DiVA
http://www.diva-portal.org

This is the published version of a paper published in *Research in Dance Education*.

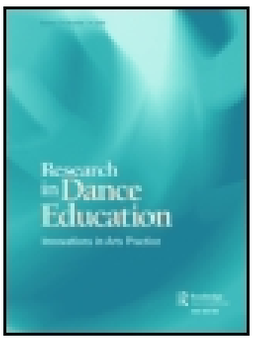
Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Pastorek Gripson, M., Lindqvist, A., Østern, T P. (2022)
'We put on the music and then the children dance' - Swedish preschool teachers' dance educational experiences
Research in Dance Education, 23(3): 337-359
https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2021.1928622

Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hh:diva-45767



Research in Dance Education

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/crid20

'We put on the music and then the children dance' - Swedish preschool teachers' dance educational experiences

Martha Pastorek Gripson, Anna Lindqvist & Tone Pernille Østern

To cite this article: Martha Pastorek Gripson, Anna Lindqvist & Tone Pernille Østern (2021): 'We put on the music and then the children dance' - Swedish preschool teachers' dance educational experiences, Research in Dance Education, DOI: 10.1080/14647893.2021.1928622

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2021.1928622

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

Published online: 09 Jun 2021.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 458

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=crid20

RESEARCH IN DANCE EDUCATION
https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2021.1928622

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

'We put on the music and then the children dance' - Swedish preschool teachers' dance educational experiences

Martha Pastorek Gripson [a], Anna Lindqvist [b] and Tone Pernille Østern [c]

[a]Department for Pre-School and School Teacher Education, University of Borås; [b]Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University; [c]NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

ABSTRACT

This article investigates and discusses Swedish preschool teachers' work with and understanding of teaching dance. Preschool teachers should teach aesthetic expressions such as dance, according to the curriculum. This study depicts how preschool teachers, in semi-structured group interviews in 18 preschools, describe their work with teaching dance.

The results show that early childhood teachers are well prepared for and focused on all children, and let them influence the dance education. They are flexible, oriented towards each child's needs, regard children as competent co-creators, and they cooperate with colleges to inspire each other. However, the respondents rarely mention their own bodily involvement when dance is taught in their preschool. They have difficulties in picturing dance specific knowledge, separated from other learning areas, and many also state that choreographic material seems frightening to them. The lack of own bodily knowledge and choreographic tools is discussed in relation to children's possibilities to develop dance knowledge in their preschools.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 11 November 2020
Accepted 7 May 2021

KEYWORDS
Aesthetic approaches to learning; Dance Education; Embodied pedagogy; Narrative inquiry; Preschool education

Preschool, curriculum and aesthetic expression – a Swedish perspective

In Sweden, the majority of children aged 1–5 years go to preschool. The Swedish preschool is a statutory school form with a national curriculum which demands formally qualified teachers with skills in and knowledge about the concept of teaching, as inscribed in the 2010 Education Act (SFS 2010, 800). When this article was written, the curriculum had recently been revised, in 2018 and implementation started in 2019 (The National Agency for Education 2018). In the new curriculum dance is mentioned as one of the art forms that preschool children are supposed to encounter in preschool. The children should '/ . . . /experience, portray and communicate through different aesthetic forms of expression such as/ . . . /music and dance' (The National Agency for Education 2018, 9). What does this mean in different preschool settings? This sentence in the curriculum sparked our curiosity and served as impulse to the research project in focus in this article.

CONTACT Martha Pastorek Gripson martha.pastorek_gripson@hb.se Märtha Pastorek Gripson, University of Borås, Allegatan 1, 503 32 Borås, Sweden

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

The researcher voice and research focus

The authors of this article are previous dance teachers, now researchers working at universities within teacher education. In our three different teacher education institutions in Sweden and the neighboring country Norway, we have all noticed that dance plays only a minimal role in general teacher education, school and preschool (Lindqvist 2018; Pastorek Gripson 2016; Styrke 2018). A previous study (Lindqvist 2019) highlights that the academization of Swedish preschool teacher education provides limited bodily knowledge and experiences. Another study reveals that dance does not occur in the content, learning goals or forms of examination in the Swedish syllabi for preschool teacher education in a majority of cases (Pastorek Gripson, Mattsson and Andersson, 2021). This indicates that during their education, preschool teachers do not achieve skills, abilities and understanding in and of dance. But what is the state-of-art in practice? How do preschool teachers in Sweden work with and understand teaching and learning in dance? With the new curriculum as an impulse, we initiated and carried out an interview-based, qualitative research project in 17 different preschools in different areas in Sweden during 2019. In this article, we analyze the interview material guided by the following research question: *How do preschool teachers in Sweden understand and practice dance in their preschools?*

The Swedish preschool context

In this article we use the concept 'Nordic model' as a way of trying to explain what we experience as the underlying or comprehensive pedagogical thinking among the preschool teachers. Tin et al. (2020) in the book *The Nordic model and physical culture* describe what could be called the 'Nordic model' as first of all the expression of a common ideological framework (1). Separating out the Nordic model as a 'social democratic' model, distinguishing it from a more 'liberal model' and a more 'conservative model', and referring to Esping-Andersen (1990), Tin et al. (2020, 2) describe the social democratic regime as fundamentally aiming at the emancipation of the individual. Referring to a recent study by Pedersen and Kuhnle (2017), Tin et al. (2020, 3) further add two more determining factors to the Nordic model, which they call 'the principle of universal social rights' and the 'passion for equality'. They further claim that the core idea of the Nordic model is a combination of equality and individual freedom (Tin et al. 2020, 3). Without going any further into nuances or critical investigation of the Nordic model, we see traces of this Nordic ideological framework in the preschool teachers' stories that are later analyzed in this article.

The Swedish preschool, then, aligns with the values of the 'Nordic model'. In a holistic way, play, learning and care form a whole, and strive to develop a life-long learning environment (The National Agency for Education 2018). To care for each child's individual needs and to provide a safe and joyful environment is a task for preschool teachers and child minders. The responsibility to teach is exclusively put on the preschool teacher, who is expected to provide goal-oriented teaching resting on a research-based foundation and teaching experience. The UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child has the status of law in Sweden. The freedom of speech and to express oneself in different art forms is emphasized in articles 13 and 31 (United Nations 1989).

As the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2018) points out big differences in quality between preschools in Sweden, the possibilities to provide more equal quality education in preschools is of high importance. Aesthetic approaches to learning in all subjects should be utilized, and arts education as a field in itself should be strengthened.

In accordance with the goals in the curriculum, gender equality between girls and boys is one task for preschools to develop. This is in line with the democratic aim that everyone, regardless of gender, should be able to express themselves freely, in a variety of modalities (Lindqvist 2018; Pastorek Gripson 2016).

Vallberg Roth (2018) emphasizes the need to explore how the concept of teaching is used and understood by preschool teachers. Swedish teacher education has over the years been changed to have less focus on arts education and aesthetic approaches to learning (Lindgren and Ericsson 2013; Lindqvist 2019). Previous studies of preschool teachers and student teachers in Sweden showed that they feel insecure in relation to arts subjects like dance and music (Ehrlin and Wallerstedt 2014; Lindqvist 2019). It seems challenging for preschool teachers to define what learning outcomes they aim at developing within the field of dance.

According to Doverborg, Pramling, and Pramling Samuelsson (2019), preschool teachers need to be aware of *what* they want to teach children about, and they need to define what learning object they aim to point out to children. For many preschool teachers the question of *how* things are done, is of primary interest. Many preschool teachers also mention activities carried out without describing the content: the question of *what* is learnt is not in focus.

