

John Dewey and Entrepreneurship in School- A Swedish Case

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Abstract

Progressive education, with its purpose of educating young people to become democratic citizens, has influenced the Swedish educational system for many years. Critical voices have been raised, claiming that progressive education has diminished Swedish pupils' results. Since 2011, when entrepreneurship as a concept and as a pedagogical approach was instituted in Swedish curricula, the debate has emerged again. In this case, however, the problem was with the pedagogical ideas of the entrepreneurship in school. Critical voices claim that entrepreneurship is a part of the neoliberal agenda and that the language of progressive education has been appropriated and misused in order to create productive citizens who will maintain the capitalist state. This article is written from the perspective of pupils in an upper secondary school, illuminating and problematizing the sense in which the entrepreneurship in school can be said to be progressive in the spirit of John Dewey. The result shows that the entrepreneurship in school contains many similarities with the ideas of progressive education, especially in the way that pupils work and take part in activities. However, the lack of pupils who talk about learning to improve future society or to develop democracy is obvious. Thus, even if working methods seem to be equal, the overall educational goals are different. The goal of entrepreneurship in school is to educate young people to become independent, innovative individuals but in that education mission, there is a risk that democratic values are neglected.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship in school, progressivism, democracy fostering, pupils' voices

1. Introduction

Education does not need a new fuzzy concept is the headline of a polemical article written by Von Greiff and Hartman (2011) in *Svenska Dagbladet* a daily newspaper in Sweden,

concerning the introduction of entrepreneurship in the Swedish curricula for both primary and lower and upper secondary schools in 2011. The authors think that to a too great extent and for too long time schools have made pupils work on their own in a progressive spirit, which they regard as one of the reasons for Swedish schoolchildren's and young people's increasingly worse results in international comparisons. In many respects entrepreneurship in schools will merely result in a continuation of the chosen course, according to the debaters. In the Swedish translation of progressivism that was made in the 1950s, 60s and 70s when democratic aspect was seen as prominent feature and teaching methods were developed that should be based on the pupil's interest, own initiatives and curiosity such as projects, theme assignments and group work (Carlberg, 2011; Sjunnesson, 2011; Säljö, 2007). Later on this type of pedagogy was given the epithet "fuzzy education" by critics who made the interpretation that it is chiefly a matter of pupils working on their own and that these working methods have successively worsened the pupils' results. The reasoning dates far back in time to the discussion between advocates of the so-called traditional and the progressive pedagogy, where the pedagogy called traditional places the emphasis on mediating objective facts to the pupils, while the progressive pedagogy above all emphasises that pupils' interest, motivation and freer working methods should govern the teaching to a great extent (Egan, 2008; Labaree, 2005; Gustavsson, 2002, 2003). Nowadays one can also see that what is associated with traditional education has been replaced and can in many contexts be characterised by the concept of "knowledge school", which was launched by Jan Björklund, Minister for Education and Science in the non-Socialist government between 2007 and 2014.

John Dewey wrote as early as 1938 in the book *Education and Experience* about the difference between the traditional and the progressive pedagogy. Dewey's principal argument in favour of new pedagogical ideas was that the traditional pedagogy could not provide sufficiently for pupils with the experiences that were needed to live and work in a democratic society. Dewey's starting-point was that democracy should above all be described as a means more than an objective for attaining democracy. It was thus the democratic working methods in the education that should foster democratic citizens (Hartman, Roth, & Rönström, 2003). In the 1970s, when progressivism had its real boom, its pedagogical ideas came to be regarded as a left political phenomenon, when the implementation of the education was planned precisely by means of new democratic working methods and pupils' influence (Gustavsson, 2002).

John Dewey's ideas about the progressive education has according to Biesta (1996) influenced both Europe and North America when it comes to the development of education. And it is obvious that the main inspiration to educational reforms in Europe during the 20th century, has been the thoughts of John Dewey (Blossing, Imsen & Moos, 2014). In Sweden Dewey's texts were early translated and implemented in the curriculum work, and his rhetoric has characterized the Swedish curricula since then (Burman, 2014; Ringarp, 2013; Hartman, Lundgren, & Hartman, 2005).

