

Well-Being among Children – Some Perspectives from a Swedish Viewpoint

Eva Alerby, Ulrika Bergmark, Arne Forsman,
Kristen Hertting, Catrine Kostenius & Kerstin Öhrling

Children's health is of great importance for their ongoing growth and development. It is therefore important to increase our knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence children's health. The main areas of interest for the Swedish part of the ArctiChildren project are bullying and stress-related problems, as well as children's experiences of health and well-being, ethical learning and school. In this chapter we will discuss some perspectives on well-being among children from a Swedish viewpoint and we will present some thoughts on how we as adults can aid the process of promoting health together with children.

Children and health

Health is created and experienced in daily life, and children's meetings with all adults are important for their growth, learning, play and development. Such meetings can promote children's healthy development, but in some cases they can also lead to the opposite. When the World Health Organization (WHO) was established in 1948, two important statements about health were approved. One of these was the well-known definition of health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." According to Wass (1994), this decision has been important since then, because it not only defines health in terms of the occurrence of medically defined problems but also provides a much wider perspective on the view of health. In addition, it offers a goal for human beings to strive for. The other important statement was about the role the WHO thought that governments had in the promotion of health: "Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures." In spite of the time that has passed since the WHO's statements were made, it has been observed in the last 10–20 years that Swedish school children's mental health is not what it ought to be. Most children and young people feel well, but the proportion of young people reporting psychosocial health problems has increased in Sweden (SOU, 2006:77; Öhrling, 2006).

The question of how children experience their health might seem easy to answer, but new problems arise when we try to understand the meaning of the concept of health. When planning to ask children in the compulsory nine-year

school system how they regard their state of health, we had to think carefully about the formulation of the questions. It has proven to be easier for children to understand and answer questions based on how they feel than questions about their health (Kostenius & Öhrling, 2006). As a concept, health is often seen in relation to a number of other concepts such as illness, injury, inability and disability. For this reason, the meaning of the concept of health has often been used to illustrate lack of health or the occurrence of health problems. According to *Nationencyklopedin* (1998), the Swedish word for health, *hälsa*, stems from Old Swedish, means 'happiness', and is related to the sense of the word *hel* ('whole'). From such a perspective, a healthy life appears to be synonymous with a "happy" or a "good" life, according to Bremberg (SOU 2006,77). From a holistic perspective, the idea of health may be described as people's potential or ability to perform certain actions or realise certain goals. In meetings with children and in dealing with issues concerning children's health, an important question to consider is who should set the goals. But other questions to be considered are about when, or rather at what time or at what age, children's participation in health matters should be initiated. Yet another important question is about what opportunities, rights and support children are given in order for them to formulate goals for their own lives and health themselves. Children are dependent on parents and other adults to get their needs satisfied, which restricts their freedom of action. But as children develop and learn, their autonomy and self-determination also increase. Kellet, Forrest, Dent and Ward (2004) describe how ten-year-old children who are given greater responsibility also grow and develop their own competence.

Throughout people's development, their health is affected by the environment and the culture that surround them in their daily lives. To children, events in life, in their own bodies, in their families and in society mean that life and health constitute a whole. Children and children's health cannot be regarded as an object but as a part of life. Meetings with adults are important to children, because adults can facilitate, challenge and protect children's development and learning.

Face-to-face meetings

A large number of meetings take place within the framework of schools' activities. Buber (2002) thinks that a human being really exists only in relation to other people, that is to say that, by nature, the world consists of meetings. A question worth elucidating somewhat more thoroughly is, however, what types of meetings take place and whether these meetings benefit a pupil's health and hence also her/his learning. The context and the social conventions are important for the relations that are created. The social aspect is the connection between people that results in common experiences and actions. Even if the community of a social group can lead to personal relations, this does not automatically mean that these personal relationships exist, only the shared existence. The personal sphere risks being superseded by the collective sphere and there is an obvious risk of being regarded as an object. Objectifying other human beings means attacking their possibilities of making choices of their own (Skjervheim, 2002). There is also something beyond the social conventions that may be described as face-to-face meetings. There is an instrumental and objectifying element in social relations that is lacking in face-to-face meetings (Buber, 2002; Lévinas, 1969). According to Buber (ibid), these meetings appear to be a separate category in our existence, a dimension that we are so self-evidently familiar with that we do not see it. The social sphere and face-to-face meetings are thus two different areas in human beings' lives. Taking another human being seriously is the same as being willing to consider her/his views and possibly discuss them. In face-to-face meetings, two people become mutually aware of each other, and each sees the other precisely as the particular Other^[1], not as an object but as a partner in a phase of life (Lévinas, 1969). The involvement of both parties is in principle an absolute requirement. A face-to-face meeting can consist of profound relations, but also of momentary encounters, such as when strangers' eyes meet on the bus; it is something that transcends mental and physical states (Buber, 2002).

