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Sarah Campbell

Making the Open Preschool

A Place for Language and Integration



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Abstract

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Although it has been in existence since the early 1970s, the Swedish open preschool is significantly underrepresented in research. Described in law as a pedagogical group setting for children without a place in the regular preschool, and a place for social contact and community for their accompanying parents, the open preschool has since 2018 also been identified by the Swedish government as a setting for immigrant parents to learn language and civic orientation content. The primary aim of this thesis is to contribute with knowledge about conditions for adult immigrants' learning in the open preschool, an educational setting with an explicit child educational purpose. Taking as its starting point the apparent contradiction inherent in adults being positioned as learners in such a setting, the thesis addresses questions from four research areas; didactic characteristics of the open preschool in the period 1972 – 2024; didactic characteristics of activities for immigrant families in the open preschool since 1972; contemporary accounts of educational activities with immigrant families in the open preschool; and discourses about language, immigration and integration as a factor in the organisation of educational activities in the open preschool. The main theoretical frameworks used come from Swedish didaktik and from Curriculum Theory, supported by discourse theory, and a critical care theoretical approach to education in migration and multilingual contexts. The empirical material analysed consists of 77 texts 'for and about' the open preschool, and 20 semi-structured interviews open preschool educators in five urban locations. Discourse Trace Analysis and a content analysis method based on Curriculum Making Activity theory are used to address research areas one and two, examining whether there is historical precedent for the open preschool as a place for adult education, and specifically for education of adult immigrants. To address research areas three and four, a critical care lens is applied to thematic and didactic content analyses of contemporary educator accounts of their didactic decision making in relation to learner, content and methods for educational work with foreign born parents. The thesis' primary finding is that adult education has been a function of the open preschool's practice since its inception, but that it has been discursively backgrounded in formal documents. Results show, however, that the adult pedagogical function has recently become foregrounded in government discourses, with Swedish and Civic Orientation in open preschool identified as prioritised tools in meeting the dual political goals of expediting labour market entry among foreign born mothers, and rates of preschool enrolment among their children. Despite this marked discursive shift in the way that the open preschool is described at macro sites, the results further show that educators in the open preschool describe their practice as oriented primarily towards a parent support purpose. Adult visitors are understood first and foremost as parents, not learners, and teaching and learning takes place within the context of parent support. A critical care pedagogical approach appears to be instrumental in educators' work to maintain parent support as the open preschool's dominant function.

Keywords: open preschool, Swedish for Immigrants, SFI, didactics, curriculum theory, critical care pedagogy, Swedish language, multilingualism, parent education, immigrant parents, translanguaging

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 Alla händer säger klapp, klapp, klapp...

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20th January 2025, Uppsala

Sarah

Notes on language

Author's note

A small number of terms are referred to in the text by their acronyms, primarily for stylistic reasons. These are shown in Table 1 below, alongside their full versions in English and Swedish. A small number of frequently used Swedish terms of relevance to the thesis are used in their English translation, and as such may not be well known to speakers of Swedish. These are shown below in Table 2. Finally, a small number of Swedish terms are used untranslated in the text, and as such may not be familiar to all readers. These are detailed in Table 3 below.

In the text	Translation(s)
SALI	Societal-orientation and language content for immigrants / Språk och samhällsorienterande lärandeinhåll för invandrare.
SFI	Svenska för invandrare / Swedish for Immigrants
SKR	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (Eng. Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)
SOU	Statens Offentliga Utredningar (Eng. Swedish Government Official Report)

Table 1 Acronyms in the text and their translations

In the text	Translation
General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool	Allmänna Råd med kommentarer för öppen förskola
(The) Commission on Nursery Provision	Barnstugeutredningen
The People's Home	Folkhemmet
(The) Swedish National Agency for Education	Skolverket
(The) National Board of Health and Welfare	Socialstyrelsen

Table 2 Proper nouns in the text and their translations

Translation

In translating proper names other than those in the table above, an official English translation is used where such exists. All other translations from other languages into English in the body of the text and in the empirical examples are done myself, unless otherwise stated. A small number of Swedish terms are left untranslated for stylistic and semantic reasons – an English explanation of these terms is given here, and they are cursivised in the text.

In the text	Translation
<i>etablering</i>	Literally translated as ‘establishment’, the term <i>etablering</i> is used in a government capacity to refer to the process whereby certain groups of immigrants are supported to learn Swedish, find paid employment, and are able to support themselves financially. This usually entails participation in the Swedish Public Employment Service’s <i>etableringsprogram</i> , which they refer to in English as the ‘introduction programme’ (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2024). The term is also used more broadly, in both official and non-official contexts to refer to the establishment of immigrants into Swedish society.
<i>friluftsliv</i>	<i>Friluftsliv</i> is a term used widely in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish to refer to the characteristic Nordic cultural practice of spending time outside in the natural environment. Literally translated as ‘free air life’, the term is perhaps most commonly referred to as ‘outdoor life’ in English. Svenskt Friluftsliv, the umbrella organisation for 28 voluntary outdoor organisations in Sweden uses the following broad definition: “ <i>Friluftsliv</i> is time spent outdoors in the natural and cultural landscapes for the purpose of wellbeing and experiencing nature in a way that has no competitive element.” (Svenskt Friluftsliv, 2025)
<i>självklar</i>	Perhaps most closely translated into English as ‘self-evident’, <i>självklar</i> can be used in Swedish to refer to something that ‘goes without saying’ or to something / someone who ‘fits in perfectly’.
<i>trygg</i>	The term <i>trygghet</i> translates directly as ‘security’, but encompasses a feeling of security based on more than simply the absence of risk – it refers to a feeling of security constructed in the proactive provision of safety expressed in the meeting of physical environment, activity, and personal meeting.

Table 3 Swedish terms left untranslated in the text and their English meanings.

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Prologue

April 2014, Uppsala

When I got there, I struggled to manoeuvre the buggy through the heavy door, not realising that, (like most doors here, it turns out), it could be opened automatically by pressing the big silver button on the wall alongside it. A friend from our parenting class back home had asked me if they had playgroups in Sweden. I'd said I didn't know for sure, but Google had come up with something called an open preschool or *öppen förskola*...

Today, at an open preschool for the first time, it turned out that my struggle with the door was largely in vain, as the preschool teacher came out to tell me that the buggy had to be left outside. She was wearing Birkenstocks with thick woolly socks, and a homemade name badge labelled Asta. I think my face must have betrayed the fact I hadn't understood, and then the panic once she'd translated! But it was okay, as they had a lock I could borrow. Buggy duly locked up outside, I took Bea in, still all bundled up in her overalls, ready to start over and put into practice the only Swedish I knew:

Jag heter Sarah. Det här är min dotter. Hon är åtta månader.

“My name is Sarah, this is my daughter, she is eight months old.” Not technically true, of course. She's a month younger than that, but I can't pronounce the Swedish word for seven yet.

1 Introduction, aims and research questions

As the prologue to this thesis suggests, I first became aware of the open preschool when I moved to Sweden with my baby daughter. Having spent her first few months busy attending playgroups, parent meetups and rhymetime sessions in the local library back home in England, I was keen to find something similar in our new Swedish hometown. *Öppen förskola* seemed to fit the bill, and over the next few years, our trips to various open preschools all over town became a regular fixture in our day to day lives. It was where we learned most of our Swedish in the early days, and where we made friends, celebrated our first Lucia, and learned about the ins and outs of life as a parent in Sweden.

My professional and academic interest in the open preschool grew from these experiences. My background in language education and linguistics prompted me to try and understand more about the relationships between immigration, language, and parenting. Not infrequently do these three meet around the coffee tables and on the mats of the playroom floors in Sweden's open preschools, and curiosity about how and why this happened became the point of departure for my study.

The open preschool is a pedagogical setting for children between the ages of nought and six years who are not enrolled in preschool. Children attend open preschool together with their parents¹. Families attend the open preschool on a voluntary, drop-in basis, and do not need to register or pay to attend. The stated aim of the open preschool is to provide a pedagogical group environment for children who do not attend the regular preschool, and to provide their parents with opportunities for social contact and sense of community². Municipalities are under no obligation to provide open preschools, but they may choose to do so as a complement to the regular preschool. Statistics compiled by the Swedish National Agency for Education show that, in 2023³, Sweden had 527 open preschools, of which 486 were municipal and 41 were run by other actors. The figures show that, of the municipal open preschools, 292 were part of multi-party service settings known

¹ or other important adult

² 'Sense of community' is used throughout as a translation for the Swedish term *gemenskap*, which can translate as (sense of) community, and which has also has the broader senses of fellowship, belonging or togetherness. The Swedish term is used where necessary for analytical purposes.

³ the most recent available statistics at the time of writing

as family centres, situated alongside services such as maternity care, child health centres, social services and consumer advice (Skolverket 2024a).

The open preschool has never had a formal, binding curriculum in the same way as say preschool, or school do, but it has been a feature of Swedish early years provision since its inception in 1972, and has always had close links with the regular preschool. Indeed, preschool teachers typically constitute the largest profession employed in open preschool (Skolverket, 2006). The latest available figures show that of the 698 people employed full time in Swedish open preschools, 532 (76%) were trained preschool teachers (Skolverket 2024b). Over time, the open preschool has been positioned variously as a substitute for, alternative to and complement to the regular preschool for the children who attend along with their parents. The attendance of both child and parent is characteristic for the open preschool's *modus operandi*, and the nominally social parent-facing function of the open preschool has always co-existed with the child-educational function. Characteristic for the open preschool's organisation is that each open preschool should adapt to the specific needs of its visitors, and as such, it is a setting known for its capacity to respond dynamically to new needs, and be flexible in its organisation.

The main ambition of this thesis is to contribute knowledge about the development, nature and role of open preschool as an actor in the provision of language and societal education for adult immigrants in Sweden. Given its nominally child educational focus and its non-statutory nature, the open preschool is not necessarily a self-evident actor in adult education. However, through activities such as discussion groups, study circles, information sessions and talks, the open preschool has also long been a place of learning for parents.

The potential of the open preschool to be a relevant actor in and contributor to integration initiatives such as language practice and societal information was noted as early as 1976, just 4 years after the first open preschool pilot projects took place, and is documented variously in every decade since then. Most recently, the role of the open preschool for international families in Sweden has been highlighted at national level, when it was identified by the Swedish government as a potential resource for language and integration initiatives targeted at immigrant parents, in particular mothers born outside Europe.

In Sweden over 100,000 non-European born women between the ages of 20 and 44 are registered as resident, having arrived to Sweden in the last five years. Approximately half of them start their first years in the country with maternity leave, which entails a risk that they slip behind in *etablering* programmes right from the start, or in the worst-case scenario, drop out of them entirely. For these women and their children, there is everything to gain from shortening their paths to integration and *etablering*. It becomes a win for both generations, and for society. (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021, p.3)

The thesis is situated within the Nordic field of didactics (hereafter *didaktik*) and aims to offer a broad account of the organisation of educational activities relating to language and societal content in the open preschool. The research presented offers first a historical perspective on the development trajectory of the open preschool during the period 1972 – 2024, before zooming in on contemporary examples of language and societal education in open preschools. With the open preschool being actively operationalised as a site of labour-market preparatory education for certain groups of adult immigrants, and as a site of proactive outreach work aimed at increasing preschool attendance among children of foreign-born parents, its relevance as an object of study from a didactic and curricular perspective, as well as from a broader societal perspective, becomes arguably more highly motivated.

1.1 Research problem statement

The open preschool is a non-statutory setting, described in section 25 § 3 of Sweden's Education Act as a pedagogical setting where children can participate in educational activities, and where their parents have the possibility for social contact and sense of community (SFS 2010:800). Yet, since 2018, the Swedish government has highlighted the potential of the open preschool as a provider of education for adult immigrants. This apparent flexibility of purpose is of interest from a curriculum studies perspective, inviting as it does questions about the routines, practices and actors involved in the steering of the setting type. From a didactic perspective, the foregrounding of the adult educational purpose invites questions related to who can be a learner in the open preschool, what content areas educational activities may relate to, and how educators organise educational activities for both adults and children.

This thesis explores these broad questions, and in doing so aims to shine a spotlight on the open preschool as an actor in adult immigrant education. The apparent differences between various stated purposes of the open preschool make this an intriguing avenue for research, in particular as the open preschool is a setting that tends which diverse actors have acknowledged is poorly understood (see for example Ashley, 1990; Bing, 1999; Nilsson, 1996).

The question of education for adult immigrants and their children is one with clear relevance for a number of contemporary political questions within the Swedish and wider European context, namely education, immigration and integration. Educational research has addressed widely questions about immigrants' education (most notably language education and Civic Orientation), and the role of education in integration. There is, however, a gap in the literature that can usefully be filled by considering the specific ways in which the open preschool is operationalised, organised and understood as an actor in provision of education for immigrants. This is motivated primarily as the open preschool is an educational setting where children and adults attend together.

Indeed, the attendance of the adult is conditional upon their caregiving role. I argue that the fact that the open preschool is a parent-child setting has considerable relevance for its curriculum, that is to say, the way in which learning is planned for, and how the educational work of the setting is organised.

This thesis has potential relevance for manifold local and national actors interested in the education of immigrant adults, in that it can contribute to a broader understanding of how the open preschool as a setting type can be conceptualised as part of diverse systems addressing some of the most pressing socio-political questions in 21st century Sweden.

1.2 Research purpose statement

The overall purpose of this research is to contribute with knowledge about conditions for adult immigrants' learning in an educational setting with an explicit child educational purpose. More specifically, the research aims to create knowledge on the historical precedent and contemporary conditions for organisation of adult education, and in particular language and societal orientation education for adult immigrants in the Swedish open preschool. Organisation of education is understood in broad terms as the way in which educators organise their didactic decision making within an educational setting in relation to curriculum for that setting, to the setting's pedagogical purposes, and to the needs of learners in the setting.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions which guide the work address four main areas:

- 1) Didactic characteristics of the open preschool in the period 1972 - 2024**
 - a) How has the educational purpose of the open preschool been described in texts 'for and about' the setting since 1972?
 - b) What educational activities, learners, and intended learning content have been described for the setting during the same period?

- 2) Didactic characteristics of activities for immigrant families in the open preschool since 1972**
 - a) What educational activities for immigrant families in the open preschool have been described in texts 'for and about' the setting since 1972?
 - b) How are immigrant families-as-learners described in these texts, and what intended learning content is identified as relevant for them?

3) **Contemporary accounts of educational activities with immigrant families in the open preschool**

- a) How do educators in the open preschool describe their educational work with immigrant adults in terms of intended learning content, purposes, and methods?

4) **Discourses about language, immigration and integration as a factor in the organisation of educational activities in the open preschool**

- a) What discourses about language, immigration and integration may be identified in contemporary texts ‘for and about’ the open preschool and in educators’ accounts of their work?
- b) In what ways, if any, can these discourses be identified as a factor in curriculum making and didactic decision making?

1.4 What is meant by language and societal education for immigrants?

To refer easily to the broad areas from which intended learning content of interest in the curricular and didactic analyses in this thesis may be drawn, I coined use the dual-language umbrella acronym SALI. In English, SALI stands for *Societal-orientation and language content for immigrants*. In Swedish, SALI stands for *Språk och samhällsorienterande lärandeinhåll för invandrare*. Unless otherwise stated or further specified, SALI (sometimes referred to as SALI content) refers to any content that ordinarily might be covered during a Swedish language course, such as SFI, or a Civic Orientation course.⁴ SFI, *Svenska för invandrare* or Swedish for Immigrants, is a nationally available Swedish language course offered (at no cost to the learner) to any immigrant in Sweden, providing they have right of residency. SFI consists of four courses, A-D and three different study paths (1-3) (Skolverket, 2017). The precise combination of courses a student takes is dependent upon their study path and individual factors such as their previous experiences of formal education. SFI is designed to give students basic Swedish reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and focuses on content areas with a connection to everyday life, society, study and employment (Skolverket, 2017)⁵. Despite it referring to a specific course, the term SFI is sometimes used in common

⁴ Occasionally in the text, SALI is used as part of a phrase such as ‘SALI education’ or ‘SALI activities’. This is primarily for stylistic reasons or in the service of brevity, and can be understood as, for example ‘education with SALI as learning content’ or ‘(educational) activities where SALI is the intended learning content’.

⁵ SFI is not typically available to people seeking asylum in Sweden, until they receive right of residency, although there are examples of municipalities offering SFI to asylum seekers (Carlén, 2023), and of public folk education actors such as Folkuniversitet offering asylum seekers courses similar to SFI (Folkuniversitet, 2024).

parlance as a catch-all term for Swedish language courses or activities for immigrants. Civic Orientation, a course available to certain groups of immigrants as part of the Swedish Public Employment Service's Introduction Programme, covers eight content areas. These are coming to Sweden; living in Sweden; supporting yourself and developing in Sweden; the individual's rights and obligations; starting a family and living with children in Sweden; having an influence in Sweden; looking after your health in Sweden; and aging in Sweden (Information Sverige, 2024) However, reference made to SALI in this thesis implies language and societal content for immigrants as part of any educational activity or programme – the categories named above are used solely as a guide to aid in delimiting the scope of what is meant by societal education.

Another field, Parent Education is not explicitly identified in the acronym itself, but content related to parenting, particularly within the Swedish context, appears under the Civic Orientation umbrella. Further to this, parenting and parenting in Sweden are, due to the nature of the setting, of particular relevance to new parents, and immigrant parents. As such, parenting is treated as a likely element of SALI.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, in which the research problem statement, purpose statement and research questions have been presented, a background contextualisation of the research is given in Chapter Two, and then an overview of relevant previous research in Chapter Three. This is followed in Chapter Four by a description of the theoretical frameworks underpinning the research, and then in Chapter Five by a comprehensive account of the empirical materials analysed, and the methods used for their analysis, as well as the ethical considerations relevant to the research, with a particular focus on the ethical aspects of researching multilingually.

The first empirical results are presented in Chapter Six, in which the history of the open preschool as an educational setting is presented, structured around a series of discursive practices that have had relevance for the development of the setting's trajectory. In Chapter Seven, results are presented which show how the curriculum of the open preschool has developed since 1972, with an overall focus on how adult education in the setting has been organised, and a specific focus on education for immigrants. In Chapter Eight, the results of a Reflexive Thematic Analysis and a didactic content analysis carried out on interview data are presented. This is followed by a further analysis of the interview data in Chapter Nine, where the analytical focus is on the way in which educators view and organise their work with SALI in their settings.

In Chapter 10, the empirical results are discussed in relation to one another, to the thesis' aims, research questions, and to previous research. A closing

chapter, Chapter 11 summarises the key findings, and reflects on potential avenues for the application of the findings, and further research. Finally, the thesis is summarised in Swedish in Chapter 12.

2 Peoples, homes and the People’s Home – siting the research in the historical context of a changing society

In this background chapter, I provide a historical context for the main object of study, the open preschool, discussing it in relation to socio-political events of relevance to everyday life for families in Sweden. I do this by anchoring the discussion in three areas that significantly informed my own understanding of the historical background to the research object and research questions I would ask. These areas are discussed in Sections 2.1 – 2.3 respectively, and are: The People’s Home⁶, the 1968 Commission on Nursery Provision, and linguistic superdiversity in 21st century Sweden.

2.1 The People’s Home: reflections on the historical context and its relevance for the study

It was the expansion of the welfare sector in 1960s and 1970s Sweden, which provides the socio-political contextual background for the open preschool’s emergence. This expansion was driven by the political initiative referred to at the time as *the Strong Society* (Sw. *det starka samhället*), which historian Nils Edling called “the premium instruments of progress” (Edling, 2022, p.87). Edling further described the expansion as “an incrementally enlarged and improved system of reforms and services introduced to meet a growing popular demand and individual needs, financed through taxes and provided by the public authorities” (Edling, 2022, p.87). The Strong Society characterised a period in Sweden when, following earlier widespread measures to tackle the pernicious mass poverty of the 1930s and 1940s, the Social Democrat government put in motion the next phase of societal reforms aimed not (as had previously been required) at securing a universal dignified and adequate quality of life baseline, but at giving families the conditions to improve the material and non-material quality of their own lives, and impact the wider society (Edling, 2022). This “non-material” wealth took the form of leisure and cultural activities, meaningful human interaction outside of a competition driven capitalist

⁶ The People’s Home is sometimes referred to in English by its Swedish name, *Folkhemmet*.

context, and social solidarity, positioned as core facets of the vision of a society where each person had the chance to contribute meaningfully to society. The ambitions of this second wave of welfare politics recall the words of former prime minister Per Albin Hansson in his famous speech about The People's Home, in which he criticised what he felt to be the shortcomings of the sitting government, and asserted that:

The major task of an honest democratic politics is to render, of society, the benevolent home its citizens shall have (Hansson, 1928/1935, p.22)

This benevolent home he in turn described as built around community and kinship, with no individuals or groups inherently privileged over others, and characterised by equality, consideration, and cooperation stemming from a sense of security in their existence (Hansson 1928/ 1935). This sense of security, Hansson observed, would make individuals more aware of their roles as fellow citizens, and generate the “kinship with the general public, and the sense of the homely and the domestic, which characterise a good democracy” (1928/1935, p. 28) As Edling (2023) has noted, the term People's Home (Sw. *folkhem*) was actually scarcely in active use during the welfare reform decades of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, despite it having gained “near mythical” status in the public mind as a symbol of an egalitarian Sweden.⁷ (Edling, 2023). Nonetheless, the ideological principles of Hansson's People's Home ambition are visible in the manifold policies, and in the concrete and ideological affordances the welfare reforms offered everyday people.

It is these welfare reforms, and the democratic ethos behind them, which paved the way for the emergence of the open preschool whose origins as a setting type lie in the findings of the Commission on Nursery Provision 1972. This report, which will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.2, is widely understood as having laid the foundations of the comprehensive modern pre-school system that Sweden has become known worldwide for, and which is so closely connected to the ambition of a gender equitable workforce, with the welfare provisions which facilitate this in practice. The open preschool, too, can be traced back to this root.

⁷ Not until the 1980s would it re-emerge in nostalgic discussions of a perceived heyday (Edling, 2023), becoming “considerably more important [then] than it had been during the period it generally describes” (Edling, 2023, p.621). This nostalgia persisted into the 1990s, when Social Democracy was necessarily tempered by a more conservative approach in order to achieve economic recovery and related since then to a perception of crisis and fundamental shift in Swedish society (Edling, 2022).

2.2 Peoples and homes: a pen-portrait of Swedish life for families with children in the early 1970s

When the Commission on Nursery Provision committee was tasked with producing proposals for the overhaul and expansion of the pre-school childcare system, sociologist Rita Liljeström was commissioned produce a report providing the social context for their work. The resulting detailed pen portrait of Sweden in late 1960s described a country emerging from a period of radical transformation from a largely agrarian to a largely urban society (Liljeström, 1974), and still getting to grips with the knock-on impacts of this shift on everyday life and societal structures.

Swedish family politics during the 1960s and 1970s created conditions for women to be able to work and become financially self-sufficient in their own right (Qvarsebo, 2006), and had been a core demand of leading equality campaigners of the day (Hederberg, 1961). In 1971, this came to fruition in the form of a reform in tax laws, ending the joint-taxation system that viewed a married couple as a single economic entity, and established the two-earner family as the normative model with women described as an untapped resource for the Swedish economy (Qvarsebo, 2006). The increase in women working outside the home was related, not unsurprisingly, to an increased need for childcare, and the two questions developed in close relationship to one another. Given the near universality of preschool attendance today, it is no exaggeration to say that in the final three decades of the 20th century and the first two of the new millennium, there occurred a sea change in the everyday lives of families with young children in Sweden.

It is worth noting that despite the close relationship of women's employment and the development of the preschool system, the latter was not only seen as a solution to child care needs, but was positioned as a desirable occupation for children, placing them in the care of trained professionals from whose skills they would benefit in terms of their pedagogical stimulation and development (echoing the ambition noted in Section 2.1 for the Swedish populace to benefit from pursuits such as play, and creativity). Then, though, like today, there has existed a need to provide for the families whose young children do not have a place in preschool. A recommendation from the Commission on Nursery Provision would ultimately lead to the development of the open preschool, and has taken on a significance akin to that of a birth announcement in the life story of the setting:

To give pedagogical stimulation to children who do not get a place in preschool, play advice, for example, should be tested in collaboration with the child health centre's clinics. (SOU 1972:27, p.620)

This access to pedagogical stimulation in the form of play advice sessions at the child health centres is suggestive of an intended compensatory function

with parents positioned as intended recipients of advice on how to provide the stimulation in the home environment that other children would receive in a childcare setting. In the 1970s, despite women increasingly working outside the home, children without a preschool place were by no means a minority, and it was not until the mid to late 1990s that the preschool system was sufficiently well established that all those who sought a place had one available to them and a majority of children attended preschool (Larsson, 2024). In part, this can be attributed to the continuation of social and demographic processes transitioning Sweden from a rural to an urban society, and multi-generational family residential arrangements to nuclear family living, in modern, purpose-built residential areas.

For many, these centred around the characteristic apartment blocks of the Million Homes Programme (Sw. *Miljonprogrammet*) housebuilding initiative, and were close to the urban centres to which adults commuted to work in occupations characteristic of the secondary and emerging tertiary sectors. These residential areas are considered concrete products and symbols of the dream of the inclusive People's Home (Dahlstedt & Eliassi, 2018), with the facets of the People's Home ideal built in to the design of the areas, from the architecture to the proximity to nature. However, rural-urban migration to newbuild residential estates found many incoming residents in areas so new and so unfamiliar that turning fledgling housing developments into thriving neighbourhoods and communities proved to be a challenge. Parents found themselves bringing their children up in what may have been materially better conditions than previous generations, but without the familiar core structures of their day to day work and family lives they or their parents had grown up with. Compounding this was the fact that many young families were now also geographically removed from their relatives, all of which led to young families struggling to find frames of reference for their new roles (Liljeström, 1974).

As play advice pilot projects began to role out, these demographic conditions, which for many families entailed isolation, loneliness and the absence of guidance, meant that the settings quickly took on a dual function, with pedagogical input for children, and social opportunities for adults. The fledgling preschool system and the gradual introduction of new family political legislation meant that these new settings were well attended and sought after, both by families waiting for preschool places, and for those opting not to apply for them – indeed, while women's economic independence as a result of paid work was fast developing, scope remained for parents to actively choose to care for their children in the home (Liljeström, 1974). In theory, this option is retained today, despite the full availability of preschool places for all eligible children, however, as indicated above, preschool attendance is now almost universal, bolstered by Sweden's modern historical precedent as one of the world's leading countries in terms of institutional infrastructure for gender equality. The percentage of women in Sweden who were classed as employed in 2023 was, at 80,2%, high compared with the EU average of 70,2%

(Ekonomifakta, 2024). Preschool enrolment statistics for 2023 (the latest available at the time of writing) showing that while 51,9% of one-year olds attend preschool, the figure for two-year olds was 91,7%, and for four and five-year olds 95,7% (Skolverket, 2024c)

Modern Swedish society is, however, built around the explicit expectation that while the state commits to providing for those who cannot work, those who can work should have equal right and opportunity to work (Regeringskansliet, 2025). Related to this, however, is another product of the second wave welfare reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, namely parental leave and parental pay. At the time of writing, no provision exists for state subsidised childcare for children under the age of 12 months, making full time care in the home the norm for babies in their first year, and allowing flexible parental leave to be continued part time into the years that follow.

Preschool is positioned by the Swedish government as an important first stage in any child's schooling, and while it is not mandatory, it is actively promoted (SOU 2020:67). Staying at home to look after pre-school aged children is understood normatively as something which takes place within the framework of the welfare state's parental leave system and that will be followed by a return to work, and the enrolment of the child in preschool. This is of relevance to any discussion of the open preschool, given its non-statutory position as a pedagogical setting for children not in preschool, as it effectively entails a limiting of the groups likely to attend. It is particularly relevant to discussions of open preschool in relation to immigration, Swedish language and integration, as it is these areas which are increasingly invoked in government discourses around the setting, as will be outlined in Section 2.3.

2.3 Peoples' homes: immigration, linguistic superdiversity and the shift away from the domestic domain as a place for pre-school family life

As noted above, the open preschool is primarily aimed at children who do not attend preschool, accompanied by a parent. Further to this, also as noted above, the open preschool has, since 2018 been formally identified as a setting that can contribute to language and integration of foreign families in Sweden. This recent government interest in the setting is in part attributable to the global events which occurred in 2014 - 2015 when almost a quarter of a million people sought asylum in Sweden (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2023) The arrival of nearly a quarter of a million asylum seekers within the course of two years in the mid 2010s entailed a sudden increase in both the number of speakers of languages other than Swedish, and in the number of first languages spoken by the new arrivals. For those involved in any way with the teaching and learning of Swedish to new arrivals, this abrupt rise in linguistic superdiversity

quickly became of significance as education providers sought to address the needs and rights of children to participate in schooling.

Parallel to this, the relationship between the Swedish preschool and the rest of the country's education system has also been subject to intense discussions and a number of fundamental changes in the last fifteen years. These changes, including introduction of a revised Curriculum for the Preschool, Lpfö18 (Skolverket, 2018b), and preschool acquiring for the first time the status of a distinct form of education, requiring teaching to be carried out by qualified preschool teachers (Skolverket, 2010), are indicative of preschool's increasingly school-preparatory function⁸.

Statistics show that children to foreign born parents are overrepresented among those who do not attend preschool in Sweden (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2022). Among the small but significant minority of children who start compulsory school having not attended preschool education are, then, those who grow up in a home with other first languages than Swedish, meaning that they enter school potentially having had relatively little exposure to society's shared language. Resultedly, this group bring with them to school life experiences of early socialisation and language development that may differ, in some cases considerably, to those of children who have spent up to five years in group pedagogical settings where Swedish (which may or may not be the child's first language) is the primary working language. In terms of lived experience of the (albeit normative but nonetheless dominant) institutional and language socialisation practices that are directly applicable to their school readiness, children with first languages other than Swedish who have not attended preschool have arguably had less exposure to such.

A parallel can be drawn here with their mothers' workplace readiness in terms of Swedish language learning – with pregnancy and maternity cited as the primary reason for many foreign-born women's distance from adult education and / or the labour market (Sällemark, 2019). Indeed, foreign-born women are overrepresented in statistics on rates of adults not 'gainfully employed' in work, study, or workplace preparation programmes. Both the government and SKR have specifically identified women from outside Europe, and especially those who come to Sweden as dependents, as *particularly* far from the world of work vulnerable in terms of their access to language education.

It is here that these broader societal questions relating to immigration, multilingualism and integration into Swedish society become of direct relevance to the open preschool. Despite the Swedish education system's long history of supporting multilingualism (Skolverket, 2018a) and its well-established

⁸ Use of the terms teaching and education in this way has been widely considered as a distinct shift in tone from earlier versions of the Curriculum for the Preschool, where the pedagogical aspects of preschool had been expressed in terms learning and development (Skolverket, 2018c.)

system of optional mother-tongue education for bilingual pupils, discussions of immigration across the political spectrum since the latter part of the 2010s have been dominated by the concept of the *Swedish language as the key* to the Swedish education system, the Swedish job market and the Swedish society (Ohlsson & Salomonsson, 2023). Whatever a family's reason for not enrolling in preschool, their children constitute a minority in terms of experience of early learning and socialisation in an institutional group setting, and they are a group who have increasingly attracted the attention of Sweden's leaders and decision makers as Sweden transitions from being a linguistically diverse country into a society working with linguistic superdiversity, and as the formal school-preparatory function of preschool continues to grow. The open preschool is named specifically as a setting that "can prepare children and parents for preschool" (SOU 2020:67, p.124). This is, however, as noted, not an initiative designed only to get children into preschool – closely connected to preschool enrolment is (now as it was in the past), parents' gainful employment, and in the case of immigrant mothers, the push to enrol their children in preschool is inextricably linked with parallel efforts increase levels of employment.

It is against this background of near-universal preschool attendance, in a modern, multicultural and multilingual Sweden where adults' work outside the home not only entails a norm, but is an outspoken goal of immigration and integration policies, that this thesis is set. The relevance of the Sweden from which it has developed, however, should not be overlooked in understanding how the open preschool has become a setting described thus by an Eritrean mother in a report on open preschools in Stockholm's Husby and Rinkeby districts:

It's a security here. When you sit at home you just feel lonely, and can't do anything. You just feel depressed if you are alone all the time. When you come here, you meet a lot of people, you learn a lot, and you become happy. (Nilsson, 1996)

3 Previous research

Relevant previous research was identified using a systematised⁹ review following Malinauskaite et al.'s (2019) modified version of Grant and Booth's SALSA framework (Grant & Booth, 2009) in which a fifth stage, Snowball Technique, is added (Malinauskaite et al., 2019, p.2). This is shown here in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Modified SALSA framework for systemised literature review

The open preschool is treated as the main variable distinguishing my study from previous research on education of SALI content for adult immigrants. While a large body of research exists on adult education, on education of adult immigrants, and on immigrant language and societal content, and while a smaller body of research considers educational activities in parent-child contexts, a knowledge gap is identified at the point where these areas meet. This is especially true within the fields of didaktik and curriculum theory, and in relation to the specific context of the Swedish open preschool. In this chapter I present previous research in five sections: In Section 3.1 I consider research on parent support as a context for learning. In Section 3.2 attention is turned to research about normative learning pathways to integration. Section 3.3 is concerned with research about integration of parents, and in Section 3.4, I consider curricular conditions for SALI education in non-statutory educational settings. The chapter concludes with Section 3.5 where a brief discussion is presented of where I situate my study in relation to the previous research and to the research context within which it has been written.

⁹ Grant and Booth (2009) describe a systematised review as a method that is commonly used in postgraduate studies, in that it aims to replicate key aspects of a systematic review process, allowing for a methodical and credible approach account of relevant previous research within the scope allowable by the research context (Grant & Booth, 2009, p.103).

3.1 Parent support as a context for learning – international perspectives on parent-child settings

In Section 3.1, I consider previous research on parent-child settings sites for educational activities, paying particular attention to what earlier studies have found regarding the characteristics of parent-child settings as a distinct educational environments. In Section 3.1.1 I aim to give a broad overview of empirical research into the Swedish open preschool and the Norwegian equivalent, the open nursery, known as the *åpen barnehage*. I consider what previous research has shown regarding which purposes are described for the settings, and how educational activities are organised in relation to the content and purpose. In 3.1.2, I address the same type of questions with a specific focus on the context of international empirical research into the didactic ‘what’ and ‘how’ of parent-child settings. In Section 3.1.3 I present research that considers the relationship between parent support, education and integration.

3.1.1 The open preschool and similar parent-child settings as objects of educational research within the Nordic context—what knowledge has been generated?

There is a relatively small body of literature that considers the Swedish open preschool as a setting type, and a noticeable absence of recent studies of this nature. Berg and Zetterström (1988) carried out an explorative, two-year interview and observation study in twenty open preschools in Gothenburg, and this remains the sole longitudinal and multi-site study into the setting to date.

Despite the relative lack of scholarly literature on the open preschool during the 1990s and 2000s, a number of important studies and reports were published during the period which may be classified as ‘grey literature’ (Karolinska Institutet University Library, 2024). Notable examples include sociologist Brian Ashley’s *The Open Preschool as a centre for families with children in the local area* (Ashley, 1988) and his follow up book *Open Preschool – a profitable investment* (Ashley et al., 1990), as well as Catharina Frank’s master’s thesis *On a Journey of Discovery in the Open Preschool: an institution which raises questions* (Frank, 2007)¹⁰ Frank’s aim was to contribute with new and updated knowledge about the open preschool as a “relatively un-researched arena for day to day life” (Frank, 2007, p.18). She did this by using Lindensjö and Lundgren’s (2000) concept of formulation arena and realisation arena to compare the way open preschool had been described in printed

¹⁰ While it is described here as grey literature, and indeed, not technically considered academic research in the sense that, as a master’s thesis, it has not been peer reviewed, Frank’s thesis, in particular the comprehensive background account of the open preschool’s history, is nonetheless acknowledged here as a comprehensive and valuable contribution to the field.

sources with the way ideas about the open preschool were expressed by various actors, including parents and staff, in the two open preschools where she carried out ethnographic field studies. (Frank, 2000, p.42)

Of key relevance to my study are the results of Frank's study of the formulation arena, in which Frank analysed around 30 documents relating to free-standing municipal open preschool with the aim of "finding the red thread in [the accumulated knowledge on open preschool]" (p28), noting that she paid particular attention to "that which adds something new to the growing picture of knowledge" (p28) – a reflection of the relatively small amount that had previously been written on the subject. Frank accounts for the analysed texts decade wise, giving each a descriptive title relating to the development of the setting, calling the 1970s The Building, 1980s The Heyday, 1990s Positioning, and 2000s Conserving traditions or a new orientation.

The relative paucity of material relating to open preschool, and the fact that Frank's analyses were organised chronologically make her study particularly relevant to this thesis. Indeed, the empirical similarity and the choice to present results chronologically has meant that there are certain structural and substantive likenesses between the study and results in Chapter Six in this thesis, although the theoretical and methodological approaches are distinct from one another.

The Norwegian equivalent of the open preschool, the *åpen barnehage*, has been examined as a setting type in more detail than its Swedish counterpart. Haugset (2016) discussed the ambiguities within Norwegian education politics that positioned the open preschool as a "recruitment arena" for the regular preschool, while the regular preschool remained a voluntary setting (Haugset, 2016, p.32) Haugset et al. (2014) produced a mapping report of open preschools in Norway, finding that in an era when, as in Sweden, Norwegian preschool attendance was approaching universality, the open preschool had particularly good foundations for developing in the future as a preventative and health promoting setting. The *åpen barnehage* was also the subject of a comprehensive volume – *The open nursery: a diverse meeting place* (Jansen et al, eds, 2020) detailing a 2017 project, in which 126 colleagues from 60 (Norwegian) open preschools took part in a 'competence lift' on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Jansen et al., eds, 2020: 14). Both Haugset and Sivert, and Jansen et. al are of particular relevance as they lift a trend in the *åpen barnehage* which appears to echo the trends identifiable in relation to the open preschool, namely that its family support and integration functions appear to be increasingly dominant. This trend, both in the Swedish and the Norwegian contexts, will serve as a useful point of reference for my discussion of my results.

Recently, the open preschool has begun to attract attention from within public health research due to the open preschool's links with the family centres which began to emerge in the years around the millennium, resulting in the foundation of the Swedish Association to promote Family Centres in 2000.

Most academic publications on the open preschool published since the turn of the millennium examine the open preschool as a multifaceted part of Sweden's social care infrastructure, and consider it not primarily as a pedagogical setting, but rather in the context of family centres (e.g. Gustavsson 2012; Bing 2012), its social and social support function (e.g. Wissö 2012; Samuelsson 2012) and pre- and postnatal health (e.g. Edvardsson 2013). In this way, the research echoes and builds on earlier research (for example Ashley) that lifted the open preschool's expressly social function. Notably, Abrahamsson and Bing (2011) used program theory to consider the nature of popularly perceived practices in the open preschool, with the aim of assessing how closely the practice aligned with the stated aims of the open preschool when located within the family centre, concluding that alignment was high with regards to providing opportunities for social contact, support in enacting and identifying with a 'good, normal parent' role, and access to targeted support as required (Abrahamsson & Bing, 2011). Similarly, Bulling (2017) presents some interesting results about fathers' use of the Norwegian *åpen barnehage* during parental leave in her article on the setting as an arena for integration (Bulling, 2017). Here, again, content learning (this time in the form of Norwegian language) is observed alongside less explicit types of social learning relating to visitors' common parent identity. One notable and especially illustrative example from empirical data concerns two fathers, one in a smart, freshly pressed shirt and suit trousers, and the other in a hoody, sleeves rolled up to reveal full tattoo coverage. Despite their visual identities indicating (at least superficially) considerable differences between the two, Bulling describes the fellowship between the men, something the educator in the setting called "invisible friendship" in terms of "social connections between people one would never think to put together. The diversity in the group brings opportunities to build relationships outside of the social groups one otherwise belongs to" (2017, p.78) Support and integration, of various kinds, can also be seen as key ideas in Axelsson (2019). He examined the open preschool as an arena where men can meet as fathers, exploring how fatherhood is enacted and performed in dads-only open preschool sessions. He shows how the open preschool is primarily a child-oriented setting that may also be understood as a fathering space (Axelsson, 2019). Åberg et al. (2024) consider the open preschool as part of the family centre, using a social pedagogy approach to explore the organisational conditions for its convivial function.

The apparent peripherality of the open preschool to both the domain, and the academic field, of education can be understood as a reflection of the diverse purposes of the open preschool, and of the ambiguities which exist regarding its relationship to the Swedish education system. For my purposes, the relative lack of education research indicates that my thesis identifies and aims to address a knowledge gap in relation to the open preschool. Research that *has* treated the open preschool (and similar Scandinavian settings) as an educational setting has broadly focused on the kinds of learning content or on

the way in which teaching and learning are organised in the settings. Abrahamsson and Bing (2011), did not, however, discount the open preschool as a place for learning – on the contrary, they lift the importance of the learning that takes place, but position the learning within the context of a support setting, rather than an explicitly educational one. Mulkerrins et al. (2022) studied the way in which health practitioners and open preschool teachers perceive and experience the open preschool as a setting for educating families about health and diet, concluding, like Abrahamsson and Bing (2011) that “[open preschool] provides a meeting place for mutual learning in a supportive environment” where families may be linked with health practitioners in a setting that allows the health practitioners to better understand the needs of the families and adapt the kind of support they offer accordingly (Mulkerrins et al., 2022, p.4-5). In her master’s thesis, Moir (2017) explored migrant mothers’ views on what, if anything, they learned at open preschool and who they learned it from, finding that parenting related content (both universal and Sweden specific) dominated in mothers’ accounts of what they learned (p.22). With the caveat that as a master’s thesis, it is not technically classed as academic research, Moir’s study is nonetheless of interest as it explores adult learning in the open preschool using Community of Practice theory (Wenger, 1998), and in doing so lifts the relevance of peer-to-peer learning within the setting.

3.1.2 International research into parent-child settings

Outside of the Nordic region, parent-child settings have been the subject of research in a number of countries, including Japan, Australia, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom. Taken together, these studies provide important insights into international trends in terms of the purpose of parent child studies. Geens and Vandenbroeck (2013) summarise research emerging since 2010 on the social function of parent-child playgroups, and highlight a distinction in the purposes of such groups, namely between groups established to support targeted ‘at risk’ groups, and groups with a broader social and community focus (Geens & Vandenbroeck, 2013, p.408).

International research into parent-child settings highlight the way in which teaching and learning in such settings typically take place as part of activities with a parent support purpose. Musatti et al. (2017) describe parent-child settings of the type under consideration here as a phenomenon of the final decades of the twentieth century call them:

“...a response to the changing needs of families with young children in modern societies, where many parents face the challenging of bringing up a young child in physical or psychological isolation, within a reduced family network...” (Musatti et al., 2017, p. 834).

Swick et al., (2001), in their broad survey of parent education, offer a concise account of the core task of the learner in a parent education context, and summarise the learning content typical for parent learners, stating that parents "...must learn while engaged in their many different roles and relationships. They must gain information on child development, health, safety, education, childcare, and in parenting and marital-family¹¹ dynamics" (Swick et al., 2001, p.66). Further to this they emphasise the situated nature of the knowledge required, and note that parents have to be able to deploy the knowledge within the social and personal contexts unique to their situation, and that of their child.

Musatti et al. (2017) identify similarities in the way in which parents, specifically mothers, access support-as-education in parent-child settings in three countries (Italy, France and Japan). They highlight the significance for mothers of attending these settings for the first time, noting that it marks "the transition of their dyad from a private world, a mother with her child at home, to a larger social situation where they will be one dyad among other similar ones" (Musatti et al., 2017, p. 838). Related to this, Musatti et al. present empirical results showing that it is the nature of the support, and the way in which settings are organised are fundamental factors in supporting mothers to access them, and therefore be able to avail of the support on offer. For example, they identified the importance of greetings and reception of newcomers, by both staff and other parents, as a success factor for participation (Musatti et al., 2017). An important aspect of this was the skilfulness of educators when it came to "reading the room" and responding attentively to mothers who seemed nervous or uncomfortable by orchestrating contact and entrance to social meetings within the setting. The nature of the interactions between the visitors is also described as a success factor for participation, with the authors noting "striking similarities" in the "general social climate" of the 15 centres they studied (Musatti et al., 2017, p. 837), namely a pattern of "continual spontaneous gatherings among adults and free play activities among children" in dynamic groupings, and in ways characterised by "high reciprocal attention" between parents, meaning that "everyone found their niche" (Musatti et al., 2017, p. 837). Further to this, Musatti et al. describe the physical arrangements of parent-child settings as conducive to successful participation, as they "legitimize child development and care as the central focus of communication" in a way that would be unusual or inappropriate in other social situations (Musatti et al., 2017, p. 840), and note that opportunities to share snacking or drinking coffee together contributed to a climate where all parents could take part (p. 838). Musatti et al.'s results share many similarities with those of Clarkin-Phillips and Carr (2012) who studied parent-child setting sessions in

¹¹Note that the term 'marital-family' in this otherwise useful quotation is judged here to be temporally situated, and unhelpfully normative in relation to today's understanding of families within the Swedish context.

Aotearoa New Zealand. They found that the environment in which learning is intended to take place can be most effective if it is arranged to go beyond being affording, to being organised in a way that is proactively inviting, actively engaging, and provoking.

Hoshi-Watanabe et al. (2012) carried out research into the origins and rationale of parent-child settings in three European countries and in Japan, noting that such settings have ‘mushroomed’ in number during recent years. They highlight the core similarities between the settings in different countries, noting that:

...despite the diversity of organization and practices, these initiatives are all related to the changed conditions in which parents take up their roles in post-industrial societies. They aim at providing parents with some form of immaterial support. (Hoshi-Watanabe et al., 2012, p. 63)

This assertion can be said also to apply to the open preschool, given the background to the setting given in Chapter Two. Hoshi-Watanabe et al. (2012) found four key rationales for the parent-child settings they studied, namely: demographic reasons (for example decreasing birth rates attributed to mothers’ social isolation), insufficient child care provision, children’s socialisation, and parent support (Hoshi-Watanabe et al., 2012). Regarding *how* staff in the four countries’ settings carry out their work, more specifically their parent support work, the authors note two contrasting approaches, which they note may co-occur or co-exist either alongside one another, or in conflict with one another. The first of these approaches they describe as the expert function, as part of a residual approach that sees parents as “the first and sole responsible agents” for their children, but that communities or the state have a duty to ‘step in’ to help if a “risk of failure is perceived”. (Hoshi-Watanabe et al., 2012, p68) The second approach, observed in many French and Italian parent-child settings, is based upon “valorizing and empowering parents’ competences” (Hoshi-Watanabe et al., 2012, p.68) and is considered a more genuinely supportive approach. Barbosa and Vérité (2011) and Scheu and Fraioli (2010) consider the French model of reception centres for children and parents, called *lieux d’accueil enfants-parents*, and describe them in a way that recalls the open preschool, with voluntary attendance, no need for registration, and as places of convivial fun contact between families with young children.

Perspectives from Australia and the United Kingdom are offered in Needham & Jackson (2012), who have carried out research into parent and practitioner perspectives on Australian Supported Playgroups and English parent-toddler groups. The authors aimed to compare the two settings in order to identify the general values of the settings. One key result was that while both settings were similarly organised and with broadly similar purposes, the Australian playgroups took a more holistic approach to the family, nurturing the parents as well as the children. In the UK, by contrast, focus was on children’s

development, and practitioners highlighted the importance of parents participating proactively, rather than ‘just chatting’, indicating that the social nature of the UK groups was prioritised lower than the family development function. (Needham & Jackson, 2012)

Further to this, Jackson (2013), highlights the lack of research evidence about Australian supported playgroups, but notes the similarities between the supported playgroup model and “other international service provision models for parents and children” (Jackson, 2013, p.80) including in the UK, Belgium, Italy, France and Norway. Jackson’s qualitative mixed methods case study examined “the interrelationships between children, parents and staff” in three supported playgroups working with disadvantaged and marginalised communities (Jackson, 2013, p.81). Her research confirmed that parent support was a ‘major component’ in all three groups studied, in line with their stated purpose, and that the support observed could be arranged into eight categories: friendship and social network, relational, peer, emotional, parenting role, information and resource, ‘circle of care’, and multidisciplinary. Jackson identified practitioners’ authentic caring attitude towards visitors, the setting’s drop-in model, and practitioners’ knowledge of other service providers as key elements of the support on offer.

Thesing (2008) carried out research into the nature of support mothers in four New Zealand early childhood centres received. She notes that effective parenting increasingly recognised as being contingent upon support that develops “parents’ sense of wellbeing and confidence in their role, supported by relevant information” (Thesing, 2008, p.65). In summarising previous research from the decades on either side of the millennium, Thesing observed a discrepancy reported between the way in which mothers in early childhood programmes conceptualise support, and how educators in the settings understood it. The former valued support that ‘engendered feelings of: confidence, personal wellbeing and incremental mastery over a range of fundamental knowledge about themselves and their child’ (Thesing, 2008, p.66), while the latter appeared to have a narrower conception of support based around delivery of parenting programmes and dissemination of information. Such a tension is generally not reflected in later research into educators’ methods (indeed, Jackson’s (2013), and Needham and Jackson’s (2012) results from the Australian context indicate the reverse), however the result is useful in highlighting the potential problems inherent in the duality of parent-child centres, with their social and pedagogical functions. Thesing’s interviews with educators, and with mothers were coded using Strauss’ integrated method (1987) and two main themes were identified: support as contingent on mothers’ own activity in building social networks and contributing to the centre community, and mothers’ support as both formal and informal. The findings within these themes that parent support is “primarily a function of informal rather than formal systems established by teachers” (Thesing, 2008, p.69), and that formal support is often ineffective due to detrimental power differentials is described

by Thesing as at odds with government policy stating that educators and visitors should work collaboratively towards collective responsibility at the centres. This result corroborates the earlier findings Thesing highlights, and is useful from a curriculum studies perspective as it indicates the presence of competing or incompatible understandings of a setting's educational modus operandi in relation to its purpose.

More recently, Hale et al. (2020) reported on a pilot project with open pre-schools (which they called open kindergarten) in Scotland, in which the Swedish model was trialled as low-threshold family support by a multi-organisation collaboration in two Scottish cities, Edinburgh and Midlothian. They found that open kindergarten "filled a service gap" (Hale et al., 2020, p.9) and was an important source of support for families living in "complex and challenging" circumstances (Hale et al., 2020, p.9).

3.1.3 Parent support in immigration and integration contexts

Another strand that has been investigated within the Swedish, Nordic and international contexts has been parent-child settings as a factor in integration of immigrant parents. Two related themes can be discerned within the research, namely parent-child settings as an arena for immigrant parents, and the role of parent-child settings in relation to integration and dominant parenting norms of host countries.

Ochocka and Janzen (2008) carried out research into experiences of immigrant parenting, and in their results problematise the over reliance on home country culture as the primary lens through which immigrant parenting may be viewed. They carried out focus group interviews with 317 international parents from 12 different language groups, who had been in Canada for less than three years and developed an orienting framework for understanding immigrant parenting, based on the results. The framework identifies six areas of relevance to understanding the experiences and practices of immigrant parenting. The first two, cultural parenting orientations and cultural parenting styles, relate to the beliefs and expectations parents hold about their children's futures, and to the parenting practices which immigrant parents have with them from their home contexts. The next three, host country context, parenting modifications and parenting contributions pertain to the factors that may impact immigrants' parenting, and the changes they may make to it in the host country context. Similarly, to the ways in which "immigrants contribute to an understanding and practice of parenting within their new host country" (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008, p.95). Parenting supports is the sixth element of the framework, and refers to various kinds of support immigrant parents may need with settling, modifying parenting, and encouraging mutual exchange with host-country parents. (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008)

Ochocka and Janzen's primary finding based on their empirical results relates to the reflexive nature of the immigrant parent's experience, noting that that:

the process of parenting and the process of adapting to a new country are dynamic, dialectic and influencing each other. Immigrant parents are constantly exposed to "differences" and to an ongoing negotiation between what's "good" and "bad" for them and for their children considering both traditional culture and new cultural context. (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008, p.109)

They highlight that culture is not a static term, and note that to understand immigrant parenting practices also requires taking into account similarities in newcomer and host country-born parents' practices, the dynamic nature of approaches to parenting, and the diversity which exists within the parenting practices of immigrants, even if they come from the same country or cultural background (p88). Ochocka and Janzen describe their findings as being of potential use to host country governments and to practitioners working with immigrant parents, noting three main themes of relevance for the kinds of support offered to them, namely:

(a) supports that help immigrant parents understand and settle within their new context, (b) supports that help them through the process of parenting modifications, and (c) supports that help encourage mutual exchange between immigrants and other host parents. (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008, p.109)

Delblanc and Gidner (2021) report on research carried out at an open preschool for newly arrived families in Malmö, and explore what potential the open preschool carries to function as a *space for possibilities* for newly arrived caregivers together with children (Delblanc and Gidner 2021:87). Similarly, Bulling (2017) examines language practices as part of integration work in the Norwegian equivalent to the open preschool, finding that one of the many ways in which diversity was visible in the setting was in the languages used by visitors, and describing the practices she observed as constructing a dynamic language environment, whereby parents drew on their own and each others' diverse linguistic resources in order to communicate together. Kaiser et al. (2020), on the other hand, used multilevel analysis to predict benefits of the Norwegian open preschool for parents and children, and found that being able to speak the majority language was an important predictor of whether or not the family benefited from attending.

Elmersjö et al. (2022) consider discourses of citizenship and parenthood in the context of a civil society organisation offering parental support to immigrant parents in Sweden. They problematise, amongst other things, the idealising of the 'good Swedish parent' as a normative model for immigrant parents to emulate (Elmersjö et al., 2022). Also, within the Swedish context, Paul and Adams Lyngbäck (2022) analyse how immigrant mothers are described and

positioned when they attend a Swedish language session run by Swedish mothers and attended by the parents together with their babies. They find that immigrant mothers are constructed as potentially or actually synonymous with a category of adults viewed as deviating from the normative Swedish model of employed earners and tax payers, and note that "...Swedishness and Otherness operate in the integration programme in relation to embodied language use intersecting with gender through the connection between mothers and safeguarding the nation". (Paul & Adams Lyngbäck, 2022, p.6)

Intke-Hernández and Holm (2015) carried out research into an integration and language course for stay-at-home immigrant mothers and their children in the Helsinki region of Finland. They carried out ethnographic research into perspectives of educators and participants about the knowledge content of a course called 'Capable Parent', finding that "instructors act as cultural instructors...[who] try to instruct the mothers about Finnish values and child rearing habits and concepts about what is good for children" (Intke-Hernández & Holm, 2015, p.79) They report that in terms of the language side of the course, some participants self-report an improvement in their Finnish, and indicate they have passed an invisible barrier of sorts for speaking the language. In terms of the civic orientation type parenting content however, the authors describe disempowerment among some participants resulting from the "ethnocentric" perspective taken by the instructors, which took a deficit perspective towards the immigrant mothers' existing skills as parents. (Intke-Hernández & Holm, 2015, p.81)

3.2 Affordances for integration as normative learning pathways

In Section 3.2, I present research that considers the types of content for immigrant that are understood as relevant to the process of integration, particularly in a contemporary context. In 3.2.1 I summarise research related to the increasing emphasis placed on labour market entry as a marker and measure of integration. In Section 3.2.2 I present research into the broader demands placed on immigrants, in particular within the Swedish context, and in Section 3.2.3 I present research that examines, discusses and problematises use of the 'language as a key to society metaphor'.

3.2.1 Labour market integration of immigrants within the Swedish context

While Sweden's approach to the education of immigrants has, since at least the mid 1960s, valorised access to education in immigrants' first languages, as well as in Swedish (Mattlar, 2022), the explicit link between immigrants'

education and their chances for societal integration through equitable access to the labour market was raised formally as early as 1979, by the forerunner to the Swedish National Agency for Education, Skolöverstyrelsen, whose accounts of creeping marginalisation and inequity are described as evidencing a “high degree of crisis-awareness in the question” (Mattlar, 2022, p.285)

A key argument for the Swedish government’s deployment of the open pre-school as an arena for language and integration is the fact that immigrant women enter the workforce more slowly and to a lesser degree than other groups. Swedish migration researcher Pieter Bevelander has written extensively on immigration and labour market integration in the Swedish context. Bevelander (Bevelander, 1999) notes that lower levels of employment among immigrants (compared with native-born Swedes) are observable from as early as the 1970s, when they began to decline, following a boom period in the decades prior when workforce recruitment from abroad was common. Bevelander attributes this trend in part to the shift in prevalence of tertiary industries, with the newer forms of employment placing higher demands on immigrant workers to possess “informal competences” such as “culture-specific proficiency, language skills, and the understanding of different patterns of expected behaviour in team work, and in relations with public authorities and labour market organisations” (Bevelander, 1999, p.447), skills which the author would later describe as human capital needed in the immigrants’ new country (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014).

In terms of the affordances for integration, this trend can be understood in terms the literacy skills required by immigrants to participate in Swedish everyday life. In line with the increases in tertiary sector work, the language and literacy skills required to fully participate in employment have become more complex, with it becoming necessary for immigrants to attain critical literacy skills in order to access a full range of employment options. Relatedly, the large increase in immigration has drawn *basic* functional competency in Swedish back into the spotlight, positioning it as a key condition for integration. This tension can be understood against the background of broader political changes which prioritise the collective benefits of immigrants’ employments (as taxpayers) over individual freedom of choice regarding work, and types of work. These tensions may be observed across various parts of the education system (see for example Hertzberg (2023) for a discussion of the issue in relation to career guidance counsellors’ work with newly arrived migrant young people).

Such competencies such as language skills and cultural proficiency typically constitute content for integration education to an even greater extent now. This is also related to the type of immigration into Sweden that has dominated contemporary migration trends: in a later study, Bevelander (2005) turned his attention to addressing a research gap relating to Swedish labour market integration among immigrant women specifically, during the period 1970 – 1995. Here he lifts the relevance of the *nature* of immigration to

Sweden for labour market integration, noting that declining employment among immigrants generally during the period can be attributed to discriminatory hiring practices favouring of “natives” following “the shift towards immigration from countries of origin with less perceived cultural proximity to Swedish society” (Bevelander, 2005, p.178).

For women, Bevelander argues, this effect can be compounded by a general tendency (Reimers 1985) for them to bear the primary responsibility for home work and childcare. (p175). Sweden’s EU entry in 1995 is named in (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014) as a relevant factor in the increase in numbers of humanitarian and family immigration arrivals to Sweden, and the authors highlight a shift in immigration integration politics which “gradually stressed the labour market integration of newcomers as the country’s primary integration priority” (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014, p.20). They also lift, however, a tension between this expediting of workplace entry following migration to Sweden (which tended to see them employed in temporary or unskilled work) with immigrants’ prospects for obtaining higher paid or permanent employment, noting that the aforementioned barriers that immigrants face in penetrating the now decreasingly primary and secondary industrial job market can cause them to become “trapped” in vulnerable employment situations. (Bevelander & Irastorza, 2014, p.12)

3.2.2 Tax, talk, traditions – the key to opening society’s locked door?

A number of studies have examined normative aspects of content for immigration in various educational contexts, and as such are of relevance here in that I can compare my results with earlier findings. In 2010, the adult education course for new immigrants, Civic Orientation became subject to new legislation that required municipalities to follow a more structured approach in its delivery, with new instructions covering directed time and content areas to be addressed (Åberg, 2020). Åberg (2020) analysed part of the cross-sector work carried out in relation to the new legislation, namely the evaluation and ‘fact-checking’ work carried out by a county administrative board and a municipality on standardised material that had been developed for the course. Her results show that evaluators experienced difficulties in judging the appropriateness of teaching materials developed to address themes judged to be value-laden such as ‘The individual’s rights and obligations’ and ‘Starting a family and living with children in Sweden’¹² (Åberg, 2020, pp.10-11). Åberg reported a tension in the process of evaluating whether content relating to complex value-laden questions struck the right balance between easy to understand, and being ‘accurate’, thus highlighting the complexities of curriculum design for a course where immigrants are intended to learn complex content at the same

¹² *Individens rättigheter och skyldigheter* and *Att bilda familj och leva med barn i Sverige*

time as they are acquiring the language of instruction. Åberg also indicates a tension between different norms in curriculum design and the perceived validity of different types of knowledge, noting that “Contrasts between the pedagogical and the *scientifically correct* manifested most clearly when information about values was being produced” (Åberg, 2020, p.22 *emphasis and translation mine*)

Åberg’s results, when viewed in relation to those of Ochocka and Janzen, (2008) show that different ontological perspectives on culture can be of relevance in the curricular work around immigrant learning. Silow Kallenberg and Sigvardsdotter (2019) analysed representations of Sweden, Swedishness and The Other in course material for Civic Orientation paying especial attention to representation of these areas in content relating to parenting. (Silow Kallenberg & Sigvardsdotter, 2019) They found that Swedish normative practices relating to pregnancy and parenthood are described as commonplace in educational materials, and can be understood as describing “how we do it here” (where the ‘we’ is an imagined typical Swede) (Silow Kallenberg & Sigvardsdotter, 2019, pp.83-85). They note that implicit in this type of description is the notion that ‘others’ do things differently – i.e. that immigrant parents do not do things “the Swedish way” and need to be taught to do so (Silow Kallenberg & Sigvardsdotter, 2019, p.86). These studies are of relevance to my study as they highlight the tensions inherent in decision making around normative or cultural aspects of SALI content and SALI education in response to changes in shifting societal conditions and / or government policy.

3.2.3 Language as a key to society

Similarly, an object of interest in recent research relating to language education for immigrants and integration has been the way in which language learning and language use (both by immigrants and by majority language speakers) has been discursively framed in public and political texts.

Vogt Isaksen (2020) compared the way in which immigration and integration were framed in SOUs and the Norwegian equivalents, *NOUs*, in the period 2010 – 2018. He analysed expressions of immigrants and integration in the documents as either being problem oriented or resource oriented, and found that while both countries’ policies eschew a residual approach to immigrants’ establishment in the country, and instead “emphasize the responsibility of the welfare state to provide social services and education for the integration of newly arrived immigrants” (Vogt Isaksen, 2020, p.115), the Swedish reports were more proactive in highlighting the responsibility the majority population bear in integration processes. Vogt Isaksen found that the Swedish documents took an introspective approach and identify discrepancies between the democratic principles on which Swedish legislation is based, and the way in which these translate into everyday life. This introspection is paired with

reflection about how to better the situation so that attitude-based barriers to integration may be lessened.

Korol and Bevelander (2023) also raise the issue of negative attitudes towards immigrants as a barrier to integration in the Swedish refugee context, and while the study itself actually investigates mechanisms by which *positive* attitudes towards refugees can enhance host-nationals' social proximity to and positive behaviours towards newcomers, some typical deficit perspective discourses are highlighted. These include the perception that refugees pose a challenge to Swedish cultural identity, and that they place a burden on the social security / welfare system. (Korol & Bevelander, 2023)

Nuottaniemi (2023a, 2023b) also lifts the relevance of host-nationals' attitudes and affective proximity to new arrivals in his study of the languaging and integration experiences of 20 young men enrolled in the Language Introduction programme¹³ in an upper secondary school in the north of Sweden. Nuottaniemi problematises the much-used 'language as key to society' metaphor, arguing that invoking the image of a key allows language to be conceptualised as an object to be obtained or attained by a new arrival in order for them to gain access to a society. This, he argues, allows for a view of language to be disregarded that positions it as something which is done or made in conceptual and physical spaces that are "quite inaccessible for the...students" (Nuottaniemi, 2023a, p.486).

In practical terms, this is related to the fact that the students in Nuottaniemi's study had very few opportunities to use the Swedish they learned with Swedish first language speakers, which, perhaps not unsurprisingly, impacted their motivation for their learning. Mattlar (2022) lifts this same problem in a historical context, noting that school has since the 1970s been viewed as one of the places in society which *ought* be operationalised as a linguistic and cultural meeting point. (Mattlar, 2022, p.285). Further to this, Nuottaniemi found that although the young men used their languages in novel, productive and complex ways, their languaging continued to be viewed from a deficit perspective, and their chances to make progress through and beyond their studies are relatively small. This Nuottaniemi attributes to the dominance of monolingual norms and the favouring of so-called prestige languages (such as English) (p285).

Piller et al. (2024) lift an important issue related to the language-as-key to integration discourse, namely the pernicious deficit-perspective on language learners' majority language competencies that poses a considerable hinder to them on attempting to enter the labour market (Piller et al., 2024). Using

¹³ The Language Introduction programme, or *språkintruktionsprogram* is a course for recent arrivals to Sweden who lack the required grades to enrol in upper secondary school courses. Participation in the course is intended to result in pupils attaining the Swedish language skills to allow them to subsequently enrol in other upper secondary education or adult education courses. (Skolverket, 2024d.)

empirical data from the English language Australian context, the authors shed light on a catch-22 scenario facing job seeking immigrants:

The point we stress...is that the association between migrants and an English-language deficit has become entrenched to such a degree that the poor employment outcomes of migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds are now a self-fulfilling prophecy. Migrants are denied access to jobs because their English-language proficiency is assumed to be too low, regardless of their actual proficiency or the communicative requirements of a specific position. (Piller et al., 2024, p37)

3.3 Integrating for two - the challenge of dovetailing the integration practices expected of adults, adults-as-parents, and children

In Section 3.3, I present research which further considers discourses around the integration, with a focus on how immigrant mothers are portrayed. In Section 3.3.1 I consider research that takes up deficit discourses in labour market integration policy. In Section 3.3.2 I present research that examines the relationship between labour market integration of parents and the educational trajectory of their children.

3.3.1 Gendered discourses about immigration and integration in educational policy and practice

Adams Lyngbäck and Paul (2024) offer an insight into the issue of participation by some immigrant women in language and societal education or activities. Sometimes attributed to a perception that they are oppressed, or isolated, lack of participation in SALI education is often given as a reason for lower labour market participation and for women being ‘outside society’ (Adams Lyngbäck & Paul, 2024) Adams Lyngbäck and Paul’s article offers a different perspective, lifting up linguicism, racialisation and ethnicisation towards black and brown newly arrived women in Sweden as a reason for their not participating in activities. They use the example of an organisation they refer to using the name Language Learning and Babies, and present results of their ethnographic field work which indicate that leaders’ discursive practices led to a situation whereby immigrant women either assumed, based on light skin tone, not to be Swedish learners, or where their participation was predicated on their being prepared to adopt a ‘language project’ subject position and ‘stand for’ diversity in a rather exotifying manner, in a climate characterised by ‘white saviour’ type behaviours. Participants whose appearance and languaging practices disrupted leaders’ narratives about the project’s goals and ‘ideal participants’ were subject to unwanted and uncomfortable questioning

about their identities (Adams Lyngbäck & Paul, 2024) . This study is of particular relevance to my research as it considers SALI in the context of the open preschool, providing a fruitful avenue for comparison. The fact that the SALI education in question was, however, delivered by actors external to the open preschool rather than open preschool staff themselves, sheds light on the role of the educator as a variable in SALI, making this study a particularly useful one to consider my own in relation to.

Bohme-Shomary (2022) studied points of divergence and convergence in the state discourses about preschool as a place for language learning and belonging (p13) and those of newly arrived Syrian families in Sweden. One of Bohme-Shomary's informants, Boshra, attended open preschool with her son (who was not enrolled in regular preschool), and identified the open preschool as a place that allowed both her and her son to become sociable. Of interest is that Boshra identified as "a sense of belonging" the cooperation and sharing she observed her son taking part in when playing with other children (Bohme-Shomary, 2022, p.82). In terms of the stated aims of the open preschool, such social learning can be understood in terms of Swedish preschool pedagogy, yet for Boshra, it was part of the overtly social aspect of their participation. This blurring of the distinction between the social and educational functions of the open preschool is highlighted in Bohme Shomary's argument that:

Playing is an inclusive practice that is used by preschools as a complex super-tool for teaching by exploring, developing the child's skills, and including each child in the group. By playing, the child is enabled to belong *with* the community of children (social belonging) and *to* the preschool and its activities, practices and values (political and organizational belonging). (Bohme-Shomary, 2022, p82)

This is useful here as it supports a problematisation of the official distinction between the open preschool's child-educational and adult-social function, or at least prompts deeper interrogation of the ways in which the two functions differ and are similar.

Hudson et al. (2023) carried out an interesting study into how citizenship and integration into Swedish society are framed in applications made during 2016 / 2017 for funding provided by the Swedish government for projects that aim to improve the integration of refugees into society. The authors used thematic analysis to explore data from 204 such applications, and identify two broad themes, namely the *what* and the *how* of integration as it is expressed by the funding seekers. They conclude that:

A picture emerges in the applications that the problem is that integration is too slow, that the immigrant's establishment in the community, entry into the labour market and self sufficiency take too long. This is often linked to negative consequences in terms of ill health, social exclusion and various types of conflict. There is an emphasis on that this can be rectified, that integration can be

speeded up through increasing the opportunities for the newly arrived immigrant to learn about and imbibe Swedish values, norms and culture. The organized meeting / encounter plays a central role in these projects as a way of achieving this goal, showing how Swedishness is articulated. However, we see that it is an encounter with the Swedish rather than with the Swedes. (Hudson et al., 2023, p.565)

They note, however, that Sweden and “the Swedish” are generally treated as static, normative concepts in the discourse, and that “Swedishness” is not problematised as a concept. (Hudson et al., 2023, p.557). Of especial relevance to this study, their results give an insight into “what immigrants are described as needing and expected to learn in order to become good, well-integrated, Swedish citizens...and how they are to gain this knowledge” (Hudson et al., 2023, p.554), with “organized encounters where the immigrants can meet Swedish and learn Swedish values and norms” described as figuring prominently in the texts analysed (Hudson et al., 2023, p.554).

One aspect of becoming good that Hudson et al. (2023) identify features heavily in their results relates to ‘good parenting’. The idea of being a language learner at the intersection of immigrant status and parental role is significant in this research, as it is those two facets of the participants’ selves which, in combination with the open preschool as a setting type, co-create their legitimacy as learners within the context. In this way, the research here can be placed in what Menard-Warwick has called the “debates about how learners’ identities intersect with their efforts to acquire additional languages through participation in discursive practices” (Menard-Warwick, 2009, p.26)

Menard-Warwick (2009) draws on empirical data from her ethnographic study of ESL lessons in the context of a Community English Centre to note that

...language learning itself is perhaps best conceptualised as occurring through participation in speech and literacy events within a (gendered) sociohistorical context. (Menard-Warwick, 2009, p.2).

In reflecting upon her study, and in describing related work which followed it, Menard-Warwick describes many themes related to the immigration experiences of her research persons that have relevance for this research, for example economic policies, deficit perspectives on other-than-majority language skills, discrepancies between pre- and post- immigration status and capital, and a gender normative dichotomy between men as workers outside the home and women as workers in the home (Menard-Warwick, 2009).

Further to this, Menard-Warwick addresses the issue of intended function of immigrant language learning initiatives directed at the family context, raising aspects such as the tension between a focus on standardised testing and familial empowerment as curricula goals, and the issue of the normative socialisation function of family language education within an immigration

context, especially in societies where there is a power imbalance between immigrants and ‘native’ speakers.

3.3.2 Between (being) a rock and (living in) a hard place – tensions and deficit perspectives in portrayals of immigrant mothers’ use of time

Some notable previous research centring around the specific meeting point of language learning and parenthood has focused on immigrants learning the language in situ in the country they have moved to (as opposed to prior to their move, for example). Within this area, Bonnie Norton¹⁴ has been a leading figure as a result of her development of the theoretical term *investment* (Norton Peirce, 1995). Often presented in relation to motivation, investment describes a more holistic and identity bound way of theorising a person’s relationship to learning the majority language of a country to which they have immigrated. Norton’s work focused primarily on the language learning practices of immigrant mothers in Canada, and the way in which they operationalised their motherhood as a tool in accessing the majority language, often in the face of symbolic resistance from first language speakers. (Norton Peirce, 1995) While Norton’s work relates to learners’ understandings of themselves, and this thesis looks at documentation and educator accounts, her research is useful in lifting the complexities of immigrating as a parent against a political and discursive background that takes advantage of power differentials to position immigrant mothers in deficit terms.