1.1 Entrepreneurship in school according to teaching and learning

The concept of entrepreneurship took place in the Swedish curriculum for upper secondary

school in 2011 (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). The concept of entrepreneurship has been given two meanings, both to stimulate the entrepreneurial abilities and to stimulate entrepreneurship, and innovative thinking. The entrepreneurial abilities are defined as creativity, curiosity, self-confidence, desire to try out and realise new ideas, solving problems, taking initiatives and responsibility and working both independently and together with others (National Agency of Education, 2011). It is thus two perspectives that are visualised here, one that is narrower and is about entrepreneurship and one that is broader and is more about developing entrepreneurial abilities in all subjects in school. In this article the concept *Entrepreneurship in school* will be used to describe both the narrow and the broader perspective.

Entrepreneurship in school in terms of the narrower perspective has existed in upper secondary schools for a long time. As early as the 1980s the concept of ‘Young Enterprise’ was established, where young people during one year can try out starting, running and liquidating an enterprise. On the other hand the idea of entrepreneurship in school permeating all teaching is relatively new. In research the entrepreneurship in school is formulated as something that is characterised by activity, both within and outside the school together with different actors in order to create as authentic activities as possible (Jones & Iredale, 2010, 2014; Otterborg, 2011; Svedberg, 2007). Emphasis is also placed on project-based working methods and transdisciplinary assignments to give the pupils a better understanding of context and a more holistic view of their education. This requires long coherent periods with opportunities for the pupils to plan, implement and evaluate their teaching (Backström-Widjeskog, 2010; Leffler, 2009). Cooperation and teaching for lifelong learning are considered important, as is the emphasis on the teacher as mentor (Elo, 2015; Seikkula-Leino, 2011). Reflection on one’s own learning (Pepin, 2012) and the idea that the teaching should be based on the pupil’s own life-world are emphasised (Leffler, 2014). It should be considered that the teaching methods mentioned, does not appear to need a certain social/cultural context or a specific school organization for performing these way of working.

According to Aasen (2003) the early so-called social democratic progressivism was a way and a method to protect young people from the economic system and capitalism. Several researchers’ show that entrepreneurship in school increasingly has come to be connected with the progressive pedagogy, in particular the ideas of an activity-based pedagogy and learning by doing (e.g. Hammerling, 2011; Johansen & Shanke, 2012; Lack áis, 2013; Pepin, 2012). Critics think that the language used in the progressive pedagogy has been appropriated by the neoliberal discourse, which among other things contains enterprise, creativity and independence, with the aim that everybody will develop into becoming her/his own entrepreneur (e.g. Bauman, 2001; Dahlstedt & Hertzberg; 2011; Holm; 2013). Researchers though believe that advocates of entrepreneurship in school have utilised and distorted Dewey’s ideas of the progressive pedagogy in an erroneous way (e.g. Blossing, Imsen & Moos, 2014; Hjulström, 2014). Which could be discussed as scholars that highlight entrepreneurship in schools seem more to “borrowing” learning methods from progressivism than discussing the very purpose of it.

1.2 Purpose and disposition

What is then the empirical situation in schools; is the entrepreneurship in school progressive in Dewey's sense? Is it an entrepreneurial citizen or a democratic one that is educated, or is it both? The aim of this article is to elucidate and problematize in what respects entrepreneurship, in upper secondary school in Sweden, is progressive in John Dewey's sense.

The outline of the article is the following. Henceforth the theoretical framework of progressivism is presented based on John Dewey's ideas of how progressive education should be designed. Then there is an account of the methodological considerations. After that the empirical material will be presented and finally a summarising analysis and conclusions are made together with a discussion of entrepreneurship in school and its relation to the progressive pedagogical ideas.

2. Progressivism

John Dewey's ideas of progressivism took their starting-point in the societal changes of the period. He thought that there was a discrepancy between education and what took place outside schools (Glassman, 2001). In the late 19th century and the early 20th century many millions of immigrants arrived in the USA. One of the effects of this was great class differences and hence also different wishes of how society should be formed, which in turn resulted in a multitude of different political movements (Hartman, Lundgren & Hartman, 2004). According to Dewey education should be a tool for developing the citizens of the future, it should be an effective instrument for attaining democratic development, social advances and a shared society, with shared goals that might be realised (Dewey, 1938/1997). In the form that education was then constructed it did not meet the demands, so a change was required (Hartman, Lundgren, & Hartman, 2005). Democracy should be a matter of creating habits. By means of social construction through education citizens would be made to act democratically (Rivero, 2007). Dewey emphasised that children and young people should be socialised into the shared culture, but it was equally important that they developed individually (Burman, 2014). The individual and society should not be seen as two different things but as two sides of the same coin (Hartman, Roth, & Rönström, 2003).

