

# How pioneering research can generate impact on teachers' and school leaders' pedagogical practice

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Research is about finding out what people  
need to know,  
not about what they should do



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# The responsibilities, tasks and obligations of research:

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science.

(The European Charter for Researchers, 2016)



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## Unhealthy trends in education

Basic education in Europe has over the past two decades had an extremely strong focus on measurement of results, rankings, accountability, and competition and very little on its fundamental purposes in society.



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# Myths to expel about schooling

- Deprivation is destiny
- Immigrants drag down overall school performances
  - It's all about money
- Success in education is about talent
  - Excellence is about selection

(OECD, 2015, p. 28)



The first problem is in what ways purposeful research can be used in educational practice without drowning in an increasingly strong flow of information.

The second problem is the extent to which alternative ways of disseminating research is compatible with university requirements for publication in reputable and high impact journals.



# Raising achievement through inclusion

Duration 2010 – 2016

Bengt Persson  
Elisabeth Persson  
Julie Allan



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In this research (2010 – 2016), a Swedish municipality that succeeded in converting a negative trend of school failure into success is in focus.



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# ESSUNGA MUNICIPALITY

- 3 schools
- No Upper secondary school
- Less than 50 % among 19-year olds were eligible for tertiary education 2009
- 15 % of the population had tertiary education compared with 29 % in the nation as a whole



All students were given the opportunity to succeed in their regular classes from the academic year 2006-07 and on. Ability grouping and special education groups, common in Swedish schools, were abandoned.



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# Open comparisons comprehensive school year 9, 2007 – 2010, Essunga municipality

	Achieved goals in all school subjects (%)		Eligibility for Upper secondary education (%)	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
<b>2007</b>	<b>62,8</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>76,9</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>78,1</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>91,4</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>80,6</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>93,1</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>96,3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>1</b>



- Recognition of a problem
  - Authoritative leadership
  - Functional teaching teams
- Effects of engaging in research
  - Special education competence
- Collaboration between school and social service



The purpose of the study is to

- examine and isolate key elements that make a difference in schools and classrooms in an inclusive work with all students.
- follow two batches of students through their upper secondary education



# PART TWO

Data were collected through  
Statistics

Qualitative interviews, 10 x 2 pupils

Gender spread

Ability spread

Programmes spread



*”I think you get an insight into the different difficulties for some and the extra help that some need and you know how to handle situations in the future.”*



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*"We had no such student in our class so I don't know how it was".*

*"I had probably no such in my class. So I have no references to it directly".*

*"We had no one in our class. But I did not feel that there was something problematic or that I heard something. There was never any problem with it. No, there was nothing that I noticed".*





*”So, as it was in the small group, then I do not think I had passed the national exams. I passed the course that the teacher presented. It was for that group. If I had been staying at the Oasis [special class] I probably would not have made the national test in ninth grade.”*



*”The experience I have of people with disabilities is that the worst that can happen is you are treated as a restricted person. One should have the same opportunities and values and the conditions should be the same and one should have the same platform to stand on”.*



*”In ninth grade we were even a group of fellows who trained for the tests. To get the best results possible. So we met, extra at our leisure time. It was quite unusual as well. It was, if one may call it a culture so it was pretty, pretty strange, because there were not many who had done that before. I had never done so neither. Met with friends to study. I had never done anything like that in my life before”.*



- Having students with special needs in class was probably an awakening for many to see that 'a person with a disability is actually just a person and not someone who sits in a separate building'
- Growth of tolerance of difference and recognition of this by students
- Young people seemed to have a clarity about themselves, their strengths, aspirations and their educational choices



If this is important knowledge for teachers – how do we reach them?



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## **The traditional approach:**

Conference paper presentations

Articles in scientific journals

Dissemination at research councils

Scientific report



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## **The untraditional approach:**

Continuous intermediation to practice  
representatives

Publications in popular scientific media

Interviews, interaction with stakeholders

Lectures, talks and presentations

Further steps: Interactive and collaborative  
research

And... articles in scientific journals



Research becomes valuable for teachers when it is applicable to their work with students in their classrooms. As part of an ongoing cycle, teachers who study, critique, and select research do so in terms of questions that emerge from their own teaching. They continually ask, “How will what I learned from this study help my students?” Such application grounds research in practice and translates the theoretical into the real.

(CEE Executive Committee, 2016)



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