

Institutionen för pedagogik, kommunikation och lärande

Samtal om barn och pedagogisk dokumentation
som bedömningspraktik i förskolan
En diskursanalys

av

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Abstract

The preschool, nowadays an integral part of the educational system, is to be found within a welfare state and a knowledge economy, within a society characterized by the idea of lifelong learning. As a consequence of this, the preschool is also a part of a strong culture of assessment and measurement of children's development and learning, and for this purpose there are different tools which may be used by teachers. In Swedish preschools, it is common that teachers carry out pedagogical documentations where they try to capture what is happening in pedagogical practice by video recording, taking photos and writing down what children express during selected moments.

The overall aim of this study is to investigate how teachers talk about children during their planning meetings when they are trying to understand together the children in relation to the documentation they have made. Two different teams of teachers in preschool, in total ten teachers, have been followed during planning meetings, each team in the course of about half a year. Data has been constructed through taperecording when the teachers were talking about the children during these planning meetings. The teachers' utterances have been interpreted in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of communication, including his thoughts about the dialogical voice, and with analytical tools derived from Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

The results of the thesis show that the teachers' conversations about the preschool children are multifaceted. Discourses coexist in the utterances. Sometimes discourses are involved in hegemonic struggles, and sometimes they work together. The teachers talk about preschool children both as children with an essential identity and as children who take the subject positions which the context offers. When the teachers talk about the children they go back and forth

between these images of children's identity but in spite of this, above all the teachers talk about the preschool children in a manner which describes the children as children with a lot of competence. In the utterances the teachers primarily are discussing the competencies of the children.

The teachers look upon the pedagogical documentation as a tool which supports the children's possibilities to show themselves as competent children, a tool which may help the children to use competencies they already have but also to cross boundaries and become even more competent. In the utterances the teachers also agree with each other about the idea that preschool children may be limited by their age. The teachers seem to talk about the preschool children in a manner that show that they are searching for the point where the children's capacities reach their limit, and there is nothing in the context that may help the children to cross this border. The teachers also emphasize the responsibility they have to create favourable conditions for the children's development and learning. The children are assessed by the teachers in relation to the preschool program they take part of. The moment when the teachers document the children's activities stands out as a critical moment when the teachers may disturb the children in their processes. In the teachers' utterances they express that the use of pedagogical documentation in preschool offers many advantages for the preschool children and these advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

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