

# **Pedagogical Centre: A way of Empowering and Transforming a School Library**

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## **Abstract**

*Today's society is described as a digital society or information society (Burke, 2012; Guribye, 2005; Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010). This change has influenced all parts of society. In the digital society gaps have arisen. In the beginning it was mostly about who had access to digital technology and who had not. Today it is talked about "a second digital divide", also embracing student ability to use digital resources support net. School's compensational mission becomes an important part in this context (Warschauer, 2010; Warschauer, 2002). This paper will present a process of development, successful in our school; a cooperation between Pedagogical centre, teachers and management.*

## **Introduction**

Digital competence is one of eight key competences of the EU and it is an important area for education – and this also means challenges. The use of information technology (IT) in schools has become an area of high priority (Skolverket, 2010). Due to current curriculum in Sweden, students in upper secondary schools must have access to school libraries (Skolverket, 2017). The important role of the school library is lifted in many other contexts connected to digitalization in schools, for example the Swedish National Strategy of Digitalization in Education (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017). International Federation of Library Association and Institutions, IFLA (2015), also lifts the importance of cooperation between teachers and educated librarians.

The eight key competences of the EU have been one of the premisses of the writings in the Swedish curriculum and subject plans, which has resulted in four aspects of digital competence.

- To understand the impact of digitalization in society.
- Ability to use and understand digital features and media
- To have a critical and responsible approach
- Ability to solve problems and translate ideas into practise (Skolverket, 2017)

The important role of the school library is lifted in several contexts around school digitalization. In the Swedish National Strategy of Digitalization in Education (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2017) it says for example “The school library has an important task to fill when it comes to strengthening the student’s competences in for example information searching and criticism of the sources” (s.8).

Experience and science show, due to IFLA’s/Unesco’s manifest of school libraries (1999) and IFLA’s guidelines for school libraries (2015) that the students’ ability to write, solve problems, read and use information technology are improved when teachers and educated librarians cooperates. Aside from cooperation between librarians and teachers it is important that librarians work in a pedagogical way and work with outreaching activities. It is also important for librarians to take responsibility in the learning process and educational activities. Education should occur both in groups and individually and should be connected to the learning goals and the curriculum.

### ***Background***

School inspection (2018) and IFLA’s guidelines for school libraries (2015) lifts the importance of cooperation between teachers and school libraries, the legitimacy of school libraries in the school and the support of the school management. The management of Erik Dahlbergsgymnasiet saw the need of improving cooperation, collect resources and educate in digitalization. The school also got the economical preconditions to realise these ventures. Our library together with the school management started a development project resulting in the creation of Pedagogical centre where many different competences were gathered within information, reading promotion, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Information and Media Literacy (IML). The term IML include many skills a person needs to take part in the digital society. To these skills information competence and digital competence are of importance. These competences describe the knowledge of search, find and critically review and use information in different contexts and purposes (Rivano, Eckerdal & Sundin, 2014). IML are often divided in two part; media literacy and information literacy, where media literacy focuses in the media and their function in society. Information literacy focuses in the processes of searching information. ICT is a generic term describing the use of digital tools, coming to data processing and communication. The term is often used in school context, but it is not used in the curriculum.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this presentation is to explain a project of cooperation between a school library and other pedagogical functions in the shape of a Pedagogical centre. This Pedagogical centre contains the physical library, librarians, IT pedagogues, lecturer and education manager. These resources have been chosen due to their competence within ICT and IML, as well as learning.

### ***Method***

This presentation originates in a project of development accomplished at an upper secondary school in a midsized community in the south of Sweden. The staff are about 150 persons, of whom around 120 are teachers. The number of students is around 1500. 2015 the library, together with the management, initiated a development project resulting in the creation of a Pedagogical centre – a platform for different

competences to gather and cooperate within areas like information, Information and Communication Technology, Information and Media Literacy and reading promotion.

The data material consists of discussion documents, protocols and other collected documents such as “Voices from the employees” and a poll answered by our staff.

