

**Foreword to
Order and Discipline in the School – One Step on the Path to Dynamic
Harmony in the Classroom, Fortbildningsförlaget, Stockholm, 2006.**

When speaking with teachers throughout Sweden, we often meet an urgent call for a good working atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers wish for more order and structure. A general view is that children and adolescents are more divergent in their thinking, insecure and uncertain today than ten or fifteen years ago. However, it is one thing to describe a symptom, another to propose a diagnosis or a reason for the symptom, and yet another to decide what needs to be done. Depending on what we consider to be the reason for the increase in insecurity and unrest amongst pupils in schools, we will place confidence in different perspectives.

We can either claim that the problem of the poor working atmosphere in schools is caused by social conditions. Or we can claim that the pattern of social interaction in the school arises as a result of the conditions prevailing in the school. We who work in schools can either absolve ourselves of responsibility and place the problem outside the school, or we can recognise that we are also responsible - that we are a part of the problem.

Many of today's children and adolescents bring with them to school very different experiences and contexts than previous generations did. A logical consequence of this is that this generation's school-goers must be engaged with and responded to differently. The authors of this book, social scientist Nick Drummond and psychologist Mats Edin, have spent many years exploring this question of how to create a good working atmosphere in classrooms and schools.

In this book they clearly explain how evolutionary psychological research distinguishes the different steps that human beings go through in their social development and they describe what those steps look like. They go on to examine the different factors and conditions that enable individuals to continue their social development. This approach provides us with an insight into why so many pupils behave and interact as they do, and the authors deliver some sturdy advice to teachers on how they can act to improve things.

A central theme in the book is that if teachers wish to encourage a child in its social development, they will need to apply a different style of leadership depending on how far that child has come so far. Another important theme is that only through the teacher's professional and conscious leadership can the classroom and school become a "greenhouse" for social development - in short: the necessary order and structure are created through the teacher's leadership.

Our hope is that this book will awaken an understanding of how it is possible to create the kind of classroom that many of today's teachers are striving to attain.

Helena Moreau and Steve Wretman, editors Grundskoletidningen.
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