Osman et al. (2016) carried out focus-group based research with 23 parents from Somalia and living in a central Swedish municipality, as part of a trial on developing and evaluating a parent support programme for Somali-born parents in Sweden (Osman et al., 2016). They used Ochocka et al.’s (2008) framework for understanding immigrant parenting to guide their study design, and qualitative content analysis to analyse the data. Their main finding was that parenting was discussed as being ‘in transition’, and they lifted a number of challenges families faced relating to alienation, the new social context, gender roles and the effects of leaving their home country under traumatic conditions (Osman et al., 2016). Some opportunities were identified by parents also, relating to new ways to communicate with their children and establish healthy habits around respect and boundaries (Osman et al., 2016). This last area related to the wishes parents expressed for their children’s futures – they saw themselves as responsible for teaching children how to behave respectfully in society, and they aimed to gain the respect of the children and retain parental authority by being a role model. Being a good role model entailed, for them, learning Swedish and establishing a career (p8), but they note that for some

¹⁴ Who also published using the name Bonnie Norton Peirce

parents, their own integration and language learning had had to take a back seat so that the parents could focus on parenting, giving the example of a single mother to four children who had been expecting to follow up her Somalian high school studies by attending university in Sweden, but who “didn’t even get the time to read the language books” as she had to “work hard to be a father and a mother and a friend to my children” (Osman et al., 2016, p.8).

Distance from the labour market is, as has been shown above, a rationale for introduction of measures such as language education in open preschools, and is described as a problem to be solved. Here, again, immigrants become ‘caught in the crossfire’ between two different public discourses about language, employment and integration, neither of which position them in a positive light, nor recognise value in their linguistic or other skills. Further to this, Piller et al. (2024) give examples of the way in which societal deficit discourses about immigrants’ use of the majority language can impact women’s labour market participation – they showed that when faced with sustained societal and / or personal deficit comments on their use of the majority language, some women become disillusioned about their own language skills and chose to become stay-at-home parents, thus withdrawing from the remunerated labour market.

Sofia Villenas, in her ethnographic study about immigrant Latina mothers’ narratives about themselves and their parenting in as new immigrants to North Carolina, USA, discusses the issue of deficit perspectives in public discourses about families’ integration (Villenas, 2001). One of the many ways in which Latina mothers were discussed in deficit terms was in relation to their relationship to the labour market, compared with that of ‘American’ women, a term which Villenas notes was being used problematically as a synonym for white, (Villenas, 2001, p.20). Both their parenting capabilities and the very fact of their occupations as homemakers were subject to race and gender related deficit discourses, positioning them as needy and oppressed, with a desire to be like American women (Villenas, 2001). Villenas reports that because they belonged to the realm of the domestic and of the maternal, the women’s roles in the integration of the families were systematically undervalued, despite their contributions constituting in a concrete way activities which “consolidate settlement of their families in the making of permanent and stable communities in the United States” (Villenas, 2001, p.8) The mothers’ own counternarratives about themselves, however, contested their deficit framing, highlighting their diverse funds of knowledge and standing up for the benefits these brought to communities.

Villenas and Moreno (2001) highlight the same issue and note the particular problems of Latina women in the United States who enact mothering against a background of a society “that insists on...borders, while living the realities of globalization” (Villenas & Moreno, 2001, p.672) – that is to say, in a society where the labour of the men in their families is a prerequisite for the continued capitalist ideals dominating the US, but where affordances for

their own integration are limited by barriers erected where xenophobia, patriarchy and benevolent racism (Villenas, 2001) cross paths (Villenas & Moreno, 2001).

The research presented in this section can be said to present information that counter's some political discourses about immigrant women, by highlighting the relevance of motherhood for women's affordances to participate in *etablering* in the same way as immigrant men, or immigrant women who are not mothers. The breadth of contexts introduced in this small selection of studies indicates that this question has wide applicability, and as such my thesis can be understood as contributing to the knowledge being created on these subjects.

3.4 Didactic decision making in the face of uncertainty, change or isolation

In this final section, I take a comparative subject didactic approach and present research which considers the way in which language and integration activities are organised in non-statutory educational settings, followed by didactic research in the context of settings undergoing some kind of change or transition, or which appear somewhat isolated in terms of curricular precedent from similar contexts. Research with both these foci is of relevance to the study of SALI in the open preschool, both in terms of possibilities for comparison with conditions in the open preschool, and in terms of garnering a deeper understanding of what could be called non-standard curricular situations. In 3.4.1, I present contemporary research which considers the way in which non-statutory educational settings can be understood as actors in SALI education provision from a curriculum theoretical perspective. In Section 3.4.2 I discuss research that can be understood in terms of curriculum making and didactic decision making in educational contexts marked by change or other kinds of uncertainty.

3.4.1 SALI education initiatives in the civil society, folk education and other pedagogical settings

Within the Swedish context, a number of studies lift the issue of non-statutory or non-typical education settings, in particular in relation to adult SALI learners. Adams Lyngbäck and Paul's (2024) research is of especial interest from a curriculum perspective in the sense that it refers to an external actor delivering an educational moment in (in the sense of 'hosted by') open preschools.

Schoultz (2023), in his thematic analysis of teachers' perception of their work with adult learners in Swedish non-formal education settings, found that educators in folk education settings valued being able to orient their didactic

decision making towards factors other than evaluation (in the form of, for example quantitative assessment), and that being able to organise their teaching without “estimating or judging the participants’ performances” provided “new possible goals for courses” (Schoultz, 2023, p.1002). Further to this, Schoultz found that the educators’ professional freedom to select content based in part on the course participants’ interests and wishes was highly valued, and allowed them to “[consider] how the content already had significance for the participants and that a deeper meaning could be created through continuity between past, present and future experiences” (Schoultz, 2023, p1003)

Sandell and Öhman (2024) lift the relevance of folk-education in their discussion of the democratic possibilities of *friluftsliv* as a context for education for sustainable development (Sandell & Öhman, 2024). Sandell and Öhman’s article is of relevance to this thesis as it lifts the especial relevance of *friluftsliv* to the Nordic societal contexts, and links it with the more explicitly human focused of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Sandell & Öhman, 2024, p.1). Similarly, Jansson and Kunitz (2020) have carried out research into language initiatives hosted in for example churches. Their 2020 policy brief written as part of a collaboration between The Swedish Research Council (VR) and The Migration Studies Delegation (Delmi), presented research into language cafés as arenas for language training for immigrant adults in Sweden (Jansson & Kunitz, 2020). In their three-part study, the authors analysed data from over 150 visits to 14 language cafés in churches and libraries in the Stockholm area (Jansson & Kunitz, 2020), examining the organisational structure of the cafés’ activities, multilingualism as a resource in language training, and pedagogical practices respectively. In researching language learning in informal environments outside of the typical language learning classroom, and directing their focus towards language cafés provided by civil sector actors, Jansson and Kunitz identify and address a gap in the research into language education. In a similar way, this thesis also addresses this knowledge gap in that it considers SALI education in a non-typical educational setting, which may be delivered by parties without a specific language educator background. Kindblom (2016) describes the historical development of SFI, noting that prior to it becoming regulated by Skolöverstyrelsen¹⁵ in the early 1970s, and indeed, for some time afterwards, due to the efforts made within the folk-education (*folkbildningsrörelse*) movement to have the newly introduced curriculum for SFI described as ‘advisory’ rather than obligatory (Kindblom, 2016, p.72), the Swedish folk-education movement took initiative to and bore responsibility for much Swedish language instruction for foreigners.

Together, these articles about civil society actors in SALI education provide a useful overview of the role of non-traditional actors in the context of language and integration education, and are of particular relevance for this

¹⁵ the forerunner to Skolverket

study as they provide a background for discussion of the open preschool's legitimacy as a setting for SALL.

3.4.2 Didactic decision making in uncertain curricular conditions

Here I continue to take a didactic perspective in order to benefit from the insights that can be gained by examining didactic practices in uncertain curricular conditions, even if these are distinct in nature from those of the open preschool. I use the term uncertain to describe conditions for didactic decision making which are in some way non-traditional, unusual or subject to changes of various types. The research in this section is characterised by its focus on situations where uncertainty has given educators cause to be innovative in their didactic decision making, that is to say, to adapt their didactic decision making in unexpected and / or new ways which they may lack precedent for. Such research is of relevance to the open preschool both generally (given the lack of research into it as an educational setting) and in relation to its capacity for managing initiatives such as SKR's open preschool for language and integration.

Hedefalk et al. (2021), writing at a time when preschool was in a period of transition, having had the term teaching included for the first time in their curriculum, describe teachers' didactic dilemmas in terms of selecting content for sustainable development education in preschool. They note a tension which arises for the teachers between teaching around content selected by the teacher, and content which emerges as a result of the children's interests and actions. (Hedefalk et al., 2021) This is of relevance for this research, as a parallel can be drawn with the open preschool context, as educators use professional judgement to navigate organisation of their settings in a way which variously addresses both (shifting) curricular expectations and learner agency.

Further to this, Lundqvist and Lidar (2021) used the Deweyan concept of habits in order to analyse the way in which 10 science educators in the compulsory school adjusted their teaching practices in response to a significant policy change, namely the introduction of a new curriculum and assessment system in the form of National Tests (Lundqvist & Lidar, 2021). Working from the theoretical starting point that teachers' responses to the changes (as identified in their talk about their work – the empirical interview material) were “related to the habits of teaching the teachers are using in their everyday practice” (Lundqvist & Lidar 2021, p.167), Lundqvist and Lidar identified four key themes in the ways in which the teachers aligned their previous knowledge and habits to the new requirements. These were working to make teaching transparent, working with the experiences of increased levels of stress, working to develop professionally in collective practices, and reconsidering the teaching content and methods. (Lundqvist & Lidar 2021, pp.171 –

176) Common for all the teachers was their acceptance of the reforms, and the fact that they understood their didactic practice as being of direct relevance to their work with the new assessment system.

Relatedly, Van Poeck et al. (2024.) followed schools in Belgium and Sweden who had introduced the open schooling practice Locally Relevant Teaching, and analysed the problematic situations educators encountered in the implementation of this novel approach in relation to their existing practice (Van Poeck et al. 2024, p.1). They noted that “policy driven innovations can be challenging for teachers because they require a departure from habitual ways of thinking and acting” (Van Poeck et al. 2024, p.2) and using Dewey’s (1929) term “problematic situation” to describe situations which arise when initiatives for education innovation disrupt teachers’ established habits (Van Poeck et al. 2024, p.2). Analysing case studies from the schools in the two countries by asking which problematic situations occurred, what created them, and which habits were disturbed, the authors identified six types of problematic situation, related variously to aspects of planning, collaboration with internal and external actors, and responding to student input (Van Poeck et al. 2024). Of particular relevance to this thesis are the results indicating issues between teachers and external partners in their efforts to coordinate their practices productively.

In discussing the theoretical approach to understanding disruption to established teaching habits, Van Poeck et al. (2024) lift the relevance of Tryggvason et al. (2022), who describe meetings between existing and innovative practice in the context of schools working to integrate environment and sustainability education (ESE) into their settings. Tryggvason et al. advocate envisioning the meeting of established and innovative habits in school contexts as non-dichotomous (Tryggvason et al. 2022, p.1238) and note that instead of viewing educators as “caught between” their established habits and the establishment of novel habits required by ESE initiatives, parties may shift between the two sets of habits (Tryggvason et al. 2022, p.1238).

A further area of relevant research relates to education in settings outside the mainstream formal education systems. Here the concept of liminality is a key theme in the literature, with researchers considering the organisation of, and the challenges and opportunities connected with alternative types of education, in particular when an aspect of formal education is ‘transplanted’ into a non-traditional setting. Wigg and Ehrlin (2021) draw on their research analysing teacher perspectives on the dilemmas they face when deciding whether to place newly arrived pupils into a regular class, or into a special introduction class. While the latter would attend to their specific language learner needs, they argue that it risks isolating students (hindering their integration) and that if transition into a regular class is poorly planned, or repeatedly delayed, students are placed in a “semi-liminal state, not fully ‘real’ students in the eyes of themselves or others” (Wigg & Ehrlin, 2021, p.4). Winn (2010) carried out research into incarcerated teenage girls within a US context, and

examined the way in which their participation in a playwriting and performance program afforded opportunities to make meaning in relation to their experiences of life between incarceration and freedom (Winn, 2010).

Relatedly, new research aims to broaden the scope of didaktik and curriculum theory by closely considering how it can be applied to crosscurricular teaching (Mård & Klausen, 2024a). Such research is of use here as it talks to the kind of innovation necessitated by societal turbulence, and adds to theoretical approaches to understanding opportunities and contexts for such innovation. Mård and Klausen draw attention to a lack of “theoretical foundation and didactic guidelines” (Mård & Klausen, 2024a, p.1) for what in school contexts tends to be called crosscurricular teaching, and in higher education, interdisciplinary teaching.

They present research aimed at developing the theoretical understanding of the term crosscurricular, and introduce a theorisation of the term *transcurricular* to better account for the broad spectrum of ways in which teaching can look when it is organised based upon “deep integration between subjects” (Mård & Klausen, 2024b, p.7) and introduce a taxonomy for crosscurricular and transcurricular teaching based around the idea of “depth and degree of integration” between subject areas (Mård & Klausen, 2024b, p.13). The taxonomy juxtaposes crosscurricular teaching with the established term multidisciplinary, characterised by hierarchical, sequenced, thematic types of collaboration, and aligns transcurricular teaching with transdisciplinary approaches including integrative, project based or opportunistic approaches where curricula may be negotiated in practice. They note that their taxonomy is not intended to be understood as static or complete, and that it will develop, be added to and elaborated on in response to further research into “new institutional and social conditions” (Mård & Klausen, 2024b, p13).

This research is a useful complement to well established comparative didactic research, and is particularly relevant to this thesis as it actively seeks to broaden theoretical approaches to novel types curricular and didactic organisation of educational activities across and between contexts. The term transcurricular is particularly relevant to this thesis, as it offers possibilities for understanding cross-curricular or inter-setting curricular work as productive, and provides a language for discussing educational contexts emerging from these productive conditions.

3.5 Situating the thesis in relation to the research context

In this section I will account first for how this thesis may be situated in relation to previous research with which it has distinct similarities in terms of the main object of study – the open preschool, and in terms of the educational context under consideration – SALI. Following this, I will account for the way in which this thesis can be understood in relation to the research context within which it was written, namely didaktik at Uppsala university.

By surveying research related to education of adult immigrants, parent-child settings, and SALI, I have aimed to establish an understanding of the existing knowledge in relation to which my empirical results may be positioned. Key recurring themes in the research analysed include the immigration experiences of women, in particular mothers, shifting policies and public discourses about the conditions for integration into Western countries, and the role of parent-child settings as places of support. Particularly noteworthy was the research which examined educational policy and practice at the junction of parent-support and immigrant parenting.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the Swedish open preschool is understood as the primary variable in this study distinguishing it from other research into the ways in which SALI education of adult immigrants in multilingual migration contexts is organised. Bulling, Adams-Lyngbäck and Paul, and Shohme-Bomary's studies are those with which I judge my thesis to be most closely aligned in terms of the demographic of the learners, the educational setting, and the focus on discourses about language. In terms of the explicit critical focus my research has a number of areas of overlap with Villenas (2021), Piller et al. (2024) and Osman et al. (2016). Despite considerable differences in terms of the learner demographic and educational setting, Nuottaniemi's research is of particular relevance to my research, due to its problematising of the 'language as a key to society' theme. The results of Adams-Lyngbäck and Paul's studies of language sessions in open preschools are noteworthy in that they report on well meaning but other-than-equitable pedagogical approaches, despite the clear similarities between the studies in terms of the content, learner demographic and setting. This is interesting in terms of where I position my research, as it provides a perspective relating to language education organised by third party outside agencies who are 'hosted' in the open preschool. This specific type of cross-curricular or transcultural hybrid is not part of my empirical material, and in that sense their research offers me an additional perspective I can consider alongside my results.

Considering the body of reviewed research as a whole, I identify a knowledge gap in relation to the subject of political, social and curricular conditions for education for adult immigrants in parent-child settings, understood as part of a broader theme of education and migration in an age of linguistic and cultural superdiversity. In addressing this knowledge gap, this research

aligns closely with and contributes to the research environments within which it was produced, namely Studies of Language Practices (STOLP) and Studies of Comparative Didactics (SCOD) at Uppsala University. Described by Almqvist (2016) as a field of research and area of knowledge where “questions about teaching content in relation to teachers’ teaching, and students’ learning and socialisation” are in focus (Almqvist, 2016, p.1), didaktik is a central tenet of Uppsala University’s educational research output.

Research published by members of the STOLP group typically considers areas such as development of various language and literacy proficiencies in first and subsequent languages (see for example Ackermann-Boström & Glass, 2024; Halleson et al., 2024; Nilsson Tysklind, 2024; Nyström, 2024) and conditions for teaching and learning languages (see for example af Geijerstam et al., 2023; Raattamaa Visén et al., 2024). Further to this, research from within this environment takes a discourse analytical approach to the study of disciplinary literacy practices (see for example Björk, 2023, 2024; Björk & Folkeryd, 2021), as well as exploring the norms and values which underlie participation in language and literacy practices. Research in SCOD has a broad focus on conditions for teaching and learning within different educational contexts, often with the dual aim of creating knowledge about a specific context, and then using this knowledge for the purpose of comparison. Teachers’ professional practice and judgements in relation to the organisation of teaching (for example, content selection) is a further core focus for SCOD (see for example Lundqvist and Lidar 2021, Van Poeck et al., 2024). Further to this, the research group is characterised by the breadth of educational contexts and institutionalised practices under consideration. For example, Hofverberg (2020) and Gelinder (2020) carried out studies into conditions for meaning making in textiles and home economics classes respectively, and Deleye (2024) analysed higher education settings.

As such, this thesis, with its focus on the role of educators and other actors in the selection and delivery of language content within a specific setting, draws on influences from both STOLP and SCOD, and can be understood as positioned as aligned with both fields. In terms of subject didactic affiliation, this thesis aligns well to the STOLP group, in particular to the research carried out by Reath Warren (see for example Reath Warren, 2013, 2017, 2018) and Ackerman-Boström (2021) into conditions for multilingualism in education within the Swedish context. Theoretically, the thesis is arguably closer to the explicit curriculum focus of SCOD research, and focus on understanding the organisation of teaching and learning in a variety of different types of setting that is characteristic of Uppsala’s comparative didaktik tradition (see for example Almqvist et al., 2023; Andersson et al., 2015; Lidar et al., 2010, 2018; Lidar & Lundqvist, 2022; Östman & Öhman, 2023;).

4 Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical approach to the research presented in this thesis may be summarised with five related key terms: curriculum, didaktik, discourse, critical caring pedagogy, and multilingualism. While each theoretical approach is discrete in its nature and function, and while they are used to varying extents in the empirical analyses, depending on, for example, material type or method, they nonetheless meet and overlap in practice, and as such function together as a holistic theoretical approach. These areas, and how they are deployed in this thesis are summarised briefly here, prior to their being expounded fully in Sections 4.1 – 4.3 below.

Curriculum: a theoretical approach to analysing how an educational setting is organised, viewed as part of a larger system

The term curriculum is used in a broad sense, and is understood as the collection of practices that result in the selection of intended content to be taught for specific purposes in educational settings seen as part of larger educational systems. Priestley et al.'s (Priestley et al., 2021) model of curriculum making activity is adopted as the primary model for operationalisation of broad curriculum theory in the analyses.

Didaktik: a theoretical approach to analysing how educators organise a setting in practice, or in planning for practice

My approach to didaktik aligns with the Nordic tradition described by, among others, Hopmann (2007). Didaktik is understood as the theoretical framework underpinning educators' local didactic decision making, that is to say, the practice of organising an intended learning content in relation to particular learners in a particular context.

Discourse: a theoretical approach for making visible the mechanisms of power that may be a factor in curriculum and didaktik

A Foucauldian understanding of discourse is used, with the work of Carol Bacchi instrumentalised in expounding Foucault's ideas (Foucault, 1972/2002) (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014) (Bacchi, 2000). Discourse refers here to conditions for selection or deselection of what may be known and communicated about something.

Critical caring pedagogy: a theoretical approach for making visible and conceptualising relationships between educators' curricular and didactic work and the ideological positions they take in relation to dominant discourses of relevance for their work

Critical caring pedagogy is deployed to describe an ideological approach to didactic decision making in a multilingual context. Here, Marnie Curry's theorisation of Authentic Cariño pedagogy provides the primary underlying theoretical framework (Curry, 2016). This is complemented by a theoretical approach to language, language and multilingualism (viewed as factors of relevance to the educational situations under examination) aligning with the expressly social-justice oriented research within the field post the 'multilingual turn'. This is expounded in Section 4.3.2 below.

4.1 Didaktik and curriculum studies

4.1.1 Didaktik overview

This thesis is situated within the Nordic didaktik tradition and as such is concerned with the content of learning, how it is selected, and the relations made between educator, learner and content in an educational situation (Hopmann 2007). The business of didaktik is to explore what may become from content when it is put to work in the service of meaning making by the educator and their professional judgements, in (and beyond) the situations where educator and learner meet. The focus on learning content underpinned the development of the field, of didaktik in Sweden during the 1980s (Englund, 2007). The relations which the educator makes between content and purpose have remained the core focus of the field since then, although attention has shifted away from content as an analytical unit to be 'transmitted' to learners, towards a model didaktik which continues to centre content in analysis, but which pays close attention to the co-constructed communicative practices and meaning-making occurring in the educators' relating of the content to the learners' experiences (Englund, 2007).

As a professional tool, didaktik theory provides a structure for educators' reflective practice, and as a field of research, didaktik examines, makes visible and creates knowledge about the mechanisms by which content is constituted, reconstituted, legitimated, selected, deselected and interrogated in society's meeting with its educational systems (Schoultz, 2023).

In relation to classroom practice, didaktik is concerned with the didactical dilemmas teachers handle and make choices in relation to during the course of their everyday work (Almqvist et al. 2023), though research shows that there is rarely a "clear or obvious solution" (Almqvist et al., 2023, p.55) to these challenges, and that the professional work of the teacher is to make them visible, problematise and discuss them. This focus on what has been described

as the ‘taken for granted’ characterises one of the most prominent branches of didaktik, and the one this research is primarily positioned within, namely comparative didactics (Almqvist et al., 2023). As distinct from the fragmented approach of subject didactics (Almqvist et al., 2023, p.57), in which research is focused towards particular subject areas, comparative didactics serves to:

[contribute] with empirical results of how educational choices are regarded as central and important in one educational context but not in another. (Almqvist et al., 2023, p.57)

In doing so, comparative didactics opens up for deeper understanding of specific educational situations and invites comparison of didactic processes across settings (Almqvist et al., 2023).

The primary conceptual model used for didaktik theory is the well-known didactic triangle, which is used throughout this thesis as the starting point for theoretical discussions of didactic decision making. As a model, the didactic triangle allows exploration of an educator’s main task, namely to establish a functioning relationship between themselves, the learner and the content (Wickman et al., 2020). More complex questions teachers may ask themselves (whether explicitly or, perhaps more likely, implicitly as a part of the overall enactment of their professional role) as part of their didactic decision making might include: Who is the learner? On what grounds are they positioned, or do they position themselves as a learner in the context? How is that intended content legitimised for and selected within the educational setting? To what end do the learner and the educator engage with the teaching and learning activity? How is the teaching and learning activity conceptualised, planned, delivered, adapted? What functions is the learning intended to serve, and how are these expressed by interested parties? Whose interests are served by the learner’s new knowledge, skills or habits?

Almqvist (2016) describes the questions of the didactic triangle in relation to the knowledge required by teachers, noting that:

The teacher needs knowledge about both the choice of content, and its potential consequences for pupils’ learning and socialisation (the what and why questions), and about the potential consequences for pupils’ learning and socialisation of different ways of teaching. (Almqvist, 2016, pp.2-3)

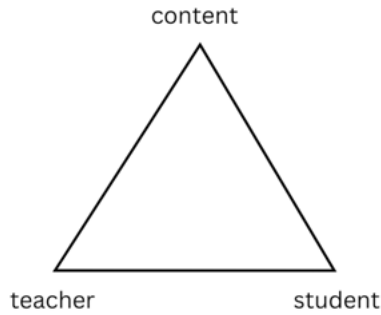


Figure 2 Didactic triangle

Didaktik theory is used because it allows for close exploration of the way in which educators organise teaching and learning activities as situated practice in, and in relation to the situation. Here, situated can entail immediate, physical situation, but also other intangible types and scales of situatedness, such as situation within a socio-political context. This possibility to position an educator's didactic decision making in relation to not only the situated practice but to the broader institutional practices is of particular relevance to the methodological approaches taken in this thesis, and as such further commends active usage of the term didaktik. A limitation, however, of the didactic triangle model is that its one-dimensionality can invite misinterpretation of the points as representing static, homogenous concepts or actors. In this respect, it can appear an incongruous model for discussion of teaching and learning as situated activity. This limitation is mitigated by the combination of didactic theory with a broad curriculum theory. This approach serves to make visible the way in which such didactic decision making is not an act that happens in isolation, rather it is an activity that takes place as part of a far larger set of synchronous and asynchronous activities, where the teacher may act in relation to both discursive and human actors, with varying degrees of agency.

It is useful at this juncture to briefly outline why the Swedish term didaktik is adopted in this thesis, rather than the English didactics. The latter has been deliberately deselected due to its unsuitability as a translation for didaktik that stems from the negative connotations it can hold in common English usage of an overtly authoritarian or self-important, transmission approach to teaching and learning. (see for example Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Wickman et al., 2020 for a discussion of this). In deselecting the term didactics, it is hoped that the undertones of the omniscient teacher and pupil as passive recipients (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) to whom knowledge is transmitted are avoided, as they unhelpfully bring to mind methods of organising teaching and learning that are in stark contrast to the reflexive, relational methods in the present didaktik tradition.

4.1.2 Curriculum

Curriculum is of relevance in this thesis both as an object of study (curricula), and as a knowledge object (curriculum theory). This means that the empirical material is analysed both in terms of how it forms a curriculum for open pre-school, and also in terms of how viewing the material as curricular can generate knowledge about the nature of curriculum.

Curriculum is understood as a set of tools for organising didactic decision making in relation to teaching and learning activities. Use of the term curriculum here also aligns to the Nordic didaktik tradition, and is used here in combination with the didactic triangle model. That curriculum is discussed in relation to the organisation of teaching and learning activities does not mean that the term curriculum is used synonymously with or solely to refer to the formal document referred to as a curriculum or syllabus in, for example, the British education system, or a *läroplan* / *Lehrplan* in the Swedish or German traditions. Neither does it refer to curriculum as it may be used in the North American educational tradition, whereby the teacher tends to be positioned ideologically not as a co-constructor of meaning, with the skills and agency to make professional judgements about content selection aligned with learning goals, but as “more or less an instrument, who has to deliver curricula decided by research” (Wickman et al., 2020, p. 35). Rather, curricula are viewed as products of and actors in both localised teaching and learning activities and the broader macro socio-political context, and understood as any discursive, documentary or enacted-in-practice expression of how the three facets of the triangle are, could, or ought be organised.

4.1.3 Broad curriculum theory approach

Curriculum theory of the broad type described by Englund (1997) is used as a framework to understand the processes driving selection of intended learning content, as represented variously in both documents and in practice. As Englund notes, this broad approach relates :

...to how to choose and teach a certain content: all the way from educational policy, curriculum documents and so on to teachers' concrete choices, different interpretations and how choices are made.(Englund, 1997, p.268)

Other curriculum models with a similar functionality exist within the approach, notably Goodlad et al.'s model of curriculum domains (Goodlad et al., 1979), which allows for discussion of curricula at five different domains: ideal (also referred to as ideological), formal, perceived, operational and experienced. This model offers the flexibility discuss the diverse nature of the factors that may affect how the curriculum as conceived of at one domain may be expressed at another. Similarly, van den Akker, later together with Thijs describe curriculum using levels, namely supra, macro, meso, micro and nano.

(Thijs & van den Akker, 2009; van den Akker, 2003) Common to these two approaches is that they orient focus toward products or artefacts of curriculum, and while they *do* allow for consideration of the actors and processes driving construction and delivery of curriculum, this is less easily made the primary analytical focus.

Englund's aforementioned broad approach to curriculum underlies the way in which curriculum is envisaged and deployed as a theoretical term in this research, namely as a conceptual tool for systematic exploration of how the points and relations of the didactic triangle obtain meaning in practice. By exploration of the points is meant not only with what or whom the points are populated, but also how and why content, learner and teacher are discursively constructed in a particular way in relation to a particular context or practice at a particular time. In operationalising Englund's model of what curriculum may be understood as being and where curricula may be located, a further model is added which adds nuance to the processes of curricular decision making. The approach to curriculum adopted here is Priestley et al.'s model of Curriculum Making Activity.

4.1.4 Curriculum Making Activity

Priestley et al. (2021) describe curriculum making as situated activity, signalling their alignment with those curriculum scholars whose work:

...illustrates how curriculum work involves highly dynamic processes of interpretation, mediation, negotiation and translation, across multiple layers or sites of education system. (Priestley et al., 2021, p.1).

They present a heuristic model of curriculum making as occurring at different sites, and as is evident from the description of the field of broad curriculum theory above, their conception of curriculum making as a situated activity has at its core the diversity and multiplicity of both actor and activity type. Priestley et al. invoke what they describe as the enforced passivity of educators as one of the key areas for curriculum researchers to address today in terms of dissonance between theoretical conceptions of curriculum and politically motivated conceptions of the same (Priestley et al., 2021). They lift in particular the concept of the so-called teacher-proof curriculum, a trend whereby the curriculum and related legislation are designed in such a way as to minimise teacher agency, and maximise 'faithful implementation' of prescriptive policy, describing it as "constricting theorisation of what teachers (and students), as social actors, are and do in schools" (Priestley et al., 2021, p.2). In doing so, Priestley et al. contribute to the problematisation of a narrow conceptualisation of curriculum that sees the term used, in academic and public discourses, to mean "an official text designed by government

official authorities to be faithfully implemented and passively ‘received’ in schools” (Priestley et al., 2021, p.1).

This theory describes curriculum in terms of curriculum making activities, that is to say, situated activities carried out by a broad range of actors in a broad range of ways. Their model of curriculum making activities draws inspiration from theories that conceptualise curriculum as presenting over different kinds of level, layer or domain, amongst others, Goodlad et al.’s domains model (Goodlad et al., 1979). It is perhaps most closely related to the model presented by Thijs and van den Akker (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009) whereby curriculum is described in terms of curriculum products that may occur at different levels ranging from supra down to nano. These levels are outlined in Table 4.

Level	Description	Examples
Supra	International	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
Macro	System, national	Core objectives, attainment levels Examination programmes
Meso	School, institute	School programme Educational programme
Micro	Classroom, teacher	Teaching plan, instructional materials Module, course Textbooks
Nano	Pupil, individual	Personal plan for learning Individual course of learning

Table 4 Curriculum levels and curriculum products (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009)

Priestley et al.’s model adopts the same six levels, but modifies the way in which they are conceptualised. Instead of foregrounding the hierarchical character of the levels and delimiting each level in terms of its products, their model describes six sites of activity, at which different actors take part in different types of curriculum making activity. (Priestley et al., 2021, p.12)

Site of activity	Examples of activity	Examples of actors
Supra	Transnational curricular discourse generation, policy borrowing and lending; policy learning	OECD; World Bank; UNESCO; EU
Macro	Development of curriculum policy frameworks; legislation to establish agencies and infrastructure	National governments, curriculum agencies
Meso	Production of guidance; leadership of and support for curriculum making; production of resources	National governments; curriculum agencies; district authorities; textbook publishers; curriculum brokers; subject-area counsellors
Micro	School level curriculum making: programme design; lesson planning	Principals; senior leaders; middle leaders; teachers
Nano	Curriculum making in classrooms and other learning spaces: pedagogic interactions; curriculum events	Teachers; students

Table 5 Sites of curriculum making (Priestley et al., 2021, p.13)

Their reasoning for this reimagining of Thijs and van den Akker’s model is a wish to create a hermeneutic which is as context neutral as possible (Priestley et al., 2021). Further to this they aim to problematise the linearity and hierarchical nature of a superficially top-down model and:

...push analytical work to account for curriculum making of different texture emerging within and between different layers or sites of social activity, defined by the nature of such activity, rather than by the administrative system level, within which it is normatively expected to occur.” (Priestley et al., 2021, p.3)

In turning away from this normative framing of curriculum, Priestley et al. foreground the possibilities provided by a heuristic analytical framing that recognises and allows for elucidation and examination of inter-, intra- and transsite activity. Priestley’s broad conceptualisation of curriculum defines it as “the multi-layered social practices, including infrastructure, pedagogy and assessment, through which education is structured” (Priestley, 2019, online). Elsewhere, Priestley refers to curriculum as social practice, the multiple sites across which curriculum is made, and the multiplicity and diversity of practices which comprise curriculum (Priestley et al., 2021). These practices

include “the selection of knowledge / content... pedagogical approaches, organisation of teaching (e.g. timetabling), and the production of resources and infrastructure for supporting curriculum making in schools” (Priestley et al., 2021, p.8), recalling Englund’s (1997) definition in Section 4.1.3 above.

Lingard (2021) emphasises the way in which Priestley et al. conceptualise curriculum as activity, noting that they “stress curriculum making, curriculum in a state of becoming, a practice, being made through practice, through enactment.” (Lingard, 2021, p. 31). These practices can be understood in relation to the key didactic questions outlined above, and in so doing, curriculum making may be viewed as acts of didactic decision making regarding the who, what, how and why of educational activities. Priestley et al.’s typology of sites of curriculum making makes it possible to envisage the didactic decision making a teacher does when organising their pedagogical work with a group of learners as one element in a far broader network of activities temporally and physically abstracted from, but nonetheless of relevance to, the activities in the classroom setting. Describing the ‘mutations’ in policy (Priestley et al., 2012) that take place as it ‘migrates from one setting to the next’ as iterative refraction (after Supovitz 2008), Priestley et al.’s model integrates the idea that activity between the sites they describe is never a case of direct transfer, but rather of recontextualisations of various kinds.

What follows here is a summary of how Priestley et al. conceptualise curriculum making activity across the six sites:

Supra

Supra curriculum making activity recalls Goodlad et al.’s ideal, or ideological domain (Goodlad et al., 1979). Curriculum making activities at supra sites may impact the “flows of ideas that percolate through educational...communities” (Priestley et al. p15) without necessarily existing as transnational policy frameworks. Priestley et al. include all activities which “[generate] general discourses [which] serve to influence curriculum making within national education jurisdictions through ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ policies as well as diverse lending and borrowing processes” (p15). Further examples of supra level curriculum making activity noted include comparative transnational measurement of attainment (such as PISA¹⁶), assessment of education using internationally recognised programmes such as the International Baccalaureate, and some commercial activity, for example that of textbook publishers Pearson.

Macro

Priestley et al. (2021) emphasise that while macro curriculum activity does tend to be associated with national level policy making frameworks, it is ultimately the *type* of activity which is the primary factor of relevance in describing it as macro. They draw on Deng et al.’s (2013) description of national or

¹⁶ Programme for International Student Assessment

institutional level curriculum making as consisting of both ideological and productive processes, and list examples of how macro curriculum making often can be characterised by controlled delegation or distribution of activities, thereby managing the degrees of autonomy those engaging in the productive practices have. In doing so, macro actors with legislative privilege can steer “the educational ideals and expectations” (Deng et al., 2013, p.6) of the society (perhaps more accurately, the dominant societal actors) while tasking others with operationalizing these values in practice.

Meso

Curriculum making activity at meso sites often has a close relation to macro activity, entailing actors working at an intermediary stage of policy operationalisation closer to, but removed from direct engagement with nano practices. Where macro activities produce the didactic ‘what’, the products of meso curriculum making activities address questions of ‘how’. Typical meso curriculum making actors may be institutional, but may also represent commercial interests such as producers of educational materials.

Micro

Micro curriculum making is always an activity that occurs ‘on the ground’ in educational settings. It is the process whereby the curriculum as expressed at other sites is made ready for its recontextualisation at what Goodlad would refer to as the operational and experiential domains. The nature of the recontextualisation process varies depending on the degree of autonomy teachers and other practice-proximal decision makers are afforded within the education system in question.

Nano

Curriculum making activity at nano sites can be likened to Goodlad et al.’s experienced domain. Nano activities are those taking place in the classroom or other educational setting, where the intentions expressed at supra and macro sites are again re-contextualised, this time in the meeting between curriculum, educator and intended learners.

Another of Priestley’s research interests within curriculum is the question of agency. In returning to van den Akker’s text from 2003 (van den Akker, 2003), one aspect in particular stands out as having changed markedly during the intervening two decades, namely the role, and agency, of the teacher in curriculum development or curriculum making. Van den Akker distinguishes between what he describes as the enactment perspective and the fidelity perspective on curriculum (van den Akker, 2003, p.9), whereby the former entails educators and learners creating their own curriculum realities together, and the latter refers to teachers “faithfully follow[ing] curricular prescriptions from external sources” (van den Akker, 2003, p.9). Referring primarily to

schools, van den Akker was of the opinion that the fidelity perspective was increasingly being usurped by the enactment perspective, highlighting the importance of exchanges between actors at different levels for what he calls effective and sustainable curriculum improvement. Writing more recently, Priestley et al. note the opposite phenomenon, namely that the fidelity perspective, or the desire to implement ‘teacher proof’ curricula is (and has been since the 1960s and 1970s) “a dominant rationality of curriculum policy and reform” (Priestley et al., 2021).

Priestley et al. (2021) draw attention, however, to the fact that curriculum research, including their own, challenges this dominant rationality, which they describe elsewhere as being the approach of state actors rather than the theoretical conception of curriculum in research. In “reflecting on the ways in which curriculum is made within...multifarious and complex educational contexts” (Priestley et al., 2021, p.2) they position their theoretical work as an attempt to revisit earlier multi-site curriculum theories by which they have been inspired (on this point they site Goodlad, Doyle, Thijs and van den Akker, and Deng) and extend this work by:

...push[ing] analytical work to account for curriculum making of different texture emerging within and between different layers of social activity, defined by the nature of such activity, rather than by the administrative system level, within which it is normatively expected to occur” (Priestley et al., 2021, p.3)

In applying curriculum making activity theory as part of the analytical and interpretive work on the empirical material presented in this thesis, I adopt Priestley et al.’s sites of activity heuristic, and their conceptualisation of curriculum as practice. Like them, I see a close relationship between their model and that of Thijs and van den Akker (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009), and draw on this when discussing the products of curriculum making – steering documents, policy documents and other texts stemming from curriculum making activities.

As noted above, curriculum theory is used in combination with didaktik theory in order to place teachers’ nano level didactic decision making within a broader context of curriculum making activities, and to highlight that the decision-making practice is always situated, and that it is possible to use a discourse analytical approach to exploring relations and patterns in the way activities can be understood in terms of recontextualisation of other activities. Curriculum theory offers a relatively holistic, organisatory perspective on teaching and learning, and invites examination of organisatory practices such as steering documents, syllabi and so on, and the theoretical model from didaktik is necessary for isolating and studying specific moments or activities. Using these theoretical approaches allows the complexity and nuance of curriculum making to be made visible by aiming to show how the agency and actions of interested parties, and the function and meaning of steering

documents, are not fixed attributes, but rather created in practices that may cross, span, or move between different modes and sites and eras of activity.

An outcome of being able to study the didactic triangle viewed as an object of curriculum making activities at different sites is that, in combination with discursive analysis, it allows for reflection over how the different activities relate to one another, and what impacts this may have or have had for the trajectory of teaching and learning in a particular setting.

The theoretical frameworks outlined above are adopted in combination with one another as they offer the flexibility necessary to analyse accounts of the open preschool's activities and development over time, in particularly given that these are rather non-standard when compared with other parts of Sweden's education system or with well-established institutional models of schooling. Use of the above-mentioned approaches is especially motivated in this thesis due to the nature of the open preschool as a setting type, and how it may be viewed as an object of didactic study both independently, and in relation to other parts of the Swedish education system.

4.2 Discourse

A further theoretical term used in this research is discourse. In line with Curriculum Making Activity's conceptualisation of curriculum as a multi-actor productive practice, discourse is used first and foremost in a similar way – that is to say, in relation to practice. This will be expounded below.

Discourse is a term that is known to be so notoriously difficult to define satisfactorily, that an attempt to do so risks distracting and detracting from the analytical work that the concept of discourse should act in the service of. In place of a definition of discourse, then, it is preferable to describe the way the term is used in this research, namely in alignment with the way it has been used by others from whose work this research takes inspiration.

Wodak (2018) draws attention to the fact that discourse research encompasses the work of both discourse theorists and discourse analysts. She draws a distinction between the typically more epistemological and political orientations of discourse theorists such as Foucault and the empirical, text-proximal approach taken by discourse analysts. Wodak notes, however, that while the two broad discourse research approaches are distinct from one another, they are nonetheless closely linked, and that discourse studies “only exist[s] as a field when both discourse theory and discourse analysis are integrated in the practice of discourse research” (2018).

In this thesis, aspects of discourse theory and discourse analysis are combined. In this chapter, the discourse *theoretical* approach is outlined, namely Foucault's Discursive Practices (specifically Bacchi and Bonham's reading thereof), which provides an epistemological account of discourse as practice, as well as a theoretical language for accounting for the mechanisms of

discursive change. This is supplemented by a number of key theoretical terms from Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach which are adopted to broaden the range of tools available for application of the theory in the analytical work.

In Chapter Five below, the main discourse *analytical* method used in the thesis is presented, namely LeGreco and Tracy's Discourse Trace Analysis.

4.2.1 Discourse in Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge: the reading of Bacchi and Bonham

The theoretical approach to discourse taken in this thesis stems from Foucault's Archaeology of Knowledge (Foucault, 1968/1972). Here, the formation of a discursive object as something it is possible to say something about, is described as being contingent upon "a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification" (Foucault, 1968/1972, p.44), describing these as:

the historical conditions required if one is to 'say anything' about [an object of discourse]... if several people are to say different things about it, the conditions necessary if it is to exist in relation to other objects, if it is to establish with them relations of resemblance, proximity, distance, difference [and] transformation (Foucault, 1968/1972, p.44)

So, discursive objects are 'things it is possible to say something about', and they can be established if conditions exist for the establishment of relations between them (the discursive objects) and other objects. Foucault goes on to describe what he means by relations, noting that they are not internal to discourse and do not entail connections between concepts or words, but that they are:

...established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterisation; [and] these relations are not present in the object.....They do not define its internal constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and perhaps its heterogeneity. (Foucault, 1968/1972, pp.45 - 46)

Of particular relevance to the way in which discourse is used in this thesis is Carol Bacchi and Jennifer Bonham's reading of Foucault's discursive practices (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014), in which they, as per the title of their article, aim to reclaim discursive practices as an analytic focus. Bacchi and Bonham (2014) present their close study of discursive practices, which they deem to be one of the most important analytical concepts in Foucault's work, noting that their aim in doing so was to untangle the term discursive practice from its

almost universal use as a synonym for language use (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014).

While acknowledging that discursive practices is used within the field of discourse analysis in a number of different ways, none of which should be considered the only “correct” one (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014, p.174), Bacchi and Bonham note that Foucault’s understanding and use of the term has, in part due to inconsistencies in his own use of discourse related terminology, increasingly been applied in a way that implies a closer connection with textual practices (compare Fairclough’s (1995) three part conception of discourse as text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice) than Foucault intended (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014). They build their argument around their problematisation of this ‘blurring of the lines’ between the Foucauldian and Faircloughian uses of the term, and seek to draw attention back to the usefulness of Foucauldian discursive practices as an analytical unit. They build their argument around the explicit usage in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* where he describes discursive practice as “a body of anonymous, historical rules” (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014, p.178; Foucault, 1968/1972)

Bacchi and Bonham state that Foucault’s interest was, according to their reading, not the content or linguistic structure of what was said by someone, but in “the mechanisms of refinement” at that had been at work on what was said (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014, p.179) – these can be understood as the relations mentioned above. They describe these mechanisms as “the operation of a whole package of relationships, including symbolic and material, that make those ‘things said’ legitimate and meaningful” (p178) – where the legitimacy and meaningfulness can be understood a product of the very fact of a statement being made. This legitimacy is placed in relation to that which goes unsaid in a situation.

Bacchi and Bonham go on to note that what could theoretically be said in a given situation constitutes an almost infinite corpus, and by arguing this, Foucault cemented his interested in what leads an actor to deselect all but one of the things they could possibly say in a situation? When a statement is made, what is its selection contingent upon? According to Foucault, the answer is the history of the statements (Bacchi and Bonham p179) - “...the difference between what one could say correctly...and what is actually said”. It is this ‘history’ that Foucault describes as discourse. Discourse is the history of a statement, and this history is understood as “a complex set of relations that function as a rule”.

So, discourse is conceptualised as the complex relations which serve to have governed the selection (from among infinite theoretically possible statements) of a particular statement. A discursive practice entails both the statement made, and the relationships-as-rules governing that which is said. In what Bacchi and Bonham describe as “[Foucault’s] most explicit formulation of the meaning of “discursive practice”, he explains that:

what we have called “discursive practice” can now be defined more precisely. ...it is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function” (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014; Foucault, 1968/1972, p.117)

Bacchi and Bonham lift the importance to Foucault of his rules being understood as “immanent” in discursive practice, rather than external to it (Bacchi and Bonham p180), noting that it is this immanence that allow Foucault to make what they describe as his strongest claim about discourse (Bacchi and Bonham p181), namely that it is practice. Foucault’s conceptualisation of discourse as knowledge, understood as that which is ‘within the true’, or that which it is possible to say something about, is the core epistemological idea underpinning the analytical approaches taken in the thesis. It is operationalised in two ways (as will be expanded upon in Chapter 5): firstly, it is used as the analytical unit in discursive tracing, and secondly, it is used to support construction of themes, the analytical units in the reflexive thematic analyses. Resultedly, this understanding of knowledge informs the ontological stance of the research, that is to say, how the analytical units are understood in terms of their being real or representing an external reality.

Discourse as knowledge is not understood ontologically as an expression of some essential reality – rather, it is understood as an expression of situated practices that, while mutually constructive and obstructive (indeed, this is the feature of the practices that allows them to be treated as analytical units), ultimately are infinite in scope, and incompatible with the notion of ‘reality’. That is not to say, however, that all the things which may be ‘within the true’ are equally likely to be positioned as such. Indeed, Foucault’s model depends upon discourse-as-knowledge being made to be within the true. In this way, then, discourse is by its very nature open to manipulation in use, and to strategic manipulation.

4.2.2 Complementary theories of discourse

Here it is useful to draw upon two other ways in which the term discourse is used in this thesis. Firstly, a Faircloughian approach to discourse is outlined, highlighting the use of the term in a way which can be seen as similar to non-theoretical uses of the term to mean ‘the way in which something is talked about’ or ‘ways of talking about’. Secondly Wodak’s Discourse Historical Approach is outlined and its application as an additional theoretical framework alongside Foucault is outlined.

4.2.2.1 Fairclough’s naturalisation of discourse

Discourse in the sense of ‘ways of talking about something’ be identified within renowned critical discourse analyst Norman Fairclough’s use of the

term dominant discourses, described in his classic *Language and Power* (Fairclough, 1989, p.91). In presenting the term, Fairclough first draws on Foucault's concept 'orders of discourse' (Fairclough, 1989, p.28), deploying it to mean clusters of "underlying conventions of discourse" (Fairclough, 1989, p.28). Later, Fairclough invokes the idea of discourse types in his discussion of dominant and dominated discourses whereby one type of discourse (in the sense of set of characteristic ways of talking about something) is positioned as being in a struggle with another. Fairclough describes the 'ultimate objective' of discursive dominance in a way that recalls Foucault's concept of legitimacy, whereby a statement gains legitimacy in the action of being made, where the making of the statement is akin to deselection of all other possible statements that might have been made:

...if a discourse type so dominates an institution that dominated¹⁷ types are more or less entirely suppressed or contained, then it will cease to be seen as arbitrary (in the sense of being one among several possible ways of 'seeing' things) and will come to be seen as natural and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself. (Fairclough, 1989, p.91)

Fairclough calls this process naturalisation of a discourse. Viewed in relation to Foucault's concept of a discursive practice, it can be said that naturalisation is a process whereby, within a particular domain, a statement gains legitimacy not as a historically contingent, contextually sited product, but through being framed as the only possible thing that may be known about a subject. Clearly, such an interpretation being realised in practice would entail a systematic erasure, or neglect, of Foucault's 'unwritten historical rules. Such acts of erasure or neglect are power moves, although it is worth noting that they are ultimately only dominant in its comparative sense, not in its absolute sense. And because activity is a human practice, there remains, the potential for negotiation of power.

It is here that the value of curriculum making activity as a theoretical framework for analysis becomes even more evident: its non-linear structure, and recognition that actors may act and create impact beyond, across and between sites, create a space for resistance to dominant discourses, and for dominance to be established in ways that are not contingent on familiar institutional mechanisms of power, for example legislation.

4.2.2.2 Discourse Historical Approach

The Discourse Historical Approach to discourse research is situated within the wider field of Critical Discourse Studies and as such is a methodological and empirical approach concerned with broad questions of power relations in social practices (Reisigl et al., 2018). Influential critical discourse analyst Ruth Wodak, known widely for her work since the 1980s on identity, migration and

¹⁷ emphasis of *dominated* mine

integration political discourses, is regarded as the founder of and leading figure within the Discourse Historical Approach. Since the turn of the 21st century, Wodak has led and collaborated on discourse historical research within the areas of language policy, right wing fascism within the European context, and climate change (for a comprehensive account of Wodak's work, see Reisigl et. al, 2018).

Reisigl et al. (2018) outline key areas of interest for the approach, highlighting (amongst others) discourse and discrimination, discourse and language policy, discourse and identity, discourse and history, discourse and the media, and discursive aspects of organisational communication (Reisigl et al., 2018). As such, the Discourse Historical Approach is especially well equipped with theoretical terminology of relevance to the subjects addressed in this thesis, and its historical perspective. It is not the primary theoretical framework used in this study for the discourse analytical work, but supports the work by providing a broad vocabulary for analysis and discussion. Further to this, it is an approach which Wodak notes combines well with others:

...one of the most salient distinguishing features of the discourse historical approach is its endeavour to work with different approaches, multimethodically and on the basis of a variety of empirical data as well as background information. (Wodak in Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 65)

As noted, the critical orientation of the Discourse Historical Approach foregrounds the notion of power as central to the analytical process. Reisigl and Wodak (2009) describe power in terms of the capacity someone may hold to exercise their wishes in a social context, even if this goes against the wishes of another (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009, p.88) and outline the way in which power is utilised in the Discourse Historical Approach:

For the DHA, language is not powerful on its own – it is a means to gain and maintain power by the use powerful people make of it. This explains why the DHA critically analyses the language use of those in power who have means and opportunities to improve conditions. 'Power' relates to an asymmetric relationship among social actors who assume different social positions or belong to different social groups. (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.88)

For the purposes of this curriculum theoretical research, these definitions Reisigl and Wodak (2009) put forward are particularly useful, as they provide a language for describing how different actors in curriculum making activity (recalling that these actors may be acting at different sites), establish dominance in the curriculum making process. That is to say, the way in which the selection of intended learning content for (and thereby in many cases the purpose of) the open preschool as an educational institution is negotiated and made. Reisigl and Wodak expound various mechanisms for the implementation of power, including control through threats or promises, and attachment

to / exertion of authority for example (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Within curriculum making, curriculum or other policy documents can be understood as powerful objects or artefacts, especially where they are produced or used by institutions with legislative or organisatory authority, such as the Swedish National Agency for Education, and questions of provision or withdrawal of funding can be understood as part of institutional ‘threats and promises’.

Of interest, however, is the potential which the Discourse Historical Approach offers to empirically probe what might be called the ‘non-typical’ relations of power implicitly permissible within Curriculum Making Activity. As noted above in Section 4.1.2, Curriculum Making Activity as a theoretical approach to curriculum recognises the dynamic and multiple practices at play in the organisation of teaching and learning activities, and highlights, for example, the agency which teachers or other nano or micro level actors have to ‘make curriculum’ in spite of, contrary to, or within the boundaries of other mechanisms of power.

This section concludes with the introduction of a number of key theoretical terms from DHA (as outlined in Reisigl and Wodak, 2009), that are adopted for facilitating the discourse analyses in this thesis, namely discourse, discursive strategies, text, intertextuality, recontextualisation and interdiscursivity. By discourse, Reisigl and Wodak mean “a cluster of context-dependent semi-otic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.89), noting that discourse is both socially constituted and socially constitutive, and is “linked to the argumentation about validity claims such as truth and normative validity involving several social actors who have different points of view” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.89). Using this understanding of discourse further supports the above-mentioned view of curriculum as discourse, and curriculum making as a discursive practice.

DHA distinguishes between and expound the relationship between the terms discourse and text, calling the latter part of the former (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Texts, they note, “make speech acts durable over time and thus bridge...the situation of speech production and the situation of speech reception” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.89). The idea that text functions as a constitutive vehicle for socially constituted discourses is compatible with Foucault’s notion of discourse as the historical background to what it is possible to say about something, and what it is possible to bring ‘within the true’ about something. DHA adds to this Foucauldian understanding of discursive practice by providing a mechanism to bridge discourse theory and discourse research by positioning text as the situated expression of that which is within the true – a kind of agent of discourse.

Reisigl and Wodak’s reference to texts as relevant for the durability of discourses¹⁸ is of relevance for three final theoretical terms of importance:

¹⁸ (Noting, I argue, that change can also be described in terms of durability in the sense that a discourse can be retained, but in an altered form, or replaced by another dominant discourse).

intertextuality, recontextualisation and interdiscursivity. Recontextualisation has been accounted for elsewhere in Section 4.1.4, and is understood in the same way here. Intertextuality refers to the way in which texts are linked to other texts through “explicit reference to a topic or main actor; through references to the main events; by allusions or evocations; by the transfer of main arguments for one text to the next, and so on” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.90). Interdiscursivity is a similar process relating to discourse. On this, Reisigl and Wodak write “If we conceive of discourse as primarily topic related (as ‘discourse on x’), we will observe that a discourse on climate change frequently refers to topics or subtopics of other discourses such as finances or health” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009, p.90). Wodak’s approach to discourse is added here as a complement to the main theoretical approach to discourse, that of Foucault, on account of the fact it is considered to contribute meaningfully to the analytical work through the provision of a concrete language for analysis.

4.2.3 How discourse is used in this thesis

Like Bacchi, this research is concerned with different possible perceptions and understandings of activities, and like Foucault and Fairclough, this research is interested in the way in which practice can be impacted by dominant, that is to say, powerful, actors, and in how power can be negotiated and exercised. In this last matter, the research is further aligned to the work of Wodak and Kryzanowski, in that it is interested in normalised discourses as a phenomenon of politics, in how these are established, and in how they may be resisted. Like Priestley et al., this research is interested in practice across multiple sites, and in the capacity of diverse actors to traverse sites and contribute to conceptualisations of curriculum in a way that may disrupt top down models of authority and steering.

As such, discourse is used in two ways in this thesis, both of which complement the broad curriculum theoretical approach taken, and in particular, Priestley et al.’s curriculum making activity model. Common to both approaches is the conceptualisation of discourse as practice.

First, and primarily, discursive practices is used to describe both the practice and outcome of rule governed selection and deselection of statements, where statements can be understood as expressions of knowledge about a something. Additionally, dominant or naturalised discourse is used as to describe communicative practices in relation to a particular subject that have become to a greater or lesser extent normalised, usually because of strategic, politically motivated activity. The function of using the term in this way is to enable dominant discourses to be considered as a factor in curriculum making and in didactic decision making.

4.3 Critical care pedagogical approaches to teaching in migration and multilingual contexts

The thesis' focus on SALI¹⁹ content necessitates a theoretical approach which allows consideration of the learning conditions for minoritised learners²⁰ in situations where first language, place of birth, and in many cases ethnicity, are used as descriptive categories. The approach used for this is critical care pedagogy. This is a growing field that has developed largely in the context of Hispanic and Latine²¹ educational research. Broadly speaking, the approaches share a number of common elements, namely a focus on creating and sustaining opportunities for secure and equitable interpersonal interactions and relationships, a proactive critical approach to dismantling inequity, and to co-creating conditions for academic and other types of success.

In Section 4.3.1, an overview of key points in the development of critical care pedagogy is given as contextual background to the use of critical care pedagogy as a theoretical tool. This is followed in Section 4.3.2 by an outline of the way in which critical care pedagogy and multilingualism relate theoretically to one another in this thesis. In Section 4.3.3 by a more detailed account of two specific approaches which are operationalised to form the theoretical underpinning of one of the analytical frameworks in this study – Authentic Cariño, and transcaring. Transcaring is closely related to the theoretical and pedagogical concept translanguaging, and this too is outlined here.

4.3.1 Caring pedagogy, an overview

Caring pedagogies have developed from the early work of Nel Noddings, an early key figure within the field. Her ethics of care model positions care for learners and their individual conditions for learning as a basis for educators' organisation of their teaching, and emphasises educators' sense of duty as a motivator for caring practices (Noddings, 1988). While Noddings' influence on the field of educational care has been considerable, her work has been subject to criticism from feminist scholars and from critical race scholars (see for example Dalmiya, 2007), who note that her approach systematically fails to

¹⁹ Societal-orientation and language content for immigrants / Språk- och samhällsorienterande lärande innehåll för invandrare.

²⁰ The term minoritised is used in the sense described by DaCosta et al. (2021) in their discussion of the pros and cons of a variety of terms used to talk about race, and highlights the way in which 'students from historically marginalised racial and ethnic groups' (2021, p.26) may have their needs and circumstances disregarded in learning environments.

²¹ In using the terms Hispanic and Latine, I aim to present a broad, yet necessarily concise, descriptor of the diverse communities in the United States of America who have Spanish or another Romance language as their first language and / or as a core part of their cultural identity. In selecting the terms, I took guidance from academic writing style guides from the libraries of two US universities, Tulane University (2025) and New York University (2024), and I acknowledge that some members of the communities I aim to refer to would likely choose other ways of identifying themselves and their backgrounds.

address the relevance for caring practices of structural inequalities that impact minoritised students' conditions for learning. In foregrounding the role of the individual over the responsibility of the society in caring, Noddings' work has also been criticised for assuming a colour and power blindness (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006). A further critique is that it is not sufficient for caring pedagogies to be the domain of individuals, but must be a shared responsibility within institutions (Dalmiya, 2007).

Angela Valenzuela's 1999 ethnographic research into the conditions of Mexican and Mexican American students at a Texas high school drew a distinction between authentic vs aesthetic care in education, noting that the former is dependent upon familial-type practices and attention to the actual conditions and needs of individual learners, whereas the latter may appear to entail features of caring, but in the event of tension, these are backgrounded, with normative, and potentially harmful, pedagogies being foregrounded in practice. Valenzuela's findings that students' experience of their education was culturally and linguistically subtractive is an example of this, based on her assertion that:

...this large, overcrowded, and underfunded urban school reproduces Mexican youth as a monolingual, English-speaking, ethnic minority, neither identified with Mexico nor equipped to function competently in America's mainstream (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 3)

Much of the critical pedagogy research in this area has been within the USA – Hispanic and Latine context, and has become linked in recent years with the part of the educational research field concerned with language as a factor in inequitable education. A body of scholarship has emerged that considers education of Hispanic and Latine children and young people in the USA, and a number of scholars (García et al., 2013; Lewis et al., 2012; Rodríguez-Castro et al., 2016; Salmerón et al., 2021) have shown how equitable education for Hispanic and Latine children often draws on and leverages characteristic aspects of Hispanic culture. *Cariño* has become a key theoretical term in the field. Like Valenzuela's authentic care, *cariño* is a concept that contributes to addressing the 'colour-blindness' critique of Noddings. The term describes a heartfelt, loving, familial care whose authenticity (Valenzuela, 1999) is expressed through its holism and its authenticity, in Valenzuela's meaning.

Antrop-González and De Jesús describe a continuum of care encompassing what they call both soft and hard caring, similar to Valenzuela's aesthetic and authentic care. They suggest that their terms advance the theoretical discussions around caring pedagogies, and that in doing so they begin to "outline the contours of a theory of critical care" (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006, p.429). A core distinguishing feature of critical care is the rejection of curricula which neglect to bring into the spotlight and problematise the social

conditions of marginalised groups which they purport to benefit. Failing to do so creates a climate wherein even well-intentioned educators risk lowering their expectations of students out of a misguided sense of pity towards them, as though their social conditions were essential rather than the result of structural inequality. The authors refer to this as “Ay Bendito syndrome”, drawing on the Spanish expression of pity towards someone (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006, p.411).

Here they echo Rolón-Dow (2005) who, in her analysis of care narratives in Puerto Rican girls’ schooling experiences in US schools states that:

A critical care praxis begins by acknowledging that, to care for students of color in the United States, we must seek to understand the role that race/ ethnicity has played in shaping and defining the sociocultural and political conditions of their communities. (Rolón-Dow, 2005, p.104)

Bartolomé (2008) made a similar point in presenting the results of her 2005 study of beliefs about education of linguistic minorities held by teachers who had recently completed one year’s teaching in Spanish-only speaking pre-schools in the US (Bartolomé, 2008.). She lifts the lack of critical attention paid to ‘the political and ideological dimensions of caring’ (Bartolomé, 2008, p.2), relating it to the deficit perspective often inherent in pedagogies where care is superficial or aesthetic, even if it is well meaning. She notes:

For example, many teachers of liberal persuasion claim to love and care for minority students; however, their love is often condescending and very much informed by unacknowledged deficit views of their students. In such situations, teachers often “lovingly” coddle their students and shelter them from having to learn dominant academic discourses because of the erroneous belief that their students already have a culture and should not have the dominant culture imposed upon them. (Bartolomé, 2008, p.3)

Bartolomé used the term authentic *cariño* to describe the practices she observed in her 2005 study although her use of the terms together was for the purposes of description, rather than with the aim of advancing theory. Marnie Curry theorised the term Authentic *Cariño*, however, situating it at the overlap of familial, intellectual and critical aspects of educational care. These three types work together to “emphasize a vision of caring grounded in Latino cultural values (*educación, comunidad, familia, personalismo*)²²” (Curry, 2016, p.891)

Relatedly, García et al. (2013) coin the term *transcaring* to describe a pedagogical approach they observed which centres students’ languaging practices as a core caring practice. They describe *transcaring* as building upon Noddings’ care concept and upon the concepts of *cariño*, authentic care and critical care

²² *Personalismo* in this context refers to an institutional culture of care, respect and amicability that may permeate a setting such as a school – see Collins (2011) for a comprehensive account.

developed by Latino scholars and position it as a descriptive framework for examining and evaluating the nature of educational practices in settings identified as successful. Drawing on both translanguaging pedagogy and critical care pedagogy, transcaring allows for consideration of educators' holistic didactic decision making in their work with learners with an immigrant background and with a first language other than the society's majority language. They describe how transcaring adds to or goes beyond these theoretical terms thus:

[But] it goes beyond these other conceptualizations by placing the fluid ethnolinguistic identities of Latino emergent bilinguals, as they construct U.S. bilingual identities that extend beyond traditional national, cultural and linguistic borders, at the center of the schooling process. The *transcaring* that we describe...refers to the way in which teachers and administrators...*straddled* languages, cultures, and modes of knowing and performing in the borderlands in which these immigrant students live. These schools helped emergent bilingual youth negotiate rigid borders of languages, cultures and ways of learning and performing, in order to expand their abilities and gain greater understandings. (García et al., 2013, pp. 807-808)

Authentic *Cariño* and transcaring are adopted as important theoretical approaches in this study, and the way they are used is described below in Section 4.3.3. Prior to this, however, it is useful to divert attention towards the theoretical approach to language and multilingualism adopted in this thesis, as this is critical for expounding transcaring theory.

4.3.2 Multilingualism as an aspect of critical care pedagogy

Research into multilingualism has been described extensively over the last fifteen years as being in a state of flux, undergoing a paradigm shift referred to within the field as the multilingual turn (see Meier, 2017 for example). This paradigm shift has entailed a unitary view of language as a “code-like system of inputs and outputs” (Thibault, 2017, p.75), where second language use is viewed in relation to normative, essentialist frameworks such as named languages and prescriptive grammars, increasingly being displaced by a theoretical understanding of language as complex, pluralistic, multimodal situated meaning making, and as a political question with wide-reaching relevance in discussions of education, employment and migration. In line with its theoretical understanding of language, much of the research published following the so-called multilingual turn has an express social justice orientation (see for example Wei & García, 2022).

I position this research in alignment with this social justice oriented theoretical approach, and operationalise it by considering theories of multilingualism in relation to critical care pedagogy. Such an approach recognises the colonialist roots of monolingual normative discourses about language practices, and rejects the conception of native speaker fluency as a valorised, unmarked form

of language use, and challenges the dominance of the monolingual norm as an ideological lens through which multilingualism is viewed in societal, educational and political contexts. For example, one particular field, translanguaging, has emerged as influential within contemporary language research. Characterised by its dual functions as both theory of language and a pedagogical approach, translanguaging has been described by leading researchers within the field, Ofelia García and Li Wei thus:

Translanguaging extends our traditional definitions of language and bilingualism. It refers to the ways in which bilinguals use their complex semiotic repertoire to act, to know, and to be. Through multiple discursive practices that constitute the language users' linguistic repertoires, translanguaging makes visible the different histories, identities, heritages and ideologies of the multilingual language users. (García & Wei, 2014, p137)

As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging pedagogy challenges monolingual orientations to bilingual education (Hopewell 2017), and refers to:

... the strategic and flexible use of multiple languages within a single learning event, the expectation that content learned in and through one language informs academic performance and participation in the other, and the creative distribution and use of materials across languages in service to overall teaching and learning.” (Hopewell, 2017 p73)

The two distinct functions of translanguaging - as a descriptive theoretical approach to multilinguals' languaging practices, and as a pedagogical model, are unified through broad agreement on a key concept, namely that translanguaging's decolonising core stems from an ambition to build restorative and equitable spaces within societal and education systems for the knowledges, languages and cultural practices that have been systematically invisibilised and marginalised (Wei & García, 2022). A three-part model, 'stance, design and shift' is used to describe the way in which translanguaging pedagogy is operationalised in educators' practice García et al. (2017), and can also be used as an analytical tool. In the model, *stance* describes the educator's ideological approach towards language as a factor in democracy work. The theoretical term *stance* is used in a way not dissimilar to its non-theoretical usage, and its usage within translanguaging theory echoes earlier deployments of the term with a similar function, for example by discourse analyst Hyland (2005), who discusses a writer's *stance*, calling it;

...a textual 'voice' or community recognized personality which[.....] can be seen as an attitudinal dimension and includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments. (Hyland, 2005, p.176)

The second part of the model, *design*, refers to the way in which the educator's translanguaging stance is a factor in the organisation of their setting, encompassing planning across the short, medium and long term, as well as resourcing, and physical organisation of the setting. The final part, *shift* refers to the actions an educator takes 'on the ground' in their classroom practice in order to uphold and realise translanguaging as a foundation for educators' learning (García et al., 2017). Shift can be understood as an act of didactic decision making; the two terms are effectively synonymous in terms of the processes they describe, with shift gaining the aforementioned specialist meaning when used in the context of translanguaging pedagogy.

Language as a factor in didactic decision making and curriculum making is a core theme running through this research, and a core aim of the thesis is to create knowledge on the way in which SALI content in the open preschool is described in texts and educators' accounts, in relation to the learner and to the purpose of the setting, and in relation to educators' organisation of educational activities. As such, two elements of translanguaging and translanguaging pedagogy provide suitable theoretical points of entry for the analytical work. The first is the theoretical understanding of language as situated meaning making which translanguaging shares with other post-multilingual-turn research, and social justice orientation inherent in it. The second is the 'stance, design and shift' model (García et al., 2017).

Terminology from the thesis' primary theoretical frameworks, (the didaktik and curriculum theoretical approaches outlined in Section 4.1 above) is adequate for describing organisation of an educational setting and accounts of educators' 'moment-by-moment' moves in the classroom – as such, in this thesis, I primarily describe educators' organisation of their pedagogical settings in terms of didactic decision making and curriculum making. However, it is useful to have a complementary theoretical vocabulary on hand to effectively capture aspects of the ideological in educators' approaches to their didactic work, and to describe relations between the different sites of educators move between in their didactic decision making. It is here that the stance, design, shift model is of use. Stance, in particular, used to describe an ideological approach toward something, is useful both in its translanguaging pedagogical sense, and in Hyland's broader sense (Hyland, 2005).²³ Further to these uses, stance, design and shift are used in discussion of researcher positionality and ethical approach to the research (see Section 5.3).

²³ Where the term stance is used synonymously with translanguaging stance, this will be indicated in the text. Where no such indication is given, stance is used following Hyland's broad understanding of the term (Hyland, 2005).

4.3.3 Authentic Cariño and transcaring as complementary theoretical lenses

The key theoretical terms relevant to the way in which critical care pedagogy is used in the study are, aesthetic and authentic (care), critical (care), cariño, Authentic Cariño, familial, intellectual and critical (cariño), and transcaring. Transcaring is adopted as a supplementary analytical lens in the analysis of the interview material on the grounds of the close situational and ideological alignment with the thesis' overall ambitions, as indicated in the quote above.

García et al. (2013) identify four transcaring strategies namely translanguaging and bilingualism in education, *transculturación* in culturally transforming pedagogy, transcollaboration and *compadrazgo* among all communities of learning, and transactions through dynamic assessments (García et al., 2013, p. 808) The key terms of relevance to this study, given that it is not sited within a school setting, are translanguaging, *transculturación*, and *compadrazgo*. Translanguaging pedagogy has been accounted for in Section 4.3.2 above. The authors describe *compadrazgo* as:

a system of godparents and coparents who offer support and guidance to those without blood ties. As a result, large intertwined supportive familial networks are created among administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students themselves, educators in school and parents/families, and educators in schools and others in community organizations. In extending this *compadrazgo* within and beyond school walls, educators are building a third space that transcends differences within school and between school and communities. (García et al., 2013, p. 814)

and describe *transculturación* thus based on their observations:

...rather than simply drawing from students' cultural backgrounds, these schools helped students construct fluid new cultural practices that in some ways resembled, and in some ways transcended, cultural practices from both their home countries and the United States. We refer to this concept as *transculturación*. (García et al., 2013, p. 808)

As noted above, Marnie Curry theorised the term Authentic Cariño, and her model of Authentic Cariño pedagogy is used to answer the study's fourth research question: "What points-of-view about the multilingualism, and about open preschool's activities for and with immigrant parents and their families are expressed in contemporary educators' accounts of their work and how they organise it?" Curry's model describes a three part, overlapping model of caring pedagogy that "emphasises a vision of caring grounded in Latino cultural values" (Curry, 2016) and is used here as a theoretical framework for describing educators' accounts of their didactic decision making. Authentic Cariño is sited within the field of educational care, and has its roots in Nel Noddings'

ethics of care model, and in Angela Valenzuela's theorising of the distinction between aesthetic and authentic care in education.

