



Brief

Teaching as listening in preschool

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Over the past decade societal concerns over the development and definition of preschool quality, and its relationship to long-term learning and developmental outcomes, have led to the gradual incorporation of the concept of teaching into the discourse of Swedish preschool provision. Most recently these changes have been crystallized in the amending of the 2018 national preschool curriculum to include the concept of and guidance related to teaching (defined as adult-led, goal-oriented activity). Research over the past decade has thrown into relief the contested status of teaching among preschool staff in Sweden, highlighting pedagogical and organizational tensions experienced by staff who see a compulsory school-based conception of teaching as out of place in preschool.

The Pedagogy of Listening is an approach that conceives of teaching in more expansive and egalitarian terms, as a process of negotiated, mutual appropriation in which the means and goals of learning and care are intentionally co-determined through collaborative exploration among adults and children. In the present article we focus on the ongoing research discussion concerning how the concept of teaching can be understood in preschool practice. We consider this question in the context of a school that practices the Pedagogy of Listening. Specifically, we examine the connection between preschool teachers' reflections on their own teaching and the local culture of the preschool.

This study is guided by the research question: *How is teaching described and arranged for in the teachers' preschool?*

The seven participating preschool teachers were drawn from two departmental teams that described themselves as working from a *Pedagogy of Welcoming and Listening*. The empirical materials are drawn from one reflection conversation held with the preschool teachers in which the teachers discussed documentation they considered personally significant for their teaching in a recent education for sustainability project focused on play roots and semiotic production. The design and analysis of these conversations was based on cultural theories of communication (Carey, 1992; Dewey, 1916), and an understanding of preschool education as a situated cultural development process, preschools as idiocultures (Fine, 1979, 2012). Our analysis led to the description of three perspectives representative of the preschool teachers' meaning making in relation to teaching: *Teaching processes in motion*, *Preschool teachers' participation and presence*, and *Discernment of knowledge domains by listening to children's actions*. The result is discussed in terms of the preschool's teaching culture, the ways in which the national preschool curriculum is manifest in the children's actions, and the social and material relationships underpinning teaching.

Keywords: *value-based teaching; pedagogy of listening; preschool; teaching*