Lévinas (1969) thinks that face-to-face meetings can both constitute a personal challenge and enable the learning of new knowledge. To Lévinas (ibid), these face-to-face meetings mean welcoming the Other. When I meet another person, it is important that I do not reduce her/him, regarding this person as similar to myself. It must be possible for the Other to be something else than what I myself am. In order for a meeting to be a face-to-face meeting, I must turn to the Other as the kind of person s/he really is, take her/him

seriously and refrain from forcing something of my own or of myself on the Other. There are many challenges in Lévinas's ideas, because they challenge us as human beings to welcome strangers and those who are different from ourselves and also to refrain from trying to alter them. This might not be as easy as it seems to be. In spite of this, Lévinas (1969) points out that there are many opportunities for people to learn from each other in these face-to-face meetings.

Noddings (2002, 283) emphasises that "Education may be thought of as a constellation of encounters, both planned and unplanned, that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding, and appreciation". This means that there are good chances of learning different types of knowledge in meetings where there is a natural connection between life in and outside school. These meetings can affect a person's inner life and feelings.^[2] Lévinas (1969) thinks that ethics exists as a natural part of every human action and relations, and consequently also in meetings between people. This has ethical consequences for schools. Teaching is, as Campbell (2003, 116) says, "a profoundly moral activity". She also stresses that it is through these relations and meetings at school that pupils learn important values such as honesty, respect and tolerance (Campbell, 2003). The curriculum for the Swedish pre- school and compulsory nine-year school system also emphasises the ethical aspect of schools' mission by stating that children and pupils should be encouraged to develop an ethical attitude to people around them (Ministry of Education, 1994, 1998). Since schools are an important environment for learning and development, we think that it is central to enable face-to-face meetings.

On the one hand the school as an institution has a mission to encourage children to take on the frameworks of knowledge, norms and values that are advocated by society. On the other hand every teacher has an important mission to meet every child in a caring relation. Human meetings have a double nature that is important in how children and teachers meet. By only emphasising the first mission there is a risk of objectifying the children. Von Wright (2000) describes teachers' attitudes to children as punctual or relational. In the punctual perspective, the teacher is only interested in the individual child's inherent qualities and abilities, while the relational attitude is characterised by an understanding that phenomena are at least two-sided. A child must be seen in relation to the context. According to Lévinas (1993), it is not possible to understand oneself through objectifying thinking, which serves to dominate, control and make uniform. We must be aware of the double nature of the relations and live in the field of tension that this involves.

² See further Bergmark, U., *Learning for life through meetings with others*, in this publication.

The way children are treated is of great importance for their learning but also for their identity development. The meetings that children experience in the educational situation may affect their identity development both positively and negatively. How then can identity be viewed? And what connections are there between identity and psychosocial health?

Identity and health

Identity is not merely a matter of our self-image or other people's image of who we are. Our identity is our being in the world, our way of leading our daily lives, and it is the layer of experiences and interpretations we have made through participating in social contexts (Wenger, 1998). Identity is something that is created in a continuous process. It is not an unambiguous concept, and it may be described in many different ways and from several aspects. The word is derived from the Latin *identitas* meaning 'sameness'. This means being the same person from one day and one situation to the next – *I am me* (Stier, 2003). What different types of descriptions of the meaning of identity have in common is its close connection to social relations and the context – the situated nature of identity. A person's identity is constituted socially in relation to other people, groups or phenomena. The contexts may be physical as well as social, cultural and existential. There are different levels of descriptions and points of departure when it comes to understanding identity and its meaning. There are descriptions focusing on the body and self-conception, others that focus on people's biographic narratives, socio-psychological descriptions of groups, and there are descriptions focusing on sub-identities such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, class, lifestyles, etc. (Stier, 2003). In this connection, the individual's identity should also be contrasted with the group identity. There is an antagonistic relationship between the two (Simon, 2004; Goffman, 1963). In the group identity, there is a role expectation that the individual has to relate to, which is a tense relation. In our modern Western society it has become a cultural and ideological ideal to emphasise the individual's identity at the expense of the group identity. At the same time, the group identity is an important motivating driving force when it comes to taking part in organised leisure activities, for example (Simon, 2004). Csikszentmihalyi (2003) describes it as the two pillars of happiness and thinks that being able both to differentiate oneself from others and integrate oneself with others provides the best opportunities for creating a happy and meaningful life.