Familial *cariño* entails a holistic approach to interaction with and care for learners akin to that which a family member may take. It comprises both a way of caring, and a broader structure within which the care may be enacted. Familial *cariño* likens the school community to a family, and both the educator and the learner as parts of this family-like network, where care is based around trust, reciprocity, resilient bonds, and a multiplicity of knowledge types and sources that may be drawn upon – for example those typical of peers, siblings, parents and elders. The educator-learner relationship is just one possible point of contact among many other possible ones that could exist within the network, and these other relationships are valorised and leveraged as part of the educator's organisation of the teaching and learning. (Curry, 2016)

Intellectual *cariño* refers to the concern educators demonstrate for a learner's academic development and personal development of a type akin to *Bildung*. Intellectual *cariño* combines high expectation with relevant support, and supposes the learner to be capable of curiosity and learning both of subject knowledges and of the reflexive skills required to tackle broader societal questions, including philosophical, political and ideological. (Curry, 2016)

Critical *cariño* refers to educators' caring practices that are underpinned by an awareness of the historical and contemporary complexities of learners' ethnic, demographic and gender identities and of the way in which these factors are relevant to the lived experiences of the learners and the communities they are part of, recognising that these are often minoritised and subject to inequitable treatment by majority power structures. Critical *cariño* balances recognition of the fact that learners' to a certain extent must act within the existing power structures (and supports in their doing so), with the conviction that learners can and should be supported in deconstructing inequality norms. (Curry, 2016)

Authentic *Cariño* pedagogy is used as part of the didactic analyses of educators' accounts of their practice, and its application is outlined more fully in Section 5.2.5.

5 Empirical material, methods and ethical considerations

The empirical material analysed in this thesis can be broadly divided into text and interview material. The text material consists of 77 diverse texts ‘for and about’ the open preschool in the period 1972 – 2024. The interview material consists of 20 semi-structured interviews with educators in the open preschool, conducted during 2023.

The text material is used primarily to address RQs 1 and 2, which consider the development trajectory of the open preschool and its curriculum. By contrast, the interview material is used primarily to address RQs 3 and 4, which consider contemporary accounts of practice within open preschools. With that said, in the interpretation and discussion of the analyses, both material types are at times treated as a combined data set, to facilitate comparative aspects of the interpretation and discussion, for example.

Each material type is analysed in either four phases. The phases are the same for each material type, but the methodological approach is distinct for each type.

1. Data collection and delimitation
2. Data management
3. Inductive data analysis
4. Deductive data analysis

During each of the four phases for both material types, the theoretical understandings of curriculum, discourse and critical care pedagogy are adopted to ensure consistency of theoretical approach. Results are presented for each material type and each analysis method.

5.1 Text material

5.1.1 Data collection and delimitation

An initial systematic search for texts from the period 1970 – 2021 using the Swedish version of the terms *op *presch, *play advice and *open playschool²⁴ was carried out in seven databases^{25,26}. These results were cross referenced with an existing data set²⁷ which searched three additional databases²⁸ using the search terms *op *presch²⁹ and open preschool.

This dataset was supplemented by 40 additional empirical materials sourced using the snowballing method during the whole of the doctoral period 2018 – 2024. The systematically identified materials numbered c.1500, and were delimited using the criteria indicated in the flowchart below (Figure 3), where a green arrow indicates a ‘yes’ answer, and a red arrow a ‘no’. These criteria were established with the intention of including empirical material about the open preschool which was drawn from the field of education, and which might reasonably have been of general interest or relevance to a practitioner or other actor in the field. In doing so, the intention was to exclude material from the field of healthcare, material where the open preschool was mentioned only in passing, and material with only a specific local relevance, for example opening times and schedules.

²⁴ *öpp *försk, lekrådgivning, and öppen lekskola

²⁵ UU, Google, Google Scholar, SwePub, EBSCO, ERIC, Riksarkivet digitalised items, SOU

²⁶ Due to the relatively limited scope of the substudy, the search was restricted to Riksarkivet’s digital items, and this is recognised as a potential limitation of the material.

²⁷ generously shared with me by researcher Tobias Axelsson at Örebro University

²⁸ Libris, Diva, Primo

²⁹ *öpp *försk

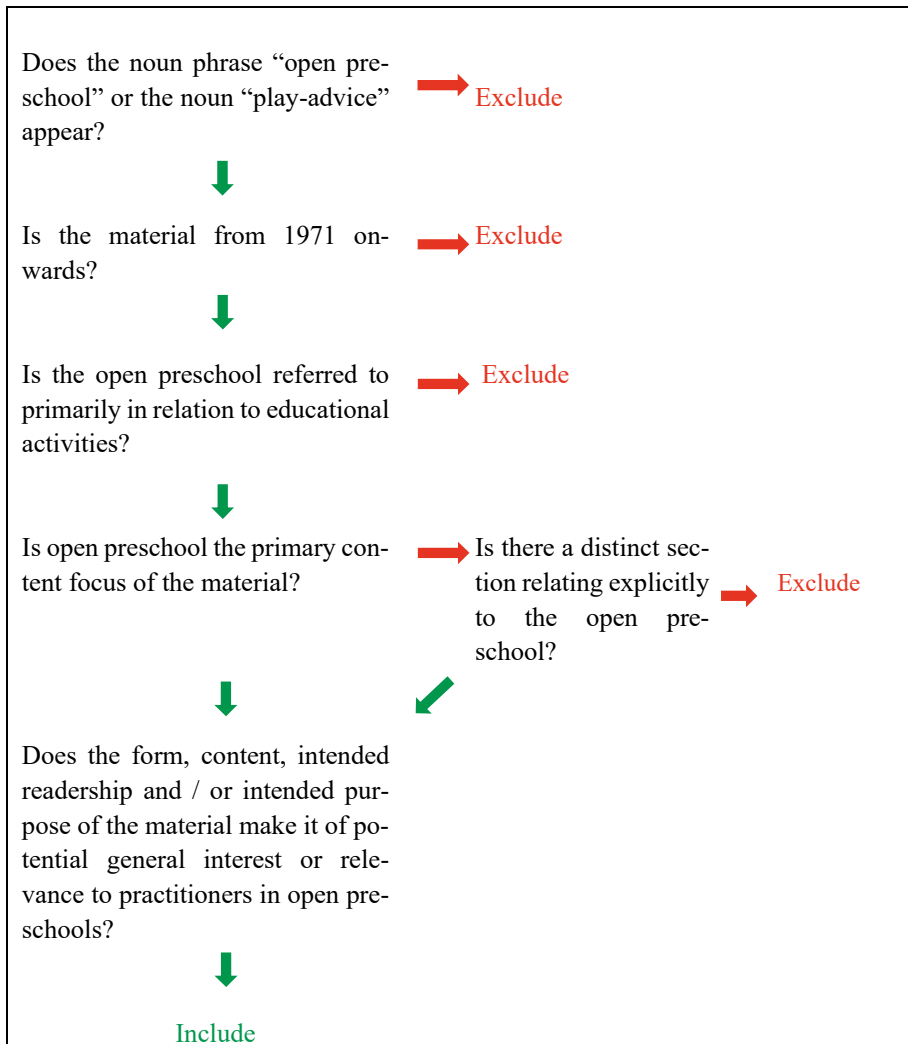


Figure 3 Delimitation criteria for empirical text data

The same criteria were applied to the c.40 materials gained through snowballing, although they were somewhat less strictly applied in a small number of cases. In particular, as materials from the private domain and field notes were included, the final question, that of relevance was relaxed somewhat, with items not necessarily needing to be judged to be of a general interest or relevance.

Having sourced the empirical material and ascertained its relevance, materials were subject to a final delimitation using external and internal criticism (Garraghan & Appel, 1946; Tosh, 2015; McDowell, 2013 etc) to ascertain their authenticity (external) and credibility (internal). This was done in line with

conventions for empirical research of a historical nature using the following questions

External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the source, written or unwritten, produced (date)? • Where was it produced (localisation)? • By whom was it produced (authorship)? • From what pre-existing material was it produced (analysis)? • In what original form was it produced (integrity)?
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the evidential value of its contents (credibility)?

Table 6 Questions for ascertaining authenticity and credibility of a historical source (after Garraghan & Appel, 1946)

Following this delimitation process, the data set consisted of 77 items. Materials were, wherever practical, stored in both physical and digital form.

5.1.2 Discourse Trace method

LeGreco and Tracy’s Discourse Trace is used to answer the Research Questions in research area 1. The method emphasises a qualitative analysis of “... the formation, interpretation and appropriation of discursive practices across micro, meso and macro levels of analysis” (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1523). Accordingly, it is a suitable method for my purpose due to the focus it places on the trajectory of a case over time and on the impact of discursive practices on the direction in which the case develops.

Step One: Identifying a rupture

The first step of the Discourse Trace, the Research Design, begins with the identification in relation to the epistemological object of a case to study. This is done through the identification of a “turning point or rupture in the scene” (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1524) that is used as a starting point for the identification of relevant empirical material. LeGreco and Tracy define ruptures as “significant events or changes that signal moments of discursive organization or reorganization” (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1524).

Step Two: Data Management and initial reading

Following this is the Data Management phase of the discourse trace, and entails “gather[ing] data from a variety of sources that span micro, meso and

macro levels of discourse [and] order[ing] [them] chronologically” (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1523). The breadth and diversity of data sources is emphasised as characteristic of the method and the ordering and classifying of the empirical material, in order to ‘make sense of’ this diversity, is a key part of the data management, meaning that in this meta-analysis of the material, some initial results relating to the nature of the trajectory may emerge even before the deeper analytical work on the content begins. LeGreco and Tracy note that “even the most detailed data” gathered for a discourse trace may be “incomplete and messy” (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1526), as researchers may be examining a case which changes contemporaneously during data collection, and because of the necessary diversity of material eligible for inclusion. While this messiness may be a limitation of sorts, it is viewed here also as a consequence of what I perceive to be a strength of the method, namely the opportunities it provides for nuanced analysis of rich and diverse material, following iterative readings and notetaking.

Step Three (a): Data analysis

The data analysis phase is characterised by operationalisation of the chronological ordering that distinguishes the Discourse Trace method from other qualitative methods in that it enables the researcher to make empirically founded judgements regarding the way in which interdiscursivity may have, in whole or in part, caused, enabled, hindered or prevented particular events or developments. (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009, p.1526). The method requires that these judgements be based upon answers to structured questions applied to the material following the initial readings. The development of these questions also constitutes a result, but is included here for ease of reference. The following structured questions were applied to the material and following the application of these questions, detail was added to the initial, giving a summary of the key general and didaktik oriented content in each text.

- How is the purpose of the open preschool described in general terms, in relation to the regular preschool, and in relation to visiting parents and children?
- What educational activities are visitors (children and adults) described as taking part in, and, how are educator, learner and content described? How do the purposes expressed for educational activities relate to purposes expressed for the open preschool in general?
- How are the educational activities described as being organised? (How is it intended that content be taught?)

Step Three (b): Presentation of results

These results constitute a large material, which the method requires to be transformed into a narrative case study – a process that necessitates a further sorting of the empirical results and the selection of relevant ‘storylines’ in the

main themes for inclusion in the narrative. In other words, the raw data relating to the trajectory of the open preschool's development is "translate[d] into...a more accessible narrative" (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009 p1535)

5.1.3 Curriculum Making Activity analysis method

The second analysis adds nuance to selected results of the Discourse Trace analysis. Priestley et al.'s heuristic model of Curriculum Making Activity is used as a supplementary framework for identifying activities that may be judged to have played a role in the development of the open preschool's curriculum as it relates to adults. The aim of this was to allow the narrative account of the open preschool's development in relation to adult education and adult immigrant education to be examined in terms of how the setting's curricular practices emerged and developed over time.

The empirical material was subject to repeated close reading to identify instances that could be described as curriculum making activity. The criteria used in this process were produced by synthesising core features and functions of curriculum making activity from Priestley et al. (2021) and creating the following definition based upon them.

An **activity**, or **account** thereof, whose **intention** and / or **effect** is to **describe**, **define and delimit**, **prescribe**, **interpret**, **negotiate**, or **translate** one or more of the **learner**, **content**, **form** and **purpose** of educational activities in an educational setting. The activities or accounts may be categorised according to the **site** of the activity and the **actors** involved, and described in terms of any resulting **products**.

The key terms highlighted in bold above are described and exemplified in this grid, used in the analysis to operationalise Curriculum Making Activity as an analytical framework.

Activity and / or account	a description of a situation where teaching and learning are intended to take place. Alternatively, an account of a specific educational activity or situation.
Intention and / or effect	the notion, expressed in the text, that the activity is intended to impact another aspect of curriculum or curriculum making at another site. Alternatively, an account or indication of this having occurred.
Describe	to give an account of, usually in some detail
Define and delimit	to state the nature and boundaries of an aspect of curriculum
Prescribe	to present an aspect of curriculum as compulsory and not open to negotiation by other actors
Interpret	to work towards and decide upon the meaning of an aspect of curriculum as it relates to a particular context
Negotiate	to adapt an aspect of curriculum in conjunction with another actor or actors who may have different aims or wishes
Translate	to adapt an aspect of curriculum so that it can be applied to a different context in a way that is as similar as possible to the way it was originally used
Learner	a person or people positioned as intended 'recipients' of the learning content
Content	that which is intended to be learned
Form	the type of educational activity and / or the methods used to organise the educational activity
Purpose	the immediate or future intended outcome of the educational activity, or the reason for the organisation of the activity
Site(s)	the conceptual categories at which curriculum making may occur, as defined in Priestley et al. (Priestley et al., 2021)
Actors	a person or organisation who participates in curriculum making activity
Products	a tangible or conceptual output of curriculum making

Table 7 Definitions used in Curriculum Making Activity analyses

The Toolbox

One of the 77 items described above is further analysed in more detail, namely *Verktysglådan*, referred to hereafter using the English translation, toolbox. *The Toolbox* is a ‘good practice’ resource for educators and other stakeholders and actors working with language and integration in the open preschool, published in 2020 by Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner. The recursive nature of the analysis process for both the text and interview material led to the identification of *The Toolbox* as an important piece of empirical material. The reason for this judgement is that it can be seen in some ways to act as a ‘bridge’ between the historically focused text corpus that was viewed primarily in terms of (curriculum making) and the contemporary educator accounts (that were viewed primarily in terms of didactic decision making). In part this is due to the Toolbox’ publication date, and in part due to the text type, author and intended purpose. As a result of these factors, analysis of the Toolbox also drew on these additional guiding questions:

- How are immigrant mothers as a target learner group represented in the Toolbox?
- What content areas and educational activities are represented as desirable in order to meet the goals of the SKR initiative?
- Which norms and values about parenting, language, immigration and integration are represented in the Toolbox and how are they constructed?

5.1.4 Method reflection on selection of empirical material

A limitation of the decision to limit the initial systematic search for empirical materials to those which treated the open preschool as a stand-alone educational setting is that it excluded a number of documents which subsequently emerged that, had the delimitation criteria been different, could have added an additional empirical dimension. Notably, Hammarström-Lewenhagen (2013) cites texts from *Förskolan*³⁰ magazine which focus on the open preschool. While the decision not to systematically search in *Förskolan* magazine was intentional, I acknowledge that, with hindsight, it may have been appropriate.

³⁰ Preschool

5.2 Interview material

5.2.1 Data collection and delimitation

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 employees working open preschools in five large urban areas in central and southern Sweden. I use the umbrella term educators to describe the interviewees as a group, and account for their specific roles in Table 8 below, and where necessary in the text. A number of criteria were used to identify open preschool educators to interview: the primary aim of the selection process was to identify a selection of areas with high numbers of foreign-born residents. Statistics from Sweden's Central Statistical Bureau were used to identify such areas, and a Google search was carried out to establish whether these areas had open preschools. Of these, areas with multiple open preschools were prioritised (in part due to practical and logistical considerations), resulting in the selection of five urban locations in central and southern Sweden. All five were among Sweden's largest in terms of total population, and in terms of number foreign-born residents. Together, the total length of the interviews was 15 hours and ten minutes, and the average length of an interview was 43 minutes. For ease of discussion, each educator and each open preschool is given a pseudonym, shown here. The names of the educators were selected with the help of an online random name generator, and the names of open preschools were selected arbitrarily from a loose lexical field of Swedish flora and fauna.

No.	Lo- ca- tion	Role	Name	Open Pre- school	Date / length
1	1	Preschool teacher	Amira	Forget-me-nots	03/2023 0:44:08
2	2	Preschool teacher	Anna	Acorns	04/2023 0:49:14
3	2	Preschool teacher	Karin	Acorns	04/2023 0:41:52
4	2	Bridgebuilder	Dina	Acorns	04/2023 0:44:22
5	2	Preschool teacher	Sara	Cloudberries	05/ 2023 0:44:32
6	2	District mother	Lita	Cloudberries	05/2023 0:18:49
7	3	Preschool teacher	Moa	Pine Martens	04/2023 1:31:14
8	3	SFI teacher	Lise	Buttercups	04/2023 0:53:35
9	3	Preschool teacher	Norah	Buttercups	04/2023 1:01:44
10	3	Preschool teacher	Ida	Chaffinches	04/2023 1:11:55
11	3	Preschool teacher	Carina	Swallowtails	04/2023 0:33:10
12	4	Educator	Juno	Paskflowers	05/2023 0:54:19
13	4	Educator	Mariana	Dandelions	05/2023 0:48:25
14	4	Preschool teacher	Aisha	Bluebells	05/2023 0:30:57
15	4	Bridgebuilder	Helena	Paskflowers Waterlilies	05/2023 0:55:24
<i>16 interview removed due to withdrawn consent by participant</i>					
17	5	Preschool teacher	Lotta	Poppies	06/2023 0:37:16
18	5	Preschool teacher	Moa	Clover	06/2023 0:24:39
19	5	Preschool teacher	Irma	Clover	06/2023 0:34:07
20	5	Family assistant	Emma	Harebells	06/2023 0:29:22
21	1	Childcare asst.	Allie	Squirrels	06/2023 0:40:34

Table 8 Details of interviews carried out by interview number, location number, educator role, name of educator and open preschool (pseudonymised), date, and length of interview.

Bosses for open preschools in the five selected locations were contacted with information about the planned data collection and the open preschools under their steering were invited to take part in interviews. Following this initial contact, and once they had agreed in principle to educators in their area being invited to participate in the study, municipal or city level employees in charge of open preschools were given the option of contacting prospective interview persons themselves, or to allow me to make the initial contact.

The default arrangement for the interviews was that I travel to the open preschools and carry the interviews out in person. Digital or telephone interviews were offered as an alternative if respondents preferred, and were used if required for practical reasons (for example when plans were impacted by respondent illness, and by a rail strike).

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 21 educators in 15 open preschools, following the principles for interviewing outlined in Mears (2017) including use of an interview guide, treating the interview as a distinct type of communicative meeting, and *not* treating it like a spontaneous or social conversation. Mears describes a research interview as:

a purposeful interaction in which an investigator attempts to learn what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it, and what significance or meaning it might have. (Mears, 2017, p.183)

She describes the importance of the interviewer being aware of the responsibilities inherent in their role, and of the need to conduct oneself in such a way that interview persons feel at ease, and well informed of their right to, for example, stop the interview or withdraw from the research. Mears notes that a research interview by its nature entails a power differential, with the researcher in a power position relative to the interviewee. (Mears, 2017) While this was the case for the interviews I carried out, my choice to (where possible) hold them in the interviewees' places of work served to mitigate the power imbalance somewhat.

The interviews were based on an interview guide (which may be found in full in the Appendix) approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority³¹ which was made available in advance to participants who wished to have it. Questions were designed to initiate information about educators' work with immigrant families, in particular their work with teaching and learning activities based around language, societal or parenting content. Questions focused on what they did, how they organised activities, and why they organised them in this way. A number of more general questions aimed to elicit information about how open preschools work with language, and about educators' views on their role in relation to language, multilingualism, immigrant families, and integration. Follow-up and supplementary questions were asked where relevant, and all interviews concluded with the interviewees being given a chance to clarify or add anything they wished. The analysed material consists of 20 interviews, as one participant withdrew their consent.

My role as interviewer placed me, conversationally speaking, in a position of power. I aimed to mitigate this prior to and during the interviews. Before the interviews, participants were told that I was not expecting any particular answers, and that I was genuinely curious about their work, views and experiences. During the interviews I aimed to keep my own input to a minimum, and was proactively mindful of enabling participants to comment as often and for as long as they wished, interrupting my questions if they wished.

³¹ (Dnr 2021-01685 – for more detail on the application, see Section 5.3.2)

5.2.2 Data management

All interviews were audio recorded and recordings stored in secure digital storage. Together, the total length of the analysed material interviews was 15 hours and ten minutes. Interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word and Windows Media Player, and the method of transcription was influenced by the study's aims and research questions (Jenks, 2011). As such, the content of the talk was deemed to be of primary importance to the analytical process, rather than, for example detailed prosodic or pragmatic features. Interviewee's contributions were reproduced word for word using basic orthographic conventions together with a small number of conventional and typographic speech delivery markers to indicate selected paralinguistic features (Jenks, 2011), for example exclamation marks or italic script to indicate emphasis. Other features such as pauses, inaudible passages, or passages that were audibly somewhat unclear, were transcribed using symbols based on Jefferson's Conversation Analysis methods (Jefferson et. al, 2015).

My turns were transcribed in a different colour from the participants', and with the exception of questions, were not transcribed with the same level of detail as participants' turns. Minimal responses such as affirmative 'ja' 'uh-huh' and so on (Zimmerman and West 1996) were largely left untranscribed, and longer turns were transcribed in full where not doing so would make the context of the participant's next turn unclear. The total number of pages of transcribed text was 189. Where extracts from the interview material were used in the text, these were translated into English by me, without the use of online translation software, except for in a small number of cases, mainly involving individual words, and in one or two isolated cases involving a short phrase. A further comment on translation is made in Section 5.3.2 below.

5.2.3 Didactic content analysis method

Repeated close readings of the transcripts were carried out to identify places where the educators recalled instances of what I describe as 'didactic decision making' – these were defined as any example given by an educator in which they participated in the organisation of educational activities for or with immigrant parents, and related to a content, piece of information or skill.

It was possible to make a broad distinction between two types of account within the data – those which *described* teaching and learning situations in general terms, and those which *exemplified* them. With *exemplified* is meant any specific instance recalled by an educator whereby they participated in the organisation of an educational activity (planned as such, or otherwise) for or with immigrant parents, and related to a content, piece of information, or skill. These accounts of didactic decision making were coded to ascertain the nature of the content that formed the stuff of the teaching and learning, and what the relevance of the adult visitors' immigrant status was to the nature of the

content. These analyses attempt to answer the didactic question of ‘what’ and ‘why’, as well as paying attention to the relevance of ‘who’ the learner is.

5.2.4 Reflexive Thematic Analysis method

Braun and Clarke’s Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was selected as one of the analysis methods for the interview materials. In the analysis of the interview data, the broad focus was on educators’ understandings of their work in the open preschool, both generally, and in relation to immigrant families. Part of this entailed examination of discourses about language, immigration and integration in the educators’ accounts. These focus areas served as a broad starting point for the otherwise inductive analyses.

The analyses were carried out following the RTA method outlined in Braun and Clarke’s 2022 book, which presented an updated version of their original six stage process from 2006 (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022). Braun and Clarke’s informative website (Thematic Analysis, 2024), on which much of their published material is reproduced, and their 2021 guide for assessing the quality of research using RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2021) were also used as reference materials throughout the analysis process.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis makes use of several key concepts, which will be outlined here briefly prior to the description of the method itself. Definitions are adapted from those in the glossary of Braun and Clarke’s book *Thematic Analysis: a practical guide* (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Three key terms relating to the analytical process and output are codes, themes, and central organising concept. Codes are the ‘building blocks for themes’ in Reflexive Thematic Analysis and ‘capture [an] analytic insight[s] from the researcher’s systematic engagement with their data’. In this way, codes are both ‘an analytic tool and [an] output’ (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.264). Theme describes “a shared, multi-faceted meaning, patterned across at least some of a qualitative dataset” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.296) that is initially developed by clustering together codes. Themes are unified by a Central Organising Concept, the “(sometimes implicit) idea that unifies meaning in a theme”, that is to say the “concept or idea that all the analytic observations that constitute a theme relate to”. (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.264)

Braun and Clarke describe the six phases as constituting an expression of a process, designed to serve as a tool for “systematically and robustly exploring, interpreting, and reporting a pattern-based analysis from your dataset” (Thematic Analysis, 2024). They are not, the authors point out, designed to be rigid or prescriptive. Nonetheless, for this research, the six phases were followed closely, although, as Braun and Clarke emphasise that it ought, the analysis had a recursive character, meaning that there was “movement back and forth between different phases” (Thematic Analysis, 2024). The six phases for analysis presented by Braun and Clarke are summarised here:

Phase 1 Familiarising yourself with the dataset through “reading and re-reading the data, to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content” and taking note of initial observations.

Phase 2 Coding by generating “succinct labels...that capture and evoke important features of the data that might be relevant to addressing the research question”. This phase should be iterative, with codes generated at each stage collated prior to the next phase. Analysis may take a semantic focus, where meaning is explored at a more superficial, express level, or it may focus on more implied, latent meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2022). However, it is important to note that researchers are not required to make a choice between semantic and latent foci, as they are to be understood as positioned on a continuum (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

Phase 3 Generating initial themes

At this stage, codes and the associated collated data should be examined for more overarching patterns in order to begin the process of developing the potential themes, or ‘candidate themes’(Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Phase 4 Developing and reviewing themes

These candidate themes are subject to further checking, reworking, developing and reviewing in relation to the dataset to establish the consistency of their shared central idea, and to ensure they cohesively address the research question in hand (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Phase 5 Refining, defining and naming themes

Following this, the scope and focus for each theme begins to be concretised, along with their stories. At this stage, the themes are given names.

Phase 6 Writing up of an RTA characteristically entails the intertwining of the results with their discussion in relation to previous research. While they may be written separately, the recursivity and indeed reflexivity of the method means that a “weaving together” of the “analytic narrative and data extracts” is motivated, and should lead to a greater depth of analytical attention to the research questions.

Braun and Clarke’s most recent adaptation of their method, Reflexive Thematic Analysis was chosen because as it offered clear opportunities to engage deeply and iteratively with the contents of the text, and because the reflexive element allows analytical results to be ‘kneaded’ into further analysis and in this way inform analysis recursively. Reflexivity is, then, the last key term highlighted here as being particularly relevant to the method. A cumulative method journal was kept throughout, which served a partly organisatory and

partly reflexive purpose, allowing me to document, process and reflexively analyse my observations throughout the six-phase process.

Related to reflexivity is the role of researcher positionality in the method. In this point, it is useful to raise the idea of subjectivity. Subjectivity, the making visible in analysis of a researcher's "identities, values, experiences and skills" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.284), is valued and encouraged in RTA. This is in contrast to some other methods, which can position subjectivity as a "distortion of objective reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p.284). Such an objective reality is discounted by RTA's non-positive ontology, and as such, subjectivity is understood as a resource in the analytical work. In this thesis, the subjectivity can be understood as a result of the theoretical approach to language taken (see Section 4.3.2 above), in which language as an aspect in political decision making in relation to education is understood as drawing on ideologically driven constructions of multilingualism that enact and perpetuate marginalisation of minoritised speakers' language practices. As such, the analytical work is underpinned by social-justice driven theoretical approach that valorises counter discourses about languaging. Subjectivity as an outcome and expression of researcher positionality is also attributable to the overall ethical approach taken in this thesis, as will be outlined below.

5.2.5 Critical care pedagogical analysis method

A further analysis drew on these educator accounts of the instances of didactic decision making and used critical caring pedagogy, primarily using Curry's authentic *cariño* as a framework supporting exploration of how educators can be said to organise teaching and learning in the open preschool, and drawing on transcaring to support the analysis. Here, the *modus operandi* - the how, is understood as being situated in the enactment or deployment in practice of values and beliefs held by educators. While the empirical material cannot show this operationalisation in practice, it is possible to identify in educators' talk about their work characteristics that align with Authentic *Cariño* pedagogy, and that their talk can be seen as a reflective recontextualisation of the ideological drivers behind the work being described.

This approach was selected based in part upon the results of the reflexive thematic analysis, which showed, amongst other things, that educators saw their primary role as offering parental support to the families they met, and that the support was tailored to each family's own needs. As such, using the *cariño* frameworks to analyse their accounts of their work was an attempt to understand more deeply a possible relationship between support, and teaching and learning activities where the learner does not necessarily have a high level of overlap between their own linguistic repertoire and that of the educator and the other learners.

Selected results of the didactic content analysis were further examined using a critical care pedagogy lens as a theoretical tool for categorising educators'

accounts of their didactic decision making. Specifically, Marnie Curry’s model of authentic *cariño* and was used as the basis for an analytical framework for discussing the accounts in terms of familial, intellectual or critical *cariño*. The framework (described in detail below) was based around a synthesising of Curry’s descriptions of the three elements of authentic *cariño*, summarised here in Tables 8-10:

Familial <i>cariño</i>
<p>education is underpinned by family-type relations</p> <p>teachers show genuine, holistic care towards learners ‘as though they share a last name’</p> <p>relationships between teachers and learners, and between learners, are built on reciprocal trust</p> <p>peers bond and support one another</p> <p>learners’ actual families are treated as relevant to their education</p> <p>Elders can be seen as mentors</p>

Table 9 Features of familial *cariño* (after Marnie Curry)

Intellectual <i>cariño</i>
<p>teachers care about learners’ intellectual development</p> <p>teachers aim to foster learners’ habits of mind and engagement with big ideas</p> <p>teachers have high expectations of learners, and provide high levels of academic challenge</p> <p>high challenge / high expectations are paired with high levels of support</p>

Table 10 Features of intellectual *cariño* (after Marnie Curry)

Critical cariño
caring undertaken with a historical and political consciousness of learners' communities
education underpinned by a desire to interrupt inequity
the education enables learners to examine how ethnicity, social class and gender shape history and their own lives
learners are supported to 'master dominant discourses' without devaluing or losing home cultures

Table 11 Features of critical cariño (after Marnie Curry)

Curry's Authentic Cariño as a theoretical concept derives from her research begun in 2011 at an urban US high school in a Latinx district, where she participated in two 'success-centred' research projects in association with the organisation SOLES, with the aim of investigating the ways in which "schools that were serving Latinx youth well" were organised (Curry, 2016, p.15). A key result of the first study was the identification of a characteristic way of working, which Curry called Authentic Cariño. Curry carried out a follow up study in which she undertook observations, interviews and questionnaires in order to explore how familial, intellectual and critical aspects of Authentic Cariño were constructed and enacted in the school.

Curry used different heuristics for analysing each of the three elements. Familial cariño was analysed using two qualitative models developed at the school – Habits of Life and Network of Care. Together these articulated characteristics valorised for interactions between members of the school community, and the comprehensive, holistic support network the school implements for its students respectively.

Intellectual cariño pedagogical approach was studied using a combination of quantitative elements from two established lesson observation protocols.³² The resulting protocol was used to assess implementation of 13 different features of intellectual cariño pedagogy, clustered under four headings, namely Connection, Challenge, Culture and Communication and Collaboration.

Critical cariño was measured using a qualitative-quantitative quadrant graph, with the horizontal axis describing justice stance, and going from "No critique of social oppression" to "Critique of social oppression", and the vertical describing pedagogical stance, from "banking / transmission" up to "problem-posing /solving praxis" (Curry, 2021, p.99). This created a Zone of Critical Cariño indicating optimum conditions for / elements of critical cariño pedagogy.

³² CLASS-S and CREDE- SPC

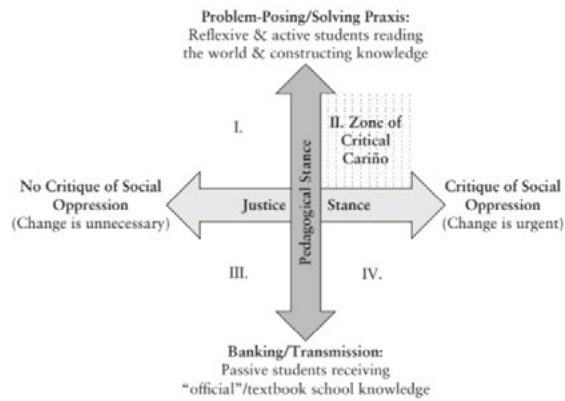


Figure 4 The Enactment of Critical Cariño (Curry, 2021)

In this thesis I synthesise these three separate heuristics in order to create a heuristic for analysing educator accounts. This was done by identifying the types of analytical units and units of measurement for each of the three models, and exploring how these, and how the models themselves were similar and / or different to each other. The two qualitative analytical units both focus on how discursive practices interact with each other, understood in relation to other possible ways that the practices could interact. The quantitative analytical units both address prevalence and strength. Resultedly, Curry's analytical approaches can be seen as consisting of two parts which can be related to the discourse theoretical approach taken in this thesis.

The qualitative aspects of Curry's analyses consider discursive practices – what is it possible to say about something, and what are the shared, unwritten rules (Foucault's 'history') that allow something to be brought within the true in this way? The quantitative aspects consider dominance as a feature of discursive practices – what are the conflicting discourses that stand in opposition to the discursive practices valorised as aspects of the enactment of authentic cariño pedagogy? What acts of resistance to opposing discourses would it be possible for an educator to enact, and which are enacted? In this way, Authentic Cariño as an analytical unit can be understood as and in the conceptual space where enactment of educator's beliefs in the approach meets the educator's enactment of their discursive agency. The latter category may be subdivided into two parts referring to content and critical context respectively. The following table, Table 12, shows the way in which I operationalised the key facets of Authentic Cariño in order to produce a set of guiding questions to ask of the interview data.

Concept (what is being looked for in the data)	Variables (what are the indicators)	Operational definition (what can be asked in order to identify them?)
<p>Educator's deployment / enactment of authentic cariño in their meetings with learners in the setting</p>	<p>family type relations genuine, holistic care reciprocal trust peer support relevance of family support from elders</p>	<p>Do educators describe their work and / or setting using positive aesthetic language?</p> <p>Do educators pay attention to a broad range of wellbeing factors for their learners?</p> <p>Do educators invoke family or metaphors of family in their descriptions of their work and / or setting?</p> <p>Do educators describe enacting supportive practices in their work, or support mechanisms available to learners within the setting?</p>

<p>Educator's deployment / enactment of discursive agency to integrate authentic <i>cariño</i> in their instruction (teaching) content, level and ambition</p>	<p>care about learners' academic education</p> <p>attention to learners' academic habits</p> <p>attention to big ideas</p> <p>high academic expectations</p> <p>high academic challenge</p> <p>high support</p>	<p>Do educators describe learners' abilities, capacity for learning, and future academic prospects in positive terms?</p> <p>Do educators select complex or challenging content areas?</p> <p>Do educators describe didactic decision making that indicates a proactive desire to facilitate learners' meaning making around content?</p> <p>Do educators describe meta-learning as part of the teaching and learning content?</p> <p>Do educators value, provide or facilitate support with learners' current or future academic endeavours?</p>
<p>Educator's deployment of discursive agency to integrate authentic <i>cariño</i> in their instruction (teaching) critical context</p>	<p>historical and political consciousness of learners' communities</p> <p>desire to interrupt inequity</p> <p>supporting learners' introspection</p> <p>support to master dominant discourses without devaluing home culture</p>	<p>Do educators demonstrate awareness of present and historical socio-political factors impacting learners' communities?</p> <p>Do educators' descriptions of these factors suggest that they actively problematise them, independently and / or in their work with learners?</p> <p>Do educators describe solution focused activities in relation to inequity?</p> <p>Do educators support learners to master dominant discourses and practices in a way that does not entail devalorisation of home cultural practices?</p>

Table 12 Operationalisation of Authentic *Cariño* as an analytical framework for analysis of interview data

Transcaring is used as a complementary analytical lens, and is used to add nuance to the Authentic Cariño analyses where necessary, by identifying examples of translanguaging, *transculturación* or *compadrazgo* approaches, following the definitions in Section 4.3 above.

Authentic Cariño and transcaring are used to analyse this material as both methods have been and are designed to be used to examine *good practice*, making them an appropriate choice given that both the government and SKR have identified open preschool as a potential and optimal arena for language and integration initiatives. It is worth highlighting, however, the highly situated nature of both authentic cariño and transcaring as they have primarily been deployed previously, namely within the Hispanic and Latine contexts, and discussing the appropriateness of their deployment as an analytical tool within the Swedish context. It is acknowledged here that it is potentially problematic to map culturally situated practices onto a different cultural setting – to do so risks devaluing or invisibilising the practices of a marginalised community by extrapolating a generalisability. The choice to use these frameworks, despite this risk, is based on two primary factors: there exists a research gap around critical care pedagogies in Swedish multilingual language learning contexts, meaning that there is a lack of precedent in terms of Swedish specific analytical tools. This, along with the social justice orientation of this study, and the studies cited which have used authentic cariño and transcaring, indicates their application in this context. Further to this, the content focus of authentic cariño and transcaring as analytical tools – that is to say, their focus on holistic care and the relevance of family and familial relationships and networks, further indicates their use as a starting point for analysis. This issue is further addressed in Chapter 11.

5.3 Ethical considerations and holistic method reflection: an ethical commitment to researching multilingually

An ethical commitment to research can be described as the “overall ethical aspirations that guide a research project” (Kousholt & Juhl, 2021, p561), where the aspiration may be viewed as an expression of the researcher’s positionality that serves as a jumping off point for the design, planning and execution of the research project. In this chapter, I will describe the ethical approach to the work on this thesis, and expound on the relationship of multilingualism to the ethical work.

In her popular article *Qualitative Quality: Eight ‘Big Tent’ Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research* (Tracy, 2010) and elsewhere (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017), Tracy identifies four aspects of ethics that ought be attended to by the qualitative researcher: procedural, situational, relational and exiting (Tracy,

2010, p.847). Procedural ethics, a term earlier deployed by Guillemin and Gillam (2004) refers to the formal ethical approval or permission to proceed which must a researcher must seek from the relevant authorities. Situational ethics, which is similar to 'ethics in practice' (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004), refers to practices which "emerge not just from prescribed laws but through reason and context" (Tracy, 2010, p.847). Relational ethics, as the name suggests, pertains to the ethical considerations a researcher addresses in their meeting and interactions with others. Ellis (2007) highlights not only the situational, but also the continuous, necessarily reflexive nature of relational ethics, in particular where the research topic is especially sensitive or personal. Ellis et al. highlight the increased relevance of a well-functioning relational ethics approach in cases where the research persons are vulnerable in ways beyond solely the "fundamental power differential that exists between a researcher and a participant" (Ellis et al., 2007, p.469). Relatedly, exiting ethics is concerned with conscious attempts to mitigate "unjust or unintended consequences" (Tracy, 2010, p.847) that might arise from research and its publication. More recently, Kousholt and Juhl (2021) use the term situated ethics to refer to an approach that recognises the value of complying with what Tracy (2010) has called procedural ethics, but emphasises that this should not represent a researcher's sole engagement with the ethical aspects of their work. Their reasoning centres around the fact that such a narrow understanding of ethics can leave researchers ill equipped to manage the ethical dilemmas (Kousholt & Juhl, 2021) that inevitably emerge over the course of a research journey. Such dilemmas are described as "situations where researchers must deal with contradictory concerns where there is no unequivocal or obvious 'right answer'" that are invariably unforeseen, situated and idiosyncratic (Kousholt & Juhl, 2021, p561)

Situated ethics is understood here as an approach that pays attention to the four elements Tracy (2010) described, and which makes space for the acknowledgement of these unpredictable dilemmas and the uncertainty they entail for the researcher and the research trajectory. A key observation of a situated ethics approach is that an overreliance on static guidance (procedural ethics) predefines a researcher's action, whereas a situated ethics approach allows them to enact their ethical commitment through their actions in a particular situation. Treating ethical work in this way highlights that it is a dynamic process driven by active deliberation and decision making. Kousholt and Juhl's ideas may be usefully understood alongside a growing body of work published under the banner of Researching Multilingually (Holmes et al., 2015), described as:

the process and practice of using or accounting for the use of more than one language in the research process, e.g. from the initial design of the project, to engaging with different literatures, to developing the methodology and considering all possible ethical issues, to generating and analysing the data, to issues of representation and reflexivity when writing up and publishing"

(Holmes et al., 2021, p.88) Stelma et. al (2013) call this researcher intentionality, and note that:

...researching multilingually is ecologically shaped by researchers' reflections on their own and others' linguistic repertoires and associated experiential knowledge, as well as the parallel engagement with expectations in the research community. (Stelma et al., 2013, p.312)

Holmes et al. analysed case study profiles of researchers describing their own engagement with multilingualism in research, and from these developed a three-part framework for developing Researching Multilingually researcher competence: realisation, consideration, and informed and purposeful decision-making. The model describes the typical stages that a researcher may take in understanding Researching Multilingually as it applies to their own specific context. (Holmes et al., 2015) Briefly, realisation entails becoming aware of the possibilities for Researching Multilingually, and is usually triggered by a particular event, such as a conversation, a change of location, or a particular language related question emerging from data. Consideration is described as "...bearing in mind the reflexive and reflective, spatial, and relational aspects of the research – of the possibilities for, and the complexities of, Researching Multilingually practice in research activities" (Holmes et al., 2015, p.91) and leads to the final stage of the model, informed and purposeful decision-making. Researchers engaging with this stage of the process are mindful of the roles which multilingualism plays in their research, and purposeful in how they wish to navigate these roles during the research design, production of research texts, and in managing issues such as representation.

Further to this, I note and operationalise the similarities which can be observed between the Researching Multilingually framework and García, Ibarra Johnson and Seltzer's (García et al., 2017) stance, design, shift model for translanguaging pedagogy (as described in Section 4.3.2 above). Like the Researching Multilingually framework, stance, design and shift is a tri-level framework predicated on operationalising a point of view as a guiding factor in the design and operation of a setting.

While the researching multilingually concept is becoming more widespread, Nemouchi and Holmes (2022) note that descriptions of this type of researching multilingually reflective practice are often conspicuous by their absence in doctoral theses. By working with situated ethics, I necessarily address a key aspect of the methodological work of this thesis. By combining it with the Researching Multilingually framework, I am able to hone the ethical work and orient it more specifically towards my own practice as a researcher examining language as a factor of educators' accounts of their work. In adding in the stance, design and shift model from the overtly social-justice focused field of translanguaging pedagogy, I link the ethical approach to language that informs my own practice with the critical care pedagogical approach used to

analyse the empirical material, anchoring my analyses in my reflective practice as a research in order to ensure consistency of approach.

I have chosen to call this approach Multilingualism Centred Situated Ethics (MCSE), and visualise it in the form indicated in Figure 5, whose shape recalls the ‘map pin’ icon, indicating situatedness, the upper part of the pin portrays the three phases of the Researching Multilingually framework, and the attached triangular part portrays the way in which ‘informed and purposeful decision making’ can be extended to apply to the analyses of didactic decision making and curriculum making.

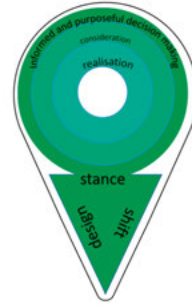


Figure 5 Multilingualism Centred Situated Ethics

As noted, the situated ethics approach entails a reflexive and iterative practice, and as such has been integral to the research process in the sense that it has contextualised, informed, and facilitated decision making at all stages, from study design to empirical research, analysis, and presentation of results. In Sections 5.3.1 – 5.3.3 below, I present selected, representative (but not exhaustive) examples of how the Multilingualism Centred Situated Ethics approach has informed and impacted this thesis. These examples are taken from notes made during the course of the research process.

5.3.1 Terminology and translation in the meeting of English and Swedish – orienting meaning, author, reader and languaging norms in a language-political question

Early on in the researching and writing process it became clear that writing within a Swedish context about a Swedish setting type, in English, could present challenges. Certain words, notably names of government authorities or agencies, societal phenomena, and typically ‘Swedish’ concepts, seemed to gain an unwieldiness, or lose their essence, in the translation to English. In considering how to resolve this issue, academic writing conventions felt at odds with the theoretical understanding of multilingualism underpinning the research. Style and referencing guide APA, for example, indicates italicising “First use of words, phrases, or abbreviations from another language when readers may not be familiar with them” adding that “if the term appears in a dictionary for the language in which you are writing, do not italicize it” (American Psychological Association, 2025). The Chicago Manual of Style takes a similar approach, but notes that if a ‘foreign word’ becomes familiar in a text due to repeated use, it need not be marked specially beyond the first usage (Chicago Manual of Style Online, 2024). Here, the Chicago approach comes closer to the theoretical understanding of multilingual practices that

underpins this research, namely spontaneous use of language from multiple different knowledge funds that language users draw from to select the most appropriate term for a given situation, without undue consideration to which named language the resource comes from. Taking inspiration and courage from the precedent set by the field of translanguaging, in which terms like *corriente*³³ and *cariño* are used unproblematically in English texts, I choose to use selected terms from Swedish when they seem to me as the author to be the best tool at my disposal, and clarify their meaning in a note at the beginning of the thesis. During the course of the writing process, I experienced many moments of conflict in this aim to marry academic writing conventions with ideologically motivated theoretical multilingual language use conventions; oftentimes, academic convention ‘won out’, but even where this was the case, I consider the MCSE and researching multilingually reflection I undertook while writing this thesis to have been important for my development as a researcher.

5.3.2 Procedural ethics in theory and practice

The research presented in this thesis has been carried out in accordance with the regulations of Uppsala University. As noted above in Section 5.2.1, ethical approval for the project was sought from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2021-01685). Approval was sought in March 2021, and received in April 2021, subject to the supplementary condition that information material for research participants be made available in the languages spoken at the open preschools. An earlier version of the research plan for this thesis contained an observation study of open preschool sessions. This formed a core part of the ethical approval application, as it would have entailed video recording participants, and there was, in theory, a chance that sensitive information may be given by persons being observed, even if it was not sought. Ethical approval was given provided all information material for participants was translated into their first languages. This presented what appeared initially to be a logistical problem – how could I ensure that all participants would have access to the material if neither I nor the educators in the open preschool knew in advance who would attend? In considering the problem, it quickly became clear that it was not only a logistical but also an ethical problem. The question of the languages could have been solved by, for example, asking participants to sign up in advance for a session, and providing translations in the languages of those signed up. Alternatively, by making a series of translations into major immigrant languages and meeting participants on their arrival at the session, asking them about their languages, then directing them to a particular activity depending upon whether translated material was available for them. Both these options were felt to jeopardise two of the core conditions for attendance

³³ current or flow

which the open preschool aimed to create, namely ‘come when you wish’ and ‘low threshold, secure environment’. The latter was particularly relevant, as it was widely held amongst relevant actors that some international families were both overwhelmed by and wary of bureaucracy and ‘forms to fill in’, as these were seen as reifications of an uneven power relationship with Swedish authorities. The open preschool aims to stand out among societal settings by not requiring registration and information gathering of this type, and this absence of bureaucracy is one of the characteristics of the open preschool that allows it to be a place of security.

A period of deliberation took place in which a solution was sought which would allow the observations to be carried out in a way that fulfilled the formal ethical requirements and the situated ethical considerations. A potential option was explored with an open preschool with a well-established and well-developed programme for international parents, whose main educator suggested that it might be possible to obtain the relevant consent with a staggered approach whereby I was introduced to the group and informed them about the research (including the consent forms) gradually, and with the support of audio-visual versions of the participant information. I had come to know this educator well enough to know that they had deeply relevant local knowledge and understanding of the local context (including the main languages among their staff and visitors), and I was able to feel sure that they would not suggest something that they deemed would risk the wellbeing of their visitors. A key part in the arrangement was that there would always be other staff to meet and greet visitors prior to them encountering me. Despite the measures put in place to mitigate potential risk to participants, even this staggered approach proved unworkable due to participants and participant numbers varying so widely that consistency of my introduction was not possible. Ultimately, a proactive decision was made to remove the observation study from the research plan. The reservations I had held had proven to be unsurmountable within the scope of this project, and to have pursued the observations in spite of the reservations felt ethically indefensible.

5.3.3 Transcribing and translating multilingually

An ethical dilemma arose during the course of the research when it came to translating extracts from one of the transcriptions. The educator whose language I was translating had a first language other than Swedish, but was using Swedish in its capacity as society’s shared language. Her role in the open preschool, as a bridgebuilder³⁴ requires her to use more than one language, and indeed, it is a prerequisite of the role that she is able to do so. In this sense, then, transcribing her interview presented no ethical problems; there was no reason for me to do it in a different way to any of the others, and I did not do

³⁴ brobyggare

so. Nonetheless, when it came to translating extracts of the interview, I became aware of the potential for discord between the ideological understanding of multilingualism espoused in my ethical approach, and the pervasive nature of deficit perspective discourses on minority and / or minoritised languages. Put simply, what had existed unproblematically as a situated use of, and then situated recounting of, Swedish by someone for whom it was not their first language, had become transformed in the translation process into a problematic version of the educator's words, decoupled from their Swedish context and from the valorising situation within which they were spoken. Instead, they seemed to have become coupled with a discourse built on the historically dominant and, as noted above, pervasive, deficit perspective view of English as used by speakers for whom it is not their first language. I attributed this problem to the way in which I had intentionally tried reproduce the 'errors' in the spoken Swedish when I produced the English translation. My reasoning for this was that the understanding of multilingualism in this thesis eschews a deficit perspective, and recognises the equal value of all uses of the language. It 'didn't matter' if it was 'bad Swedish' or 'bad English' because 'there is no such thing'. While this reasoning may have been ontologically feasible in the situated contexts of the educator's workplace and the interview situation, this feasibility was challenged when her words were recontextualised across named language and across medium into a formal academic text. In the new situated use, the educator's words were presented through the filter of English, resulting in a text nominally attributable to the her, but heavily influenced in its form by normative stylistic choices made by me in my researcher position and in the absence of any knowledge of the educator's own English language skills.

The ethical considerations pertaining to translation are widely discussed in academic literature. Bermann and Wood refer to this kind of dilemma as an ethical double bind inherent in acts of translation (Bermann & Wood, 2005), describing the 'impossibility of fully rendering another's voice or meaning, and yet the necessity of making the attempt' (Bermann & Wood, 2005, p.89). Temple and Young (2004) raise a different problem, namely the *lack* of any attempt made to authentically render minorised language users, in their discussion of how research and grey literature relating to minority ethnic communities within the British context routinely omits contextual information about informants' languaging practices, with results uncritically "presented as if interviewees were fluent English speakers or as if the language they used is irrelevant" (Temple & Young, 2004, p163). While one suspects that such attempts to 'neutralise' results when presenting them is sometimes borne out of either a misplaced benevolence, or perhaps out of a prioritising of content over form, the problem with such linguistic gaslighting is that it can be seen to perpetuate native speaker primacy norms, and invisibilise diversity within language use.

More recently, Kalocsányiova and Shatnawi (2022) highlight the particular complexities of this kind of double bind in transcribing multilingual voices, noting that transcripts (and, it would follow, translations thereof) “can (mis)attribute social and interactional roles to the speakers” (Kalocsányiova & Shatnawi, 2022, p.210) and pose the question “How do different transcription choices (e.g. adoption of standard spelling even when a person is using a non-standard/learner variety) affect our readers’ views of the text and of the people represented within it?” (Kalocsányiova & Shatnawi, 2022, p.210). It was this type of question I considered when deciding how to address the problem. This entailed discussion with more experienced colleagues within the field, and with my supervisors. It became apparent, for better or for worse, that there was no ‘solution’ or ‘right answer’, and that addressing the matter would be a process of mindful decision making in line with the scope and the overall ethical orientation of the thesis. In this specific case, the decision was made to make minor grammatical edits to the translated extract so that the educator’s level of Swedish, judged according to typical language assessment norms, was more adequately reflected in the English translation. In practice, this meant correcting some parts of the grammar in the English version. Despite my feeling that the edited version did constitute a more just representation of the educator’s language than the unedited one, the lingering dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of the solution is, I think, an important part of the overall ethical work of researching multilingually, and a small, but for me as a researcher, significant reminder of the social justice goals implicit in some multilingualism research.

6 Tracing the development trajectory of the open preschool as an educational setting type

In Chapters 6 and 7, I present the results of the text analyses outlined in Section 5.1 above. Together, the analyses presented in the two chapters address research areas one and two, repeated here for ease of reference:

- 1) **Didactic characteristics of the open preschool in the period 1972 - 2024**
 - a) How has the educational purpose of the open preschool been described in texts ‘for and about’ the setting since 1972?
 - b) What educational activities, learners, and intended learning content have been described for the setting during the same period?
- 2) **Didactic characteristics of activities for immigrant families in the open preschool since 1972**
 - a) What educational activities for immigrant families in the open preschool have been described in texts ‘for and about’ the setting since 1972?
 - b) How are immigrant families-as-learners described in these texts, and what intended learning content is identified as relevant for them?

The Discourse Trace Analysis results primarily address Research Questions 1a and 1b. The results are given here in Chapter Six.

The Curriculum Making Activity analysis results primarily address Research Questions 2a and 2b. The results are given below in Chapter Seven.

6.1 Discourse Trace Analysis – results of data management and initial reading analyses

The data collection and delimitation phase gave 77 texts for and about the open preschool, from the period 1972 – 2024, in which the open preschool is referred to primarily within the context of education. In order to create

knowledge about the nature of the texts, the data management stage of analysis entailed inductive analysis based on repeated reading. This resulted in the organisation of the texts into categories showing the *source* of material.

Source	Definition
Government (legislative)	Texts directly related to state level legislation, for example preparatory reports such as SOUs, or acts of parliament / laws.
Government (agency)	Texts published by government agencies such as the Swedish National Agency for Education or the National Board of Health and Welfare.
Government (political)	Texts produced by government actors without direct responsibility for legislation or overseeing enactment of legislation. SKR is the most pertinent of example of this category.
Academic	Texts from the domain of academia, including academic research, textbooks, and other types of research report, for example selected masters level theses.
Practitioner	Texts produced by practising or former educators in open preschools. Texts were included under this category even if the publication was ordered and / or financed by a government actor, as long as the primary voices were those of the practitioners and / or visitors to the open preschool.
Other (public domain)	Texts of a different type that are, or could unproblematically be made, available to members of the public, (e.g. texts from municipalities, organisations).
Other (private domain)	Texts of a different type that come from private individuals or concerns / commercial actors as a result of personal contact including purchase.

Table 13 Sources of empirical text material

A further sorting into sub-categories showing the *type* of material was also made. 14 text *types* were used to organise the material – these were based upon a synthesis of the categories suggested in Garraghan and Appel (1946), McDowell (2013), and Tosh (2015). Only seven of the 14 text types turned out to be represented in the material, and just two text types accounted for 66 of the 77 texts. Table 14 below shows the number of texts in the seven types represented, and the names of the remaining seven categories are given in the footnote below.³⁵

³⁵ Diaries / journals; Fiction / literature / screenplay; Graphical sources; Monuments, artefacts; Oral evidence; Private letters and effects; Religion related material

Source Type	Government (legislative) Govt Leg	Government (agency) Govt Agen	Government (political) Govt Pol	Academic Acad	Practitioner Pract	Other (public domain) Oth Pub	Other (private domain) Oth Priv
Academic /educational materials AcEd	0	0	0	11	1	1	0
Biographical material Bio	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Internal documents Int	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Newspapers / magazines News	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Photographs / Film / Audio Phot	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Publications from private institutions Comm	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Publications from public institutions Publ	18	16	9	0	8	2	0

Table 14 Overview of empirical material by source and type

Full details of the 77 texts, including year of publication, title, author, source and type are given in Appendix A.

6.2 Discourse Trace Analysis – main analytical results

The analytical results presented here are based upon answers to the guiding questions outlined in Section 5.1.2 ‘in conversation with’ the results of the data management and initial readings, and focus on the educational activities that have been described for the open preschool, and on the ways in which these have been organised in and for the setting.

The analytical work yielding these results took the form of further close deep reading, and reflexive note taking in order to ‘operationalise the chronological ordering’ and construct an account of the development trajectory of the open preschool. This resulted in seven discursive practices, or instances of discursive reorganisation, of relevance to the development trajectory of the open preschool being identified. These are:

A	Initiation and actioning – the open preschool as a nascent setting (1972 – 1973)
B	Development and dissemination – the open preschool as an emerging setting (1975 – 1981)
C	Synthesising and establishment – the open preschool as an established setting (1975 – 1983)
D	Comment, evaluation and reevaluation – the open preschool as a dynamic and developing setting (1982 – 2000)
E	Tension in framing of the relationship between open preschool and preschool – the open preschool as a setting with a disputed position (1989 – 1999)
F	Repositioning and realignment – the open preschool as simultaneously moribund and nascent (1998 – 2015)
G	The open preschool as a co-opted setting? Repurposing and a glimpse into the future (2012 – 2023)

Table 15 Overview of discursive practices (A – G)

Each Discursive Practice (A-G) is delimited by the *sites of the discursive re-organisation* (source areas and texts where the discursive practices are identified) and the *period of time* during which these texts were published. This information is presented in two ways in Table 16 and Figure 6 below.

Table 16 shows the date span of each discursive practice and the number of texts from each source whose contents gave rise to the identification of the discursive practice.

Discursive Practice	Date span	Government (Legislative)	Government (Agency)	Government (Political)	Academic	Practitioner	Other (Public Domain)	Other (Private Domain)	Total
A	1972 – 1973	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
B	1975 – 1981	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3
C	1975 – 1983	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	8
D	1982 – 2000	1	3	0	3	5	2	0	14
E	1989 – 1999	3	3	0	4	2	1	0	13
F	1998 – 2015	2	2	0	2	3	1	0	10
G	2012 – 2023	1	1	10	0	1	3	1	17

Table 16 Date span and text sources for discursive practices A-G

Figure 6 illustrates information from Table 16, in the form of a timeline in which the relative time span of each discursive practice, and the relative proportion of texts from each source are visually foregrounded.

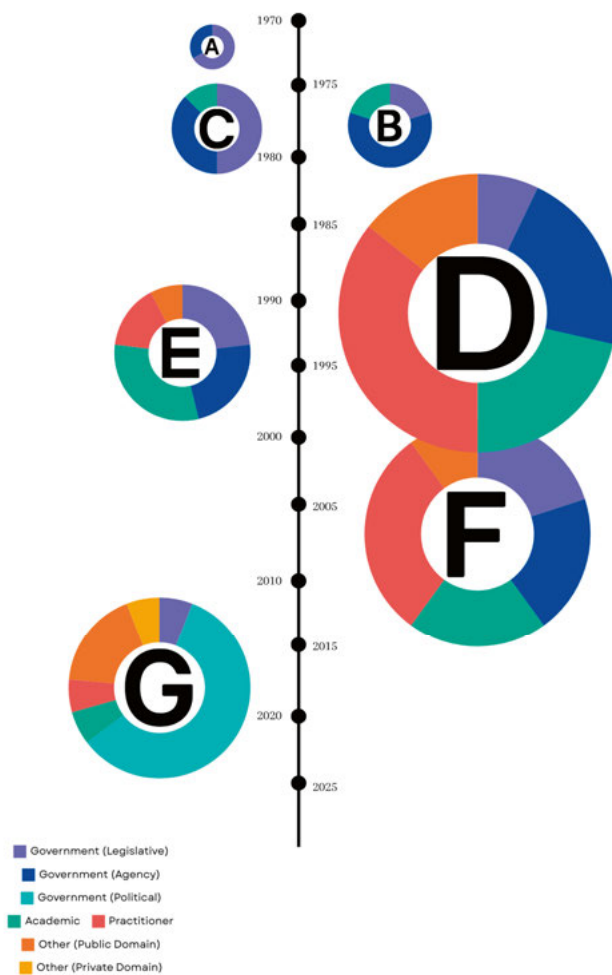


Figure 6 Timeline of discursive practices A-G, including relative proportion of texts from each source

Full details of the texts constituting each of the discursive practices are given in Table 19 in Appendix B. Narrative accounts of each discursive practice are given here in Sections 6.3 – 6.9. These constitute a comprehensive historical account of the open preschool’s development as an educational setting since its inception in 1972. In the narrative accounts, emphasis is placed on highlighting the *primary* or *main* ways the discursive reorganisation is constructed in the texts, meaning that some texts are accounted for in both the narrative accounts and the full results tables, while others appear in the results tables only.

6.3 Discursive practice A: initiation and actioning – the open preschool as a nascent setting (1972 – 1973)

Play advice is recommended in the Commission on Nursery Provision as provision for children without a place in preschool. Pilot projects are organised.

6.3.1 Commission on Nursery Provision's report and recommendations

As noted in Chapter 1, the Commission on Nursery Provision laid the groundwork for the development of Sweden's comprehensive and distinct preschool system, and proposed provision for children without a place in preschool. This proposed provision, play advice, was made in the first of the Commission on Nursery Provision's two major reports on preschool, *SOU 1972:26 Preschool (report pt. 1)* and was related to a broader goal of the Commission on Nursery Provision, namely proactive preventative outreach work³⁶ (SOU 1972:26: 27). This aimed at identifying children without a place in preschool, and / or those whose situations were judged to make them especially likely to benefit from preschool, and encouraging their parents to engage with the pedagogical and family support activities of and relating to the preschool system. The main aim of this was that the child be able to avail of the pedagogical benefits of preschool, but also to familiarise the family with the services available to them. Part of the proactive preventative outreach work entailed addressing the question of preschool enrolment at each child's four-year-old medical checkup, and part of it entailed the development and advertisement, in easily accessible forms, of activities with this outreach focus and purpose. Physically disabled children, children from geographically isolated rural areas, and immigrant families were identified as being, potentially, in particular need of this type of intervention provision (SOU 1972:27).

6.3.2 The first pilot projects

The empirical material shows that a number of local actors in different parts of Sweden began to oversee the coordination of and support in the running of projects designed to meet the outreach goals named in the Commission on Nursery Provision's report. The first pilot project to be extensively documented began in 1972 in Brandbergen, Haninge, a newly built residential area to the south of Sweden's capital city Stockholm. The so-called 'open play-school' was held in a still-empty preschool building, and development of the project was meticulously recounted in a social services report *Report on the play advice pilot 'open playschool' in Brandbergen, Haninge municipality*

³⁶ *uppsökande verksamhet*

(Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973) put together by preschool teacher Marianne Möller.

The goal expressed for the pilot was to “give parents the possibility to discuss play and play material in relation to their child’s development with an experienced and knowledgeable preschool teacher” (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973, p.1), and to provide at low cost play advice with a content which “is experienced as meaningful by both children and parents, (and which) gives the parents increased knowledge about children’s development, play and play materials” (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973, p.1). A balance ought to be struck between activities for children, and those for adults (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973). The report outlines how the Swedish Co-operative Union’s³⁷ Play Circle model was used in setting up what is believed to be the first pilot project set up in response to the Commission on Nursery Provision’s play advice proposal, sourcing materials directly from the Co-operative Union and arranging the premises accordingly to accommodate the five different elements of the Play Circle (*experience, move, create, make-pretend* and *organise*)³⁸ (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973, p.2-3). In this way, the report provides a clear statement of the educational aims of the developing setting, and of the reasoning behind the organisation of the setting.

In the evaluative parts of the report, Möller describes the kinds of questions that had been asked by parents, and it is clear that this pilot project was closely aligned with the play advice purpose, but that it had also functioned as a forum for more generalised parent support (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973). Möller records many questions relating to the toys and other educational material (concerning cost, availability, instructions, possibilities for and practicalities of use within the home environment, safety, etc.), but notes that parents had questions on other aspects of parenting also. Sibling jealousy, feeding, and teething were among the topics parents asked about, as well as practical questions regarding for example applying to preschool. The pilot project in Brandbergen would go on to be taken over by the municipality following the pilot project, ensuring its continuation.

6.3.3 Discursive reorganisation

This era is of interest, and is noteworthy, in terms of discursive practices relating to the open preschool, as it is possible to identify activities and relationships in and between government legislative and government agency sources that began to pen the ‘unwritten rules’ guiding the form, function and organisation of what would become the open preschool. While these activities can now be discussed in terms of the open preschool itself, they related at the time of their publication to the notional setting ‘play advice’.

³⁷ Kooperativa Förbundet

³⁸ *uppleva, röra sig, skapa, låtsas, and ordna*

The proposal in the Commission on Nursery Provision constitutes a statement about the nature of provision that ought to be made, with some added detail on how it *might* be made, and who in particular would benefit from it. Unsaid, however, is *precisely* how the provision should be made, and the pilot project model equipped local actors with agency to interpret the brief in diverse ways depending on the nature and needs of their local contexts.

Viewed in terms of Foucault's difference between what one *could* say and what is actually said, the lack of regulatory guidance regarding implementing the hedges inherent in the play advice proposal allowed for a certain flexibility in terms of discursive negotiations of 'what can be said' about it. Given the rapidly changing and locally specific arenas for possible implementation (an effect of the state of flux within which Swedish society found itself), this flexibility can be understood as a factor in the development of settings tailored to local contexts and needs. Documents such as the Report on the play advice pilot project 'open playschool' in Brandbergen, Haninge municipality (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973) indicate that while the didactic 'what' and 'why' for play advice had been prescribed at national level, local actors' agency based upon their local knowledge was operationalised with regards to *how* the play advice proposal would be enacted in practice.

Despite this, the detailed and comprehensive nature of the Brandenberg report positions it as a kind of template which other settings might feasibly attempt to emanate, adapt or otherwise align themselves to. The features of the text, notably the great attention to detail about precisely *how* they interpreted the brief, make it an important discursive practice in the early development of the open preschool. The adoption of the Swedish Co-operative Union's Play Circle resources can be judged to have been an important factor in realising the play advice purpose in a way which centred the active participation of the child in educational activities.

6.4 Discursive practice B: development and dissemination – the open preschool as an emerging setting (1975 – 1981)

Pilot projects are enacted and reported upon. As reports emerge, they are disseminated among relevant actors.

6.4.1 Pilots continue. Information about pilots is collated and disseminated

Parallel to and following the Brandbergen project, proactive preventative outreach pilots were carried out in nine municipalities across Sweden. A 1976 factsheet, published by the National Board of Health and Welfare and entitled *Factsheet Nr2/76: Open preschool*, (Socialstyrelsen, 1976) describes the pilot project in Brandbergen (mentioned above in Section 6.3.2), and gives detail of several other pilot projects, including several in Huddinge, and others in Västerås, Ljusdal, and Skellefteå. In addition, the factsheet refers to several others which are known to the social services, and it is noted that there are likely additional municipalities who have started or plan to start open preschools.

Of note is that this factsheet uses the name open preschool as an umbrella term when disseminating its collated knowledge on the developing setting. The factsheet again takes up the question of the purpose of this new institution type, summarising it as, broadly speaking, “to give parents and childminders the opportunity to discuss play and play materials in relation to their child’s development” (Socialstyrelsen, 1976, p.3) . The factsheet further notes that the different open preschools had nonetheless identified additional purposes relevant to their particular settings. Feedback is presented from the pilots which describes the emergence of parental agency as a characteristic of the open preschool as an institution type, with educators taking on, at times, a facilitator role when parents expressed an interest in seeing the open preschool develop in a certain way and taking ownership over some of the activities of the newly started groups. This ‘personalising’ of each open preschool’s activities to its particular context would become characteristic for the open preschool.

6.4.2 Open preschools develop in relation to their geographic and demographic contexts.

One example of the way in which accounts of the early open preschools highlighted this tailored approach comes in the form of Salamanders open preschool which opened in 1975 in the Skogas area of Huddinge, and was documented in a National Board of Health and Welfare report from 1978 entitled

Open preschool for Immigrant Children (Grevelius, 1978). Completed at the end of the 1960s, newly built Skogas had a population of 9000 by the mid-1970s. Around (11%) of the population were immigrants, with around half coming from Finnish families, and the majority of the rest from Turkey and the then Yugoslavia. Grevelius' report on Salamanders outlines how a local child health doctor had noted that many of the immigrant women she met at her practice in Skogas were isolated, and suggested that an open preschool for immigrant families may combat this isolation (Grevelius, 1978).

The report describes how the widely experienced turbulence of migration to new residential areas can be exacerbated for immigrant families, who as well as becoming accustomed to new forms for everyday life, must do so in a society where they do not yet have mastery of the majority language. Salamanders' primary goals, were not, however, focused on learning the Swedish language – on the contrary, integration, and the preservation of language and culture from the countries of origin were lifted in the report as priorities, with the preschool teacher in charge described as trying to “stay in the background when the children are there, so as to avoid too much Swedish being spoken” (Grevelius, 1978, p.6). A further example of open preschool where immigrant families are in focus is mentioned in the aforementioned factsheet (Socialstyrelsen, 1976) the Swedish-Finnish bilingual play advice / open preschool situated in an empty residential flat in the centre of Vallby, Västerås. with other outreach initiatives occurring in the neighbouring flat.

SOU 1975:30 Children (report pt. 1) Children's Living Environments (SOU 1975:30), showcases pilot projects in Huddinge municipality as part of the chapter on care for preschool aged children, reporting on their popularity and repeating the purpose from the Commission on Nursery Provision's report, namely to give parents and childminders possibilities to discuss play and play materials (SOU 1975:30, p.240). The text details the way in which the play advice purpose has developed alongside a 'greatly needed' contact centre function, and describes how families who met at open preschool continued to socialise outside of the setting, and babysit for one another, for example. This development was not immediate, nor necessarily easy, but the text identifies the success of a 'low demand' and empowering approach, that would become characteristic of the open preschool's way of working:

In some places, coffee has been served in order to encourage conversation between the adults who found it hard to discuss with one another initially. Some parents have become very engaged in entertaining the children, and have taken the initiative to taking care of the group of children themselves...The Social Services' pilot open preschool project in Huddinge has proved itself to be very successful in engaging local residents. Not much initiative or imagination is required from the parents themselves when they are first introduced to the setting. One can simply go there and sit and watch, which has been the most common approach for most newcomers. The leaders have always been prepared however, to hand over responsibility [for the group] when parents and

childminders have wanted to take care of the group themselves, after a period of more passive participation. The combination of a low demand approach in the beginning, and openness for participants' initiative taking are likely the factors which give people the will and confidence to take part, and to give of their time and share their experiences. (SOU 1975:30, pp.240-1)

While the aforementioned examples of Brandbergen, Vallby and Skogas and Huddinge served the needs of fledgling urban communities, homing both international migrants, and migrants from the Swedish countryside, the 1979 National Board of Health and Welfare report *Open Preschool: A meeting place for rural areas too* (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979) lifted the importance of the opportunities for contact which open preschool afforded to families in sparsely populated areas. The report detailed the ten open preschools which had been opened in Gällivare municipality since 1976, describing how geographic location (in Sweden's far north) impacted both the needs of families in an area, and, resultedly, the way in which open preschool and proactive preventative outreach pilots developed (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979). While the isolation in the urban areas pervaded despite density of population, *geographical* isolation lay behind the loneliness and lack of support the report indicated was experienced by families in Sweden's rural northern communities (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979).

Outreach pilots had been trialled in Gällivare as early as 1973, driven by a proactive council and close cooperation with the National Board of Health and Welfare at national level. During these projects, conversation with parents revealed that the municipality's children lacked playgrounds, playmates and opportunities for educational activities in group settings. Low numbers of children, infrastructural challenges (some villages could not be reached by road, for example) and language barriers further hindered opportunities for children and their mothers to create contacts (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979). Social Director (Sw. *socialchef*) Dan Johansson was quick to realise the opportunities which the pilot projects proposed in the Commission on Nursery Provision's report offered, reflecting in the report on how improvisation and creative problem solving were a necessary part of planning for provision of social services in such a large, rural area (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979). Political support (of a kind which stands out in the material as being especially proactive and well-informed) appears also to have been an important success factor.

For children, the report highlighted how the chance to socialise with peers had emboldened them, and was good preparation for school (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979). For parents, the main benefits of the open preschool included the break it offered from daily routines, the chance to build meaningful contact networks, and the affordances it gave for them to draw on their individual strengths and contribute to the settings with activities and skills.

