

What Role Might Writing Within And After Preschool Teacher Education Have For The Professional practice?

Our forthcoming paper is the third in a longitudinal examination of student teachers' writing. All these three papers are produced within the project *The Struggle for the Text* financed by the Swedish Council for Educational Research. Drawing on the findings from two papers in progress; paper 1 *What will student teachers become as writers?* and paper 2 *Writing in and out of control*, we have identified different struggles in student teachers' development of writing in preschool teacher education (PTE).

A core research interest in all the three papers is to capture the student teachers' individual struggles with academic writing and what this writing mean to them (Lea & Street 1998, Lillis 2001, Macken-Horaik, Devereux, Trimmingham-Jack & Wilson (2006). The data stems from the students' written self-presentation, interviews in focus groups and individual interviews, text samples and observations of group work and examination seminars. An underlying interest is to problematize the frequent everyday conception of looking at student teachers as lacking the needed competence for academic writing (Ask 2005, Bertilsson 2014, Gallavan, Bowles & Young 2007).

In the first paper we analyze different genre struggles across different disciplines in teacher education in the light of general academic rules for writing etc. (cf. Blåsjö 2004). In the second paper we concentrate on analyzing preschool student teachers' struggles with writing in and out of control (different forms of control and lack of control over identity formation processes) and we successively concentrate our analysis to three preschool student teachers representing groups of students with different attitudes and ways of dealing with academic writing. By combining a before, within and an after perspective we relate their struggle with writing texts in higher education to the questions of present and future processes of life (Ivanic 1998, 2004, Lillis 2001). The results from the first two papers show that the students experience different kinds of struggles in academic writing, depending on earlier and current experiences within and outside of Pre-school Teacher Education (PTE). We can also see how the same norms and rules of academic writing are supportive to some of the students, but obstacles for others.

The third paper to be presented at ECER 2015 is an important follow up paper supplementing and making possible a more thoroughly analysis of the role of academic writing for the preschool teachers in professional practice. This paper starts out from the results from the two earlier papers to help us move the analysis further and incorporate the transition from education to work life. In the paper we relate their experiences with writing in pre-service education with their experiences with writing after 5 months at work as preschool teachers. This approach allows us to consider how they evaluate the academic writing they worked with during their education course with experiences from writing as professionals. In our approach we will offer the informants opportunities to reflect on how the academic writing in education relate to their work as professional preschool teachers. We will develop a battery of questions seeking responses and answers on:

1. Is there an obvious progression of the texts they produce during their education?
2. How do they look on their own development as writers?

3. How do they evaluate the academic writing they have experienced in IPTE and how do they use that kind of writing as professionals.

Method

In our earlier papers we have used different kinds of interviews analyzing how the student teachers worked and possibly struggled with their writings. The present paper will be based on analyses of the three student teachers' assignments during their preschool teacher education and their written responses to a questionnaire put forward to them after having worked as preschool teachers for around half a year. As developed in our proposal we will concentrate on three areas of their writing. The answer to the first question of progression as writers, is based on text analysis of their writing in preschool teacher education. The material to be analyzed stems from six texts (different kinds of assignments) from three students, in total 18 texts. In this part of the analysis we study how their writing changes over time. The second and third questions, how they look at their own development as writers and their evaluation of the experiences of academic writing in education and as professionals, is based on their responses to the questionnaire mentioned above. Through the analysis we aim at gaining more insight into how - and to what extent -these informants consider what they learned about academic writing in PTE has been helpful in their work as professionals. Additionally we aim at learning more about what they see as most worthwhile and important to their development as professionals, and what they missed. Our main focus will be to try to evaluate the meanings of academic writing analyzed from a standpoint of reflexive interpretation moving between different levels and angles (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2001). As researchers, we represent two "insiders" (researchers working at the Swedish university in which the PTE is situated) and one "outsider" from a Norwegian university. The preparation of questionnaires and interview guides have been worked out collaboratively, yet the data collection, categorization of data and an initial interpretation has been accomplished by one of the insiders, before all engaged in a collaborative and critical analysis of the data.

Expected Outcomes

While we already have a rather clear picture of the different trajectories of the three informants, seeing them also as representatives of many other students, we hope, through our analysis of the texts mentioned above, to be able to make more elaborated analyses of the different meanings and implications of writing for preschool teachers in education and in their professional work. It is anticipated from our preliminary analyses that we will be able to problematize the stereotype and frequent occurring conception of students and in particular student teachers especially the ones with non-academic parents, as lacking the potentials of developing analytic writing. Additionally, we will, by presenting the very different trajectories of student teachers, argue for the need to encounter every individual as a unique person rather than approaching them as a group with similar qualities and experiences. Our analysis might also create concrete evidence for the values of developing different academic literacies among preschool teachers. We may perhaps also identify more 'negative' results in our investigation concerning the encounter or perhaps confrontation between the recent educated preschool teacher and the expectations of the preschool institution. What kind of conclusions can then be drawn from the analysis of the trajectories that the three student teachers represent? It seems as a needed flexibility concerning the student teachers' encounters with the preschool teacher education is missing in the general debate. Do all

student teachers necessarily have to follow the same kind of route to academic writing and professionalism? We think that the different dispositions and potentials among the student teachers could be explored and developed through by drawing on multiple teaching approaches that open up for a higher degree of flexibility in the relational teaching-learning processes, especially when it comes to the student teachers' writing and development as professionals.

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