The process of individualisation gathered momentum with the growth of industrialisation and the new petty bourgeois

class that developed in connection with it (Featherstone, 1995; Bourdieu, 1984). Featherstone (1995) thinks that the construction of lifestyles is central in our society. By promoting an individualistic view where individual self-realisation with concepts such as 'lifestyle' is drawn into commercial advertising, the market both creates needs and claims to satisfy them. The rapid flow of signs and images targeted at desire is constantly creating new needs. The desire is constantly being altered through new images, and presentations and exhibitions are becoming more important than the utility value of a product (Giddens, 1991; Featherstone, 1995). There is great awareness that, among all social groups, we speak through our clothes, homes, leisure interests and lifestyles, not least among children and young people. The view of the body has also changed radically through the consumer culture. The body is a mouldable instrument for pleasure, and it is the individual's own responsibility to form her/his body. The image society is forever reminding us of what we look like and what we should look like. According to Featherstone (ibid), a good constitution is not merely a matter of power and energy, but also of a person's own human value. There is an obvious risk that narcissism will flourish in the consumer culture (Giddens, 1991; Featherstone, 1994; Bauman, 2002). There is a shift from creating good character to creating personality. It is not enough to be able to appear in particular contexts, since it is equally important to demonstrate "a winning image".

Identity is thus a complex concept. For one thing, identity is closely linked to social contexts and their prevailing discourses, but that is not all. Wenger (1998) thinks that identity is about negotiating meaning in a social context. Identity is about a person's own negotiated experience, her/his membership, personal learning history or biographical narrative, where membership is part of several social contexts that all shape her/his identity. Children's participation in different social contexts means that they carry with them different kinds of experiences, which they also carry along to different social contexts, for instance leisure activities and school. The work of building bridges between the social contexts is, according to Wenger (ibid), both an active and a creative process. In this way it is not only our own identities that are negotiated in the context; we always take part in negotiating other people's identities too. There is thus a double relation between identity and social contexts – they shape and are shaped by one another.

For most people and on most occasions, meetings and identity creation may have a positive effect on the development of good psychosocial health. But adapting constantly to new trends, tastes and lifestyles as regards for example clothes, music and leisure interests is often stressful to children and young people – being able to show a winning image and liv-

¹ Using a capital O means that it is others in a definite sense that are referred to. The Other is regarded as a subject, a person with a body. See further Lévinas (1969).

ing up to the constantly changing ideals of the consumer culture. This is manifested not least in schools. These meetings are very difficult for some people, which in turn may have a profound impact on their own identities. Some of these meetings might be called occasions filled with bullying.

Bullying

– one of the greatest problems in schools

In spite of conventions and legislation that are supposed to offer pupils a secure learning environment, bullying of pupils is one of the greatest problems in schools. The fact that children can be unacceptably cruel to one another is not just a contemporary phenomenon. Such negative sides of human relations used to be called teasing, peer oppression, etc. In the late 1960's, Heinemann initiated the debate and research on bullying in schools (Heinemann, 1972). He coined the Swedish term for bullying, *mobb[n]ing*, based on *mob* from the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* meaning 'the easily moveable crowd'. It was thus established that bullying is a group phenomenon. In Anglo-Saxon parlance, one of the meanings of *mob* is 'association of criminals', 'mafia', and the behaviour of a group of bullies might perhaps be compared to mafia methods. The consequences for the victim of being exposed to acts of cruelty and harassment may be serious health problems. Heinemann was followed by Olweus (1973), who is now regarded internationally as a guru in the discourse on bullying, and by his contemporary Pikas (1975). Both developed programmes of measures and methods for preventing and taking steps against bullying in schools. Ljungström (1997), Staff (1997), Roland (1996), and *Friends and Tillsammans* ('Together') are further examples of people and organisations that have developed anti-bullying models, programmes and methods.

