedish schools for decades. On 1 July 2011 new school legislation came into force: the Education Act (2010:800). A number of new curricula were adopted: the curriculum for preschool education, (Lpfö98) revised (2010) the Swedish National Agency for Education (2010); the Curriculum for the Compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre (Lp11), the Swedish National Agency for Education (2011a) and the Curriculum for upper secondary schools (GY11), the Swedish National Agency for Education (2011b). A new school ordinance was also adopted, Swedish statutes (SFS 2011:185) and a new grading system was introduced for compulsory school, Swedish National Agency for Education Statutes (SKOLFS 2011:157) and for upper secondary school, Swedish National Agency for Education Statutes (SKOLFS 2011:145). At the same time as these reforms, it was also decided that it would be compulsory for newly recruited school leaders to participate in the head teacher programme (SFS 2009:1521). This means that municipalities, county councils and heads of independent schools must ensure that all head teachers employed after mid-March 2010 participate in the headmaster programme or equivalent training.

The steering documents for education are also affected by and associated with Swedish and international law as well as other joint agreements such as the European Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC), (Council of Europe, 2016; Unicef, 2016).

In a bid to turn the negative trend in student performance, the administrative authority the Swedish Schools Inspectorate was set up in 2008 under the Ministry of Education (Swedish National Agency for Schools Inspectorate, 2016). The Swedish Schools Inspectorate is a supervisory authority for all schools, from preschool to adult education. The Schools Inspectorate works with different types of inspections, such as regular supervision, quality inspections, targeted supervision and establishment control. The regular supervision and targeted supervision are aimed at ensuring that schools/activities work in accordance with laws and regulations. Inspections are made to help development by highlighting important areas in need of improvement.

Granström and Ekholm (2011) believe that inspections have a controlling effect on schools' activities. However, criticism has been raised on whether school inspections contribute to school development or not. Sandahl and Bringle (2006) believe that follow-up inspections by the Schools Inspectorate can operate as self-disciplinary, since schools and teachers adapt their work to what will be reviewed. Ekholm and Lindvall (2008) critically claim that the work of the Schools Inspectorate can be considered as counter-productive and that the Schools Inspectorate has been ineffective in relation to the results trend.

Based on the final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review, Alexander (2010) claims that government intervention in pedagogy, whether through the national strategies or by other means, may have helped some teachers but in general it has been excessive and often ill-founded conceptually and empirically. Although some visible doubts about governmental interventions have a career ladder for teachers created by the post first teacher been established. Despite debate and certain doubts, the Swedish Government has decided to make it possible for local councils to introduce a new "Lead Teacher" position (Swedish National Agency, 2015; Prop. 2012/13:136).

4. National steering documents for the Swedish school system

The Swedish national school system is based on democratic foundations and the Education Act stipulates that education in the school system aims at pupils acquiring and developing knowledge and values (Education Act, 2010:800). Education should impart and establish respect for human rights and fundamental democratic values on which Swedish society is based.

The Swedish Education Act states that all children shall have equal access to education and that all children shall enjoy this right regardless of gender, residence, social or economic factors.

The Curriculum for the Compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre (Lp11) and the Curriculum for upper secondary schools (GY11) present several values that Swedish schools and leisure-time centres are to represent and impart. These values are the inviolability of human life; individual freedom and privacy; all people's equal value; gender equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable. In accordance with ethics managed by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this will be actualised by fostering individuals to have a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility. Furthermore, both curricula state that [school] activities must be non-denominational (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a; Swedish National Agency for Education. (2011b).

The Swedish Education Act (2010:800) stipulates that the education provided at each school and in the leisure-time centre should be comparable, regardless of where in the country it is provided. However, comparable education does not mean that the education should be the same everywhere or that the resources of the school are to be allocated equally (Education Act, 2010:800).

Both curricula state that it is not sufficient in itself that teaching only imparts knowledge about fundamental democratic values. Democratic working forms should also be put into practice at schools, to prepare pupils for active participation in society. In the Curriculum for the Compulsory school, preschool class and the leisure-time centre (Lp11) the ambition is for schools to partner with the pupils' homes to promote the all-round personal development of pupils into active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens. In a deeper sense meaning that education and upbringing involve developing and passing on cultural heritage – values, traditions, language, knowledge – from one generation to the next. The Curriculum for upper secondary schools (GY11) states that the main task for upper secondary schools is to impart knowledge and create opportunities for pupils to acquire and develop skills.

