

# **Elevinflytande i gränslandet mellan didaktik och makt – en studie av undervisningspraktiken i tre grundskolor**

*Linda Eriksson*

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

För avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen vid fakulteten för Humanvetenskap  
vid Mittuniversitetet, Campus Sundsvall, som offentligen kommer att försvaras i  
E409, fredag, 30 augusti, 10:00

Fackultetsopponent: Professor Marianne Dovemark

## Abstract

Linda Eriksson 2019. Pupil influence in between didactics and power – a study of teaching practice in three compulsory schools. Mid Sweden University. Doctoral Thesis 300, ISBN 978-91-88947-03-1, ISSN 1652-893X.

This thesis focuses on student influence in the borderland between didactics and power. Student influence is ambiguous and the mission of student influence can be interpreted in different ways in Swedish compulsory schools. In the school reforms of the 1990s, the intentions of student influence, based on both moral and political as well as theoretical positions were stated. Student influence was seen as a right, as being important for education in democracy, and as a prerequisite for learning. Democracy, knowledge and learning are essentially contested concepts. As a didactic practice student influence cannot be understood as general impact through learning, nor as fully-fledged democracy. The question of the limitations of student influence is described and analysed in the thesis. The aim is to describe and critically analyse student influence as didactic practice. The research questions that have directed the study are: How is student influence expressed in three different schools, where there has been a particular ambition to implement student influence? What prerequisites are given for student influence in the way teaching is organised and carried out? What possibilities and constraints (conditions) appear, from the perspective of didactics and power? A fourth question links together the empirical study with the problem of the limits of student influence: Can a didactic model be designed for student influence as didactic practice, and if so, how? The study was conducted using an abductive approach and strategy, and with a point of departure in critical realism as scientific approach. Three primary schools, with the particular ambition of implementing the mission of student influence, were studied through a multiple case study design. The empirical material was produced using ethnographic methods. The a didactic framework is used for description, whilst a sociological concept of power has contributed to the construction of analytical tools. Using 'order' and 'renegotiation' as analytic tools, the conditions for student influence on how teaching is organised and carried out, are described. Responsibility and transparency are tested as conditions, in order to answer the question of possibilities and constraints from the perspective of didactics and power. The analysis of teaching practice in the three schools shows that student influence is complex, and that it has to be understood as local bound and situationally. This impacts on the possibility of understanding its limitations. The results show that experiences and interests of students can concern motivating them to work, adapting teaching to different learning styles, or that the teachers pay attention to their expressions to fostering more generally. Furthermore, all models of democracy, and of different approaches to learning and knowledge are visible in the schools. The importance of classroom discussion for student influence needs to be illuminated, and the distinction between didactic considerations, and what could be understood as unwarranted power. The results are discussed in relation to issues of learning theory and curriculum theory, as well as to ideals of democratic education, to understand the limits of student influence. A didactic model, with three conceptual tools that enable repeated questioning of the limits of student influence, is proposed.

**Keywords:** compulsory school, democracy, didactic theory and practice, influence, knowledge, learning, multiple case study, power