

Ethical leadership interpreted as fostering an appreciative environment in schools in Sweden

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This paper emanates from my thesis (Bergmark, 2009), which explored the school as a site for ethical practice. The research was inspired by life-world phenomenology. A total of 45 teachers and 45 students participated.

Teachers' and students' experiences of school as a site for ethical practice imply the value of: *striving for ethical awareness, building ethical relationships, and encouraging ethical actions*. The findings in this thesis suggest that the schools' mission to integrate ethics into the curriculum can be viewed as a process whereby, together with students in different educational settings, an *ethical learning community* can be created and sustained.

Fitting with the ethic of care, when exploring teachers' and students' experiences of school the opportunity for an appreciative attitude emerged. This outlook includes the importance of meeting others where they are, care about them, have faith in their abilities, letting them influence, and encouraging and recognizing them. It is of specific interest to reflect on how the findings from my thesis can be interpreted and affect the preparation and practice of school leaders. One aspect of ethical leadership, interpreted as 'fostering an appreciative environment' in schools, will be discussed.