

The Passive Recipient - How the Pupil Comes across in Local Swedish Health Policy Documents

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Abstract : Ever since the Ottawa charter in 1986, health promotion through schools has been stressed across the globe. Both in the global and national discourse, schools are made responsible not only for providing education but also for working with pupil health and well-being. In Sweden, where the study is set, it is emphasized in national directives that promoting pupil health should be part of the school practice. Since the Swedish school system is decentralized, these directives need to be interpreted and recontextualized locally. This study aims to explore how the student comes across in Swedish local health policy documents. The data consists of 37 such documents called student health plans collected from different high schools throughout Sweden. The analysis was inspired by critical discourse analysis, and tentative results are divided into two main themes; the invisible actor and the passive recipient. The pupil is largely invisible in the documents, and the discourse instead focuses on school health service staff and, to some extent, the teachers. When the pupils are visible, they mainly come across as passive recipients of health promoting actions. Since participation, taking action, and feeling empowered are key aspects of health promotion, the findings could impact the pupils' possibilities for health and well-being.

Keywords : health promotion, high school, student, sweden

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