Two vignettes from the report describe some of the special challenges which 1970s rural life 100km above the Arctic Circle posed for both parents

and staff attending the open preschool, and may be interpreted as indicating the extent of the value the open preschool held for some members of the community. One mother to two toddlers travelled with the local school bus in order to get to open preschool, leaving before 8:00, bringing food to cook for lunch, staying at open preschool until it closed, and then waiting until 14:30 for the school bus back to her village. “They might think I’m not interested in coming if I’m only here occasionally”, she is reported as explaining. (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979, p.8). Preschool teacher Ellen Silverplatz, responsible for three open preschools, described her experiences of getting to work:

I mean, yes, of course they’re long journeys for me, and there’s often been snowstorms, herds of reindeer, temperatures as low as -30, and torrents of meltwater on the roads... But the warmth and kindness and appreciation I have received from the parents and children outweighs all that. I feel like this service is really needed, and every day feels meaningful. (Oldinger & Lundgren, 1979, p.8)

Despite this overwhelmingly positive report on early open preschools in the far north, Danielson and Östling (1981) in their book, *Proactive preventative outreach work for families with young children: a new way of working for social care*, describe emerging tensions between open preschool seen as an educational institution, and seen as part of the social services. They note that the relationship between preschool teachers and social workers in some of the pilot projects was strained, with colleagues somewhat skeptical of one another and of what each profession could contribute to the setting. Further to this, however, Danielson and Östling note that such tensions were usually able to be resolved through dialogue, and that they lessened over time.

6.4.3 Discursive reorganisation

The main discursive practice of note during this second period of discursive reorganisation is the use of the name open preschool in dissemination of information about the pilot projects. Material published for and about open preschool at this time comes primarily still from government (in particularly government agency) sources, and the act of giving a collective name to the pilot projects served to position the open preschool as a setting type within the true (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014) (Foucault, 1972/2002).

In this way, the discursive practice is established as a rule (in the Foucauldian meaning) concerning how to refer to settings. This constitutes a change in the sense that it delimits what is within the true about a particular type of practice (the enacting of the pilot projects in practice). Of interest, however, is the discrepancy between the collective naming practices and the naming practices ‘on the ground’. Locally produced texts, and references in compilation texts about the individual settings show that variation existed in how the pilot projects were referred to (for example Ljusdal and Skellefteå’s

lekrådgivning (play advice) in *Factsheet Nr. 2 / 76 Open Preschool* (Socialstyrelsen, 1976) and Brandbergen's *öppen leksskola* (open playschool) (see also Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973) but their prevalence as a result of the spread of the pilot projects, and crucially, the diversity in the enactment of the project 'brief', necessitated an umbrella term.

Öppen förskola, then, can be understood as a term increasingly observable in the texts during the period to refer to settings developed under specific circumstances, and *doing similar* things for the *same* purpose. At this stage, the term is not yet being used to refer to an established setting type.

A further discursive practice, the recontextualisation of the name in different text types, would be required in order for the name to be what might be regarded as 'fully established' and able to be used as a definite compound noun form - 'the open-preschool'. This kind of usage, by contrast, would see the noun phrase used to describe the open preschool as a distinct setting type.³⁹

6.5 Discursive practice C: synthesising and establishment – the open preschool as an established setting (1975 – 1983)

Accounts of the pilot projects are synthesised and an umbrella term is established for the setting type that is seen to be emerging.

6.5.1 Established pilot projects are synthesised and reported on

In 1977, the National Board of Health and Welfare published an overview report on the development of open preschools in Sweden, entitled simply *Report on Open Preschool* (Nuder, 1977). Authored by preschool teacher Margareta Nuder as part of an internship with the Board, the report notes that by 1977, there were 45 open preschools in Sweden, with a further eight municipalities planning to introduce them in the year which followed. Nuder summarises the general purposes of the open preschool as being:

...to offer children and adults an open setting where they can get to know one another and get information about the municipality's social services and facilities...(and) to cater to both children and adults' need for contact, information, and advice on various matters, and to stimulate (engagement in) a variety of activities (Nuder 1977, p.3).

Nuder's account went on to be recontextualised as an offprint⁴⁰ published by the National Board of Health and Welfare in 1979 (Socialstyrelsen, 1979), in

³⁹ Compare for example pre-school and preschool

⁴⁰ *Särtryck*

which her report appeared as part of an account of national municipal child-care from 1977 - 1981. In this way, that which had been brought within the true about the open preschool as a setting type - the state of play, so to speak - of the open preschool was given a new form and new gravitas, by being presented for a broader audience and by being placed in relation to that which was within the true for other settings within the education system.

By the end of the 1970s then, the open preschool had been established both as a realised institution with a distinct *modus operandi*, and as a discursive object, although its core repertoire continued to develop, expand and be subject to adjustment into the mid-1980s. Establishment of the name open preschool, effectively replacing play advice, nominally foregrounded the child pedagogical aspect of the setting, and aligned it discursively with preschool, but activities for adults remained present both in policy and practice. Indeed, the potential of the open preschool as a more formalised arena for adult learning in the form of parent education is posited during this ‘negotiation’ phase, when the open preschool was explicitly linked in government legislative texts to the establishment of a national parent education programme. This is expounded here in Section 6.5.2 below.

6.5.2 The open preschool is viewed as well established and potential is identified for a broadening of purpose

The possibility for open preschool to be an actor within parent education was first mentioned in *SOU 1975:87 Collaboration in childcare (1): Report from the Working Group for Society's Childcare* (SOU 1975:87) and then in two further SOUs, *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* (SOU 1978:05) and *SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education* (SOU 1980:27). These texts were instrumental in linking the open preschool with parental education by highlighting areas of overlap in the two initiatives’ intended content area and practice and initiating a potential dovetailing and collaboration. SOU 1978:05, in its discussion of post-natal parent education make particular note of the open preschool, observing that they are found in an increasing number of municipalities and calling them a setting type “worth paying attention to” (SOU 1978:05, p.107). Further to this, the report’s authors recommend that the open preschool be expeditiously supported in expanding and developing. SOU 1980:27 sets out overreaching concrete goals for parent education, noting that it is a contributory part of the wider work of society to create good conditions for families and that:

the overreaching aims of democracy, equality, solidarity and security should therefore also be the guiding principles when it comes to parent education (SOU 1980:27, p.64)

Parent education would enable adults to take responsibility for giving children a good environment to grow up in, give all parents support in their parenting role and influence over their own and their children's situations, and prepare children and young people for adult life and parenthood (SOU 1980:27). This was to be achieved through parent education centring around three key concepts: increased knowledge, opportunities for contact and fellowship, and opportunities to influence society and the open preschool was to be one of several settings for parent education. This expression of the goals of parent education would go on to have relevance for what was made within the true for the adult-facing purpose of the open preschool, and this is described in more detail in Section 7.4 below. Further to setting out the goals of parent education, the two SOUs explicitly reason about the form, function, content of, and epistemological standpoint underpinning parent education, and how this might manifest within the context of the open preschool. A large number of those consulted in the preparation of the report expressed the view that:

...parent education is an unfortunate term, which conjures up images of conventional instruction with curriculum, syllabus, teachers, pupils, textbooks and the like." (SOU 1980:27, p.13)

Further to this, where terms such as *curriculum*, *syllabus*, *teachers*, *pupils*, *textbooks*, are mentioned, these are collocated with negatively loaded terms such as *unfortunate*, *scare away*, *(does not) entice*, (SOU 1980:27, p.13) effectively expressing an ideological approach to education which parental education is deliberately discursively positioned in opposition to, and which would come to be enacted in practice. Both reports noted that the term parent education carried with it a risk that it would be "interpreted as a societal ambition to want to train parents to 'raise their children right'." (SOU 1980:27, p.13). In *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* this issue is mentioned in particular with reference to immigrant families noting that:

Parent education must not be formed in such a way that it could be perceived as a way to get immigrant parents to raise their children in a Swedish way. This would be in conflict with the principle of freedom of choice. (SOU 1978:05, p.107)

A 1979 report entitled *Parent Education in Open Preschool: a special support in childcare* (Svensson, 1979), written by Gunilla Svensson from the University of Gothenburg's Institution for Practical Pedagogy, aimed at assessing the feasibility of parent education in the open preschool as a kind of special support within childcare. Like the abovementioned SOUs, Svensson's report highlighted that parent education is not a case of traditional 'teaching', and that it should be understood against the background of other family-oriented social services support (Svensson, 1979, p.13).

6.5.3 A bump in the road? Statement of position about open preschool's form and function

In 1982, Swedish teachers' union Swedish Union of Specialist Teachers (Sfl)⁴¹ published an adapted version of a material from their conference the previous year. The text, *Swedish Union of Specialist Teachers on Open Preschool*, (Sfl, 1982) clearly and unequivocally stated the union's opposition to any further development of the open preschool. Their objection was grounded in the firm belief that a place in the regular preschool should be available for all children at the end of their parents' parental leave, and that the open preschool should only be considered a temporary solution until full availability of places were reached (1982). Further to this, Sfl were explicitly critical of the government's proposal to use state funding to fund open preschools, opposing it on the grounds that it would "water down" the value of the regular preschool (Sfl, 1982, p.4) and on the grounds that they considered the content and activities of the open preschool to be more closely aligned with the social services than the education system. While the publication of Sfl's opinion is evidently far from positive in terms of its message, it is important as it evidences the by then well-established characteristics of the open preschool as a distinct entity by invoking them in their criticism, something which can be understood as the development of a counter-discourse about open preschools.

6.5.4 The first book

Margareta Nuder's report of five years prior, and its recontextualisation in the form of the offprint indicate that the productive and innovative part of the play advice pilot phase had yielded a result in the form of settings with sufficiently well-established, common practices as to have warranted the naming and description of a new setting type, bedding for the further development of the open preschool.

In 1983, just over a decade after the first pilot projects began, the first book on the open preschool was published, written by practitioner within the field Margareta Gustafsson and entitled simply *Open Preschool* (Gustafsson, 1983). In contrast to Nuder's text, in its various incarnations, Gustafsson's book is arguably more descriptive than prescriptive⁴². In it, Gustafsson describes the goals of the open preschool as contact, fellowship and stimulation (p.11), and describes in brief the early history of the setting and its development from play advice to open preschool, noting that this change arose from the wishes of parents to counteract the isolation they experienced and to access support in their parenting, and from open preschool staff subsequently

⁴¹ (Svenska facklärarförbundet)

⁴² although it would go on to gain a de facto prescriptive function due to its relative isolation as a general book on the setting

organising their settings to accommodate these wishes and afford agency to parents (p.10)

Further to this, Gustafsson describes the way in which the open preschool's first decade has seen it shift and develop from a proposal for a compensatory child-educational setting for children (especially vulnerable ones) without a place in the regular preschool, to one where the adult facing purpose is much enhanced. She writes:

The name open preschool indicates that it is the children and their needs and relationships which are central to the setting, and that it entails essential pedagogical elements. But the participation of the child's carers makes other 'starting points' possible. The *modus operandi* and content [of the open preschool] are steered by parents' and children's dependence and influence upon one another, and by the interaction between them. Increased knowledge and experiences garnered in the ten years during which open preschool has existed have led to initiatives aimed at parents becoming more pronounced in the setting. Given that there are large numbers of small children in the open preschools, it is natural that the work is aimed at stimulating and engaging the parents, and strengthening them in their parent roll. Knowledge about how closely children's upbringing and development conditions relate to parents' situations has led to the open preschool striving to be a support for both children and adults. (Gustafsson, 1982, p.12)

An important feature of Gustafsson's book is that it recounts the zeitgeist of the period, in particular regarding the development of the preschool system (which, at the time of her writing, was not on schedule to meet demand within the timeframe for its expansion). A particularly pertinent issue raised was the concerns held by some that investing in the open preschool would be to the detriment of the regular preschool by diverting financing from the regular preschool, and hindering women from taking up paid work, acknowledging the emergence of a counter-discourse about the open preschool. Gustafsson noted that this concern had not in fact come to pass, and if anything, the opposite was true:

Women working within the home have often gained increased self confidence from having attended open preschool. They've taken the step of seeking employment, and required preschool places as a result. Furthermore, experience shows that some visitors, perhaps mostly immigrant parents, have been given a different perspective on collective forms of childcare and children's needs as a result of the increased awareness of the matters that they have received by participating in open preschool. In this way, the setting becomes an introduction to other forms of childcare. (Gustafsson, 1982, p.15)

6.5.5 Discursive reorganisation

The establishment of the name open preschool as an umbrella term had opened up possibilities for the activities in the settings to be positioned as characteristics,

or indeed, characteristic of the setting type. This in turn allowed for the accounts of the activities to be collated, described, compared, commented etc as units of ‘the same thing’. In this way, the name served as a ‘mechanism of refinement’ (Bacchi & Bonham, 2014) which transitioned its use from an umbrella term for settings doing similar things (see above), to a particular setting *type*, and facilitated the recontextualisation of the name by actors at different sites.

This recontextualisation took the form of reproduction of text about the open preschool in publications with increasingly authoritative authorship (and arguably increasingly formal register); parts of the *Factsheet* (Socialstyrelsen, 1976) were reproduced in Nuder’s (1977) report, which was subsequently reproduced as part of a government agency report, and cited in legislative texts. Further to this, establishment of the open preschool as ‘something that could be known’, that is to say, as part of a discursive practice, allowed it to become an object of academic research, and the subject of a book in its own right. These texts can be understood as a reification of the discursive practices that resulted in the open preschool being brought into the true, thus opening for it to be further treated in this way, and effectively minimising the possibility for the developing setting type to be referred to in a different way at anything beyond local sites, without there being implications for the way in which it aligned itself with the open preschool. Gustafsson’s (1982) rejoinder to the emerging criticism of the open preschool, coupled with the significance her book garnered through being the first and only one of its kind, can be understood as delimiting what could be brought within the true for the open preschool, especially in terms of its ‘truth’ in relation to the regular preschool.

6.6 Discursive practice D: comment, evaluation and reevaluation – the open preschool as a dynamic and developing setting (1982 – 2000)

Open preschools proliferate and are reflected upon by a variety of types of actor.

6.6.1 Academic research

Margareta Gustafsson saw value in the idea that the open preschool ought become an object of academic research, and approached sociologist Lars-Erik Berg, at the University of Gothenburg's Department of Sociology. Together with then doctoral student Lotten Zetterström (herself a contact of Gustafsson, and already engaged in the field of open preschool through her work with open preschool at Gothenburg's Ethnographic Museum), Berg carried out and reported on a two-year long research period centered around five open preschools in Gothenburg, where they interviewed visitors and observed the activities (Berg & Zetterström, 1988). Prior to this, Berg and Zetterström had interviewed over staff from over 20 open preschools (Berg & Zetterström, 1985).

In the introduction to their book, *Open Preschool – informative meetings*, (Berg & Zetterström, 1989), in which their research results (Berg & Zetterström, 1985, 1988) were reworked into a student literature text, Berg and Zetterström describe the open preschool as being aimed at both adults and children, and describe one of the educator's tasks as to "take into account and facilitate initiatives that come from the children and adults, and stimulate activities which benefit the children, and create programmes in which the visitors can take part" (Berg & Zetterström, 1989, p.9).

6.6.2 Reflective practice and a new professional role

A 1985 short publication about an open preschool in the Södermalm area of Stockholm, *The book about the Open Preschool on Södermalm*, (Fritidsdistriktet Södermalm & Katarina-Sofia Socialdistrikt, 1985) lifted the way in which the open preschool had been established and developed in coordination with an existing setting, the staffed park-based playscheme⁴³ in Björns trädgård park. This was thought to be the first collaboration of this kind in Stockholm, and was notable in that the playscheme was under the remit of the municipality's youth recreation department⁴⁴ and the open preschool under the remit of childcare (at that time still a part of the social services) (1985). This cross-department collaboration, as well as close collaboration with

⁴³ parklek

⁴⁴ fritidsdistrikt

parents, was described as a success factor for, and characteristic of the setting, and viewed as serving the children's best interest. The text lifts details of the open preschool's educational work citing reflective practice as a key feature, as well as the practice of working "through adults for the children" (Fritidsdistriktet Södermalm & Katarina-Sofia Socialdistrikt, 1985, p.21).

A further example of reflective practice is *Like ripples on the water* (Johansson & Östberg, 1985), an extensive report authored by two open preschool employees of a culturally diverse area of Stockholm. Their open preschool was piloted in 1979 and had developed into a well functioning setting, largely thanks to a core group of visitors who attended regularly, many of whom spoke Swedish. With time, this core group began to move away from the area and immigrant families began to constitute the majority of the area's new residents. While they brought with them myriad first languages, many had yet to acquire functional Swedish, and authors Francesca Östberg and Susanne Johansson realised that the methods and practices they had established no longer met the needs of their new demographic (Johansson & Östberg, 1985). Feeling that they were faced with a choice of resigning their roles or changing their way of working, Östberg and Johansson chose the latter, and systematically researched the context of their setting⁴⁵, identifying the nature of the problems they experienced in their work with the immigrant families, carrying out a comprehensive survey of the linguistic, material and social needs of their community, and using the new knowledge to develop new ways of organising their setting in order to meet those needs (Johansson & Östberg, 1985). As well as making a significant contribution to literature about the earliest open preschools, and about the potential of this new institution as an arena for language and integration, Östberg and Johansson's work reinforces the developing discursive 'rules' of the open preschool, by highlighting the value of one its key characteristics, namely its capacity to adapt to the needs of the community it exists in and for.

Three years later, the report was reworked for wider publication, with the key insights appearing in a publication Östberg and Johansson co-authored with author and educator Gunilla Ladberg entitled *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* (Ladberg et al., 1988). The book, a short publication released by publishers Förskolans förlag as part of a series disseminating collegial good practice, describes in word and images the way in which a number of open preschools (including Östberg and Johansson's) in areas with high numbers of immigrant families organise their work. Across its four chapters, the book lifts a number of recurring challenges for educators in the open preschool, in particular those who are used to working in the regular preschool. In doing so, they draw attention to much of what is characteristic for the setting type.

⁴⁵ (Funded thanks to a grant from Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden⁴⁵ and the then Swedish Immigration Board)

Firstly, the shifting and unpredictable make-up of the group attending is highlighted as a key difference impacting the educators' way of working as is the nature of planning for the structure of sessions. In the particular open preschool mentioned, one aimed at refugee families, the sessions are much less structured than in other settings⁴⁶. The reason given for this is based around the needs of the visitors, and the need to tailor the activities to the needs which manifest *in the here and now*.

The greatest need is almost just to be able to meet and talk to one another. And to get some humanity. Someone who cares, and who listens. Because they are bearing so much inside. They feel isolated here in Sweden, isolated from the society, and it's hard with the language. They come to us because they feel that we understand them. (Ladberg et al., 1988, p.6)

Thirdly, and connected to this example is the nature of an open preschool educator's work with the children in their setting, and the fact that they take a much less active role in organising activities than in the regular preschool. This is explained as follows:

We rarely do activities directly with the children. They play with one another – that's something they have a great need of. They're living in cramped conditions at home, they don't have any toys or any playmates there. In a year's time maybe there will be other needs – other things will come up in time. (Ladberg et al., 1988, p.6)

Later in the publication, however, a description is given of the way in which pedagogical activities are deployed in the open preschool in Botkyrka in order to meet the need for proactive preventative outreach work for specific demographics (Ladberg et al., 1988) For example, carpentry and painting groups were organised for Latin American, Turkish and Kurdish children, led by staff with the same linguistic backgrounds, thanks to a collaboration with the Invandrarbyrå. As well as this, mother tongue teachers were employed by the open preschool to work individually with the different language groups as part of its pedagogical strategy.

The book's final chapter looks at the experience of working in an open preschool, and at the skills and characteristics staff themselves identify as being advantageous in the work. It is noted that common to all preschools is the need to listen, be flexible, and responsive to visitors' needs, but that no open preschool is like another (Ladberg et al., 1988). A Swedish preschool teacher previously employed in a regular setting is quoted as saying:

⁴⁶ (and much of the work can be characterised by that which now would be described as family centre type work)

You have to forget your work in nursery, and understand that this is a completely different setting. You shouldn't forget your professional role, but forget how you worked in nursery and create a whole new role. (Ladberg et al., 1988, p.28)

As a text intended to be read by others within the field, Immigrant families in the Open Preschool serves to foreground – to bring into the true – a number of core characteristic features of the educator's role in the open preschool, and how it can be carried out. This is achieved both through explicit comment, and implicitly through the descriptions of how educators work with *children*, as this gives further information about the role of the parents in relation to the staff and in relation to their children.

By the late 1980s, the open preschool as a setting type was well established (between 1980 and 1986 the number grew from 290 to 1016, rising to over 1500 by the end of the decade) (Skolverket, 2006), and becoming increasingly well established in terms of its form, function and way of working. Texts from the time increasingly indicate, however, that general understanding of the skillset needed to work in open preschool, and of the setting's organisation was still developing. For example, as early as 1981, *SOU 1981:25 Quality nurseries for small children* (SOU 1981:25) noted that certain parts of the preschool system, including open preschool, would benefit from a greater degree of self governance and independence (SOU 1981:25). A new role or job description was developing in practice in open preschools, and there was call from some parties for a degree of clarification and consistency in what the open preschool ought to be, and how it ought to be run. For example, an empirical study entitled *Open Preschool* (Lignell, 1987), by Kajsa Lignell an employee in an open preschool and student of pedagogical leadership at Högskolan Dalarna, proposed shared goals for open preschool in Falun municipality. These were motivated by Lignell's experience that there lacked advice and guidance at a national level on open preschools.

By contrast, others felt that prescriptive steering of the open preschool would be detrimental and that the open preschool's value lay in its unique position between the domestic and the institutional. Lars-Erik Berg (see Section 6.6.1) penned an 1987 article in *Förskolan* magazine entitled *Don't put a straitjacket on Open Preschool* (Berg, 1987) In the article, Berg describes the government's goal of providing a preschool place for all children as 'projectification' of childhood based on a home-institution duality which increasingly favoured childhood within the latter rather over the former. The open preschool, by contrast, lacked an institutional character, and was a place where one could 'just be', describing any efforts to alter this as akin to straitjacketing of the open preschool.

1987 saw the publication of the *Pedagogical programme for preschool* (Socialstyrelsen, 1987), a framework for the preschool's content produced the National Board of Health and Welfare at the request of the government following the 1985 decision to make preschool available to all children from 18

months by 1991. In effect a curriculum in the common meaning of the term, the *Pedagogical programme* is of interest in that it specifically notes that the open preschool is not covered by it in the same way as the preschool is, but that in regards the aims and orientation of the setting, the program should be seen as advisory for the open preschool (Socialstyrelsen, 1987). This ‘not binding but advisory’ relationship would go on to be echoed in The Swedish National Agency for Education’s first formal curriculum for preschool, and the accompanying document *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* (Skolverket, 2000).

6.6.3 Positioning phase one – conversations in the field

The emerging discussion about the organisation of the open preschool was furthered by British sociologist Brian Ashley, who came to Sweden in 1982 on a British government scholarship to study the welfare state (Socialstyrelsen, 1995). Ashley would come to be a highly driven and influential figure within the world of the open preschool, vocal about conviction that it had evolved into a distinct setting type that ought to be treated as such (Socialstyrelsen, 1995). This was, Ashley would claim, necessary in order for the open preschool to fulfil what he saw as its primary function, namely to serve as an integrated local service resource with pedagogical and social service features for families with young children.

Between 1984 and 1988 Ashley led a development project in five municipalities to the north east of Stockholm “to explore and examine how the open preschools might best develop their work and methods of their own” (Ashley, 1988, p.21) Funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs⁴⁷, the project was run in conjunction with the municipalities’ 18 open preschools and play-scheme settings, and described in the report *The Open Preschool* as a centre for families with children in the local area (Ashley, 1988). The motivation for the project was the perception among employees that the setting type had developed without a specific policy, and that staff felt uncertainty about their roles that they felt went unaddressed by leadership, who did not wish to steer or structure the settings too much.

6.6.4 Discursive reorganisation

I describe the discursive practices characterising this era as ‘comment, evaluation and reevaluation’. The empirical material comes from an increasingly wide variety of sources, and shows that the OP is by this point well established (and undergoing a further period of expansion due to it becoming eligible for government subsidies), indicated by accounts of a period characterised by a high degree of predictable and uniform practice viewed from a macro or national

⁴⁷ *Socialdepartementet*

perspective as a setting type. Texts from this period detail types of content addressed in open preschool's educational activities, and detail emerges on the way in which learning activities manifest in different OP settings, including peer support with parenting, informal parent support and focused small group contexts. In describing this stability in what is within the true for the open preschool, I identify a kind of sustaining of a status quo that has an equivalent impact on the trajectory as would a change. Indeed, the relative lack of legislative texts during this time also points to a period of stability for the OP as a practising institution, and this stability may have been relevant for the setting's growth during the period from 290 OPs to 1626 in the period 1980-1990 alone (Skolverket, 2006, p.56). Even the SfL text, with its expressly 'destabilising' purpose, can be understood as an indicator of the stability of the setting type, showing that it is perceived as sufficiently well developed to pose a threat to the discursive practices of relevance to the regular preschool.

Despite the relative stability of the setting type understood as a whole, an interesting example of reflexive practice during this period is indicated by the discursive practices in *Like ripples on the water* (Johansson & Östberg, 1985). Here, a tension is evident between how the open preschool is understood 'from within' and 'from without', and this tension is given as a factor in the solutions available for resolving a problem. This indicates a discrepancy between what was within the truth about open preschools for different actors with different roles in relation to the setting, and this absence of 'unwritten rules' or 'shared history' led to limits being placed on the educators' agency to act. It can be argued that an aspect in the agency Östberg and Johansson were able to enact was a willingness to disregard what they perceived as incongruous discourses about open preschool and prioritise their own, situated, discourse as dominant.

Further to this, an incongruity between discourses of relevance to open preschool is also lifted in Lars-Erik Berg's (1987) opinion piece in which he invokes stark imagery, that of a strait jacket, in his plea for dominant, or dominating, discourses about childhood to be distanced from discourses about the open preschool. His invocation of the strait jacket, a clear symbol of the ultimate removal of agency from a person, can be understood as an expression of just how discordant the two discourses were in his view, or how incompatible the discourses would be if understood as rules for the open preschool. This feared imposition of a powerful discourse into what is within the truth of the open preschool, may in turn be explained as the absence of a shared history.

Of note here is the fact that the 'threat' to the open preschool is not positioned as coming from within the discursive practices of the open preschool itself, rather it can be understood as existing in the potential convergence of discursive practices relating to another setting type, the regular preschool, understood as operating at a number of different sites, including the macro, political arena. This tension would become of particular relevance in the next era of discursive practices.

6.7 Discursive practice E: tension in framing of the relationship between open preschool and preschool – the open preschool as a setting with a disputed position (1989 – 1999)

Developments in the trajectory of the regular preschool highlight related questions in relation to the open preschool.

6.7.1 Positioning phase two – the conversation branches out

The period between the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed both the ‘high point’ of the open preschool as an institution type (with the Swedish National Agency for Education recording a total of 1644 open preschools operating in 1991) (Skolverket 2006), and the beginning of its numerical decline. As the 1991 deadline approached for the full provision of municipal preschool for all children from the age of 18 months, preschool was once again the subject of national discussion and decision making. Against this background, figures active within the open preschool, notably Brian Ashley and Jill Westermarck, actively positioned the open preschool as a distinct setting type, to be viewed and treated independently of the regular preschool (Socialstyrelsen, 1995). Their work, however, would ultimately be challenged by the historical relationship between the two settings, and the discursive proximity of the two.

To wit, *SOU 1990:80 Preschool for all children 1991 - how will it turn out?* (SOU 1990:80) reviewed the likelihood of municipal preschool provision for all children over 18 months by the deadline of 1991. This date referred not only to the provision of a preschool or childminder place for all children whose parents work or study, but also to the provision of an *open* preschool place or place in part-time daycare for children attending childminders, or who were looked after in their own home. Here the early years educational nature of the open preschool is highlighted in that it is positioned as a pedagogical activity available to children attending ‘non-pedagogical’ childcare. As municipalities reported that they were unlikely to fully meet full coverage target, the report recommended that *open preschool* be made compulsory for municipalities to provide for children under four who did not have a childcare place from the autumn term of 1994. (SOU 1990:80)

In 1992, a project report was published for the National Board of Health and Welfare’s Children and Family Unit as part of an evaluation project in Västerbotten and Norbotten counties. The report, *Preschool for all – the scope and content of the Open Preschool* (Wollbrand, 1992), came a year after the government’s deadline for municipalities to provide open preschool where necessary to compensate for a lack of preschool places. Its purpose was to “acquire a deepened knowledge of the open preschool’s scale, direction and possibilities for development” in the counties in question (Wollbrand, 1992,

p.4). While the report pays relatively little attention to the activities of the open preschool (despite its title), it gives a valuable insight into how the setting was understood at municipal and county level, positioning it clearly and closely as part of the childcare system, and calling it “our youngest form of childcare” and “an important building block in a joined-up childcare model” (Wollbrand, 1992, p.3).

In the early 1990s, the open preschool attracted further significant attention from Brian Ashley, who had spent two years as a freelancer leading training and seminars for staff, managers and politicians around Sweden, and who published his second book on the subject, *Open Preschool – a profitable investment*, at the turn of the decade (Ashley, 1990). Ashley described the book as “the result of (his) accumulated experiences and an attempt to help the Swedish childcare sector realise the enormous resources that exist among parents and in the community itself” (Ashley, 1990, pp.5 – 6). Highlighting his conviction that the open preschool has a large role to play in proactive preventative work for families, Ashley expresses his wish that the book will give open preschool staff the impetus to, with the support of decision makers, develop the open preschool into a genuine, independent player in the system. Together with preschool teacher Margareta Sandhagen, Ashley was founding editor and editor in chief of a dedicated magazine, *Open Preschool*, published between 1996-1998 (Öppna förskolan, 1996). The magazine combined news, training opportunities, good practice examples, discussion articles, and other content relevant to the present and future situation of the open preschool. The magazine opened up the possibility of people communicating with each other - ‘Letters to the editor’ were frequently featured, as were adverts for training courses and conferences of relevance to open preschool educators. In 1997 a new network for staff in open preschools was announced in the magazine (2-3/97) boosted by the new possibilities offered by burgeoning availability of digital communication, and taking the form of an online discussion board where members could, according to the announcement, advertise events, exchange experiences, support isolated colleagues, and discuss with colleagues from other municipalities (Öppna förskolan, 2-3/97) .

6.7.2 Staffing in the open preschool – preparing staff for a new professional role

The increasingly prevalent view, particularly from within the field, of the open preschool as a social service was accompanied by increasingly formalised discussion about the role of the educator in the open preschool. Earlier texts had touched on the question, and it was taken up in earnest in the early and mid-1990s, by lecturer Jill Westermark at the Teacher Training College in Stockholm. Westermark ran two 10-point courses entitled *Working in the Open Preschool* for trainee preschool teachers or those with a different academic

background but who had been working for at least two years in open preschools⁴⁸. These addressed the challenge previously expressed by educators in open preschools of adapting their previously child facing role to work with both children and adults together.

Less formally, Ashley and Sandhagen organised and led a number of comprehensive training courses (personal communications) for open preschool staff, offered in locations around Sweden during the period 1989 and 1998, including several on a cruise ferry, and one which offered half price admission to anyone who brought a local politician with them! In the mid 1990s, two national conferences on open preschool were held. One, in early summer was held by the National Board of Health and Welfare in collaboration with then equivalent of The Public Health Agency of Sweden⁴⁹, with the aim of “stimulating further development of the open preschool as both a pedagogical and a proactive preventative setting” (Socialstyrelsen, 1995). The aim of hosting the conference collaboratively was to give a broad illustration of the open preschool’s importance for children and their parents (p.2). Social worker Margareta Gustafsson, preschool teacher Jill Westermark and sociologist Brian Ashley all spoke at the conference, and were selected to record their various points of view about the open preschool then and in the future in a conference publication entitled *Open Preschool Three perspectives* (Socialstyrelsen, 1995).

In terms of political developments, in 1997, *SOU 1997:157 To conquer the world around - proposal for a curriculum for preschool: final report (pt.1 and pt.2)* (SOU 1997:157) proposed details of an upcoming curriculum for preschool. The report also considered a number of organisatory and legislative changes impacting the relationship of preschool to other settings for preschool aged children, to school itself, and to the Swedish education system as a whole. Open preschool would no longer be understood as a formal equivalent alternative to preschool and as such should not be seen as education in its legal sense, nor should it be bound by the incoming curriculum (SOU 1997:157). Instead, as noted above, the curriculum would remain advisory for the open preschool, and the Swedish National Agency for Education were tasked with developing *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* (SOU 1997:157).

Despite discussion about the form, function and place of the open preschool in the increasingly preschool saturated early years field taking a somewhat reserved and sceptical turn, and despite the drop-in numbers that occurred from the second half of the 1990s, reports continued to be published describing the activities and benefits of open preschool. In 1996, public health officials published a report entitled *Open Preschool in Husby and Rinkeby* (Nilsson, 1996) which, like Östberg and Johansson’s 1985 report (see Section

⁴⁸ (Supplementary details provided by Westermark: personal correspondence)

⁴⁹ *Folkhälsoinstitutet (numera en del av Folkhälsomyndigheten)*

6.6.2), focused on open preschools in suburban areas of Stockholm that were home to a high proportion of immigrant families. A text published by The Swedish Arts Council⁵⁰ from 1996, entitled *The Good Example: childcare and children's culture in a shrinking economy* (Statens kulturråd, 1996) detailed a number of good practice examples in the areas of childcare and children's cultural services, including the work of the open preschool in Karlskoga (Wilhelmsson, 1996) where an open preschool is described as having 'moved in' to the local library, with children offered drop-in activities like music and movement, art workshops and storytelling sessions (Wilhelmsson, 1996). A slight difference in the organisation of library setting from that of the regular open preschool is that children took part in the actual activities *without* their parents. This is motivated by an uncharacteristically stark (compared to the rest of the data set) socialisation purpose for the children, described as the figurative 'weaning' of the child from their mother, framed as a positive feature of the open settings, giving children opportunity to get used to being away from their parents at a slow and natural pace, in a setting where they have the reassurance of their parents (who must remain on the premises, and who tended to socialise together in the open preschool's 'base' room) being nearby. In this same publication, Lars-Erik Berg published a chapter entitled *Open Preschool and play – a beautiful set of twins* (Berg, 1996), in which he built on his earlier article cautioning against the straitjacketing of the setting, describing the educational processes in open preschools as:

... often of a spontaneous character, even if they have been planned by the staff. Children's learning in the open preschool elude clear-cut description. But it exists, and constitutes effective invisible pedagogy which is in stark contrast to most other school pedagogy. (Berg, 1996, p.41)

He concludes by describing the open preschool as a setting where 'the blessings of play may bear fruit unusually easily' adding that:

It is the automatic richness in variety of people, objects and events which underpin this nurturing atmosphere, as well as the all-important freedom, that nothing is expected of you beyond you participating in some way, regardless of how. Whimsy and spontaneity can bloom without anyone making a big deal of it. (Berg, 1996, p. 53)

6.7.3 Discursive reorganisation

If the trajectory of the open preschool's first fifty years was a literary narrative, then this fifth era would be the peak of the Fichtean curve. Having begun as an alternative to preschool at a time when the availability of places was still limited, the open preschool grew alongside the regular preschool, quickly

⁵⁰ Statens kulturråd

taking on a character that far exceeded the bounds of the initial proposal. Those within the open preschool were acutely aware that when the promise of preschool for all was fulfilled, their *raison d'être* could be called into question, and that the shift of education from the National Board of Health and Welfare to the Swedish National Agency for Education would likely have implications for the organisation of the open preschool. The era is characterised by various actions that talk to the distinctness of the open preschool from the regular preschool, and the diversity of actions is reflected in the diversity of text sources. Actors within the field can be understood as operationalising the divergence they perceive in form and function between the preschool and the open preschool in order to try and occasion changes to how the latter is organised on a national level. Resources such as the conferences, professional development courses, *Open Preschool* magazine, and the open preschool educators' network are employed in the service of raising the profile of the open preschool, which can be understood as having the aim of detaching the open preschool from the increasingly education-oriented preschool, by changing what is within the true about the open preschool, and, importantly, about the educator's professional role in the open preschool. In terms of discursive practice, the hosting of these conferences can be likened to the publication of the first report, first book, and first academic research on open preschools, in the sense that it is treated as an object of a particular kind of practice. By positioning the open preschool as the content focus of a national conference organised by a government authority, the act of treating it as such, that is to say treating it as a focal point around which people will gather to discuss, debate, and opine on becomes part of what is in the true about the open preschool. Likewise, publication of the *Open Preschool* magazine (which ran to 11 editions between 1996 and 1998) constituted a further medium through which the open preschool could be communicated. Produced by and addressed to a practitioner readership, the format, the only of its type in the data set, allowed practitioners to take the floor in the discourses for and about open preschools in a way that institutionally authored discourses did not, and constituted a platform through which adult educational activities as a part of the open preschool's overall activity were made visible. As noted, Brian Ashley was an extraordinarily active figure in this work, and as a retired sociologist he was almost uniquely resourced, through his extensive relevant career experience and his connections with key figures in field of education in Sweden, to pursue his interest in the open preschool and drive his ideas with such passionate conviction. Other influential actors from within the open preschool contributed to the ongoing public conversation about the setting's future post 1998, and while these dovetailed with Ashley's dream of a separate setting in some respects – Lars-Erik Berg, for example, lifted many aspects of the open preschool that he felt ought be retained in order to distinguish it from preschool's education project. Jill Westermarck's university courses to train educators to work in the open preschool can be interpreted as a strategic move to secure continuity of

practice going forward, in the event that open preschool would join the regular preschool under the Swedish National Agency for Education. The diverse understandings of the educational practices of the open preschool emerging from practitioner, state and academic actors in this period can be understood as the culmination of a discursive tug of war in relation to the core form and function of the open preschool and its activities, that would be seen to play out with great relevance to curriculum making in the years that would follow. On the one hand, comments such as those of Lars-Erik Berg (Berg, 1996) advocated for the value of the open preschool as a place of learning in its own right, whose value derived from its difference to other types of educational setting. On the other hand, state level actors operationalised the differences in order to justify *not* describing the open preschool as an educational setting (SOU 1997:157). That it was a setting where learning could take place, however, appeared not to be in question, indicating that restrictive or narrow frameworks for defining ‘education’ were discursively dominant.

6.8 Discursive practice F: repositioning and realignment – the open preschool as simultaneously moribund and renascent (1998 – 2015)

Preschool education is moved from the jurisdiction of the National Board of Health and Welfare to that of the Swedish National Agency for Education, impacting the officially expressed relationship of the open preschool and the regular preschool, as well as the status and function of both.

6.8.1 Positioning phase three - top down voices

In 1998, the regular preschool gained the status of a formal part of the education system, and as such gained its first curriculum plan, *Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98* (Skolverket, 1998) This change came about in connection with the move of early years’ provision (including the open preschool) from the remit of the Ministry of Health and Social affairs to the Ministry of Education. As noted above, discussion had taken place regarding what would happen with open preschool once the regular preschool became an independent school form under the jurisdiction of the Swedish National Agency for Education, with its own curriculum, and that *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* would be published. Despite this not insignificant shift in overall leadership of the open preschool, conversations about its role, purpose, function and organisation did not abate, and despite its earlier announcement in connection with the publication of the preschool’s curriculum, *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* would not be published until 2000.

This delay did not go unnoticed among practitioners. Preschool teacher Inger Lundström, for example, raises it in her Swedish National Agency for Education financed book *Open Preschool: a cooking pot to gather around* (Lundström, 1998, p.17). Lundström's book gives comprehensive information about the setting type in the form of a historical overview, reference to other literature, and extensive explanations about the forms and functions of the setting type, as well as tips for how the setting may be planned, resourced, organised and advertised, and questions for the reader to reflect on. The book is based on Lundström's own experiences of working for many years in regular and open preschools. It's timing, coinciding with the wider changes in the organisation of early years education, allows it to function as a kind of retrospective account of the practices of the open preschool 'then', and its comprehensive content allowed it to effectively served as an ersatz steering document available to educators awaiting the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* that would advise on the 'from now on'.

In this sense, its curricular function is of particular interest. Notable in Lundström's text is the focus she places on the professional role of the preschool teacher employed in open preschool, noting that it required time and reflection to transition into the new role, describing it as a diffuse role that had needed to "grow forth" at its own pace. (Lundström, 1998, pp.50-51) Lundström summarises the differences in the two roles in the form of a comparison showing the changes she had to make in her role. Having previously been 'fröken' ('Miss') to the children in preschool, Lundström became a supporter and facilitator for adults in open preschool. Likewise, the chatterbox communicating with children in the regular preschool gave way to a responsive, attentive listener for adults in the open setting (Lundström, 1998). The working day in preschool, Lundström describes, is typically planned and structured, whereas in the open preschool, a more flexible approach to planning is called for. Where in the preschool, educators must be active and lead structured activities, in the open preschool, their role is to be on hand to facilitate participation in activities proposed by the group. Lundström's uses the eponymous 'cooking pot' metaphor to describe the open preschool as setting. On the role of the staff she writes that they

"hold the wooden spoon and stir every now and again, making sure the casserole doesn't burn or stop simmering. They are responsible for making sure there's enough wood for the fire, and for gathering all the different ingredients in the form of questions queries, ideas and suggestions from visitors and staff" (Lundström, 1998, p.28)

As well as highlighting the didactic 'how' of the open preschool educator within their setting, Lundström describes fruitful experiences of open preschool collaborating with other agencies for example working with a child welfare officer and describing in detail the practice of collocating open

preschools in family centres. Lundström's mention of the family centre is however noteworthy in the sense that it positions family centres as *one* of a variety of organisatory contexts for the open preschool, and not necessarily a dominant one. It was, however, one that was gaining in visibility, and in 1999, social worker Vibeke Bing published *Carrots and Dandelions: on conditions for growing up and proactive preventative social service* (Bing, 1999) a report in book form on the so-called 'Gothenburg Model'. Developed during the 1970s, the Gothenburg Model is described as "a proactive preventative way of working developed in Gothenburg that is based on collaboration between the social services and maternity and child healthcare services" (Bing, 1999, p.9) Its original aim was to "improve conditions for children and parents" (Bing, 1999, p.9) and had, according to Bing, solid political support and clear leadership from both Gothenburg's healthcare agencies and the social services department. The open preschool is named often in the book as an important aspect of the preventative work, with the potential impact of such work on children's and families' living conditions and life chances highlighted. Despite the success of the Gothenburg Model and the importance of the open preschool as part of the work, Bing, like Lundström, hints at the relative lack of attention which the open preschool receives and the resulting lack of awareness of the setting type:

Open preschool is a part of the social services' childcare. For 20 years it has lived a silent existence... Within the fields of preschool teacher training and municipal childcare it is a character who has never quite been part of the family. It has aroused little interest among politicians. Locally, however, one can see that the open preschool and the child health centre have found one another in their daily activities. And in children and parents, the open preschool has loyal supporters. (Bing, 1999, p.64)

The relevance of the open preschool educator's facilitator role, and of various collaborations with other relevant societal actors were further lifted in two texts from the 2000s. The first, *The Seagull* (Kalmar kommun, 2008), gives a detailed account of open preschool Måsen in Kalmar, and the characteristic Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach it uses whereby all visitors, whether adult or child, are described as being given the freedom to make use of the setting in their own way⁵¹ :

We have a democratic fundamental idea which is that families with different backgrounds can meet in enjoyable ways. The setting places a lot of focus on a positive mindset and on parents' active involvement. The visit [to Måsen] is what you yourself want it to be. Our starting point is on open meetings, free

⁵¹ Within the empirical material, only one other example of an open preschool using a particular pedagogical approach has been identified, namely Jämtli open preschool, located in an open air museum (hembygsgård) and run with history-oriented museum pedagogical approach, as detailed in Lundström's book.

from demand. The meetings between parents, the creative work, and the togetherness with the children are all as important as each other. (Kalmar kommun, 2008, p.13)

On collaboration, both with other actors and with the regular preschool, the text notes that:

We meet children and parents under different conditions than in preschool. Parents don't leave their children, rather the setting is built around shared experiences and meetings. Måsen organises its pedagogical activities intentionally to have a focus on the meetings between people and material. Here, people with different competences meet, and that creates possibilities for development and communication. Here, meetings occur that lead into preschool's world" (p.11)

In journalist and librarian Lena Molin's book, *Baby at the Library: inspiration book for libraries and open preschools* (Molin, 2010), Molin details the emerging trend for literacy, book, and cultural activities for babies, and gives practical tips and inspiration for librarians and educators in open preschools wishing to introduce these kinds of activities into their settings. Describing open preschools as being potential trailblazers in stimulating a love of reading amongst the very youngest children, Molin outlines the educator's work in leading such sessions benefits the children, but is also aimed at enthusing parents, and modelling for them how they can replicate the good practice at home.

In 2006, the Swedish National Agency for Education released a report entitled *Open Preschool's development – a study of the period 1980 – 2005* (Skolverket, 2006) that had been commissioned by the government against the background of the wide scale closures of the past decade. Between 1994 and 2004, the number of open preschools in Sweden had dropped from around 1350 to fewer than 500 and one of the aims of the report was to account for the reasons behind such comprehensive closures – for example, whether they could be attributed to a declining target group, or whether the causes were primarily financial. Further to this, the report considered questions about the open preschool's form, function, organisation and leadership, as well as about the potential future trajectory of the setting (Skolverket, 2006, p.6).

Catharina Frank's master's thesis, *On a Journey of Discovery in the Open Preschool: an institution which raises questions* (Frank, 2007), constitutes the only comprehensive thesis accounting for the open preschool in almost 20 years, and as such provided an updated historical overview of the setting. Coming on the heels of the Swedish National Agency for Education's analysis of the setting's decline (Skolverket, 2006), Frank's thesis is representative of the transition discourses of this era.

6.8.2 Reorientation of open preschool in response to changes in preschool

SOU 2013:41 Preschool guarantee: report (SOU 2013:41), mentions the open preschool in the context of a report into municipalities' capacity to fulfil the legal requirement for them to offer preschool places within four months to any family that needs one. While the proportion of children waiting too long for a preschool place was calculated to be only around 2%, the report highlighted the negative impacts on children of missed education and on parents who, having run out of paid parental leave, are left financially vulnerable, and at risk of losing their employment (SOU 2013:41). The report highlights not only the ideological relationship between preschool attendance and parents' gainful employment, but the way in which the two had become effectively dependent on a functioning synergy. As regards the open preschool, the document is informative, and important for this analysis, in that outlines the its relationship to the regular preschool. The report notes that the definition and legal status of the preschool have changed over time, and with it those of related settings. The first updated legal definition of pre-school settings since the Commission on Nursery Provision had come about with the 1975 law in which the umbrella term *preschool setting*⁵² was used to refer to preschool, childminders, and other complementary settings, of which the open preschool was one. Following the shift of preschool from the National Board of Health and Welfare to the Swedish National Agency for Education, and the publication of the first curriculum for preschool, two terms for preschool, (*daghem* and *deltidsgruppen*) were discontinued as legal terms in favour of the combined term preschool (SOU 2013:41, p.85). *Preschool setting* remained in use following the introduction of Lpf 98 as a term to describe preschool, childminders and 'complementary preschool settings', namely open preschool (SOU 2013:41, p.85) but was itself phased out with the introduction of the new Education Act in 2010. Instead, a distinction was made between preschool and 'other pedagogical activity'⁵³, consisting of pedagogical care⁵⁴ (formerly childminders), open preschool, and night preschool⁵⁵ (SOU 2013:41, p.86). It is especially noteworthy that the report emphasises that, unlike preschool, these are not official forms of schooling and that they do not form part of the formal education system (SOU 2013:41 p.92).

6.8.3 Discursive reorganisation

If the fourth era of discursive reorganisation had been broadly characterised by stability (which may be understood as congruity of discursive practices by

⁵² *förskoleverksamhet*

⁵³ *annan pedagogisk verksamhet*

⁵⁴ *pedagogisk omsorg*

⁵⁵ *omsorg under tid då förskola inte ejrbjuds*

diverse actors), and the fifth by the emergence of tension, then this sixth reorganisation is characterised by the resulting instability and change. As noted above, this era would be characterised by tensions occurring when changes in what could be within the true for the regular preschool impacted with discursive practices about the open preschool.

The tension can be understood as having been expressed in two ways, firstly in relation to the regular preschool itself, and secondly in relation to the established discourses about the open preschool. These two are related, as many of the actors involved in positioning the open preschool in relation to its 'soon to be statutory' cousin were the same ones who were lobbying for a shift in direction for the open preschool seen as a stand alone setting. Like in the example of *Like ripples on the water* above, a lack of knowledge about the open preschool as a setting type can be seen to have hampered constructive discussion about the way in which it would be treated in the transition of the regular preschool from the National Board of Health and Welfare to the Swedish National Agency for Education, but unlike in that example, it can be argued that the power imbalances in the competing discourses were too great for the internal-dominant discourses about the open preschool to remain within the true in their own right, and the external-dominant discourses about the open preschool, which persisted in positioning it in relation to the regular preschool, were able to retain this discursive alignment. An interesting point to note in relation to this in the way that the open preschool is described in the new document relates to the concept of 'othering'. The name of the category open preschool falls under is literally 'other pedagogical setting', and can be seen as clear discursive positioning of the setting in relation to the preschool.

6.9 Discursive practice G: the open preschool as a co-opted setting? Repurposing and a glimpse into the future (2012 – 2023)

The open preschool is identified as a possible arena for initiatives aimed at expediting language learning and workplace entry of foreign born mothers.

6.9.1 Longstanding staff share their reflections

An interesting item of empirical material was published in 2012, by open preschool teacher Solveig G. Hägglund (2012). on the occasion of her retirement after working at Elefantens open preschool for almost 20 years. The book, *Open Preschool 'The Elephant'*, presents Hägglund's personal view of open preschool, and can be seen as an important contribution to the field given that she had been practising in open preschools during the period when the number of settings reached its 'high point', and during which it subsequently began to

fall noticeably. This perspective, and the reflective tone of the book, lead to some useful insights into the development of open preschools. Hägglund writes, for example:

Previously the setting was aimed more at the older children, and quite often the staff took over too much from the parents – read stories for the children and played with them while the parents socialised and looked after younger siblings. Now we don't manage to do that, even though we have puzzles, arts and crafts, and games that can occupy the small number of older children. Staff concentrate instead on reaching the children through the parents. (Hägglund, 2012, p.10)

Hägglund continues this theme by calling the open preschool “just as much a school for parents as for children” and that a better name would be “parent-preschool” (Hägglund, 2012, p.9) as it is more like “family care” than child-care, with staff reaching children by effecting the parents. She gives a concrete example of this which mirrors closely the earliest expressions of play advice, with two chapters entitled “Pedagogical play with parents” (Hägglund, 2012, p.63) and “Good pedagogical toys” (Hägglund, 2012, p.77) taking up the idea that children’s learning and development benefit when parents learn strategies for pedagogical play, and stating :

Activities and toys at open preschool should inspire and facilitate parents’ pedagogical play with their children. First and foremost, play equipment which maybe not everyone knows about or have at home because they are bulky or expensive. We as educators are tasked with showing what, and how, one can [use these materials], make toys and materials available, and get parents and children started in their play and interaction. Many of them can already do this themselves, but it’s always good to show new ways of doing things. We serve as a starter motor. (Hägglund, 2012, p.63)

Here it is possible to see the recurring questions of who open preschool is *for*, and which organisatory organ is most suitable for the setting. On this point, Hägglund points out that open preschool in the area she worked in was for the first time no longer organised under preschool, rather under “consultation and support”, which she described as giving them more freedom to organise the setting (Hägglund, 2012, p.34). That she has a chapter in her book called “The open preschool is not a preschool” (Hägglund, 2012, p.9) can be understood as saying something of note about the different ways in which the setting is understood.

6.9.2 Framing the open preschool's role in an age of increasingly school-preparatory preschool

The introduction of the new Curriculum for Preschool, Lpfö 18 (Skolverket, 2018b), introduced, for the first time, the term *teaching*⁵⁶ to describe the pedagogical work of the preschool. This entailed a significant shift from previous approaches, and can be understood as reflecting the increasingly school preparatory function of preschool, which was further enhanced when *förskoleklass*⁵⁷ became obligatory in the academic year 2018-2019. The new developments entailed the withdrawal of the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* which had existed for the open preschool, on the grounds that it was coupled to the now defunct version of the Education Act (1985: 1100).⁵⁸

In 2018 the government tasked SKR with instigating a large-scale initiative designed to map, lift and expand the possibilities for deploying the OP as an arena for language and integration / social orientation content, with the specific aim of expediting the entrance of foreign-born women into the employment market, and increasing rates of enrolment in regular preschool amongst their children (Törner, 2018; Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2019). SKR, who as an author do not appear in the empirical material until this point, are a governmental actor, but they are not a legislative organ or government agency – rather, they are a political employer organisation of which all Sweden's municipalities and regions are members. The 'open preschool for language and integration' project, as it became known as, provides support and funding to open preschools support foreign born women with Swedish language learning during maternity leave (Törner, 2018; Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2019). This initiative has the stated aim of shortening the time it takes for foreign born women in Sweden to enter the workforce by providing opportunities within open preschools for them to study Swedish during maternity leave. Inextricably linked to the entrance of foreign born women into the job market is the enrolment of their children (for whom Swedish is not the first or sole first language) into the Swedish preschool system, and this is also a stated aim of the government's initiative (Törner, 2018; Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2019).

The initiative was multifaceted, multidiscursive and enacted at national level, deploying formal documents, pedagogic material, information leaflets in both Swedish and English, films and illustrations variously in different contexts, in the service of meeting the goals of the initiative by drawing attention to ways in which open preschools can provide language learning activities,

⁵⁶ *undervisning*

⁵⁷ (schooling in the academic year prior to grade 1, known in British English as reception class and in US English as Kindergarten, for example)

⁵⁸ In their response to two email enquiries in 2018 and 2021 about whether there existed plans to introduce a new or updated document to replace the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool*, Skolverket's Information Service confirmed that no such plans existed.

including enrolment in Sfi, for foreign born women during their parental leave. A set of illustrations by artist Kristina Widlert were commissioned and made available for municipalities to use in their work with the initiative, thereby constituting a type of artefact designed to aid the intended work. The initiative's final report (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021) noted among its conclusions that practitioners in the OP would benefit from a national guidance document and a key action point was the recommendation that the Swedish National Agency for Education be tasked with producing the same. Of note is that SKR also produced a short summary of the project in English, suggesting that it was intended to have reach outside of the Swedish speaking context.

One concrete outcome of the initiative was *The Toolbox* (Larsson et al., 2020) a toolkit for practitioners who meet foreign born parents on parental leave (and their children) in the course of their work. *The Toolbox* consisted of two parts, the first of which gave practical tips for targeted activities, and case study examples of good practice, with accompanying discussion questions for practitioners. The second part contained support for following up initiatives, described as “practical guidance for making progress visible, and ensuring that the goals of the initiatives are met.” (Larsson et al., 2020, p.5)

Iterative refraction of previous curriculum making through SKR's own (non-academic) research operationalises previous relationships-as-rules, and repurposes earlier content that had been relevant to the development of the open preschool as part of SKR's approach (or, to use a term that will become more relevant in the next chapter, macro curriculum making). By operationalising the authority imbued by their status in order to take the floor, SKR, I argue, act to discursively reframe what can be within the true for open preschool – to create a naturalised dominant discourse about the setting as an arena for SALI initiatives. SKR texts are familiar in terms of genre from government agency texts, and garner gravitas and authority from this similarity with agency texts. Such a toolkit was not without precedent in terms of its intended content and target group. In 2012, the platform *Join In* (Va Med, 2014) saw a number of Civic Orientation and language related courses designed for delivery in, amongst other settings, open preschools. Other similar initiatives promoting and providing for Swedish lessons for parents on parental leave co-existed. In 2019, the government funded an initiative Swedish National Council of Adult Education to “increase possibilities for foreign born parents on parental leave to learn Swedish” (Folkbildningsrådet, 2022) with Study Associations running courses based on, amongst other things the language and cultural handbook *Swedish for Parents* (Campbell, 2019). Other actors, such as the Swedish Outdoor Association⁵⁹ detailed how they adapted existing provision in order to provide language and cultural learning

⁵⁹ *Friluftsförbundet*

opportunities in outdoor open preschool settings as part of ‘meaningful waiting’ initiatives for asylum seekers.

2022 marked fifty years since the publication of the Commission on Nursery Provision’s report and the proposal which has widely become recognised as the birth of the open preschool. This anniversary was marked with a jubilee symposium organised at Uppsala University attended by over sixty researchers, practitioners and policymakers within the field of open preschool, including city level representatives from Stockholm, Uppsala and Gothenburg, and national actors from SKR. Presentations were given by Swedish and international researchers, retired practitioners and pioneers from the field of open preschool, Lotten Zetterström, Francesca Östberg, Jill Westermarck and Vibeke Bing, as well as actors local to Uppsala who presented innovative open preschool settings combining *friluftsliv* with integration work.

In the autumn of 2020, the Swedish government’s Department of Education released the findings of a committee set up to make recommendations aimed at increasing participation in preschool among children in the age group 3-5 years, and specifically at strengthening preschool’s work with children’s language development. The report was named *Preschool for all children – for better language development in Swedish* (SOU 2020:67) . The report highlighted the importance of preschool’s school-preparatory function, in particular for children without Swedish in the home. The name of the report recalls the slogan used by Swedish campaigners in the 1970s, as they demonstrated widely for an increase in the number of available childcare places: *Hear our call – daycare for all! Ropen skalla – daghem åt alla!* but the subtitle and content place the report squarely in a contemporary language and integration context. It highlights the fact that while preschool places are now available for all children, not all families avail themselves of them, and lifts in particular the discrepancy in enrolment statistics between children with and without immigrant backgrounds.

SOU 2020:67 Preschool for all children - for better language development in Swedish (SOU 2020:67) also made mention of SKR’s initiative Open Preschool for language and integration, noting that it had lifted the way in which the open preschool could form a key actor in outreach work going forward, and that this would especially benefit children who do not have Swedish as a first language. A core change enacted following the recommendations in the document was the introduction of reserved preschool places for foreign born children and children with foreign born parents from the age of three years, and every autumn term from that point forward, and the legal obligation of municipalities to engage in proactive outreach work with this target group. While municipalities may carry out this work as they wish, the open preschool is mentioned and positioned as a potential actor in the outreach.

Following the initiative Open Preschool for language and integration, SKR announced in 2023 that they had entered into a further agreement with the government to extend the work operationalising the open preschool as a

setting working with facilitating and expediting the entrance of foreign born women into the workforce (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2024). At the time of writing, no guidance document from the Swedish National Agency for Education has been published in response to the proposal in the SKR Final Report (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021), and no reports have at the time of writing been made on the newest SKR initiative.

6.9.3 Discursive reorganisation

An important action in this era the *withdrawal* of the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* in 2018. This left (at the time of writing) only the Education Act and the Swedish National Agency for Education 's interpretation thereof as formal and binding guidance for OPs (see discussion for further comment on this). In terms of discursive practices, one interpretation of a setting being without any macro domain curriculum document would be that the setting is put the in the position of having any number of 'open doors' in its future trajectory. Another way of understanding the situation is to see it in the opposite light, namely that the absence of a macro level curriculum document for the setting is a symbolic indication that the unwritten rules, to which actors should adhere in selecting what it is possible to say or not about the open preschool, are no longer relevant, and no longer a reference point (or at least, no longer a sole reference point) for what can be said to be within the true for the open preschool. Such an interpretation relies on understanding the discursive dominance of 'traditional' looking macro curricular of the prescriptive plan for learning type.

Yet despite such a traditional macro curriculum for the open preschool being noticeable by its absence, the open preschool's continue to function, and it can be argued that in terms of curriculum making, the period since 2018 has been marked by almost unprecedented levels of macro activity and curriculum products, as well as the a new curriculum actor (SKR), who have repositioned the open preschool as a place primarily concerned with targeted language, integration and employment support for immigrant families. This is clearly somewhat of a paradox, since the curriculum making is a discursive practice, and as such contingent on its relation to what has come before.

7 Adult learning in the open preschool: curriculum making for support-as-education

In this chapter, focus shifts from the more general didactic and curricular characteristics of the open preschool as a setting type, towards the way in which the open preschool as a setting for adult learning and SALI content is understood. The purpose of doing this is to ‘zoom in’ on particular aspects of the development trajectory in more detail, and in doing so highlight the way in which they may be understood in terms of curriculum. The results presented in this chapter identify and describe instances of curriculum making activity in the Discourse Trace results that relate to *educational activities for adults* as part of the open preschool’s practice and / or *language and integration related educational activities* as part of the open preschool’s practice as reported in the text material. As noted in Section 4.1.4 above, Priestley et al.’s heuristic model of Curriculum Making Activity is used as the primary interpretative framework, and the criteria used for identifying instances of curriculum making are repeated here for ease of reference:

“An activity, or account thereof, whose intention and / or effect is to **describe, define and delimit, prescribe, interpret, negotiate, or translate** one or more of the **learner, content, form** and **purpose** of educational activities in an educational setting.” (after Priestley et al., 2021)

Terms marked in bold in the identification criteria are used throughout in the descriptions of the seven Curriculum Making Activities in sections 7.1 – 7.6 below. A number of these are ‘composite’ activities, meaning that several activities are judged to have, in combination, contributed to the overarching activity.

7.1 From play advice to open preschool – establishing open preschool

The first curriculum making activity identified can be understood in terms of the discursive practice that established the open preschool as something immanently ‘within the true’. Here, the term ‘making’ can be understood rather literally, as the curriculum making activity describes the founding of a novel setting type as a direct result of a prescriptive proposal in a macro situated text.

To give pedagogical stimulation to children who do not get a place in preschool, play advice, for example, should be tested in collaboration with the child health centre’s clinics. (SOU 1972:27, p.374)

In the recommendation made in SOU 1972:26 *Preschool* (report pt 1) and *SOU 1972:27 Preschool (report pt 2)* that, for example, play advice ought to be trialled in child health centres in order to give pedagogical stimulation to children without a place in preschool, it is possible to identify an intended learner (the parent), an intended educator, an intended content (play and play materials – expressed elsewhere in the same text) and an intended purpose (to give pedagogical stimulation to children not in preschool) in relation to the proposed educational activity.

Content for adult learning is initially predominantly play and children’s development. The proposed play advice had the ultimate aim of aiding children’s development by providing them with stimulating, pedagogical input. The report into the Play Advice pilot in Brandbergen (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973) gives the intended purpose as: “to give parents the opportunity to discuss play and play materials in relation to their child’s development, with an experienced and knowledgeable preschool teacher” (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973, p.1). This indicates that it would ultimately be the parents mediating this content to their children, and so the interim purpose of play advice was to educate the parents. In this way, then, we see that this proposed ‘forerunner’ of the open preschool is characterised by its adult learning purpose, but also that the child educational purpose is inextricably linked. This established right from the start a dual space within which the nature of the open preschool as an educational setting could be understood, as a potential space for learning for both adults-as-parents, and for their children. The duality is also evident in the way the purpose of the open preschool as an educational setting could be understood, and in how the relationship between the two distinct types of learners could be navigated by the educator in their didactic decision making.

A certain ambiguity regarding the basic facets of the didactic triangle as it could be seen to have existed for this as yet non-existent setting can be discerned, but nonetheless, the inclusion of this recommendation in the *SOU*

1972:27 *Preschool (report pt 2)* (SOU 1972:27) can be understood as macro curriculum making activity with the intention of defining and delimiting the didactic elements of the as yet non-existent setting's educational activities. Play Advice for parents as part of the service offering of the child health centres is established as 'in the true' as a result of its proposal in this macro sited text, (which arguably could equally be seen as being supra sited), allowing it to become an artefact for translation into situated local practices by meso and micro sited actors.

Certain features of the text, however, have the effect of assigning agency to these meso and macro actors in the translation process – through use of the modal auxiliary and the adverbial 'for example', the definition / delimitation is expressed as being open to negotiation. While Play Advice is established as an ontological object, there remains an ambiguity about its definition that cannot be resolved within the scope of the macro activity, but is dependent upon activity at other sites to move from a state of latency to a state of being enacted in practice. Indeed, the formulation delegates the didactic decision making around content, learner and pedagogy in relation to fulfilment of the purpose (arguably the element most absolutely described), to meso, or even micro, actors.

Of relevance also was the societal and demographic context; infrastructure impacted the realisation, or the translation, in practice, with the form of the first pilot projects influenced by the type of premises and staff available, for example. In a number of cases, the play advice pilots took place in preschool premises used for half day part-time preschool and thus available for the rest of the day. In others, empty residential apartments were used, both due to the absence of other premises, but also as a way of anchoring the setting in neighbourhood centres. These arrangements can be considered a physical expression of the liminality which would develop as characteristic for the open preschool as a setting type, positioning it somewhat ambiguously in a space between the domestic and extra-domestic domains.

In the text *Report on the play advice pilot project 'open playschool' in Brandbergen, Haninge municipality* (Socialstyrelsen / Lundgren, 1973) accounts are given of the curriculum making activities that occurred in response to this delegation. Taking the Brandbergen example, the following activities are accounted for – interpretation of macro curriculum making, negotiation of the macro expressed purpose, and translating the macro proposals hyperlocally, which can be understood as micro curriculum making.

As an outcome of these activities, a further curriculum making activity is identifiable: description, definition, delimitation of the setting as it had been interpreted by meso actors, and translated by meso, micro and nano actors. This activity is evidenced in texts produced by meso level actors with input from local and nano actors, for example *Factsheet Nr. 2 / 76 Open Preschool* (Socialstyrelsen, 1976) and Margareta Nuder's *Report on Open Preschool* (Nuder, 1977) (See Chapter Six above); the factsheet compiled details of

pilots that they had been involved with in five municipalities across Sweden (noting also that there were other pilots under way that they had not been directly involved with), referring to them under the umbrella term of open preschool, and summarising and disseminating them as possible models for adoption in other areas of the country. The *Factsheet* accounts for the way in which more general ‘parentcraft’ content for adult learning was added in response to visitors’ needs, as it became apparent for some families lacking a support network, the contact and support function for adults came to be a more compelling function than the play advice alone (Socialstyrelsen, 1976). Content from the Factsheet’s background section, was recontextualised in two further National Board for Health and Welfare texts (*Report on Open Preschool* (Nuder, 1977), and *Open Preschool (report by Margareta Nuder): Offprint from Questions of quality: compilation of municipalities' childcare plans 1977 – 81* (Socialstyrelsen, 1979). With each recontextualisation, the formality and ‘gravitas’ of the text type increased. The consistent use of the umbrella term open preschool in this way established a denotational relationship between the name and the institution in practice, establishing it as a discursive object. The increasingly formal and authoritative recontextualisations served to legitimise and embed the term within early years pre – school care discourse, serving as an act of curriculum making that described, and arguable also delimited, at least semantically and organisationally, the new setting type.

This recontextualisation in the form of describing and delimiting the open preschool by using an umbrella term occurred, then, across different sites meso and macro sites, culminating in its adoption by its use in macro texts with an authoritative author, namely government SOU texts. The establishment of the name entailed an agreement on what type of setting was being referred to by the name. This should not be understood in an essentialist way, or to mean that the open preschool’s curriculum was by this point fixed. Instead, it can be understood as an indicator of the 1972 macro / supra proposal had been transformed in practice into a setting type that could form part of future discussions. *That* this happened can be understood in curriculum making terms, terms, but more interesting is perhaps *how* it developed when one considers that the emerging open preschool diverged quite significantly from its imagined predecessor.

7.2 Discussing and negotiating of the form and function of parent education and its role in the open preschool

The second curriculum making activity identified is the negotiation of parental education content and purpose, and descriptions of how this type of educational activity could be translated into the open preschool setting.

By the end of the 1970s the open preschool had been becoming established both as a realised institution with an increasingly distinct *modus operandi*, and as a discursive object. Despite this, the years around the turn of the decade can still be identified as a transitional period in terms of the open preschool's name, and a period in which the activities of the setting continued to be negotiated and established in practice. Establishment of the name open preschool effectively replacing play advice, nominally foregrounded the child educational aspect of the setting, but texts, for example *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* (SOU 1978:05), would continue to note the adult educational aspect of play advice as one of the open preschool's activities, and in practice, and accounts thereof, adult learning remained present. Indeed, the potential of the open preschool as a more formalised arena for adult learning in the form of parent education is posited during the period, when the open preschool was explicitly linked in government legislative texts to the establishment of a national parent education programme. Viewed in terms of discursive practice as a factor of curriculum making, it can be said that once the name open preschool was established, it became an artefact in the unwritten rules around what could be 'done' with open preschool. One way in which this played out was the above-mentioned linking of the open preschool with parent education, which can be understood as the operationalisation of the open preschool as a setting type in a new context.

The development of parent education was roughly simultaneous to the developments in the field of childcare, and to the broader political developments in relation to the family. Whilst distinct from the development of the open preschool (in the sense that it encompassed a wide range of actors), three SOUs are identified here as examples of macro curriculum making in relation to parent education that also serve as curriculum making in relation to the open preschool. *SOU 1978:05 'Parent education 1 - around the child's birth: report from the childcare committee'* (SOU 1978:05) and *SOU 1980:27 'Adults and children: the childcare committee's final report on parent education'* (SOU 1980:27) are both concerned with parent education, and *SOU 1975:80 'Collaboration in childcare: report from the working group for society's childcare'* (SOU 1975:80) focuses a whole chapter on parent education.

These three SOUs are understood as macro curriculum making in relation to the content and purpose of parent education in the sense that they seek to

define, delimit and describe its content, purpose and form as a distinct pedagogical activity. While the education of parents was clearly no new idea, the formalisation of it as part of a broader societal project is arguably an interesting phenomenon in terms of curriculum analysis, as it is possible to identify the earliest and most fundamental elements of curriculum making around a content.

Nested within the curriculum making in relation to parent education is macro curriculum making of a different type in relation to the open preschool: within the three SOUs named here above may be found three curriculum making activities of relevance to the open preschool's function as an adult educational setting. The act of discussing and in doing so linking open preschool and parent education, recognizes the overlap in the two initiatives' content and practice, and initiates potential dovetailing and collaboration – this can be seen as interpretation of the setting. The acts of defining and positioning in the texts serve to explicitly reason about the form, function, content of, and epistemological standpoint underpinning parent education, and about how this might manifest within the context of the open preschool. As may be seen from the *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* (SOU 1978:05), cited below, the question of parent education was closely interweaved with broader societal questions of the type which also informed the Commission on Nursery Provision, and these informed the selection of the goals:

Family politics has to a great extent been used to support the family, and to give parents of small children the same opportunities as others to take part in working life. It is not managed to completely counteract the negative consequences of the societal development that has brought with it rapidly increasing urbanization, disintegration of social contact networks, the demand for a mobile workforce, and so on. Neither have initiatives directed towards individuals (which have assumed that problems derive from individuals' and families' internal situations) been sufficient to solve the problems which have, amongst other things, lead to the demand for parent education. In order for the family's situation to be fundamentally improved, factors such as the demands of working life, living environment, economic conditions and so on must be taken into account. In every society, the family...will always appear to be a bearer and creator of problems. This primarily because grave personal problems, and future inability to manage one's social situation, can often be established by experiences in early childhood, and can often be passed down to the next generations. It is the external pressures the family is subjected to, and the possibilities the family has to resist such pressures, which determine the extent to which the family functions as a 'problem creating', 'illness generating'. 'conflict solving' or 'health promoting' entity. (SOU 1978:05, p.44)

These goals had been first outlined in the *SOU 1975:87 Collaboration in childcare (1): Report from the Working Group for Society's Childcare* (SOU 1975:87) in which parent education's "contribution to the overarching goals

of social and family politics, democracy, equality, solidarity and *trygghet*” (SOU 1975:87 p.44) should be that:

all adults are given responsibility for giving all children a good environment to grow up in, that all parents are given support in their parenting and influence over their and their child’s situation, [and] that all children and young people are readied for their adult role and for parenthood. (SOU 1975:87 p.44)

Drawing on these intended purposes for the supra societal contribution of parent education, *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* (1978:05), goes on to develop an overarching goal for parent education, namely to improve general societal conditions for children and families, and ensure conditions for parenting responsibility to be equitably shared (SOU 1978:05) This was further expressed in terms of three main areas, constituting the concrete goals. These were ‘parent education to increase knowledge’, ‘parent education to create possibilities for contact and fellowship’, and ‘parent education to create possibilities to impact societal conditions (SOU 1978:05, p.14). *SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education* (SOU 1980:27 pp.64 – 67) repeats overreaching concrete goals for parent education, again noting that it is a contributory part of the wider work of society to create good conditions for families and mention that the overreaching aims of democracy, equality, solidarity and security should be the guiding principles when it comes to parent education. In repeating the goals in this final report, they are recontextualised as recommendations, which may be understood as macro curriculum making.

