Arts and Crafts as a school subject (Slöjd) 
impression – expression - imprint 

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to illuminate and question the school subject Arts and Crafts from the perspective of the pupils. The empirical investigations cover interviews with subject teacher and adults, focusing their memories from the Arts and Crafts subject in the compulsory school. The analysis is made from different point of reference. The interpretations were done on empirical ground and aimed at identifying the main problem areas, which then were taken as the point of departure for the further analysis.

The main patterns in the pupils’ experiences are associated with the manual work processes and their self-made objects, which were taken as tokens of a growing maturity and sharing of a common cultural heritage. It gave rise to a wide range of comments on the type of knowledge generated from manual and aesthetic learning processes. The attitude of the teacher as an intermediary, may have a great impact for the future adult’s interest in the subject field. The more pupil centred teaching the pupils had experienced, the more pleasurable memories they had.

The analysis shows that qualities of the subject is connected to the pupil’s personal and bodily experience of the work process in mainly textile, metal and wood. The creative work generates feelings of pleasure and fulfilment, which seems to correspond to a basic need, which most people recognize. It combines various communicative expressions of individual, cultural and educational character. The Arts and Crafts subject can be characterized by four aspects which are interlaced; the manual, the æsthetic, the sociological and the theoretical aspect.

Key words: Arts and Crafts (slöjd), didactics, perspective of the pupil, compulsory school, manual work processes, self-made objects, cultural heritage, problem solving, aesthetic learning processes, tacit knowledge, pupil centred teaching, bodily experience, communicative expressions.

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