Previous research – dance education in a global perspective

Dance education does not hold *one* global canon of dance theoretical perspectives. However, dance educational research is an active field and research is ongoing. For this study, we have chosen a current publication series of dance educational research and practice to dialogue with. Dance researchers Burridge and Svendler-Nielsen have edited the series *Perspectives on dance, young people and change* connected to the world conferences arranged by daCi – dance and Child international. When this chapter was written, three volumes had been published in the series: *Dance education around the world* (Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015) *Dance, access and inclusion* Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018) and *Dancing across borders* (Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2020). The contributors in these three volumes are dance researchers and practitioners from around all continents on the globe, bringing in different voices. All volumes give examples of and theorize about practice-led dance artistic and/or educational research projects, often collaboratively between the practice field and academia. We see the tendencies, educational ambitions and theories used and produced through these volumes as dance educational research *now*, relevant for us to dialogue with in our analysis in this study.

Dance education around the world (Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015) is the first volume in the series. It contains chapters and case narratives from both researchers and dance educators that together highlight different roles that dance can have in human life, for example in shaping identity, expressing feelings and giving form to ideas (Robinson 2015). The low status dance education has in educational systems globally is

problematized (Kipling Brown 2015; Koff 2015; Stinson 2015). Dance education can contribute to challenges related to social justice, cultural change and climate related challenges (Manley 2015; Meiners and Garrett 2015; Sansom 2015; Robinson 2015; Rowe 2015). The importance of letting children and young people influence and challenge dance education, as we know it in more traditional, professional driven ways, is a core theme, which intersects with gender as well as ethnicity (Sansom 2015; Speth 2015; Stinson 2015; Svendler Nielsen 2015). Another core aspect is the possibility to connect to oneself, one's own body and identity, as well to others and to community. Embodied aspects of sensing one's own body and embodied meetings with others are highlighted as life skills, and that embodiment also has the potential to develop critical thinking (Anttila 2015; Jeppsen Groves and Leggat Roper 2015; Stinson 2015). Stinson challenges dance educators to rethink their practice. She stresses the importance of being able to reach those with no enthusiasm or drive for dance from new perspectives, helping them to articulate their resistance in different ways and modalities rather than just advocating for dance. Additionally, Chappel and Jobbins (2015) highlight/emphasize the importance of more critical perspectives in dance education that can lead to change rather than just describing, explaining and advocating existing practices.

Dance, access and inclusion Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018) is the second volume in the series. The whole book highlights children and young people with special needs in diverse dance activities. Different researchers (Whatley and Marsh 2018; Østern 2018) give examples of what is required (for everyone) to have access to dance, regardless of different abilities. There are still prejudices and presumptions about dance and the dancing body, but also traditional approaches to skills and technique. Whatley and Marsh (2018, 7) state: 'In a dance teaching context, we propose that disability should make no difference, or at least difference should be celebrated rather than erased'. Buck and Snook (2018) argue for the importance of values and principles in the meeting with students and dancers. They describe their values from their own experiences defined as equity, democracy, diversity, curiosity, perseverance, participation, fun and reflection (Buck and Snook 2018, 38–41). By different projects and case narratives, researchers and artists raise questions about cultural diversity, strategies and practices, identity through dance, inclusion, access and fundamental rights for children and young people with special needs (Samuel 2018; Carbo Ribugent 2018; Reinders 2018; Jaakonaho 2018; Baltà, Eva, and Raimon 2018). The book reminds us of the importance of children's rights to develop and express themselves in meaningful and creative dance-based activities.

The volume *Dancing across borders* (Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2020) focuses especially on intercultural competence (Svendler Nielsen et al. 2020; Siljamäki and Anttila 2020), dance for social justice and decolonizing perspectives on dance education (Siljamäki and Anttila 2020; Overby, Lynnette, and Ruberto 2020; Dodd Macedo 2020; Mabingo and Koff 2020; Martin 2020), embodied pedagogies (Thomson and Pringle 2020; Svendler Nielsen et al. 2020; Nikkanen, Kirsi, and Anttila 2020), interdisciplinary arts pedagogical approaches (Svendler Nielsen et al. 2020; Siljamäki and Anttila 2020; Watkins and Burridge 2020), and artistic processes as educational frames (Nikkanen, Kirsi, and Anttila 2020; Wright and Deans 2020; Parker and Samuel 2020). Siljamäki and Anttila (2020, 54) emphasize that increasing diversity in society and school needs to be taken into account in teacher training for promoting social justice in general, and more specifically for preparing future teachers in supporting all individuals' needs and

learning. They highlight that '[C]ulturally responsive teachers can support the students to become empowered socially, politically, emotionally and physically' (53). The large ArtsEqual[1] research project is an example of a project that explores and seeks to develop equality in and through the arts in Finnish society. In encouraging interdisciplinary arts pedagogical approaches, Watkins and Burridge (2020, 126) argue that '[. . .] the implementation of 21st century teaching and learning strategies, such as group cooperation, collaboration, empathy, listening and reflecting and networking [. . .] enhance critical evaluation skills and embrace diverse perspectives'. Nikkanen, Kirsi, and Anttila (2020, 136) seek to draw the contours of artistic processes as a frame for collaborative embodied pedagogies through dance, artistic processes and collaboration, relying on Bhabha's (1994) decolonial concept *third space* and socio-material theories (Fenwick, Edwards, and Sawchuk 2011).

When trying to summarize the educational values and tendencies in these three volumes representing current dance educational research around the world, we understand these as an emphasis on and striving towards:

- Inclusion and participation, democratic, community-based and collaborative ways of working.
- Intercultural pedagogies and dance for social change, a decolonializing attitude towards dance genres and teaching pedagogies.
- Interdisciplinary arts pedagogical approaches, crossing and blurring arts forms and arts integration with other subjects.
- Embodied pedagogies, emphasizing dance as a valuable way of working in bodily ways.
- Artistic processes as educational frames opening up for collaborative and participatory ways of working.

We will return to and use these dance educational perspectives in dialogue with the analysis employed in this article.

Methodological and ethical considerations

The research material consists of interviews with preschool teachers in four different geographical areas in Sweden. In total, we conducted 17 interviews, two of them individual interviews, and the remaining focus group interviews with 2–6 participants, all preschool teachers. The individual interviews became individual because of the circumstances, not because we wanted to. When we turned up to the interview situation, the other participants were sick or away for some other reason. In order to get the interview, we had to accept interviewing only one person.

Author one conducted 6 interviews in South-West Sweden, author two 6 interviews in the North, and author three 5 interviews in the Mid – East of Sweden. As we present quotes from the interview material, we only indicate that they come from a preschool in North, Mid-East or South-West Sweden, with no further specification, as this is secondary in this study. One of the preschools was the so-called *Sameskolan*, the indigenous Sami preschool, and three were Reggio Emilia preschools. The rest of the preschools were ordinary schools with no specific pedagogical branch. All preschools in Sweden,

regardless of pedagogical specialization, have to follow the national curriculum and the laws regulating schools (The National Agency for Education 2018).

The selection of preschools for participation in the study was problematic. We wrote an information letter and a letter of consent, explaining the project and research interest, and that we followed the ethical guidelines demanded in Sweden, that participation was entirely voluntarily, and sent this off to a number of principals. We had very little response to these emails. We wondered why, and speculate that it might have been easier to get a response if we had asked about a more common subject like language, science or mathematics. Maybe the focus on dance itself was a little intimidating, especially if the principals might have felt that they were not doing a lot when it comes to dance. Even though we tried to reassure that we were just interested in the state-of-art, and not to judge or criticize, this might be an explanation as to why the response was so sparse. In the end, the only method that worked was to go through contacts. We used, for example, colleagues and friends with children and grandchildren to introduce us to their preschools. In this way, and not without difficulties, we managed to obtain access to 17 preschools. All these interviews, however, were conducted with full consent and in a confident and trustful atmosphere in line with ethical guidelines (The Swedish Research Council 2017). In most cases, the interviews were carried out at the preschools, with only one interview conducted online because of the vast distance involved. The analysis was sent back to all preschools, and the research participants were allowed to read, comment and ask for revisions before the publication of this article.