Both curricula include four different perspectives identified with the motive that it is important that in all education, overall well-balanced perspectives are established –historical, environmental, international and ethical. A historical perspective anticipates that a historical approach will enable pupils to develop an understanding of the present and prepare for the future. From an environmental perspective, there is hope that it will provide young people with opportunities not only to take responsibility for the environment in areas where the young exercise direct influence themselves and as well as to hope to form a personal position with respect to overarching and global environmental issues. Both curricula stipulate that teaching should illuminate how the functions of society and our ways of living and working can best be adapted to create sustainable development. The curricula also view the international perspective as important. It is argued that an international perspective can help pupils to understand one's own reality in a global context and to create international solidarity and prepare young people's for a society with close contacts across cultural and national borders (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a; 2011b).

5. Educational leadership

Alexander (2010) argues that pedagogy is the heart of enterprise and furthermore gives life to educational aims and values, lifts the curriculum from the printed page, mediates learning and knowledge, inspires and empowers learners (Alexander, 2010). Nevertheless in this report, there are some who disagree with Alexander's standpoint (p. 307). In Sweden and other countries, such as England, Poland and New Zealand new a concept known as "Lead Teachers" has been introduced. Arguments that have been heard are that one of the most important factors for pupil's school results is the actions of teachers. Securing high quality teaching must be more attractive so that children can be better educated and therefore have a better chance to reach the national aims and good results. The Government intends for these career services to be a coach for other teachers, initiating educational conversations and initiate and lead the project in order to improve teaching (Swedish National Agency, 2015; Prop 2012/13:136).

Hattie (2009) states that what teachers know and do are the strongest influencing factors for learning. Similarly Duze (2012) claims the main drivers of successful teaching and learning is teachers. Specifically, this means that teachers express their teaching strategies in words and take theories of learning and the school's physical environment into account. At the same time, teachers find ways to engage and motivate pupils. The conclusion is that school leaders need to lead school improvement efforts by creating good conditions for teachers' learning in everyday life. School principals have an enormous responsibility towards greater instructional leadership (Duze, 2012). This is also argued by Timperley, Wilson, Barrar and Fung (2007) who state that the collective expertise of a school is inbuilt through employee interaction in everyday life. They further argue that school leaders need to lead school improvement efforts by creating favourable conditions for teachers' learning in their daily work.

In their meta-studies, Timperley et.al (2007) and Hattie (2009) similarly demonstrated that the most obvious improvements in student performance take place at schools where teachers learn from each other and in their own activities in everyday life. Nichols (2007) claims taking children's citizenship seriously means providing educational environments in which educators actively listen and respond to their feedback encourage children to listen and respond to each other.

Goodwin (2010) says that the new norms influencing the education system can be seen almost worldwide. Classrooms are becoming more and more diverse and it is becoming common for teachers to have colleagues from abroad. Moreover teachers will be instructing pupils with diverse cultures, knowledge and skills. Children will come to the classroom with very unique and challenging needs. Omar, Khuan, Kamaruzaman, Marinah and Jamal (2011) claim education is a social phenomenon and the role of teachers will continue to develop in parallel with the current global developments.

Bunar (2010:6) examines research of newly arrived pupils at Swedish schools and believes that both Swedish and international research shows that the reception and integration of newly arrived pupils may never be regarded as an isolated phenomenon at one given school and only affects the newcomers themselves, their parents and their teachers. For schools and preschools to be successful, consistency is needed throughout. This consistency must originate in national policy and permeate local school structures and finally reach the classroom practices, to then further spread to operators in the local community. Bunar (2010:6) argues that merely getting stuck in endless discussions about segregation versus integration and the pursuit of new pedagogical methods for the learning of the majority language is not productive.

The real importance of school leaders and the development that takes place in each individual school has been demonstrated by many researchers (Duze, 2012; Kruse & Louise Seashore, 2009; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2009; Robinson, 2007). It is often expressed that school leader has many hats as an administrator, leader, economist and organizer (Duze, 2012). As a common feature, research shows that a school leaders' working day is often fragmentary and that it is characterized by many short meetings and being constantly interrupted (Thomson, 2009), which many school leaders perceive as an obstacle to engage in school development (Hultman, 2012). Schools that are more successful in developing their educational activities are considered to have school leaders who are skilled at transforming social problems, which at first seems impossible to influence, to the educational challenges (Scherp, 2005). The lessons that are made by the school leaders and teachers are also found important to be documented.

