



Migration and Education

- newly arrived migrant students (NAMS)

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Research-based tenets of educational ideology, policy and practices providing an educational structure of opportunity for NAMS



- Justice and Equity instead of Medical discourse
- Inclusion
- Holistic and Individual approach
- The asset-approach
- Majority language **and** Multilingualism
- Focus on all school subjects, not just second language
- Cooperation between various actors within and outside of schools
- The children's agency acknowledged

These tenets are currently under attack
Simplicity instead of complexity



- No access to education for undocumented children, questionable even for asylum-seekers
- Separate educational forms for a prolonged period of time = collective solutions
- Extended education in majority language only
- The deficit-approach
- Instilling cultural values of the majority
- Individual accountability (children and parents)
- More decisive involvement of social services
- Zero-tolerance policy to disciplinary problems (expulsion, placement in alternative schools)

Sweden: Current policy

- NAMS = arrived after the ordinary school start (age 7). A status is bestowed up to four years after enrolling in a school in Sweden (Currently around 50,000 in elementary school are defined as NAMS, including around 15,000 children from Ukraine)
- Access to regular education regardless of legal status
- Focus on learning and school success
- Support – general and through a separate support package
- Prevention of prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination in a wider school and society context

The treatment of newly arrived students' educational needs has been upgraded from taking care of traumatized refugees and a sole focus on second language acquisition to justice and equity.

Separate support package for NAMS



- Mapping of students' educational background
- Separate classes (up to two years partial placement)
- Multilingual classroom support
- Guaranteed number of instruction hours
- Adjusted curriculum (transfer of teaching hours from other subjects to Swedish language)
- Priority subjects (age 13-16)
- Individual development plan (age 13-16)
- Professional development of school staff (Language and content integrated learning, LCIL)

An equation for school success of NAMS



Access, Justice and Equity

+

Inclusion

+

Separate and individually tailored support package

+

Promotion of multilingualism

+

Well educated teachers with enough resources

+

Cooperation

+

Careful enactment in practice

However...

The equation works only if the policy is consequential with elements of accountability – what is promised ought to be delivered and someone is responsible if the aims are not met. That's not always the case today. Why?

- a) Responsibility for the achievement gap is solely projected to the students and their families: poor Swedish, inadequate and interrupted schooling, the age at a time of migration, real or imagined cultural differences, parents' socio-economic background. This explanation is taken for granted, recognized as natural and logic.
- b) Major school actors tend to use the intentional flexibility of the policy to mask the absence of adequate and high-quality support measures. Sometimes they lack understanding for its basic principals, sometimes resources and sometimes the support from their principals.
- c) Furthermore, the ideological underpinnings – in the context transferred into meaningless discursive devices such as inclusion, integration, equity, justice – are used to justify what and how is being (or not) done and (or not) provided.

Finally



- Discussions about this or that organizational or pedagogical model (“the silver bullet”) are fruitless. The scientific and practical emphasis must be on the content and quality of what is provided to NAMS, regardless of what fancy words we attach to it!
- The educators must be informed not to “hide away” the problems they encounter while enacting the policy, but rather bring the attention of policy makers to what support they need and why if they are to deliver what was promised to NAMS in the name of justice, equity, inclusion, learning and achievement.