Everybody who has worked in or had anything to do with a school will have heard about a pupil that has been bullied. About 100,000 pupils in Swedish schools are involved in bullying every day, and this exposure must be regarded as the greatest threat to pupils' health and development. Bullying may consist of pupils being verbally assaulted, harassed or degraded, excluded from the community of their class and classmates, or mentally or physically attacked during their school days. The victims are likely to regard as empty rhetoric the control documents' commitments to the inviolability of human life and schools' obligation to protect every child from being exposed to acts of cruelty and insults. The pupils themselves have ranked protection against violence, acts of cruelty and bullying as the three most important factors that must be secured in schools (Friends, 2006).

There are field reports indicating that pupils have become crueler to one another, a new manifestation of hardening attitudes in schools. For the first time in the history of Swedish schools, a school was closed down on 11 May 2006 due to failure to guarantee the pupils a secure learning environment. In this particular case, it was a small group of children who terrorised others, damaged the school's premises, and sabotaged its teaching.

On the other hand, the upper secondary school at Rinkeby has shown that developments can be influenced. From having been threatened with closure and almost impossible to work in a few years ago, the school has now won both national and international prizes for entrepreneurship, enterprising and knowledge development, and the pupils' working climate is very good. Pupils are now applying for this upper secondary school.

Although Sweden is considered a leading country as regards preventing and taking legal measures against bullying in the compulsory nine-year school system (Forsman, 2006), about 100,000 children are estimated to be involved in bullying on a daily basis, as victims, perpetrators, sometimes in both capacities, and as various categories of sympathisers and helpers. In every class there is at least one pupil who sometimes or often experiences fear of the coming school day. Many children's psychosomatic problems are likely to be related to the working environment of their school³. Another aspect found in our human meetings and affecting us negatively as individuals is stress.

Stress

– the public health problem of our time

Stress in schools is often on a personal level very tangible, and in a general perspective it constitutes one of today's greatest public health problems. Stress is increasing in society as a whole and in children and young people stress is also on the rise (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). As pointed out initially, there are tendencies indicating that children's psychosocial state of health has deteriorated over time (Clausson, Petersson and Berg, 2003; SOU, 1998, 2000, 2006), and the commission for Swedish Government Official Investigations, recently appointed to investigate children's and young people's stress and mental health, also points to this downward spiral. This commission emphasises that "... there is a clear connection between schools' ability to implement their principal assignment and children's mental health" (SOU 2006, 261). In a report from Barnombudsmannen ('the Children's Ombuds-

³ See further Forsman, A., *Bullying at School – A threat to Pupils Health, Learning and Development* in this publication.

man') (2002), Swedish children state that bullying, stress and the working environment in schools are the most important things to work with⁴. According to Einarsen et al. (1998), one of the causes of bullying and harassment is the increase in stress in schools, and in the National Agency for Education's report *Attityder till skolan 2000* ('Attitudes towards School, 2000'), stress in schools is described as a growing problem (Skolverket, 2001). School nurses, school psychologists and school welfare officers were interviewed about children's health, and 95% thought that children's observable stress had increased in the last ten years. The rest thought that the stress level had not changed, and none of the interviewees considered that children's stress had decreased at their workplace (Barnombudsmannen, 2001). A Swedish study revealed that the meaning of stress for children aged 10–12 is experienced as an emerged focus on them being caught in life's challenges (Kostenius & Öhring, in press). In this study children's lived experiences of stress were described in the following five themes: being out of time; being less than one can be; being ordered around by others; being in a fleeing, fighting body; and being pushed to excel. A number of stressful situations presented themselves when relating to others (ibid). Children experience well-being in relations where they are being met as a "we" and when trust and respect are the basis for communicating (Kostenius & Öhring, 2006).

The double nature of silence in connection to well-being

Another important aspect of human communion that can also affect children's well-being is silence. There is always silence in our daily lives and we can never escape it. But the nature of the silence has to be observed – is it good or bad? Or, in other words, is the silence perceived as constructive or destructive? Silence may sometimes be experienced as divinely pleasant and desired, while at other times it may enforced and very unpleasant. These two sides of silence constantly interact, and the boundary between constructive and destructive silence may often be very thin (Alerby & Elidottir, 2003).

