

Chapter 14

The Competent Youth's Exposure of Teachers at YouTube.se

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ABSTRACT

Swedish children are generally well informed, from preschool all the way through the entire school system, about the meaning of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC (United Nations, 1989), and other similar ideas about their position in relation to adults in school, adults at home and adults in the society. As a result of that experience, almost 30.000 hours in school as an institution, it is possible to argue that a lot of Swedish children, through discussions are well trained to act according to the idea of the competent child. But how do adults, teachers, researchers and journalists react when competent youth use their knowledge to expose what they have experienced in school on websites like YouTube? In order to answer such a question this chapter examines two movies of exposed teachers on YouTube.se. These movies, one with an angry teacher and one with a jocular teacher, are subsequently used in order to argue that exposures like these of teachers are reasonable to understand as being made by the competent youth.

INTRODUCTION

Schools and the events going on during ordinary lessons have in one sense, at least in the western society where school buildings exist, been closed from direct insight until the Internet exploded during the 1990s. Even so youth, parents, teachers, headmasters, authors as well as news media

have been aware of some of the doubtful things that happen in certain classrooms, as part of certain teachers' ways of managing their work behind closed classroom doors. Many teachers and headmasters previously used to look the other way. They were so to speak, able to turn their back at children's, youth's and in some cases parent's stories about what was going on at the lessons in school. This phenomenon has earlier been described as an example of teachers' ethical

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dilemmas, called the *collegial paradox* (Colnerud, 1997; 2002). The collegial paradox was shown in such a way that teachers constructed silent alliances with each other when doubtful rumours or accusations, mostly from offended students, were exposed. By doing that, they took sides for their colleagues against the students, even if they knew that there was no smoke without fire. But, teachers and headmasters who recently used to turn a blind eye when other teachers' behaviours towards children or youth opposed for example *Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC* (United Nations, 1989), *Lärares Yrkesetik, LY* (Läraryrkesförbundet & Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2002) or a legislation such as *The Child Protection Law, TCPL* from 1 of April 2006 are nowadays forced to react one way or another, as a consequence of witnesses of teachers' violations that are to be found in movies at different websites. The growth of Internet that started 20 years ago has, together with the development of mobile phones, especially the new techniques for sound recording and filming, challenged the until now more or less closed school system. One of the latest, but possibly not the last, ways of obtaining insight in great parts of youth institutionalized school life (Sigsgaard, 1992; Samuelsson, 2008) was the introduction of websites as YouTube.com in February 2005 and later on YouTube.se in October 2008.

The amount of movies exposing teachers' classroom leadership during 2008-2009 where described as a major problem for the teacher profession

One out of twenty teachers has during the last twelve month period sometime been harassed in relation to his or her occupation by being registered with a mobilephone. (Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2008, p. 5)

The same evaluation reported that as many as eleven out of hundred answered that they knew another teacher who during the last twelve month period had been harassed on the Internet.

According to such experiences it is quite easy to understand that teachers feel as if their hands are tied in such a way that they were, or became, afraid to interfere and as a consequence of that perhaps where filmed and later on exposed on websites like YouTube. Almost the same conclusions were drawn by Honawar (2007) from interviews with teachers in USA. The general council for the American Federation of Teachers said that fear of being taped could change how teachers interact with students and is therefore "disturbing to the educational process" (Honawar, 2007, p. 2). Another consequence, according to the general council was that the whole environment could be affected.

Now, concern is growing among teacher advocates that the proliferation of such videos is causing stress among teachers and some students, and could have a chilling effect on classroom discussions. (Honowar, 2007, p. 2)

Such an experience can affect the classroom situation as well as teachers' ways of managing the classroom. Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) suggest that students' and teachers' beliefs in good classroom management can be seen as opposite conceptions. For students good classroom management was built up around a

Fair and reasonable system of classroom rules and procedures that protect and respect students. Teachers are expected to care for the students, their learning and their personal lives, before the students will respect and cooperate with the teachers. (Woolfolk Hoy & Weinstein, 2006, p. 209)

Students didn't mind differential treatment and they wanted, as long as there were no classism, favoritism, racism or sexism, teachers to maintain order without punishment while teachers seemed to believe that students needed to earn their concern, interest, respect and relationship as well as their caring.

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