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Title

Teaching Fundamental Values in Art Education: A Study on Policy Enactment in Secondary School.

Abstract

The overall purpose of this thesis is to describe and discuss preconditions for the enactment and the construction of fundamental values in art education in secondary school. The study is based on ethnographic methods, including classroom observations, video recordings and interviews with art teachers and pupils. Three art teachers and 36 pupils in grade eight and nine (age 14-16) have participated in the study. The schools are located in areas of different socio-economic status. Besides interviews, the empirical material consists of observation notes, video and sound recordings, documents and photographs from the observed lessons. In total, 27 lessons were observed and recorded, 20 interviews with teachers and seven interviews with pupils were conducted. The empirical material is analysed with a combination of policy enactment theory (Ball et al. 2012) and concepts from Bernstein (2000, 2003) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986).

The analysis reveals that the conditions for policy enactment are created by several factors that interact. It is impossible to designate a single factor to explain why the enacted curriculum turns out the way it does. The contextual dimensions, such as material context, situated context, professional culture and external context (Ball et al. 2012), constitute a complex and unique contextual mix in every school. Together with existing subject traditions and teaching practices in art education, the unique contextual mix creates the conditions for enacting the fundamental values in art education.

The art subject carries a tradition of image-making that pushes more theoretical syllabus content, such as image analysis, aside. The situated context influences the professional culture and, therefore, they function as a lens for selecting and translating the curriculum. Regardless of teachers' intentions to enact the fundamental values in art education, the external context can create obstacles. The goal and result management of school leads to a focus on measurable subject knowledge and drive away other curriculum parts such as the fundamental values, making it challenging to work with fundamental values in Art education.

In conclusion, there are no prerequisites for realising the intentions of the fundamental values as expressed in the curriculum. Despite this, the fundamental values have a given place in Art education. Although, it is not always expressed verbally; instead, it is image-borne.

Keywords

Art education, fundamental values, citizenship education, democratic education, policy enactment, policy context, performativity.

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