Our critical evaluation of the interview material is that we did not manage to get hold of preschool teachers who were outspokenly negative towards working with dance or who did not work with dance at all in the preschools. Those who joined the study as research participants probably did so because they were positive, or at least positively interested in dance in preschool.

The interviews were conducted in Swedish in semi-structured form, based on the same interview guide in all preschools. The questions were arranged through the following main topics:

Tell about your experiences of and attitude towards dance

Tell about if, when, and how dance arises spontaneously among the preschool children

Tell about if and how dance led by teachers take place at your preschool

Tell about if and how you document your work with dance, if and how dance is visible in your local curriculum, and if and how you communicate your dance work to the parents

The interviews lasted from 50 to 90 minutes, with an average duration of around 60 minutes. The interviews were transcribed by the same author who conducted the interview, and then shared with the other authors. The analysis was then conducted by the three authors together.

The analysis was conducted through a thematic narrative approach. The aim with a narrative analysis is to 'listen' into the stories in a research material, or in other words, how people create meaning in their lives through storying their experiences, and then theorize around this narrative meaning-making (Josselson 2011). In this analysis, we looked for central narrative themes across the 17 interviews. Inspired by Josselson (2011, 228) we first made an open, comprehensive reading of the whole interview material,

trying to get a sense of central themes and how the narratives in the material are, or could be, structured. We then re-read the material to identify and clarify different themes, singling them out as separate narrative themes, but still making sure they are in accordance with the comprehensive whole. It was important to do this re-reading together and with a lot of discussion among the authors. As a result of this, we created central narrative themes. As we present the analysis, we stick to the empirical material only, and avoid plugging-in theory. This we do only in the last part of the article, where we theorize and put the narrative themes created through the analysis in contact with the existing research field through dialoguing with the global dance educational theory presented.

Narrative themes among preschool teachers talking dance

Through the thematic narrative analysis, we were guided by our research question *How do preschool teachers in Sweden understand and practice dance in their preschools?* As a result, we created four central narrative themes, which occupy the preschool teachers in the meaning-making they conduct as a response to our interview questions in this study. Swedish preschool teachers practice and understand dance in their preschools through:

- The comprehensive 'Nordic model' as a pedagogical guiding principle
- Dance as inseparably connected to music and other art forms, and a subject leading to knowledge in other subjects
- Creative ways of strengthening teaching qualification in a scarce dance educational context
- Largely unarticulated dance teaching pedagogies, with own embodied dance experience and choreographic thinking as a pedagogical tool, as unreleased educational potential

In the following, we go through each of these central themes, structured as four different sub-titles.

The comprehensive 'Nordic model' as pedagogical guiding principle

Based on the curriculum for the preschool (The National Agency for Education 2018), the preschool's fundamental values and tasks as connected to the 'Nordic model' described previously appear in the preschool teachers' stories, such as the children's rights to active participation and influence. The children can take part in their own way, everyone can attend on their own terms, and the children's opinions and interests will be taken seriously.

Thematic work in dance is based on the children's interests, where they are given the opportunity to choose or vote for different activities. The dance in preschool is often child-initiated. If the children want to hear their favorite songs, do breakdance, disco, or imitate artists in the Swedish song contest for Eurovision, they are allowed to do that. The children are understood as qualified and curious and find their own moves where they inspire each other. No one is forced to take part in the preschool dance classes:

> If you are a bit shy then you don´t take up so much space: you can stand, or kind of sit on a bench and watch, and maybe clap on beat with your hands . . . or stand and sway. But if you are a forward and more driven person then you take more space on the dance floor, too (laughter) (interview, North)

The preschool teachers in the study respect the children's integrity and freedom. They believe that it is important to share and be open-minded, be comfortable adults, act as role models, and provide support for children with special needs. In the preschool teachers' stories there is a desire to involve all children. They respect the children's needs and want to include everyone despite their different abilities. There is no right or wrong in dance, according to the preschool teachers, and no child should be excluded. An open, social climate is sought, where different types of dance and movement are allowed.

In some cases, cultural diversity is noticed when preschool teachers play songs in different languages or stimulate dance from other cultures. In a few stories, the importance of offering something other than hit lists and popular music also emerges. The preschool teachers talk about the importance of offering dance early in preschool so that all children, regardless of gender, should have the opportunity to express themselves in dance: dancing is not considered 'just for girls'. In the material there are examples of (older) boys who only participate if the preschool teachers offer *Just dance* or *Fortnite* through the internet. It seems that the boys prefer to imitate different characters and learn set dance material.

To sum up, this narrative theme articulates how the preschool teachers in this research material on a comprehensive pedagogical level are led by what we call here the 'Nordic model'. According to Tin et al. (2020, 2), this is a model aiming at the emancipation of the individual, with a belief in the principle of universal social rights and a passion for equality. This ideology shows itself in the pre-school teachers' stories as a practice of flat hierarchy between children and adults, with adults encouraging and seeking to develop democratic, collaborative and inclusive ways of working pedagogically with children. Ideas of gender equality as very important, and also equality more broadly, are clearly present in the pre-school teachers' stories. These aspects guide how the teachers work with dance, with an emphasis on a lot of choices regarding music and movements being given to the children, as well as actively encouraging both boys and girls to dance.

Dance as inseparably connected to music and other art forms, and a subject leading to knowledge in other subjects

This narrative theme describes what the teachers regard as learning outcomes for children and how dance is connected to other learning areas. What stands out is that dance supports the general pedagogical ambitions of the teachers, and is understood as a tool for reaching many aspects of the curriculum. Difficulties to describe what specific knowledge dance can contribute becomes visible, as dance generally is linked to other aesthetic and non-aesthetic areas. Dance and motor ability are described as closely connected, and artistic aspects in dance are generally under-communicated in this research material.

Dance is perceived by many preschool teachers as closely associated with subjects other than dance, i.e. dance is almost always about something other than dance itself. It

becomes clear that dance specifically cannot easily be defined. Different types of Swedish ready-made gymnastics programs such as 'Miniröris'[2] are mentioned in almost all the interviews. Theseinstructional movement programs are highlighted as dance or dance and movement in all the interviews we conducted.

The preschool teachers in the study show several examples of how they work with dance, but still it sometimes seems difficult for some of them to explain which dance-related content has been in focus. This is how a preschool teacher describes what dance can mean for children's learning and development:

> I think it can be a reason to get good self-esteem. Okay, to do how you want. Amuse yourself how you want, and no one should laugh like without . . . this is how I get to do it. (interview, South-West)

Here, general personality development aspects such as, for example, self-esteem, but also pleasurable aspects, have a central place. However, nothing specific, which would characterize dance as an aesthetic form of expression, is brought forward. The interconnection of various aesthetic subjects and physical activity such as movements, in a broad sense is explained when preschool teachers answer the question of their own experience of dance during their education:

> Yes everyone had it . . . Dance, drama, music . . .
>
> Art . . . we had something called aesthetics . . . . (interview, Mid-East)

The preschool teachers state that during their education thay have met 'something called aesthetics . . . ' and mention dance, drama, music and art. This gives a picture of aesthetic subjects that are tightly interwoven to an extent that makes it natural for preschool teachers to mention several forms of expression and not separate out dance. When asked what dance in a preschool context is, a preschool teacher answers:

> Yes, that is (laughs) . . . it can be . . . so it could be that if we have projects, we have had a project about sound now, and then they should show, but they cannot show . . . and so instead they do sound waves like this (shows), some movement. And then they start to move, and then the others follow. I don't know, is it dance?. (interview, Mid-East)

In this statement the preschool teacher describes how movements occur spontaneously in response to sounds in a project, but she/he felt uncertain if this could be regarded as dance. The connection to projects and sounds gives dance a position as being connected to other content, rather than separated as a learning object in itself.

