

Meaning making and learning in preschool.

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The aim with this paper is to highlight some results from an ongoing study and to discuss preschool teacher's pedagogical approach towards children's mathematical learning in the preschool context. The theoretical framework is the Variation Theory (Marton et al 2004, Runesson 2006). In this theory necessary conditions for learning are variation, discernment and simultaneity. According to Marton (2005) and Runesson (2006) learning is changed ways of experience something and to experience something the child have to discern it. In order to discern the child have to experience a difference from the earlier experiences. There are different critical aspects of a learning object that the children have to discern simultaneously and to discern different aspects of a phenomenon it is necessary with variation. If teachers have knowledge about children's earlier experiences they can help children to discern with help of variation. The overall research question in this study is: How can preschool teachers catch mathematics in children's activities and challenge children's learning in the preschool context? I see preschool children as active in their own learning process and they experience mathematics in different ways and make meaning in their learning activities. At the other hand I see teachers as participants in children's encounter with mathematics. Teachers can help children to discern critical aspects of a phenomenon and ask for children's experiences of the phenomenon. Teachers who can see the mathematics in children's activities may have opportunities to challenge children's thinking and there by deepen the mathematical learning.

Keywords: meaning making, learning, content, mathematics.