Among other things Dewey discusses in his lecture *Progressive Education and the Science of Education* 1928 how education should be changed, what should concretely characterise the progressive education in schools and in what way the progressive pedagogy might be a contribution to pedagogical theory. Here he emphasises the following basic themes: *Respect for the individual's capacities, interests and experience, External freedom and informality, Respect for self-initiated and self-conducted learning, Respect for activity as the stimuli's and centre of learning, Belief in social contacts, communication and cooperation.*

The starting-point of the goal-directed work in the education was that it should always be based on the individual's interest, curiosity and the pupil's life experience (Dewey, 1928/2004). The pupils should be free to base their work on their own experiences, but for this reason they should not govern their learning entirely by themselves; the teachers as

guides are given an important role here (Dewey, 1928/ 2004). The pupils' power of initiative was central, since great emphasis was placed on the pupils acquiring knowledge and abilities on their own (Dewey, 1897). The pupils should then develop wider experiences through interaction between practice/action and reflection. Experience was not considered to arise merely through reflection without any anchorage in practice and vice versa (Dewey, 1938/1997; Hartman, Roth, & Rönström, 2003). It is in this description of experience via practice that Dewey's perhaps best-known concept *Learning by doing* has its origin. According to Dewey & Dewey (1915) the prerequisite for *Learning by doing* becoming reality was giving the pupils great freedom and creating habits of independence.

The concept of activity was then the most essential in Dewey's ideas of how teaching should be done. The activities were described as the central part of the learning and the activities should be constructive and expressive (Dewey, 1938/1997). In order for the activities to be regarded as meaningful, the activities that were offered should be steered towards the desired future society and be based on situations for how people lived with one another (Dewey, 1916). The systemisation in the activity was described as important and the teacher's general view and understanding of how activities were built on each other were considered an important component for pupils' learning and development (Dewey, 1928/2004). The experience a pupil had got in one activity was thus brought into the next activity. All activities in the education should thus be built on each other; Dewey (1938/1997) called this experimental continuum. Cooperation and activities should take place with the surrounding society, since education should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon but as a part of the rest of society. Education should build relations, with the homes, the garden, the park, the countryside, the universities, technological developments, vocational schools, museums and working life (Dewey, 1928/2004).

Dewey regarded communication as fundamental, since a shared society with goals, beliefs, expectations, knowledge and shared understanding and consensus requires good communication (Dewey, 1916). The language constituted the possibility for knowledge, understanding of others' perspectives, ideas and feelings passing from one individual to another in social relations (Burman, 2014). A living society was characterised as a society providing preconditions and scope for living discussions among different life styles, i.e. a pluralistic and democratic society (Hartman, Roth & Rönström, 2003). The spirit in schools should be informal in order to facilitate the development of the pupils' emotional life and give the teachers a chance to see the pupils as the persons they were (Dewey, 1928/2004).

The education was regarded as a preparation for the pupils to meet the future, not for something that would come, since the future is not predetermined. The pupils should instead learn to handle current future problems (Hartman, Roth & Rönström, 2003). Dewey thus saw the learning as the basis for maintaining a democracy. The learning process should take place through an active process of social commitment, of gaining experience, of broadening somebody's awareness, of developing habits and skills of cooperation and intelligent interaction with other individuals and groups (Dewey, 1916). Understanding is for Dewey a more important concept than knowledge (Wegmarshaus, 2007; Apple, 2013). Dewey's view of human action was holistic, since he thought that our actions could not be understood in

isolation from each other or from the social contexts in which they were implemented (Hartman, Roth & Rönström, 2003). Therefore the entire education should be holistic and not be divided into different subjects (Dewey, 1938/2004).

The progressive pedagogy can thus be summarised in the following fundamental concepts: *The activity is dominant – it is steered towards the society we want – a shared society, capacities, interest and experience, holistic education, freedom, initiatives, self-conducted learning, communication, cooperation, process, development, learning is endless, the teacher is a guide.*

3. Methodological considerations

The investigated school is included in a school improvement program “Entrepreneurial learning” governed by a Swedish independent research institute Ifous [Innovation, Research and Development in Schools] and was launched between the year 2012 and 2015. The aim of the program is to implement entrepreneurship in school and to monitor its effects through research. The program includes both education and research. The training is conducted at three seminars per year and addressed to the schools selected groups of teachers, so called pilots and their school principals. The training also includes assignments to be carried out for each activity. In total 25 schools participate in the programme, 19 upper secondary schools, 5 primary and lower secondary schools and one preschool.