For some preschool teachers in the study, it seems difficult to describe the difference between dance and other forms of movement. A contrasting example is a preschool teacher who has participated in continuing education with a dance educator and who is regularly visited by this dance educator at his/her preschool. A few of the preschool teachers have also participated in a college course in dance. The preschool teacher at the Sami preschool tells us that they have developed performances where the preschool children do choreographies together with the older pupils at the nearby Sami school. The preschool teacher from the Sami preschool also uses dance related terms such as training on a specific jumping step (hoppsasteg), and mentions holding up your back and trying different ballet positions. This example shows that a dance-related language increases the educator's ability

to describe the content and goals of dance education in a nuanced way. However, this description is not genre-free, but based in a typical Western dance theatre tradition.

Dance is often described as moving to music by preschool teachers. Music seems to be a prerequisite for dance to occur. It is when you turn on music that children spontaneously begin to dance, both inside and outdoors:

> We often have music when out on the yard, so then any child who wants can go there . . . I sit and think about which kids it used to be and it is probably the same children, as you say, who are often attracted by the music (interview, South -West.)

Letting the children have an influence on the choice of music is seen as crucial, as it creates motivation and desire. But there are also preschool teachers who say that they actively choose to widen children's music listening abilities by sometimes playing classical music, music from different countries, or quiet music during meals or rest. Here, the children's influence is balanced against an ambition to challenge and broaden children's experience of music, and the preschool teachers' own knowledge of different musical genres opens up to challenge children's understanding of music, beyond what is already known to them. Whether the dance that occurs with this variety of music also brings about a variety of dance genres and qualities is not mentioned, but we do not get a picture that different dance genres are actively used – the emphasis being on free and creative dance. Several preschool teachers defined dance as something other than running. Running is characterized as mischief and wildness, which they regard as needing to restrict in work with dance. This is done by choosing rooms, tone modes and music that counteract wild running, and instructing the children in a way that makes it clear that running is not what you should do at the moment.

Thematic work is highlighted, where various subjects are linked together as desirable and urgent for children's learning. One preschool teacher talks about his/her education, which included visits to a school with a special music profile. S/he highlights the collaboration between a music teacher and math teacher in a positive manner:

> . . . Everyone had collaborations with each other, and the math teacher and music teacher had collaborations and [. . .]To learn even and odd numbers and, for that matter, they . . . then she had space songs here as they worked with the space. She used music and rhythm almost linked to everything else in the learning process. (interview, South-West)

By illustrating mathematics with the help of music, a richer activity is created, where children are given the opportunity to understand the entirety. But at the same time, it becomes clear in the example above that it is the music teacher who is allowed to use the music for 'everything else in the learning process', not the other way around. This way of organization of aesthetic subjects as tools for other learning is highlighted by many preschool teachers in the study, as they regard it as beneficial for children's development and learning.

To sum up, this narrative theme articulates how the preschool teachers in this research material think of dance as inseparably connected to music and blurred with other art forms. The aspect that they highlight most is the physical aspects of dance: that dance is about motor development and movement to music. Additionally, dance is primarily seen

as beneficial for learning in other subjects, like math, and the own value and specific knowledge in dance is under-articulated.

Creative ways of strengthening teaching qualification in a scarce dance educational context

This narrative theme articulates how the interviewed preschool teachers understand the value of dance education qualification, and how they seek to develop their qualifications in a scarce dance educational context. With the concept 'dance education qualification' in this study, we include formal as well as informal education. We lean on the preschool teachers' own sense of qualification, and what qualification contributes to.

Throughout the interview material, we read that if the preschool teachers have the experience of not having the skills and competences that dance demands, this is an aspect that frightens them and makes it harder to work with dance. One preschool teacher says:

> I believe that in preschool, we are afraid of dance because not all of us feel comfortable dancing [. . .] I feel that I can lead a group, yes, but I am not good at dancing and putting together a dance. No, that is not me, in a way. [. . .] I feel comfortable standing in front of the group, but not when they are looking at my body when I make movements and do a lot of mistakes. [. . .] Generally, we feel safer with painting. (interview, South-West)

In other words, having the sensation and self-image of not being able to dance makes leading dance and working with dance educationally in preschool problematic. Conversely, the experience of having – whether formal or informal – dance or dance educational skills and competences, gives the teachers the security they need to work with dance themselves as teachers. One teacher tells about having danced a lot:

> Well, I took my A levels in dance and theater. So I have performed a lot. So, formally, I have a preschool teacher education, but my background is within aesthetics. So I have danced a lot [. . .]. (interview, Mid-East)

In other words, the preschool teachers' self-experienced sensation of having or not having a dance education qualification, is crucial for whether they will actively or joyfully initiate work with dance in their preschools or not.

Dance education is not an obvious or extensive part of Swedish preschool teacher education. As a group, the preschool teachers who participated in this study have little or no dance education as part of their formal education. There are big variations within the group, and determinant factors seem to be *when* they studied, as well as *where* they studied. Most preschool teachers recall having some, but not a lot of dance during their preschool teacher education. Only a couple of the interviewed preschool teachers have had a lot of dance in their education. The preschool teacher from the Sami preschool mentions dimensions as choreography and creative dance, uses specific dance vocabulary and name drops well-known dance historical persons during the interview.

Several of the interviewed teachers talk about the value of having a colleague in the team who is confident and skilled in dance. They reflect on how this is an aspect with a huge impact on whether the preschool cultivates an environment for dance or not. One

preschool teacher tells about her colleague, who is sitting next to her during the interview:

Preschool teacher A to preschool teacher B: You are a deep source of inspiration. So I have not had any further education or anything in dance, but I have been working together with you during several years [. . .] So you inspire the rest of us. I believe that you are the key, to be honest.

Interviewer: So, it is important that somebody on the staff has that qualification?

(Both eagerly answers yes, yes). (interview, Mid-East)

This shows how the preschool teachers work as a community, creatively utilizing the different skills and competencies that different colleagues bring with them to make the whole group of preschool teachers feel more secure to work with and enjoy dance. It also shows the importance of someone in the group of colleagues being able to take on the role as being more skilled in dance, to make this exchange of knowledge happen.

When the interviewed preschool teachers have positive memories of dance courses from their education, or from further education courses, this seems to have a big impact on their attitude towards working with dance educationally. One preschool teacher tells about having had a whole course in dance during her preschool education, and that s/he valued it a lot. S/he tells about how s/he still to this day, many years after finishing her/his education, uses the ideas and skills s/he developed then:

> I found the dance course really fun. And I use quite a lot of things I learnt [. . .] For example, this idea about dance maps [. . .] One is supposed to do, to follow [. . .] it can become like a route with different stations [. . .] and at each station there is a picture showing what to do [. . .] And I still have quite a lot of notes that I took during that course. And I also saved the music we received. (interview, North)

For some teachers, taking further education has functioned like a revelation – they have come to understand dance in a completely new way. This often happens when the teacher originally has had a negative attitude towards dance. One preschool teacher explained that she prefers not to dance, but still tells about how meeting creative dance in her preschool teacher education led to change:

> That was actually great fun. Because it was not so serious. There, one was allowed just to feel. I actually found that really fun [. . .] And it was fun to work together. (interview, Mid-East)

However, very few of the preschool teachers tell about courses that would have given them a long-lasting teaching pedagogical thinking that would allow them to develop ever new dance material and ways of teaching. Instead, what they take with them from different educational settings and are most thankful for, has more of a 'tips and tricks' character: ready-made dance programs, sequences or tasks, often with a selection of music to go with them. However, there are two clear exceptions from this in the research material:

The preschool teacher from the indigenous Sami-people's preschool in northern Sweden describes dance as a fully integrated part of the preschool activities. The teacher tells about creative dance and choreographies developed especially in connection with working with different animals that are of deep importance in the Sami culture, like reindeer, bear and wolverine. This dance qualification is explained as having to do with

a thorough further education offered by a local dance teacher and teacher educator, as well as a local dance teacher educator.