The research community is strongly in agreement about the importance of teachers and school leaders' learning being based in their own everyday activities (Schools Inspectorate 2012; 2012a; 2010). Concepts in the field of school development such as learning organizations, professional learning and learning networks have become increasingly prevalent over the last 20 years. Ekholm and Scherp (2014) claim lessons you have co-created are more often put into action than knowledge that one acquired by listening to other people's conclusions.

Likewise, Timperley (2013) considers that it is not enough to focus on the traditional skills of the employees [teachers] to increase the learning of the organization and thus also the settings to change the way of working. He believes that it is necessary to increase space for learning and interaction in daily work. Actions which are characterized by hints and solutions or expertise leads more often to lasting improvements in pupils' results.

The conclusion drawn is that school leaders need to lead school improvement efforts by creating good conditions for teachers' learning in everyday life (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007).

This has previously been argued by Hattie (2009); school leaders and teachers need to create schools, staffroom and classroom environments where mistakes are welcomed as an opportunity for learning. Timperley et. al (2007) and Robinson (2007) argue that schools become better able to contribute to student learning and development where there were school heads who created the organizational conditions for teachers' learning processes by developing a learning culture in schools. Swedish National Agency's overall assessment of the situation in the Swedish school system focuses on three areas of development (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015c). These development areas are considered to be developing an education that meets each student; there are the right conditions for teachers and principals, as well as a long-term governance and clearer accountability. Stimulating pupils' motivation on the basis that most pupils think that school is valuable.

The Swedish National Agency for Education (2015c) state that schools are to play a compensatory role; schools provide the conditions for all children and young people to develop, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. The role of the teacher is critical for the pupil's results and so feedback is important, as is the way it is presented. The result from this study will be analysed with standpoint from these recommendations.

6. Citizenship

Arnot and Dillabough (2000) have argued that an important aspect of schooling is the production of citizenship. Citizenship is not a school subject at Swedish schools. Aspects and perspectives of peoples Citizenship is included as a part of different school subjects such as civics and history. Citizenship is a part of the Swedish school system expressed as "the Swedish school systems' fundamental values" [author's translation] that are supposed to permeate all activities in elementary and secondary schools.

Swedish steering documents state that in cooperation with the pupils' homes, schools are to foster pupils' all-round personal development of becoming active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens. Schools should be characterized by care for the individual, consideration and generosity. In a deeper sense, training and education are to transfer and develop a cultural heritage – its values, traditions, language, and knowledge – from one generation to the next. School should be a support for families in their child-rearing responsibilities and development. The work must be done in cooperation with the home. The school's mission is to transmit basic values and promote student learning in order to prepare them to live and work in the community (Swedish National Agency, 2010; 2011a; 2011b).

A portfolio with skills for citizenship has been identified as to be able to show mutual respect to others, to have social awareness, to be able to take self-responsibility, and to have a good self-confidence and a good self-worth (Hall, Williams and Coffey, 2010). Schreiner and Sjöberg (2007) argue that when young people choose an education they simultaneously express important components of their identity. Education is seen as a means for self-actualization, for fulfilling and developing personal talents and abilities. Moreover, late-modern societies (Western modernised countries) attempt to develop citizens who are self-directed and self-expressive individuals. Consequently, Schreiner and Sjöberg (2007) claim that pupils in late-modern classrooms might reasonably expect that their values and their voices are taken into account in one way or another.

7. Method

In this chapter, the study design and analysis is described. To get the answers to the purpose of the survey, a quantitative study was selected included with a part of quantitative data. The approach is deductive and based on a theoretical framework that is the basis for the empirical study (Bryman, 2011). The survey was conducted in Sweden's northernmost county, Norrbotten. The reason for this was that there is little– if any – research at all in this part of the country that highlights school issues in the way that this study permits. The questionnaire and a cover letter were sent to 100 addressees. On two occasions, a reminder was sent to the addressees to respond to the survey.

