

Louise Edlund: Students Then and Now

The development of schools has to a large degree been driven by the transformation from state ownership to a free choice of school. With free school choice, our young people have gone from being students to becoming our customers.



My colleagues and I have to satisfy the needs of the students, otherwise they will move to another school. I think that free school choice means that we teachers do not have the same authority as before. Power has to some extent shifted from the teachers to the students.

As society has changed, so has the way we teach. This is necessary to meet the requirements of today's students. In my teaching, I try as often as possible to work thematically or on small projects. It is the teacher who must capture students' interest and show how lessons relate to the community, that is, how students can benefit from what they learn in school and apply it outside the school walls.

In order for students to be active knowledge seekers, they have their own computer. I see this as both good and bad. It is good because students have the opportunity to watch movies, seek knowledge online and do their written work. It is negative because the computer distracts them. There is so much that attracts the students on the web and that is so much more exciting than, say, mathematics. I feel that there is an unwillingness to learn new things if students thinks they are tough and time consuming.

I believe that tomorrow's society will consist of social entrepreneurs, who are accustomed to cooperate, but they will miss the extensive factual knowledge that yesterday's generation had, and they will even lack the ability to understand that setbacks are a part of learning. We must ask ourselves what kind of knowledge is best suited to meet tomorrow's challenge: is it important to be able to memorize facts and reproduce these? Or is it better that the training gives you the knowledge of how to use these facts and concepts?