Another exception is an area with several connected preschools with a Reggio Emilia profile. In this area, the management has employed a dance teacher with the task of providing ongoing further dance educational development with the staff. S/he circulates around the different preschools on a regular basis. In this area, the preschool teachers show confidence and sustainable teaching pedagogical dance skills and thinking. As a reply to the question of what the management means for the possibilities of working creatively in preschool, two teachers from this area explain:

> *Preschool teacher A:* The management means a lot. And that is an important part of this pedagogy [Reggio Emilia]. And that is why the management makes sure that we as adults get the opportunities to develop in dance. And in creative ways of working. (interview, Mid-East)

There are also numerous examples of preschool teachers talking about the value of having external dance educators coming into preschools, either to work with the children directly, or as further education for the preschool teachers. There is a clear tendency that these experiences are connected to certain geographical areas. In certain areas, there seems to be no collaboration with external resources on a personal or institutional level, whereas in other areas collaboration between especially what in Swedish are called *kulturskolan* is well-established and ongoing. One teacher says:

> These occasions when *kulturskolan* . . . that has worked amazingly well in this town. When they come with their offers that we can take part in. Yes. And especially . . . I mean, they can educate us, but especially when they come and work with the whole group of children. That is always something very extraordinary [. . .] And then we also participate [the preschool teachers]. (interview, North)

Whenever the collaboration with kulturskolan is mentioned, this is talked about very positively, and the collaboration has a long-lasting character, having lasted for several years.

To sum up, this narrative theme articulates how the interviewed preschool teachers focus on the topic of qualification in several different ways. Their own experiences of being qualified to work with dance or not is important for whether they will want to work with dance in preschool or not. Further, they utilize several sources creatively in order to strengthen their scarce dance educational skills in a preschool context. They value the qualifications of colleagues, they actively use the tips and tricks received during their preschool education or further education, and they highly value external dance expertise that comes into the preschools.

Largely unarticulated dance teaching pedagogies, with own embodied dance experience and choreographic thinking, as an unreleased potential

Something that stands out among the preschools teachers, pointing back to the 'Nordic model', is the idea that everyone can dance, that it is most beneficial if children can create their own dance, and that dance is a part of celebrations of various kinds. The interviewed preschool teachers describe that their work with dance education in their preschools usually means that the children dance freely to music, which they choose for themselves.

Sometimes there is a disco ball that gives the activity an exciting setting, or the opportunity to dress up. The free dance also presents the opportunity to express emotions in a personal and individual way, the preschool teachers stress:

> -Yes, but when talking about emotions . . . well how do you dance when you are happy? And how do you dance when you're angry? And when you might be sad?". (interview, North)

Furthermore, the preschool teachers describe how they work with dance linked to various projects, where the themes such as the earthworm, cogwheel, autumn leaf or anthill are the focus. Then you can, for example, let the children try to move like an earthworm, understand the function of the cogwheel through dance, or lie still like a stone. Several interviewees emphasize the importance of connecting different subjects with dance, such as mathematics or language.

> "Yes dance and math. For dance and mathematics go together. It is so . . . a lot of math in dance . . . Yes, dance is a rhythm and you count all the time. (interview, South East)

The descriptions above provide a picture of mathematics as content and dance as a method for shaping this mathematical content.

Some preschool teachers give examples of dance becoming an alternative when an excursion is rained off, and others highlight dance as a resource when the outdoor environment is not perceived as exiting and stimulating by the children. Then you can instead dance together outside, as a social activity, where anyone participate in dancing as they prefer, in a free manner.

Several preschool teachers question the need for digitalization in preschool, which they say limits the opportunity to work creatively with the children, for example with dance. Nevertheless, they also highlight how different digital tools are extensively used for dance. Dance videos online are used to a very high degree, projected onto the wall, and the preschool teachers also actively document the children's dances with the help of digital equipment.

Dance is also highlighted as a resource in the celebration of festivals, holidays and annual traditions at preschool such as at the 'Summer party', 'Preschool day' or 'Lucia', where parents are often invited as an audience and/or participants. Here, dance takes on a function as a party and tradition bearer, where you create and experience community.

Choreography and set dance material is something that several of the preschool teachers themselves experience as slightly intimidating. They tell about previous experiences of going to classes, like Zumba or dance aerobic classes, where they have felt incompetent – and scared. One preschool teacher tells about how s/he loves dance, but how ideas about choreography have always got in the way of her own dancing. She explains:

> Well, I have always loved dance and always been fascinated by people who can dance. But I have been thinking that this is not for me, because dance has always been very connected to choreography for me. And there I feel somewhat restricted. (Interview, Mid-East)

Choreographed material, in these teachers' experience, becomes an obstacle to dance. It also becomes clear that the preschool teachers' ideas about 'choreography' are connected to a traditional, today largely outdated, idea about choreography as predetermined steps

and movements, created by somebody else – the choreographer. Choreography as more of a generic set of tools for structuring and shaping movement ideas, seems out of reach. This, in turn, creates a dance educational approach, where the preschool teachers interfere in choreographic processes only to a minimum degree.

There are quite a few stories in the material where the preschool teachers talk about children who take part in performances. However, these performances seem to be self-created by the children to a high degree. In other words, some of the preschool teachers do open up for the children to create choreographies and performances, but with minimal choreographic devising.

To sum up, this narrative theme articulates that regarding the teaching pedagogies in dance that the preschool teachers tell about, aspects of dance content and *how* to teach it are largely unarticulated. They seem to have some idea about the possible content of dance, but less about various teaching strategies related to dance and dance skills. Strategies, skills and dance-related language could help them organize and perform the teaching, and push the children's development in dance beyond what occurs in this material. It can be seen as a teaching strategy that lots of choices are handed over to the children. In this strategy, the teachers build on the joy of free movement that they see among the children, and give little direction or few demonstrations that could develop movement vocabularies and artistic expression. Choreographic thinking as a dance educational toolbox seems a potential yet to be discovered, as well as an embodied knowledge of dance.

Plugging-in tendencies from current dance educational research

In the former sub-section, led by the research question *How do preschool teachers in Sweden understand and practice dance in their preschools?*, we created four central narrative themes that could answer the question. These were: The comprehensive 'Nordic model' as a pedagogical guiding principle; dance as inseparably connected to music and other art forms, and a subject leading to knowledge in other subjects; Creative ways of strengthening teaching qualification in a scarce Dance educational context and largely unarticulated dance teaching pedagogies, with own embodied dance experience and choreographic thinking as pedagogical tool, as unreleased educational potential. These narrative themes are inductively created, based in the preschool teachers' stories about their experiences with dance in a preschool context. Now we take these four narrative themes with us and return to the dance educational perspectives from the series *Perspectives on dance, young people and change*, as presented previously in this article.

When we plug in the educational values and tendencies in the three volumes in the series, which represent current global dance education research (Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018; Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015, 2020), we argue that the preschool teachers, even with very little dance educational study in their preschool education, actually work from an updated dance educational value base in line with the research. The preschool teachers clearly work for inclusion and participation for all in dance (see also Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018; Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015, 2020) – this is priority number one for all the preschool teachers in this study. It is 'all aboard' in whatever dance activities are undertaken in the preschools. This stands in rather sharp

contrast to dance education in some other contexts, like higher education, where professional dancers are educated.