As the first step in the selection for the study a number of schools were chosen out of the 19 upper secondary schools that participate in the Ifous programme. The selection was made on the basis of a questionnaire where those that described to the greatest extent that they were working entrepreneurially were selected. After a further analysis of the responses the school was selected that based on current research can be regarded as the most entrepreneurial one. Above all because the school has a clear cooperation with actors outside the school, the pupils describe in a distinct way that they can take a lot of initiatives, that they work creatively and that they have great freedom to organise their work in the school. Pupils from all the programmes in the school are represented in the study and these are the *Programme of Business Administration and Economics*, which is a vocational programme, the pupil should develop knowledge to work in business occupations, such as salespersons, purchasers, and store manager and in the administration area. The *Business Management and Economics Programme*, is a higher education preparatory program, the pupils should develop knowledge for higher education studies primarily in economics, laws and other social areas. *The Social Science Programme* with an orientation towards media, information and communication, is a higher education preparatory program, the pupils should develop knowledge about a broad area of social science. The *Natural Science Programme* is a higher education preparatory programme, pupils should develop knowledge needed for higher education in the natural sciences, mathematics and technology.; in total 21 pupils were interviewed. In the spring semester of 2014 the school had in total about 260 pupils when the study was conducted.

The interviews were semi-structured and the starting point was question based on how research describes different teaching methods that appears to develop the entrepreneurial abilities. Interviews were made in focus groups (Tursunovic, 2002; Wibeck, 2010). The focus

groups were gender homogeneous (Wibeck, 2010).

Based on the theoretical perspective, interviews made at the investigated school was analysed. The study was concretely implemented by first making the interviews and then placing them in NVivo a data analysis software application designed for qualitative research. The five progressive themes were then used as a tool to categorize the empirical material, and finally the students' answers was analysed with help of the fundamental concept.

4. Results

The pupil's responses in the focus groups interviews are below categorised under John Dewey's five progressive themes.

4.1 Respect for the individual's capacities, interests and experiences

All groups that were interviewed in the school state that at the start of every course they are allowed to talk to all the teachers and to establish a goal towards the mark they are striving for. During the course they then get feedback on assignments that they can complement afterwards in order to attain the mark that the individual pupil is striving for. The teachers can also give feedback during the time in which the pupil is working with the assignment and then the final version is handed in and a final mark is given. The pupils state that it is valuable to be allowed to establish goals and to have something to strive for.

I sit down with the teachers and plan that this is the mark I want to aim at. Then it's also up to the teacher to be able to support me on the way. Even if I don't get there, I've tried to make my journey there and I think that it strengthens me quite a lot (Girl, 18 years old).

Regardless of programme all pupils at the school have a placement period every school year and to the greatest possible extent the pupils must arrange the placement themselves, based on their interests. One boy says:

Now I'm going to Jerusalem to do volunteer work, in what other school would I've been allowed to do that? I'm enormously grateful (Boy, 18 years old).

The placement is described by the interviewed groups as a necessary experience to gain easier access to the working life. They say that this school differs from other schools, since in other schools, above all in preparatory educations for ensuing studies, pupils seldom get an opportunity to gain access to a place of work.

4.2 Respect for external freedom and informality

When the pupils talk about creativity, it is often associated with the concept of freedom. They

state that they can participate in designing assignments, use a form of examination decided by themselves, work with actor outside the school and use different working methods such as UF, Case and other projects. They think that projects or modules that last for a long time create extra scope for freedom and possibility to influence:

We may do almost anything as long as we believe in it ourselves (Girl, 17 years old).

In this freedom there is in many pupils' statements a positive view of having long lessons, where there is time for introduction, work reflection and also for finishing what they are doing.

The pupils experience that the teachers have a good knowledge of them and that they get the help they need through guidance and advice. The teachers encourage and defuse the situation and there is joy in the mutual relations both between teachers and between teachers and pupils and between pupils:

I think that all teachers are very good at raising the spirits of all of us pupils (Boy, 16 years old).