The poll was sent to the whole staff and it contained eight questions about Pedagogical centre with focus on librarians and IT-pedagogues. Results gave us that most of the staff knew and understood the functions of Pedagogical centre and what areas we can help with. Results tell us that the staff wants even more information and clarification of our functions.

“Voices from the employees” is a collection of information where IT-pedagogues, lecture, librarians and main teacher in Swedish answered in writing the following questions:

1. Do you see any beneficial effects in the students or to students referring to pedagogical centre?
2. Do you see any other needs?
3. Are there anything you would like to develop or change?

### **Results**

The results contain three parts: What is pedagogical centre?; “Voices from the employees” and the poll.

### ***The Purpose with Pedagogical Centre***

Pedagogical centre contains the physical library, librarians, IT-pedagogues, lecturer and education manager. These resources are chosen due to their competences within ICT and IML as well as learning.

The purposes of Pedagogical centre are:

- Promote basic media and information literacy among students and teachers
- Promote efficient use of resources
- Arrange workshops and lectures with both internal and external educators in the areas of for example IML and ICT.
- Being a centre of study techniques knowledge and organization, analogue as well as digital.
- Initiate in the collegial learning by participate in the teachers’ different teams and courses. Complement teachers in courses.

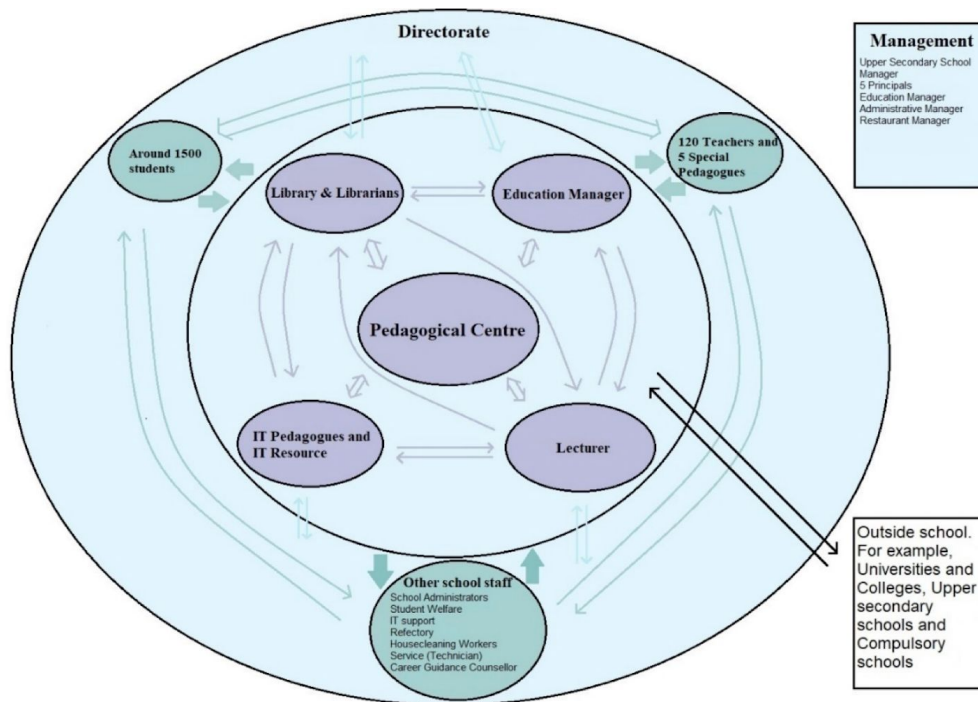
The presentation will explain the Pedagogical centre concept and thereby give concrete examples of what cooperation projects between school library and other pedagogical resources of our school might look like. The experiences described in the presentation can be transmitted to other functions and be adapted to other local conditions.

Pedagogical centre is a dynamic feature always working to improve and develop. One way of doing that is to evaluate this function. The guidelines of IFLA (2015) points out the importance of evaluating the school library function in order to improve and develop its different functions and services. These guidelines are applicable to Pedagogical centre. The presentation will also show the results of two different investigations (mail interviews and a poll), made in order to investigate the understanding of Pedagogical centre, the success factors emerged and what areas of development to be identified.