We can be forced into silence for various reasons, for example through oppression, ignorance and/or somebody exercising her/his power, which is often the case for example in bullying situations in schools. A person upon whom silence has been forced, for example through oppression or execution of power, may eventually experience that s/he has no

⁴ See further Kostenius & Nyström, *Health Promotion with the pupils in the Classroom*, in this publication.

voice and hence cannot be heard. Freire (1972) wrote, among other things, about "the culture of silence", where, after a long period of enforced silence, people came to believe that they had no voice and therefore no control of their situation either. They experienced, so to speak, that being able to have an influence was beyond their control. Losing the opportunity to voice one's thoughts and views may be devastating from several perspectives, as Arendt (1958) pointed out when claiming that it is not bad people's evil but good people's silence that is dangerous.

From a psychosocial perspective, the situation in many of today's schools is not the best, and it has been observed that bullying is one of the greatest problems of schools (Forsman, 2003). To relate Arendt's (1958) argumentation to present-day schools and the bullying problems that often occur there, silence is found to be an important aspect of bullying. Silence is not only an important component of the very act of bullying, where for example ostracism, withholding information, and condescending looks may occur. The silence of other people who observed the bullying but chose not to act is devastating to both the bullied person and the bully. Arendt talks about the danger of good people's silence, of not reacting and making their voices heard. She also claims that if silence is allowed to rule in such situations, evil will be banal and people will stop reflecting on and caring about what is really happening. According to Forsman (2003), bullying treated with silence, that is, when allowed to continue unchallenged for a lengthy period of time, may lead to mental blunting eventually resulting in acceptance. In Arendt's (1958) words, bullying then risks becoming a banality.

In an earlier study, children describe their experiences of lack of time, which in turn leads to a stressful lifestyle, in their opinion (Alerby, 1998). One way of handling stress was, according to children in yet another study (Alerby, 2004) to be in the silent area of the school – the Peace Area. There the children had a place where they could collect their thoughts and reflect on existence in peace and quiet. The fact that a quiet place like the Peace Area can reduce the children's experiences and feelings of stress is naturally important for their experiences of school as a whole and hence also for their learning. Stress has a negative effect on our health, and our ability both to communicate and to achieve is affected when we are exposed to stress (Kostenius & Lindqvist, 2006). Moreover, studies have shown that noise is generally stressful for human beings. A high sound level has a physical effect on us, among other things in the form of high blood pressure and a higher pulse rate as well as an increase in stress hormones (Babisch et al., 2001; Englund, 2000). According to Passhicer-Vermeer and Passhicer (2000), high sound levels will be precisely one of our chief public health problems

in the 21st-century. What in this context we can pause and think about is whether the sound level of schools contributes to stress among those studying and working there. Children themselves clearly underlined the importance of being in silence during the school day – “The Peace Area is my favourite place because it is quiet. It is important precisely because it is quiet” (Alerby, 2004).

Concluding remarks

As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, children's health and well-being is of great importance for their ongoing growth and development, or in other words; “Health is a breeding ground for development and improvement” (Bergmark & Alerby, in press). Therefore it is important to achieve increased knowledge and understanding of factors influencing children's health and well-being in general, and in schools more specifically. We have illuminated aspects like bullying and stress among children, which are increasing ill health and decreasing children's experiences of well-being (Forsman, 2003, 2006; Kostenius & Öhrling, in press). We suggest that instead of focusing on factors which are problem-orientated, we shift the focus to possibility-orientated experiences and activities. One way to develop a healthy school can be through appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005). Instead of problem-solving, appreciative inquiry focuses on positive experiences and what we want more of (ibid). Antonovsky (2005) emphasises the significance of seeing health and positive aspects in our lives, which has a close connection to appreciative inquiry. According to Bergmark and Alerby (2008) appreciative inquiry involves listening to the student, in this case the child, and focusing on the health and positive aspects in school, or as they express it: “It focuses on the discovery of people's gifts and strengths and equality of voice”. Kostenius and Öhrling (2008) suggest that adults keep asking questions and listening with ‘a sensitive ear’ when working with children, to be open to the children's experiences by giving them a voice in the process. Positive question has a tendency to result in positive solutions which lead to positive action (Ghaye, 2005). In the light of these thoughts we would like to end with two questions which might aid the health promotion process: How can we discover a child's gifts and strengths? How can we meet children with openness and listen to them with a ‘sensitive ear’?