The authoritative and exclusive legacy in Western dance and dance pedagogies, traditionally striving for normative and special bodies and techniques, is well documented and criticized (Green 2002-2003; Lakes 2005; McCarthy-Brown 2014; Risner and Schupp 2020). As this article is written, upheavals against colonialization and structural racism[3] are taking place around the world, also within tertiary arts education. The preschool teachers in this study, in line with these current tendencies in the dance (research) field, are concerned about equal opportunities and want to work with dance in ways that allow and encourage everybody, despite special needs and across gender identities, to take part in and enjoy dance (see also Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018; Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015, 2020). They are fully community-based, listen to the children's wishes and suggestions as impulses to dance and to create dance. An example is that the children are allowed to choose music for the dance, and also that when performances are created, they are almost entirely based on the children's own suggestions. Democratic values and ways of working are encouraged in the way the preschool teachers understand dance education. In other words, in these preschool teachers' stories about how they experience and work with dance in their preschool setting, it is possible to hear an updated dance educational value base emphasizing inclusion, participation, community, collaboration and equal opportunities in line with current dance educational research.

Another tendency in the research we are dialoguing with, is interdisciplinary arts pedagogical approaches, crossing and blurring art forms and arts integration with other subjects (see Burridge and Svendler Nielsen 2018; Svendler Nielsen and Burridge 2015, 2020). This tendency is also visible in the preschool teachers' experiences. They frequently work with different art forms with no clear and distinct boundaries between them, and they frequently include dance as creative movement in projects where the main focus is another subject, like math or environmental sciences. Even though this is in line with current dance educational research, we suggest that this integration and blurring even happens to such a degree that it is not easy for the preschool teachers to articulate what dance actually is as an art form and form of knowledge. However, as movement and dance are mentioned as separate subject fields in the Swedish curriculum, it would be of importance for the preschool teachers to have an idea of the differences between dance, movement, and other art forms and subjects, in order to single out the specific value of dance.

When asked about learning goals in dance, the preschool teachers have difficulties in saying something specific about dance that would not, at the same time, be true for physical education or the other arts subjects as well. They legitimize dance as a physical activity developing motor competencies and enhancing learning in other, more 'academic' subjects like math, more than articulating dance as an aesthetic expression and art form with an independent value. Still, some of the preschool teachers try to explain the difference in a way that is similar to the definition that dance researcher Stinson (1989) makes, where she explains that dance is to do 'movement significant in and of itself'. In other words, one way of understanding dance today is to take any movement and consciously make it into dance, by paying attention to the movement as such and to how it is experienced in the body. This suggests that, although dance as a subject separated from other subjects is new ground for many of the preschool teachers in this

study, in their stories there is still an emerging understanding of what could differentiate non-dance from dance in a preschool context.

Furthermore, the preschool teachers connect dance to music to such an extent that it almost is plausible to talk about the dance activities more as *musicking,* as defined by Small, than dance. Small writes how musicking as a verb means to take part in any way in music, whether by, for example, performing, listening, rehearsing, practicing, or by dancing (Small 1998). Dancing is thus seen as a way of musicking, a way of doing the music, which correlates well with the strong connection the preschool teachers in this study make between dance and music. In the publication series by Burridge and Svendler Nielsen (2018) and Svendler Nielsen and Burridge (2015, 2020), interdisciplinary arts pedagogical approaches, crossing and blurring art forms, and arts integration with other subjects is a clear tendency in current research around the world. However, the researchers in this series come from a dance background, which makes interdisciplinary work in crossing and blurring arts forms easier without losing dance qualifications out of sight. The preschool teachers in this study have little embodied dance experience and choreographic tools as educational frames with them from their own education, which might lead to learning situations where other subjects dominate dance, instead of real interdisciplinary work taking place.

Several authors in the book series we dialogue with emphasize dance education as embodied pedagogies (for example, Thomson and Pringle 2020; Svendler Nielsen et al. 2020; Nikkanen, Kirsi, and Anttila 2020). To work with embodied pedagogies as a teacher also means to engage bodily in movement oneself. In the preschool teachers' stories about how they experience and understand dance in their preschool contexts, we hear few, if any, stories about their own embodied experiences, exploration and dance making. We hear more about the children, and how they dance to music and make dances. As we find the child-centered teaching strategies very valuable and in line with the collaborative, community-based and democratic ways of working with dance educationally that research emphasizes today, we also argue that the dance teachers' own embodied experience of dance is an important reservoir to build on and activate when teaching dance. A bodily active preschool teacher is inspiring for the children, and growing an embodied memory of dancing makes it easier as a teacher to find solutions and suggestions for dance making in their own body. Even further, what would make it easier to teach dance would be to have *artistic* embodied experiences and knowledge about how choreographic thinking can serve as dance educational frames. Nikkanen, Kirsi, and Anttila (2020, 136) seek to draw the contours of artistic processes as a frame for collaborative embodied pedagogies through dance, artistic processes and collaboration, relying on Bhabha's (1994) decolonial concept of *third space*. The third space is a meeting place, a hybrid between, in this case, what the preschool teacher as dance teacher brings into the dance and what the children bring and contribute with. With the help of artistic, choreographic thinking, the third space can be creatively shaped as a collaborative meeting place.

We argue that from a dance educational perspective, the learning of choreographic tools is most valuable, and something that the preschool teachers in this study would benefit from learning and embodying through their teacher education. To learn about how to create form with the help of, for example, choreographic tools as dynamics, timing, spatial awareness, patterning, levels and partner work, is a rich dance educational

possibility. However, in this study, choreography is seldom mentioned, and if mentioned, it is mostly with negative connotations. Previous meetings with choreography as specific steps to be learnt, are told about as frightening and negative experiences. Previous experiences with choreography thereby becomes an obstacle for opening up the world of choreography as a dance educational possibility for the preschool teachers. However, choreography can be understood in other, more creative ways, and the preschool teachers' emphasis on the children as choreographers is very progressive and in line with the ongoing democratization of choreographic processes in the dance art field (Joy 2014; Sortland 2016). One example might be the artistic possibilities that lie in running. In this study, several preschool teachers defined dance as something other than running. Running is characterized as mischief, and regarded as something necessary to restrict in work with dance. However, running, as any other everyday movement, is seen as an artistic, dance educational and choreographic possibility in today's dance educational landscape. Running is not necessarily different from dancing, as running can turn into dance through active attention to running *as* running, as a movement valuable in itself, worthy of (artistic) attention, and with small choreographic input, running can turn into fascinating artistic experiences. With the democratic and participatory preschool pedagogy as a professional value base that is so strong among the preschool teachers in this study, it is possible to think that they would be able to create amazing dance performances together with the children, with a little more further education in choreographic thinking as a dance educational possibility. In the preschool teachers' stories, we hear a lot of appreciation of further education in dance and in bringing in partners with a high level of dance educational competence, like *kulturskolan*. The influence of positive dance educational input from different educational contexts is great. However, what the teachers take with them is mostly a set of ready-made dance tasks or programs, often with music to accompany them, that they use directly. There are fewer examples of preschool teachers having developed sustainable teaching pedagogical thinking and structuring that would allow them to create ever new tasks and ways of working with dance. However, two clear exceptions stand out in this regard. Interestingly, these areconnected to special pedagogies: the indigenous Sami preschool, and an area with a clear Reggio Emilia profile. We find it especially interesting that the pedagogical thinking behind dance educational skills and knowledge in the Sami preschool stands out, since the general narrative about Sami culture is that it is a culture with a lot of music and art, but no dance. However, some dance researchers (Hoppu 2020) have critically challenged this, calling it more a narrative than a truth. This study joins in challenging this narrative. Maybe Sami culture actually is rich in dance – maybe it has more to do with how dance is defined than anything else?