4.3 Respect for self-initiated and self-conducted learning

The pupils state that there is great scope for them to take initiatives, which in turn gives them a lot of responsibility, which in turn develops them as persons:

Personally I've learned to take initiatives of my own, so that I'll really finish my tasks in time and make them nice the way I want them. I hadn't thought like this when I came from the lower secondary school to this school, because there I was used to getting assignments from the teachers and the teachers holding my hand if I needed help. So for myself I see it as a great personal development to take my own responsibility and be a driving force, Perhaps more than I was before; I've really awaked that part of myself (Girl, 17 years).

Several pupils bear witness to the positive aspect of taking a lot of initiatives and they say that the teachers really want them to do so, but they also say that it may sometimes even be nice when the teacher decides, since e.g. when working with Young Enterprise, case or other projects a lot of initiatives and responsibility is required to manage the assignment. Several of them state that they have learned to take responsibility during the education, precisely because there is great scope for taking initiatives of one's own. In the program of Young Enterprise and the upper secondary work that the pupils must implement in the third form, the

pupils state that it is very much up to themselves what the work will be like:

In the program of Young Enterprise we can take as many initiatives as we like, and the same goes for upper secondary work and project work, they are all our own; there is no teacher who tells me that this is what you should do, there is only the date when this must be handed in (Boy, 18 years old).

The pupils do not experience that the teachers put pressure on them or nag at them about doing the work, so the responsibility is entirely theirs. The pupils' statements indicate that they must take a lot of initiatives themselves as regards both the content of the assignment and the responsibility for completing it in time, which is indicated by several of them being given power over their own time. In the longer overarching projects the pupils themselves are often in control of the time and individual studies are sometimes conducted at home or at school. This seems to be facilitated by the long lesson periods that the school has chosen to work with.

4.4 Respect for activity as the stimuli's and centre of learning

In addition to the usual teaching the pupils have recurrent activities during the education, and the pupils often talk about these activities during the interviews. All pupils must run the program of Young enterprises all the three years. The level of ambition during the three years can differ somewhat, among other things due to the time that is available for it on the timetable, which seems to have differed during the years. In the first form the classes are divided into large groups and start, run and liquidate an enterprise in this group. The pupils state that in some years they have had time in the timetable, but not in some years. Many pupils describe in the interviews that a lot of work is required in order really to run their enterprise successfully and some pupils are more enthusiastic than others, but they all say that it is a useful and developing experience:

If it hadn't been for Young Enterprise, we would probably not have learned, but with Young Enterprise we have learned a hell of a lot; we've got so much through Young Enterprise (Boy, 18 years old).

The whole school also works with what is called Case and recurs once a term. Case is supposed to a task from industry and trade and must be done in 24 hours. Several pupils state that it is fun and creative, but there are also pupils who describe this activity as "worthless".

As mentioned earlier all pupils also have a placement period in all the three years in the upper secondary school. The pupils say that it provides a good opportunity for e.g. getting extra work:

For me the work placement training has been a good thing. I've never been turned down and they've given me weekend jobs, so it's only been positive for me and I've also learned a lot (Boy, 18 years old).

Among other activities they mention the upper secondary work and other both individual projects and group projects and various transdisciplinary activities in small and large groups, e.g. a gender theme and a health project.

4.5 Belief in social contacts, communication and cooperation

A majority of the pupils say that they work a lot in groups both when the teachers think they should do so but also voluntarily. They say that there is a good cooperation climate and they talk about possible advantages and disadvantages of working in groups. The advantages are that they learn from each other, complement each other and that they give each other perspectives and that it is a good preparation for working life to learn to cooperate with others. The disadvantages might be that the members of the group do not have the same goals and that they have to make compromises. Nevertheless several pupils say that they have become good at cooperating with each other and that they like to do so without being told to:

I think that working in a group is very strengthening also because you get a lot of input from different people because they think so differently. Because if you work in a group you can think in a different way and that is also a preparation for working life, because there you don't work individually either, so there is a lot of group work there too, and it has also been very good (Girl, 17 years old).

The pupils can discuss in many different subjects and several of them say that the most important thing is how to arrive at the answer, not always what the answer is. The pupil's experience that they can both reflect and analyse and that it is a good way of learning and that they can get new conceptions and new perspectives on different things. The pupils think that working transdisciplinary leads to new questions arising to be discussed, since they then experience that they get angles of approach from different subjects:

We discuss a lot of things, it's a good way of learning; then you get different persons' perspectives on things and perhaps you get a new conception of how something works that you haven't thought of before (Boy, 17 years old).