Pedagogical centre has a direct channel to the management in the educational manager - and by that a direct channel to the whole staff. The Education manager has an assembling role and responsibility of the protocols. This direct channel gives us the opportunity to adapt fast to meet upcoming needs. Pedagogical centre has been under construction during the last two years. Structures are now made and there are now routines and the different members roles are defined. Pedagogical centre has become a part of the school organization.

### Organization Review

The organization review below show the structure of Pedagogical centre. The arrows are for communication between the different parts.



Picture 1. Organisations review ED

### Competences Within Pedagogical Centre

There are two librarians tied to Pedagogical centre, one with main responsibility within ICT and the other one with focus on pedagogical issues and the physical library. In the ICT-librarian's areas of responsibility are the development of the digital library resources. One of the missions are to increase the digital media of the library and interact digital pedagogical resources in the physical library environment, which includes providing several digital instruments like microphones, tripods, dictation machines and so on. These tools are integrated in education for example in the documentary film project. This is a project performed for the first-grade students where the students record their own documentary films (within the area of sociolinguistics). The students are trained in handling digital media, information search and criticism of the sources.

One of the other areas of the ICT-librarian is to further develop the school library services within ICT. This includes for example to administrate a library blog and to work with our page at the school forum,

where the students can find internet links in different school subjects, reference guidelines, information in criticism of the sources, databases and more.

Another role of the ICT-librarian is to be an editor of the school Instagram and to publish news at the school website. She also has responsibility of buying and registrate the course books of the school, which includes both physical and digital media. To promote the library as an area of pedagogical exchange and to promote the lust of reading are also important roles. She does this, for example by arranging different visits from authors and by talking about books and reading out loud for our students.

The librarian with focus on pedagogical issues and the physical library take main responsibility for the library itself and for the budget. Newsletters and presentations of what happens in the library and presentations of the new books as well as making different exhibitions about up-to-date themes also falls in here. To support, help and guide the students in their work and in their different tasks is of course the most important role of both our librarians and also to give service to teachers and the other staff with different kinds of literature. The pedagogical role becomes more and more important and take considerably more space than earlier. Nearly all students are reached by our information about criticism of the sources and technologies of searching. The students also get an introduction to the school library and what it offers. The teachers can also reserve the librarians for other lessons like reading practise and presenting different kinds of books. Regular visits are made to the different groups of teachers who wants introduction to new literature or presentations of literature in their different subjects.

In Pedagogical centre we also have a lecture in ICT with focus in the school subject Swedish. Her mission also contains to be a part of the Pedagogical centre and to be proactive force within this. The role as a lecture is to identify pedagogical needs both connected to the subject Swedish and ICT, but also more general in school development. The mission contains to initiate and document school development projects at our school and to spread experiences of these, both externally and internally. In Pedagogical centre the lecture mostly identify, structure and organize, especially structures among teachers, later to be realised together with the students.

Our IT-pedagogues have responsibility for the school pedagogical ICT development. They are also responsible for developing, educate in and administrate the school forum. They also keep themselves updated in the latest within ICT and how it influences the students' attainment. Software and licenses are also in their area of responsibility.

### ***Results From the Poll***

The respondents find the librarians easy to get in touch with and they are content with the help given. They like the presentations of books and the exhibitions. They also appreciate the librarians helping them with information searching and the supplies of the library in the shape of different kinds of media. It is pointed out that the cooperation between teachers and librarians has increased and has become better over the past few years. Some respondents want the librarians to help more with the administration of teaching materials. They also want more book recommendations and presentations of new books.

The IT-pedagogues are, due to the respondents, mostly easy to get in touch with. The opinion is that the IT-pedagogues are good at helping and presents relevant information at the school forum. A wish is they show themselves more and presents what they do and what they can help with more effectively. They are also wished to improve the school forum and to have a clearer focus towards pedagogical issues and digital tools.