Conclusion

A long research journey has come to an end. Having travelled around Sweden during a one year period, interviewing and discussing with Swedish preschool teachers in the North, Mid-East and South-West, and plugging in to current dance educational research tendencies in the preschool teachers' stories, we have learnt, and aimed at contributing with new knowledge, about how Swedish preschool teachers understand and practice dance in their preschool contexts. As we started this study, the preschool curriculum had

recently been revised, in 2018, and its implementation started in 2019 (The National Agency for Education 2018). In the new curriculum dance is mentioned as one of the art forms that preschool children are supposed to encounter in preschool. The children should '/ . . . /experience, portray and communicate through different aesthetic forms of expression such as/ . . . /music and dance' (The National Agency for Education 2018, 9). We asked ourselves what this means in different preschool settings, which led to this study.

As we now conclude this article, we argue that the most important insights received are that the preschool teachers in this study work from an updated dance educational value base emphasizing inclusion, participation, community, collaboration and equal opportunities in line with current dance educational research. They are in the forefront of inclusive dance education – something that the professional dance field is striving for in these times, seeking to break down colonializing and exclusive barriers. In other words, we argue that the dance field has important lessons to learn from these preschool teachers and from the field of early childhood education and care.

Furthermore, an important insight is how the preschool teachers realize and utilize different competencies in the working team, as well as how they acquire important qualifications from outside the preschool to enrich their own dance teaching. Team working and collaboration is an important 21st century teaching value.

Further insights are also that the preschool teachers have only limited own embodied experiences with dance and few, if any, qualifications in choreographic thinking as educational tools. Frankly, they seem to lack a choreographic tool box and an embodied dance repertoire. We argue that these aspects would be of importance for the preschool teachers to gain through preschool teacher education or further education, in order to work with dance and interdisciplinary areas with dance in ways where the specific value of dance in preschool children's learning and care would become clearer and easier for the preschool teachers to articulate.

We hope that the knowledge created in this study will be of value for the continuous implementation of the new Swedish preschool curriculum, where dance is mentioned as one of several art forms, and also that the knowledge contribution will be of interest to preschool teacher educators and researchers elsewhere. Finally, we encourage and welcome more research in this field, as we suggest that knowledge exchange and blurring between the field of dance educational and preschool educational research is needed and valuable.

Notes

1. https://www.artsequal.fi/
2. A popular Swedish ready-made instructional movement program
3. See, for example https://www.dancemagazine.com/are-college-curriculums-too-white-2645575057.html?rebelltitem=2#rebelltitem2

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Märtha Pastorek Gripson, PhD in Research on Arts education, is a Senior Lecturerin pedagogical work at the Department for Pre-School and School Teacher Education, University of Borås. Her research focus on discourses on gender, dance education and syllabi documents. She is a former dance teacher, primary and preschool principal and the head of a Municipality Art and Culture school. She has worked with dance in a variety of settings such as special education, preschools, primary and secondary school, extracurricular activity and as a course leader in the preschool teacher education. She has been engaged in the Swedish section of Dance and the Child International and involved in different advisory boards on dance related issues in the Swedish Teacher union.

Anna Lindqvist, PhD in Educational Work, is a senior lecturer at the Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University, Sweden. Her research focuses on dance in preschool and primary school. She combines research with the appointment as a Deputy Dean at Umeå School of Education, Umeå University. She is a board member of The Swedish National Dance in Schools Institute with the mission to support and inspire dance in preschools and schools. She is also a board member of tepe, Teacher Education Policy in Europe. In her spare time she works as a dance teacher at Balettakademien, Umeå.

Tone Pernille Østern, with a Dr. of Arts in Dance from the Theatre Academy/University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland, is a Professor in Arts Education with a focus on Dance at NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology. She is active as artist/researcher/teacher, with a special interest in socially engaged art, dance in dialogue with contemporary contexts, choreographic processes, performative research, and bodily learning. She is Editor-in-chief for the peer-reviewed journal Dance Articulated. In 2019-20 she was appointed by the NorwegianDirectorate for Education and Training as expert member in the national curriculum renewal committee for the study program Music, dance, drama in Upper Secondary School. https://www.ntnu.edu/employees/tone.pernille.ostern; www.dance-company.no

ORCID

Martha Pastorek Gripson http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9158-3907
Tone Pernille Østern http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4361-3929

References

Anttila, E. 2015. "Dance as Embodied Dialogue: Insights from a School Project in Finland." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 79–87. London: Routledge.

Baltà, J., G. Eva, and À. Raimon. 2018. "New Spaces for Creativity and Action: Recent Developments in the Applied Performing Arts in Catalonia." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 69–72. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H. K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Buck, R., and B. Snook. 2018. "Values and Principles Shaping Community Dance." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 37–44. London: Routledge.

Burridge, S., and C. Svendler Nielsen, eds. 2018. *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*. London: Routledge.

Carbo Ribugent, G. 2018. "Dance, Education and Participation: The *'Planters'* Project in Girona, Spain." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 52–59. London: Routledge.

Chappel, K., and V. Jobbins. 2015. "Partnerships for Creativity: Expanding Teaching Possibilities." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 149–160. London: Routledge.

Dodd Macedo, D. 2020. "Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change." In *Brazil and Denmark Dance Encounters: A Case Study of Intercultural Artistic Coexistence in Higher Educational Contexts*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 96–99. London: Routledge.

Doverborg, E., N. Pramling, and I. Pramling Samuelsson. 2019. *Att Undervisa Barn I Förskolan*. Stockholm: Liber. should book title be capitalized?.

Ehrlin, A., and C. Wallerstedt. 2014. "Preschool Teachers' Skills in Teaching Music: Two Steps Forward One Step Back." *Early Child Development and Care* 184 (12): 1800–1811. doi:10.1080/03004430.2014.884086.

Esping-Andersen, G. 1990. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fenwick, T., R. Edwards, and P. Sawchuk. 2011. *Tracing the Sociomaterial: Emerging Approaches to Educational Research*. London: Routledge.

Green, J. 2002-2003. "Foucault and the Training of Docile Bodies in Dance Education." *Arts and Learning Research Journal* 19 (1): 99–125.

Gripson, M. P., Mattsson, T., & Andersson, N. (2021). What syllabus documents can tell us about the presence and position of dance in Early Childhood Teacher Education: A Swedish perspective. *Research in Education*. https://doi.org/10.1177/00345237211009255

Hoppu, P. 2020. "Dancing Agency. Skolt Saami Identities in Transition." *PULS, Musik- Och Dansetnologisk Tidsskrift* 5: 26–44.

Jaakonaho, L. 2018. "Encountering and Embodying Difference through Dance: Reflections on a Research Project in a Primary School in Finland." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 65–68. London: Routledge.

Jeppsen Groves, K., and M. Leggat Roper. 2015. "Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change." In *Stepping into Skin: Expanding Empathy through Dance*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 127–130. London: Routledge.

Josselson, R. 2011. "Narrative Research: Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing Story." In *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis. Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry*, edited by F. J. Wertz, K. Charmaz, L. M. McMullen, R. Josselson, R. Anderson, and E. McSpadden, 243–278. New York: Guilford.

Joy, J. 2014. *The Choreographic*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kipling Brown, A. 2015. "Dance Education: Embodied Knowledge in the Digitalised World." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 141–148. London: Routledge.

Koff, S. R. 2015. "Applied Dance Curriculum: A Global Perspective." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 3–10. London: Routledge.

Lakes, R. 2005. "The Messages behind the Methods: The Authoritarian Pedagogical Legacy in Western Concert Dance Technique Training and Rehearsals." *Arts Education Policy Review* 106 (5): 3–20. doi:10.3200/AEPR.106.5.3-20.

