



Brief

Possibilities and challenges with puppets as pedagogical tool in preschool – a research review

Anders Råde

Umeå University, Sweden

Contact corresponding author: Anders Råde, E-mail: anders.rade@umu.se

The curricula requirement that the teaching in preschools is based on science and proven experience entails the pedagogical tools of preschools to have a base in research. As play is a central part of the curriculum in preschool a development of the playful tool of puppets can be motivated. Therefore, this study aims to scrutinize research on the possibilities and challenges with puppets as pedagogical tool in preschool.

The concept of “teaching” is newly used in the revised curricula of Swedish preschools (Lpfö 18). One way to integrate the teaching with children’s play is a pedagogy that is play based (Pyle & Daniels, 2017) or play responsive (Pramling & Wallerstedt, 2019). Here puppets with a kind of forgotten tradition in preschool could be a functional didactical tool (Forsberg Ahlcróna, 2012). Puppet is also used in other fields as special education, play therapy and nurse education. Few research reviews have been conducted regarding the use of puppets in preschools (Kröger & Nupponen, 2019).

A systematic review has been conducted of 29 scientific articles found in three international databases. The sample included studies done in 17 countries with different scientific designs. The articles were scrutinized by a thematic analysis to identify possibilities and challenges with puppets as didactical tool in preschool.

The result identifies four areas with opportunities for puppets as pedagogical tool, preschool children’s social skills, communication, subject learning and in play. Furthermore, two areas with challenges, pedagogical and contextual, related to puppets as pedagogical tool is identified.

The discussion highlights both the opportunities and the challenges with puppets as pedagogical tool. The results have similarities with previous research especially compared with research concerning the use of puppets in other professions. This result and the finding of the worldwide use of puppets in preschools are indications of the potential of puppets as didactical tool.

Keywords: *didactic; puppets; preschool; teaching; play*