One aspect of the recontextualisation of the goals of parent education is particularly important for the open preschool. The three areas that were identified as the main concrete goals are, in places, referred to in shortened form – *kunskap, kontakt and påverkan* (knowledge, contact and impact). Adult facing purpose of the open preschool would go on to be described in documents from the early 1980s onwards broadly in terms of ‘*möjligheter för kontakt och gemenskap*’ (possibilities for contact and fellowship).

Here it is possible to identify an example of curriculum making in relation to two different contexts converging and then diverging. One of the goals of educational activity for one educational context, parent education, becomes discursively associated with a potential arena for the activity, the open preschool. This occurs at a time when the open preschool as a setting type is sufficiently stable for it to have become a discursive object, and as such a time when it is being described widely and in new types of medium. In these recontextualisations, the contact-as-goal-of-parent-education sense undergoes a transformation in the divergence, and curriculum making in relation to the open preschool draws on a refracted sense of the original expression going forward. This would occur most notably in the *General Advice with Comments*

for *Open Preschool* that would be published as the first formal expression of the open preschool's activities after its move to the jurisdiction of the Swedish National Agency for Education.

Invoked without the other two goals, and through iterative refraction, the educational implications or sense of 'possibilities for contact and fellowship' become masked, and only the social(ising) sense is retained. Whilst clearly the phrase does indeed refer to social contact, when it is isolated from its original context, *and* placed in contrast to the overtly child educational expressed for the open preschool, its use serves to background the adult educational purpose of the open preschool, and foreground the child educational purpose.

This effect is furthered by a separate act of curriculum making in relation to parent education that is of relevance to the open preschool, namely the negotiation of language used to describe the form and ideological orientation of parent education. Metatext about curriculum in curriculum making is observable in *SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education* (SOU 1980:27). It is noted that a large number of those consulted in the preparation of the report "...expressed their view that parent education is an unfortunate term, which conjures up images of conventional instruction with curriculum, syllabus, teachers, pupils, textbooks and the like." (SOU 1980:27, p.13) and that the term carried with it a risk the interpretation will be that parent education indicates a societal ambition to train parents to 'raise their children right'. Further to this, where terms such as *curriculum, syllabus, teachers, pupils, textbooks*, are mentioned later in the text, these are collocated with negatively loaded terms such as *unfortunate, scare away, (does not) entice*, (SOU 1980:27, p.13) effectively expressing an educational ideology in opposition to which parental education is deliberately discursively positioned, and which would come to be enacted in practice. While this refers to parent education generally, and not to parent education in the open preschool specifically or solely, it can nonetheless be viewed as curriculum making of relevance to the open preschool, in that it clearly interprets the comments of the consultation response⁶⁰ translates them into policy recommendations in a way that is close to prescriptive, and which can arguably be said to impact the form of educational activities in the open preschool. Further macro curriculum making is identifiable in the discussion in the SOU of what education entails, and what types of education can be considered in relation to parent education. It is noted that:

...education is not a unanimous term 'and that while it *can* entail transfer of information from someone 'who knows' or 'who can' to a group who do not know, or cannot, it can also interpreted 'more progressive[ly] and active[ly]. (SOU 1980:27, p.48).

⁶⁰ remissvar

Parent participation is prescribed in all cases as a foundation for optimal learning, and for parents' ability to gain knowledge, make contacts, and make an impact. Indeed, these three lead words for parent education *kunskap, kontakt and påverkan* (knowledge, contact and impact) first appear in *SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group* and are repeated oft in *SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education*, although it is not certain this can be seen as a recontextualisation, in that *SOU 1980:27* is a final report on sub-reports, of which *SOU 1978:05* is one.

Reflecting on this section, it is possible to see the open preschool as functioning within two domains. Curriculum making activity is identifiable in relation to the open preschool as a distinct setting type, and a parallel curriculum making activity is identifiable in relation to the open preschool viewed as part of the parent education system. In this sense, it can be said that the open preschool is the subject of curriculum making by two different actors, whose goals may be different from one another. At this stage, both the open preschool's curriculum and that of parent education are *both* in their earliest phases, and as such the scope for agency in relation to convergence and divergence is relatively high, even when the two are linked at government level, given that consultation responses are encouraged.

7.3 Describing and delimiting the role of the educator in open preschool, and negotiating the form and purpose of the setting

The third curriculum making activity identified is a kind of description, and delimiting of the educator role in open preschool and a negotiation of the form and purpose of the open preschool as a setting type. In this section, three related texts are analysed and discussed as curriculum making activity in relation to the open preschool's work with adults. The first two texts are *Work in Open Preschool – courseplan* and *Working in Open Preschool – literature list*, documents produced by Jill Westermarck for university level professional development courses for practising educators in the open preschool, and the third text is *Open Preschool Three perspectives*, the report from the 1995 national conference on open preschools (Socialstyrelsen, 1995) (See Section 6.6.2 above). The two courses for which the plans are a product or an artefact, can be understood as meso curriculum making activity, designed to inform and support micro and nano curriculum making and didactic decision making. The act of designing the professional development courses entailed the selection of content deemed relevant to participants, who were required to be qualified and experienced preschool teachers or free-time care educators, with experience of working in open preschool. In this way, it constitutes acts of

interpreting and delimiting the knowledge which educators need in order to organise their settings (as well as the nested didactic decision making occurring in the teaching and learning during the courses). The courses Westermark developed had a total of 62 participants over three courses during 1994 (with three further courses planned for 1995) and covered content relating to children's needs and development, working methods for open preschool, parenting, municipal preschool settings, conversation techniques, and professional obligations relating to safeguarding and confidentiality within public sector work. In terms of iterative refraction, the course leader, Jill Westermark, is of relevance, and can be understood in relation to the other text analysed in this section. Westermark initiated, developed and taught on the courses, and would go on to be described by The National Board of Health and Welfare in *Open Preschool Three perspectives* (Socialstyrelsen, 1995) as a person who had "worked with great engagement in and for open preschool" (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.1), and is described in the same document as having many years' experience as a preschool teacher in open preschools and as having been the driving force behind the development of the two courses. Westermark's planning and delivery of the courses can be understood as recontextualisation of her own nano and micro curriculum making, as well as of the meso and macro level curriculum making that had informed her own practice, into a new arena. In doing so, 'open preschool's working practice' or 'professional skills for working in the open preschool' as garnered by practitioners in the course of their practice are translated from lived and learned experiences into academic knowledge content to be taught in an academic context, with the aim of impacting educators-as-students' future micro and nano didactic decision making in practice. The courses are an important episode in the development trajectory of adult learning as part of the educational activities of the open preschool, constituting a complex series of curriculum making activities across multiple sites and actors, aimed at defining and delimiting the role of the educator in the open preschool, and in so doing, describing and delimiting the setting itself. Part of this was by positioning the knowledge and skills required for an educator in an open preschool in relation (specifically, in contrast to) those required for an educator in the regular preschool. This need for new types of knowledge and skills was a direct result of the well documented differences between the two setting types caused by the presence and participation of adults alongside children in the open preschool, and by the open preschool's dual function as a setting for educational activity and social support. This curriculum making occurred during the same period that discourses around the open preschool were in a phase of negotiation, as described above and it can be argued that involving a new, authoritative macro actor, a university, was a significant discursive positioning act in the period when discussions were being undertaken about the future of the open preschool under (or not under) the Swedish National Agency for Education.

Open Preschool Three perspectives (Socialstyrelsen, 1995) gives the perspectives of Brian Ashley, Margareta Gustafsson, and Jill Westermark, on the state of the open preschool, note specifically their prominence within the field. In their accounts, the trio weave together perspectives on the past, present and future of the open preschool, with a red thread running through their accounts that serves as curriculum making activity in relation to the unique duality inherent in the open preschool as a setting type – the presence of both children and adults. This is addressed from the point of view of the organisatory challenges it poses (Gustafsson), the potential of the open preschool as part of future proactive preventative outreach work (Ashley), and educator education (Westermark). Gustafsson's contribution gave a detailed description of the open preschool's activities, purpose, character, goals and development, with a particular focus on how and why it became so multifaceted. Further to this, she explicitly raises the question of open preschool's top down regulation and steering (or more accurately, the lack thereof), and of how it has created and sustained a stable organisatory structure over two decades, despite lacking visibility, and being misinterpreted. Jill Westermark wrote about the specifics of the role of educator in the open preschool, calling her article "Being an educator and fellow human in the open preschool" (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.13). She says that working in an open preschool entails having 'both comprehensive knowledge about and responsiveness to children's needs and development, and high levels of competence in and interest for adults' needs', and notes the clear need for professional development opportunities for staff with experience of working with children rather than adults.

Brian Ashley's contribution, "Visions for the future" (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.17) focused on development of the open preschool as a setting type. He criticises the welfare system's treatment of the open preschool as uncharacteristically ambivalent and ambiguous, and blames this on the fact that open preschool's name aligned it unduly and mistakenly with early years education, and hindered it from becoming a "fully accepted component of the social welfare system" (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.17). As curriculum making activity, his article aims to exact macro definition and delimitation of the open preschool as a specific type of setting, arguably with a less explicitly educational focus than in its then present form. This is done by describing open preschool in a way which distances it from early years education, although Ashley makes an important observation regarding the way in which staff with a preschool teaching background have adapted their practices in response to the nature of the open preschool:

Even if the original aim of having pedagogic staff in open preschool was the social development of the child, it has now been realised that the adults' social development is of the utmost importance. Staff have also learned how they can make their pedagogical expertise available for parents. In this way they multiply the benefit of the teaching, and in the longer term this will undoubtedly benefit the child. (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.17)

This can be understood as an account of curriculum making by educators 'on the ground' that supports the reasoning above about the 'organic' recursive nature of curriculum making as it relates to educators learning to teach in the open preschool. Nonetheless, Ashley stands firm in his conviction about the crucial role the open preschool has to play for adults, and while he does not specifically mention the need for open preschool staff to be more properly prepared for their roles in the setting, the needs he lists serve to make explicit the kinds of support he believes educators ought to be able to provide.

Open preschools have on many occasions shown the various needs which adults have for support – the need for social contacts and exchanging experiences; to develop knowledge and information; for discussion about everyday events, worries and problems; the need to understand communication from various agencies and be able to communicate with them; to teach others and learn from them; to have shared experiences; to understand and help those with special needs; to develop supportive social competencies etc. (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.18)

Ashley continues by driving a clear line in terms of his future wishes and vision for the open preschool, calling it a much needed and meaningful institution– a “healthy embryo” (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.18) that ought continue to be allowed to develop as a distinct setting type that forms a core part of the emerging system of multi-agency family centres. Ashley makes suggestions about which agencies should share responsibility for family centres, and claims that integrating the open preschool into family centres is in line with parental and staff wishes for the setting (p.19). The apparent strength of his conviction in proactive preventative work is such that he describes The Social Services Act (Sw. *Socialtjänstlagen*) as, in his, opinion “one of the most humane pieces of legislation in the world due to its emphasis on the importance of preventative work and of helping individuals to develop their own capacity to manage” (Socialstyrelsen, 1995, p.18). In terms of curriculum making, Ashley's vision of the future may be seen as important, as it contributes to the curriculum relevant discussions occurring at the time (as described above in Section 6.7) by articulating succinctly the tensions that had emerged in terms of the alignment and orientation of the open preschool as an educational establishment, whether within education or social services.

7.4 Describing, defining and delimiting the primary form and purpose of the open preschool – an act of de facto prescription?

The fourth curriculum making activity identified is the description, definition and delimitation of the form and purpose of the open preschool, in a way which comes close to being prescriptive. Discursively, *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* was arguably the closest thing the open preschool has ever had to a formal curriculum document in the commonly understood use of the word, and its publication is a clear example of macro curriculum making activity by a government agency actor relevant to the trajectory of adult learning as part of the activities of the open preschool. A number of features in the text are of relevance to the way in which the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* (Skolverket, 2000) serves to define and delimit the activities of the open preschool. The first is the explicit reasoning within the document around its purpose as a document type:

General Advice with Comments are general recommendations about how a law or other constitution can or ought be applied. The aim of [them] is to influence development in a particular direction and promote a uniform application of the law. (Skolverket, 2000, p.6)

The second action is the formalising and foregrounding of the child educational purpose of the open preschool. While the document does point out that the new curriculum for preschool is not binding for the open preschool (formally, the open preschool is described as a complement to the regular preschool at this juncture), it nonetheless notes that it should be viewed as advisory. In terms of intertextual relationships, the Swedish National Agency for Education draws heavily on the concepts and content of the preschool curriculum in formulating the *General Advice*, conceptually and discursively marking a proximity between child educational content of the two settings. Closely linked with this is the third action – the explicit reasoning around parent education and adult learning in the open preschool– which constitutes a new formal expression of the adult learning purpose, equal in effect to it being formally backgrounded or delegitimised as a purpose. In accordance with the then new Education Act, the open preschool is described as oriented first and foremost to the needs of the child (Skolverket, 2000, p.14). The adult-facing purposes (both educational and social) of the open preschool *are* mentioned, but throughout the text, the parent facing purpose is secondary to the child educational focus. Here the relevance of the recontextualisation of ‘kontakt and gemenskap’ (see 7.2 above) is made clear, as it is this phrasing which constitutes the main expression of open preschool’s adult facing purpose. In its recontextualised form, it is significantly distanced (both discursively and

temporally) from its original usage⁶¹, arguably so distant as to render its expression of an educational goal absent.

The fourth curriculum making activity I identify is the withdrawal of the *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* in 2018. This left only the Education Act and the Swedish National Agency for Education's representation of the relevant parts thereof as formal and binding guidance for open preschools. This not insignificant curriculum making activity took place in the same year that SKR's open preschool for language and integration initiative launched, and while no explicit connection has been made publically linking the two events (recalling that the reason given for the withdrawal was the updating of the Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 18 and the Education Act), their near simultaneous occurrence can be said to mark this era as particularly eventful in terms of curriculum making.

7.5 Describing and the open preschool as a place for immigrant families, and positioning immigrant adults as learners in the open preschool

The fifth curriculum making activity identified is description of the way in which immigrant families can be learners in the open preschool. In the foreword to the Open Preschool for language and integration 2018 - 2020 - Final account of the agreement between the government and SKR (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021) which will be discussed more fully in Section 7.6 below, the CEO of SKR describes the initiative, its participants and its outcomes warmly and positively. He closes with the conclusion that:

The [government / SKR] initiative has made it possible to gather knowledge on and shine a light on a setting which has been in place for a long time, but which has not previously had attention paid to it. This knowledge is of importance for the continued work with integration, and for women's establishment in worklife and the life of the society. It can also contribute to increasing the number of children with foreign backgrounds in preschool. In summary, the open preschool's activities can be described as important proactive preventative work, which has taken place in silence up until now. (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021, p.3)

The CEO, Isling's, comments can be understood in terms of curriculum making in the open preschool. He is not the first to observe that open preschool has operated on the sidelines of the education system, but it may be argued that it has never been out of range. Rather, its perceived silence can be understood in terms of its curricular and discursive positioning in relation to the

⁶¹ when, it can be recalled, it was used alongside the other two primary goals for parent education (see Section 6.3.2 above for discussion of this)

regular preschool. Such positioning is, of course, not unwarranted or unreasonable as a description of the *relationship* between the two settings. It is, I argue, more problematic in terms of the open preschool's visibility if it is deployed as a criteria and premise for macro curriculum making.

To understand the grounds upon which the open preschool can have been identified as an arena for language and integration, both by outside and inside actors, it is useful to consider what precedent exists for curriculum making in relation to immigrant families learning in the open preschool. Three instances can be identified within the empirical material.

The first of these is Salamanders open preschool, as described in Section 6.4.2. This open preschool for immigrant families was first described in the *Factsheet Nr. 2 / 76 Open Preschool* (Socialstyrelsen, 1976), then the subject of a report - *Report on Open Preschool* (Nuder, 1977), and finally then used as a good practice example in the SOU 1980:27. The second example of curriculum making in relation to immigrant families is the work of Francesca Östman and Susanne Johansson that resulted in the report *Like ripples on the water* (Johansson & Östberg, 1985), and the educator training book, *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* (Ladberg et al., 1988). The third example is in the form of a number of accounts of work with immigrant families, most noticeably the report from the open preschool in Husby and Rinkeby - *Open Preschool in Husby and Rinkeby: a secure meeting place for children and adults, a bridge to the society in multicultural areas of the city* (Nilsson, 1996), alongside others such as Friluftsförbundet's (2019) article on Öppna Skogsglanten forest open preschool organised for asylum seekers as part of the 'meaningful wait' initiative, and *Join In SFI and SO for open preschool* (Va Med, 2014).

A characteristic shared by all three examples of curriculum making is that they have their roots in nano didactic decision making, that is then co-opted by actors at other sites and shared as curriculum-style guidance or good practice examples. This can be understood as a cyclical process whereby nano activity is described, and as such is recontextualised at other sites, with the result that it becomes positioned as meso curriculum making resources.

In effect, the same can be said of the SKR initiative in the sense that it draws heavily on the curriculum resources of meso, micro and nano level actors, and reproduces this knowledge in the form of curriculum guidance. However, it can be said to be different in the sense that the initiative is top down, and that it has a particular ideological orientation, closely related to supra curriculum making in relation not to the open preschool, but to education of adult immigrants with the express purpose of expediting their entry to the employment market.

In this way, the SKR initiative can be understood as curriculum making in relation to a different part of the education system that relies upon the open preschool as an artefact or tool. It has the effect of functioning as curriculum making in relation to the open preschool in that it clearly defines and delimits

preferred educational content and purposes, but this happens in a way that is designed to align first and foremost with interests external to the open preschool.

7.5.1 Publication and recontextualisation of an early account of open preschool's relevance for immigrant families

Anna-Clara Grevelius (1978), author of the report *Open Preschool for Immigrant Children*, produced the document in her role as part of the Socialstyrelsen's preschool department, following study visits to Salamanders open preschool during the spring of 1978. Two instances of curriculum making activity can be identified in relation to the text. The first is the establishment, development and running of Salamanders. This activity is, naturally, not directly observable, however the account of it given in the text is. Within the text, the following types of activity can be identified; interpretation, definition and delimitation, of learner group, purpose, form.

An interesting example of how curriculum making activity may entail a variety of actors is evident in the description of how the initial idea for Salamanders came about – following an observation by a doctor at the local child health centre that many immigrant women in the area were isolated (Grevelius, 1978), a collaboration was described between the municipality, the Red Cross, and the child health centre. Here we can see that an actor from outside the field of education, identified a need for a particular type of learner as a result of their direct work with them, an activity at a nano site. This led to a meso curriculum making activity where actors from local government and the charity sector collaborated with the child health centre in order to interpret the new and developing setting type as a site for the work they deemed necessary, and translate existing practice in to a setting that had a specific purpose in relation to a particular learner group.

The second is the production of the text itself, and the text as a product of this activity. The descriptive account is based upon her conversations with staff, children, parents and leadership and Grevelius states expressly in the introduction to the report that “[these] experiences can certainly be transferable to other municipalities” (Grevelius, 1978, p.2). This can be understood as expressing intent to share information about the educational organisation of the setting to other relevant actors, so that they might translate it into their own contexts. The impact of this curriculum making activity was to establish the specific relevance of OP to immigrant families. A further instance of curriculum making activity in relation to Grevelius' text occurred when it was used recontextualised as an artefact in macro level curriculum making activity in relation to the linguistic and cultural conditions for immigrant children in the preschool system: Parts of Grevelius' text are reproduced in *SOU 1982:43*

Language and culture support for immigrant and minority children of preschool age (SOU 1982:43).

This recontextualisation did not entail any editing of Grevelius' text in terms of content, but that a number of edits are made to the language that have the effect of making it more formal. For example, the modal auxiliary *ska* in Grevelius' is replaced by the *skall*, which at the time was the dominant standard form⁶². and a number of changes are made to Grevelius' punctuation. The format of the SOU is stylistically more formal than Grevelius' report (for example, it is word processed rather than typed, organised in numbered sections, and the hand-drawn illustration has been removed). The stylistic differences are especially evident in the covers of the two texts.

This recontextualisation into more formal and discursively more authoritative document has the effect of validating the relevance to a broader context of Grevelius' account. This effect is also built up in the way Grevelius' report is referred to, as it directly precedes a definition of characteristics of the open preschool that has the effect of prescribing its (non-statutory) deployment in future work with immigrant families in Sweden:

The open preschool ought to be able to become an important addition for both children and parents. It can offer contact, fellowship, and linguistic and social stimulation for both children and adults. The open preschool as a setting type is flexible enough as to relatively easily allow it to be adapted in response to needs identified, and it can also highlight the families' need for other types of support (SOU 1982:43 p. 9)

Further to this, the report draws on the examples presented, of which Grevelius' report describes one, when it asserts that:

The open preschool has shown itself to be able to offer a stimulating setting for both children and adults, especially in new residential areas where people have a need to establish new contacts and forms of fellowship. Those who visit open preschool are themselves a resource – they should be able to do support and stimulate one another. (SOU 1982:43, p.150).

The report's recommendation section states that children from linguistic minority groups who do not attend preschool should have the possibility of home language support in other types of child setting, with open preschool named specifically. Further to and related to this recommendation, the report names the open preschool as a setting where "parents in minority groups and Swedish parents...ought to have the possibility to get to know one another, and learn from each other" (SOU 1982:43 p.19; p.119), as well as a potentially

⁶² Institut för Språk och Folkminnen (2024)

important actor in formal and informal parent education and parent support for immigrant families (SOU 1982:43).

The publication of the SOU can be seen as a further instance of curriculum making activity, sited at macro level due to the state actor and the relative authority of the text in terms of form and proposed function. The activity can also be said to be of relevance to supra curriculum making, as a chapter comparing the situation of immigrant children in preschool in a variety of Nordic, European, and international countries, and linking this work to the goals of the Council of Europe (SOU 1982:43 p.281) is appended to the report. In this section, Sweden is lifted as unique in its comprehensive approach to mother tongue provision, and the open preschool is lifted within this context as a Sweden specific resource.

7.5.2 Two accounts of educators' work with immigrant families, and of their reflective practice in the face of turbulent curriculum conditions

Two texts are analysed in this section: *Like ripples on the water* (Johansson & Östberg, 1985), and *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* (Ladberg et al., 1988). These they contribute with knowledge about how didactic decision making in relation to adult immigrants developed, and also more generally about curriculum making as it relates to the open preschool. In Francesca Östberg och Susanne Johansson's report, *Like ripples on the water*, an example of nano curriculum making activity is recalled. This recalling can be understood as a recontextualisation, and the publication of the report becomes a meso curriculum making activity. A further recontextualisation occurs when part of the report is used in the publication *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool*. The nano curriculum making activity consisted of Östberg and Johansson's close and deeply reflexive examination of the didactic *how* in relation to the needs of the learner, viewed in the context of the demographic characteristics of the local area, as part of a proactive period of didactic decision making in which Östberg and Johansson tried to, in their own words 'find new ways of working'. *Like ripples on the water* is a significant example of curriculum making activity in the open preschool for two reasons. Firstly, it gives an insight into the movability of actors between sites of activity. Secondly, it exemplifies the way in which nano curriculum making can have an impact outside and beyond its local situation. In the sections which follow, I elaborate on these two reasons:

Like ripples on the water can be understood as an illustration of the movability of curriculum making actors. The introduction to *Like ripples on the water* details the educators' perception of their relationship with other actors in a way which highlights some of the peculiarities of the open preschool's curricular practices. Östberg and Johansson describe feeling isolated in their

work, with no-one at management level showing interest, or even in some cases awareness, of open preschool. They report that this isolation left them frustrated and angry, and lacking confidence in their bosses, leading to low morale and a loss of perspective:

We had reached a point where we understood that we had to do something radical, both for our own sakes and for our visitors'... We could, after all, see that people had resources, we just had to find a way to give them the chance to bring them to the fore. We realised in the end that there was no reason to quit. Instead we decided to try and change our work. To do that, we needed knowledge. Partly on what the people in Fittja wanted and needed, and partly on our own work – a perspective on what we do. From there, the project was born! [.....] For the duration of the project we have continued to work at the open preschool in parallel with our writing. One of the conditions for the project has been to test the hypotheses and theories we have had in a real life context. (Johansson & Östberg, 1985, p.9)

Following this passage, the authors acknowledge the project's financiers (Children's Welfare Foundation Sweden⁶³, the Swedish Immigration Board) and thank district and municipal managers, childcare consultants, and local mother-tongue family educators for their support with the work. The educators express clearly that they have agency over their work, the capacity to enact nano curriculum making, but that they feel isolated. This isolation can be understood in terms of deficient infrastructure for curriculum making at other sites, notably a lack of knowledge and understanding among micro and meso actors about the open preschool and its curriculum. Herein can be seen one of the paradoxes of the open preschool's curriculum: educator agency at nano and micro sites is arguably relatively high *because* no prescriptive curriculum plan exists that outlines intended content or specific goals. However, it is the absence of this kind of curriculum plan that can become problematic when nano curriculum making activities require support from actors at other sites.

Nonetheless, this example shows that the educators *intend* to enact curriculum making, by seeking to (re)define or delimit their didactic decision making in relation to the specific learner context, so that they could run the open preschool in such a way that meant its function was fulfilled. Despite their isolation and sense that their work was not visible or well understood, the educators worked collaboratively with other actors, and needed resources from macro and meso actors in order to be able to *enact* the agency they had for the actual productive aspect of the curriculum making. In this respect, actors at other sites *were* able to contribute to the work, indicating that curriculum making at one particular site was conditional on functioning structures and resources for curriculum making at other sites, even if in this case the resources were infrastructural rather than knowledge based.

⁶³ Allmänna Barnhuset

Like ripples on the water can be understood as a concrete product of Östberg and Johansson's nano curriculum making activity that would go on to impact the open preschool's curriculum at other sites: its publication with the support of the organisations mentioned above can be understood as meso curriculum making. The subsequent recontextualisation of large parts of the account in *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* can also be understood as a separate example of meso curriculum making activity. Running to just 30 pages, and with a combination of text and photographs on each page, its form and genre is markedly different from the 270 page text-only *Like ripples on the water*. This difference is evident in the style and layout of the text, which no longer has the characteristics of a formal report, but is presented as a far less formal 'example of good practice', in a magazine or training material style. Both activities serve to describe, define and delimit the didactic 'how' of the open preschool, in particular in relation to a particular group of visitors. They work in different ways, however. *Like ripples on the water*, as a primary source, contributes more broadly to knowledge about the setting. Publication of *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* also works by bringing the knowledge created at nano / micro site into the meso domain, but this time with a different intended audience – peers, rather than decision makers. Further to this, the content of *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* constitutes a kind of peer-to-peer metacommentary on how to organise an open preschool setting, which gives rise to the professional development function. For example, the foreword reads:

Many linguistic and ethnic groups live in Sweden nowadays. For immigrant families, the open preschool can come to be of great importance as the first real contact with Sweden and Swedes. But even Swedish families can be 'immigrants', to the region, or the residential area. The need for contact with other families with children is shared by everyone. On the other hand, different families have different backgrounds and life experiences, and so the open preschools differ from one another. Here we talk about some open preschools that work in different ways because of the fact that the needs of the residential areas they are located in differ from one another. As one of the preschool teachers at one of [the open preschools] says "That is what's so lovely about open preschool, and they can be so different. We can't give a recipe and say: This is how you do it. We can only talk about how we do it. After that, each place has to find its own ways" (Ladberg et al. 1988, p.1)

The reader is given a practitioner account of nano curriculum making as a core feature of the open preschool's way of working, by relating a general purpose (to meet the need for contact) to a way of organising didactic decision making in local contexts. In this way, then, to return to the point made at the start of this section, *Immigrant families in the Open Preschool* has, thanks to its recontextualisation in relation to *Like ripples on the water*, relevance as curriculum making activity both generally, and in relation to immigrant families in

the open preschool. Further to this, if the reader is also a practitioner, which can be assumed likely given the genre, the statement constitutes an explicit expression / description of *how* curriculum making and didactic decision making function – a type of metacommentary on curriculum making which can be seen as a meso contribution to accumulated knowledge on the organisation of the open preschool.

7.5.3 Translating Civic Orientation for the open preschool

In the first half of the 2010s, a civic orientation course was produced and trialled in open preschools, including a number in the Uppsala area. The course, entitled *Join In* (Va Med, 2014) was developed from existing *Join In* civic orientation materials, and specifically adapted for the target group of immigrant parents, primarily mothers, in open preschools. The stated aim of the material was to provide civic orientation in open preschools, and thereby reach the demographic targeted by the initiative. The educator material cites three main reasons why open preschool specifically was selected as the setting for the course, namely that it is a place where the target group spend time and can be located, the open preschool's contacts with child and maternity healthcare services, and because working in open preschool allows practitioners to reach the whole family (Va Med, 2014) This extract can be understood as a metatext commenting on the curriculum making activity that has taken place:

The material has created a new arena for Civic Orientation – the open preschool, with the aim of reaching a new target group, namely newly arrived third country nationals, women with small children who have immigrated as dependents. The material was developed and trialled as a new information and method material for dialogue and reflection based upon the target group's specific needs. The overall aim of the material is to create better civic information aimed specifically at the target group newly arrived women with small children. The idea is to enhance the conditions preschool staff and staff from maternity and childcare services have to effectively give civic information to the target group. When developing the material, we collated, documented, adapted and trialled existing civic information material from the previously published *Join In* material... But we also developed a new material adapted to the target group, with the theme of lifestyle questions, sex, and cohabitation. (Va Med, 2014, digital)

The development and trialling of the *Join In* materials can be understood as a curriculum making activity and product thereof with the intention and effect of translating the subject Civic Orientation for a specific group of learners for a specific purpose.

7.6 Delimiting by co-opting? (Re)negotiating the dominant purpose of the open preschool and delimiting learner and content for adult educational activities

The sixth curriculum making activity identified draws discursively on the activities of the fifth in 7.5 above, and constitutes an attempted negotiation by the government (through SKR) of the open preschool's purpose, carried out by attempting to delimit one aspect of the open preschool's work as a dominant purpose for the setting. This in turn constitutes a delimitation of learner and content, and is of especial relevance to not only adult learning in the open preschool, but to adult learning of SALI. While delimitation of learner and content is familiar from the examples in e.g. 7.4 and (to a lesser extent) 7.2, this curriculum making activity can be seen as different, in that it constitutes an attempt to negotiate by *altering* the purpose of the open preschool, and *delimit* it by *narrowing* its scope in terms of learner and content. This at a time when the open preschool's curriculum had experienced relative stability for a long period prior. Whereas *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* had also been a delimitation activity, it took place within the context of describing the open preschool in relation to preschool. The curriculum making activity under discussion here in 7.6 concerned the open preschool directly, and, while it was motivated by policy decisions relating to preschool and SFI, the activity lifted the way in which the open preschool *could serve* those purposes, rather than considering how open preschool *would be impacted by* changes at the other sites.

Furthermore, it is distinct in that it has elements which have the purpose of addressing practitioners directly, inviting and facilitating for them to adapt their own curriculum making and didactic decision making in order to align with the policies behind the initiative, thus being co-opted⁶⁴ into become co-actors in the curriculum making. A significant discursive investment is identifiable, with a wide variety of text types produced by an authoritative actor not who had not previously been explicitly active in CMA for open preschools, all with a specific intended purpose aimed to support the overall intended purpose of the initiative – macro and supra curriculum making in relation to adult immigrant education and to preschool. The extent and diversity of materials created as part of the initiative (and the number and types of activities undertaken), as well as the authoritative author and coopting of genre-specific curriculum practices serve as the medium of the interpreting and negotiating.

⁶⁴ Co-opt is not one of the verbs listed in the analytical framework for Curriculum Making Activity presented in Section 5.1.4, however its use is indicated in this example, and I am of the view that it could become a useful addition to the list.

7.6.1 Negotiating the open preschool's core purpose and delimiting learner and content

The titles of three reports published by SKR as part of the initiative can be said to foreshadow the metaphorical representation of SKR's intended function the open preschool that permeates the texts themselves; *Open preschool opens many doors* (Sällemark, 2019), *A foot in the door* (Törner, 2018), and *For me and my child* (Fryckholm & Törner, 2020) contribute to the positioning of the open preschool as a portal through which mothers and their children may step in order to 'come in' to the Swedish society. In doing so, they aim to negotiate the primary purpose of the open preschool and delimit the setting's learner demographic, and the content they should learn.

It is important to note that while I claim that this curriculum making activity does aim to narrow the scope of the setting, no explicit wish is expressed that SALI should constitute the *only* function of open preschool. Nonetheless, a multimodal approach can be observed in the way in which the intended 're-aligned' activities could find a natural home in open preschools. SKR commissioned a number of illustrations by artist Kristine Widlert which they use consequently in their content about the initiative, and of which four were made available for municipalities to use in their work with SALI education initiatives. Although a comprehensive image analysis is outside the scope of this thesis, it is nonetheless legitimate within discourse analytical approach to comment briefly on three main points pertaining to the images. Firstly, two distinct types of physical settings for learning are shown— a typical classroom, and a more informal small group setting, with learners and educators sat around coffee tables. The distinction is also clearly made in the names of images in Text Extracts 2 and 3 – *Language Lesson* and *Language Support*, respectively. As well as two types of organisatory settings for educational activities, two distinct content areas can be observed – Swedish language, and Civic Orientation. In the case of the latter, specific content items are shown as logos and key words as a backdrop to the image of a small group educational setting; work, the right to roam, equality, media, laws, career choice, and preschool appear in written form and the three logos (from left) convey The Swedish Tax Agency (Sw. *Skatteverket*), The Swedish Migration Agency (Sw. *Migrationsverket*) and The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Sw. *Försäkringskassan*) respectively. Finally, the presence of children in the (adult) learning settings is observable in the images.



Text extract 1 SKR illustration Civic Orientation / *Samhällsorientering*



Text extract 2 SKR illustration Language Support / *Språkstöd*



Text extract 3 SKR illustration Language Lesson / *Språklektion*

All illustrations: Kristine Widlert (2024)

7.6.2 Co-opting practitioners and other decision makers as co-actors in the curriculum making

The SKR materials widely promoted and distributed. They outline clearly their motivation for deploying the open preschool as an ‘arena for language and integration’ and identify good practice examples in relation to their goals. Of particular note are the multimodal features of the texts promoting and disseminating of the initiative, which appear to present a brand identity that the intended audience should want to identify and engage with, placing practitioners in a consumer-like role. A striking example of the ‘branding’ is the two conferences organised by SKR for practitioners in and decision makers for the open preschool, billed as ‘Inspiration Days’ with not only presentations from practitioners, researchers but also appearances from a high-profile politician, and a well-known actress and comedian. Further to this, *The Toolbox* plays a core role in the SKR in both the negotiation and delimitation activity, and in the co-opting; it was aimed at actors in the or with responsibility for open preschool, professionals working with SFI, social services, integration and employment, and those within child and maternity healthcare services and was

aimed at inspiring the development of initiatives in the open preschool to expedite establishment and strengthen integration for foreign born parents and their children (Larsson et al., 2020). *The Toolbox* was directed equally at practitioners already working with such targeted initiatives, and those thinking of starting them, and was made available online, as a digital download, and in paper format.

It stakes a claim to an authoritative voice by positioning itself (and by association SKR) as a guide, both semantically, and through intertextual links with the ‘syllabus’ or ‘curriculum’ genre. Viewed as a reification or product of the overall SKR curriculum making activity, the Toolbox serves to foreground the dominant discourses about open preschool both in terms of its purpose as expressed in the public domain, and in terms of steering how educators in open preschools could organise their settings. Further to this, it supports the negotiation of the overall function of the open preschool in relation to other parts of the Swedish education system. With the starting point that the initiative’s primary aim is to provide activities with SALI type content in the open preschool for foreign born mothers whose *etablering* has been slowed down by pregnancy and motherhood, three curriculum making activities can be identified under the umbrella of *The Toolbox*, which itself is a CMA, as noted above. To wit, the *Toolbox* translates the purposes of the broader SKR initiative and recontextualises them by aiming to define and delimit the form and purpose of educational activities for a particular learner group.

The Toolbox deploys specific norms and values about parenting, language, immigration and integration in its construction of what it positions as desirable practices in the open preschool – that is to say, its negotiation of the practices. This is done through consistent use of language that positions the specific group of immigrant mothers described by SKR as the target of the initiative, the open preschool, and dominant normative occupation practices in a specific relationship to one another. Specifically, immigrant mothers are constructed as *outside* of dominant occupation norms – that is to say, they are not gainfully employed either in paid employment or as studying, and their children are not enrolled in preschool. No other model of occupation norms (for example, choosing to be a stay at home parent), is constructed as being within the true, and the open preschool is consistently implied to be a setting where normative practices may be adopted, that is to say, where the target group can learn to enact dominant normative practices – and in doing so, transition into insiders, a role which is portrayed as desirable for the mothers, their children, their integration, and for the Swedish economy and welfare state. Insiderhood is constructed as a number of related distant or hard to reach ‘destinations’ which the immigrant mother is implied to be on a figurative journey or route towards. The open preschool is positioned as a setting that helps the mothers reach these destinations by offering activities specifically designed to mitigate the disruption caused to *etablering* by maternity, offering a resolution to its

(apparent) incompatibility with *childcaring*⁶⁵ by serving as a site where both can occur in parallel.-Participation in education, and the transition to gainful employment and self-sufficiency are given as the indicators of insiderness, or the ‘destinations’.

In a chapter entitled ‘Strengthened connection to the labour market’, it is suggested that explaining explicitly to visitors how the welfare state is financed can make it easier for ‘the foreign born’ to take a step closer to the labour market. One example of this does this by specifically invoking parenting and preschool, suggesting visitors be taught “that Sweden is a country with a dual-earner model, that taxes finance our shared welfare system, [and] that preschool is an important part of the education system, and a prerequisite for parents to be able to work” (Larsson et. al, 2020, p.53) This assumes a deficit perspective on visitors’ understanding of the Swedish welfare state, and positions knowledge about the connection between employment, tax, childcare and welfare as something that would make it easier for them to seek work. An expression such as this can be interpreted as assuming that visitors have the *conditions* to align with societal ‘gainful employment’ norms, and that it is their *lack of understanding of their obligations to the collective* that is stopping them seeking work. While this sense is mitigated by other discourses in the *Toolbox*, it is nonetheless reminiscent of discourses positioning immigrants as net recipients of welfare rather than net contributors to society.

The normative model of the equal, working parent is lifted specifically in discussion of a labour-market-preparation course in a Helsingborg open preschool; in the example the norms of the working parent’s day to day logistics are operationalised as part of the didactic decision making around labour market entry content. This approach draws on a discourse of parenthood that invokes both the personal and the collective, and indicates that the learning content would include *conditions* for combining work and parenthood, positioned as a normative practice. It positions being a working parent as within the true for parents in Sweden, and limits the possibilities for alternatives (for example being a stay-at-home parent) to be positioned as actual alternatives to pursue in talk or in practice. An important way that knowledge of SALI as a condition of becoming an insider is established is through invoking the educational benefits preschool as an aspect of labour market entry. By explicitly linking preschool, work and employment, the working parent norm is established, and valorised.

The economic aspect of insiderness is woven together with the social aspects, with adherence to dominant norms highlighted as the outcome required

⁶⁵ The term *childcaring* is used in this thesis to refer to the act of physically taking responsibility and care for of a child, and its use has precedent within literature on parenting (see for example (Ball, 2013; Connelly, 2016; Irastorza & Bevelander, 2021). *Childcaring* is distinguished from *childcare*, which is used primarily to mean an institutional setting for out-of-the-home child-caring such as a preschool or childminder.

for immigrants to become insiders, and the open preschool positioned as the arena for learning towards this outcome. This is exemplified in statements such as “Open preschool can be an important arena for the municipality’s labour market initiatives with the aim of reducing the gap in establishment that occurs during parental leave” (Larsson et. al, 2020, p.53). Perceived hindrances to the mothers’ participation are also described, and these can be logistical, cultural, or stem from lack of knowledge, or insecurity about societal norms and practices.

Establishment activities usually entail following a structured trajectory that can, in the case of women, often be disrupted when they have a child. Caring responsibilities for a child (childcaring) are implied to be incompatible with establishment activities. Immigrant women who are pregnant or childcaring are sited in a deficit position relative to those who are not similarly ‘burdened’ in the establishment journey towards an insider position – that is to say, someone who has engaged in SALI learning initiatives and is gainfully employed, studying or jobseeking. Parenthood as a hindrance is established by implying incompatibility of pregnancy and childcaring with a mother’s availability for full time uninterrupted gainful employment. This degree of participation is positioned as lower relation to men’s, but also ‘insider’ parents, suggesting that the target group’s lower participation in ‘insider’ normative practices is related to both their gender and their migration background. Childcaring as a hinder to establishment is further constructed through the journeying metaphor by associating parental leave with the journey being difficult, longer, and taking a longer time (than for men). For example, this can be seen in statements like “The Toolbox addresses those of you who, in a professional capacity, meet foreign born parents and their children during parental leave, and who want to make their way into the Swedish society easier” (Larsson et. al, 2020, p.6); “Parental leave is a reason for establishment taking longer time for foreign born women than for men” (Larsson et. al, 2020, p.6) and “One way of shortening the path to studies and work is language teaching during parental leave” (Larsson et. al, 2020, p.21).

Shared migration background is a commonality which can be operationalised when immigrant mothers who are ‘further along’ in their establishment journey support those taking their ‘first steps’ into the society. Central to this are references to the way in which the municipal examples described in the Toolbox have worked together with immigrant mothers who have participated in establishment activities and are now in a position to share their experiences and knowledge with those who are still ‘outsiders’. Further to this, a bridging metaphor is also used explicitly in relation to the work of a particular profession, bridgebuilders, who are themselves immigrants on the same journey, but who are further ahead, and can use their learned knowledge and skills to support mothers ‘further behind’ by relating their shared cultural background to the destination culture. Description of these ‘trailblazers’ positions them semantically and latently in a maternal or sororal role in relation to the

‘steptakers’, and the references made in the *Toolbox* to them serve to give concrete examples of the types of resources available to practitioners wishing to reorganise their settings, or to put it another way, to become curriculum making actors along with SKR.

The organisatory conditions of the open preschool are constructed as offering a unique opportunity for the target group. The open preschool is described as flexible, open, adaptive, well established, and primarily a site for parents and parenting. – a place where hindrances to establishment caused by childcaring and the logistics of day to day life are made irrelevant through making space for participation *and* childcaring. A key part of this spacemaking entails the physical space – in the second part of the *Toolbox*, where educators are invited to reflect on and evaluate their settings. Suitability of and access to the educational environment are constructed as important points to consider, with educators invited to ask themselves questions such as: How can we adapt the premises so that it is suitable for both a teaching situation for parents and the small children? and How easy is it to get oneself there? (Larsson et al., 2020) This kind of didactic-decision-making-for-access is also advocated for in the way open preschools can organise their learning activities in order to accommodate the logistics of family life. Educators are invited to consider carefully the time of day it is best to schedule a SALI session, and where on an open preschool’s daily schedule such as session should be placed in order to foster attendance (Larsson et al., 2020).

As noted in Chapter 6, broadly speaking, the open preschool, although described as a pedagogical setting, is not generally organised in a manner associated with formalised institutional educational settings such as schools. In the *Toolbox*, however, activities are described which share elements more often associated with school, such as language teaching. Additionally, the open preschool is described in terms which recall other kinds of less formalised learning environments (such as discussion groups or similar). This description of preparatory Swedish for Immigrants at an open preschool in the west of Sweden is presented here as illustrative of the open preschool’s betweenness:

Parents register their interest in participating and they are encouraged to report absence in order to practice routines. The activity consists of three parts: a lesson, fika, and song-time.The lesson takes place for an hour and a half, led by a trained SFI teacher.....Parallel to the teaching, the children can meet the open preschool’s educators. The pedagogical activity also gives parents a good introduction to preschool, which means that many of the participants in preparatory SFI also enrol their children in preschool.....The fika time afterwards offers a light, social context where participants can practise words and phrases from the lesson. The song-time that rounds off the session is part of the language training where parents and children sing songs both in Swedish and in the parents’ mother tongues. (Larsson et al., 2020, p.24)

In this extract, the open preschool is positioned as a setting whereby the target group can ‘act out’ habits and practices from the domain of study and gainful employment, for example registering, and reporting absence. The activity allows for these practices, yet the setting does not demand them. That registering and reporting absence are in direct contrast to the regular routines of the open preschool serves to highlight the particular nature of SALI initiatives in the open preschool, and invites the educators to organise the setting in a fundamentally new way. This can be understood as a desired outcome of the didactic organisation of SALI in the open preschool.

7.6.3 Continuing the negotiation: final reporting and subsequent developments

As is usual with large scale initiative such as this, the SKR Öppen förskola för språk och integration project concluded with the publication of a final report (Skolverket, 2021), summarising the work done, and making recommendations going forward. The final report makes ten conclusions of relevance to continued work, including:

- The target group in need of inputs is considerable
- The *etablerings* programme needs to be better adapted to the target group
- The open preschool ‘scoops up’ a wide range of participants by being ‘low threshold’ and having skilled and adept staff
- Open preschool offers a wide variety of initiatives, but is often overlooked as a potential partner in integration work.
- Open preschool is an important bridge to preschool
- Initiatives connected to the labour market can increase
- A national guidance document would contribute to making visible the important platform which the open preschool is – the Swedish National Agency for Education to be tasked with this.
- Increased participation by leadership.
- Consideration of the problem around Stadsbidrag not offering a secure long term solution.

(Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021, pp.7-10)

In terms of curriculum making activity, one aspect of the final report is especially noteworthy in terms of the way it functions as a potential mechanism of change with regard to adult learning in the open preschool. To wit, the proposal that the Swedish National Agency for Education should produce a national guidance document:

In those municipalities that were visited during the project, many [employees] expressed a wish to have some kind of guidance document to *hålla sig i* have to hand when planning their setting and its activities. Only having access to

information about how the work is done within their own municipality feels rather lonesome. SKR's Toolbox has been produced to meet this need and support those who wish to use open preschool as an arena to promote integration and *etablering*. However, open preschool's core task is to be a meeting place for all parents. SKR views that one of its strengths is the fact that attendance is voluntary, and that this grows from local needs. Having a national guidance document, where tips and good advice about successful ways of working are presented, would be a great support for [the open preschool]. SKR propose that Skolverket are tasked with producing such a document, which highlights, amongst other things, the important role which open preschool has in easing the transition to preschool, the first step in the education system.

(Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2021, p.9)

This proposal does not mention the existence or withdrawal of the previously available *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* – whilst it is not possible to know from the data the reasons for this, the apparent omission of what would seem like an obvious reference stands out as somewhat irregular in the discursive context. However, it is important, and interesting, to observe that the final report expressly notes that the *core* task of the open preschool is to be a meeting place for all parents. Furthermore, it notes that the voluntary attendance model and the tailoring to local contexts are key strengths. The passage above contains a type of metacommentary on the nature of the open preschool's curriculum, bringing up educators' experiences of isolation and their wish to have a guidance document regarding their work with SALI, but positioning this wish against the background of the open preschool's main task – thus indicating that SKR recognise that SALI is indeed *not* the primary task of the open preschool. The relationship between this metacommentary and the final part of the passage, highlighted in bold, can be understood as an act of curriculum making that leverages educator accounts of their experiences of curriculum making in relation to a specific content area, in order to legitimise a proposed macro curriculum making act – The Swedish National Agency for Education producing a supportive guidance document for practitioners. This proposal is then linked in the final sentence to curriculum making in relation to children and the regular preschool, positioning the open preschool as a pre-formal setting, and foregrounding the child facing purpose (in an echo of earlier Skolverket documentation).

As noted, *SOU 2020:67 Preschool for all children - for better language development in Swedish* (SOU 2020:67) made recommendations aimed at increasing preschool attendance amongst all children, but in particular foreign-born children, in order that they might make greater progress in Swedish. In this respect, the text as a whole is an example of curriculum making in relation to the regular preschool, however within it, is a description of how open preschool can be operationalised in the proactive preventative outreach work recommended. As such, an act of macro curriculum making in relation to the purpose of the open preschool is identifiable, in which its preschool

preparatory function is foregrounded over the other purposes, and the *out-reach* purpose of the open preschool is effectively prescribed, a further action which can be understood as macro curriculum making, as indicated by this passage:

SKR's conclusion is that open preschools can promote participation in preschool and facilitate starting preschool if they actively work with this as a goal (SOU 2020:67, p.125)

Describing open preschools that do not have increased preschool attendance as a focus area, the text states that:

Even in settings that don't have a focus on increased preschool attendance, staff inform [visitors] about preschool and motivate the women to let their children go to preschool. The staff describe that in such conversations, they focus on the benefits of preschool according to research, and link these to the women's wishes about their children's future life chances.....In order for the activities of the open preschool to be able to contribute to increased participation in preschool it is [therefore] considered to be important that the setting is clearly tasked with doing this... (SOU 2020:67, p.125)

Further to this, the macro curriculum making is linked explicitly to supra curriculum making in relation to children whose first language is not the majority language in the country they reside in. This is done through the positioning of SOU 2020:67 as part of a European Council wide initiative to reach 95% preschool attendance among children between the ages of four and school-starting-age in EU countries by 2020 (SOU 2020:67). In this way, then, the description of the open preschool in a way which arguably delimits its function in relation to immigrant families, is also a supra curriculum making act for the open preschool. The primary recommendation of the SOU, namely that preschool should be made obligatory for children in the autumn of the calendar year they turn five, was not included in the final version of the legislation, but legislation was passed obliging municipalities to engage in proactive preventative outreach work with target groups with the aim of increasing attendance in preschool, and furthermore obliging them to reserve preschool places for all children without a place from the age of three years, offering the place to them yearly thereafter. In this legislation, the open preschool is named as a possible actor in the proactive preventative outreach work, cementing its role in the newly oriented curriculum activity.

The final curriculum making activity identified under this umbrella category involves a follow up initiative to SKR's open preschool for language and integration, whereby the intended learning content and purpose are broadened to include a more specific labour-market entry component. The documents available for analysis at the time of writing were SKR's webpage (Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, 2024) for the project, and two government

documents, namely a 2023 press release⁶⁶ announcing the initiative, and a 15 page document detailing the agreement between the government and SKR to work on a new initiative to increase foreign born women's labour market entry (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2023). Together, these outlined the main aims of the initiative, namely to:

..promote an increased level of labour market establishment for foreign born women with children aged 0-6 years, by strengthening the existing capacity of municipalities' and other collaboration actors' to...build sustainable forms of collaboration based on the needs of the target group and on the local organisatory conditions, reach out to the target group, offer appropriate inputs with the open preschool as the setting, [and] refer visitors at open preschool on to relevant societal actors. (Arbetsmarknadsdepartement, 2023, p.4)

The overall purpose for the initiative is given as increasing the number of foreign born women who enter the labour market, and this is framed as being important for the women and their families, and from a socioeconomic perspective, which in turn is positioned as being key to gender equality politics. *SOU 2023:24 Increasing participation in establishment activities: Equitable possibilities for integration* recognises that the open preschool's work with language and integration initiatives is by now well established, but notes a problem in that financing for such work can be time-limited and insecure, and that there is no national advisory document supporting municipalities' work with such issues (SOU 2023:24). This can be understood as an expression of deficit regarding the resources for curriculum making which exist in relation to this specific function of the open preschool and its work. The SOU notes that SKR have requested such a national advisory document, but that the Swedish National Agency for Education has not produced one on the grounds that the open preschool is a voluntary setting for municipalities, for which they do not produce national guidelines. (SOU 2023:24, p. 314)

On this point a tension is noted between the open preschool's official status and the apparent (actual or perceived) need for any kind of educational setting to have official curriculum plan – again, the flexibility the open preschool has as a result of it not having an obligatory curriculum plan is not total, as the absence of the plan can be the factor which impacts other parts of the curriculum making machinery. Of note here is a particularly relevant example of curriculum making in SOU 2023:24, namely the committee's official recommendation that the Swedish National Agency for Education should be tasked with distributing state subsidies to municipal *adult education* to allow them to run SALI and career counselling in the open preschool. This solution is proposed as a way of ensuring municipalities can offer increased longevity for SALI education activities in open preschool (SOU 2023:24). This is identified

⁶⁶ Pressmeddelande 16th March 2023 <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2023/03/regeringen-och-skr-i-gemensam-satsning-for-att-fa-fler-utrikes-fodda-kvinnor-i-arbete/>

here as a supra-influenced macro curriculum making activity with the intention of delimiting and to some extent prescribing intended content, learner group, and purpose for open preschools. This is, however, curriculum making in relation to adult education, enacted in the open preschool, rather than curriculum making in relation to the open preschool, given that open preschool is positioned as *one among many arenas* for the pedagogical work. This is distinct to initiatives such as those described in 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 above, where the purpose can be said to fall within the framework of family support *in the form* of SALI activities.

7.7 Ways to make a curriculum

Both the adult learning purpose of the open preschool, and activities for and with immigrant families, have been described in texts for and about the open preschool since the setting's very earliest days. Despite its lack of a formal, binding curriculum document, these results indicate that open preschool is not lacking a curriculum. Open preschool has curriculum in the sense that a body of texts exist that can be shown to impact the organisation of the setting. These texts do not in each case derive discursive dominance from an authoritative author or source – instead they can be seen to come from diverse sources, and to impact organisation of the setting in diverse ways.

For example, by presenting research from a local context which is recontextualised as the basis of a peer-learning resource; by contentising professional experience and recontextualising it to form the basis of a professional development course; or by drawing on practitioner inside knowledge to produce and distribute a 'toolbox' to be used in the service of implementing government policy. These, and other examples can be said to have resulted in well established and structured routines for selection of intended learning content and organisation of educational activities. A key indicator of this is the fact that the practices in the open preschool were identified by the government as conducive to the setting being deployed in a particular way, indicating that they were perceived as being consistent and uniform in their overall approach.

As can be seen from the illustrative examples here, this consistency appears to have come about in part due to a cycle like process of activity, identifying or reporting of activity as good practice, recontextualisation of the reporting, and new activity in other contexts based on the good practice examples. Such an interpretation is consistent with the theoretical premises of Curriculum Making Activity, and highlights the multi-actor, multi-site nature of curriculum making. As well as work with immigrant families being a recurring feature of texts for and about the open preschool (and, then, of the open preschool's curriculum) since the 1970s, the overall *purposes* expressed for the open preschool in relation to immigrant families appears to remain constant over time. Descriptions from 1970s and present day of why such work is

needed are strikingly similar, with isolation, the need for contact and a network, the need of a place in which to learn and practise Swedish, and a place to find out about diverse aspects of Swedish society and culture, recurring in the empirical material. Further to this, the open preschool is described as a place where minority and / or minoritised home language and cultural practices can be enacted and shared. Since the mid-2010s, a shift is visible in how SALI has been treated as part of macro curriculum making. Most recent developments can be said to come close to being a kind of prescriptive curriculum by proxy in that funding may come to be attached to formalising provision of SALI initiatives in relation to particular goals / guidelines. This can be seen as a result of curriculum making in relation to other settings impacting the open preschool, and changes in macro and supra immigration politics.

8 Educators' accounts of purpose, content and methods in their educational work with immigrant families

In Chapters Eight and Nine, the results of the interview study are presented. Together, the analyses presented in the two chapters address research areas three and four. In Chapter Eight, focus is on questions 3a and 4a. Question 4b is addressed in Chapter Nine.

3) Contemporary accounts of educational activities with immigrant families in the open preschool

- a) How do educators in the open preschool describe their educational work with immigrant adults in terms of intended learning content, purposes, and methods?

4) Discourses about language, immigration and integration as a factor in the organisation of educational activities in the open preschool

- a) What discourses about language, immigration and integration may be identified in educators' accounts of their work?
- b) In what ways, if any, can these discourses be identified as a factor in curriculum making and didactic decision making?

Viewed in terms of the didactic triangle, the analytical work on the interview material focuses educators' understandings of *what* content forms the basis of the educational activities for a *specific learner group*, *what purposes* they assign to the work, as well as the *how they organise* the educational activities, and *why* they organise them in a particular way. Further to this, and inherently related, it pays attention to the way in which educators describe language, immigration and integration as concepts, and considers the potential relevance of educators' stance on their didactic decision making.

Results in this chapter are presented in two sections. In 8.1, results of the didactic content analysis are presented. In 8.2, the results of the Reflective Thematic Analysis are presented. Through the dovetailing of thematic and didactic analyses, it is possible to create knowledge about the organisation of the open preschool as a site of learning for immigrant parents and their children, from the point of view of the educators.

8.1 Didactic content analysis: content and purpose in educators' accounts of SALI education in the open preschool

56 instances of exemplified didactic decision making were identified, and interrogated to isolate the content in each example (the didactic *what*) as well as paying attention to the relevance of 'who' the learner is and 'why' they need to learn such content. Six areas from which the information, knowledge and skills identified as content were observed – that is to say, the didactic 'what' is answered by content that can be organised into six areas, namely: *cultural knowledge, practical knowledge, the Swedish language, being and belonging, values, and views and attitudes about language and multilingualism in Sweden.* The content identified for each of these areas is summarised here in 8.1, and examples given where suitable. A detailed overview of the instances of exemplified didactic decision making is given in Tables 18 - 24 in Appendix B.

8.1.1 Cultural knowledge

Learning content categorised under cultural knowledge can be summarised as information about normative cultural practices typical in Sweden, often relating to a person's free time. Here, a non-theoretical understanding of the term culture is adopted, and is used to refer broadly to features or practices from everyday life that are characteristic of a particular society or group.

Ten of the 13 examples relate in some way to being outdoors: some relate to outdoor activities such as berry picking, swimming, and visiting the forest or a farm, others relate to the health benefits of spending time outdoors, others to the practicalities and legalities of participating in different outdoor activities. In one example, childcare assistant Allie recalls a mother who had moved from the United States learning about the Swedish habit of having babies nap outdoors:

... there was an American parent who came in and all the babies were lined up sleeping outside, she said, Oh God in America they'd call the *police*, they'd be down here, they'd take your *child away*, you'd be in the *police station*, whereas here... but she's been here for a few years so she was laughing, but she said my friends would go mad if they knew I left my baby outside.

Extract 1 (Interview 21)

Here the organisatory set up of the open preschool included space for the babies to nap in their strollers outdoors, and the mother had observed this, compared the practice to her own experiences, what was 'true' for her for her in terms of parenting knowledge, and interrogated the practice by drawing comparisons with the meaning the practice would hold in the country she moved

from. We learn that the mother has become accustomed to the practice, and now even does it herself, but it is notable that she comments on the practice even after a few years in the country – this can be understood as indicating this was noteworthy, novel information for her, and especially relevant to her learning about parenting in Sweden.

Further to the content areas above, some activities have natural history content, for example seasons, life cycles, animals or forest items such as pinecones. The other content areas in this category relate to typical cultural activities that can be done with young children, namely arts and crafts, and visiting the library, and to cultural norms about weaning and ‘first foods’.

The nature of some of the activities (the didactic ‘how’) which constitute the setting for the content learning indicate the way in which content in the open preschool can relate to a number of different learners (who) and purposes (why) simultaneously. (Specifically, child learners, adult learners, and parents-as-learners.) In many of the activities, it is evident that they are organised in such a way that there are multiple ways to make meaning, depending upon the learner’s prior knowledge. This is not especially unusual for an educational activity, but is distinct in the specific context of the open preschool, in that the different types of learners have completely different backgrounds and conditions for learning – one type are children, the other adults; adults may be learning new things for the first time, or they may be learning about their relevance as part of parenting.

One example from the data illustrates this particularly well: it comes from a longer passage in which educator Mariana talks about how she and her colleagues at Dandelions open preschool aim to broaden the both the perspective and the physical sphere of movement of the immigrant parents who visit their open preschool. During her account, Mariana mentions that there are many obstacles which hinder the families from taking part in typical cultural activities for families with children, and gives the example of the 4H-Farm⁶⁷

We have one of those 4H farms about 400m away, but a lot of parents, they don’t know what it is. It’s new, it’s alien to them, they don’t dare open the *gate*, they think maybe it’s something *private*, or that it costs money. So yeah, we go there together, and we show them – you just open the gate, go in with your child, it’s always open, you don’t need to ask staff for permission, you can just go straight in and look at the animals [.....] [So] there are really quite a lot of hinders. Take 4H – I think everyone in Sweden knows what 4H is, a 4H farm, but if you’ve not grown up with it, it’s a brand new concept. (*SC says she didn’t know about it, coming from UK*) Very Swedish! (laughs) So we go

⁶⁷ A ‘4H-gård’ meaning ‘4H farm’ is part of a network of farms around Sweden which are open to all and free to visit. 4H farms are often located in urban areas, and aim to give youngsters between 6-25 years the chance to learn about a typical Swedish farm, as well as participate in the running of the farm and care of the animals. 4H farms have been a feature of Swedish life since the 1970s, and cite democracy education as a key element in their work. (Sveriges 4H, 2024).

there, we follow the seasons, we follow the animals. Now the animals on the farm are going to start having their young, and we've followed them the whole journey, with their big pregnant bellies. So now we're going to go and see the lambs on Wednesday. So we kind of follow these cycles, so it becomes second nature for children and adults.

Extract 2 (Interview 13)

In the extract, Mariana describes content areas which can be understood as being oriented towards the child learners, towards the adult learners, and towards the 'parents-as-learners'. Farms, farm animals and their young arguably constitute the main content areas for the children. For the adults, Mariana's account indicates that there is the potential for meaning to be made around a number of content areas – *what a 4H farm is*, *the fact that you can attend a 4H farm with your child*, *how to visit the farm* (both in terms of the logistics and the 'rules'), and *what kinds of things you can see or observe at the farm*. This last area ties into another type of learning content identifiable in Mariana's account, namely that parents *should* take their children to visit the 4H farm. It is positioned as a normative cultural activity, and one which should naturally form part of childhood in Sweden. As such, then, it is portrayed as a practice which parents ought participate in as 'parents in Sweden', and is aimed at them in their capacity as parents-as-learners.

8.1.2 Practical knowledge

Learning content categorised as practical knowledge is defined here as factual information relating to everyday life, including meetings with public bodies and authorities. Almost half of the 11 instances in this category relate to the open preschool itself, or to preschool. For example, the conditions for attending, what happens in these settings, what the benefits of preschool are, and how to apply for preschool. Opportunities are described for parents to learn about the preschool as a social norm, about the ideological reasoning behind preschool, and about how to interact with authorities in order to have your child participate in preschool. The other examples in the category entailed content of relevance to various kinds of interactions with public bodies, for example how to use the bus, information about medical and dental services, and local amenities of relevance to families, such as homework help, and help with finding and applying for jobs. One notable content area of this type was the social services, and one example from the empirical material demonstrates particularly well the way in which educators in an open preschool create opportunities for specific content learning in response to local conditions and local needs. In these extracts, preschool teacher Sara and district mother Lita talk about their work to dispel myths about the social services which had been circulating, and becoming increasingly pervasive, in some communities. Sara

begins by talking about the parent cafes they hold, with different themes each time, including on one occasion social services:

... it's a huge thing among newly arrived families – how you see the social services. They are often scared that social services will come and take the children. That's what they think. Social services take the children. It is *extraordinarily* important to put paid to those prejudices, because it is simply not the case [.....] I know it's been going around on TikTok, and at some point it was being said that social services mainly take Muslim children, and we had a discussion about that here... we really made an effort to dispel that [.....] at parent-café you have the chance to talk about all these things, sit down and have a coffee together and talk about what the parents are feeling, and I mean, this is a think that comes up often [.....] It's really a case of creating a sense of security at open preschool, so that we are something they can rely on. And what message does it give if we are not credible, or not a place you can get that sense of security? [.....] I mean, we're the first bit, between BVC when you've had your baby, then you go to open preschool, and from open preschool on to preschool.

Extract 3 (Interview 5)

Lita (who had been present during Sara's interview) added that they had difficulties in getting some immigrant families to come to open preschool, because they were so afraid that it would lead to social services taking their children. In this example, the educators express two purposes for the selection of the content about social services. Firstly, it is important for them that visitors learn factual, credible information about the social services in order to counter misinformation they have received. Relatedly, the visitors' learning about social services is discussed in relation to a broader purpose, namely teaching visitors that the open preschool is a safe place that they can trust, and a safe stepping stone into other areas of public life.

8.1.3 The Swedish language

11 instances of teaching and learning in relation to a content involved the Swedish language, more specifically aspects of Swedish as a second language including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and prosody, and song lyrics. Further to this, a number of examples focused around both language content and strategies for developing literacy skills. Around half the examples centred around content with a direct relevance for parenting, either through child related vocabulary (such as body parts, toys, clothes, play), through parenting related language (such as bringing up children, and weaning), or through learning Swedish children's songs – most often in the context of songtime with familiar 'classics' but in one example, through songs written by the educator herself and designed to promote vocabulary learning. Six examples centred on SFI type content and / or simple everyday Swedish such as greetings and introductions. Two of the examples additionally had SFI itself functioning

as learning content, with the open preschool serving as a place where visitors could learn about future language learning routes. One example stands out as somewhat different from the others – a planned activity where visitors shared soup recipes, wrote simple ingredients lists, then cooked and ate the soup together with each other and the educators, with Swedish as the shared language of the activity.

Of note is that in the majority of these examples, the purpose for the language content - familiarity with Swedish, and the confidence to begin using it appear to have taken precedence over accuracy in the majority of the examples. The fact that the content areas and types of language (for example greetings) are primarily highly situated to the specific open preschool setting (that is to say, they have immediate relevance to the parent-child-educator or parent-child-parent scenarios) appears to suggest that *that* visitors speak Swedish is more important than *what* they say, and *that* they learn to position themselves as users of Swedish, and to see Swedish as part of their linguistic repertoires is more important than whether or not they retain specific vocabulary items or phrases, for example.

8.1.4 Being and belonging

The category being and belonging has nine instances of learning situations where the content can be described as the explicit message that families are welcome and valued in the physical and conceptual spaces that constitute Sweden. Six of the nine examples entail conveying the ways which the open preschool is understood as a place where visitors belong. This ‘belonging’ is expressed to visitors (and therefore constitutes a meaning which educators wish for them to know) in a variety of ways; firstly, through construction of the open preschool as a place where visitors are actively welcomed, and where it is made clear to them that their continued attendance is desirable. Secondly, educators intend visitors to understand that they are welcome by means of provision of a learning environment that is designed to be open-ended and inviting. Thirdly, the ‘belonging’ meaning is expressed through intentional highlighting the open preschool as a place where parenthood is a commonality shared by all visitors. Further to this, the open preschool is constructed as a place where not only the visitors themselves belong, but where their Swedish belongs too. It is established as a safe space where their use of Sweden with staff or with other visitors (including Swedish speakers) would be not only valued, but welcomed and encouraged.

One important example relates to the way in which the open preschool is not only positioned as a place where international parents can find shared belonging as parents, but where they can experience belonging as an *international* parent. Whilst integration into Swedish society is a purpose attached to many of the examples mentioned in this sub-section, and indeed the section as a whole, this example emphasises to the learner that being an immigrant is

an important factor in their experience and practicing of parenthood in Sweden, and that the open preschool can be a place where they can experience solidarity in matters of particular relevance to international parents.

Two examples relate to the way in which visitors are encouraged to know that they have a place in society, both metaphorically, and literally, and that they have every right to move and 'be' in the public domain. One of these examples entailed visitors learning to find their way around in the local area, with educators scaffolding independence in this skill by, for example, meeting them half way on a route to an outing. The other example relates to the way in which an educator, preschool teacher Karin at Acorns open preschool, organised situations for scaffolded participation in public domains, which led to her observing what she understood to be an act of learning relating to the visitors' use of public spaces for socialising.

We've started having a lot of outdoor activities, and... we were at a park which is a little bit further away from here, there's a bit of a walk to get there, and my working day finished while we were there, so I started to pack my things up and said goodbye. Usually, everyone tends to pack up as well, and leave at the same time, but yesterday there were lots of families who stayed. And so I asked one of them, because one of the dads was here this morning, [and he said] 'yeah, there were three or four of us, we stayed till half three, four o'clock'. And so I felt, that's also a good thing, because then it's not *me* there gathering people together, but rather it's they themselves who want to stay a while and hang out in the park, and have a nice time together. So maybe it'll be easier then to say 'I saw that it's going to be beautiful weather tomorrow as well, how about we meet up in the park then, too?' and it leads to more opportunities.

Extract 4 (Interview 3)

By gaining experience of socialising in the park together along with her, the families, Karin suggests, have become able to use the space independently, and it is suggested that this in turn could lead to further future interactions with other families. While concrete information such as the location of the park is identifiable as learned content here, and a kind of learning has been implied to have taken place in terms of growth in confidence, it is also possible to view this understanding as the parents learning or acquiring a context within which they feel comfortable to use the public spaces in a way that they may previously have felt isolated from doing, or ill equipped for.

8.1.5 Values

In the teaching and learning of content categorised here as relating to values, focus was placed broadly on democratic values relating to equality in diversity. In all seven instances, the content took the form of a specific example of democratic values being applied within the Swedish context. In three of the examples, the values relate to gender equality, two relate to diversity,

specifically people with NPF⁶⁸ diagnoses, and different family constellations, and two relate to enacting agency as citizens in a democratic society.

Of these seven instances, one is particularly interesting as it illustrates the way in which educators actively integrate democratic values into their daily practice with the aim of instilling them in their visitors. Childcare assistant Allie at Squirrels open preschool describes the way in which visitors are greeted, with the specific aim of conveying the democratic values the setting holds in relation to family constellations:

I feel that we as people who work there foster that kind of open environment, the way we talk to people, the way we talk *about* people, the language we use. We're very... we try, hopefully, to... we say parent, not mother or father, if we talk about family groups we will kind of ask, oh, who's in your family as opposed to oh where's your mummy or where's your daddy? Oh is this your little sister? We'll say oh who's your little sibling to try and... so people don't necessarily feel, cos it might be a same sex family, or they might not, might be a single parent...

Extract 5 (Interview 21)

By being asked a question in a way that is somewhat unexpected compared to how it might ordinarily be asked, or by hearing others being asked and responding to the question, visitors have the opportunity to interrogate their understandings of and language use surrounding family norms, and (while the empirical material does not indicate this for a specific case) an opportunity to adapt new practices as a result of their learning.

8.1.6 Views and information about language and multilingualism in Sweden

The five instances in this category can be summarised as normative and factual information about living in multilingual Sweden. Two of the examples refer explicitly to the importance of books and reading for children's language and literacy development, and as a positive experience for children. As part of this, the importance of parents reading in their first languages is lifted. In this way, parents also learn about the views held by the educators about use of languages other than Swedish. Educators' views on use of languages other than Sweden constitute the main learning content of two of the other examples – the message, expressed once implicitly and once explicitly, that use of languages other than Swedish is welcomed and valued in the open preschool, and as an aspect of parenting.

⁶⁸ NPF is a commonly used acronym standing for neuropsykiatriska funktionsnedsättningar and referring to neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism or ADHD. In everyday use it can be used as an adjective meaning 'neurodivergent'. Precedent for the use of these terms can be found, for example, in Sveriges Psykologförbund's Psykologilexikon <https://www.psykologiguiden.se/psykologilexikon>

One example has the concept of multilingualism as its main content, with educators describing that they receive many questions from parents about which languages they should use with their children, and how. In this particular example (and elsewhere in the empirical material, in other types of example), the educator describes academic research as the source of the information they convey to the parents, and they talk positively about being able to rely on research in this way. Here a distinction is visible in the way educators work with content about multilingualism as an aspect of identity, and as a factor in parent-child relationships, and how they talk about it as an object of study. In the case of the former, educators use affective language which foregrounds the phatic function for families of a shared language. In the case of the latter, educators are keener to convey externally accredited, credible information, and express that while they acknowledge parents' agency in whether or not to accept or believe that information, they themselves are not keen to deviate from it when it becomes a content item in the setting.