The questionnaire consists of six parts. The first part covered general issues such as gender, education, number of years in school or preschool, number of years of working with education in the municipality in which the participant works. Thereafter, the survey was divided into different statements for six different areas for the participants to answer. These were: 2. *your responsibility*, 3. *your leadership*, 4. *school development in my work*, and 5. *grading* 6. Three open questions were also included; *what do you think is the hardest part of the teaching profession? What do you consider the most important issue in the teaching profession* and, finally, *what does school development mean to you?*

The results are presented as direct quotes provided by participants in the open questions. Histograms are also used, where n =number of participants and where the relative frequency of the defendant, the mean and standard deviation are apparent. The histogram follows the following structure:

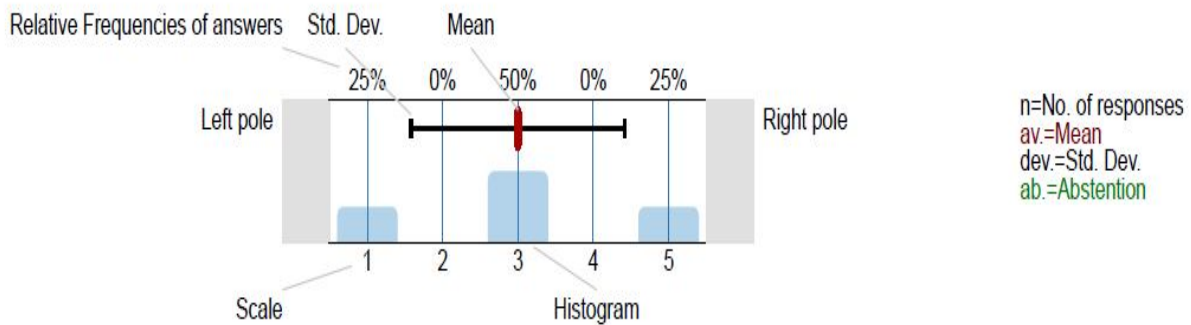


Figure 1: Structure of the histogram

The responses from parts 1-5 and the free text answers from part 6 of the questionnaire were read and analysed. A combination of direct quotations and presentation of the figures in a histogram were used for the analysis. No statistical calculations have been made as the number of participants was deemed to be statistically insignificant.

8. The results from parts 1-5

The questionnaire was sent to 100 addressees and 40/41 participants responded – 87.5 % were female and 12.5% were male. 43.9 % worked as primary school teachers, 26.8 % as high school teachers and 22 % were preschool teachers. The majority had been in the profession for a long time, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Number of active years as an educator

Figure 2 shows that over 50 % of participants had worked for over 15 years as educators.

In the questionnaire one of the questions was if participants felt that their work was meaningful. The results show that most of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they find their work at school or in preschool to be meaningful.

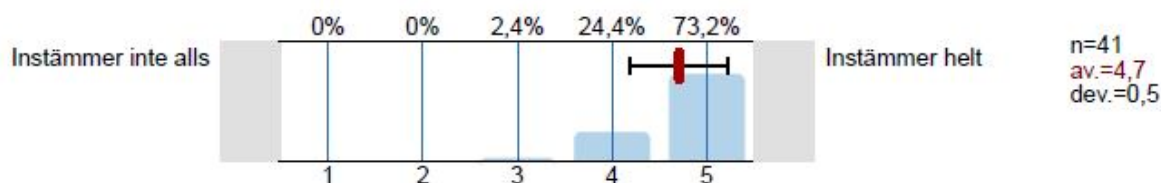


Figure 3: 73.2 % of the participants strongly agree with the statement.

Another question in the questionnaire asked if the participants actively took part in discussions about pedagogical visions about their work.

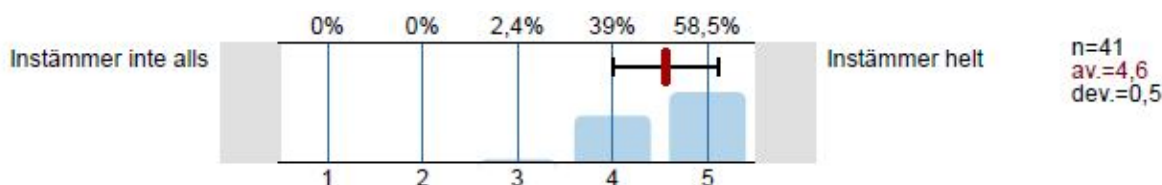


Figure 4: 58.5 % strongly agree with the statement that they actively participate in discussions of educational visions at their work.

In the questionnaire one of the questions were formulated as if the participants thought that there was a common formulated pedagogical direction. As shown in the histogram, many of the participants agreed with the statement.