The pupils often mention that they have had many guest lecturers visiting the school, often from industry and trade. All pupils have a placement-training period regardless of programme and they experience that they have representatives of industry and trade close to the school who are very willing to help if necessary and to answer different questions:

Precisely because of the contacts this school is perfect, because it has lots of contacts; if you put all the contacts together, we have industry and trade sort of outside the door, so if we need contacts and don't have them ourselves, the school has contacts that we might use (Girl, 17 years old).

That the pupils have contacts with others outside the school is experienced as important for their development. They say that they developed a lot as persons and many of the pupils seem to have good self-confidence.

5. Summarising

Based on the responses given by the pupils in the interviews one can understand that the teaching conducted in the school seems to try to utilise pupils' talents, interests and experiences, among other things because the teachers are described as willing to help the pupils on the basis of the goals that the individual pupil together with the teacher establishes at the beginning of the course. The pupils also state that in principle they *can do what they want* if they only finish their assignments in time, which indicates that the pupils' own interest in how the assignments are implemented governs the process to some extent. The pupils' interest may also be decisive to a great degree as regards the choice of placement, among other things because on the part of the school there is a wish that the pupils should arrange and make the choice of placement themselves to as great extent as possible. The pupils also say that they have great freedom in the schoolwork, which in turn leads to the effect that they develop both an ability to take responsibility and power of initiative. The pupils also describe that the teaching consists of a number of different activities and several of them say that they have learned a great deal, in particular during the time when they have had the opportunity to be young entrepreneurs within the framework of the program of Young Enterprise. It is also above all in the work with Young Enterprise that one can see that the school has a vision of the activities being based on one another, when Young Enterprise is to be implemented in the first, second and third forms and the experiences gained from each form are to be taken into the next. This process may be compared to what Dewey calls experimental continuum. According to the pupils the school has a number of external contacts and they say that in principle they have industry and trade outside the door. The pupils train communication, both in groups and together with teachers and other adults both inside and outside the school. They describe the usefulness of being able to cooperate with others in order to get other perspectives and prepare themselves for future work.

Below the pupils' statements are analysed by means of fundamental concepts in progressivism.

5.1 Visible in the teaching

According to Table 1 several of the concepts that Dewey emphasises as necessary for a progressive education are found in pupils' statements in the investigated school. It is possible to understand that the pupils can base their studies on their own ability and interest, experience and curiosity in the implementation of assignments and different activities mentioned above. The pupils may take initiatives, experiences self-conducted learning and communicate with contacts both inside and outside the school. The pupils indicate that cooperation is important and that they work with it to a great extent and they also state that they have developed and can see advantages and disadvantages of cooperation. Above all in Young Enterprise it seems clear that the pupils can do process-oriented work, but they can also do so in various assignments that they hand in for assessment, get responses and are

given chances to process and improve to get a better result and this also places the focus on the pupil's development. The pupils say that at any time they can ask their teachers if they need help and that to a great extent they get the support they want in the different subjects.

Table 1. Pupils' statements related to fundamental concepts in progressivism

Fundamental concepts	Visible	Visible to some extent	Is not visible
Activity is steered towards a shared society			X
Utilising talents, interest, experience	X		
Freedom		X	
Holistic education		X	
Initiatives	X		
Self-conducted learning	X		
Communication	X		
Cooperation	X		
Focus on process	X		
The pupil's development	X		
The learning is endless		X	
The teacher is a guide	X		

5.2 Visible to some extent in the teaching

The pupils state that they often have great freedom in their schoolwork, but there are limitations, such as e.g. that a specific course content with its adherent course objective has to be attained, which still limits the pupils' degree of freedom to some extent.

According to the pupils' descriptions they experience that they are challenged to understand how subjects are connected in different transdisciplinary projects and that holistic thinking appears to occur to some extent. What is also experienced to occur to some extent is that the learning is endless. The pupils state that what they above all learn in the more specific activities, which often take place in interaction with actors outside the school, are such things that will be useful to them in the future. Whether they understand that the learning will never end is difficult to predict, but many pupils understand that they can develop and feel that they have done so, which might indicate that they understand that that process may continue.

5.3 Not visible in the teaching

The pupils' statements do not contain any mention of a shared society. They do not talk about having to develop themselves and their abilities in order to be able to work in a society together with other people. The activities that the pupils are offered are often linked to industry and trade, e.g. Young Enterprise, Case and lecturers visiting the school. The pupils talk about understanding other people's perspectives, but these statements are above all linked to being able to function in a place of work in the future.

