

School Policy Initiatives in Sweden

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Abstract:

The teaching profession today experiences tension between professional expertise and academization. This thesis addresses the question of how scientific orientation, which enriches teachers' professional knowledge, is initiated in contemporary scientific discourse. Various initiatives have been designed to strengthen research relevant to teachers' professional practice. One such initiative is the Education, Learning, Research (ULF) organization, established in 2017 to enhance teachers' scientific foundations. ULF promotes practice-oriented research to address the needs of schools and create incentives for research about, for, and with schools.

My research aims to identify the boundaries related to the ULF try-out organization from the perspectives of policy, implementation, and schools, drawing conclusions about which discourses dominate the initiative. At the policy level, boundaries are established to indicate what is deemed more, or less, desirable in such collaborations. These demarcations clarify who or what is allowed to define the school's problems and determine what activities the school needs. From an implementation perspective, the needs that have shaped the ULF's try out period are highlighted, specifically how ULF has been designed and staged. From a school perspective, the research examines how well the initiation and staging of ULF align with teachers' practices and the problems and needs they encounter.

Theoretical foundations include Norman Fairclough's three-part discourse analysis, complemented by Carol Bacchi's perspective on problems as discourse inputs. Critical discourse analysis posits that discourse is shaped by history, ideology, and power, which can illuminate the discourse in question. Bacchi's framework, which views problems as responses to needs, aids in understanding the limits conveyed and what is considered desirable.

The material for this research is composed of three types: policy documents that initiate and evaluate the experimental ULF activities, project data from ongoing ULF projects, and interviews with teachers. The documents are presented chronologically: first, the foundational documents that developed ULF, followed by more evaluative documents. This chronological approach provides an overview and reveals tensions, pressures, and potential shifts in the discourse surrounding both ULF and schools. Data from the projects include frequencies, such as the number of projects within specific areas and the subjects they addressed, illustrating which projects received funding through ULF's try out organization, where they were conducted, and in which subjects or areas. Together, the documents and projects provide a holistic understanding of ULF's implementation. Furthermore, interviews with