References

- Alerby, E. (1998). *Att fånga en tanke. En fenomenologisk studie av barns och ungdomars tänkande kring miljö* [To catch a thought. A phenomenological study about children's thoughts concerning their environment]. Doctoral thesis, 1998: 44, Institutionen för pedagogik och ämnesdidaktik, Centrum för forskning i lärande, Luleå tekniska universitet. Luleå: Universitetstryckeriet.
- Alerby, E. (2004). The Appreciation of a Quiet Place at School. *Nordic Journal of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 14(1), pp. 57–61.
- Alerby, E. & Elidottir, J. (2003). The Sounds of Silence: Some Remarks on the Value of Silence in the Process of Reflection in Relation to Teaching and Learning. *Reflective Practice*, 4(1), pp. 41–51.
- Antonovsky, A. (2005). *Hälsans mysterium* [Unraveling the mystery of health]. Stockholm: Natur and Kultur.
- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: Ill.
- Babisch, W., Fromme, H., Beyer, A., & Ising, H. (2001). Increased Catecholamine levels in Urine in Subjects Exposed to Road Traffic Noise: the Role of Stress Hormones in Noise Research. *Environ Int*, 26 (7-8), pp. 475–81.
- Barnombudsmannen. (2002). *Elevhälsa, Rapport från enkätundersökning bland skolsköterskor, psykologer och skolkuratorer* [School health care. Report from school nurses, psychologists and welfare officers]. Hässelby: Author.
- Barnombudsmannen. (2001). *Barn och ungas stress i skolan* [Children and young people in school]. Stockholm: Author.
- Bauman, Z. (2002). *Society under siege*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bergmark, U. & Alerby, E. (2008). Developing an Ethical School through Appreciating Practice? Students' Lived Experience of Ethical Situations in School. *Ethics and Education*, 3(1), pp. 39-53.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Buber, M. (2002). *Between Man and Man*. London: Routledge.
- Campbell, E. (2003). *The Ethical Teacher*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Clausson, E., Petersson, K., & Berg, A. (2003). School Nurses' View of Schoolchildren's Health and Their Attitudes to Documenting it in the School Health Record – a Pilot Study. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Science*, 17, pp. 392–398.
- Cooperrider, D & Whitney, D. (2005). *Appreciative Inquiry: a Positive Revolution in Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2003). *Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Einarsen, S., Raknes, B. I., Matthiesen, S. B. & Hellesøy, O. H. (1998). *Mobbning och svåra personkonflikter* [Bullying and severe person conflicts]. Södertälje: Kommentus Förlag.
- Englund, A. (2000). *Trafikstress. En redovisning av utförande och resultat i KFB-finansierade forskningsprojekt 1996–1999* [Traffic stress. An account of performance and results of KFB-financed research projects 1996-1999]. Stockholm: Fritzes.
- Featherstone, M. (1994). *Kultur, kropp och konsumtion. Kultursociologiska texter i urval och översättning av Fredrik Miegel och Thomas Johansson* [Culture, body and consumption. Selected cultural sociological texts]. Stockholm: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag.
- Featherstone, M. (1995). *Undoing Culture. Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity*. London: Sage Publications.
- Forsman, A. (2003). *Skolans texter mot mobbning – reella styrdokument eller hyllvärmare?* [The school's texts against peer bullying. Real tools or just paper?]. Doctoral thesis. Luleå tekniska universitet: Institutionen för lärarutbildning.
- Forsman, A. (2006). The work against peer bullying. In A. Ahonen, K. Kurtakko & E. Sohlman (eds.). *School, Culture and Well-Being. Educational Sciences No: 4*. Rovaniemi: University of Lapland. pp. 53–67.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. UK: Penguin Books.
- Friends. (2006). *Skydd mot våld och övergrepp viktigast för ungdomar* [Protection against violence and assaults most important for teenagers.]. Available at www.friends.se. (Retrieved May 10, 2006).
- Ghaye, T. (2005). *Developing the Reflective Healthcare Team*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs.
- Heinemann, p-p. (1972). *Mobbning. Gruppvald mellan barn och vuxna* [Bullying. Group violence among children and adults]. Lund: Natur och kultur.
- Kellet, M., Forest, R., Dent, N. & Ward, S. (2004). Just Tell Us the Skills, We'll Do the Rest: Empowering Ten-Years-Olds as Active Researchers. *Children and Society*, 18(5), pp. 329–343.
- Kostenius, C. & Lindqvist, A-K. (2006). *Hälsövägledning* [Health counselling]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Kostenius, C. & Öhrling, K. (2008). 'Friendship is Like an Extra Parachute': Reflections on the Way Schoolchildren Share their Lived Experiences of Well-Being through Drawings. *Reflective Practice*.
- Kostenius, C. & Öhrling, K. (2006). School Children from the North Sharing Their Lived Experience of Health and Well-Being. *Journal of Qualitative Studies of Health and Well-Being*, 1, pp. 226–235.
- Kostenius, C. & Öhrling, K. (in press). The meaning of stress from schoolchildren's perspective. *Stress and Health*.