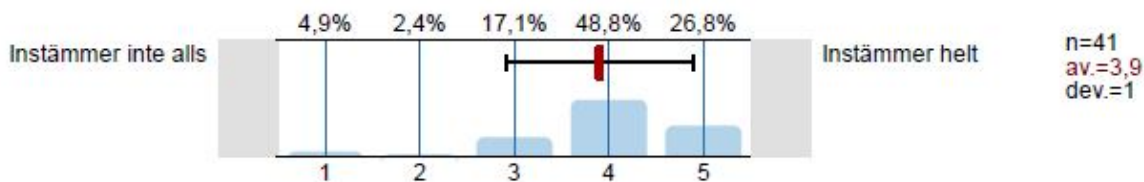


Figure 5: Most of the participants strongly agreed 26.8 % or agreed 48.8 % with the statement that there was a common formulated pedagogical direction.

Finally in part 3, the participants were asked if they felt that their experiences from the daily work were utilized and documented. The following histogram shows a wider range of answers for this question.

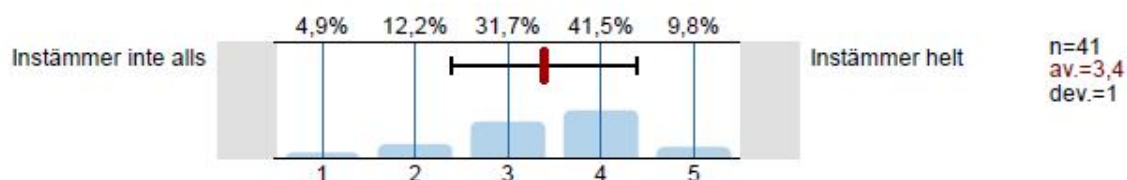


Figure 6. 4.9 % strongly disagree with the statement and 9.8 % strongly agree that teachers' experiences from daily work been considered and document.

Part 6 of the questionnaire gave participants the possibility to answer the questions *What do you consider the hardest part of the teaching profession? What do you consider the most important in the teaching profession? And what does school development mean for you – provide examples.*

8.2 The result: voices from the questionnaire - free text answers

This section presents the results of the survey from Part 6. Two of three open questions are presented, *What do you think is the hardest part of the teaching profession? And What do you consider the most important issue in the teaching profession* The result is structured within the questions from the free text part of the questionnaire. Participants were anonymous, therefore only their quotations have been included in the results.

8.2.1 What do you consider the hardest part of the teaching profession?

After reviewing and sorting the free text answers, they were divided into the following categories: time, border demarcation and their work environment. Many of the answers mention time. One of the answers has a connection to meaningfulness. *To have enough time for everything to be able to feel that I am doing a good job.* Others wrote about lack of information and about challenges to find substitute teachers or preschool teachers in case of sickness or other work-related matters. *The information is inadequate and makes the work time-consuming. Substitute shortage.* One of the informants also mentions the lack of time. This participant make connects with tests and assessment. *To have enough time for everything. We do not have enough time to be able to plan interesting and motivating lessons. Finding smart, easy, clear documentation templates that simplify following the pupils' progression in various subjects.*

Parents are mentioned by one participant, who argues that there are parents who push their children to achieve goals and do well in different contexts. *Parents pressure their children to perform better than is reasonable.* One of the participants speaks of the increased workload and of the many tasks to be completed during the same period. *Increased workload combined with less time.* Another believes that sometimes it feels like work takes so much time that it is not possible to take a break – *to even be able to take daily break, the lack of time means that I work almost every break, I read the mail, I reply to email, write texts, plan lessons, pick up materials and picks it again.*

Another informant also specifies the time or lack of time. *Lack of time. Wants more time allocated, for example to analyse and find the good texts that develop and deepen pupils' reading abilities. Analyse and critically evaluate teaching materials etc. Much else takes up valuable time and creates some frustration when teachers want so much more.*

To be a teacher or a preschool teacher includes a lot more than just teaching the following quotes shows and an answer is about boundaries to pupils, colleagues and to themselves. *The hardest thing is to allocate enough time so that it is possible to carry out all the tasks during working hours.* Other participants express the same but in this way *to accommodate functions within dedicating hours. Almost every week there tends to be unpaid overtime, time for everything or increased workload, combined with less time.*

Working as a teacher or preschool teacher is viewed as being stressful and is often mentioned by participants in different ways; *The preschool class curriculum has not been clear, but under constant change, lack of speech therapists. Edwise (a computer program) that NN (Name of municipality) uses is very clumsy and inefficient to work towards parents.*

Some of the participants point to the situation of the increasing numbers of new arrivals who have come to Sweden in recent years, both asylum seekers and EU migrants. *Stressful, new pupils streaming in now and then.* One of the informants point to the individual learning and some difficulties to satisfy all the needs of young people. *To give time to the individual learning when you have many pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish and other difficulties.*