8.2 Reflective Thematic Analysis: Educators' views of their work with immigrant families, language and SALI education – what, how, and why?

The content areas above indicated above that, in broad terms, the relationship between the learner and the content is described in terms of the learners' *knowledge gaps* being attributable to their *unfamiliarity* with the Swedish language and norms relating to life in Sweden. Specifically, the content that may be identified in the empirical material can be described as the knowledge and skills needed in order to act in a way characteristic of normative Swedish parenting, educational and employment practices. A similar approach is identified in the construction of the themes which follow here as the results of the Reflective Thematic Analysis.

The themes created in reflexive dialogue with the data that constitute the initial analytical result of the thematic analysis are summarised below, and following this, each theme is illustrated with empirical examples, expounded and discussed in relation to the others. The themes can be understood as commonalities in educators' descriptions of their practices, and in the discourses about language, immigration and integration which dominate in their accounts, which allow me to sketch out (in Chapter 10) a characteristic way of arranging the educational activities in order to facilitate learning.

Theme	Central Organising Concept
1. Come as you are, this place is for you, and it's safe.	Staff view <i>their</i> primary role as providing a secure, low-demand, low-threshold environment for families. While the primary parent facing purpose of the open preschool <i>as a setting</i> is parent support, educators express that their own primary role is to provide a secure environment for families, where security is expressed through and can be understood in terms of the Swedish term <i>trygghet</i> .
2. We are here to support you.	The adult-facing purpose of open preschool as a setting is overwhelmingly described as support. Educators express that they view the primary adult-facing purpose of the open preschool is to support and strengthen all parents in the enactment of their parenting role.
3." It's parenthood which unites us."	Visitors to the open preschool are received first and foremost as parents ⁶⁹ , and parenthood is a precondition and basis for participation. Staff believe that parenthood constitutes a commonality that unifies the visitors, and which forms the basis for the educators' reception and treatment of the adult visitors. This is expressed in terms of foregrounding the parent identity over any other type of identity or role visitors may have.
4. Good parents doing good <i>föräldraskap</i> .	Parents visiting the open preschool are already competent experts. They are their children's most important role models, and any learning that takes place builds on existing skills, with a goal of strengthening them and equipping parents to acquire and act in accordance with a culturally normative set of skills and practices. Parents are encouraged and supported to engage in specific practices that are associated with a normative image of what a 'good' parent is and does. <i>Goodness</i> as expressed in the empirical material can be understood in three ways, best explained by synonyms for the different meanings of good: competent, obedient, and sustaining.

⁶⁹ Or other important adult.

5a. Multilingualism enriches.	The concept of multilingualism is described by educators in terms of its high value. Multilingualism and first languages (mother tongues) is described in terms of being an asset, and enriching of both the individual and of society, and in terms of being a gift that parents can give their children.
5b. Broadening your linguistic repertoire by adding society's shared language	The use of more than one language in daily life (including first languages positioned as minority language practices in relation to Swedish as a majority language) is highly valued as a practice when viewed in terms of individual and family cultural and identity practices. Swedish is understood as society's shared language and valorised as a practice relating to public domains such as education and employment, and as an aspect of visitors' futures. Swedish is valued more highly than other languages as a tool for learning in formal academic and employment settings.
6. The open preschool is a place for learning, but it is not school.	The open preschool is a setting where learning is prevalent. Educators express that learning happens frequently, but also that institutionalised practices of formal teaching and learning environments such as school are broadly incompatible with overall purpose and organisation of the open preschool.

Table 17 Overview of results of the Reflexive Thematic Analysis (themes and central organising concepts)

In Sections 8.2.1 – 8.2.7 below, each theme is described with the help of illustrative empirical examples. The Central Organising Concept for each theme is repeated at the beginning of each section for ease of reference.

8.2.1 Theme One: Come as you are, this place is for you, and it's safe.

Staff view their primary role as providing a secure, low-demand, low-threshold environment for families. While the primary parent facing purpose of the open preschool as a setting is parent support, educators express that their own primary role is to provide a secure environment for families, where security is expressed through and can be understood in terms of the Swedish term trygghet.

In this section, three examples demonstrate the ways in which staff make families feel secure in the open preschool. The term *trygghet* translates directly as 'security', but encompasses a feeling of security based on more than simply the absence of risk – it refers to a feeling of security constructed in the proactive provision of safety expressed in the meeting of physical environment, activity, and personal meeting. Despite the purpose of the open preschool being

discussed in terms of its parent support function, and despite aspirations that parents be supported to engage in particular normative practices, educators express *trygghet* as their *raison d'être*, suggesting that it takes precedence over their pedagogical role, while also, however, pointing out that creating a *trygghet* can be a part of the educational work. Within the theme, *trygghet* is systematically positioned as a prerequisite for learning and participation, both in the open preschool generally, in the specifically educational aspects of the open preschool, and, importantly, in the society as a whole.

...you become a kind of security. A secure person. Many parents, when they leave the open preschool and start in the regular preschool, tell us that they would have liked to carry on at open preschool. They say 'I want you as my educator! It's *trygg* here.'... I think many parents see us as...I mean, this thing with security...to be able to be brave enough in the future to... to feel that you dare have a foundation to stand on. They've been given a foundation in that open preschool has been a place they've been able to come and be themselves, get support... where they've been able to be sad, and where they've laughed a lot. That they've had a kind of security and a way in to the education system, and into society, in fact.

Extract 6 (Interview 2)

In this example, the preschool teacher, Anna, is described as *trygghet*, the open preschool is described as secure, and *trygghet* is something the families have received, and which underpins their capacity to go on and move and act in other public domains. Part of the way in which *trygghet* is created is through unconditionality of care, which is also expressed in this example, in terms of visitors 'being able to be themselves'. This unconditional care underlines the the undemanding nature (Sw. *kravlöshet*) of the open preschool. This too is expressed through the notion of being one's self, and can be understood also in the idea that one can attend the open preschool whether one is happy or sad – there is no requirement to perform strength, or mask vulnerability. Neither is there a requirement to perform vulnerability or mask strength.

A theme that recurs in the data in relation to this theme is the idea that many visitors do not have access to opportunities where they can meet Swedish people, and talk Swedish with them. This is attributed partly to their isolation, partly to limited spheres of movement, and partly to societal factors. Part of the work with *trygghet* is described as making the open preschool a space where immigrant parents *can* meet with Swedish people, in a context where equity through parenting forms the basis for the meeting. Further to this, the open preschool is organised to be a place that is *självklar* for the families, even if they do not feel that other spaces are open to them. In this example, childcare assistant Allie from Squirrels open preschool talks about what role she thinks she plays in the life of international parents:

So those who come to Sweden and are in the process, or possibly not, of learning Swedish. Erm, hopefully, err... what I'd say, I suppose if I would say what I was aiming for would be to be, errr, a person that could support not only, just their introduction to Sweden, and their kind of feeling of helping them to settle in to err the social environment, I suppose starting as a parent with the children, but we also try to give tips and advice because there's so much stuff that's difficult for people that aren't native speaking but also don't know the system. [.....] I suppose when we have international parents that come back, I think that always feels quite nice to know that, oh yeah, they actually feel like that they belong. There's one place that they belong even if they don't feel that they belong in the rest of Sweden yet, they feel that they and their child belong in Squirrels, in the open preschool.

Extract 7 (Interview 21)

A further expression of showing families that educators recognise the many demands they have on them, and as such offering a low threshold, unconditional environment, can be seen in the attention given by educators to parenting as a practice with many corporeal aspects. For this description, I reuse the term *childcaring*. Attention to physical wellbeing (both in terms of health and basic physiological needs) is visible as a factor in educators' didactic decision making. In response to a question about whether an open preschool held specific sessions for immigrant parents, preschool teacher Lotta answered in a way that shows the relevance to them of domestic parenting tasks such as budgeting, cooking, accompanying children in the public domain, and providing clean clothes. In this way, she indicates the relevance of the domestic domain as a site of daily life.

No, I mean, we've tried it now and then, but it hasn't really proven to be what they want...because this area...it's very socioeconomically vulnerable, people's finances, you know, so it's hard to get parents to come at specific times. People come when they themselves feel the need to come, or when they have a chance to get out of the house. Lots of families have a lot of children, and they need dropping off and collecting from different places. People have food cooking in the slow cooker, they have to go down to the laundry room... But when we have had specific groups.....there haven't been so many who've shown up. So the best way to get a win is to meet them when they come of their own accord.

Extract 8 (Interview 17)

8.2.2 Theme Two: We are here to support you.

The adult-facing purpose of open preschool as a setting is overwhelmingly described as support. Educators express that they view the primary adult-facing purpose of the open preschool is to support and strengthen all parents in the enactment of their parenting role.

In this section, two examples indicate the way in which parent support is understood by educators as the core parent-facing purpose of the open preschool. The concept of support for parents is referenced in two main ways in the data – parent support *föräldrastöd* and parenting support *föräldraskapsstöd*. Both terms are used in approximately equal measure (17 and 15 references respectively), either as standalone nouns or as part of compound nouns, and can refer to part of an educator's role, a job title or role in itself, or an aspect of a course, programme or group.⁷⁰ A nuancing of meaning is noticeable in the way parent support and parenting support are used, with the former constructed as something that can be given, offer, or do, and the latter constructed more in terms of a content that can be taught and learned. Parent support is something you can give or offer – it is support given *to* the parent, and is not necessarily *directly* linked to parentcraft or parenting. In this way, activities are organised to align with the learner and their needs, towards the overall purpose of strengthening them. Some illustrative examples of how parent support is expressed in the material include *give parent support, offer parent support, parent supporter, parent support (department), work parent-supportively* and *parent support course*.

Parenting support, on the other hand, is understood more in terms of content that can be taught – it is support in, or with the task of, parenting. Here, activities can be understood as being organised in relation to content intended to lead to a particular outcome. For example, it is expressed variously in terms of *parenting support as a part of the educator's job role; parenting support individually or in a group; work with parenting support; parenting support programme; parenting support as something you can be trained in, parenting support as something that can be researched;*

Although the distinction in usage is not absolute, it is nonetheless relevant in illustrating two strands of the parental support theme, one person-centred (relating more closely to Theme One 'Come as you are' overall), and one content-oriented (relating more closely to Theme Four). The parent(ing) support purpose(s) are not infrequently expressed in relation to the primary child-facing purpose, namely that the open preschool works variously 'in the interests of the child'. In this way, parenting support is directed at parents, but with the ultimate purpose of benefiting the child. Support is positioned as an educational activity, where the knowledge gained by the parents supports the child's

⁷⁰ Further to this, *stöd* is used over fifty times in other, related contexts.

wellbeing. These examples (Extracts 9 and 10) illustrate this. Here the preschool teacher, Amira, was asked what she thought to be her main tasks and responsibilities towards the visitors, and what the purpose of open preschool was in her opinion:

A good climate, good reception (welcome) – because it’s really important that the parents are seen – the adults, but also that the children are seen as well. Because the difference between preschool and open preschool is that we work for the benefit of the child through parents. So it’s really important I think, that first welcome. You also have to be attentive – really listen to what parents bring up – to support. That early support is really important. That we see, and not just close our eyes.

Extract 9 (Interview 1)

In this example, in answer to the same question, preschool teacher Aisha answered:

At the same time, we also [give]information, society information to our visitors. Yes, but important also that we work mainly preventative and support. Support and preventative work, to explain that...we support parents, I mean, we support children through parents. We work with the family, so we don’t just work with the children like we do in preschool.

Extract 10 (Interview 14)

8.2.3 Theme Three: "It’s parenthood which unites us."

Visitors to the open preschool are received first and foremost as parents, and parenthood is a precondition and basis for participation. Staff believe that parenthood constitutes a commonality that unifies the visitors, and which forms the basis for the educators’ reception and treatment of the adult visitors. This is expressed in terms of foregrounding the parent identity over any other type of identity or role visitors may have.

Whilst other identities or roles visitors may have are not treated as wholly irrelevant, in the sense that they are important factors in understanding visitors as individuals, they are treated as effectively irrelevant in understanding visitors as a group, and in relation to one another. Asked about whether there was something particular about the open preschool which made it especially inclusive, preschool teacher Moa said the following:

The open preschool, it's important for integration, we really feel that, and we have many who have just moved into the area, and irrespective of their background, they can have the chance here to meet other families with small children, because we focus on 0-6 year olds with a parent or other important adult. Here, everyone can be a part of the setting, regardless of language, they can feel community, a sense of belonging, and make new contacts. Do you know what it is that unites the visitors? It's the fact that they are parents. It's their parenthood. So I don't know if there are many other arenas where you don't need to know anything about someone's background: you come, you're a parent, you're there in the setting. We think that's so lovely. We do. We think it's so important.

Extract 11 (Interview 7)

The irrelevance of visitors' languages or background, and strikingly, the irrelevance of *knowing* anything about someone else's background is highlighted in the context of what visitors should receive from the setting - fellowship, sense of community, and contact with others. This can be understood as implying that participation in other settings *is* in some respects conditional upon or impacted by background (although it is not explicitly indicated how), and the open preschool is positioned as unique in having this levelling or unifying function.⁷¹

Another preschool teacher, Ida, spontaneously lifted parenthood as a unifier in the context of multilingualism, and what the concept meant for her, for the open preschool she worked in, and for society. Of interest here is that while Ida is talking about multilingualism, the examples she gives (this is further evident in the full interview transcript) relate more closely to culture – to ways of doing things.

It broadens my reality. it's so exciting that there isn't just one way of thinking, but there are many different ways of approaching, for example, food. Ways of seeing the world. this is how we (sic) do things with children where they come from – that broadens *my* view of reality. It's not just like we do here, the Swedish way. I think it brings something to the whole group as well, when we get to meet the *world*, as people. Because it is a person we are meeting. And the thing which unites us, [is] that everyone who meets here is a parent. And we're people who in fact have the same *needs*. To be seen, and find a place where you can feel secure.

Extract 12 (Interview 10)

In this extract, Ida responds to a question problematising the notion of some immigrants being discursively positioned as 'outside society'.

It's such a complex situation, going to a general place where anyone is welcome – to put yourself in a room where you soon read the room. There you quickly understand, oh, I'm in a completely different situation to you. But

⁷¹ (Noting that neither levelling nor unifying are wholly satisfactory terms, as they imply the existence of a hierarchy and / or a disunity).

because our setting is meant to be based on democratic principles, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child as well.....the idea that human dignity is inviolable...if one meets people from that starting point, and then you *as a parent* come in, not with your title, or your profession. We don't talk so much about those... 'I mean, of course we touch on profession sometimes, but it's not that which is important. If you have the children in focus, then everyone in here is just a parent. But the hard thing is... there's been a suggestion from above – we're going to extend the opening times to reach those families we aren't currently reaching. And I feel a bit like this – if we do that, we're directing it to those who feel that they're outside.... But this place should be for everyone!

Extract 13 (Interview 10)

Ida herself lifts a complex dilemma in the organisation of the open preschool relating to their default modus operandi of treating all parents equitably based upon their parent role. She draws a distinction between what she calls a 'general arena' and the open preschool, where general arena can be understood as meaning a setting or situation where aspects of a person's identity (*other than* parenthood) might turn out to become of relevance to their participation, or to the way they are received. In a general arena, there is a risk that one could be impacted by how they think they are perceived or received by others, and that this too could impact the conditions for their participation. By contrast, the open preschool is described as a place of democracy, where human rights are unviolable, and Ida expressly states that it is the child (and resultedly, the parenthood) and the way the setting is organised in relation to the child, that is the basis for this. She makes a further comparison, with a proposal 'from above' that they are to start outreach sessions specifically for the demographics designated as hardest to reach. This is understood as problematic for her, as it appears to be incompatible with the equity-in-parenthood basis for her work in the open preschool.

A further example also illustrates awareness of basic needs, this time sleep and comfort, and makes visible the relevance to educators of paying attention to the physicality of parenting practices and to the paraphernalia of parenting.

We really like being outside and we're really close to a forest and we can see a really lovely forest area, so we had a language walk for parents and children there. And we had a parent who said 'Oh! We can't come because the stroller shakes so much in the forest!' And I said, no, it's lovely for them – you know, this kind of uneven path you have to go on. But so many discovered the forest who maybe hadn't been there before...it turned out really well.

Extract 14 (Interview 7)

The example referred to a time during the Covid19 pandemic where open preschools had to find new ways of running their settings due to social distancing requirements in indoor premises, and as a result, many moved over to outdoor activities. In the example, preschool teacher Moa talks positively about being

outdoors and in the forest (a normative practice with deep importance to Swedish culture), yet she shows in her account attentiveness to a parent's concern regarding the potential incompatibility of the stroller as a way of transporting her child (*självklarhet* of the child's presence) with the physical features of forest paths. It is not possible to know for certain the specific relevance to this mother of the shaking stroller, but it is reasonable to assume her concerns related either to her child's ability to sleep if being pushed over an uneven surface, or to her own ability to manoeuvre the stroller on forest terrain. Irrespective, the parent expressed a perceived hinder to her participation that centred around physical aspects of parenting, and Moa addressed this by reassuring her, and providing a counter understanding of the meeting of a stroller and a forest floor, invoking the uneven ground as a source of physical wellbeing for the child.

8.2.4 Theme Four: Good parents doing good *föräldraskap*.

Parents visiting the open preschool are already competent experts. They are their children's most important role models, and any learning that takes place builds on existing skills, with a goal of strengthening them and equipping parents to acquire and act in accordance with a culturally normative set of skills and practices. Parents are encouraged and supported to engage in specific practices that are associated with a normative image of what a 'good' parent is and does. Goodness as expressed in the empirical material can be understood in three ways, best explained by synonyms for the different meanings of good: competent, obedient, and sustaining.

Where parenting support (or parent support) is positioned as the stuff of learning, this learning is positioned in relation to a goal, namely becoming a 'good parent', and part of the educational work of parent support is expressed as being to model and convey what is meant by a 'good' parent. Note, however, that parents are consistently described as already being experts on their children, and as such supported to be and become even more effective 'good parents' rather than being positioned as deficient in their parenting. Where parents are described as needing support, or help with a particular aspect of their parenting, educators' talk indicates a mindset that the parent is *capable*, but what they may lack is the *skills* or strategies (rather than the capacity). In other words, a deficit perspective may be seen in reference to particular behaviours, but not in reference to a parent's capability to learn and enact them.

...we think that it's really important to strengthen the parents. To be, kind of, strengthened in their parenting, in their presence... I'm personally really happy that we don't have a strict steering document, because I think we are really good at sort of take the visitors as a starting point [...] We work so much with relationships, that whole thing of relational learning between child and parent,

but here in this area, we actually place a lot of emphasis on the parents, because if we give the parents a lot, if we strengthen them...[...] if we get these parents to put their children in preschool, then the child will really get the pedagogical aspect there when they start. So we feel that we can work to strengthen parents in their parenting in every conceivable way, really broad, you know? Future plans, faith, studies, work, all of that. And guiding them in terms of the society – we go for lots of study visits, we take public transport and try to find our way around. We try to give the parents as much as we possibly can and just strengthen them...see them, and acknowledge them [...] Because parents are number one after all – it's they who are going to be the parents for their whole lives, so investing in the parents, that's the main thing.

Extract 15 (Interview 2)

Within the data, three meanings of the concept good are identifiable, with synonyms for each sense serving to distinguish between the meanings, namely good-as-competent, good-as-obedient, and good-as-nourishing.⁷² A competent parent is strong, equipped with the relevant skills, and effective. An obedient parent mirrors societal childrearing norm, including being self-sufficient through employment, enrolling one's child in preschool, and supporting one's child towards achieving self-sufficiency themselves. A sustaining parent attends lovingly to the child and makes opportunities for enjoyable, joyful, loving ways to spend time together, these entail the setting of loving boundaries, forming close attachment to the child, engaging in language and literacy development activities, pedagogically informed play activities, and participation in cultural activities. These excerpts in which preschool teacher Anna talks about the different ways they work with supporting parents illustrates each meaning of the term. Firstly, she talks in general terms:

...I think a lot of it's about seeing, and affirming, but also guiding them to be bold and 'dare' to be parents, to not be afraid to set boundaries. There are quite a lot of foreign born parents who feel insecure about setting boundaries in Sweden. They link it to the idea of social services taking children if you set too hard a boundary, that's an example the parents bring up. And we say that it's really important to establish routines and set boundaries, because children want it, children need it, children thrive on having boundaries. It's you as the parent who decides – the child can choose if they want macaroni or curly pasta, but it can't choose between pasta and sausages. I mean, whether it's about food or whether it's about clothes – it's about really small things for little children, but we try to tell [the parents] and emphasise, it's you as the parents who are important and who set the frameworks for [your children's] upbringing, you know?

Extract 16 (Interview 2)

⁷² A further way of expressing goodness, which is treated in the main text here as part of good-as-nourishing, is expressed in the empirical material through use of the Swedish term *go*, an adjective that is actually short for *god* meaning good, but which has developed a specific meaning pertaining to a goodness that comes from cosiness and warmth.

Later, she describes how they follow up in the regular setting after parents have taken part in a specific parenting course, in particular with parents who find bonding with their child tricky.

...so a lot of really great questions come up that we can build on when we've finished the course – because the course is only four times, for an hour each time, but we often catch ourselves afterwards saying 'Oh, I was just thinking about that thing from the course...'. That we try and build the parents up, 'now I can see that you're thinking about the thing we talked about', 'now I can see you're having a moment with your child'. And we try and do that with parents who find bonding with their baby tricky – that's also really important, that we try to show the parents 'look, I can see your baby is seeking contact with you'. When parents aren't fully with it, and don't really see – so we try to be...instead of being the one who takes over with the children, we try to back them up but say 'look, now I see that your child wants such and such, do you see?', and try to get the parents to be the ones to notice. That's a really important part of it.

Extract 17 (Interview 2)

8.2.5 Theme Five A: Multilingualism enriches.

The concept of multilingualism is described by educators in terms of its high value. Multilingualism and first languages (mother tongues) is described in terms of being an asset, and enriching of both the individual and of society, and in terms of being a gift that parents can give their children.

The first part of theme five relates to multilingualism viewed as a phenomenon, a characteristic or an object. This theme is built up through repeated use of lexical items relating to value, richness, and gifts, for example:

I feel this way – what *riches* one has, if one has the *possibility* to be multilingual. And here, we support the parents to support their children to be just that. (Interview 9)

We see it as a *huge huge gift*, a *richness* quite simply, and we try to support parents in that as well. (Interview 13)

It *enriches*. *Having lots* of languages, it just *enriches* like society and the child, and personally and everything. It *enriches*. (Interview 15)

First language use is also described in terms of its value, to society, but first and foremost to the relationship between parent and child. In this first extract, first language use is described in terms of being a parent's responsibility - the educator speaks about the importance of parents using their first languages in public as a way of resisting societal messages about multilingualism as something to be hidden.

Parents are their children's most important role models, that's how we feel. If parents cave in and stop talking their language out and about at preschool and so on, for example, then they've implicitly agreed that it's something that should be hidden.

In this example, first language use is described as a way of building a close bond between parent and child, and as a way of parents acting as role models for their children. First languages are referred to as 'heart languages', and first language use is described alongside the reading to one's child, which is given a dual educational and relationship building function, and positioned as part of 'good parenting'.

But what I would say is important is that parents get the opportunity to communicate in their heart-language. We've talked ever such a lot about that. (SC comments what a nice term that is) The language of the heart. You should read in your heart-language. Parents are their children's most important role models – talk in your heart-language and read...we talk about that a lot too, read in your heart-language..... and make it cosy! It should be the best time of all, the best time. It can be in the day, it doesn't need to be at bedtime. Make it the highlight of the day, read in your heart-language.

Extract 18 (Interview 7)

Some educators draw upon lived experiences in their talk about multilingualism and plurilingualism, as seen in the example from Forget-me-nots Open Preschool below, where the educator Amira draws reflectively on her own childhood experiences of languaging, her experiences as a mother and grandmother to plurilingual children, and research based discourses about language in her expression of how she understands multilingualism in society.

I was born in a country where... or rather, I grew up with two languages. And for me, being able to speak lots of languages, free of charge, is the best thing that can happen in a child's life. To be able to communicate with others...[inaudible] Previously they used to say 'one person one language', but that's changed a little bit, because if I think about when I was little, it wasn't 'one person one language'. Everyone spoke all the languages at the same time, and you were able to learn all the languages. And then later you realised, aha, now I'm speaking this language, but now I'm speaking this language... There was a doctor of languages, actually, Finnish, I can't remember what she was called, but she talked about showering children with languages. And I see this with my grandchild, for example, where the dad speaks Spanish, the mom chose to speak Swedish, I speak French, so that's four [sic] languages for him even before English and all that. I mean, imagine, you have that, it's fantastic! And the children just learn it!

Extract 19 (Interview 1)

Perhaps paradoxically, the value of multilingualism is also established through lifting its 'banality', in the sense that it, as a valued practice, is a

natural part of day to day life for many of the visitors, even if parents can experience uncertainty about their language use. As such, in emphasising the prevalence of multilingualism, speakers of more than one language are positioned as a kind of critical mass, enacting a positive and valuable practice in and for society. However, this does not necessarily apply to minority languages as an aspect of participation in work and education by individuals and their children. The following example is typical of the understandings of language identifiable in the data that support the construction of both Theme 5a and Theme 5b. That is to say, it indicates the proactive positivity of the educator towards first language use, at the same time as it highlights the importance of acquiring Swedish as a school language. The distinction in purpose for each language can be seen as that which influences the language ideological approach taken to first languages, and to Swedish.

We see it as a huge, huge gift – a richness, quite simply. And that’s what we also try to support the parents in. Many of them are worried that it’s wrong to speak their mother tongue – they think that you have to give the children Swedish only. So they get a little worried, are the children going to get confused, you know? [...]. Lots of parents are worried about that, we get an awful lot of questions about it. But we try to support the parents to understand that children are fantastic at learning languages, everything falls into place in the end, and it’s an enormous gift to have many languages. So we try to support them in that a lot. And that’s also what research says, so we feel secure in that, and feel that we can support parents. A lot of them are relieved (does a ‘phew’ breath) when they hear ‘it’s okay for me to speak my language with my child’, [...]. But of course Swedish is very important too, and we do raise that - Swedish is the language the children are going to learn in, in school, for example, so we do raise it. But it’s also there that we usually say that preschool comes into the picture. If they put the children in preschool, they’ll get Swedish there, so you don’t need to be worried as a parent that you’re not enough, or that you can’t give them Swedish. Because of course, it’s extremely important. It’s the key, of course, to a life in Sweden. To education, and work eventually, and social contacts and everything, so of course it’s very important. But we encourage parents to keep their own languages alive and speak them with the children, and speak a lot, mix a lot.

Extract 20 (Interview 13)

8.2.6 Theme Five B: Broadening your linguistic repertoire by adding society’s shared language

The use of more than one language in daily life (including first languages positioned as minority language practices in relation to Swedish as a majority language) is highly valued as a practice when viewed in terms of individual and family cultural and identity practices. Swedish is understood as society’s shared language and valorised as a practice relating to public domains such as education and employment, and as an aspect of visitors’ futures. Swedish

is valued more highly than other languages as a tool for learning in formal academic and employment settings.

The other part of Theme 5 relates to the use of more than one language in day to day life, and to educators' views around what different languages are 'good for'. Use of mother tongue in the meeting between mother and child, and as a practice of the home, is highly valorised and linked with a desirable aspect of parenting – being a 'good parent' by bonding with your child. Use of mother tongue is further linked to a desirable practice, namely literacy – reading aloud, reading as bonding, visiting the library and so on. Nonetheless, a tension is visible in the theme between languaging in the domestic domain, as an aspect of parenting, and languaging in the public domains of education and employment. In such contexts, Swedish is valorised as an instrumental skill for adult and child visitors' day to day life now and in the future. It can be argued that the tension evident in the data can be attributed to the distinction between micro curriculum making in relation to the primary parent support focus, and macro curriculum making activity that has assigned the open pre-school an explicit outreach function.

A further example from Forget-me-nots Open Preschool refers to illiteracy. In the educator Amira's comment, a critical care stance is observable in the use of the phrase *lilla gumman*, a somewhat loaded term translating literally as 'little old lady' and used in this context to express that someone is a 'poor old dear' and by implication helpless and to be pitied.

But the most important thing is, as I say, as I answered before, is to see every person. To be able to...I mean, it's not 'lilla gumman' because I can't read or right. Because to get here I might have had to go through 'h' (whispers: hell), mightn't I? But I'm here, regardless. So I'm strong, regardless. What is it I need to go further? [It's important that] we show the way, in a good way. I'm not better than you because I've lived here longer.

Extract 21 (Interview 1)

Amira identifies illiteracy as a grounds for pity, and then rejects it as such. In doing so, she uses a stereotypical characteristic which immigrants are often assumed to have, and which is typically used to further a deficit perspective on them in terms of their perceived capacity to learn Swedish and enter the labour market, and she dismisses it. Instead, she invokes a possible way in which the immigrant women can have shown strength, namely by embarking upon and surviving a dangerous or challenging asylum seeking journey. By doing so, the educator challenges notions of what skills or characteristics are typically referenced in majority discourses. Note that Amira does not deny that the (imagined) woman is in fact illiterate. Rather, she rejects the premise that her literacy levels should be used as a reason for pity. Instead she frames them as a starting point for further learning, by musing on what they need

(from the open preschool) in order to take the next steps in her learning. This can be understood as an expression of the stance she takes in her practice, whereby each person is seen, and seen as an individual.

8.2.7 Theme Six: The open preschool is a place for learning, but it is not school.

The open preschool is a setting where learning is prevalent. Educators express that learning happens frequently, but also that institutionalised practices of formal teaching and learning environments such as school are broadly incompatible with overall purpose and organisation of the open preschool.

The open preschool is a setting where learning is prevalent. Educators express that learning happens frequently, in both planned, unplanned, expected and unexpected ways. Children, adults (both visitors and educators) can be learners in the open preschool. The practices of the open preschool are, however, broadly positioned as distinct from, or in some case incompatible with, aspects of the institutionalised practices of formal teaching and learning environments such as school. Theme 6 works by constructing two apparently contrasting understandings of a pedagogical setting, and by positioning one of these as incompatible with the open preschool's modus operandi. The open preschool is overwhelmingly and enthusiastically positioned as a place of learning, and that learning is described in ways which emphasise the diversity of the ways in which it manifests. For example, parents, children, educators can all be described as learners and 'teachers' in various constellations. Diversity is evident in educators' descriptions of the *types* of learning which take place, and in what can be understood as content.

The nature of what learning can be in the open preschool is emphasised by the establishment within the theme of how the open preschool as a learning environment, should *not* be understood. This motif is built up by positioning *physical expressions of formality, such as desks, social expressions, such as compulsoriness, obligation, and power-imbalance predicated on educator and learner roles, and institutional expressions such as syllabi and examinations* as incompatible with the modus operandi of the open preschool, thus establishing an opposition to it being viewed as a formal learning environment. The grounds for this opposition relate to the educators' expressions of the overall purpose of the open preschool, and of their own roles as parent supporters, as outlined in Themes Two and Four. Further to this it can be seen that the eschewal of traditional learning motifs is an act which pays attention to the visitors' parenthood seen as an expression of the domestic and the familial. With that said, the theme is also constructed in the way in which educators describe open preschool in relation to formal educational settings, primarily preschool and SFI. The relation is described as preparatory – a kind of

pre-formal setting. This is expressed in a number of ways, including orientation in the form of information about the nature, organisation, location and application procedures for the settings, and in terms of *trygghet* as a precondition for participation.

Educators' talk about SFI in the open preschool – three examples

An important way in which this theme is constructed is through educators' talk about Swedish for Immigrants (SFI), in the open preschool. To recall, SFI is the four-level Swedish language course available free of charge to any person over the age of 16 who is registered as resident in Sweden. SFI is identified by SKR and the government as one possible programme that could be held (in various formats) in open preschools in order to expedite labour market entry and preschool enrolment. The theme is constructed through the educators' talk about SFI, which is specifically referenced in the context of open preschool in 11 of the 20 interviews. The three examples which follow here are typical of the way the 'Open preschool is a place for learning, but it is not school' theme is further constructed through specific reference to SFI:

In this first example, preschool teacher Carina describing weekly sessions when an SFI teacher attends the open preschool, and responds to questions about the nature of the sessions, how they are set up, and whether participants must sign up in advance.

No, it's not proper SFI, no. It's language...Swedish training. What you can say is that it's something that prepares you for SFI. Because at the beginning we called it SFI but the teacher themselves said no, we're not allowed to call it SFI, we can call it language training, pre-SFI. So they don't get grades or anything – it's not like we say 'You're in Course A now, and now you can move up to Course B', but rather.... But they do get individual careers advice! From a careers adviser who comes every term, talks to them one on one...what do you want to do, these are your options, and so on. Because they have the kids with them – they're on parental leave, but they attend here. [...]

It's not drop in, no, it's registration. And we had twelve places, and they filled up immediately. Then of course it drops off a bit now towards the end, some have gone to their home countries, and it's been Ramadan, so then there were some who didn't come.

Extract 22 (Interview 11)

In this example, normative artefacts of SFI viewed as a formal part of an adult education system meet the local practices of an open preschool, and a number of sites of tension can be identified, namely how to refer to the session, assessment, and registration and attendance. The act of naming a course or subject is a practice familiar from traditional higher education and school settings – it does not form part of the discursive or curricular practices of the Swedish

preschool.⁷³ Carina describes not being *allowed* to refer to SFI-in-OP as SFI, which highlights the organisational conditions of curricular bound by established judicial frameworks. A name is settled upon which reflects the practice (the micro and nano didactic work), and the relationship of the sessions to ‘SFI proper’.

Similarly, assessment, described in the extract in terms of summative assessment in the form of test grades which allow progression through a staged course programme, is a familiar part of traditional schooling models. This type of formal, summative assessment is described as simply not happening in the open preschool, and this can be understood as linked to the question of whether the SFI-in- OP is SFI proper or not. Nonetheless, Carina enthusiastically describes the type of assessment that *is* offered, namely formative assessment in the form of access to a careers adviser who meets the parents on a one to one basis and provides tailored advice. This type of service can be said to align far more closely to the ethos of the open preschool, and can be understood as a type of hybrid practice where artefacts from the formal education system are deployed in this no less structured, but arguably far less formal, pedagogical setting. Thirdly, an interesting account of attendance further indicates the way in which practices from the two settings meet; a core aspect of the open preschool’s modus operandi, and arguably a primary discursive practice about the open preschool, is voluntariness of attendance, which in turn is related to the idea that the open preschool should be a low threshold service in order to facilitate participation. Here, a recognisable element of formal education, registration, is described as having been implemented for the SFI sessions (although no affective comment is made about this). Of interest however, is the account of how learners (and by association, the setting itself) reacted to the enrolment and attendance practices – namely with enthusiasm towards enrolment (indicating a positive relationship between learner and content), and in line with the attendance norms of the open preschool towards attendance.

In this next extract, preschool teacher Ida reflects on the types of language education in the open preschool and at SFI, and how each type relates to a particular purpose.

You get there, I think. I mean, with the grammar, when you go on to SFI and learn, but here we start...we start to get to grips with the language, we start to realise that we can say ‘hi, how are you?’ ‘I’m fine, how are you?’. Now we’ve got it! And that... I mean, sometimes it’s a meeting without words – we catch each other’s eye, we had a meeting. That’s sometimes the start of something. But the grammar and that, I think it comes later when you sit at the school bench and learn about the forms of the language. But then it’s more....ah, I

⁷³ While the empirical data does show that it is possible for, say, named parenting courses to be held in *open* preschools, it can be argued that these are more setting-specific than SFI – a closer didactic match between open preschool’s overall learner – content – purpose.

don't know, I also think... to come to a country where you don't know the language, [I] become an island and I end up outside...the society, which can lead to lots of misunderstandings and poor health. To get in, to help parents. And so our place is part of networking, that it actually is possible to get into the society.

Extract 23 (Interview 10)

Here the didactic reasoning occurs at sites where content meets purpose, and where the didactic *how* is described in terms of the relationship between educator and learner. Ida invokes artefacts of traditional language instruction, namely *grammatical forms* as content, and a *school bench*⁷⁴, relating them both to future studies, temporally and physically outside of and beyond the visitors' time in the open preschool, and in doing so, marking that they contradict what is within the true for the open preschool as an educational setting.

Ida proffers a contrasting understanding of language learning, that draws in an interesting way on curricular and other discourses (language, immigration, integration) to describe her understanding of the open preschool's role in SALI education. She invokes hyperlocal non-verbal languaging as an aspect of communication as a human practice, describing the way in which such non-verbal communication can be a precursor to a verbal exchange - a reciprocal phatic greeting sequence. Her talk about that greeting sequence positions it as a shared achievement on the part of both the educator and the visitor, and as the start of a continued process of meeting in language. She links these intimate accounts of nano didactic decision making to macro and supra discourses about immigration, integration and language learning. Ida invokes the discourse of immigrants who have not learned a host country's majority language as being 'outside' society in order to highlight the relevance, for her as an educator, of human connections as a success factor for learning and using a language 'inside' society. The notion of insiderness is itself constructed by Ida's invoking of an island as being *outside* and the presence of a network as a prerequisite for coming *inside*. It is here that she positions the SALI work of the open preschool, as providing this network, this precondition which lays the foundation for future, formal learning contexts. In this way, the educator is giving an account of a (possibly theoretical, but arguably illustrative) didactic sequence in which the educator-learner relationship is foregrounded as fundamental to the educational work towards an overall purpose, and the pre-formal nature of SALI learning in OP is further highlighted.

In this final example, preschool teacher Karin describes a number of sites of tension.

⁷⁴ Note that the term used in Swedish, *skolbänk* and its English translation, school bench, tend to refer to dated types of classroom furniture, further invoking formality

...we all help out with SFI, I feel like. So, now we've got a new teacher who is fantastic. The other teachers, they've changed so often that you hardly have time to build up a relationship with the person that's meant to come here, and then it's just like, nope, I was a substitute, now the next one is on their way. But now a girl has come who is fantastic, and who has an idea about...she wants to lay a foundation for future studies. We think actually that...we think the most important thing is that you have the confidence to speak, that you dare to speak, here when you're with us. School-mindset can come when you haven't got your baby with you. It's difficult here, suddenly you need to breast-feed, or there's a nappy that needs changing, or the child is so tired that you can't stay. So a lot of these kinds of external factors affect you when you are here with your child trying to learn Swedish. And we are very clear about the fact that we are not here as babysitters when they're at SFI, rather they still have complete responsibility for their child. Then I mean, we can... the children who think it's okay to sit with us and play for a bit, then we do that of course, but if they need their parent, then they can go to them. It's the parent who has to take care of their child if you see what I mean.

(SC: ...how do you think it will develop?)

It's going to develop well! But I think that we will have to... I think that it's three weeks that we've been working together, and I think we are going to have to continue lowering her level a bit, because it can't really be as advanced as she would like it to be. She has such a good plan, really so pedagogical, but I think she has to also think that the children are here, and that, err, we have to lower the level a bit compared with what she wants. Then of course, SFI is divided up – they have it in Pondtail too, so both us and them have it. Here it's basic basic – those who don't have hardly any Swedish – maybe you didn't even go to school in your home country, you can't read or write. And that's something I think she's really good at now as well, Emilie, the teacher. That she's kind of started to understand that certain mammas can't read. If they get given a paper, it takes them quarter of an hour just to trudge through the lines and the words on the page. So she said, you know what we'll do, we'll record it instead, so we can talk and you can listen to how it sounds, instead of writing. So I thought that was really lovely.

Extract 24 (Interview 3)⁷⁵

The main source of tension is related to the level of the work which the well meaning SFI teacher has planned, with Karin describing a mismatch between the academic demands of the work and the conditions for learning, both in terms of the presence of children, and in terms of the mothers' literacy levels. It is important to observe however, the way in which these are not viewed with a deficit perspective by the SFI teacher, but rather as a reason to make adjustments in order to meet the childcaring and academic needs of the mothers.

⁷⁵ The name of the area and the teacher are pseudonymised here.

8.3 Parent support as the red thread running through the themes

The themes are unified by sustained and diverse expressions of the overall purpose of the open preschool as a setting type, and of the purpose of the open preschool as it relates to the adults. The ultimate purpose of the open preschool as a setting is consistently framed as to work in the best interests of the children, both directly by providing them with a pedagogical environment, and indirectly by strengthening their parents in their parental role. Indeed, this parental support is consistently expressed as being the primary purpose of the open preschool as it relates to adults – it is framed as a place where all parents will be welcomed, seen, listened to and given parenting support and advice if it is needed. It is within the context of parenting support and parenting advice that references to adult learning are identifiable in the educator accounts. The ultimate purpose of *parent learning* is expressed in terms of establishing parents with a strong sense of their parent role and identity as a parent, along with the knowledge and skills to enact the role for the short, medium, and long-term best interests of their child. (In short, for them to be ‘good parents’. This is clearly a normative concept, and one which is culturally situated, as accounted for in Theme 2 above.)

Two related points about parental support as adult learning are observable as red threads in the data. Firstly, the fact that the types of support offered (and therefore the types of teaching and learning situations afforded) should be based on individual families’ needs. In practice, and due to the absence of formal prescriptive instructions for content selection, this means that content and method are not necessarily pre-selected, rather they are selected in relation to the intermediary purposes which develop for individuals as they learn towards the ultimate purpose of being a ‘good’ parent. Secondly, adult learning is positioned as being contingent upon a secure relationship having first been established with the adult visitors, centring on their parent identity. The data indicates a number of ways in which educators say they work to establish this secure foundation (see Theme 3 above). Establishing the open preschool as an arena for adult learning by first establishing the ‘secure foundation’ can be seen to apply in broad terms to both established families and to immigrant families. Considerable variation in *how* this looks for different demographics is however evident in the data, as is considerable variation in the subsequent teaching and learning activities educators describe.

The support purposes appear, according to the educator accounts, to take precedence over other possible purposes, and the rights and needs of the child constitute the primary purpose that is prioritised in practice over others. Where the support purpose appears to be compromised by a ‘competing’ or co-occurring purpose, for example SFI, then educators appear to exercise their agency as didactic decision makers and curriculum makers ‘inside’ the setting, and organise the activities in a way they judge will mitigate the threat.

This process can be identified in the data in relation to curricular compromises, such as SFI (where the organisation, including for example the requirement to register and expectation to attend at a particular time can compromise the low-threshold conditions for participation), but also in relation to practices such as use of mother tongue language within the setting. Viewed in relation to one ultimate purpose of the open preschool, to support parents and children towards a long-term goal of economic independence in Sweden, first language use can be understood as a factor which could compromise this, hence the dilemmas raised in Theme 5a and 5b that position educators between mono- and multilingual norms. Making a judgement on how to organise the language norms in the setting can, then, entail the educator making a choice between supportive practices with an immediate / short term, or long-term benefit.

9 Identifying critical care pedagogical approaches in educators' accounts of their didactic decision making

In Chapter Eight, the main analytical focus was placed on addressing Research Questions 3a and 4a. The results of the Reflective Thematic Analysis can be understood as an account of a broad consensus among practitioners on the nature of their role, the role of the open preschool and the ways in which questions about language, immigration and integration are of relevance for the didactic organisation of their settings. In Chapter Nine, attention is turned to Research Question 4b, which asks whether these results – that is to say, the nature of the educators' views - can be understood as factors in their curriculum making and didactic decision making. As such, the analyses presented in this chapter focus on the ways in which the discourses about language, immigration and integration identified in educators' accounts of their work are operationalised in the curriculum making and didactic decision making they describe.

A core feature of Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis is the eponymous reflexive nature of the method, which allows for iterative interpretations of the themes constructed. I chose to address research question 4b by engaging further with the data (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p.210) from my position as a qualitative researcher with personal experience of the open preschool, and against the dual backgrounds of the government's invocation of the open preschool as an arena for language and integration, and the knowledge gap identified in terms of didactic knowledge about the open preschool as a setting for SALI.

This further engagement with the data took the form of an interpretation of the results of the RTA and the didactic content analysis, in discussion with aspects of caring pedagogy theory. The language, immigration and integration context of the thesis motivated the selection of a critical care pedagogical approach to the interpreting, and the previous research available motivated the use of Curry's Authentic Cariño and García et al.'s transcaring. In order to generate knowledge to answer question 4b, I anchored my interpretation in reflexive repeated deep reading of and engagement with the empirical material against the background of the critical care pedagogical approaches identified. The 56 instances were interrogated in reflexive discussion with the cariño

criteria (see Table 12 in Section 5.2.5) to explore whether, and if so, how, they could be usefully described and contextualised in terms of authentic *cariño* and transcaring. The results presented in Chapter 9 below, then, are methodologically distinct from those in Chapter 8, but they build on the results of the didactic content analysis, and are intricately related to the results of the Reflexive Thematic Analysis, and can be understood as an outcome of the reflexive process. The results stand alone, but from a position of synergy alongside the results in Chapter 8.

The critical care pedagogical analysis yielded two main results: firstly, it was found that 92% of the instances of educators' didactic decision making met the criteria for at least one of the three types of authentic *cariño* (familial, intellectual or critical). Secondly, didactic decision making was shown to meet the criteria for *all three* types of authentic *cariño*, in over one third of the instances. This result indicates that the discourses about language, immigration and integration identified in educators' accounts of their work are consistent with those identifiable in the critical care pedagogical approaches authentic *cariño* and transcaring. As these discourses were identified specifically in the educators' own accounts of didactic decision making, the result further indicates that the authentic *cariño* approach informs the didactic choices made.

Having established that educators' didactic decision making could be described in terms of authentic *cariño*, continued reflexive interpretation allowed for a further result to be identified which addresses the question of 'how' or 'in what way' authentic *cariño* is a factor in the didactic decision making. I framed my reflexive interrogation of the results by asking 'so what?'

So what if educators take a critical care pedagogical approach? What are the implications thereof for the way in which SALI is organised in the open preschool? What happens to the open preschool as a setting type if educational activities for immigrant parents are organised in this way? What is the relevance of the approach to the learners themselves?

This reflexive process resulted in the identification of three types of affordances in the educational activities that arise, I argue, as an outcome of educators' authentic *cariño* approaches. These are introduced briefly here, then expounded with the help of illustrative empirical examples and commentaries in Sections 9.1 – 9.3 below. The first group is presented in Section 9.1 and consists of three instances whereby the educator's didactic organisation of an activity afforded immigrant parents the possibility to participate equitably in culturally situated activities. I give these examples the umbrella title 'Co-creating participation'. The second group is presented in Section 9.2 and consists of three instances whereby the educator's didactic decision making facilitates immigrant parents' access to and participation in culturally situated literacy practices. I give these examples the umbrella title 'Opening up spaces for everyday literacies and languaging'. The third group is presented in Section 9.3 and consists of three examples whereby a critical care pedagogical approach is visible in educators' reflexive practice in the face of an unforeseen

hinder in their planned organisation of an activity, of a type which occasions educators to recentre their practice specifically around the learner's identity as an immigrant parent. I group these examples under the heading 'Tailoring teaching and learning'.

In Section 9.4, I present one of the few examples of an instance where a critical care pedagogical approach is *not* identifiable – at least not initially. The example shows how an educator who was unfamiliar with the open preschool as a pedagogical setting identified discord between her previous experiences of teaching, and her experiences in the open preschool. In the example, an unpleasant incident causes the educator to examine her own practice in dialogue with her developing understanding of the open preschool's curricular practices, and to adapt her professional practice in order accordingly. I give this example the title 'Learning to teach in the open preschool revisited: adapting to a critical care pedagogical approach in the meeting with the open preschool's purposes and practices'.

9.1 Co-creating participation

The three examples which follow here illustrate a number of ways in which educators' organisation of teaching and learning in relation to different content areas can be understood as critical care pedagogy. The examples illustrate the way in which educators' didactic decision making can be understood as critical and intellectual *cariño*, as they draw on learners' existing capabilities and experiences in order to facilitate meaning making in relation to aspects of Swedish culture. Further to this, the examples indicate that educators use familial *cariño* approaches afford access to physical spaces where families can participate in SALI activities designed meet the open preschool's broader goals of providing a secure environment where families are welcomed as competent actors. The examples that follow here show ways in which educators' high-expectation – high-support intellectual *cariño* approach in relation to the physical environment as part of their work with immigrant families is visible as part of their curriculum planning and didactic decision making. A critical *cariño* approach is observable in educators' accounts of the way in which they introduce immigrant families into Swedish normative *friluftsliv* practices, in a way that attends to historical socio-political factors that may entail a hinder. The accounts suggest that parents are able as a result to experience the physical environment in aesthetic, affective and nourishing ways.

9.1.1 Scaffolding learning in the meetings between shared practices

In this short extract from a longer account, preschool teacher Moa responds to a question about the types of teaching and learning which occur in the open preschool. She describes, amongst other things, the inviting and open environment in their arts and crafts area, and gives an example of parents creating a large scale illuminated display of a mosque, and organising a party in the space.

It all starts with, with us being opening and inviting, that they can just do and create whatever they like in the studio. We have to let go a bit, because everything is learning. [.....] I learn as well – I’m a co-discoverer. I feel I like I have the whole world as a work place every day. I couldn’t imagine being anywhere else. [...] this woman’s husband came to pick her up because she wanted to go and collect something for the project....so it becomes a kind of participation. This big cardboard box they brought from home to put the moon up on, that’s also participation, with both the home, and the parents, and here.

Extract 25 (Interview 7)

In this example, it is possible to make visible the way in which educators organise the setting in relation to one or more of the purposes of the open preschool, and in doing so facilitate an educational activity whose content can be categorised under ‘being and belonging’ (as per the content areas expounded in Section 8.1) This is an example of the way in which educators’ didactic decision making in the open preschool can foreground the relationship ‘setting – learner – purpose’ rather than a specific content area.

The example, about baking dampers⁷⁶ over a campfire, shows how parenthood is leveraged as a way of managing the question of (normatively constructed, societal) inequity between the educator’s position of authority and the mothers’ positions of marginalisation – with parenthood and agency being used as points of contact, and authentic *carifño* being used as a medium for constructing solidarity.

And we collaborate a lot with the painters’ playground, it’s a unique place, you ought to have visited it actually, it’s unique in Sweden, children can come there and do art projects, spray-painting, test things they might not do at home, it’s so inviting and full of possibilities. And they’ve created so many things, and they also grow vegetables there. We started doing that, we got an allotment, during the pandemic.... together with the local allotment society – they’re often there and help us a lot. And they show us – it’s a bit of a generational thing...and when we were on holiday they took care of it during the summer, and some of our parents did too. They grew potatoes, carrots, cabbage and then in the autumn we had a harvest festival down there, because they’ve got a huge firepit, together with the parents. And we had a Kazakh speaking mamma,

⁷⁶ *pinnbröd* / baked bread dough

she'd baked dampers from home, and showed us, and then she made them over the open fire. So it was fantastic.

Extract 26 (Interview 7)⁷⁷

This account further highlights the way in which educators' organisation of the open preschool's activities facilitate a situation where visitors to the open preschool enact home practices in the public domain. Elements of familial *cariño* are identifiable in the educators' account of the park and allotment area, and the different groups who use it; firstly, preschool teacher Moa lifts the use of the place by different age groups – children, their parents, and the allotment society, whose members are implied to be older – perhaps pensioners. Secondly, Moa pays attention to the *way* in which the different groups use the park, namely for recreational, creative endeavours, both artistic, and horticultural. The different groups are described as helping one another – the allotment society share their knowledge with the open preschool, and help look after their plants. Together, they are described as sharing in the harvest together, bringing the groups together around the food they have grown. Such actions recall family type relations, built on reciprocal care and trust, drawing on the knowledge of older or more knowledgeable members of the community.

A critical *cariño* approach is identifiable in the vignette of the mother who shared her dampers with the group by bringing them from home and baking them over the fire as part of the harvest festival. The organisation of the open preschool's activities at the park and with the allotment group can be understood as having constituted a context for the mother to participate and contribute with her knowledge. Cooking over a fire is a core facet of Swedish *friluftsliv*, and as such a dominant normative practice within the Swedish context, and the mother was able to participate in that practice in a way that did not require assimilation or the adoption of a learner role, but that allowed her to bring her existing practices and enact them in the context of the similar, Swedish practices. Open preschool, specifically the educators' organisation of the activities within the public domain, and in the meeting with groups not formally affiliated with the setting, serves as a scaffolded entry point to the *use* of public spaces, providing a context from which visitors can act, learn and contribute. This disrupts the 'outside society' discourse by interrupting the inequity inherent in normative understandings of Swedish *friluftsliv*. It can be further understood as an example of transculturación with the situation described by the educator understood as a cultural experience based on equitable participation in the performing of the 'universal' act (baking bread) in a way which allowed actors to draw on their existing and new cultural knowledge funds without one being subordinated to or compromised by the other.

⁷⁷ Some potentially identifying details have been edited for reasons of confidentiality, however the meaning is effectively unchanged.

9.1.2 Demystifying and sharing *friluftsliv*

In this example, Moa describes the ways in which her setting adapted to the requirement to hold all open preschool sessions outside during the Corona 19 pandemic.

So we felt that we really like being out, and we're really close to a playground, and we can see Four Oaks Forest, a really lovely forest area there. So we had a language walk up there for parents and children. And we had a parent who said 'oh, we can't go because the stroller shakes so much in the forest' and we were like, no, you just have to... it's just nice – you know, this uneven path you walk on. Many of them discovered Four Oaks Forest up there who maybe hadn't been there before, and some cultures, you know, they say 'oh boy, what do you do in the forest?'. They're not so used to it... it's varies depending on what you have with you in your baggage. But it was great, and we had the language walk and people could look for pinecones, and we had little cards, and we always finish with a story time. And then we'd been sitting looking for blueberries and we sat on one of these green mosses, and one of them said 'oh wow, it's like a lovely shaggy rug!'

Extract 27 (Interview 7)

In this example we can identify a number of intended content areas: the Swedish language, Swedish natural history, and how to 'be' in the forest as an act of Swedish cultural knowledge. Moa uses positive language to describe her feelings towards being in the outdoors and towards the forest (*we really like being out; really lovely forest area*). Further to this, she recounts using positive language to describe the way babies experience being pushed in a stroller on the forest path (*nice [path]*) – this happens in response to a visitor who does not think they can participate in the language walk because the path is unsuitable for the stroller. Moa's positive language can be understood as information stemming from both her cultural experiences and professional knowledge, as well as from the place where they meet as a content area "Swedish natural history". Swedish language content is evident in the name of the activity, and as such can be interpreted as a purpose of the activity. Blueberries and pinecones are given as two examples of things visitors were encouraged to find, and it is reasonable to assume that the cards the educator mentions contained other examples of common forest items for visitors to find.

Here we can see a preschool pedagogical activity organised for both parents and their children, where the intended learning content for both is culturally specific vocabulary, and culturally specific knowledge. Moa's account of the activity contains two contrasting expressions of visitors' aesthetic reactions towards the forest – the first in when the parent is concerned that pushing the stroller on the forest path would cause discomfort, and the second when a parent uses a simile to liken a moss carpet with a shaggy rug. These can be interpreted as her description of learning having taken place – while it is not evident in the empirical material whether it was the same parent in question both

times, it can be argued that the selection of those examples to start and end the account was deliberate in order to exemplify the nature of the learning within the group. In lifting these, Moa pays attention to the physical wellbeing of the visitors, and to their aesthetic experiences of engaging with the forest, as parents, and as people unused to the physicality of the forest environment. She pays attention to the feelings attached to these experiences – concern, and happiness, and indicates that this change – this learning – is a measure of the success of the educational activity. Tied into this is the experience of the adult visitors as parents concerned about their children’s safety and wellbeing in the forest, as well as how the routines of parenting (taking babies for a walk in their stroller) can be made to align with the physical environment.

Through the above examples, it can be seen that the Moa’s way of arranging the educational activity makes use of familial *cariño* type pedagogy. It can be said that the didactic decision making undertaken to relate the learner-as-parent to the physical setting for the activity pays attention to a broad range of wellbeing factors of relevance to the family. The educator’s didactic decision making can also be described in terms of intellectual and critical *cariño*. The activity takes place against the background of the corona pandemic, and educators had to move their activities outside. By adding an explicitly educational element to the forest walk, educators can be said to include academic type learning in their adapted practice, and to show that they expect visitors to manage to participate, despite the concerns the educators know they have about the new setting for the learning. In other words, they retain high expectations for the visitors as learners, and offer high support (as described above in the form of familial *cariño*).

Critical *cariño* pedagogy is evidenced by the Moa’s explicit reasoning around the visitors’ backgrounds as a factor in their uncertainty towards the activity. This is evidenced elsewhere in the data, with educators describing how the forest is associated with dangerous animals, or with illegal activity in the form of trespassing. Here it can be said that she pays attention to, and takes seriously, the visitors’ past knowledge and experiences (that which stands fast for them about being out in the wildlife), and operationalise it in their decision making. Teaching about the kinds of animals that are found in Sweden is a part of this, as is explicit teaching around right to roam⁷⁸ (evidenced elsewhere in the dataset), and around which fruits are edible. Teaching ‘about the forest’ is not positioned as a case of transmitting knowledge, rather it can be said to be organised in direct relation to the learners’ prior experiences and existing knowledge, and to that knowledge as an aspect of their parenthood. Another way in which critical *cariño* pedagogy is visible in this example is in the way Moa describes her wishes for the visitors to move in the physical environment near to where they live. She contrasts the proximity of the forest with the visitors’ lack of experience of it, and indicates a desire to

⁷⁸ *allemansrätten*

share it with them, and to broaden their horizons. This claim is evidenced in this example, and others where educators describe the way in which immigrant families' spheres of movement are limited.

In summary, it can be argued that this example shows how authentic *cariño* pedagogy is deployed in order to facilitate the relationship learner and content, by invoking the parents' concerns, operationalising existing knowledge, and by having high expectations of them being able to overcome these potential hinders and engage with language and cultural content. As well as this, the choice of physical setting for the activity is grounded in the educators' knowledge of the visitors lives and conditions, and a desire to equip them with skills to broaden the range of experiences they can participate in independently. All this can be understood in relation to the goals of parental support as expressed in early and more modern texts.

It is useful to consider the nature of the Moa's reference to the Swedish language content in her account, and to the position and role of it in the activity. The empirical material does not give much insight into her views on this, but what can be seen is the way Moa frames her description of the educational activity having taken place. She describes visitors having participated in the activity as part of her aesthetic summary – as noted above, the measure of success is related to how they and the visitor experienced the activity, and the fact that visitors participated. Furthermore, the positive experiences the visitors had of learning to engage with the forest environment are mentioned as a measure of learning. No quantitative or other assessment of the visitors' learning in terms of their language proficiency is mentioned, however. It can be argued that the language content was central in that it was prioritised as an intended content area over other possibilities (for example, simply having a stroller walk, or even having a stroller walk where visitors were encouraged to chat in Swedish, but without a specific vocabulary content in mind). However, the measure of the learning is judged in relation to the overall purpose of the activity viewed holistically as part of the open preschool's parent support function, rather than in relation to the goals of language education.

9.1.3 Mitigating barriers to learning about and passing on water awareness

In this example (analysed in two parts, here and in 9.2.1), the educator responds to a question about how they plan for working with immigrant parents in their open preschool setting. She explains that they work a lot with experiential learning⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ Experiential learning is a theory developed by psychologist and educational theorist David Kolb that uses a four-part cyclical model to describe "how people learn through experience". The model's four components are *experiencing*, *reflecting*, *thinking* and *acting*. (VerywellMind, 2024; Institute for Experiential Learning, 2024.)

...we talk a lot about water, and water familiarisation, child safety. In schools today, lots and lots of gym teachers report that – I was at a network meeting yesterday when this came up – the kids aren't passing gym because they can't swim... If you don't have parents that can swim, maybe you come from other cultures then maybe you don't feel comfortable going to the sea here and swimming with the kids, or going to the pool or whatever. So we talk a lot about water familiarisation, early – you can play, visit the splashpads, things like that. And there's a splashpad in Avondale⁸⁰, with a little bit of water, right in the city centre, and we went there and we had parents, lots of whom couldn't swim and so on, and they just hitch up their long skirts and tie them like this [*mimes knotting a skirt around the knees*]. We had one mother, she said 'just think if I'd have known about this place with my other kids who are big now!' And you know, she could give [the younger children] water, water play, just in this paddling pool, because she didn't need to get undressed or be able to swim. She just needed to knot up her skirt and that gave the children water familiarisation. So it will be easier later on when they start swimchool. So anything we can work with early, you know. [...] And it benefits their swim skills later, you can pass gym, do you see what I mean, the whole way... So we do that each year, a visit to the splashpad in Avondale – it's so popular, a nice free time activity. And then there was a parent, we were there, and the day after she was like 'No well we stayed! We went and got take-out...' They'd gone and got those huge family sized pizzas, and they were there until eight in the evening... so yeah, there are lots of similar good examples in the city.

Extract 28 (Interview 7)

In this example, it is possible to identify a planned-for pedagogical situation, which preschool teacher Moa describes in terms of the intended content for the visit to the splashpad, namely water familiarisation (Sw. *vattenvana*). This is expressed in various ways in relation to various learners over both the short and longer terms. In this scenario, the child is the intended learner, and water familiarisation is the intended content – or, to express it more specifically, 'being comfortable in water'. Viewed in relation to the organisation of the activity, the visit to the splashpads, this content is understood as relating to the child in the immediate term – the preschool aged child learning to become comfortable in water through play. The educational activity also can be understood as content for the child learner in the future with the purpose expressed in terms of being able to meet the knowledge requirements for PE. I argue that lifting it expressly in her account is an indicator of the holistic perspective the educator has on family support, and this relates to the way the activity is described as being organised in relation to the adult visitors.

For the adult visitors, the educational activity is framed in terms of two different content types and two different learner identities. The activity in the immediate term is described in terms of water familiarisation as something the parent should give the child. (Here the original expression of adult learning from the earliest proposals for Play Advice can be recalled – parents learn to

⁸⁰ An area in the city, which has been given a fictitious name here for anonymisation.

be pedagogical with their children for the benefit of the child). That is to say, the content in relation to the parents is ‘giving your child water familiarisation’, and the educator’s account explains in detail the way in which the learner-content relationship was foregrounded and carefully curated. They identify two possible hindrances for the parents in being able to participate in learning how to give their child water familiarisation. The first is their own potential unfamiliarity with water or inability to swim, and the second is the (perceived) need to change into and wear swim clothes in public. In other parts of the interview, the educator emphasises her wish to broaden the families’ sphere of movement within the town, by informing them about and showing them the possibilities available outside their immediate residential area. The trip to the splashpad is an example of one such activity, and we can see from the account that the activity was organised in such a way as to overcome the potential hindrances to the parents’ learning of how to give their child water familiarisation, by providing access to water in a controlled environment that could be used in regular clothes. Here again, the learner-content relationship is foregrounded in the Moa’s didactic decision making, indicated by the deliberate selection of physical learning environment.

Related to the educational activity that positions parents as learners in relation to how-to-give-your-child-water-familiarisation content is a second description of the activity. This time the content can be said to be water familiarisation as an aspect of culture, and here it can be suggested that the visitors’ parent identity is not directly invoked in description of the learner to the same extent. By lifting the *importance* of and *reasons for* water familiarisation as something for children to learn, the educator is teaching parents *that* this is a part of life in Sweden – that is to say, relating a cultural practice. Related to this is the knowledge that this is a part of Swedish cultural life that they can participate in – that it is not an aspect of Swedish life they are excluded from. If one considers this claim in relation to the oft-expressed purpose of breaking the isolation of immigrant parents, it can be understood as knowledge about how they can participate in Swedish society equitably, how they can enact agency in order to *ta plats* (enact their legitimate presence) in the public domain.

A measure of the learning is given in the educator’s account, namely the fact that some families had stayed near the splashpads long into the evening, and eaten pizza. This can be understood as application of the new knowledge and skills about water as a part of Swedish cultural life and as enjoyable entertainment. That the families ate out, apparently spontaneously, can be understood in terms of them enacting a domestic practice in a public domain – a clear discursive contrast to the discourse of the isolated family with cramped living conditions.

9.2 Opening up spaces for everyday literacies and languaging

A number of examples follow here which illustrate the ways in which educators approach language and literacy practices (including financial literacy) as part of parent support and SALI education for immigrant families. In each of these examples, it is possible to see the ways in which educators organise teaching and learning situations which pay attention to culturally normative and desirable language and literacy practices in a way that allows visitors to make meaning from their own individual starting points, and in ways which include home language and literacy practices. Again, here it can be argued that these activities, whose primary purpose is not necessarily to teach SALI content, contributes to creating conditions for parents to participate in language and cultural practices which SALI education advocates. Attention is paid to possible hindrances to participation in language and literacy practices (for example, in the library examples), but this is not framed in deficit terms.

9.2.1 Facilitating civic literacy practices

In fact, they thought it was so fun, they decided to put in one of those Citizen Suggestions where people vote, and if there are more than 200 votes, which there were, then the council take the suggestion up in their committee meetings. So they were very proud about that, because they wanted a splashpad to be built up here as well. But you know, there's this amazing drive in all of this ...they would say to me 'Go and sit down in the square..., I'm going to go and get people to come and vote'. And they do, they come and vote. And doing this Citizen Suggestion application, that's also a kind of learning, because you have to fill in all these confusing things – even my sister in law when she did one thought 'my god this is tricky'. But you learn, you learn things like, post code, that goes here, and then you have to click here and so on. And now there's so many of them who can do that! So it's also a kind of learning. And change-making, democracy, learning how you can get involved and make an impact. It's important.

Extract 29 (Interview 7)

In this extract, a continuation of the account given in Extract 23, it is possible to identify a learner-initiated pedagogical situation when the visitors make a Citizen Suggestion. Here it is possible to identify aspects of all three elements of authentic *cariño* in the educator's account of the didactic decision making. First and foremost, aspects of critical and intellectual *cariño* are identifiable, and these are closely related to one another. In terms of content learning, preschool teacher Moa identifies a specific 'everyday literacy' practice, namely communicating with a public authority via an online form. She describes this as highly challenging generally, implying that the challenge is inherent in the nature of the practice being learned, rather than

stemming (solely) from the educators' level of Swedish or knowledge of Swedish government agency processes.

Alongside the content learning, the educator identifies another kind of learning, which she describes as *changemaking, democracy, learning how you can get involved and make an impact*. This is inline with the category of 'values' identified in Section 8.1 above (and could also arguably fall under the 'being and belonging' category). A deficit perspective of sorts can be identified in the Moa's account, in the sense that she indicates that this is something that can be learned (implying it is not something within the existing skillset of the learner), but the content teaching related to this broader aspect of learning can be understood as solution focused support to master dominant discourses. This type of support can also be identified in the educators' description of the voting process, whereby they were asked by the visitors to man their stall while they gathered potential voters from within their networks. This is facilitation of the learning in a different way to the practical language and literacy focused support given in the application stage of the Citizen Suggestion process; here, the educator is given their role in the (overall) process by the learners themselves, who draw on their own resources in order to succeed with the task in hand, namely to get votes for their suggestion. In this way, the 'isolated' visitors are supported to bring majority democratic literacy practices into the public spaces they use, in an authentic act of democratic citizenship.

9.2.2 Encouraging library use and fostering a love of reading.

In an example from Interview 10, from Chaffinches open preschool, preschool teacher Ida talks about a special book session that they organise for the visitors, where they transform their regular setting into a stage area, with specially marked places for children to sit, fairy lights, classical music, bubble blowing, and gentle storytelling or reading aloud with books from a variety of different genres. The session always ends with all parents and children dancing the waltz together. After describing the session, Ida explains that their work with genre is designed to support children's learning and describes what they do:

It's quite exciting, because we are taking part in a preschool reading scheme, and they highlight exactly this, genre, and how important it is for children to get different genres, that they can meet poetry, non-fiction, that they can meet stories and tales. And in the cloakroom library we are building up we are going to present all those. So that if the children meet [genre] early, it'll be easier then when you move on. When you get to school, you know almost, aha, this is a non-fiction book. You know what a non-fiction book is like. You've learned about them, and you've seen them and experienced them.

Extract 30 (Interview 10)

In Ida's account of this carefully planned, sensory storytime, elements of critical *carriño* are identifiable in terms of the organisation and delivery of the

activity, and also in the rationale given for it. Familial *cariño* can be identified in her positive and emotive talk (she says, for example, that they wanted to *create an experience* for the children, and *create a memory* for both parent and child, and that they felt it was *very successful* and *lovely*). Further to this, the attention to the participants' sensory and affective experiences, and to the creation of an intriguing, stimulating and out-of-the-ordinary environment, with opportunities for parent and child to bond through their shared experience and through dance, are identifiable as characteristic of familial *cariño* pedagogy in that they indicate the consideration given by the educators to the holistic wellbeing of the visitors.

In the didactic scenario described, educators identify the children as the intended learners, and describe the didactic 'why' as facilitating their future literacy development when they start school. This express purpose is in line with an intellectual *cariño* approach, and in the second part of the educator's account (following the interviewer's question), the intellectual *cariño* approach is further identifiable in her positive talk about the teaching and learning (for example *it's quite exciting*) and in the selection of the content area 'genre', which can with little doubt be described as complex in relation to the age of the learners. Despite the child being identified as the intended learner, the activity as a whole can be understood in terms of parents' learning. In combination with the cloakroom library the educator describes, the storytime can be understood as part of educating parents about desirable literacy practices, and how to make these practices part of their parenting in the home environment. Parents participate in the storytime session alongside their children, which can be understood as them being exposed to the desirable literacy practices. What for the child is designed as a content learning experience can be understood as a scaffolded pedagogical practice constituting learning content for the parents. A cloakroom library serves to link that practice with the home, by giving the message that the literacy practices promoted in the open preschool *should* be extended into the home, and by physically making this possible.

In this further library related example from a different open preschool, the educator Mariana has been describing how they try to integrate literature into everything they do, and adds:

And we go to the library of course, take the parents with us and show them...for a lot of parents it's a bit unknown....and there's a nervousness that the children will damage a book, for example, and that they'll have to pay. So we inform them a lot...we tell the parents that it's free to borrow, you never have to replace children's books, it doesn't matter if they break, if the children rip them, or taste them (laughs). And that they have books in all the languages, and if they don't have it, they can order it. So it's lovely because we find that lots of parents discount the library – they think there's nothing [there] for [them], and as I say, they're afraid that it will cost, so we really try hard to

encourage them. And the library comes to us and has storytime, we have a close collaboration.

Extract 31 (Interview 13)

Again, a scaffolded approach to educating the parents about normatively desirable literacy practices, as part of being a ‘good’ pedagogical parent, is identifiable. In contrast to the example of the storytime, however, where the cloak-room library opened up for enacting the literacy practices in the home, this example of didactic decision making pays attention to parents’ conditions for engaging with literacy in the public domain. Critical *cariño* is identifiable in both Ida and Mariana’s descriptions of the kinds of hinders the parents perceive to using the library, for example feeling that it is irrelevant to them, that they experience nervousness about books being damaged, which may have a financial implication, or being concerned that their home languaging practices will not be represented in the library’s work. Familial *cariño* is identifiable in the educators’ attention to the parents’ worry about the children chewing the library books – this is presented as something of universal relevance, and therefore normalised for the parents, with the intention of removing the concern as a hinder to participation.

9.2.3 Modelling financial literacy practices

In this example, bridgebuilder Dina responds to an observation that the open preschool appears to offer a large array of different activities and opportunities for families, and that it appeared as though building relationships was a core part of the work.

Yes, it’s important to build relations and then two, three times we meet and we exchange contact numbers, I even send them SMS, and I do that or Whatsapp and telephone, because telephone they use to contact. Sometimes they don’t have credit so send SMS on normal telephone, but I think Whatsapp is very good solution for contact with world. Sometimes I say ‘how are you’ and greet, come with us. And then they believe in us. But with parental benefits, they don’t know. Then they come and ask, can you look how many kronor in my account? And how you go to the bank, BankID⁸¹, because it is important you see, but she doesn’t know the password. Unfortunately. Then I said to her, when you get home, ask your husband. It is very important that you know what it says in BankID. Because it’s this which has identified you, it’s important that you know which password your BankID has. Then she got this password, then we help her, she very happy and grateful.

