

Institutionen för pedagogik och specialpedagogik

Det motsägelsefulla  
bedömningsuppdraget  
En etnografisk studie om bedömning i  
förskolekontext

av

Eva M Johansson

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

som med tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid  
Göteborgs universitet för vinnande av doktorsexamen i  
pedagogik framläggs till offentlig granskning

Fredagen den 11 november 2016, kl. 13.00  
Högskolan Väst

---

Fakultetsopponent: Professor emerita Ingegerd Tallberg-Broman,  
Malmö Högskola



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET  
ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

## Abstract

Title: The Contradictory Features of Assessment Activities – An Ethnographic Study on Assessment Activities in a Preschool Context in Sweden

Author: Eva M. Johansson

Language: Swedish with an English summary

ISBN: 978-91-7346-891-6 (print),

ISBN: 978-91-7346-892-3 (pdf)

ISSN: 0436-1121

Keywords: preschool, assessment, state control, documentality, cultural and social reproduction, invisible pedagogy, habitus, ethnography

This study examines the assessment practices and discourses in Swedish preschool in times of changing principles for state control and steering. These practices and discourses are analyzed in relation to theories about state control, and about cultural and social reproduction in education. The study was conducted with an ethnographic approach in two preschools located in areas that differ in terms of socio-economic status and ethnic diversity.

The results show that pre-school teachers express ambivalence towards assessment as an aspect of their work. An increased focus on children's learning and on mastery of specific assessment formats and discourses are on the one hand constructed as signs of being professional – and thus function to increase their professional status. On the other hand, by their association with school, the same features seem to conflict with the values and discourses that constitute preschool teachers' professional identity.

In their *talk* about assessments, the preschool teachers tend to focus on how assessments should be expressed (form) rather than what they are targeting (content). Furthermore, the assessments tend to concern social and behavioral aspects rather than the children's learning. As much as promoting institutional development and children's learning, the assessment practice can thus be seen as a sort of assessment game.

Finally, the results suggest that the norms and focus of assessments to some extent both indicate and reinforce the institutional culture of different preschools, thereby exposing children to different socializing messages. This is problematized in regard to the role of education to promote justice and equality.