Many of the participants talk about children and pupils needs and how to meet them and to be able to be there for all of them. *To keep up with the kids, meet all the children's needs and meet them where they are in their development and that all pupils can have challenges on their level.* Similar responses left from others of the replies *reach and help all pupils and individualize instruction and environment for each child.*

In particular, children and pupils who are in need of extra support are mentioned. *To have time to do a good work and the resources to those children who need extra help and to catch personalization to all children's different conditions.* There is even talk about the risks of the large level differences between pupils that can result in pupils being violated. *To have the opportunity to individualize on a large level spread among pupils so that the jump from a minimum to a maximum level will not be so noticeable that it becomes evident and violate pupils.* One of the participants talk about pupils that are tired of school and the importance of that the pupils feel motivated in their learning. *Finding ways to motivate pupils that are tired of school studies.* Similar notes are made of others. *Time for everything that needs to be done.* One of the interviewees speaks about motivation and the challenge for schools to meet and motivate pupils tired of school. *To motivate pupils who are tired of school.* The diversity of children is highlighted as a difficult but exciting challenge. *The hardest and most fun in preschool is that everyone is an individual. We must adapt based on the individual child. A method works for some children but not for others. We need to be resourceful and find solutions, it is a challenge! But very inspiring and fun when you find new methods or small simple tricks that help the child in everyday life.* The same informant continues *kids are not difficult the biggest difficulty is the adults, peers and parents.*

Many of the participants talk about keeping up with the outside work as a teacher and to find a way to also be able to do that little extra. / ... *work to get to that already being carried out to keep up with assignments that I am expected to perform. We educators have received many new missions without having time for them.* One of the participants talks about keeping up with the administration. / ... *there are so many parameters to take into account and to wade through all the information to make the right decision.* Another informant provides a similar comment. / ... *there are so many parameters for you to take into account and join the right of all charges that exist and / ... there is not a job description and specification which limits and directs the mission.* One of the informants believes that other non-teaching activities take up time that could have been devoted to planning and collegial conversations. / ... *there are so many things around the tasks that occupy a school day. Little time for planning and collegial conversations.* However an answer from a participant provides another opinion – many different tasks can be stimulating, but personnel also return to the time aspect *Difficult while at the same time it is often stimulating, there are so many diverse problems to face. But difficult when there is no time to do things well. Sad when administration takes so much time away from the educational work.*

One of the participants mentions virtually all the challenges that have emerged in different responses from the other informants, that is the lack of time that constrains and affect the individual, student and collegial learning. A certain frustration can be discerned in the response. *To keep up with everything that has to be done. There is no time for development to the extent that I would like there to be. There is not time to support pupils as much as I would like. There is no time to devote to formative assessment as far as I would like.* The same informant continues *to have time for new experiences and sensations that could develop my teaching, etc.*

The great changes that the Swedish school system has gone through over the past decade are also expressed. *During the time I have been a teacher, school has rationalized vigorously. Time for reflection and discussion with colleagues has been reduced drastically, has led to a drop in educational creativity. With reduced instructional time for pupils and more work for teachers, it is difficult to balance the equation, there's a knowledge slump that continues and you feel powerless.*

In the next section we will address the second open questions in the questionnaire, aims and skills that informants though were important in their profession.

8.2.2 What do you consider the most important in the teaching profession?

After reviewing all of the free text answers that the participants submitted for this question, the following categories emerged, education, citizenship and motivation. It can be noted that participants' thoughts of their mission to educate and create a future generation of young people is expressed in different ways. More of the comments connected with children and young people's knowledge development. *To form the young generation and to work with the knowledge that also goes hand in hand with personal development and to develop pupil's knowledge and ability to be free to lead their own knowledge development.* One of the participants wants to develop personally as well as their pupils and colleagues – *do my best every day to develop myself, my pupils and colleagues.* One of them indicates that he/she prepares pupils for future studies and career. *The pupils will be prepared for future studies/careers.* Similar answers are given by a participant who probably works in a preschool. / ... *develop each child both socially and intellectually.* Another participant responds briefly, *to teach.*

Many of the replies describe the participants' thoughts about educating children and young people as citizens of our future society. There are informants who by themselves wonder what the future will bring. *The future. What happens? Everybody's future is at stake.* Someone of the participants say that the mission is to educate and train to respond to society's needs for the labour market. *We train the workforce of tomorrow.* One of the participants answered *to give pupils the tools to cope in society and to acquire knowledge.*

Several of the informants express themselves and their visions in similar ways. *Provide pupils with the tools and knowledge, and secure that my pupils leave school with good conditions to be able to make further studies and to act as good corporate citizens.* One of them believes that a future society needs young people with a strongly developed sense of self, good self-confidence. *Good citizens with a strong sense of self.* Another of the interviewees speaks about the importance of an approach to each other based on respect and trust. A good attitude, and work relationships based on mutual trust and respect. If it works like that it is easier to work and cooperate with children, colleagues, parents.

