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Academic Freedom in Teacher Education; Between Certainty and Uncertainty

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Abstract. In this study, academic freedom in teacher education is related to preservice teachers' possibilities to develop critical and autonomous thinking in teaching practice. Self-awareness and self-confidence provide certainty to deal with the uncertain situation in teaching where creativity and judgment must be given priority over an instrumental teaching based on authorities, effective methods or ready-made solutions. Teacher educators thus need to promote academic freedom as both certainty and uncertainty. The aim of this paper is to provide enhanced understanding of the meanings and implications for teacher education of academic freedom, in the tension between certainty and uncertainty, based on a phenomenological study about preservice teachers' experiences of professional ethics. The results show that teacher educators' function as role models is crucial for preservice teachers' academic freedom in developing their teaching. A consensus on fundamental values provides openness in discussions that promote the student's critical attitude.

Introduction

The concept of academic freedom derives from Humboldt and means freedom for both educators and students in higher education (Lernfreiheit och Lehrfreiheit) or a 'freedom for all' (Badley, 2009, p. 151). In this study, the concept is used in a context of preservice teachers' experiences of possibilities of agency and development in relation to teacher educators during their internship periods in preschools or schools. Furthermore, academic freedom is an issue about preservice teachers' development to teach in a way that involves a support for children's possibilities to become autonomous (Yoon and Larkin, 2018). Academic freedom is related to democracy (Badley, 2009; Misco and Patterson, 2007) since values like free speech, open minds (Mihailova, 2014), pluralism and critical thinking (Misco and Patterson, 2007) are mentioned as being associated with academic freedom.

As we already know, there is a tension between reproduction and transformation of teaching (Bhukhanwala, Dean & Troyer, 2017; Han, Blank & Berson, 2017; Molla & Nolan, 2020). Preservice teachers' experiences of learning environments both at campus and at pre/schools oscillate between opportunities to develop as teachers according to personality and own ideals about teaching and as a compulsion to teach in predetermined ways. In the professional socialization process, this tension needs attention supporting preservice teachers to discover their ideals (values, beliefs) as becoming teachers (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015), to develop their judgment through own experiences and to discourage teaching aimed at what educators want to hear (Johnson, 2008). Academic freedom is a way to advocate democracy (Giroux, 2006), in order to offer preservice teachers development based on their own view of the profession. Misco and Patterson (2007) refer to Dewey when they argue that

academic freedom is ‘not a privilege, but an obligation.’ (p. 525) Teachers are obliged to teach in a way that stimulate autonomy regardless of whether the students are adults or children. Standards challenge freedom and accountability challenges autonomy (Ledoux, Marshall and McHenry, 2010). Arguably, business logic involving objectification of teaching and simple measuring instruments must give way from teacher education in favor of personalized teaching focusing on teachers’ judgment.

The freedom of preservice teachers is a matter of opportunities to be critical of teacher educators’ views on or implementation of teaching. Studies about teaching when different values or opinions emerge (Call & O’Brien, 2011; Misco & Patterson, 2007) indicate what it means to develop democracy and prepare students to use their judgments in different areas. Steinnes (2011) discusses teachers’ judgment in ethical matters and states that teachers should not limit themselves to effective methods or teaching based on evidence. Responsibility to the students means to be inventive and creative in teaching to support students’ learning. The context in the article (Steinnes, 2011) is special needs education, but the content is relevant to all preservice teachers since teaching always involves ethics and demands judgment in complex situations. Even Griffiths (2014) promotes creativity in teacher education and thoroughly explains the meaning of creativity as needed in the ongoing process of constantly reconsidering beliefs, values and professional commitments. She defines two contrasting approaches to teacher education, and the first means a technical view of education where professional experts share their expertise. The second, that she promotes, involves uncertainty and critical reflection. Earlier beliefs are possible to question and reconsider, and there is no guarantee of success. This tension between certainty and uncertainty, that both Steinnes (2011) and Griffiths (2014) discuss, means that uncertainty, being without evidence and a single correct solution, provides space for responsibility. Furthermore, Griffiths (2014) claims that creative teachers are more likely to encourage their students to be creative.

In order to act inventively and creatively, preservice teachers need to develop their self-confidence, self-awareness and security. Ledoux et al. (2010) advocate a teacher education that supports the development of students’ self-identity as a way to help them resist a technical view of teaching. Security can mean to follow guidelines and regulations but the security that gives the confidence to go against principles and norms is wanted. Then preservice teachers can be free to teach, as they believe is best for the students. Confirming and expressing academic freedom means to encourage students to individually interpret frameworks and take a stand based on different opinions. Ledoux et al. (2010) claim that ‘teaching should be a profoundly personal experience, one in which the students learn to teach themselves by imitating and going beyond the teacher’. (p. 250) Badley (2009) underlines the importance of universities that support the students’ competence to think and learn instead of being training schools for effective methods.

Teaching practice as part of the preservice education of teachers is valuable in order to develop students’ teaching skills in real situations (Adoniou, 2013). The learning context consists of communication between preservice teachers, educators at campus and in practice and children in preschool or school. In addition, preservice teachers encounter specific learning cultures that affect their learning (Altun, 2013). Besides contextual factors in preservice teachers’ learning environment, personality, self-awareness and self-confidence matters in education in the professional socialization process (Caires, Almeida & Vieira, 2012). In practice, preservice teachers are able to try their theoretical knowledge and from experiences with the children, supported by teacher educators, their understanding of the theories develops.