- Léznas, E. (1969). *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Lévinas, E. (1993). *Etik och oändlighet. Samtal med Philippe Nemo* [Ethics and infinity. Conversations with Philippe Nemo]. Stockholm: Stehag, Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposium AB.
- Ljungström, K. (1997). *Mobbning i skolan* [Bullying in school]. Johanneshov: Ordskällan Förlag.
- Ministry of Education. (1994). *Läroplaner för det obligatoriska skolväsendet och de frivilliga skolformerna* [The Swedish major educational guidelines for the compulsory school system and the voluntary types of school]. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (1998). *Läroplaner för förskolan och förskoleklass*. [The Swedish major educational guidelines for pre-primary schools and the pre-primary school classes]. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.
- Nationalencyklopedin (1998). *Multimedia 2.0 for PC*. Höganäs: Bokförlaget Bra Böcker AB.
- Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating Moral People. A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Olweus, D. (1973). *Hackkycklingar och översittare* [Bullying in school. Aggression and whipping boys]. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Passchier-Vermeer, W., & Passchier, W.F. (2000). Noise Exposure and Public Health. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 108(1), pp.123–31.
- Roland, E. (1996). *Mobbing. Håndbok til foreldre* [Peer bullying, handbook for parents]. Stavanger: Rebel Forlag A S.
- Simon, B. (2004). *Identity in Modern Society. A Social Psychological Perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Skervheim, H. (2002). *Mennesket* [The human being]. Red: J. Hellesnes & G. Skirbekk. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Skolverket. (2001). *Attityder till skolan 2000* [Attitudes towards school 2000]. Stockholm: Author.
- Socialstyrelsen (2004). *Socialstyrelsens riktlinjer för skolhälsovården* [Guidelines for Swedish school health care by the National Board of Health and Welfare]. Stockholm: Author.
- SOU 1998: 31. Swedish Government Official Report. *Det gäller livet. Stöd och vård till barn och ungdomar med psykiska problem* Slutbetänkande av Barnpsykiatrikommittén [Concerning life. Support and care for children and young people with psychological problems. Final report from the child psychiatry committee]. Stockholm: Socialdepartementet.
- SOU 2000: 19. Swedish Government Official Report. *Slutbetänkande av levvårdsutredningen*. [Final report from the pupil care investigation]. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- SOU 2006: 77. Swedish Government Official Report. *Ungdomar, stress och psykisk ohälsa*. Slutbetänkande av Utredningen om ungdomars psykiska hälsa. [Young people, stress and psychological ill health. Final report from the investigation into mental health in young people]. Stockholm: Author.
- SOU 2006: 77. *Ungdomar, stress och psykisk ohälsa*. Slutbetänkande av Utredningen om ungdomars psykiska hälsa [Young people, stress and psychological ill health]. Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.
- Staff, J. (1997). *Mombus, en model att förebygga mobbning* [Mombus, a model to preventbullying]. Täby: SANA förlag.
- Stier, J. (2003). *Identitet. Människans gåtfulla porträtt* [Identity. The mysterious portrait of the human being]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Wass, A. (1994). *Promoting Health: the Primary Health Care Approach*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace and Company.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- von Wright, M. (2000). *Vad eller vem? En pedagogisk rekonstruktion av G H Meads teori om människans intersubjektivitet* [What or who? A pedagogical reconstruction of G H Meads theory of human inter-subjectivity]. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Öhrling, K. (2006). *Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children. A WHO Cross National Survey in Northern Sweden*. Paper presented at the NERA's 34th Congress Örebro 9–11 March, 2006.