



Children Document their Hospital Stays with a Digital Camera

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The photo project between the Hospital school in Malmo and Malmo schools' culture department started in the school year 2008/2009. At the hospital school we teach pupils from the age of six to eighteen, with medical disease or dysfunctions. We invite pupils to participate in this photo project which is financed by National Agency for Special Needs, Education and Schools. With the help of a digital camera the pupils document their stays at the hospital and at the hospital school. The pupils would use digital photography as a mean of expressing their feelings about their life and the school within the hospital setting. The process of taking the pictures, selecting pictures and adding words allowed the pupils to express and share their feelings in a new way when they describe their weekday time. The digital camera works as a pedagogical tool and gives us a new dimension in our teaching and it gives the pupils new strategies to think about themselves, strengthen their self-esteem and concentrate their thoughts of healthy life. When a pupil takes a photo, he or she also makes to an observer and in this way they can get a distance from the event that feels severe. Our vision is that long life learning can be done in different individual ways and it's stimulating to integrate photos into different subjects. Even pupils with severe disabilities and pupils that are bounded to their bed can participate in this project.

As a hospital teacher you need knowledge of different pedagogical possibilities how to give education in every individual case. We need key attributes for teaching all pupils we meet some may be in some reaction of life crisis when they are in hospital care that give them difficulties to do their schooling. The pupil's illness and affect of the treatment often do that they see things in different ways than we do and they have thoughts that they cannot describe but catch in photos. For a while in their minds, in their thoughts they can leave their illness and also get influences with positive thoughts when they work with culturally events. It's a grandly moment to see one of our pupils, who only can move some fingers, press the camera's button, choose a view and the take a photo by himself. Another pupil, who was bound to the bed at an age when running and playing is natural, used the camera to explore the room behind him, which he couldn't see. When he saw his photos he called out:

"So this is what it looks like behind me." Some pupils like to photograph the view from their windows in their rooms or things in the area around the hospital as trees and leaves. The pupils' photos give us a lot a lot of thoughts, make us ask question, or arise our admiration.

The pupils who wanted to and had the energy to do so edited their photos in Adobe Photoshop Element photos, used Photo Story or Power Point, made picture series, enlarged photos, made collage, saved their photos on USB-sticks in their cell-phones or sent the photos by mail to their home computer and to the project's website www.sjukhuskolansbildprojekt.dinstudio.se In this project the parents also get involved. Their thoughts and worries about their child get less for a while. Many parents also felt happy when they saw their child's photos and felt their joy while working with the project. The photo project also makes the contact between the hospital school and the pupil's home school easier.

The pupils can take their working materials home and show the photos/films to their families, classmates and teachers. The photo project also makes the contact between the hospital school and the pupil's home school easier. It's easier for at pupil to describe their experiences when they have photos to show.

The project has received good response not only from each pupil but also from the parents, the ward staff and the pedagogues at the pupil's ordinary school.