

A short history of Swedish education

These pictures to be found on
www.jongus.se

School's five (?) periods

- Antiquity - ca 1820 (1840)
- Ca 1840 - ca 1900
- 1900 - 1945
- 1945 - 1970
- 1970 to present

I: Antiquity - ca 1820 (1840)

- School and education – by few for few
- Education primarily serving the needs of the state

Education for the few

- The city states of antiquity
- The Church's need for clergymen
- The modern state's need for civil servants
(from ca A.D. 1500)
 - clergy (theological faculty)
 - jurists (law faculty)
 - doctors (medical faculty)
 - teachers (philosophical faculty)

The most important institution?

The most important institution!



Examples of the influence of the Church in Sweden

- Monastic/convent schools (mediaeval period) – simple schools for poor children
- Cathedral schools (1600s) – in diocesan towns, preparatory to higher theological studies
- Strong church/parochial control over education of the common people from the 1600s on
 - To read from the psalmbook
 - To demonstrate the “right faith”

Some monastery schools



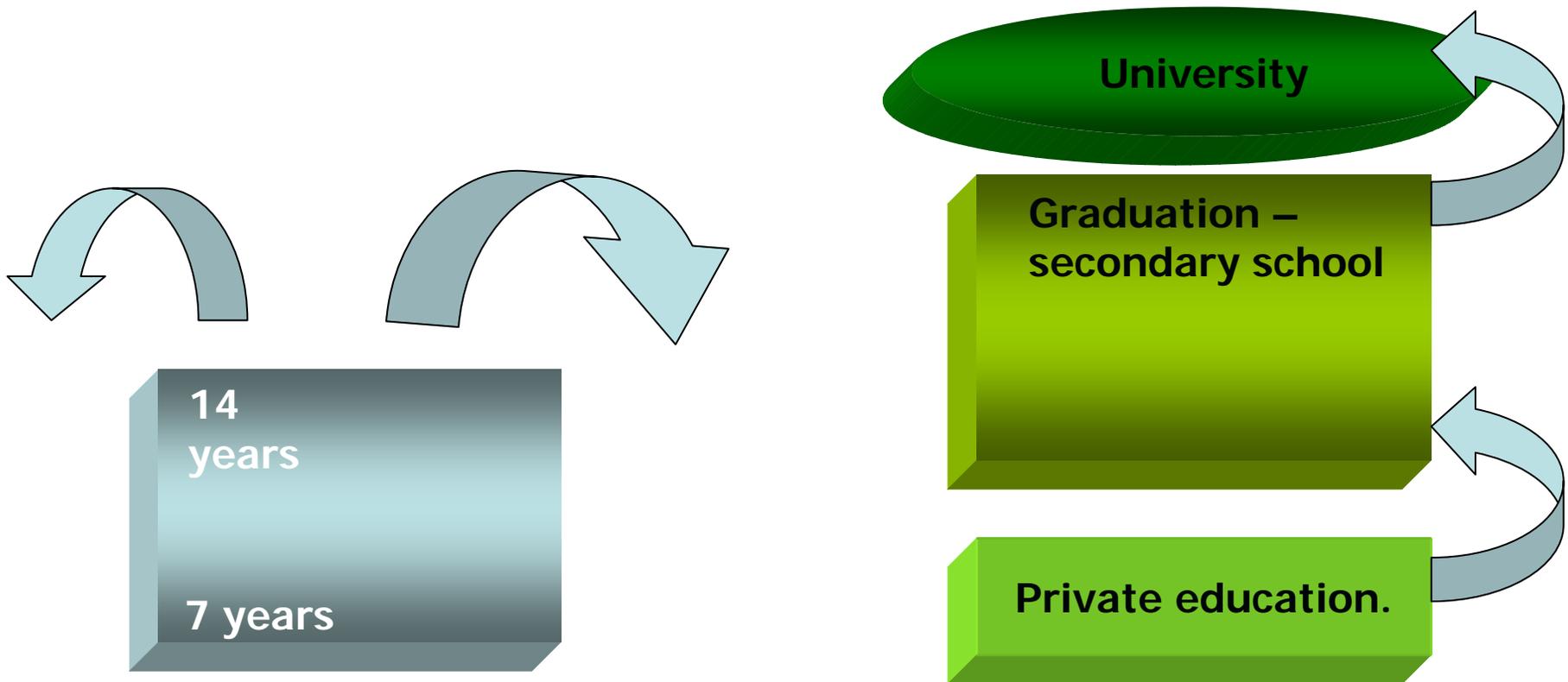
II Ca 1840 - ca 1900

- Public education institutionalized
- Elementary school statutory in Sweden from 1842
- Teacher education becomes organized
- Idea of the unique child (Rousseau, Fröbel)

Parallel school system late-1800s

Elementary school

Schools as preparation for
higher education



Different worlds?



Parallel school system late-1800s

- **Public education – elementary schools**
- Reading, writing, arithmetic
- Christianity, liturgical singing, local geography, history and folklore
- Moral development
- **Secondary grammar school**
- Latin
- Realia
- Modern languages
- Mathematics
- Music
- Secondary-school graduation
- Formal learning

III 1900 - 1945

- Education linked to technical and economic development
- Modern infrastructure (telephony, railways, roads, radio, cinema...)
- Vocational studies (teaching, engineering, etc.)
- The idea of the Child becomes widespread

IV: 1945 - 1970

- Education explosion
- “Sputnik effect” 1956
- The school unit – primary school – is introduced
- Strong link to labour-market demands
- American progressivism
- Play school, preschool in small scale, expands

One school for all children



Pedagogical progressivism, inspired by John Dewey

Swedish style (ca 1940-1990)

- Individualization
- Utility
- Scientific basis - psychology
- The advent of modern developmental psychology (Piaget) with the Barnstugeutredningen 1968 (report on early childhood education)
- Emphasize democratic values

Late 20th century

- Well organized but inefficient school system
- Rapidly changing labour market
- Problems with equality

Reforms during the 1990s

- Teachers and principals are given much freedom to interpret the curriculum
- School and preschool to be controlled according to expressed objectives
- Evaluation and follow-up
- Independent schools to operate according to the same curricula as municipal schools
- Students have the right to choose school and some of the subjects

One major change:

- In 1960: it is more fair to treat young people in exactly the same way
- In 2007: it is more fair to treat young people as if they were different from each other
- How to assure equality if schools become more different?

For tomorrow

- Try to remember one situation when you learned something (difficult). How did you do? Did you learn by yourself or did somebody help you?
- How do we know that we have learned something?