Most, they have different problems, because when they move here, they don’t meet other people. Sometimes the husband, they think, you just at home. And it’s very important that you contact with BVC, midwife, during pregnancy. When she pregnant, you meet, give information - when you became pregnant,

⁸¹ A commonly used electronic identification system in Sweden

when you will have the baby, how many child benefit you get, if you are on maternity leave you can go to open preschool at the same time. Often I said to the BVC, look, many who come maybe, newly arrived, always the husband comes with them. And sometimes they don't have an interpreter unfortunately. Just the husband is the interpreter. I think it is good have meeting the mothers alone, only the mothers they meet, they have an interpreter, maybe easier, they can also talk, they dare to talk, otherwise in front of the husband you don't dare to talk [...] It's good that I help them.

Extract 32 (Interview 4)

Dina describes some of the numerous ways in which she works with newly arrived immigrant families. The didactic content that can be identified is practical financial information relating to accessing a bank account and understanding the parental benefits system. Effectively, the teaching that takes place here can be understood from the account as having a 'transfer' of facts / information character. This transfer, however, can be understood within the context of the specific ways in which the educator-learner relation is (described as being) organised in practice.

Here, the relevance of the Dina's specific role is paramount. To recall, bridgebuilders are employed on account of them having a similar immigration background to the families they work with, and first-hand lived experience of migrating to and establishing life in Sweden. In this context, the empirical data indicates that one measure of establishment is being able to access core societal functions such as telecommunications, banking, healthcare and legal services, and, as an immigrant woman, being able to do so independently of one's husband. Often, bridgebuilders are relatively newly arrived themselves, and adopt a kind of mentor or guide role. Inherent in the name bridgebuilder is a sense of liminality that positions them as 'between' newly arrived and established, with a foot in both camps. Crucially, there is usually a high level of linguistic overlap between bridgebuilders and the families they meet. In this way, a transaring approach is also identifiable in this example with Dina's actions constituting both translanguaging and compadrazgo.

Naturally, however, being newly arrived or being established are not static or essential concepts, and whilst engagement with some public services is linked to criteria pertaining to how long a person has been in the host country, this is arguably just one measure of being established. Otherwise, becoming establishment can be understood as a process of learning where the concrete outcome of the learning is the developing capacity to engage independently in normative practices related to daily life within the host country context.

Bridgebuilders, then, can be understood as having learned and enacting some of these normative practices - for example, use of the majority language, and securing employment. These practices understood as application of learned content constitute one source of knowledge from which bridgebuilders can draw in their didactic decision making and educational work. The other source is their existing skills, knowledge and practices. By drawing skillfully

and dynamically on both these knowledge sources, bridgebuilders facilitate meaning making for people with whom they have some degree of ‘high knowledge overlap’ Dina describes methods which recall familial *cariño* when she describes how she uses Whatsapp to make contact with families. Exchanging telephone numbers after having met a few times can be understood as a symbolic and concrete expression of mutual trust and interest. Equally, the purposes described for the contact are broadly phatic, taking the form of reaching out, checking in, ‘being there’, rather than expressly functional / informative. This type of contact arguably more closely likens familial communication than professional, with the expressly phatic, caring purpose of the contact similar to the kind that might come from a parent.

This type of strategy expressly counters the state described in the account of not having anyone to talk to, and not having anyone to ask about things which are in fact crucial for participation in normative practices. The impact of the educator’s actions can be seen as a relational practice aimed at putting in place the conditions for learning to take place. Having laid that groundwork, the account describes a teaching and learning situation related to banking. While Dina’s talk about the experiences of women accessing health services in the Swedish system is general rather than specific, it nonetheless gives an insight into the kinds of civic orientation content she identifies as being relevant to the mothers she works with. Here an element of critical care pedagogy is identifiable when the educator makes a link between conditions for equitable participation in society according to Sweden’s democracy norms, women’s knowledge of the host society and majority language, and the points where their current, culturally situated knowledge and practices may potentially be in conflict with the knowledge and practices that constitute the intended learning content. She operationalises her insider knowledge resources to lift practical implications of women *not* participating in SALI initiatives, namely that they may not be able to access gynecological and maternity healthcare independently of their husband, and that they may not be aware of or exercise their right to an interpreter in healthcare situations.

9.3 Tailoring teaching and learning

The examples which follow here in Section 9.3 show ways in which educators use authentic *cariño* approaches in their ‘moment by moment’ didactic decision making in practice. That is to say, the examples show how educators react to and act in relation to visitors’ comments, questions, concerns, and actions using familial, critical and intellectual *cariño* approaches.

9.3.1 Adapting a novel creative activity to accommodate parental concerns and cultural considerations

In this example preschool teacher Karin responds to a question about the kind of teaching and learning that occur in an open preschool.

I mean, I think that the whole thing of supporting parents, that that is a kind of learning. We have activities – lots of them [the parents] are super scared of getting messy and painting for example. It's fantastically wonderful to just get messy with the whole body but naaaaah.... are they toxic paints? So now we make paints with blueberries and yoghurt, so it's not toxic paint. And soygurt so that all the vegans [can take part] – there are a lot of vegans in these areas – yeah, so we have to think of everything...!

Extract 33 (Interview 3)

Karin has planned a messy-play painting activity for children and their parents to participate in. This can be understood as an example of a typical preschool pedagogical activity put on first and foremost for the benefit of the children, who can experience experimenting freely with paint without being restricted in terms of the 'mess' they make. A parent-facing purpose is, however, expressed by the educator, namely *parent support*, as well as an aesthetic expression *it's fantastically wonderful to get messy*. This may be understood as a perceived benefit of the activity for both the child and the parent, and as such can be understood as intended content for the parents to learn about.

As such, then, the educational activity is designed to have an intended content and purpose in relation to the child learner, and a different intended content and different purpose in relation to the adult learner. The activity planned by Karin in order to allow meaning making in relation to the content (the method) is the same for both adult and child learner (although as the meaning making is intended to be in relation to two different purposes, it is likely not assumed that parents and children will engage with the content in the same way as each other). Karin accounts for two instances where she was required to adjust her planning of the activity in order to create the best possible conditions for the learners to be able to make meaning in relation to the content and purpose. The first of these is in response to parents' concerns that the paint could be toxic. The educator responds by planning to switch out paint for homemade edible paint made of blueberries and yoghurt. The second occurs in response to the new plan, when the educator expresses that she has to make sure the yoghurt is vegan.⁸²

These two adaptations to the original planned activity can be understood as didactic decision making on the part of the educator, aimed at ameliorating

⁸² It is not evident from the interview what the timescale for the adapting of the original activity. It is reasonable to assume that it was probably not adapted within the self-same session, however it is deemed likely that the time frame for the adaptations was such that some or all of the same learners were involved.

the conditions for meaning making by the learners. In the decision making, it is possible to identify a number of ways in which Karin acted in ways that align with Curry's authentic *cariño*, and that may therefore be described as examples of critical care pedagogy. The first thing she recalls that can be understood as jeopardising the conditions for meaning making is the parents' fear. Although it is not explicitly stated, this fear can be understood as fear that their very young children will ingest (what they are concerned could be) a toxic substance that could cause them harm. Karin can be seen to have responded to this fear by acting to mitigate it, switching out paint for an edible equivalent made with yoghurt and blueberries. In doing so, she is paying attention to one of the deepest-rooted aspects of parenting, the desire to care for your children's safety, and acting to uphold the emotion of fear by mitigating it, whether or not she herself thought it necessary. This can be understood as enactment of familial *cariño*, in that it demonstrates a holistic concern for wellbeing, and pays attention to parents' emotions in relation to their children's wellbeing.

The second thing that Karin recalls that could jeopardise these newly instated conditions for meaning making is some families' food practices, namely the fact that many of them are vegan. This is mitigated by switching out yoghurt for soygurt, a vegan alternative. Paying attention to this can be understood as an aspect of critical *cariño* in the sense that it takes into account a norm-divergent (although admittedly increasingly mainstream) cultural practice that may be attributable to religion or other types of belief system. Accommodating the beliefs in this way includes the vegan families, and in doing so does not other them or exclude them from the educational activity. Further to this, taking into account veganism also talks to another issue that is generally of import to parents, namely nourishment and feeding, and this can further be seen as an expression of familial *cariño*. That the educator adapted the activity in two ways by enacting a kind of familial *cariño* pedagogy in order to mitigate parents' concerns can in itself be understood in terms of intellectual *cariño*. Recalling that the goal for the activity was parent support by showing them (teaching them about) a fun pedagogical activity, and recalling that part of a theme identified in the interview material was 'learning to be a good, pedagogical parent', it can be argued that Karin had high expectations of the parents to participate in this rather unusual activity, and that these high expectations were retained even when she experienced a problem in organising the activity in a way that made sense to the learners. The adaptations can be seen as high support, to match the high expectations, indicating a drive on the part of the educator to make the teaching and learning successful for the learners.

9.3.2 Creating a secure space for a father to challenge existing understandings of parenting

In this example bridgebuilder Helena responds to a question about the purpose of the open preschool, and she describes her role in creating opportunities for foreign born parents to find a network and share experiences. Here she recounts an instance in which a mother and her husband learned, in different ways, about gender and parenting norms in Sweden.

But for those who come from my homeland, for example, once a woman came who had seen a pappa standing and changing a diaper. And came and said ‘What?! A pappa changing a diaper?’. I said, okay, what’s wrong with that? ‘No, my husband never does this, he says this is your job’.

I say, why? Is he not a pappa? A pappa should do this! ‘No but why my husband doesn’t do this?’. I said, ask him. (Both chuckle).

So she said, ‘Yes! I will’ [redacted due to potentially identifying information] Then after a few days she and her husband came, and they tend to respect me because I make a good relationship between me and them, while I help them. Make calls, fill in forms, slussa them along, you know, little problems, I usually kind of solve them, and they feel that I’m someone they always want to be nice to me. When he came, we started discussing – we had arranged that we would discuss, and I talked with him, I said ‘Nothing wrong with that! It’s your child! If you’re going to feel like that, who are you going to...?’

And then I said ‘This time [with your child], your child will remember it when you are old and he is old, like this. And he said ‘Hmm, I hadn’t thought of it, but you know how it is, in our society...’ I said ‘Yes, but we’ve moved to Sweden! And we can learn new things that lift us up, not the other way around. We mustn’t be closed! We have to be flexible and try.’

The other day she sent me an SMS and said, ‘thank you so much, he’s changed a diaper!’ (Both chuckle). I mean, little things – those that come to open preschool, I mean, it’s good for foreigners to, err, read the codes in the society, how does this work, what are they doing, why... they always ask.

Extract 34 (Interview 15)

Here the teaching and learning situations that arise are not pre-planned by Helena, rather they emerge following a comment made to her by a mother visiting the open preschool. The mother expresses surprise over seeing a father change a nappy, and in doing so effectively self identifies a content area relating to gendered parenting practices as an aspect of culture. Helena poses a follow up question to visitor, inviting her to reflect on the question, and to ask her husband about it. This can be understood as the educator having high expectations of the mother and father in question and their capacity to discuss this issue. Helena then invokes her positive relationship with the whole family (which can be understood in terms of familial *cariño*) and her position as a part of the learner’s community and a kind of maternal / elder figure (familial *cariño*) in order to bring the husband in as an artefact in the wife’s learning, but also as a learner himself, again showing high expectations. When she

contacts the father, Helena challenges him to interrogate what stands fast for him about parenting and culture, drawing on her community insider knowledge to do so, which can be understood as critical *cariño*. Consistently the educator shows high expectations of the parents as learners, and offers high support to them in the meaning making. A further example of familial *cariño* is visible when Helena specifically invokes the fathering role, indicating that he is being treated as a father-as-learner. The father's learning is evidenced when his wife sends a message saying he has changed a diaper. This can be understood as a particularly good example of a familial *cariño* approach, given that Helena has created an environment where parents are secure in raising a 'private and personal' topic - nested within the context of a 'private' situation ie. their domestic environment –with an educator. This can be seen as an indication of a family type relationship and trust that have been established, partly as a result of personal communication via Whatsapp. This is reported as being a common practice amongst this role, and an important tool of the bridgebuilder work, due to the use of a shared first language, and in many cases overlaps in cultural background.

9.3.3 Facilitating access to a support network and a new way of understanding a child's diagnosis

In this example, Helena describes an instance from her network-building work with two mothers.

I have another really lovely example – there was a mamma, an Arabic speaking mamma, who came with her daughter, and her daughter has autism. She came like this (dejected face), and was like 'oh, my life'. And I don't know, she was so depressed and sad, and she said 'what shall I do? what future is waiting for my daughter?'. And I understand her, it's not easy. On the other hand I have another mamma, Swedish, and very, you know, happy and positive, and she has a boy, also autism. But each person comes different days, they don't come.... So I met this mamma and I asked her how's it going with your son, and she said, "I mean, Helena, it feels kind of....from the beginning I was shocked but now I feel like I am walking in a garden and picking something every day – a flower from the garden when I see 'Aha! My child can do this!' you know? 'Aha! my child can do this' I pick flowers and collect them in my basket." I felt, wow! Two such different, like.... In our society we tend to, if you have that, shut the door and don't show the child to society. Then I thought that they should meet. I said to the Swedish girl, is it okay, there's a mamma....she said 'Yes of course!!'. So I called her and I said to her 'come, tomorrow, I need you'. When she came I got them to know each other and we started talking, and I asked her and asked the other, and the Swedish girl has spoken so beautifully, you know? Showed her, okay, I understand it's difficult but we should [see the glass half full]. And the mamma became so... she got energy! And she said to her, if they want they can meet somewhere, and she said yes, gladly. And it went really well. She started coming every day, and feels so 'thank you that I met this woman'. There was even a group of same

nationality women and all had autistic children, and I said to her, go with them. And every day they talk a little about something, if there's a doctor, if there's a method, you know, it gives them energy, all together. They feel 'not just me'. But to come to open preschool, it means they'll be together and learn, you know. You learn so much during the day. Not just language.

Extract 35 (Interview 15)

In this example it is possible to identify the way in which the Helena identified a need, identified a resource for meeting the need, and organised the setting so that one visitor had the opportunity to learn from another. Helena's role (as described here) can be seen as a facilitator, and the facilitation can be described in terms of authentic *cariño* pedagogy and in terms of transcaring, namely *compadrazgo*.

Towards the start of the extract, Helena describes the mother's need for support with her mood and wellbeing, and describes two knowledge gaps the mother herself has expressed. Firstly, the mother asks what she should do – this is asked in relation to her role as a mother to a child with an NPF diagnosis, and can be understood as the mother expressing a need for knowledge and skills to enact this role. Secondly, the mother asks about the kind of future her child will have, indicating a need for her to be able to make a relation between a future she had imagined for her child and her child's NPF diagnosis. The NPF diagnosis is positioned as something which has disrupted what the mother understood as being within the true for her child's future, and as a result, the mother is positioned as needing additional information in order to re-establish a discursive understanding of the future.

In her didactic decision making with the aim of teaching the mother about children with an NPF diagnosis, and being a parent to them, Helena identifies another mother as a resource, and arranges for the two mothers to meet. She describes how she facilitated the meeting between the two mothers, by asking each one to share their experiences. The experiences of the second mother can be understood as the learning content that became of relevance for the first mother. Following this, Helena describes the first mother in terms which can be understood as meaning that the first mother has learned in relation to the two knowledge gaps, and that this in turn has led to an improvement in her wellbeing. This can be understood as the educator's expression of the parent support purpose having been fulfilled. Helena's account can be described in terms of authentic *cariño* pedagogy in a number of ways. A critical *cariño* approach can be identified whereby she invokes cultural differences in societal approaches to children with NPF diagnoses. As a bridgebuilder, Helena's role entails offering parental support from the perspective of someone who shares a migration and establishment background similar to that of the visitors, and can draw on their knowledge from that background and from the Swedish society in their work. Helena draws on two different cultural approaches to NPF diagnoses, and identifies a didactic strategy that would allow the first

mother to compare her understanding (that such diagnoses are shameful, that children with NPF diagnoses should be hidden away, that they do not have a chance of a normatively understood future) with that which dominates in professional discourses about NPF in the Swedish context. Here, the aim is to foreground as desirable the majority 'Swedish' approach, but this is not achieved through arbitrary valorisation of the Swedish way, but rather by creating a meeting between two parents, and allowing them to share their understandings and create meaning together.

In recalling this meeting between the two parents, the Helena lifts the joyful nature of the Swedish parent's account, and the welcoming, inclusive approach she has towards the first mother. In this way, a kind of familial *cariño* is visible, where learning occurs in the context of sharing genuine, personal, experiences of motherhood that open up for the dismantling of a discourse of shame and sadness, and re construction of a new discourse of inclusion and hope. Of interest is also the invitation extended by the second mother to meet with the first mother – this can be considered against the overall discourses of isolation, and 'outsiderness' which are used in relation to some immigrant mothers, and against the expression of personal isolation due to shame, which the educator indicates that the first mother is at risk of. In proposing a meeting, the second mother indicates that their shared experiences as mothers, and as mothers to children with NPF diagnoses is that which links them and which forms the basis of their meeting. 'Meeting as mothers' can be identified as dominant within discourses about open preschool, and constitutes a counter discourse in relation to the discourses of isolation and outsiderness. Invocation of motherhood as a way of doing insiderness allows for a broadening of how insiderness is constructed, and challenges a narrow construction of insiderness as contingent upon language practices or employment status.

Helena describes how the overall learning experience that came about as a result of her didactic planning led to the first mother to engage in other social and learning situations, namely the group for parents with a particular nationality who have children with NPF diagnoses. The type of content described here comes from the domain of medicine and medical care, and the closeness of the group based on shared experiences is lifted as important for the learning. In this way, the educator links familial and intellectual *cariño* by explicitly valorising the former as a factor in the latter.

9.4 Learning to teach in the open preschool revisited: adapting to a critical care pedagogical approach in the meeting with the open preschool's purposes and practices

In this final example, SFI teacher Lise, employed to teach once a week in the open preschool, describes an incident that occurred towards the start of her time working in the setting.

Yes, I mean, it was incredibly hard for me in the beginning, because I am incredibly structured, and think we should do things such and such a way, get such and such done... I don't always do it in the end, but...it was difficult.... I didn't quite realise in the beginning that it would be hard for me, I was completely into the idea. [I said to myself] Lise, you've got to be open to it, and see what you can.... Because I feel that this target group is, you know, important for me, and always has been, so it feels like, errr.... it wasn't like I was unwilling in any way shape or form, nope. I said yes to doing this, after all, went in with my eyes open and so on. But at the start we did some clumsy things. I stood...so there's a kind of gangway here, in-between – the children go in that way, and then they move around so much, they crawl over to the table, and crawl back... And I was standing and teaching right in the middle of the gangway, and I managed to tread on a baby. You know, I'm in a world of my own when I'm stood there, do you see what I mean? And so I took a step back, and there was a baby there, and I trod on her leg. And it was so, I... I was so shocked, and I fell down to the ground and was like 'Little darling, oh! Oh goodness! What happened? Oh no.' And she was so shocked about my reaction, this little girl, she was just, oh.... And she must have had a real bruise on her leg. But the mother nether said anything about it, which I get. Most of them are so completely... in any case... so then I said that this absolutely can't happen again, so we reorganized, and now I stand in one corner, and the children and parents don't come there. So, it's been lots of that kind of thing, you know? How do we do things in the best way. And sometimes I've said [to the educators] 'Can you take the children?' – that's become my thing, you know? 'Can you take the children with you, can you kind of...?' And they say 'Yeah, but we can't, you know, force them to be with us.'. No, no, I get it.

Extract 36 (Interview 8)

This example is an extract from a much longer example in which it is possible to note numerous examples of the educator Lise, an SFI teacher working once a week in the open preschool, reflecting upon her practice and adjusting her didactic decision making in response to the conditions in the open preschool. The example in full emphasises the tensions that arise from the incongruity of the educator's habits from school contexts with the working practices in the open preschool, and can be viewed as an example of learning by the teacher herself, as she launches enquiries when something does not stand fast for her in her practice. Many of the times, this results in the creation of new relations, which may also be viewed in terms of her learning to understand and use

authentic *cariño* methods. In some of the examples, the educator's account shows that she has not been able to dovetail her earlier experiences with the working practices of the open preschool, and her didactic decision making is not such that it could be described in terms of authentic *cariño*.

In this particular example, it is the Lise herself who is the learner, and the open preschool *arbetsätt* that is the content – as such, the episode recounted here shows the *educator* learning new ways of enacting her teaching role by learning about how teaching looks when the setting is the open preschool. The episode begins with Lise recounting her usual teaching habits – this can be understood as what stands fast for her about teaching, or what she ‘knows’ about teaching. These habits are garnered from her experience in schools and in adult education, and she expresses both that she likes to work in a certain, structured way and also that she was aware that the change of setting might entail the need to change her practice. She expresses that the target group has always been one that is important to her, and this is positioned as the motivation for being open to enacting her professional role in a different setting. Indications can be found that the Lise initially tried to replicate her classroom practice (for example, her posture and position) in the open preschool setting. This has the unfortunate and clearly accidental consequence that a young baby is injured when the educator missteps.

It is this incident which is described as the Lise's motivation for changing the way in which she enacts her teacher role – it can be understood as an indication that she has learned something about ‘how to be a teacher in the open preschool’ and that this knowledge is operationalised in her practice going forward. Here the notion that the open preschool as a setting requires or necessitates a specific approach in terms of educators' didactic decision making (as an aspect of curriculum making's ‘how’ question) becomes relevant. A reality of the open preschool is by default the presence of very young children and babies together with their parent, and this is noted in the thematic analyses of both the SKR Toolbox and the interview studies as a natural and *självkärlart* aspect of the setting. The physical presence of the children is relevant in two ways here – firstly it is a factor in the *decision to change* where Lise teaches from, as well as a consideration in deciding *which new position* she should teach from. Secondly it is invoked as a hinder to the parents' learning, but one which she accepts is not possible to overcome or remove. As such, the physical presence of children and the physical presence of the parents and children in relation to one another, become understood as factors that the educators must take into account in her didactic decision making. In this way, it can be said that Lise has learned that authentic *cariño* pedagogical practices (even if they are not familiar in those terms to her) are important tools in effective teaching in the open preschool. Familial *cariño* practices are made real for the educator as an outcome of her visceral, maternal reaction to the injured baby, and in her understanding that her students are parents-as-learners first and foremost. A critical *cariño* approach can be identified in the Lise's (albeit reluctant) acceptance of the fact the presence of the children is a factor of didactic decision making in relation to this marginalised target group of learners.

10 Discussion of results in relation to research questions and aim of the thesis

Having presented the results of the empirical studies, attention is turned now to discussion of these results in relation to the thesis' research questions. The overall purpose of the thesis has been to explore how education of adult immigrants can be understood as a legitimate activity in the curriculum of a nominally child educational setting, and this has been addressed through the specific research questions outlined in Chapter One.

This study set out with the aim of understanding the place of education for adult immigrants in the curriculum of a nominally child educational setting. Here, the term nominally is important, as it implies an ambiguity in the way the setting is organised in relation to its stated pedagogical function - a discrepancy between 'policy and practice'. The question identifies this discrepancy as being sited in the curriculum of the open preschool. As such it is useful to begin discussion of the empirical results by considering whether they contain support for the curricular ambiguity regarding the pedagogical purposes of the open preschool. A narrow understanding of curriculum that privileges a legislatively authoritative author and conventional syllabus type document could be used to support the assertion that education for adult immigrants is incongruent with the stated pedagogical function of the setting. *General Advice with Comments for Open Preschool* has been described above as the closest document it has had to a binding curriculum, and using this document as a point of reference would confirm that the pedagogical purpose of the open preschool is childfacing, and that the purpose for adults is social and supportive. However, as noted in Section 4.1.4, this narrow approach to curriculum is deselected in favour of a broader approach that visualises curriculum as a dynamic, multifaceted, multi-actor practice that can be enacted across a variety of sites. Using this understanding – curriculum making activity, allows a wider spectrum of *different* practices to be brought within the true for curriculum, and allows education of adult immigrants to indeed be understood as a legitimate activity in the open preschool.

Developments in the open preschool's curriculum that have taken place since work began on this thesis invite the further conclusion that curriculum making as it relates to the open preschool has also led to the adult immigrant pedagogical function of the open preschool becoming *dominant* in public discourses about the setting. Characteristic of the open preschool is that it adapts

its practice in response to the needs of the visitors. The empirical results have indicated here that one way in which this adaptation can occur is due to the open preschool being identified as an arena for another curriculum – as was seen in the case of parent education, and more recently in the case of SALI. Open preschool can be understood in such scenarios as ‘hosting’ teaching and learning activities in relation to specific contents and purposes which are related to, but (in terms of their specificity) outside the scope of, the core practices and purposes of the open preschool as understood by practitioners. The results further show that open preschool has a historical precedent as a *site* of SALI educational activities, but that these have typically been identified at nano or micro sites as a visitor need, and organised accordingly. Since 2018, there has been a change in the nature of SALI in the open preschool, with the setting increasingly being positioned as an *arena* for SALI by external actors, in relation to a need identified at meso, macro and supra curriculum making sites. This is discussed further in Section 10.2.3 below.

10.1 Dynamic understandings of learner, content, educational activities and pedagogical purpose in relation to educational activities in the open preschool since 1972

In Section 10.1, I address the research questions 1a) How has the educational purpose of the open preschool been described in texts ‘for and about’ the setting since 1972? and 1b) What educational activities, learners, and intended learning content have been described for the setting during the same period? The empirical results invite the conclusion that the pedagogical purpose of the open preschool can be conceptualised in a number of related ways, namely in terms of practices reported in terms of curriculum; and in terms of the Swedish education system.

10.1.1 A pedagogical support for pedagogical parenting

The learner in the open preschool can be an adult, a child, a parent-child dyad, or indeed an educator. In this section, I discuss results in terms of how the learner(s) in the open preschool are described in the empirical material, and the relevance of this to the learning content. Broadly speaking this can be understood as didactic decision making in the meeting between learner, content and shifting purpose.

In this question, it is useful to return to the frequently raised observation that the common denominator used to describe the adult visitors as a group is parenthood, as noted for example in Bulling’s research into the Norwegian open preschool equivalent (2017), and in the empirical example in 8.2.3. In

contrast to official school forms, where age and position in terms of progression through the education system are the common denominators, and a traditional curriculum document informs selection of content, the unifying characteristic of the adults-as-learners in the open preschool makes it necessary for content to be selected on different grounds. The results show that the broad area from which content may be selected is parenthood, and that this is motivated by the overriding purpose of the setting (even if this purpose is obfuscated in one way or another in certain curricular documents for the open preschool, as will be discussed below in 10.1.5). However, due to the non-statutory nature of the setting, and the multiple, coexisting purposes the setting can serve (social, networking, child educational), delimited selection of content from the umbrella topic area parenting is described as taking place in response to the needs of the parents-as-learners.

It has been beyond the scope of this study to examine in detail the way in which the needs of the visitors come to be operationalised as intended content – where reference to this has been identified within the results, it can be seen variously that parents self-select content and suggest it to the educators (see the example of the mosque in Extract 25), content emerges from interactions with visitors (see Extract 34 for example), content is proposed by external actors (for example the government and SKR’s language and integration initiative), or delivered in collaboration with external actors whom the open preschool engage with (see for example collaboration with the library in Section 9.2.2). Further study would be required to create more detailed knowledge about these methods, however it is possible from the results in this thesis to assert that content from within the field of parenting is delimited where it can be identified as constituting or contributing to *parent support*. In this way it is useful to consider the educational elements of the open preschool’s activities in terms their close relationship to the setting’s supportive function / purpose.

Whilst it is true that parenthood is generally seen to be the common denominator in terms of who are the (adult) learners in the open preschool, there is nonetheless some individualising of content selection, depending on the needs of individuals or specific target groups. However, educators express tensions regarding personalisation of educational activities for some groups in a way that would have the effect of marginalising opportunities for participation by other groups, emphasising that *their* primary role as educators is to make each and every visitor feel welcome ‘as they are’ – something which can be compromised if the educational function of the open preschool becomes dominant and highly specific. Educators describe (for example in the examples in 9.1 and 9.2) the way in which different *types* of learning or *aspects* of a particular content area can take place or become relevant for different parents (or for them themselves) in a learning situation, meaning that even if activities have a support focus that is more directly relevant to some parents-as-learners than others, all parents can be understood as potential learners.

In addressing Research Question 1b, it is useful to ask, in relation to *parent* as the primary learner identity, and *support* as the primary motivator for selection of relevant content, *support with what?* On this point, the empirical results show two main things. Firstly, parents are supported to enact specific parenting practices that are normatively positioned as desirable. Broadly speaking, this entails parents learning to create a pedagogical environment in children's home lives and environments that is similar to the pedagogical environment in preschool. For example, creative activities, outdoor activities, language and literacy activities, and practices designed to create strong bonds between caregiver and child, and to develop children's sense of self, strengthen their confidence and maximise their school readiness. This result is visible in the very earliest texts about open preschool and, notably, its fore-runner Play Advice, and it recurs through the empirical material.

Secondly, parent support can be understood as support with parenting. 'Parenting' in this sense spans a wide range of information, skills and knowledge, from the practical aspects of childcaring (weaning for example, as seen in example 8.1.1) to more abstract, culturally situated aspects of bringing up children (Sw. *uppfostran*), for example creating conditions for children's future capacity to be self-sufficient citizens by oneself taking part in normative education and employment practices. This result is also visible in the earlier texts on open preschool, in particular those which link it with parent education's original goals and remains present in texts and dominant discourses around the open preschool today (SKR's focus on language and labour market entry, primarily). A difference, however, is visible in the political discourses or ideologies which policy makers and curriculum makers draw on in invoking these norms and ideals.

10.1.2 Auxiliary in relation to other child and adult educational settings

This research took as its point of departure a conception of the open preschool as an educational setting, based upon the available 'face value' information available from the regulatory authority, the Swedish National Agency for Education, and in the Education Act. Results show that the open preschool *is* an educational setting in the sense that it is a place where teaching and learning take place. Of interest within the results, however, are the details of the multifaceted, multi-site and multi-party discussion which the open preschool has been the subject of about the nature of its alignment with education and / or social care services. Some of this discussion can be understood in terms of curriculum making, and much of it can be understood with reference to the development trajectory of early years care in Sweden. Key points raised in the results regarding this are the fact that, until 1998, childcare was regulated by the National Board of Health and Welfare, meaning that while preschool had

a pedagogical purpose, it was not legislatively situated as part of the education system. Further to this, the question of open preschool's nature and status was discussed by various actors ahead of the move of the preschool from the National Board of Health and Welfare to the Swedish National Agency for Education, resulting ultimately in it following the preschool, but leaving, it appears from the empirical results, a number of loose threads and remaining questions about the decision. I argue that the aforementioned question of open preschool's *name* and the perhaps unduly close association with the regular preschool which the *kontakt* and *gemenskap* discursive practice occasioned, can be viewed as factors in the ultimate decision to shift the open preschool over to the Swedish National Agency for Education along with the regular preschool. The increasingly close alignment of the open preschool with the developing family centre settings has kept the flames of this 'education-vs-social care' discussion alight into the 21st century as regards the open preschool as a general setting, although the developments regarding formalisation of the language learning purpose of the open preschool exert a discursive pull back towards the educational side.

In fact, I am inclined to draw the conclusion that the questions that arise over the rightful status of the open preschool, and the appropriateness of the Swedish National Agency for Education as its regulatory authority are more fruitfully answered by viewing the open preschool's 'edu-care' characteristics as typical of its multifacetedness as a setting, and that the dual educational and social care / support function are fundamental components of the way in which the setting is organised. It is further possible, as the empirical results have indicated, to question the need to see the educational and support purposes as separate. If we further draw on the *transculturación* concept, they do not need to be understood as being in conflict, but as two 'ways of doing something' that create another, novel 'way of doing something' (critical care pedagogy, perhaps) when they come into contact with one another.

This conclusion interprets results answering the research question about how the setting has been described in terms of the didactic questions of what, how and why. Another way to answer the question is to do so in terms of how the open preschool is positioned legislatively and organisationally in relation to Sweden's education system. Here, two points of contact are clear – regular preschool (understood as the first stage in the formal education journey), and SFI (understood as a prerequisite step for labour market entry).

The empirical results that it has been variously described over the years as an alternative, a complement and an introduction to the regular preschool, and that the regular preschool itself has been increasingly positioned as school-preparatory. Open preschool has been postulated, and tested, as a site for SFI, or a version thereof, but the results of this study indicate that there are complications with the implementation of this. One conclusion, then, is that the open preschool can be described as a pre-formal part of the Swedish education system for children, and that it has a pre-formal function for some

adults, first and foremost those who need to develop their Swedish language skills ahead of entering employment. This description, while primarily intended to be a literal one, also recalls discourses within the empirical material (for example within the *Toolbox*, which suggests open preschools can help visitors practice workplace skills by implementing e.g. schedules and signups even if they are not technically necessary) of the open preschool as a threshold, or gateway, solidifying further its liminality.

10.1.3 Micro- and nano-adaptive: a setting providing attentive, personalized opportunities for learning

A finding which stands out is that the open preschool has routinely been described as a being a responsive, adaptable setting where the organisation is characterised by local responses to an overall purpose. This presupposes a certain kind of proactive mindful approach to educators' didactic work, where their organisation of the setting should prioritise aligning the specificities of the visitors' needs and the physical and / or demographic characteristics of the setting with the didactic purpose. This can be seen particularly clearly in, for example, Extract 28 about the splashpads in Section 9.1.3 and Extract 35 about the NPF support in Section 9.3.3.

10.1.4 Macro- and supra-adaptive: a setting attending to a national target learner group's needs

The attentiveness and adaptability of the open preschool is also evident on a larger scale, and results show that it is able to be deployed in the service of political goals relating to other parts of the education and / or related socio-political questions. The clearest contemporary example of this is the SKR initiative whereby the open preschool is deployed in the service of expediting of foreign-born women's integration, a macro or supra sited political goal. Earlier in history, the use of the open preschool as a setting for Parent Education functioned in a similar, but arguably less politically discordant, way.

10.1.5 A setting whose educational purpose is hard to put a finger on

The results of the document study show that a child educational and an adult educational purpose have existed for the open preschool since its inception, and that these have been variously foregrounded and backgrounded in curricula and discourse about the setting, depending on the way the open preschool has been positioned in relation to other educational settings such as parent education, or parts of the education system such as preschool, and adult education in the form of SFI. One interesting finding is the way in which the adult

educational purpose of the open preschool has been discursively subordinated to the child educational purpose over time, despite it being retained in policy and practice. The first example of this occurred in the naming of the open preschool, where the earliest name of the pilot projects, Play Advice, gave way to the name *öppen förskola*. In terms of the relation of the names to the didactic practices of the settings, Play Advice was descriptive in terms of didactic content, and its use in context made it clear that the intended learner was the parent. The name *öppen förskola* obfuscated the adult educational purpose, and indeed, any concrete reference to intended learning content ceased to be invoked by the name of the setting. Instead, the name discursively linked open preschool to the regular preschool, fundamentally shifting the *type* of setting it should be understood as. This shift, I have argued, contributed to the second way in which the adult educational purpose has been invisibilised, namely by the recontextualisation of the phrase *kontakt och gemenskap* from the SOUs about parent education, in subsequent texts for and about the open preschool. That the phrase is associated with a social purpose is uncontroversial given the semantics, but that its detachment from the original context, namely the aims of parent education, has led to a discursive favouring of the social connotations is arguably more problematic in terms of what is discursively within the true for open preschool, given that it entails a mismatch between policy and practice. As a discursive practice in the sense of serving as a textual representation of what is within the true for the open preschool, it could be argued that the recontextualisation of *kontakt och gemenskap* has been driven primarily by discursive actors without a deep knowledge of open preschool, and as such is an example of discursive dominance being established that is counter to insider discourses on open preschool. In particular, the misaligned use by outsiders of the phrase *kontakt and gemenskap* to describe the adult facing purpose is positioned as a problem in that it does not adequately describe the actions of the *educator*, and serves to devalue them by placing them in a kind of hostess position rather than a professional educator position. So, the original educational meaning is obscured by the dominant lexical practices, and by the related obscuring of the educators' practices in relation to adults' learning. These results contribute in a small way to addressing the issue identified in earlier research (Frank, 2010, for example) that the open preschool is misunderstood, or poorly understood.

While the above discussion lifts the issue of whether the child-educational or adult-educational purpose dominates in open preschool's curriculum, a recurring discursive practice in the material has been the inextricably holistic nature of the open preschool's educational purpose, where it is not always necessary or desirable to 'decide' between the two positions. Understanding this conclusion relies on two things, firstly the numerous ways in which children's and adults' participation and learning are described in relation to each other and secondly the widespread representation in the material of learning as a diverse phenomenon, and learning in the open preschool as *not* limited to

formal types of learning. Viewed against the background of the overall tailored parent support purpose which is visible in the wider results, it is perhaps not surprising that the types of learning and constellations in which parents and adults may be positioned as learner are manifold.

10.2 Learner, contents and purposes for educational activities for immigrant families in texts for and about the open preschool in the period 1972 -2024

In Section 10.2, I address the research questions 2a) What educational activities for immigrant families in the open preschool have been described in texts ‘for and about’ the setting since 1972? and 2b) How are immigrant families-as-learners described in these texts, and what intended learning content is identified as relevant for them?

10.2.1 Society’s shared language and immigrant families’ first languages as dominant content for educational activities for children, family units and parents in shifting socio-political contexts

Immigrant families have been linked with open preschool since its inception, with the earliest discrete text to the open preschool as a setting with the potential to be specifically relevant to them coming in 1978. The concept of *migration* has been shown to have been of particular relevance as a factor in the development of the pilot projects, where the needs of rural-urban Swedish migrants in newbuild neighbourhoods were described in a way that recalls the needs of immigrants arriving in host societies. The play advice pilots responded to the needs for locally situated information, for support networks, and for public spaces to move within. A slight shift over time is observable in terms of who in immigrant families are described as the target demographic, or intended learner. In Section 7.5, the texts within the dataset that have immigrant families as their main focus are discussed. Within this group of texts, it can be seen that the earliest one focuses on immigrant *children*, the next wave focus on immigrant *families*, and on an immigrant *area*, before shifting focus in the 2010s to a focus on immigrant *parents*, primarily mothers.

Languaging as an aspect of immigration is visible as a recurring theme in the empirical data, and discussion of language has usually centred around mother tongue languaging as an aspect of families’ identities, and around immigrant families’ use of Swedish as society’s shared language. The way in which language has been treated in accounts of curriculum making and didactic decision making, has tended to align with the dominant, broader

societal discourses about multilingualism of the time when the text was produced. An example of this can be seen if one compares the accounts of how Salamanders open preschool worked with language in the 1970s, when use of first languages took place in dedicated, language specific groups, to accounts of translanguaging practices in contemporary settings. This is broadly in line with the approach to mother tongues and Swedish that is expressed in Swedish legislation whereby mother tongue use is actively valued, and Swedish is positioned as the working language of the country, and thus the language of education and employment (SFS 2009:600). A difference to note, however, is a shift in the discourse surrounding Swedish as a school language, whereby the importance of attending preschool is increasingly positioned as important for the development of a child's Swedish for school, where school is viewed as the first stage in a learning trajectory towards labour market entry. Such a long-term view is arguably not as visible in earlier texts.⁸³

10.2.2 From immigrant cultures to transcultural meetings – developing understandings of culture as content in the open preschool

Results show that educators have linked immigration with culture in the organisation of their settings and the planning of activities. The empirical material indicates that culture is often understood in the common use of the term, relating to (what are assumed to be) country specific music, food, customs and traditions. A comparison of results from the document study and the interview study reveals that the trend noted above in 11.2.1 whereby languages other than Swedish were first addressed in individual language groups, and latterly integrated in the general setting, is echoed in terms of culture. The example of country specific groups meeting to do specific cultural activities in Section 6.4.3 in the text study can be usefully compared with the example with baking dampers in Section 9.1.1 in order to highlight the way in which a shift in the nature of multicultural Sweden (primarily in terms of the diversity within diversity that is characteristic of today's society) appears to be mirrored by a shift in the way in which 'immigrant cultures' are understood in relation to Swedish culture and Swedish life, with the more recent examples indicating that culture is not seen as a static term, but rather as a dynamic and integrative concept.

⁸³ (Although it is not visible in the empirical materials analysed here, this 'school language' focus can be reflected on against the background of a general a shift in public discourses about mother tongue teaching (*modersmålsundervisning*) that increasingly questions its value and lobbies for its abolition in favour of a focus on Swedish (see for example Spetz, 2014; Wingstedt, 1998))

10.2.3 Formalisation of SALI content as increasingly foregrounded in discourses about the open preschool

As noted in Sections 10.1.3 and 10.1.4, characteristic of the open preschool is that it adapts its practice in response to the needs of the visitors. The empirical results have indicated here that one way in which this adaptation can occur is due to the open preschool being identified as an arena for another curriculum – as was seen in the case of parent education, and more recently in the case of SALI. I argue that it is useful to distinguish between the terms ‘site’ and ‘arena’ when describing the way in which conceptions of open preschool as an actor in SALI have shifted over time, and in response to changing socio-political conditions. Open preschool can be understood in such scenarios as ‘hosting’ teaching and learning activities in relation to specific contents and purposes which are related to, but (in terms of their specificity) outside the scope of, the core practices and purposes of the open preschool as understood by practitioners. The results further show that open preschool has a historical precedent as a *site* of SALI activities, but that these have typically been identified at nano or micro sites as a visitor need, and organised accordingly. Since 2018, there has been a change in the nature of SALI in the open preschool, with the setting increasingly being positioned as an *arena* for SALI by external actors, in relation to a need identified at meso, macro and supra curriculum making sites.

A typical expression of this has been the discursive practice of linking SFI⁸⁴ and open preschool. In such a case, the curriculum of SFI comes into contact with the curriculum of the open preschool (including the part of the curriculum which organises SALI in the open preschool). Viewed in terms of curriculum making activity, this can be understood as the meeting, in practice, of two curricular ‘cultures’. This gives rise to curriculum making in relation to a new activity, namely ‘SFI in the open preschool’ (or, likewise, ‘Civic Orientation in the open preschool’). The new educational activity, like any other, should be organised by educators in relation to existing curricular practice. Yet, as the empirical results show, there are hazards in assuming that one set of curriculum practices can be unproblematically enacted in a different setting. Put simply, it can not be assumed that ‘SFI in the open preschool’ will work, simply on the grounds of didactic similarities in the shape of learner demographic and content area.

Examples from empirical results in Section 8.2.7 illustrate this idea well. These examples draw on SFI in the open preschool, and suggest that while SFI and open preschool may share a didactic *who* and a *what*, there can exist tensions in the way the didactic *how* and *why* are organised relative to these. These tensions have been shown to relate variously to teaching method, use

⁸⁴ Note that it is specifically the course SFI I am referring to in this particular part of the discussion, not language learning in general, or not any other specific courses.

of the physical space, expectations on learners, and understandings of the roles played by different types of professional. I argue that while the content area may be similar, SFI and SALI education as part of the activities of the open preschool have two distinct curricula, and that the two curricula come into contact when supra and macro curriculum making in relation to SFI engages the open preschool in the service of delimiting or negotiating its curriculum. This ‘coming into contact’ can be visualised as meetings of various types between a curriculum and didactic triangle belonging to the open preschool, and a curriculum and a didactic triangle belonging to SFI, linked to show that they constitute the point of departure for the organisation of the teaching and learning. This is expounded further in Section 10.3 below.

10.3 Educators’ accounts of their pedagogical work with adult immigrants

In Section 10.3, I address research question 3a) How do educators in the open preschool describe their educational work with immigrant adults in terms of intended learning content, purposes, and methods?

In considering the results presented in answer to this question, I argue that critical care pedagogy is enacted as form of resistance in the face of curricular contact that does not align with the view of the open preschool’s ethos and purpose held by those within the open preschool itself. In this way, critical care pedagogy functions as a tool in establishing and retaining discursive dominance in curriculum making in relation to the open preschool. When educators describe their work with immigrant adults using approaches that can be identified as critical care pedagogical, they express their points of view towards the purpose of the education and the way in which it ought to be organised. Inherent in this is a particular understanding of immigrant adults that draws on democratic principles. Here, the findings of this study align with Curry (2016; 2021), García et al. (2017) and Antrop-González & De Jesús (2016), amongst others, and add support to the idea of a critical care pedagogical approach stemming from consistent application of particular values in educators’ curriculum and didactic decision making across sites and contexts.

One way in which educators in open preschools appear to be able to *retain* or *sustain* parent support as a primary purpose of the open preschool is by deploying in their work a particular viewpoint about their role, a specific way of designing or organising the setting that aligns with the ethos, and an approach to didactic decision making on the ground that is also informed by this ethos, and supported by the organisation of the setting. It is this that can be discussed in terms of authentic *cariño* pedagogy, and this in turn has certain likenesses to the *kunskap kontakt påverkan* goals of the original parent education. This can invite the conclusion that the goals of parent education in

Sweden were / are similar in their democratic foundations to the goals of social-justice oriented education for minoritised groups today, and that it is this democracy purpose that underpins didactic decision making ‘on the ground’.

The authentic *cariño* type approach (Curry, 2016; 2021), coupled with the relatively high degree of agency which educators in the open preschool have to organise their settings, appear to allow educators to adapt top-down curriculum making directives so that they can be delivered in a way that does not compromise the core characteristics of the open preschool, that is to say, a secure, low-threshold setting where support is given in response to visitors’ individual needs, and equity-in-parenthood forms the basis for social interactions. By contrast, top-down curriculum making activities, for example, the governmental expression of the SKR initiative, may express its goals in terms of positive, empowering, equitable outcomes for individuals, but may in fact be more accurately described as aesthetic *cariño*, as the primary goals are labour-market integration as a factor in state financial politics.

With reference to the results of the CMA analysis regarding education of adults in the open preschool, and to the results of the critical care pedagogy analysis of the interview results, an interesting phenomenon is observable, which invites the tentative conclusion that the role of the open preschool as an actor, in general terms, in education of adults is to be a space for the education of adults-as-parents. As noted above, parenthood is the condition for being positioned as a learner, and educational activities are organised in relation to the needs of parents for support, and to the goals of parent education.

However, in terms of the role of the open preschool as an actor in provision of *education for adult immigrants*, parenthood is not *always* the only condition for a person being positioned as a learner. Depending on which curriculum making actors are active, a different learner identity can be invoked - visitors are understood as *SALI learners who attend open preschools* rather than *parent visitors to the open preschool who have SALI content as one of their support needs*. In this way, immigranthood is the condition of being positioned as a learner, and educational activities are indicated in relation to the goals of education for integration and labour-market entry. Parenthood is positioned as relevant to curriculum making in two ways: firstly, it is positioned as a factor in the deficit position assigned to certain groups of immigrant mothers when SALI / labour market activity is ideologically conceived of as their primary activity. Secondly, it is leveraged by curriculum makers at supra and macro sites in the strategic organisation of their work. Put simply: some curriculum making activities are predicated on the fact that immigrant parents can be located in open preschools.

As such, where particular curriculum initiatives, in particular ‘top down’ ones are launched, the macro curricular practices of the open preschool are potentially altered or impacted. However, the empirical results of the interview study seem to indicate that the meso and nano ones either remain unchanged or are negotiated, in that they continue to see parenthood as integral

to the learner identity, in relation to a wide variety of ‘parenting’ content that might happen to include SALI, rather than seeing parenthood as incidental to (and a barrier to) work-oriented SFI learner identity. This tension in the way in which different actors understand and communicate the purposes and functions of the open preschool adds support to similar findings from the Japanese, Italian, Flemish and French contexts presented by Hoshi-Watanabe et al., (2012). Indeed, the example in Section 9.4 of the educator who trod on a baby, is an example of how the basis for one practitioner’s didactic decision making, her stance, changed in the course of her practice, which can be understood as mindful divergence from one curriculum and a convergence with the open preschool’s curriculum.

It is useful at this juncture to consider the relationship of educators’ accounts of their work with the concept of curriculum as it relates to the open preschool. Despite its clear historic and present relationship with the regular preschool, at nano, micro and meso sites, and where curriculum making actors act from *within* the setting, it has, as the results in, for example, Chapter 7, indicate, the open preschool has never been organised *solely* in relation to the preschool. Indeed, the complexity of the curriculum making activity by internal actors may be argued to have produced a curriculum, in the sense of a plan for the organisation of the educational activities, as fit for purpose as any that has been produced by top down actors.

With this said, while the curricular practices of the open preschool can be said to be fit for purpose in the sense that they are based upon a consistently applied and well documented way of working, the fact remains that the open preschool is, in terms of the way in which it is legally regulated and financed, different to statutory settings. As a non-statutory setting, it operates without provision in law for a prescriptive curriculum. Here, the difference between the popular, legal and theoretical definitions of curriculum become relevant, as does discursive dominance. In brief, even though the open preschool can be said to have a fully functioning curriculum that has developed largely (although not solely) from the ‘inside out’, if actors from the ‘outside’ want to change it, then the legal provisions exist for them to do so, in theory.

Yet, despite this being possible in theory, the empirical results presented show that educators report being able to work in accordance with specific principles and use specific approaches to retain the primary parent support function of their pedagogical work. It is further useful to consider here a little further the ways in which curriculum making can be understood in the kind of ‘hybrid’ situations (Mård & Klausen, 2024b) that have been described in the empirical material, for example SFI in open preschool.

I propose that it is possible to understand SFI in open preschool in terms of *transcurriculum making*. Because the basic conditions for the two settings (SFI and open preschool) are fundamentally different, the kind of transcurricular collaboration in question can be understood as a productive process whereby the trans- prefix is used in a similar way to in translanguaging (García

& Wei, 2014, García et al., 2017), transcuring (García et al., 2013) and transculturación (García et al., 2013). That is to say, that something emerges which draws on elements of both curricula in a dynamic, situated way, resulting in a distinct set of curricular practices that are ‘more than the sum of their parts’. To use this transcurricular in this way, in combination with critical pedagogy’s use of the ‘trans’ prefix, and with Priestley et al.’s Curriculum Making terminology, addresses a need identified in (Mård & Klausen, 2024a) for research that broadens the theoretical understanding of types of crosscurricular practices. Figure 7, below, uses the example of the open preschool’s curricular practices, and the SFI curriculum to give a visual illustration of how the meeting of two didactic triangles can be envisaged. This ‘meeting’ entails contact of various types between didactic decision making and / or curriculum making in relation to two different curricular practices. This contact may take the form of educators’ taking into account an aspect of the other curriculum during their individual didactic decision making, or it may take the form of communication between two actors, for example in an open preschool setting. Further, contact may occur in text – for example as part of a documented discussion of education policy. Whatever its form, the contact may occur where any one of the nine places where the educator, learner, and content from each curriculum could be linked.

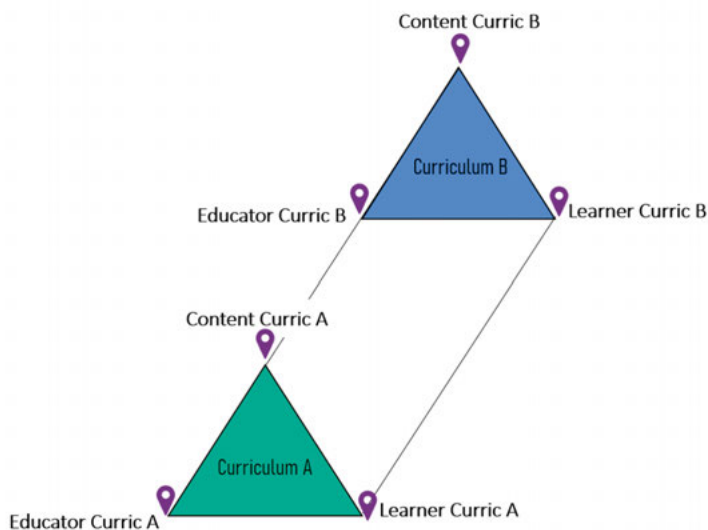


Figure 7 Possible points of contact in transcriculum making

Below, I revisit a number of items from the empirical results and discuss them as examples of transcurriculum making activity.

SFI in the open preschool

In this first example, Figure 8 below gives a visual representation of the points where contact is possible when SFI is delivered in, or intended for delivery in, the open preschool.

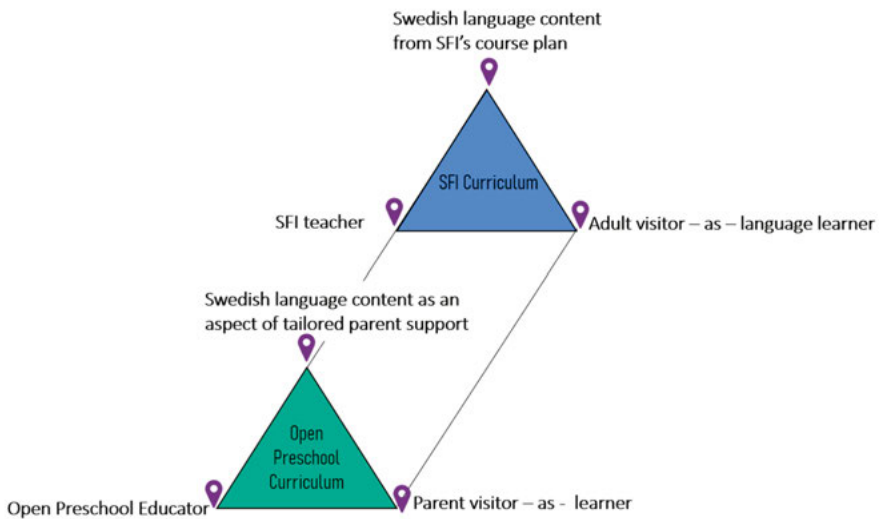


Figure 8 Possible points of contact in didactic decision making in relation to SFI in the open preschool

In this short extract from Interview 8, reproduced from the longer quote in Extract 36, in Section 9.4 above, it is possible to identify sites of transcurricular negotiation where the SFI teacher’s understanding of who the learner is in conflict with that of the open preschool educator’s.

And sometimes I’ve said [to the educators] ‘Can you take the children?’ – that’s become my thing, you know? ‘Can you take the children with you, can you kind of...’ And they say ‘Yeah, but we can’t, you know, force them to be with us.’ No, no, I get it.

Extract 37 (Interview 8)

Whereas the SFI teacher expresses a wish to organise the activity in a way which foregrounds the adults’ participation as learners, the open preschool educator emphasises their participation as parents or parents-as-learners. The open preschool educator meets the SFI teacher’s viewpoint by invoking the way in which the open preschool is usually organised, and, crucially, by clarifying the nature of the relationship between themselves and the children. With this is meant, she makes clear that they are not the primary caregivers in the

setting, and that the caregiving and childcaring responsibility is that of the parents, unless the child expresses a willingness to be a participant in the child educational activities with the open preschool educator alone. In this way, the understanding of adult visitor as parent first and foremost is cemented. The SFI teacher's final comment can be understood as her (albeit reluctant) accordance with the open preschool educator's decision, and the justification of it. Implicit here (and explicit in the longer extract) is the way in which the SFI teacher alters her practice in order to align it with the curriculum of the open preschool.

The empirical data presented here suggests that when the two curricula come into contact with one another, curriculum making takes place at different sites of contact in a process of negotiation and dovetailing that lays the ground for nano curriculum making, or didactic decision making in practice. In trans-curriculum making, when the SFI curriculum meets the curriculum of the open preschool, the two curricula meet and educational activities are organised in a way that goes beyond the one or the other, and forms a new way of aligning learner, educator and content. Something is brought within the true for SFI, for open preschool, and for the practices that occur where they meet. The result of such processes in the case described here has been described in the empirical material variously as *language training*, *introductory SFI*, *SFI lite*, *Swedish training for new parents*.

SALI in the open preschool

A similar process can be identified in the text empirical material in relation to SALI in the open preschool. In the case of the government and SKR (formerly SKL) texts (see for example Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, 2019; Sällemark, 2019; Regeringskansliet, 2023), the open preschool was identified as a potential arena for language and integration initiatives. In contrast to the SFI example discussed in relation to Figure 7 above, however, which refers to transcurricular meetings as described in accounts of practice, the transcurriculum making that can be posited here refers to curriculum making that took place at a macro site. (This echoes the way in which open preschool was lifted as part of the discussions from the 1980s mentioned in Sections 6.5.2 and 7.2 above that the open preschool is described variously as a 'solution', as a setting which can serve (or function) as a way for municipalities to meet the then newly developing parent education needs of families outside of the preschool system. This can be understood as a notional meeting of two curricula – that of the open preschool (by that time relatively well established), and that of the nascent curriculum for Parent Education.) The transcurriculum making activity takes the form of a documented discussion of the ways in which content, learner, form and function might be aligned if open preschool were to become more formalised as a setting, or arena, for SALI for adult immigrants, as a result of it having been identified as an existing and effective *site* for education

of parents. In this type of transcurriculum making activity, it may not be the actors ‘at the points’ of the triangles themselves who engage in the activity – it may be a third party actor, for example the authors of a government SOU, who discuss the two curricula in a way that can be illustrated by the transcurriculum making activity triangular prism shape.

Transcurriculum making can be discussed in relation to the pragmatist research cited in Section 3.4.2 which uses Dewey’s (1929) concept of habits to understand educators’ actions in innovative curricular situations, or in the face of , for example, policy changes. A distinction between the proposed terminology transcurriculum making and the research discussed which focuses on the nature of problematic situations or on understanding the meanings made (or the learning that takes place) in relation to teachers’ adjusted habits, is that transcurriculum making centres *curriculum making and didactic decision making* as the analytical units, drawing expressly on the relations which may be met when two didactic triangles ‘meet’. Further, it is interested primarily in describing in terms these relations the curriculum that which emerges as a result of contact between two different curricula (bearing in mind that by invoking Priestley et al.’s (2021) Curriculum Making Activity here, attention may be turned to the potential relevance of a large number of actors, actions, sites and discursive practices in describing *transcurriculum making*). In this way, transcurriculum making is potentially useful as framework for making visible discursive and systemic power relations in the meeting between curricula. Conducted equitably, it can be a collaborative, reflective, process of dovetailing, that can also be understood as an act of learning on the part of the educators. However, the potential exists for tensions to remain unresolved if the meeting of two curricula is not managed equitably, and one discourse about the didactic elements of the situation is able to dominate the other.

10.4 Discourses about language, immigration and integration as a factor in educators’ curriculum making and didactic decision making in relation to SALI.

In Section 10.4 I address the research question 4a) What discourses about language, immigration and integration may be identified in contemporary texts ‘for and about’ the open preschool and in educators’ accounts of their work? and 4b) In what ways, if any, can these discourses be identified as a factor in curriculum making and didactic decision making?

The results presented in Section 8.2. are most relevant in addressing the question of discourses about language, immigration and integration in contemporary texts for and about the open preschool. Recent government policy draws on discourses about language learning as an aspect of immigration and

integration, primarily with a focus on labour market integration. These discourses draw on the metaphor of *language as the key to society* and use temporal and physical distance metaphors in relation to normative education and employment practices to portray immigrant mothers using a deficit perspective attributable to their parenthood. The results presented in Chapters 8 and 9 are of primary relevance in addressing the question of discourses about language, immigration and integration in educators accounts of their work. In contrast to the results presented in Chapter 7, they are characterised by critical discourses on multilingualism and integration that acknowledge the broad differences between majority normative languaging and gainful employment practices, and those of some immigrant women, but in a way which centres the experiences and conditions of the individual, and attributes ‘deficits’ to previous lack of literal and metaphorical *access* to activities such as SFI or preschool. Results presented in Sections 8.2.6 and 8.2.7 detail SKR’s government funded initiatives operationalising the open preschool as an arena for language, integration and labour market entry for foreign born women. Discursively, these mediate between the discourses dominating the government documents and those most prevalent in the educator accounts.

In terms of how discourses related to SALI contexts may be identified as a factor in curriculum making and didactic decision making, it is useful to return briefly to Foucault’s understanding of discourse and discursive practices, as outlined in Section 4.2.1 above. Results presented in Sections 9.2.1 and 9.2.2 show that the dominant discursive practice brought within the true by educators in their accounts of how they organise their settings, is *parent support in a secure environment*. This is expressed as the primary purpose of the open preschool, and is positioned as a kind of curricular ‘non-negotiable’. With this is meant that organisation of the educational (and other) purposes of the open preschool must be done in a way that doesn’t compromise the parent support purpose. Therefore, discourses about language, immigration and integration that have been identified in texts and in educators’ accounts of their work can not fruitfully be viewed in isolation, but must be understood in relation to how educators deploy them in their didactic decision making towards education-as-parent support.

10.4.1 Culturally and contextually situated critical care as a basis for educators’ didactic decision making and curriculum making in relation to education of adult immigrants the open preschool

Educators’ accounts of their organisation of the setting have been described in Chapter 10 in terms authentic *cariño*. To recall, authentic *cariño* is based on Marnie Curry’s (2016 & 2021) theorisation of the term, and is based on critical care pedagogical approaches observed and analysed within the American

context, most often in the education of Hispanic and Latine learners in the United States. By identifying expressions of didactic decision making which could be described in terms of authentic familial, intellectual and critical *cariño* as a pedagogical approach, I have shown that the *modus operandi* of the educators in the open preschool shares similarities with that of the educators in Curry's study. This is particularly the case where didactic decision making occurs in relation to the family support purpose, specifically the aim of supporting families to attain and retain mastery of society's shared language and normative educational and employment practices in order to construct a life for themselves and their children. In such examples, didactic decision-making draws on situated understandings of the domestic and familial, of access to physical and conceptual spaces in society, and of the capacity of each parent, as valued members of diverse communities,

At this juncture, it is useful to critically interrogate, retrospectively, the appropriateness and applicability of Curry's terms, and the terms from *transcaring*, *compadrazgo* and *transculturación*⁸⁵, recalling that these have a deep connection to Hispanic and Latine learners in the US education context. The use of such terms has two (to some extent overlapping) functions – the analytical and the descriptive. As *analytical* terms, used in delimiting and identifying patterns in the empirical material, I argue that they are suitable and useful. As *descriptive* terms for application into a different context, however, their situatedness invites the question of whether different terms are indicated. Although the democratic principles underpinning critical care pedagogies can be seen as relevant to any context, specific practices are arguably better able to be operationalised if they have a close anchoring to the context they derive from and are intended to be applied in.

With this in mind, it can be a fruitful exercise to use the results of this study and try to sketch the outlines of a model and language of critical care pedagogy as it applies to the context of the education of adult immigrants in the Swedish open preschool. This entails identifying examples where the ethos, practices and motivations described by the Swedish educators are similar to those described for other contexts, and then describing them in terms of the situated cultural practices invoked in the text and in the broader discourses about Sweden and Swedishness. In doing so, I draw primarily on the interview material, with additional support from the text material, in order to anchor the sketch of the characteristic approach in both the contemporary and historical practices described for the open preschool⁸⁶. A fourth category, core practice-sustaining

⁸⁵ Untranslated use of the Spanish terms themselves is viewed as unproblematic.

⁸⁶ The term sketch is used deliberately to highlight the fact that no claim is being made that it is possible to use the results to comprehensively describe an essential type practice, nor that the findings may be extrapolated to a broader context. Nonetheless, the commonalities of approach indicated by the results are compelling enough to indicate an initial synthesis with the aim of giving a preliminary image of how a critical care pedagogical practice – the didactic 'how' may look in this specific context.

principle, is identified and described in 10.4.1.4. These principles form the basis for curriculum making and didactic decision making in relation to *other curriculum making actors*.

10.4.1.1 Kinship-affirming

A kinship-affirming⁸⁷ approach to didactic decision-making centres the domestic, the familial and the family in didactic decision making. Parenting and family are, of course, at the core of the open preschool as a setting, constituting both its user base, the intended recipient of its services and the basis for its societal function, and intended learning content for the adult-facing pedagogic work. Learners are understood as ‘parents-as-learners’ and it is not unexpected, then, that familial *cariño* type practices form a basis for sketching out the kinship-affirming approach. . Educators centre the meeting of the content, room and materials around the physicalities of children together with their parents, paying attention to the parent-children dyads in interactions around care, educational activities, and network building. The domestic is treated as highly relevant to the activities of the setting, and families’ home practices are valorised. Related to this is the explicit practice of paying attention to emotional wellbeing as part of educational work. This can be a responsive practice, if somebody expresses or presents with a problem, or it can be proactive preventative.

Characteristic features of a kinship-affirming approach

- Educators prioritise the creation and sustaining of a secure, low-demand setting where the unconditionality of learners’ presence and participation, and that of their children, is affirmed.
- Educators centre in-setting and outside-setting childcaring as factors of relevance to the educational activities.
- Educators pay attention to learners’ physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, and provide opportunities for validation of their experiences and feelings.
- Educators valorise, promote and facilitate the creation and sustenance of networks around families.

Two examples from the empirical results in Chapter 9, in which the kinship-affirming approach is especially well exemplified are 9.1.1, where a mother bakes dampers, and 9.3.3, where a bridgebuilder facilitates a support network for a mother to a child with an NPF diagnosis. In both these examples, communities variously support one another, based upon mutual trust, learning from more experienced members of the community (typical ‘elder’ or ‘matriarch’ figures), the *självklar* presence of children in a community, and mutual

⁸⁷ *samhörighetsbejakande*

support and practical help in the care of the children within the community. The parent support function of open preschool, then, and the way in which support has been shown to be enacted in educational activities, can be understood as an important constitutive part of the kinship-affirming approach.

In the empirical examples in 9.3.2 (the father changing a diaper) and 9.3.3 it can be observed how content for educators' pedagogical work emerges as a result of concerns and questions shared with them by visitors, either specifically (as in the case of the mother who was surprised by seeing a father change a diaper), or indirectly (as in the case of the mother to a child with autism, whose demeanour alerted the educator to the concerns she had). The educator's account indicate that the response in terms of the facilitating of learning draws on mutual trust, supportive relationships (even in the face of 'private' or sensitive topics), and pays attention to visitors' mental and emotional well-being, creating opportunities for validation.

10.4.1.2 Place-affirming

A place-affirming⁸⁸ approach centres around facilitating physical and participatory access to societal spaces in the broadest sense of the meaning, as well as discursively mapping as 'inside' society places of relevance for learners that have elsewhere been discursively positioned as 'outside' society. Scaffolding, guiding, and advocating are key features of the spacemaking approach, and are used to enact, together with the learners, a rejection of the outsider discourse.

Characteristic features of a place-affirming approach

- Educators identify parenthood as a site of commonality and operationalise this as a way of framing access to affordances in public spaces and domains.
- Educators have a high level and nuanced awareness of how minoritised identities may be a factor in access to affordances in public spaces and domains
- Educators proactively work to disrupt and counter literal and metaphorical outsidering, and / or its impacts.
- Educators support learners to literally and metaphorically orient themselves to and within public spaces and domains.
- Educators create opportunities for learners to experience and participate equitably in culturally situated practices

In the examples from the empirical results in Chapter 9, relating to the splashpads, and to the library, the place-affirming approach is especially evident. Likewise in the example from the text study, *Like ripples on the water*, in

⁸⁸ situationsbejakande

which the explicit connection between the situated experiences of the visitors and the educators' organisation of their work was the driving force behind the authors' study.

10.4.1.3 Capacity-affirming

A capacity-affirming⁸⁹ approach to didactic decision making in relation to SALI content is rooted in orienting learners towards mastery of Sweden's dominant linguistic, educational and employment norms, but in a way which resists, rejects and counters a deficit perspective of marginalised groups. Instead, the approach focuses on closely aligning the curriculum with learners' individual circumstances, and works by attributing learning content needs to a learner's lack of exposure, rather than a lack of competence or will. It also takes a formative approach to measuring progress, and pays attention to the relationship between the mother's labour market entry, their child's pre-school entry, and the long-term futures, both in a personal and in an ideological perspective.

Characteristic features of a capacity-affirming approach

- Educators identify learners' unique situations as the points of departure for learning, and enact a High Expectation High Support approach to learners' progression.
- Educators assume an asset perspective on learners and their capacity to learn within relevant content areas, and actively reject a deficit perspective on learners' capabilities.
- Educators tend instead to attribute knowledge gaps in relation to normative practices to learners' lack of access to these practices.
- Educators operationalise parenthood as a basis for scaffolded participation in normative democratic, cultural, education and employment practices.
- Educators operationalise parents' investment in their children's futures as a basis for scaffolded participation in normative and culturally situated parenting practices.
- Educators enact critical care as part of the support given when learning content entails practices with low overlap with learners' existing practices, creating secure spaces for the learners to interrogate and be challenged in their situated activity.

It is possible to identify the capacity-affirming approach in the example in Sections 8.2.7 and 9.4 above. Within the text study, the materials developed for *Join In* indicate a capacity-affirming approach in the sense that they were developed in order to produce 'better material for the target group', where

⁸⁹ kapacitetsbejakande

better can be understood as meaning ‘of greater relevance to their situations’. This indicates an affirmative recognition of the target group, and an express intention to give them optimum learning conditions.

10.4.1.4 Core practice-sustaining

Further to their use in educators’ didactic decision making in their work directly with visitors, the three guiding principles outlined above, kinship-affirming, place-affirming and capacity-affirming, also form the basis for educators’ curriculum making and didactic decision making in relation to *other curriculum making actors*. In this second usage, which I refer to as core practice-sustaining⁹⁰, the principles, then, become of *indirect* relevance to the learners, in that they are deployed in educators’ negotiation of the open preschool’s curriculum, with the aim of preserving parent support as the primary purpose of the setting and resisting curricular developments that may compromise it. This recognises that other discourses about the open preschool exist and that they may be in conflict with the primacy-of-parent-support discourse.

The relevance of making didactic and curricular decisions informed by the three culturally and contextually situated sets of principles is that they allow educators to exert agency over the organisation of the setting in the event that transcurricular contact with other actors impacts the setting in a way which appears to be in conflict with the its primary function – to provide a secure environment for family support. Here it is useful to refer back to Figure 8 used in 10.2.3 to illustrate points of contact in educators’ accounts of didactic decision making around SFI in the open preschool. Features of the kinship-affirming, place-affirming and capacity-affirming approaches can be identified in the accounts of how conflict is managed at these points, and resultingly how a productive, transcurriculum making process takes place. This is perhaps most evident in the example in Section 9.4, where the educator’s unfortunate accident with the baby causes her to interrogate her practice. The idea of a curricular conflict occurring in practice, in a setting where educators from two different contexts ‘meet’, is reminiscent of the tensions described in Paul and Adams Lyngbäck (2022). My results can be seen as aligning with Paul and Adams Lyngbäck’s observation that there exists a need for critical language awareness to be incorporated in integration programs (Paul & Adams Lyngbäck, 2022, p. 16), in particular, I argue, where one setting hosts another. These results provide an example of critical language awareness being incorporated as a result of ‘host’ educators enacting a critical care pedagogical approach in their meeting with immigrant language learners and with a ‘guest’ curriculum, and in this way also address a knowledge gap identified by Paul and Adams Lyngbäck in research about “integration initiatives targeting parents” (Paul & Adams Lyngbäck, 2022, p.16).