### ***Voices From the Employees***

#### ***IT-pedagogues***

”In my role as an IT-pedagogue I see myself as a support of teachers and students concerning different everyday problems. I shall be there for them as a possibility for teachers to optimize the work and contribute to a better work situation. The effects may be difficult to take on or to measure, but hopefully it creates security for everyone at our school. They know there is someone to go to whenever they have ICT troubles. The development that I see is needed is to become better in involving the students, to create ICT “coaches” for the students. We should also be better to inspire teachers to discover new solutions in ICT.

#### ***Lecture***

“The advantages with pedagogical centre are many. Firstly, I want to point out the strength in collecting resources and competences in one place. To physically place the members of the Pedagogical centre in the school library parts of the working day makes it easier to cooperate and manifests the point of connecting the school library with the other pedagogical functions. As a lecture I work with school development projects, as for example the Documentary film project. There are many advantages with both linear and iterative school development projects. A clear advantage that I connect to pedagogical centre is that the projects both test structures and identify areas of development as well as success factors. My judgement is that the resources connected to pedagogical centre and the bigger development projects realised at our school are connected to the Swedish subject. I see an important area of development around including many other projects in different school subjects. It is important to include other school subjects in different ways and tie them to Pedagogical centre.”

#### ***Pedagogical Librarian***

“The big advantages with Pedagogical centre is that the “other” pedagogical functions, except teachers, are connected and are given a much stronger platform to act from than if we had worked on our own. The communication between us, the management, the teachers, the students and the other staff has through pedagogical centre become easier and clearer. Within the group we also are given better possibilities to discuss our ideas between us and we also have much easier to realise them. For me who has worked here for twenty years the difference is obvious. In our school we have support from the school management which means legitimacy for Pedagogical centre. Cooperation between the functions in pedagogical centre and between pedagogical centre and other staff has increased since we began.”

#### ***ICT-librarian***

“The advantages with Pedagogical centre are many. Especially I see a big advantage in collecting and connecting several different competences in one group. Because our group are made of all these different competences they can support both students and teachers within many different areas as education in criticism of the sources, information searching, video editing and so on. Several of the members also work as teachers which gives them a good insight in pedagogical work and needs. To have a group at school working around pedagogical issues and digitalization gives the opportunity to always find someone helping you. Our lecture contributes with knowledge around research in the area and that gives us credibility to what we do and how we can develop and work forward. In the future we shall work more with evaluation of our activities and create an even more clear working structure. “

#### ***Main Teacher in Swedish***

”Pedagogical centre secures the expertise in our school. To be able to tell our student and send them to our professional librarians and IT-pedagogues in dealings where we teachers are not the experts is an asset and strengthen up the professional impression of our school. We have a close cooperation where we

ask these resources to participate in our meetings. I, as being the main teacher, am in a constant dialogue around how to further develop the cooperation and simplify for both us teachers and the students. Our lecture deepens our knowledge by systematically making research in our activities where the focus of digitalization increases our knowledge and strengthen our team. Another need is to continue our cooperation concerning common projects where we take responsibility based on our positions. Below you can find some examples where we already cooperate:

- Library information for new students
- Criticism of the sources and searching techniques
- The Documentary film project.
- Lending of computers, material for film making, collections of material for different themes.
- Visits from authors
- Book recommending for teachers and students.
- Reading aloud from books to the students.
- How we cooperate with students with special needs concerning reading and writing.

Areas of development are that we really want the IT-pedagogues to answer to our needs of increased digital use and support in the teaching situation, by for example visiting our teams in our different school subject and educate in important programs for presentation and student interaction like Onenote Classroom and Audicity. We want our librarians to continue to adapt the content in the different subjects' teachers currently are working with. For example, searching information about Nordic languages if they are going to educate about search techniques and criticism of the sources. Purchase of Ipads for loaning where the students are to edit movies and pods, and that we all, both teachers and the Pedagogical centre, participate in education in these programs.