In one of the comments, as of the content of the text can be judged to be written by a person who has preschool as their workplace, developed ideas about for whom and for what reason that assignment is completed. *Most important for me is to remember, whose best do we do this for? Is it for the kids or for me? Communication is the most important part we have in my workplace, communication between the child-child, child - adult and teacher - educator.*

Communication for all ages! Most important in learning current teaching is to teach children to learn. How do I learn? How do I get information? And that the children do not give up. We all need to practice or exercise to get forward in our lives.

Texts about how to motivate pupils and to provide security for children and young people are comments that recur in the material. The language differs between those who work with children in preschool and those who work at schools. It is reasonable to assume that the following quotes are written by those who work in preschool. The first is to create security at the preschool. *To reach, inspire and signal security.* In some of the comments, the term learning is used. *To inspire and create conditions for learning.* Another of the quotes from one of the informants demonstrates the educational ideas that motivate and create curiosity to learn. *To stimulate desire, curiosity and understanding of their own learning.* One of the informant's most likely working in preschool puts childhood in a holistic perspective and thinks about the time children have after the preschool which firstly is school. *To meet and see each child, encourage them, lifting, challenge and help them get through the school years while maintaining or/and increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem.*

Another of the quotes also emphasizes the importance of bringing up pupils curiosity to this in the further leading to a huger interest for further studies. The informant also writes about the importance of being able to individualize instruction and education to pupil's needs and expectations.

To be able to offer pupil interesting lessons that stimulate curiosity and increase motivation for further and deeper studies. Further, able to offer teaching in a more individual way, catering to everyone's ability. Another of the participants links pupil's motivation and performance. *Reaching pupils so they want to perform.* Another participate states *being able to motivate pupils and to have good subject knowledge so that I can become freer in my teaching.*

Concepts like fun can be found in the responses of free text questions as educator's possibilities preparing for children and pupils to learn. Learning must be experienced as fun or interesting. *To get pupils involved and think it's fun to learn new things, to get all the pupils in teaching.* One of the voices argue / *...to get all pupils motivated in school work, interest them and get them to get them to think it is fun.* One of the informants connects this to their own experience of being satisfied at work. *I think it is fun and challenging to organize good and developing opportunities for learning for pupils.*

The metaphor of "sparking a fire" in the sense of developing pupils' confidence is seen used. *To "spark a fire" in the eyes of pupils, getting them to believe in themselves, to understand that they have learned, that they can, and they are developable.* Another informant puts it in a similar way but *believes that it is also about raising colleague's view of their education mission to create good relationships. Be sensitive, create good relationships and trust. Raising pupils and colleagues in a positively way.*

In the next part the results will be discussed.

9. Discussion and final words

The survey reveals a number of interesting results, such as that a large proportion of participants believe that the work that preschool teachers or teachers do is meaningful, while also clearly evident in the majority of free text answers show that many have a work situation where they feel stressed.

This may seem remarkable since the vast majority of participants have worked as teachers for a long time; 35% for more than 25 years. A reasonable assumption would be that after 35 years in the profession staff has developed an ability to handle stress.

The result may thus indicate that the current situation in our Swedish schools and preschools have changed teachers' working conditions in such a way that it induces stress in large parts of the staff, although they have worked with children and pupils for many years. The shortage of trained preschool teachers and teachers in many parts of the country is one such example which is also evident in the majority of free text answers.

The survey shows that the vast majority of participants believe that there is a formulated educational vision for the activities. A vision with expressed goals to lead them at work. Many of the participants also take time to participate in educational discussions at their workplaces. However some of free text answers do not accept this as one of the participants who have worked a long time at school expresses. / *... during the time I have been a teacher, school has rationalized vigorously. Time for reflection and discussion with colleagues has been reduced drastically ... /.*

The numbers of newly arrived pupils who are staying in Sweden over the past year have increased significantly 2015/16. In the majority of the free text answers is seen that the hardest to work as teachers and preschool teachers is what teachers perceive as *a constant stream of new arrivals*. Newly arrived children and pupils staying in Sweden on different terms and under different conditions.