Lindgren, M., and C. Ericsson. 2013. "Diskursiva Legitimeringar Av Estetisk Verksamhet I Lärarutbildningen." *Educare. Vetenskapliga Tidskrifter* 1 (1): 7–40.

Lindqvist, A. 2018. "Om Män, Pojkar Och Dans I Förskola Och Skola." In *Estetiska Ämnen Och Genus*, edited by E. Skåreus, 127–142. Malmö: Gleerups.

Lindqvist, A. 2019. "Bortglömda Kroppar I Ett Akademiserat Förskollärarprogram?: Om Förskollärares Lärprocess." *På Spissen* 5 (1): 43–64. doi:10.18862/ps.2019.501.4.

Mabingo, A., and S. Koff. 2020. "Dancing across the Wall(s) of Exclusion: Reflections of Two Dance Teachers on Overcoming Barriers to Difference in Dance Education." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 100–109. London: Routledge.

Manley, M.-E. 2015. "Exploring the Rights of the First Nations Child through the Arts: Our Dreams Matters Too." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 47–54. London: Routledge.

Martin, R. 2020. "Sustaining Dance Practices in Turbulent Times: Dance, Displacement, Identity and the Syrian Civil War ." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 65–73. London: Routledge.

McCarthy-Brown, N. 2014. "Decolonizing Dance Curriculum in Higher Education: One Credit at a Time." *Journal of Dance Education* 14 (4): 125–129. doi:10.1080/15290824.2014.887204.

Meiners, J., and R. Garrett. 2015. "An Australian Curriculum for Social Justice: Potentials and Possibilities." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 11–21. London: Routledge.

Nikkanen, H. M., K. Kirsi, and E. Anttila. 2020. "Artistic Process as a Frame for Collaborative, Embodied Pedagogies: Combining Dance with Language Learning." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 134–144. London: Routledge.

Østern, T. P. 2018. "Developing Inclusive Dance Pedagogy: Dialogue, Activism and Aesthetic Transformative Learning." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 12–19. London: Routledge.

Overby, Y., L. W. Lynnette, and D. Ruberto. 2020. "Women of Consequence (WOC). Ambitious, Ancillary and Anonymous: A Cross-border Arts-based Research Project between South Africa and USA." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 87–95. London: Routledge.

Parker, A., and G. M. Samuel. 2020. "Reaching Back to Move Forward: Performing the Archive as Interdisciplinary Artistic-educational Process." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 170–178. London: Routledge.

Pastorek Gripson, M. 2016. "Positioner Dans: Om Genus, Handlingsutrymme och Dansrörelser i Grundskolans Praktik". PhD diss., University of Gothenburg. https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/48412

Pedersen, A. W., and S. Kuhnle. 2017. "The Nordic Welfare State Model." In *The Nordic Models in Political Science: Challenged, but Still Viable?*, edited by O. Knutsen, 219–238. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

Reinders, N. 2018. "Building Identity through Dance: Exploring the Influence of Dance for Individuals with Special Needs." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 60–64. London: Routledge.

Risner, D., & Schupp, K. 2020. *Ethical Dilemmas in Dance Education:Case Studies on Humanizing Dance Pedagogy*. McFarland & Company.

Robinson, S. K. 2015. "Foreword." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, xv- xvi. London: Routledge.

Rowe, N. 2015. "Dancing beyond the Post-trauma Paradigm: Community Projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territories." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 55–63. London: Routledge.

Samuel, G. M. 2018. "The Ugly Duckling: Stories of Dance and Disability from Denmark and South Africa." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 45–51. London: Routledge.

Sansom, A. 2015. "Reciprocal Engagement in Dance: Empowering Encounters in New Zealand Early Childhood Settings." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 22–31. London: Routledge.

SFS. 2010. *Skollag*. [Education Act], 800. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.

Siljamäki, M., and E. Anttila. 2020. "Fostering Intercultural Competence and Social Justice through Dance and Physical Education: Finnish PE Student Teachers' Experiences and Reflections." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 53–64. London: Routledge.

Small, C. 1998. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
Sortland, V. M. 2016. "Arbeidsstrukturer Som Kritisk Praksis [Working Structures as Critical Practice]." In *Koreografi [Choreography]*, edited by S. S. Holte, A.-C. B. Kongsnes, and R. B. Skolseg, 79–86. Oslo: Editors and the authors.
Speth, M. 2015. "Twinning: An Intercultural Approach to Dance Education." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 168–172. London: Routledge.
Stinson, S. 1989. "Creative Dance for Preschool Children." *Early Child Development and Care* 47 (p): 205–209. doi:10.1080/0300443890470112.
Stinson, S. W. 2015. "Rethinking Standards and Assessments in Dance Education." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 107–116. London: Routledge.
Styrke, B.-M. 2018. "Danshistoriska Nedslag I Och Utanför Skolan." In *Estetiska Ämnen Och Genus*, edited by E. Skåreus, 47–63. Malmö: Gleerups.
Svendler Nielsen, C. 2015. "Exploring Learning in Dance as Artistic-educational Practice." In *Dance Education around the World. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 117–126. London: Routledge.
Svendler Nielsen, C., G. M. Samuel, P. Vadim, F. Hartzenberg, and L. Hartman. 2020. "'It's All about Art'! Crossing Borders of Academia and Arts Practice in an Arts-integrated Educational Project in South Africa." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 17–30. London: Routledge.
Svendler Nielsen, C., and S. Burridge, eds. 2015. *Dance Education around theW. Perspectives on Young Children and Change*. London: Routledge.
Svendler Nielsen, C., and S. Burridge, eds. 2020. *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*. London: Routledge.
Swedish Schools Inspectorate. 2018. "Slutrapport." Förskolans kvalitet och måluppfyllelse - ett treårigt regeringsuppdrag att granska förskolan. https://www.skolinspektionen.se/globalassets/publikationssok/regeringsrapporter/redovisningar-regeringsuppdrag/2018/forskolans-kvalitet-och-maluppfyllelse/forskolans-kvalitet-och-maluppfyllelse-slutrapport-feb-2018.pdf
The National Agency for Education. 2018. *Curriculum for the Preschool, Lpfö 18*. Stockholm: National Agency for Education. https://www.skolverket.se/publikationsserier/styrdokument/2019/curriculum-for-the-preschool-lpfo-18
The Swedish Research Council. 2017. *Good Research Practice*. Stockholm: Swedish Research Council. https://www.vr.se/english/analysis/reports/our-reports/2017-08-31-good-research-practice.html
Thomson, P., and E. Pringle. 2020. "Dancing past Categories: Researching a Live Art Project with Participants." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 7–16. London: Routledge.
Tin, M. B., F. Telseth, J. O. Tangen, and R. Gialianotti, eds. 2020. *The Nordic Model and Physical Culture*. London: Routledge.
United Nations. 1989. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
Vallberg Roth, A.-C. 2018. "What May Characterise Teaching in Preschool? The Written Descriptions of Swedish Preschool Teachers and Managers in 2016." *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 64 (1): 1–21. doi:10.1080/00313831.2018.1479301.
Watkins, K., and S. Burridge. 2020. "The Significance of an Interdisciplinary Arts Pedagogical Approach for Dance Teaching Artists on Dance Education." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 125–133. London: Routledge.
Whatley, S., and K. Marsh. 2018. "Making No Difference: Inclusive Dance Pedagogy." In *Dance, Access and Inclusion. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by S. Burridge and C. S. Nielsen, 3–11. London: Routledge.
Wright, S., and J. Deans. 2020. "The Role of Movement, Dynamics and Expression in Children's Drawings of Dancing." In *Dancing across Borders. Perspectives on Dance, Young People and Change*, edited by C. S. Nielsen and S. Burridge, 157–169. London: Routledge.