### ***Conclusions of the Results***

Our conclusions show that cooperation between the different functions in Pedagogical centre has increased. The library is working more outside the library and reaching out more effectively. The IT-pedagogues mission is more defined, and lecture contributes with her research. The result also shows that the documentary film project has set requirements of the activities and by that some functions has been asked for and the roles have been made clear. Something that has appeared as an area of development is cooperation with more subjects than Swedish and Social sciences.

In our results it shows that Pedagogical centre has contributed to move the library from working a lot in the physical library to work more outwards in the school activities both physically as digitally. Partly because the librarians are more out in the classrooms teaching but also the librarian use the digital possibilities more effectively. The digital possibilities are used by the library in publishing new, links and information on the school forum. The library also administrates their own blog. Another advantage with pedagogical centre that shows in the result is that other pedagogical functions except the teachers are connected in the same place, which makes it easier to cooperate within as well as outside the Pedagogical centre. The staff knows where to turn if they have questions concerning lessons within ICT, where both librarians an IT-pedagogues can contribute with aid within their areas of expertise or other pedagogical issues. Pedagogical centre being a mission in movement continuously developing is another appearing advantage.

### ***Conclusions and Discussion***

Pedagogical centre is a dynamic function always working its way forward to improve and develop. One step to improve pedagogical centre is to do evaluations. IFLA:s guidelines for school library (2015) says

reading is an important part of school library development to evaluate the school libraries functions, services and programs. These guidelines are applicable to Pedagogical centre. An evaluation accounts for the school library programs and services corresponds to the needs. Evaluations should also contribute to the ongoing development of the school library by strengthening students and teachers support and thoughts around the school library. This makes it important for evaluation to become an integrated part of the schools quality work (IFLA:s guidelines for school libraries, 2015). The school inspections (2018) also establishes the important of quality work and evaluation. Therefore we sent out the poll to our staff, and the result show that we are appreciated and helpful but that we also can become better and more efficient.

One of the goals Pedagogical centre wants to work with in the future is to be a part of the schools' and the community's official quality work, the local as well as regional. Together with other schools Erik Dahlbergsgymnasiet has a school library plan which today is parted from the general quality work and we want to be integrated to this.

The librarians together with teachers, management, IT-pedagogues and other staff should develop the programs and services retrieved to the school library to give access to an as widely developed stock as possible with the ability to contribute to the students attainment (IFLA:s guidelines for school libraries, 2015).

One important thing is that communication and channels of communication has become smoother since the build-up of Pedagogical centre. The outreaching activities has increased both within our own school but also externally. Through Pedagogical centre the librarians visits to lessons has increased and members of the pedagogical centre has also started to visit groups out of school, for example the Swedish teachers' network (communal and local) and we have also visited university educations for teachers and librarians to tell them about our work.

One goal for the future is to make a clearer structure of the meetings of Pedagogical centre where our thought is to act more distinctive from planning to realisation. Regulated structures of meetings make it easier to work with development questions in our group, since the different parts of the work becomes clearer and also the division of roles. The meeting structure also contributes to a systematic way of realising work of change. Further development is to create different forms of documentation and spreading, in order to strengthen the activities and to contribute to secure our schools' work is based on experience and research.

To sum it up

- Crucial to the function is that school management stands behind us and that the function is represented in the school's control documents.
- Cooperation with all functions at our school has also been crucial.
- To be open and flexible is of great importance and Pedagogical centre have made this easier.
- Cooperation has helped us to make our different professions clearer and helps us to see each other's different competences.



- Our conclusion is that Pedagogical centre has been a matter of success for our school and for the development of our school library.

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## Biographical Notes

Ulrika Boström has worked as a school librarian for twenty years which makes her quite experienced and this experience is very valuable not the least in the dynamics with Emmelie.

Emmelie Ernst has worked as a school librarian for almost two years. With a modern librarian exam and a partly different focus in her employment the librarians complete each other.

Therése Haglind is a lecturer in Applied IT (Degree of Licentiate of Philosophy in Applied Information Technology with specialization in Educational Science) and cooperates with the librarians in her research.