The pupils have a developed language and can in different ways describe advantages and disadvantages of e.g. different working methods; they can see and describe their own development. Dewey thinks that a shared language is important for understanding and being able to work in a shared society. The pupils' shared language seems however to point towards an entrepreneurial society rather than a democratic one, since the pupils clearly indicate that they experience that it is the entrepreneurial abilities they will need in their future lives without using 'entrepreneurial' as a concept at any time during the interviews.

6. Conclusion

The purpose with this article was to elucidate and problematize in what respect entrepreneurship in school is progressive, using the ideas by John Dewey as an analytic tool. The study shows a discrepancy between entrepreneurship in school and the ideas of progressive education.

The civic education that takes place in schools is according to Öhman (2014) related to the political power conditions and the prevailing ideological currents in society. Upper secondary education in Sweden is now said to be in a neoliberal market-oriented context, where freedom of choice is a keyword and where Lister *et al.* (2007) and Lundahl & Olson (2013) find that the curriculum emphasises the individual results and where the education in democracy has been neglected for a long time.

The same discussion is conducted by Adolfsson (2012), Dahlstedt & Hertzberg (2011) and Dahlstedt & Olson (2014), who think that the prevalent civic discourse in the curricula is precisely about educating the pupils to meet the prevalent labour market and not for a shared society. The desire that schools should cooperate with the local community seems to have resulted in a focus on cooperation chiefly with trade and industry (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2011) as is the case in the investigated school. It may also be understood that Young Enterprise is a central activity that the pupils repeatedly return to as an explanation of their development. The narrower perspective still seems to be the dominant perspective as regards the interpretation of how the entrepreneurial abilities can be developed in the school's teaching. According to Carlbaum (2012) the labour market discourse has caused the ideal citizen to be constructed into an employable entrepreneur rather than an active citizen who will be able to participate and competent to act in a pluralistic society, which Dewey regarded as one of the most important reasons for using the progressive pedagogy in education. Dewey calls this learning collateral learning, so-called indirect learning that takes place in schools concerning norms and values, which he also realised was inevitable. But Dewey was strongly

opposed to indoctrination of different political ideas about how society should develop in a special direction in education, as it would be a danger to democracy as a whole (Apple, 2013). Entrepreneurship in school have long been of interest on the political agenda with a clear aim of introducing them in the policy documents of education, and several researchers think that this leads to a person with the entrepreneurial abilities being the individual that society wants (Carlbaum, 2012; Berglund, 2013; Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2011; Korhonen et al, 2011), which in its turn might lead to those not having or being able to develop the entrepreneurial abilities not being considered adequate citizens.

Thus it seems clear that a shift of the meaning of progressivism has taken place. In the 1970s Dewey's ideas were used to make the pupils work democratically, develop the democratic abilities and gain greater pupils' influence on education. Today the progressive ideas of education seem instead to be used in a neoliberal spirit for educating entrepreneurial citizens and developing the entrepreneurial abilities, not merely in theory but also in practice. This might promote a future entrepreneurial society rather than a democratic one, a society characterised as individualistic and where individual are always on the move to try to improve themselves and where this improvement never seems to end (Costea et al.; Berglund, 2013). The pupils' statements also show that their own responsibility for improving and performing better is important.

Leffler, Svedberg & Bohta (2010) consider that the democratic education in schools is and should always be superordinate to everything else in the schools' teaching. This has been the case in the Swedish education as it has been characterized and dominated by the concept of democracy for a long time, largely due to the influence of Dewey's ideas on implementing democratic ways of working in school in the purpose to foster future democratic citizens. Entrepreneurship in school has although come to acquire increasing importance in the Swedish educational discourse and its overall goal is not to create democratic citizens but rather to educate active citizens who will be able to support themselves and contribute to economic growth (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2011; Carlbaum, 2012; Sjöberg, 2011). Although if democracy should be reinsert as an overall goal in education policy must change. Could then entrepreneurship in school be considered, understood and described as progressive? This study shows that entrepreneurship in school should not to be compared with progressivism as it appears to have another agenda.

Dewey wrote that the very idea of democracy must constantly be discovered and rediscovered, recreated and reformed (Dewey 1937/1987). If entrepreneurship in school can get a basis that is different from starting business and develop certain abilities, we might rediscover democracy and develop it so that its meaning is that we educate in order to create a society for all in Dewey's spirit.

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