⁹⁰ verksamhetsbibehållande

10.4.2 Making space for critical care approaches in the Swedish open preschool

It is important to note at this juncture that the ideas presented in this section are tentative and exploratory, and that no claim to broader generalisability is being made. It is perhaps premature to commit to the act of naming a concept that is, then, still in its latency. Nonetheless, it can be fruitful to consider what a working title could be. One option which speaks to all four aspects is or *heartspace pedagogy*⁹¹ or *hjärterumspedagogik*. The term *hjärterum* is best known from an old Swedish proverb 'Finns det hjärterum så finns det stjärterum' (SAOB, 2015; 2021). meaning⁹² if the heart is willing, then space can always be made for a newcomer. Its lexical links to the affective, to place and space, and its links through the proverb to the idea that the sharing of a space is a process that entails actions from both the 'host' and the 'guest', and that it is a process with physical and psychological aspects, indicate its suitability as a term. It is also suitable, in a different way, for describing the fourth characteristic practice identified as part of this Swedish critical care pedagogy. In the case of this core-practice sustaining approach, the educator centred element, the *hjärterumspedagogik* can be used to stand for the resistance actions of educators who work to retain the integrity of the open preschool's curriculum. Space can be made for curricula negotiations, including for transcurriculum making, if there is space in the educators' metaphorical heart for it – that is to say, if it aligns with the kinship-, place- and capacity-affirming principles that the educator uses to orient their didactic decision making toward the overriding parent support purpose of the open preschool. If making space requires educators to deviate from the affirming principles and the parent support purpose, then educators need not 'open their hearts' to it.

The results of this study, as well as this sketch of *hjärterumspedagogik* or *heartspace* approach critical care pedagogical practices in a Swedish context, align with other research findings, for example the studies made of language cafés which concluded that the settings are organised in such a way so as to encourage participation (Jansson & Kunitz, 2020) and that important success factors include tailoring of activities to participants' needs, variety in the type of language training activities offered, and use of participants' first languages in clarification of new Swedish vocabulary items – thus valorising their home languaging practices. This last factor was found to be a key contributory factor to participation in conversation, as it foregrounded topic comprehension (rather than, for example, grammatical

⁹¹ I have previously proposed and used the term *heartspace* with this meaning (although in a different educational context) as part of my work on the Erasmus + project 'Kindinmi'. I acknowledge and thank project leader Véronique Simon for her enthusiasm in response to my asking if I might reuse the term here in my thesis.

⁹² Literally, the phrase means 'If there's room in the heart, there's room for the backside'

accuracy) as the key to being able to take part in a conversation. The participation facilitated by language cafés is in turn credited with being a “step in a mutual process of integration”. A striking similarity between the modi operandi of the educators in the open preschool and the volunteers in the language cafés is lifted in Jansson and Kunitz (2020) and Jansson (2023), both of which highlight the notion of unconditionality as a basis for participation. Indeed, in Jansson and Kunitz (2020) the volunteers interviewed in the study describe the language café as “a freezone where the newly arrived can sense belonging to a shared community without any demands [on them] to perform” (Jansson & Kunitz, 2020, p.3) and express that they want visitors to “Come as you are, we like you for who you are” (Jansson & Kunitz, 2020, p.3) refers to the volunteers in the church language cafés seeing their role as ‘providers of spaces for belonging’ and describes examples of them invoking connecting-as-humans in their work with migrant visitors. Jansson argues that this shows volunteers deploying a “pedagogy of interconnect-edness that enhances *human commonality that goes beyond language*” (Jansson, 2023, p.742 emphasis mine).

11 Research contribution

11.1 Contribution to the field, implications, and possible applications of the study

This thesis is situated at the point where universal questions related to normative expectations of how parents and young children in Sweden spend their time overlap with questions about immigration, language and integration. It approaches questions about family life, education and employment from the sometimes discordant perspective of norms, expectations, obligations and choice. Further to this, it considers how tensions between compulsion, affordance and agency have been revealed and negotiated in curriculum making in relation to the open preschool over five decades.

This study set out to explore the historical precedent and contemporary conditions for organisation of language and societal orientation education for adult immigrants in the Swedish open preschool. Reformulated in more explicitly didaktik terms, the aim of the study can be understood as to examine the relations described in empirical material between educators in a specific setting, a particular group of learners, and a particular content area. I identify here four research contributions that the study can be seen to make.

The first of these contributions is to didaktik in the Swedish context. Research to date has not accounted in any extensive detail for the characteristics of the open preschool as an educational setting, and as a result, working towards meeting the aims of the study entailed the inclusion of work on its fundamental didactic premises. In identifying, and working to rectify this knowledge gap in this way, the study makes a practical contribution to the field by providing a detailed historical account of the didactic ‘who, what, why, how’ of the open preschool as a setting type. Further to this, the study contributes an up-to-date inventory of texts ‘for and about’ the open preschool. A possible application of this, beyond its use as a reference list, is as the basis of a digital corpus or archive. Such a collection could facilitate further research into the open preschool, as well as raising the profile of the setting as a research object.

The second contribution this study makes is to the field of didaktik by tentatively broadening the scope of the terms Authentic Carriño and transcaring. It is useful to borrow García et al.’s terminology *transculturación* in envisaging the theoretical contribution. To recall, *transculturación* can be understood

as the construction of “fluid new cultural practices” (García et al., 2013, p.808) in the meeting of two cultures, that “in some ways resemble[d] and in some was transcend[ed] cultural practices” from both cultures (García et al., 2013, p.808). As noted in Chapter Four, much of the present theoretical work on critical care pedagogy in immigration and / or multilingual educational contexts is anchored in Latine and Hispanic societies in the United States. As such, the critical care pedagogical models are theorised based upon the practices observed in those societies, with the result that the theoretical terminology available is often culturally specific. Yet, it can be argued that there is a generality inherent in the democratic principles upon which critical care pedagogies are based, and so it is reasonable to surmise that the existing theories can be further developed by the addition of terminology from other contexts. Here, Authentic Cariño and transcaring theories (with their Latine and Hispanic specific roots) have been used as the basis for analysis of empirical material from Sweden: we can say they have been reimagined as migrated to the Swedish context. Through the analytical process, the theory can be said to become transposed onto the Swedish context, and through the reflective process inherent in the discussion of the results, a transculturation of the theoretical terms can be said to take place, constituting the posited *heartspace* critical care pedagogy and its related terminology.

Further to this, the study contributes to the fields of multilingualism and language education by lifting educator perspectives on the relationship between didactic decision making in relation to content, and their understandings of the primary purpose of their roles within the open preschool setting. This has potential applicability for the small but growing body of literature on language education for adult immigrants that takes place in settings that are not schools, and / or which are not *solely* places for learning, for example language cafés (see for example Kunitz and Jansson (2021) in which the authors note that those responsible for language education, or the facilitating of language practice tend to be volunteer lay people with “no knowledge of language pedagogy” (Kunitz & Jansson, 2021, p.31), as well as highlighting the fact that settings like these have a dual educational and social function). Further to this, it can have implications for understanding success factors for language learning and use of the learned language by immigrants positioned as distant from majority languaging practices as an aspect of societal integration.

Finally, the fourth contribution identified is a methodological contribution in the form of the synthesis of Priestley et al.’s descriptions of Curriculum Making Activities into an analytical tool that can be used to interrogate empirical material and support in making a judgement about whether (and if so, in what way and with what effect) a text or discourse can be understood as curriculum making activity. This tool was constructed in order to facilitate application of the CMA theoretical approach to empirical material, which, (potentially) derives its curricular function from its use in practice as opposed to from it being an ‘official’ curriculum text. As such, the tool has potential

applicability for other research into the organisation of teaching and learning in ‘non-typical’ settings. With that said, its potential applicability is also general, as it can equally be used to examine curriculum making in more traditional educational contexts.

11.2 Avenues for further research

There is abundant room for further research within the broad field of education into the open preschool. A particularly interesting avenue for future research would be a historical and contemporary discursive analysis of the tensions highlighted in this study (and elsewhere, for example Ashley et al., 1990) between the open preschool viewed as an educational setting, and viewed as a public health / social care setting. It could conceivably be hypothesised that these tensions, which have in places been framed as ‘either-or’ could be more fruitfully understood in terms of a third-space (Bhabha, 2004) or third-place (Oldenburg, 1999; Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982).

The didactic decision-making practices identified as characteristic of educators’ pedagogical work with immigrant families and SALI in the open preschool have been described using critical care pedagogy theory, and tentatively referred to as heartspace pedagogy. Further research would be required to explore potential wider applicability of a heartspace approach, and to refine and develop the concept. This could entail extending the geographic and demographic scope of the existing study into educators’ work with SALI and immigrant families, for example, or it could entail broadening the focus and exploring educators’ pedagogic work beyond the SALI content areas.

Similarly, there is scope to conduct further educational research into the role of non-traditional actors in SALI education for adult immigrants in Sweden. Such research would build upon work from related fields, for example, Jansson (2021, 2023); Jansson & Kunitz (2020), Kunitz & Jansson (2021) on language cafés, Hudson et al., (2023), Korver-Glenn et al. (2023), Paul & Adams Lyngbäck (2022) on the role of the charity and civic sectors in SALI education, as well as this work on open preschools. Fruitful foci for didaktik research in this area would include organisations’ affective and institutional motivations for engaging in this type of work, curriculum making activity, and the relationship between *språkträning* and integration. Research questions might include: Who are the main providers of *språkträning* (language training) in Sweden, and how are their educational activities organised? What forms and functions are ascribed to language training, and in what ways are these different or similar across different setting types? What relationships are constructed between language *training* and SALI in non-typical curricular settings, and language *teaching* and SFI / Civil Orientation? This last question could be investigated from a curriculum making perspective to gain a better understanding of the relationships between form, function and actor type, and

could use the analytical framework outlined in this study as a deductive re-
search tool.

12 Swedish summary

Denna avhandling syftar till att bidra med kunskap om den öppna förskolan som verksamhetsform, med specifikt fokus på vuxna invandrades lärande.

1968 tillsatte den svenska regeringen en utredning som med tiden skulle bli till ett slags symbol för de omfattande förändringar i svensk barnomsorg som utredningen satte igång. Utredningen kallades Barnstugeutredningen, och år 1972 publicerades de första två betänkandena i serien Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 1972:26 och 1972:27 – Förskolan Del 1 och Förskolan Del 2. Barnstugeutredningen var ett led i en större samhällsförändrande politik som bedrevs under efterkrigstiden, och som präglades av en jämställdhetsambition där alla skulle få tillgång till de förutsättningar de behövde för att kunna leva självförsörjande, samt påverka sin vardag och sin framtid. Att kvinnor fick förutsättningar att förvärsarbete och vara ekonomisk oberoende av en partner var en prioriterad fråga, och utbyggnaden av ett fungerande barnomsorgssystem ansågs vara en av nycklarna till denna önskade samhällsutveckling.

Utöver de rekommendationer som gjordes för en utbyggnad av förskolan (som ledde till antagandet 1975 av Förskolelagen och därmed början till dagens lagstadgade förskolesystem) innehöll Barnstugeutredning förslag gällande barn som inte hade plats i förskolan. Dessa barns föräldrar skulle, till exempel, i samband med den reguljära barnhälsovården få tillgång till lekrådgivning, med syfte att kunna ge barnen en pedagogisk miljö i hemmet. Till detta förslag bruka man härleda den öppna förskolans ursprung. Lekrådgivningsförslaget mynnade ut i en rad försöksverksamheter under 70-talets första hälft, och den blivande verksamheten bytte snabbt karaktär och blev i stället för rådgivning på BVC till en verksamhet för barn och föräldrar i närområdet, dit de kunde komma och träffa andra barnfamiljer, få råd och information om föräldraskap och familjerelaterade frågor, samt, i barnens fall, få tillgång till en pedagogisk gruppmiljö.

Den öppna förskolan, som verksamheten sedan snart femtio år tillbaka heter, är numera en del av det svenska utbildningsväsendet, och indelas under kategorin 'annan pedagogisk verksamhet'. Den är icke-lagstadgad, och deltagandet är frivilligt. Antalet öppna förskolor i Sverige var som störst 1991 (1644 öppna förskolor) (Skolverket, 2006) och har sedan dess successivt sjunkit i takt med att den reguljära förskolan har byggts ut, och idag finns det cirka 527 öppna förskolor runt om i landet (Skolverket, 2024a). Målgruppen förblir barn som inte går i förskolan, tillsammans med en förälder eller annan viktig

vuxen. Hur denna målgrupp ser ut, däremot, har ändrats nu när över 95% av alla barn i femårsåldern är inskrivna i förskolan (Skolverket, 2024c). Detta innebär att den öppna förskolan i praktiken numera först och främst besöks av familjer i för-förskoleåldern (istället för 'för-skoleåldern'), föräldralediga föräldrar med sina barn, och barn till föräldrar som av olika anledningar har valt att inte söka förskoleplats.

Bland föräldrar i den sistnämnda gruppen har regeringen identifierat en specifik grupp, nämligen utomeuropeiskfödda kvinnor. Denna grupp har blivit allt större som följd av invandring, speciellt sedan 2015 i och med att Sverige blivit mottagarland för ett stort antal asylsökande personer. Regeringen har sedan 2018, som en del av sin invandrings- och integrationspolitik, gjort en stor satsning kopplad till denna målgrupp och deras barn, med syfte att påskynda mammornas arbetsmarknadsetablering, och öka antalet barn som skrivs in i förskola. Den öppna förskolan har identifierats som en viktig miljö för denna satsning, och SKR bedriver olika projekt för att undersöka verksamhetens lämplighet för språk-, integrations- och arbetsmarknadsinsatser, samt finansiera och stötta utvecklandet av desamma.

Mot denna bakgrund skrivs denna avhandling i didaktik. Syftet med avhandlingen är att bidra med kunskap om vuxna invandrades lärande i en pedagogisk verksamhet med en uttalad barnpedagogisk inriktning. Specifikt ämnar avhandlingen skapa kunskap om vilka förutsättningar för utbildning av vuxna, och särskilt utbildning av vuxna invandrare i den öppna förskolan, som finns och som funnits historiskt, samt hur pedagogiska aktiviteter har organiserats utifrån ett läroplansteoretiskt och didaktiskt perspektiv. Tidigare forskning har lyft den öppna förskolan först och främst i ett folkhälsosammanhang eller som en del av de så kallade familjecentren. Den forskning som har undersökt den svenska öppna förskolan som pedagogisk verksamhet är mycket begränsad, med undantag för en omfattande studie av Göteborgs öppna förskolor på 80-talet (Berg & Zetterström, 1985; 1988; 1989) och enstaka nyare studier (se t. ex. Frank, 2006;). Däremot finns det såväl nordisk som utomnordisk internationell forskning om verksamheter för barn och sina föräldrar och dess funktioner och upplägg. Mest relevant bland denna forskning är de studier som har gjorts om den norska motsvarigheten till den öppna förskolan, den *åpne barnehage* (Haugset, 2016; Bulling, 2017). Mer forskning finns om svenskundervisning för vuxna invandrare, och denna har under senaste åren präglats av frågor kopplade till hur utbildningen organiseras och diskuteras i relation till skiftande politiska inställningar till språk, integration och arbetsmarknadsdeltagande (se t. ex. Nuottaniemi, 2023; Ohlsson, & Salomonsson, 2023).

Forskningsfrågorna som undersöks i avhandlingen är uppdelade i fyra fokusområden med tillhörande forskningsfrågor. Dessa är:

- 1) Den öppna förskolans didaktiska särdrag under perioden 1972–2024.

- a) Hur har den öppna förskolans pedagogiska syfte beskrivits i texter för och om verksamheten sedan 1972?
 - b) Vilka pedagogiska aktiviteter och vilket lärande innehåll har beskrivits för verksamheten under samma period, och vilka har beskrivits som de lärande?
- 2) Didaktiska särdrag i aktiviteter för invandrarfamiljer i öppna förskolan sedan 1972.
- a) Vilka pedagogiska aktiviteter för invandrarfamiljer i öppen förskola har beskrivits i texter för och om verksamheten sedan 1972?
 - b) Hur har invandrarfamiljer-som-lärande (studerande) beskrivits i dessa texter, och vilket lärande innehåll har identifierats som aktuellt för dem?
- 3) Samtida beskrivningar av pedagogiska aktiviteter med invandrarfamiljer i öppen förskola.
- a) Hur beskriver pedagoger på öppna förskolor sitt pedagogiska arbete med vuxna invandrare vad gäller lärande innehåll, syften och arbets-sätt/metoder?
- 4) Diskurser om språk, invandring och integration som faktorer i organisationen av pedagogiska aktiviteter i öppen förskola.
- a) Vilka diskurser om språk, invandring och integration går att urskilja i pedagogers berättelser om sitt arbete?
 - b) På vilka sätt, om några alls, kan dessa diskurser identifieras som en faktor i *curriculum making* och didaktiskt beslutsfattande?

Dessa frågor ämnar jag besvara genom analyser av två olika empiriska material, nämligen 77 texter för och om den öppna förskolan, samt 20 intervjuer med pedagoger på olika förskolor i fem svenska storstadsområden. I studien använder jag mig av kvalitativa forskningsmetoder, och av fyra teoretiska ingångar, nämligen didaktik, läroplansanalys, i huvudsak Priestley et al.'s (2021) Curriculum Making Activity, diskurs efter Foucault (1972), och kritisk omsorg som pedagogisk praktik (Curry, 2016; 2021). Som en del av det sistnämnda ryms även ett teoretiskt ramverk för flerspråkighet – transspråkande – varifrån vissa teoretiska begrepp lånas, nämligen *stance*, *design*, och *shift*. För att besvara forskningsfrågorna 1a och 1b, analyseras textmaterialet först med Discourse Trace Analysis (LeGreco och Tracy, 2009), en kvalitativ metod som går ut på att samla diverse texter om ett tema och analysera dem i kronologisk ordning för att försöka ta reda på vilka diskursiva praktiker som finns i materialet, samt hur de förändras över tid. Ett antal texter valdes ut efter den initiala diskursiva analysen för vidare analys baserad på en operationalisering av Priestley et al.'s Curriculum Making Activity (2021).

Denna analys syftade till att skapa kunskap som svar till forskningsfrågorna 2a och 2b. Forskningsområdena 3 och 4 besvarades genom analyser av intervjuerna, nämligen en reflexiv tematisk analys med hjälp av/utgångspunkt i en reflexiv tematisk analys (Braun & Clark, 2006; 2021; 2022) och en didaktisk innehållsanalys. Resultaten av dessa analyserades vidare med hjälp av kritisk omsorgspedagogik, först och främst Marnie Currys Authentic Cariño (Curry, 2016; 2021). Resultaten av textstudien indikerar att utbildning av vuxna alltid har varit en viktig komponent i den öppna förskolans verksamhet. Som inslag i verksamhetens aktiviteter kan den spåras till öppna förskolans allra tidigaste försöksverksamheter och till dess föregångare, lekrådgivning. Den pedagogiska funktionen gentemot vuxna har däremot successivt fått mindre uppmärksamhet i formella och officiella texter om den öppna förskolan, där verksamhetens pedagogiska funktion gentemot barn har betonats medan vuxnas deltagande snarare har beskrivits som att vara av en mer social karaktär. Utöver detta visar resultaten att pedagogiska aktiviteter för vuxna i den öppna förskolan har organiserats på ett specifikt sätt sedan verksamhetens början, som följd av öppna förskolans särskilda förutsättningar. Detta sätt innebär att föräldrar ges möjligheter till lärande utifrån sina egna behov, sammanhang och förutsättningar. Lärandeaktiviteterna har huvudsakligen haft en informell karaktär, och har huvudsakligen (dock ej uteslutande) berört teman som är aktuella för de vuxna i egenskap av föräldrar. I och med Sveriges stigande antal invandrare sedan 60-talet, och mot bakgrund av landets ökade urbanisering och mångkulturalitet, har pedagogiska aktiviteter för och med invandrarfamiljer i princip alltid utgjort en del av den öppna förskolans verksamheter, och den öppna förskolan har identifierats som en viktig verksamhet för utrikesfödda föräldrar, särskilt i invandratäta områden. Sedan 2018 har denna koppling mellan den öppna förskolan och invandrarföräldrars integration formaliserats genom ett antal olika insatser som har finansierats av den svenska regeringen och letts av arbetsgivarorganisationen SKR.

Resultaten av intervjustudien bidrar med kunskap om hur pedagoger i öppna förskolan förstår och organiserar sitt arbete med utrikesfödda föräldrar. Innehållet i pedagogiska aktiviteter för utrikesfödda föräldrar kommer huvudsakligen ifrån sex olika områden – kultur, praktisk kunskap, det svenska språket, ”att vara och att vara med”, värderingar, och flerspråkighet. Åtta teman konstrueras utifrån pedagogernas berättelser om *hur* de arbetar, och dessa indikerar att pedagogerna förstår sitt huvuduppdrag som trygghetsskapande och familjestödande. Vidare indikerar resultaten av den reflexiva tematiska analysen att pedagogerna förstår föräldraskap som den primära grunden för deltagande i den öppna förskolan, och att föräldraskapet överordnas andra möjliga sätt att beskriva eller kategorisera besökarna (t.ex. kön, ekonomiska förutsättning, etnisk bakgrund). Pedagogernas inställning till de föräldrar de möter är att dessa är kompetenta, och det eventuella stöd som erbjuds eller ges föräldrarna bygger på deras individuella förutsättningar, med utgångspunkt i föräldrarnas egna förmågor att påverka sin livssituation. Vad gäller språk visar

resultaten att pedagoger i stort sett är mycket positiva gentemot flerspråkighet och värdesätter den högt, särskilt som en del av barnuppfostran bland utrikesfödda föräldrar bosatta i Sverige, vilka konsekvent uppmanas att använda sina första språk med sina barn. Däremot uttrycker pedagogerna vikten av svenska som samhällets gemensamma språk. De betraktar förskolan som det primära verktyget för barns utveckling av det svenska språket, och anser att förskolan möjliggör för utrikesfödda föräldrar, särskilt mammor, att själva lära sig svenska under tiden barnen är på förskolan.

Pedagogernas berättelse kan förstås i relation till ett kritiskt omsorgspedagogiskt arbetssätt och det går att identifiera spår av en konsekvent användning av ett familjärt-, intellektuellt-, och kritiskt- *cariño* arbetssätt i pedagogernas beskrivningar av den pedagogiska verksamheten (Curry, 2016; 2021). *Cariño*arbetssättet visas ha tre olika funktioner, nämligen att samskapa deltagande i samhället, att öppna upp möjligheter för utveckling av litteraciteter och språkliga färdigheter, och att skraddarsy undervisning och lärande utifrån besökarnas behov.

Avhandlingens resultat diskuteras i relation till tidigare forskning, där ett antal beröringspunkter identifieras, till exempel att det finns en viss spänning i hur den öppna förskolans huvudsyften förstås av olika aktörer, något som speglar forskning om verksamheter för barn och sina föräldrar i andra länder. Sammanfattningsvis bidrar avhandlingen med detaljerad historisk bakgrundskunskap om en relativt outforskad verksamhet inom svensk utbildning, samt med specifik kunskap om hur denna verksamhet, den öppna förskolan, har organiserats i relation till de invandrarfamiljer som besöker den. Detta har undersökts utifrån ett historiskt läroplansperspektiv, samt ett nutidsperspektiv, där kunskap har skapats om pedagogernas arbetssätt i relation till deras ideologiska inställningar om invandring, språk och integration. Dessutom bidrar avhandlingen med ett förslag till hur kritiska omsorgspedagogiska arbetssätt kan beskrivas i en svensk kontext, samt med preliminära tankar kring huruvida begreppet *transcurriculum making* kan användas för att diskutera didaktiskt beslutsfattande i situationer där två läroplaner ”möts”.

I fortsättningen finns det goda möjligheter till vidare didaktisk forskning om den öppna förskolan som pedagogisk verksamhet, samt för läroplansteoretisk forskning om hur den öppna förskolan operationaliseras som en arena för språk-, integrations- och arbetsmarknadsinsatser. Vidare finns det potential för fortsatt forskning kring kritiska omsorgspedagogiska arbetssätt i olika sammanhang inom svensk utbildning, såväl inom det formella utbildningssystemet som utanför detta, till exempel i folkbildning, i civilsamhälleliga verksamheter, och i andra icke-lagstadgade pedagogiska verksamheter i Skolverkets regi.

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⁹³ APA7 does not give guidelines for referencing government documents outside of the USA, and advises authors to follow regional practices. These vary between universities, and I have selected the approach of Lund University, as it allows for SOUs (for example) to be collected together. https://libguides.lub.lu.se/apa-short/swedish_government_publications/swedish_government_official_reports

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Appendix A List of empirical materials (text) with categorisation

Table 18 List of empirical materials (text) with categorisation

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
1	Syst.	1972	SOU 1972:26. <i>Förskolan D.1 betänkande.</i> https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/562/SOU_260562.htm	SOU 1972:26 Preschool (report pt 1)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	A	7.1
2	Syst.	1972	SOU 1972:27. <i>Förskolan D. 2 betänkande.</i> https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/565/SOU_260565.htm	SOU 1972:27 Preschool (report pt 2)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	A	7.1
3	Syst.	1973	Socialstyrelsen / Monika Lundgren. (1973). <i>Rapport från försök med lekdrävning: 'öppen förskola' i Brandbergen, Haninge kommun.</i> Socialstyrelsen	Report on the play advice pilot project 'open playschool' in Brandbergen, Haninge municipality	Govt. Agen	Publ.	A	7.1
4	Syst.	1975	SOU 1975:30. <i>Barn - Barnens livsmiljö.</i> https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/223/SOU_176223.htm	SOU 1975:30 Children (report pt 1) Children's Living Environments	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	B	7.2
5	Syst.	1975	Sverige Barnomsorgsgruppen (1975). <i>Samverkan i barnomsorgen [1] : betänkande från Arbetsgruppen för samhällets barnomsorg.</i> Stockholm: LiberFörlag/Allmänna förl.,	SOU 1975:87 Collaboration in childcare (1). Report from the Working Group for Society's Childcare	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	-
6	Syst.	1976	Socialstyrelsen (1976). <i>Öppen förskola.</i> [Factsheet]	Factsheet Nr. 2 / 76 Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	7.1
7	Syst.	1977	Nuder, M. (1977). <i>Rapport om öppen förskola.</i> Stockholm: Socialstyrelsen.	Report on Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	7.1

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
8	Syst.	1978	SOU 1978:05. <i>Barn och vuxna Barnomsorgsgruppens slutbetänkande om föräldrautbildning</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/943/SOU_8200943.htm	SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1): Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	7.2
9	Syst.	1978	Grevelius, A. (1978). Öppen förskola för invandrarbarn. Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool for Immigrant Children	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	7.5.1
10	Syst.	1979	SOU 1979:57. <i>Barnomsorg behov, efterfrågan, planeringsunderlag : huvudbetänkande</i> .	SOU 1979:57 Childcare - need, demand, basis for planning: main report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	-
11	Syst.	1979	Oldinger, E. & Lundgren, M. (1979). Öppen förskola - träffpunkt även i glesbygd. Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool: A meeting place for rural areas too	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	-
12	Syst.	1979	Socialstyrelsen (1979). <i>Öppen förskola</i> . Socialstyr.. (Särtryck ur Socialstyrelsen (1978). Kvalitetsfrågor: sammanställning av kommunernas barnomsorgsplaner 1977-81.)	Open Preschool (report by Margareta Nuder); Offprint from Questions of quality: compilation of municipalities' childcare plans 1977 - 81	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	7.1
13	Syst.	1979	Svensson, G. (1979). Föräldrautbildning i löppen förskola: ett särskilt stöd i barnomsorgen. Mölndal	Parent Education in Open Preschool: a special support in childcare	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	C	-
14	Syst.	1980	SOU 1980:27. <i>Barn och vuxna Barnomsorgsgruppens slutbetänkande om föräldrautbildning</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/846/SOU_8350846.htm	SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	7.2

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
15	Syst.	1981	Danielson, M. & Östling. (1981) Uppsökande verksamhet för barnfamiljer: ett nytt arbetsätt för socialvården, 1. uppl., Socialstyr., Stockholm.	Proactive preventative outreach work for families with young children: a new way of working for social care	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	B	-
16	Syst.	1981	SOU 1981:25. <i>Bra daghem för små barn betänkande</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatas/581/SOU_7260581.htm	SOU 1981:25 Quality nurseries for small children (report)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	-	-
17	Syst.	1982	SOU 1982:43. <i>Språk- och kulturstöd för invandrar- och minoritetsbarn i förskoleåldern betänkande</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatas/098/SOU_7261098.htm	SOU 1982:43 Language and cultural support for immigrant and minority children of preschool age: report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	-	7.5.1
18	Syst.	1982	Gustafsson, M. (1983). Öppen förskola. (1. uppl.) Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	-
19	Syst.	1982	Svenska fackläraförbundet (1982). <i>Sfi om öppen förskola</i> . Stockholm: SFL	Swedish Union of Specialist Teachers on Open Preschool	Oth. Pub.	Publ.	D	-
20	Syst.	1985	SOU 1985:22. <i>Förskola - skola betänkande</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatas/941/SOU_8350941.htm	SOU 1985:22. Preschool - school (report)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	D	-
21	Syst.	1985	Berg, L. & Zetterström, L. (1985-). Öppen förskola - ett forum för sociala nätverk. Göteborg: Sociologiska institutionen, Univ...	Open Preschool - a forum for social networks	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	-

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
22	Syst.	1985	Johansson, S. & Östberg, F. (1985). Som ringar på vattnet: öppna förskolans möjligheter i ett invandrartätt bostadsområde. Botkyrka: Botkyrka kommun.	Like ripples on the water: open preschool's possibilities in an area with a high proportion of immigrants	Pract.	Publ.	D	7.5.2
23	Syst.	1985	Fritidsdistriktet, Södermalm & Katarina-Sofia socialdistrikt, (1985) <i>Boken om</i>	The book about the Open Preschool on Södermalm	Pract.	Publ.	D	-
24	Syst.	1987	Socialstyrelsen, (1987). <i>Pedagogiskt program för förskolan</i> . Kundtjänst, Almqvists förl., [distributör].	Pedagogical programme for preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	-
25	Syst.	1987	Berg, L., (1987) <i>Sätt inte tvångströja på öppna förskolan!</i> Förskolan. Nr. 3. 1987. (s. 24-25)	"Don't put a straitjacket on Open Preschool"	Oth. Pub.	News	D	-
26	Syst.	1987	Lignell, K. (1987). <i>Öppen förskola. Examensarbete</i> . Falun.	Open Preschool	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	-
27	Syst.	1988	Berg, L. & Zetterström, L. (1988). <i>Öppen förskola - ett forum för sociala nätverk</i> Slutrapport Besöksintervjuer och observationer vid öppna förskolor i Göteborg. Göteborg: Sociologiska institutionen, Univ...	Open Preschool - a forum for social networks (Final report: visitor interviews and observations from open preschools in Gothenburg)	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	-	-
28	Syst.	1988	Ashley, B. (1988). <i>Den öppna förskolan som ett centrum för barnfamiljer i närområdet: (en rapport av Noskonen-projektet) : (ett utvecklingsprojekt inom fem kommuner: Täby, Danderyd, Vallentuna, Vaxholm, Österåker)</i>	The Open Preschool as a centre for families with children in the local area	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	-

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
29	Syst.	1988	Ladberg, G., Johansson, S. & Östberg, F. (1988). Invandrarfamiljer i öppna förskolan. Stockholm: Förskolans förl.	Immigrant families in the Open Preschool	Pract.	Publ.	D	7.5.2
30	Syst.	1989	Arbete i öppna förskola 10 poäng (Högskolan för lärarutbildning i Stockholm) (via personal communication with J. Westermark)	Work in Open Preschool – courseplan	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	7.3
31	Syst.	1989	Berg, L. & Zetterström, L. (1989). Öppen förskola: lärorika möten. Lund: Studentlitteratur.	Open Preschool – informative meetings	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	-
32	Syst.	1990	SOU 1990:80. <i>Förskola för alla barn 1991 - hur blir det? betänkande</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatas/688/SOU_7263688.htm	SOU 1990:80 Preschool for all children 1991 - how will it turn out? (report)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	-
33	Syst.	1990	Ashley, B. (1990). Öppna förskolan: en lönsam investering. Stockholm: Primärvårdservice.	Open Preschool – a profitable investment	Pract.	Publ.	D	-
34	Syst.	1992	Wollbrand, S. (1992). <i>Förskola för alla. Den öppna förskolans omfattning och innehåll</i> (Projekt rapport från Socialstyrelsen)	Preschool for all – the scope and content of the Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	-
35	Syst.	1995	Att arbeta i öppna förskola 10 poäng (Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm) (via personal communication with J. Westermark)	Working in Open Preschool – literature list	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	7.3

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
36	Syst.	1995	Socialstyrelsen (1995). <i>Öppna förskola: tre perspektiv - rikskonferens 10-11 maj 1995</i> . Socialstyrelsen.	Open Preschool Three perspectives	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	7.3
37	Syst.	1996	Öppna förskolan. (1996-1998). Öppna förskolans förlag.	Open Preschool Magazine	Pract.	Publ.	D	-
38	Syst.	1996	Wilhelmsson, W. (1996). Öppna förskolan i Karlsgöga. in Björk, B., Statens kulturråd, & Statens kulturråd. (1996). <i>Det goda exemplet : barnomsorgen och barnkulturen i en krympande ekonomi</i> . Statens kulturråd.	Open Preschool in Karlsgöga	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	-
39	Syst.	1996	Berg, L. (1996) <i>Öppna förskolan och leken - ett vackert tillägg</i> in Björk, B., Statens kulturråd, & Statens kulturråd. (1996). <i>Det goda exemplet : barnomsorgen och barnkulturen i en krympande ekonomi</i> . Statens kulturråd.	Open Preschool and play – a beautiful set of twins	Acad.	Publ.	E	-
40	Syst.	1996	Nilsson, A. (1996). Öppna förskolan i Husby och Rinkeby: en trygg mötesplats för barn och vuxna, en bro till samhället i mångkulturella stadsdelar. Bromma: Folkhälsogruppen i Västra Stockholms sjukvårdsområde, Stockholms läns landsting.	Open Preschool in Husby and Rinkeby: a secure meeting place for children and adults, a bridge to the society in multicultural areas of the city	Pract.	Publ.	E	-
41	Syst.	1997	SOU 1997:157. <i>Att erövra omvärlden förslag till läroplan för förskolan : slutbetänkande 1</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatal/372/SOU_7266372.htm	SOU 1997:157 To conquer the world around - proposal for a curriculum for preschool: final report (1)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	-
42	Syst.	1997	SOU 1997:157. <i>Att erövra omvärlden förslag till läroplan för förskolan : slutbetänkande 2</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatal/372/SOU_7266372.htm	SOU 1997:157 To conquer the world around - proposal for a curriculum for preschool: final report (2)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	-

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
43	Syst.	1998	Utbildningsdepartementet (1998). <i>Läroplan för förskolan. Lpfö 98</i> . Utbildningsdep., Regeringskansliet.	Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98	Govt. Agen	Publ.	F	-
44	Syst.	1998	Lundström, I. (1998). Öppen förskola: (en gryta att samlas kring). Arjeplog: Adrimo konsult AB.	Open Preschool: a cooking pot to gather around	Pract.	Ac. Ed.	F	-
45	Syst.	1999	Studiehandledningen till Fånga ögonblicket: En film om öppen förskola Svensk mediatdatabas (SMBD). (n.d.). Retrieved 27 December 2024, from https://smbd.kb.se/catalog/id/001422168	Seize the moment: Study guide to a film about Open Preschool	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	-
46	Syst.	1999	Bing, V. (1997). Morötter och maskrosor: om uppväxtvillkor och förebyggande sociala tjänster. Göteborg: Folkhälsosekretariatet.	Carrots and Dandelions: on conditions for growing up and proactive preventative social service	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	F	-
47	Syst.	1999	Hallberg, A. (2000). Föräldrar lär i samverkan: vid Sorgenfri öppna förskola 1999. Malmö: Primärvårdens utvecklingsenhet, Sydvästra Skånes sjukvårdsdistrikt, Region Skåne.	Parents learn in collaboration – at Sorgenfri Open Preschool	Pract.	Publ.	E	-
48	Syst.	2000	Skolverket (2000). <i>Allmänna råd med kommentarer för öppen förskola</i> . Statens skolverk.	General advice with comments for Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	7.4
49	Syst.	2006	Skolverket (2006). <i>Öppen förskolas utveckling: en studie av perioden 1980-2005</i> . Stockholm: Skolverket.	Open Preschool's development – a study of the period 1980 – 2005	Govt. Agen	Publ.	F	-

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
50	Syst.	2007	Frank, C. (2007). <i>På uppdräcksfärd i öppna förskolan : en institution som väcker frågor</i> (doctoral dissertation Stockholm universitet).	On a Journey of Discovery in the Open Preschool: an institution which raises questions'	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	F	-
51	Syst.	2008	SOU 2008:122. <i>Mer om fristående skolor och enskild förskoleverksamhet</i> . https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2008/12/sou-2008122/	SOU 2008:122 More on independent schools and individual preschool settings: final report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	F	-
52	Syst.	2008	Kalmar kommun, (2008). <i>Måsen: en Reggio Emilia-inspirerad öppen förskola</i> . Kalmar kommun, Kultur- och fritidsförvaltningen.	The Seagull	Pract.	Publ.	F	-
53	Syst.	2010	Molin, L. (2010). <i>Baby på bibblan: inspirationsbok för bibliotek och öppen förskola</i> . Lund: BTJ Förlag.	Baby at the Library: inspiration book for libraries and open preschools	Oth. Pub.	Ac. Ed.	F	-
54	Syst.	2012	Hägglund, S. (2012). <i>Öppna förskolan Elefantem: en skola för hela familjen</i> . ComEd.	Open Preschool 'The Elephant'	Pract.	Blog.	G	-
55	Syst.	2013	SOU 2013:41. <i>Förskolegaranti</i> . https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2013/06/sou-201341/	SOU 2013:41 Preschool guarantee: report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	F	-
56	Snow.	2014	Va Med. <i>Så öppna förskolan</i> . https://www.vamed.se/Project/Start.aspx?PPGuid=919e90ed-5601-4404-9e08-6d96ad9f782a&PGuid=70d37e6d-d2bb-4a25-bb6e-1cb1b612b76c	Accompanying guidance and information material for 'Join In'	Oth. Pub.	Publ.	G	7.5.3

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
57	Syst.	2015	Lennartsson, C., Troedsson, A. & Ekman, S. (2015). Ni ser allt och alla [elektronisk resurs] : pedagogens roll i hälsofrämjande och förebyggande arbete på familjecentraler. Föreningen för Familjecentralers Främjande (FFF).	You see everything and everyone: The educator's role in health-promoting and preventative work in family centres	Pract.	Int.	F	-
58	Syst.	2018	Skolverket (2018). Läroplan för förskolan: Lpfö 18. Skolverket.	Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 18	Govt. Agen	Publ.	-	-
59	Syst.	2018	Törner, E. (2018). Ett steg in: utvärdering av öppen förskola som stöd för integration i samhälls- och arbetslivet. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	A foot in the door: Evaluation of Open Preschool as a support for integration into societal and working life	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
60	Syst.	2019	Sällemark, H. (2019). Öppen förskola öppnar många dörrar: Kunskapsöversikt öppen förskola för integration. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	Open Preschool opens many doors	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
61	Syst.	2019	Sveriges kommuner och landsting (2019). Överenskommelse: Öppen förskola och stöd i språkinläring och etablering i arbets- och samhällslivet. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	Agreement: Open preschool and support in language learning and introduction to working and societal life	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	-
62	Syst.	2019	personal communication with representatives of SKR	Open Preschool for language and integration: a short pamphlet about SKL's work with the initiative 'Open preschool for language and integration'	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	-
63	Snow.	2019	Sveriges kommuner och regioner (2019). The Public Open Preschool: for language and integration initiative. Stockholm: Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner.	The Public Open Preschool for Language and Integration Initiative	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	-

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
64	Snow.	2019	Öppna Skogsglantan öppnar dörrar. (2019) <i>Friluftsliv #1-2019</i>	Open Woodland opens doors	Oth. Pub.	News	G	-
65	Snow.	2019	Campbell, S. (2019). Swedish for parents: language for life with a young family in Sweden. [Stockholm]: LYS.	Swedish for Parents: language for life with a young family in Sweden	Oth. Pub.	Comm.	G	-
66	Syst.	2020	Widlert, K., (2024). <i>Öppen förskola. Språkklektion, Språkstöd, Samhällsorientering [illustrations]</i> . Sveriges kommuner och regioner. https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialmsorg/asylochlyktningmottagandeintegration/etableringsinsatsersif/oppentforskolaforjobbchintegration/illustrationersomkommunerkananvanda.63882.html	Open Preschool; Language Lesson, Language Support, Civil Orientation	Govt. Pol	Phot.	G	7.6.1
67	Syst.	2020	Fryckholm, J. & Törner, E. (2020). <i>För mig och mitt barn: intervjustudie med utrikes födda kvinnor som besöker öppen förskolan</i> . Sveriges kommuner och regioner.	For me and my child: interview study with foreign born women who visit Open Preschool	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
68	Syst.	2020	Larsson, E., Sällemark, H., Holmberg, M. & Törner, E. (2020). <i>Verktyslådan: tips och inspiration för språk och integration i öppen förskola</i> . Sveriges kommuner och regioner. https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialmsorg/asylochlyktningmottagandeintegration/etableringsinsatsersif/oppentforskolaforjobbchintegration/verktysladianmedtipsforsprakochintegrationioppentforskola.46844.html	The Toolbox: Tips and inspiration for language and integration in the Open Preschool	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.2
69	Syst.	2020	SOU 2020:67. <i>Förskola för alla barn – för bättre språkutveckling i svenska.</i> https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2020/11/sou-202067/	SOU 2020:67 Preschool for all children - for better language development in Swedish	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	G	7.6.3

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
70	Syst.	2021	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (2021). <i>Öppen förskola för språk och integration 2018–2020 – Slutredovisning av överenskommissen mellan regeringen och SKR.</i> https://skr.se/download/18.1cF584b3180b4edbfed4e94/1652447528207/slutrapport%20_%C3%B6ppnen%20f%C3%B6r%20%C3%B6rskola%20(000000002).pdf	Open Preschool for language and integration 2018 - 2020 - Final account of the agreement between the government and SKR	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.3
71	Snow.	2021	Stockhaus, B. (2021). <i>Tillåtelse att bara vara.</i> Hopp Tidning (4 Vinter 2021)	Permission to just be'	Oth. Pub.	News	G	-
72	Syst.	2022	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner. (2018). <i>Filmer och rapporter: Öppen förskola för språk och integration.</i> https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialomsorg/asylochflyktingmottagandeintegration/etableringsinsatsersff/oppentforskolaforjobbochintegration/filmerochrapporter.46836.html	SKR Films: Open preschool gives early integration initiatives; Advantages to investing in open preschool; Participants at open preschool have their say; Open preschool - the way to integration; Open preschool - anchored at every level	Govt. Pol	Phot.	-	-
73	Syst.	2022	Förskola för fler barn [Elektronisk resurs]. (2022). Regeringskansliet.	Preschool for more children - parliamentary decision	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	-	7.6.3
74	Snow.	2022	personal effects	Organiser materials from conference Always Open	Acad.	Int.	G	-
75	Syst.	2023	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (2024, December 30) <i>Öppen förskola - tillsammans för jobb och integration.</i> https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialomsorg/asylochflyktingmottagandeintegration/etableringsinsatsersff/oppentforskolaforjobbochintegration.46558.html	Open Preschool: together for work and integration	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.3
76	Snow.	2023	SOU 2023:24 <i>Etablering för fler; jämställda möjligheter till integration.</i> Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.	SOU 2023:24 Increasing participation in establishment activities: Equitable possibilities for integration	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	-	7.6.3

No.	77		Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Snow.	Year of publication	1989 - 1998	Bibliographical reference	personal communication	Translated title	Information about and from open preschool conferences	Oth. Pub.	Int.	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
									Source of the empirical item	Item type				

Appendix B Texts constituting the seven discursive practices identified in the results of the Discourse Trace analysis (Chapter Six)

Table 19 Discursive Practices A - G (overview of texts)

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
A. Initiation and actioning – the open preschool as a nascent setting (1972 – 1973)								
1	Syst.	1972	SOU 1972:26. <i>Förskolan D.1 betänkanke</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/562/SOU_260562.htm	SOU 1972:26 Preschool (report pt 1)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	A	7.1
2	Syst.	1972	SOU 1972:27. <i>Förskolan D. 2 betänkanke</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/565/SOU_260565.htm	SOU 1972:27 Preschool (report pt 2)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	A	7.1
3	Syst.	1973	Socialstyrelsen / Monika Lundgren. (1973). <i>Rapport från försök med lekdråglivning: 'öppen förskola' i Brandbergen, Haninge kommun</i> . Socialstyrelsen	Report on the play advice pilot project 'open playschool' in Brandbergen, Haninge municipality	Govt. Agen	Publ.	A	7.1
B. Development and dissemination – the open preschool as an emerging setting (1975 – 1981)								
4	Syst.	1975	SOU 1975:30. <i>Barn - Barnens livsmikljlö</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/223/SOU_176223.htm	SOU 1975:30 Children (report pt 1) Children's Living Environments	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	B	7.2
6	Syst.	1976	Socialstyrelsen (1976). <i>Öppen förskola</i> . [Factsheet]	Factsheet Nr. 2 / 76 Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	7.1

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
9	Syst.	1978	Grevelius, A. (1978). Öppen förskola för invandrarbarn. Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool for Immigrant Children	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	7.5.1
11	Syst.	1979	Oldinger, E. & Lundgren, M. (1979). Öppen förskola - träffpunkt även i glesbygd. Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool: A meeting place for rural areas too	Govt. Agen	Publ.	B	n/a
15	Syst.	1981	Danielson, M. & Östling, (1981) Uppökande verksamhet för barnfamiljer: ett nytt arbetsätt för socialvården, 1. uppl., Socialstyr., Stockholm.	Proactive preventative outreach work for families with young children: a new way of working for social care	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	B	n/a
C. Synthesing and establishment – the open preschool as an established setting (1975 – 1983)								
5	Syst.	1975	Sverige Barnomsorgsgruppen (1975). Samverkan i barnomsorgen [1] : betänkande från Arbetsgruppen för samhällets barnomsorg. Stockholm: LiberFörlag/Allmänna förl..	SOU 1975:87 Collaboration in childcare (1): Report from the Working Group for Society's Childcare	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	n/a
7	Syst.	1977	Nuder, M. (1977). Rapport om öppen förskola. Stockholm: Socialstyrelsen.	Report on Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	7.1
8	Syst.	1978	SOU 1978:05- Barn och vuxna Barnomsorgsgruppens slutbetänkande om föräldrautbildning . https://weburn.kb.se/metadatas/943/SOU_8200943.htm	SOU 1978:05 Parent education (1). Around the birth of a child - Report from the Childcare Group	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	7.2

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
10	Syst.	1979	SOU 1979:57. <i>Barnomsorg behov, efterfrågan, planeringsunderlag : huvudbetänkande</i> .	SOU 1979:57 Childcare - need, demand, basis for planning: main report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	n/a
12	Syst.	1979	Socialstyrelsen (1979). <i>Öppen förskola</i> . Socialstyr.. (Särtryck ur Socialstyrelsen (1978). Kvalitetsfrågor: sammanställning av kommunernas barnomsorgsplaner 1977-81.)	Open Preschool (report by Margareta Nuder): Offprint from Questions of quality: compilation of municipalities' childcare plans 1977 - 81	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	7.1
13	Syst.	1979	Svensson, G. (1979). Föräldrautbildning i öppen förskola: ett särskilt stöd i barnomsorgen. Mölndal	Parent Education in Open Preschool: a special support in childcare	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	C	n/a
14	Syst.	1980	SOU 1980:27. <i>Barn och vuxna Barnomsorgsgruppens slutbetänkande om föräldrautbildning</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/846/SOU_8350846.htm	SOU 1980:27 Children and Adults: The Childcare Group's final report on Parent Education	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	C	7.2
18	Syst.	1982	Gustafsson, M. (1983). <i>Öppen förskola</i> . (1. uppl.) Stockholm: Socialstyr..	Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	C	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
D. Comment, evaluation and reevaluation – the open preschool as a dynamic and developing setting (1982 – 2000)								
19	Syst.	1982	Svenska facklärarförbundet (1982). <i>Sf om öppen förskola</i> . Stockholm: SFL.	Swedish Union of Specialist Teachers on Open Preschool	Oth. Pub.	Publ.	D	n/a
20	Syst.	1985	SOU 1985:22. <i>Förskola - skola betänkande</i> . . . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/941/SOU_8350941.htm	SOU 1985:22 Preschool - school (report)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	D	n/a
21	Syst.	1985	Berg, L. & Zetterström, L. (1985-). Öppen förskola - ett forum för sociala nätverk. Göteborg: Sociologiska institutionen, Univ..	Open Preschool - a forum for social networks	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	n/a
22	Syst.	1985	Johansson, S. & Östberg, F. (1985). Som ringar på vattnet: öppna förskolans möjligheter i ett invandrartätt bostadsområde. Botkyrka: Botkyrka kommun.	Like ripples on the water: open preschool's possibilities in an area with a high proportion of immigrants	Pract.	Publ.	D	7.5.2
23	Syst.	1985	Fritidsdistriktet, Södermalm & Katarina-Sofia socialdistrikt; (1985) <i>Boken om öppna förskolan på Södermalm</i> . Stockholm	The book about the Open Preschool on Södermalm	Pract.	Publ.	D	n/a
24	Syst.	1987	Socialstyrelsen, (1987). <i>Pedagogiskt program för förskolan</i> . Kundtjänst, Allmänna fört. [distributör].	Pedagogical programme for preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
25	Syst.	1987	Berg, L., (1987) <i>Sätt inte tvångströja på öppna förskolan!</i> Förskolan, Nr. 3, 1987. (s. 24-25)	"Don't put a straitjacket on Open Preschool"	Oth. Pub.	News	D	n/a
26	Syst.	1987	Lignell, K. (1987). Öppen förskola. Examensarbete. Falun.	Open Preschool	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	n/a
28	Syst.	1988	Ashley, B. (1988). Den öppna förskolan som ett centrum för barnfamiljer i närområdet: [en rapport av Noskonen-projektet] : ett utvecklingsprojekt inom fem kommuner: Täby, Danderyd, Vallentuna, Vaxholm, Österåker]	The Open Preschool as a centre for families with children in the local area	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	n/a
29	Syst.	1988	Ladberg, G., Johansson, S. & Östberg, F. (1988). Invandrarfamiljer i öppna förskolan. Stockholm: Förskolans förl..	Immigrant families in the Open Preschool	Pract.	Publ.	D	7.5.2
31	Syst.	1989	Berg, L. & Zetterström, L. (1989). Öppen förskola: lärorika möten. Lund: Studentlitteratur.	Open Preschool – informative meetings	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	D	n/a
33	Syst.	1990	Ashley, B. (1990). Öppna förskolan: en lönsam investering. Stockholm: Primärvårdsservice.	Open Preschool – a profitable investment	Pract.	Publ.	D	n/a
37	Syst.	1996	Öppna förskolan. (1996-1998). Öppna förskolans förlag.	Open Preschool Magazine	Pract.	Publ.	D	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
48	Syst.	2000	Skolverket (2000). <i>Allmänna råd med kommentarer för öppen förskola</i> . Statens skolverk.	General advice with comments for Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	D	7.4
E. Tension in framing of the relationship between open preschool and preschool – the open preschool as a setting with a disputed position (1989 – 1999)								
30	Syst.	1989	Arbete i öppen förskola 10 poäng (Högskolan för lärarutbildning i Stockholm) (via personal communication with J. Westermark)	Work in Open Preschool – courseplan	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	7.3
32	Syst.	1990	SOU 1990:80. <i>Förskola för alla barn 1991 - hur blir det? betänkande</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadate/688/SOU_7263688.htm	SOU 1990:80 Preschool for all children 1991 - how will it turn out? (report)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	n/a
34	Syst.	1992	Wollbrand, S. (1992). <i>Förskola för alla. Den öppna förskolans omfattning och innehåll</i> (Projekt rapport från Socialstyrelsen)	Preschool for all – the scope and content of the Open Preschool	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	n/a
35	Syst.	1995	Att arbeta i öppen förskola 10 poäng (Lärarygskolan i Stockholm) (via personal communication with J. Westermark)	Working in Open Preschool – literature list	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	7.3
36	Syst.	1995	Socialstyrelsen (1995). <i>Öppen förskola: tre perspektiv i rikskonferens 10-11 maj 1995</i> . Socialstyrelsen.	Open Preschool Three perspectives	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	7.3

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
38	Syst.	1996	Wilhelmson, W. (1996). Öppna förskolan i Karlskoga. in: Björk, B., Statens kulturråd, & Statens kulturråd. (1996). <i>Det goda exemplet : barnomsorgen och barnkulturen i en krympande ekonomi</i> . Statens kulturråd.	Open Preschool in Karlskoga	Govt. Agen	Publ.	E	n/a
39	Syst.	1996	Berg, L. (1996) <i>Öppna förskolan och leken - ett vackert tvillingpar</i> in: Björk, B., Statens kulturråd, & Statens kulturråd. (1996). <i>Det goda exemplet : barnomsorgen och barnkulturen i en krympande ekonomi</i> . Statens kulturråd.	Open Preschool and play – a beautiful set of twins	Acad.	Publ.	E	n/a
40	Syst.	1996	Nilsson, A. (1996). Öppna förskolan i Husby och Rinkeby: en trygg mötesplats för barn och vuxna, en bro till samhället i mångkulturella stadsdelar. Bromma: Folksamgruppen i Västra Stockholms sjukvårdsområde, Stockholms läns landsting.	Open Preschool in Husby and Rinkeby: a secure meeting place for children and adults, a bridge to the society in multicultural areas of the city	Pract.	Publ.	E	n/a
41	Syst.	1997	SOU 1997:157. <i>Att erövra omvärlden: förslag till läroplan för förskolan: slutbetänkande 1</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/372/SOU_7266372.htm	SOU 1997:157 To conquer the world around - proposal for a curriculum for preschool: final report (1)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	n/a
42	Syst.	1997	SOU 1997:157. <i>Att erövra omvärlden: förslag till läroplan för förskolan: slutbetänkande 2</i> . https://weburn.kb.se/metadata/372/SOU_7266372.htm	SOU 1997:157 To conquer the world around - proposal for a curriculum for preschool: final report (2)	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	E	n/a
45	Syst.	1999	Studiehandledningen till Fånga ögonblicket: En film om öppen förskola Svensk mediedatabas (SMDb). (n.d.). Retrieved 27 December 2024. from https://smdb.kb.se/catalog/id/001422168	Seize the moment: Study guide to a film about Open Preschool	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	E	n/a
47	Syst.	1999	Hallberg, A. (2000). Föräldrar lär i samverkan: vid Sorgenfri öppna förskola 1999. Malmö: Primärvårdens utvecklingsenhet, Sydvästra Skånes sjukvårdsdistrikt, Region Skåne.	Parents learn in collaboration – at Sorgenfri Open Preschool	Pract.	Publ.	E	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
77	Snow.	1989 - 1998	personal communication	Information about and from open preschool conferences	Oth. Pub.	Int.	E	n/a
F. Repositioning and realignment – the open preschool as simultaneously moribund and renascent (1998 – 2015)								
43	Syst.	1998	Utbildningsdepartementet (1998). <i>Läroplan för förskolan: Lpfö 98</i> . Utbildningsdep., Regeringskansliet.	Curriculum for the Preschool Lpfö 98	Govt. Agen	Publ.	F	n/a
44	Syst.	1998	Lundström, I. (1998). Öppen förskola: [en gryta att samlas kring]. Arjeplog: Adrimo konsult AB.	Open Preschool: a cooking pot to gather around	Pract.	Ac. Ed.	F	n/a
46	Syst.	1999	Bing, V. (1997). Morötter och maskrosor: om uppväxtvillkor och förebyggande sociala tjänster. Göteborg: Folkhälsosekretariatet.	Carrots and Dandelions: on conditions for growing up and proactive preventative social service	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	F	n/a
49	Syst.	2006	Skolverket (2006). Öppen förskolas utveckling: en studie av perioden 1980-2005. Stockholm: Skolverket.	Open Preschool's development – a study of the period 1980 – 2005	Govt. Agen	Publ.	F	n/a
50	Syst.	2007	Frank, C. (2007). <i>På upptäcksfärd i öppna förskolan: en institution som väcker frågor</i> (doctoral dissertation Stockholms universitet).	On a Journey of Discovery in the Open Preschool: an institution which raises questions	Acad.	Ac. Ed.	F	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
51	Syst.	2008	SOU 2008:122. <i>Mer om fristående skolor och enskild förskoleverksamhet</i> . https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2008/12/sou-2008122/	SOU 2008:122 More on independent schools and individual preschool settings: final report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	F	n/a
52	Syst.	2008	Kalmar kommun, (2008). <i>Måsen: en Reggio Emilia-inspirerad öppen förskola</i> . Kalmar kommun, Kultur- och fritidsförvaltningen.	The Seagull	Pract.	Publ.	F	n/a
53	Syst.	2010	Molin, L. (2010). <i>Baby på bibblan: inspirationsbok för bibliotek och öppen förskola</i> . Lund: BTJ Förlag.	Baby at the Library: inspiration book for libraries and open preschools	Oth. Pub.	Ac. Ed.	F	n/a
55	Syst.	2013	SOU 2013:41. <i>Förskolegaranti</i> . https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2013/06/sou-201341/	SOU 2013:41 Preschool guarantee: report	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	F	n/a
57	Syst.	2015	Lemartsson, C., Troedsson, A. & Ekman, S. (2015). <i>Ni ser allt och alla</i> [Elektronisk resurs] : pedagogens roll i hälsofrämjande och förebyggande arbete på familjecentraler. Föreningen för Familjecentralers Främjande (FFF).	You see everything and everyone: The educator's role in health-promoting and preventative work in family centres	Pract.	Int.	F	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
G. The open preschool as a co-opted setting? Repurposing and a glimpse into the future (2012 – 2023)								
54	Syst.	2012	Hägglund, S. (2012). Öppna förskolan Elefantén: en skola för hela familjen. ComEd.	Open Preschool 'The Elephant'	Pract.	Biog.	G	n/a
56	Snow.	2014	Va Med. SÖ öppna förskolan. https://www.va.med.se/Project/Start.aspx?PPGUID=919e90ed-5601-44c4-9e08-6d96ad9f782a&PGUID=70d37e6d-d2bb-4a25-bb6e-1cb1b612b76c	Accompanying guidance and information material for 'Join In'	Oth. Pub.	Publ.	G	7.5.3
59	Syst.	2018	Törner, E. (2018). Ett steg in: utvärdering av öppen förskola som stöd för integration i samhälls- och arbetslivet. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	A foot in the door: Evaluation of Open Preschool as a support for integration into societal and working life	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
60	Syst.	2019	Sällemark, H. (2019). Öppen förskola öppnar många dörrar: Kurskapsöversikt öppen förskola för integration. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	Open Preschool opens many doors	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
61	Syst.	2019	Sveriges kommuner och landsting (2019). Överenskommelse: Öppen förskola och stöd i språkinläring och etablering i arbets- och samhällslivet. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.	Agreement: Open preschool and support in language learning and introduction to working and societal life	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	n/a
62	Syst.	2019	personal communication with representatives of SKR	Open Preschool for language and integration: a short pamphlet about SKL's work with the initiative 'Open preschool for language and integration'	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	n/a

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
63	Snow.	2019	Sveriges kommuner och regioner (2019). The Public Open Preschool: for language and integration initiative. Stockholm: Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner.	The Public Open Preschool for Language and Integration Initiative	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	n/a
64	Snow.	2019	Öppna Skogsglantan öppnar dörrar. (2019) <i>Fritidsliv #1-2019</i>	Open Woodland opens doors	Oth. Pub.	News	G	n/a
65	Snow.	2019	Campbell, S. (2019). Swedish for parents: language for life with a young family in Sweden. [Stockholm]: LYS.	Swedish for Parents: language for life with a young family in Sweden	Oth. Pub.	Comm.	G	n/a
66	Syst.	2020	Wrlert, K., (2024). <i>Öppen förskola, Språklektion, Språkstöd, Samhällsorientering [illustrations J. Sveriges kommuner och regioner. https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialomsorg/asylochflyktningmottagandeinte-gration/etableringsinsatsersf/oppenforskolaforjobbchintegration/illustrationer/somkommunerkananvanda.63882.html</i>	Open Preschool; Language Lesson, Language Support, Civil Orientation	Govt. Pol	Phot.	G	7.6.1
67	Syst.	2020	Fryckholm, J. & Törner, E. (2020). <i>För mig och mitt barn: intervjustudie med utrikes födda kvinnor som besöker öppen förskolan</i> . Sveriges kommuner och regioner.	For me and my child: Interview study with foreign born women who visit Open Preschool	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.1
68	Syst.	2020	Larsson, E., Sällemark, H., Holmberg, M. & Törner, E. (2020). <i>Verktögsådan: tips och inspiration för språk och integration i öppen förskola</i> . Sveriges kommuner och regioner. https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialomsorg/asylochflyktningmottagandeinte-gration/etableringsinsatsersf/oppenforskolaforjobbchintegration/verktyg-sladameditipspraktichintegration/oppenforskola.46844.html	The Toolbox: Tips and inspiration for language and integration in the Open Preschool	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.2

No.	Search type used to identify the item (systematic or snowball)	Year of publication	Bibliographical reference	Translated title	Source of the empirical item	Item type	Discursive Practices in which items are identified (A - G)	Curriculum Making Activities in which items are identified (7.1 - 7.6)
69	Syst.	2020	SOU 2020:67. <i>Förskola för alla barn – för bättre språkutveckling i svenska.</i> https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2020/711/sou-202067/	SOU 2020:67 Preschool for all children - for better language development in Swedish	Govt. Leg.	Publ.	G	7.6.3
70	Syst.	2021	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (2021). <i>Öppen förskola för språk och integration 2018–2020 – Slutredovisning av överenskommelse mellan regeringen och SKR.</i> https://skr.se/download/18.1cf584b3180b-4e0bfedde94/1652447528207/slutrapport%20_%C3%B6ppen%20%C3%B6r-skola%20(000000002).pdf	Open Preschool for language and integration 2018 - 2020 - Final account of the agreement between the government and SKR	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.3
71	Snow.	2021	Stockhaus, B. (2021). <i>Tillåtelse att bara vara.</i> Hopp Tidning (4 Vinter 2021)	Permission to just be'	Oth. Pub.	News	G	n/a
74	Snow.	2022	personal effects	Organiser materials from conference Always Open	Acad.	Int.	G	n/a
75	Syst.	2023	Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (2024, December 30) <i>Öppen förskola - tillsammans för jobb och integration.</i> https://skr.se/skr/integrationsocialmsorg/asylochlyktingmottagandeintegration/etableringsinsatsersfi/oppnenforskoliforjobbochintegration.46558.html	Open Preschool: together for work and integration	Govt. Pol	Publ.	G	7.6.3

Appendix C List of instances of exemplified didactic decision making in the interview material, with brief overview of context for each instance

Cultural knowledge (13 examples)		
<i>Information about normative practices from the domain of the private person, in particular parent, in their free time</i>		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 It's fun to get messy and creative with your children.	Fingerpainting	3
2 Things in the forest	Language walk	7
3 Everything you can do indoors, you can do outdoors	Outdoor activities	7
4 Making dampers	Grilling over an open fire in the park	7
5 Farm animals and 4H farms	Trip to local farm	13
6 Water familiarisation, water safety, water play, swimming, parent's role in water safety education	Visit to local splashpads	7
7 The forest is a lovely place to pick berries	Pointing out berries during an outing	7
8 Weaning, about the open preschool	Practical 'tasting portions' session with the child health centre	7
9 How to 'be outdoors' in all weathers; health benefits of being outdoors; the outdoors is safe	Outdoor activities of various types	13
10 Conditions for using the library	Trip to the library, talking about the library	13
11 Rights and possibilities in accessing outdoor activities that are beneficial for your child	Trips, information	13
12 Seasons and life cycles; how to follow these with your child; seasonal agricultural events e.g. Lambing	Trip to local farm	13
13 Babies can sleep outside even in winter	Discussion based on having observed a parent settling their baby for an outdoor nap	21

Table 20 Content area 1 *Cultural knowledge*

Practical knowledge (11 examples)		
<i>Factual information relating to everyday life including meeting with public bodies and authorities</i>		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 That you as the parent need to supervise your child during SFI training	A sketch performed by the educators	3
2 What the local area is like, how do I get to X, how the buses work	Stroller walk in the local area	5
3 Eating together can be positive for children; that preschool is a positive environment for children	Opening the premises up for visitors to use to eat together, even during educators' lunch breaks	7
4 What open preschool is and what happens at open preschool	Documentation wall	7
5 Where local preschools are located and how to apply	Visuals for applying to preschool on display in the open preschool	7
6 Medical and dental information; general information on local matters	Providing access to multiple services 'under the same roof'	7
7 That open preschool is a service in the community that families may avail of	Having a presence in the wider society – outreach work	5
8 Being a parent in Sweden	Exposure to and opportunities to participate in Swedish norms and practices	13
9 Information to counter misconceptions and rumours about social services	Providing credible alternatives to unreliable information sources	5
10 How to get into paid employment; homework help; advice on to apply for jobs	Cooperation / collaboration with local societal actors	7
11 <i>That</i> open preschool exists	Outreach in local preschools	19

Table 21 Content area 2 *Practical knowledge*

The Swedish language (11 examples)		
<i>Swedish as a second language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and prosody, songs)</i>		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 SFI content	Working with SFI teacher to plan sessions	1
2 writing recipes; soup recipes; names of different ingredients; weaning	Soup lunches	7
3 SFI content (themes e.g. Body parts; toys; clothes; baby related verbs; telling time; alphabet; about SFI itself)	Being an SFI teacher in the open preschool	8
4 SFI content; childrearing	Adapting practice to the open preschool	8
5 prosody of Swedish	Commenting on a baby's melodic tone	8
6 Swedish language; SFI is a safe place; learn to read	Provision of a language corner	3
7 SFI content; everyday / parenting themes	Structuring the SFI sessions to include a song time and fika, in order to facilitate spontaneous discussion	10
8 Arabic is valuable as a way to reach parents; Basic communication (greetings); everyday language	Making use of Arabic as a community language to help visitors understand one another and staff	10
9 Swedish language; simple Swedish; reading skills	Using props during songtime	12
10 Swedish language; simple Swedish vocabulary; Swedish children's songs	Sound and song, naming items in the setting, encouraging participation in song time regardless of level of Swedish	13
11 songtexts; Swedish language; Swedish songs	Songtime with lyrics available	13

Table 22 Content area 3 *The Swedish language*

Being and belonging (9 examples)		
<i>The explicit message that the families are welcome and valued in the physical and conceptual spaces that constitute Sweden</i>		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 You can be in these places without me; you can socialise without me as a middleman	Facilitating (scaffolding) participation in social activities	3
2 Open preschool is a place to get a basic grounding for starting to learn Swedish; open preschool is a place for speaking Swedish	Steering back to Swedish through explicit reminder	5
3 You are welcome here, this is your place, we want you to come back	Routines for welcoming visitors coming to the open preschool for the first time	7
4 This is your space to create, we are interested in you; Swedish language; you are delaktig	Provision of an open and inviting arts and crafts space	7
5 Here we are all parents, this is what unites us	Actively avoiding using titles, emphasising parenthood as common identity	10
6 You are not the only one experiencing problems in parenting	Sharing own immigrant parent experience	15
7 There are opportunities to socialise with Swedish people here	Providing a context and scaffolding opportunities for socialising	15
8 Swedish language, basic communication starters / openers	Making use of children as conversational artefacts / topics for conversation starters	19
9 Finding the way in your local environment	Meeting visitors en route to an outing to accompany them if they didn't know the way	20

Table 23 Content area 4 *Being and belonging*

Values (7 examples)		
Democratic values relating to equality in diversity		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 "This is your place"	Outreach work, then explicitly emphasising a mother's right to remain sitting when she stood up to give a man her chair	2
2 Practical financial information	Communication via WhatsApp	6
3 How to effectively parent a teenager, where to get help with parenting older children	Sharing own experiences	4
4 How to fill in a city suggestion form; being a democratic citizen	Supporting families with terminology and information for form-filling etc	7
5 Men can change diapers; Sweden has a tradition of gender equal parenting	Discussion of cultural practices in response to a parent comment	15
6 Understanding NPF diagnoses and life as an NPF parent; you are not alone; NPF diagnoses are not a source of shame	Linking parents with NPF children together in order for immigrant parents to see the Swedish perspective on NPF diagnoses	15
7 There are different gender norms and family constellations	Active use of norm critical greetings	21

Table 24 Content area 5 *Values*


Views and attitudes about language and multilingualism in Sweden (5 examples)		
<i>Normative and factual information about living as a plurilingual family in a multilingual society</i>		
Content (what?)	Context for the exemplified didactic decision making	Interview Number
1 Books and reading are important; how to interact with your child; it is important to read in your 'heart language'; language development;	Holding a book party / festival of reading	7
2 Reading is an exciting experience; disciplinary literacy; genres; reading is something to experience together with your child	Holding a special reading session with multisensory elements	10
3 Language development; setting boundaries; how OP works; how the Swedish system work; Swedish values	Access to Arabic speaking bridgebuilder	12
4 best practice for multilingual families	Advising parents on multilingualism in response to their queries	13
5 it's okay to use another language than Swedish here	Careful choice of terminology etc when talking about language to ensure a multilingual inclusive environment	21

Table 25 Content area 6 *Plurilingualism in Sweden*

Appendix D Interview guide (English translation)

1	Can you say a little bit about yourself, your role or your profession, and how long you have worked in open preschools?
2	What do you see as your main tasks and responsibilities in terms of working with the visitors to the open preschool? What different purposes do you think the open preschool has?
3	Can you tell me a little bit about your thoughts on the terms ‘teaching and learning’ in the context of the open preschool?
4	What types of teaching and learning happen in the open preschool?
5	Where do you and your colleagues get your information and ideas from when you are planning activities? Which steering documents do you use, for example?
6	Can you tell me a little bit about language in relation to the activities of the open preschool?
7	What does the term multilingualism mean to you?
8	How do you work with and how do you plan for working with visitors who have another or other first language(s) than Swedish?
9	What do you see as your role in relation to these visitors?
10	How do you view the relationship between language, open preschool and integration or establishment?
11	Can you tell me a little bit about your work with parenting, in particular with families who have moved to Sweden from other countries?

Table 26 Interview guide (English translation)

... nu så ska vi sluta.  .

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS

Studia Didactica Upsaliensia

1. Jörgen Mattlar. *Skolbokspropaganda? En ideologianalys av läroböcker i svenska som andraspråk (1995–2005)*. 2008.
2. Silvia Edling. *Ruptured Narratives. An analysis of the contradictions within young people's responses to issues of personal responsibility and social violence within an educational context*. 2009.
3. Staffan Stenhag. *Betyget i matematik. Vad ger grundskolans matematikbetyg för information?* 2010.
4. Martin Karlberg. *Skol-Komet. Tre utvärderingar av ett program för beteendeorienterat ledarskap i klassrummet*. 2011.
5. Jan Grannäs. *Framtidens demokratiska medborgare. Om ungdomar, medborgarskap och demokratifostran i svensk skola*. 2011.
6. Gunilla Sandberg. *På väg in i skolan. Om villkor för olika barns delaktighet och skriftspråkslärande*. 2012.
7. Gabriella Gejard. "Jag kan göra matte å minus å plus". *Förskolebarns och pedagogers deltagande i matematiska aktiviteter*. 2014.
8. Leif Östman (Red.) *Naturmötespraktiker och miljömoraliskt lärande*. 2015.
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10. Mona-Lisa Henriksson. *Rätt och moral. Meningar med skolämnet juridik på gymnasienivå*. 2021.
11. Viktoria Waagaard. *Ämneslitteracy i samhällskunskapsämnet. Ett ämnes-specifikt bidrag till ett språk- och kunskapsutvecklande arbetssätt*. 2023.
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13. Sonja Blomquist. *Meningserbjudanden om metaforiskt språk i ämnet svenska som andraspråk i gymnasieskolan*. 2024.
14. Olle Uppenberg. *Filosofiämnets didaktik. En studie om det svenska gymnasieämnet filosofi och dess didaktik*. 2024.
15. Sarah Campbell. *Making the Open Preschool. A Place for Language and Integration*. 2025.