They can for example be asylum seekers, family immigrants or children of migrant workers. There are also children and pupils whose parents are undocumented. Some of the new arrivals have come with their guardians, while others have come alone. Newcomers can also be Swedish citizens, for example, has lived abroad and had not previously been enrolled in a nursery school and attended Swedish schools.

The newly arrived children and pupils are a heterogeneous group and their backgrounds are different. The thing that most newly-arrived children and pupils have in common is that they have left the context in which they previously lived, and that they usually do not have Swedish as their mother tongue. This can be compared with Jans (2004), who indicates that nowadays a multi-cultural childhood is common, see also Bunar (2010), James (2011) and Sandstrom, Kjellin and Stier (2008) who argue that this challenges education systems in many countries.

Several of the participants expressed this and specify that the number of arrivals contribute to the challenge that the Swedish school system is currently facing. *Stressful, new pupils streaming in now and then... To give time to the individual learning when you have many pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish and other difficulties.*

Today, many children and pupils at our preschools and schools need help and support. Several of free text responses also mention this. Participants talk about the personalization of the activities at school and preschool to reach the goal to reach all the different conditions that pupils and children groups represent.

There is talk of a level distribution of the pupils in schools and of children enrolled at preschools and to make sure everyone's needs are fulfilled. If many children and pupils are at different levels may result from a noisy environment in the schools and preschools affect the fulfilment of the goals negatively.

One of the participants believed that the atmosphere became worse over time, which consequently negatively affected the organisation as targets were not met. *To have time to do a good work and the resources to those children who need extra help and to catch personalization of all children's different conditions.* The survey shows that the documentation and administration take time away from teaching. *To have enough time for everything. Finding smart, simple documentation templates that easier facilitate following the pupils' development in various subjects.*

Another of the informants argues */... there are so many parameters to take into account and to sift the right of all charges.* Previous research, for example, Hattie (2009) has shown that what teachers know and do is the single most important factor for children and young people's development. The results of this study do not show any signs that there have been changes in the Swedish schools since the performance on the Programme for International Student Assessment PISA, (2012). A series of free text answers shows the challenges educators face when it comes to support children's and pupils' development and knowledge.

To keep up with the kids, meet all the children's needs and meet them where they are in their development and that all pupils can have challenges on their level. A large part of the work as a preschool teacher or teacher at school is to motivate children and young people to develop as individuals (Duze, 2012).

Words such as to arouse children's curiosity, challenge children's creativity, working for school and preschool to be perceived as pleasurable and interesting recurs frequently in the survey. Many of the free text answers in the survey clearly show that participants are highly aware of the importance of motivating children and pupils – such as this participant, who states that *to be able to offer pupil interesting lessons that arouses curiosity and increases motivation for further and deeper studies.* When asked what the participants considered to be the most important part of their profession, the most common answer – except from to motivate children and young people – is to contribute to their learning skills and to help them to develop as citizens.

Hall, Williams and Coffey (2010) argue that a portfolio filled with skills for citizenship consists of being able to show mutual respect to others, to have social awareness, to be able to take self-responsibility, and to have a good self-confidence and a good self-worth. Arnot and Dillabough (2000) have argued that an important aspect of schooling is the production of citizenship.

The free text answers in this study show how respondents view their tasks in terms of raising the citizens of future generations. The answers given can be said to include both the short and long term perspective. In the short term children and young people need to be motivated so that they can develop both socially and in terms of knowledge skills. In the longer term, it is about educating children and young people so that they in the future can act as good citizens.

In this research one of the informants describes this as contributing to developing good citizenship with high self-confidence. To develop each child and young both socially and intellectually often arises in the material. The responses show that many of the participants believe that it is important to work with the attitudes and values. That means to work with school and preschool set of values that are specified in the respective curriculum. Furthermore it is to follow the Education Act but also the objectives set out in this. The European Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the rights of children (CRC) is also mentioned. However one of the participants argues that the curriculum for preschool is not sufficiently transparent and conductive.

The result shows clearly that the question of how our newly-arrived children and young people can best be integrated into our society is a real key issue for the Swedish school but also for the future of Sweden. The Swedish Education Act states that all children shall have equal access to education and that all children shall enjoy this right regardless of gender, residence or social or economic factors. All children and young people need to leave preschool and school with the necessary conditions to act as good citizens in an increasingly globalized society. In that process, the school and preschools have an important role, perhaps even the most important of them all.

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