Within teacher education, the meaning of modeling is twofold. Educators function as role models to preservice teachers who in turn are supposed to develop as role models for

students. A study about teacher educators' congruent teaching showed that through workshops, modeling in the sense of linking teaching to theory could be improved (Swennen, Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2008). Teacher educators reflected on their videotaped teaching and after the workshops educators' congruent teaching increased. The result indicates that modeling can have several meanings and that it probably is an overlooked aspect at many universities. The possibilities of educators in higher education to model teaching in a way that could be useful in preschool or elementary school need to be further discussed. Teaching adult students is not necessarily comparable to lower ages. Research problematize preservice teachers' need to reflect on and develop their dispositions during teacher education in relation to the meanings of becoming/being a role model (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2013; Schussler & Knarr, 2013; Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw, 2010; Sockett, 2009). The progress of modeling influences the connection between preservice teachers' dispositions and children's development of morality (Carr, 2006; Osguthorpe 2008). However, the meanings of being a role model are not clear. Carr (2006) states that it is necessary to be a virtuous person while Osguthorpe (2008) claims that it is enough (and possible) to act as a role model only in the profession. Since the meanings of modeling is not clear, it is difficult to determine whether a teacher is a good and effective role model. Sanderse (2013) raises demands on conceptualization and is doubtful about how teacher education is preparing students to become role models.

Overall, research shows that preservice teachers to some degree need space to develop teaching according to their own ideas (Altun, 2013, Ledoux et al., 2010) and in order to manage the free space and become autonomous, the education must support their personal development (Mikulec, 2019). A teaching culture, built during many years, can be a serious obstacle to student development (Altun, 2013). In a study with mixed methods, questionnaire and interviews, Altun (2013) examines the effects of classroom cultures on preservice teachers' professional development. He finds that the culture is as important as teaching in itself for preservice teachers' learning. The vague position of preservice teachers in classrooms is one problematic issue that gets attention. Preservice teachers, as interrupted by the supervisor and not allowed to deal with situations on their own, are considered not fully competent and temporary. Altun (2013) concludes that classrooms with a culture dominated by the supervisor do not contribute much to preservice teachers' development of teaching skills.

Fenwick and Cooper (2013) studied preservice teachers' learning to teach students in low socio-economic status contexts. The data consisted of a questionnaire, lesson plans and a 500-word rationale that explained and justified chosen strategies. Before a 12-week period of practice, the campus teaching was preparing the preservice teachers by raising issues about inequality in education. The results indicated that most preservice teachers were able to learn about consequences of teaching in different contexts. They learned to hold high expectations for all students, to support them and enable their learning. However, a small group of preservice teachers did not develop an understanding of contextual effects but had a fixed picture of students' capabilities. This study is interesting because it exemplifies how teacher education, by bringing together theoretical understanding with the practical design of teaching, can instil preservice teachers' courage to try innovative approaches in teaching practice and in that way support their academic freedom. Through theoretical knowledge, the students get the opportunity to understand their own values and be able to try them out in discussions with each other and then design teaching based on their theoretical understanding.

In the Swedish context, preservice teachers have twenty weeks of school-based education, regardless if they study a program towards preschool (seven semesters) or elementary school (8 or 9 semesters). Each university distributes the weeks of school-based

education and usually decides to spread them quite evenly over the semesters. The weeks are distributed as continuous periods and not as recurring single days during a semester. The communication between educators on campus and in practice is insufficient and problematic and the different parts of the education are mostly not very well connected. Research in the Swedish context (for example Eriksson, 2009; Gustavsson, 2008) shows the difficulties of finding a balance and a collaboration between the various elements of the education in the form of courses on campus (university-based) and internships (school-based). Related to the communication, Eriksson (2009) points out two problematic aspects, namely differing intentions and ideas about teacher education and professional practice and differing language usage. The students need support to understand how abstract theories can be used in practice (Eriksson, 2009) and to systematically process one's own and others' experiences in practice (Gustavsson, 2008). Furthermore, there is a tension between being socialized into the profession and at the same time having a critical eye and developing individually in the professional role (Gustavsson, 2008). These findings in research connected to a Swedish context are not unique but are also found internationally (see for example Allen & Wright, 2014; Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010; Yoon & Larkin, 2018).

Aim

The introduction has indicated the need for a teacher education that contributes to preservice teachers' self-awareness and self-confidence in order to create certainty in uncertain and complex conditions in teaching practice. The contextual impact on teaching requires a constant readiness to exercise judgment and handle uncertainty around different approaches and dilemmas innovatively in concrete situations. Through supportive teacher education, students can gain the courage to challenge traditional teaching and thus develop their academic freedom. The aim of this study is to provide enhanced understanding of the meanings and implications for teacher education of academic freedom in the tension between certainty and uncertainty.

Methodology

This study is phenomenological, inspired by Reflecting Lifeworld Research, searching for the essence of the phenomenon as a new whole that emerges from the analysis of data (Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nyström, 2008). The studied phenomenon is academic freedom in teacher education in a tension between certainty and uncertainty. The essential meanings characterize the phenomenon and are initially formulated on an abstract level. Then the researcher supplements them with variations and concrete examples from data. This means that the result includes three different levels of abstraction, which together provide a solid understanding of the phenomenon. Lifeworld theory, grounded by Husserl (1978/1970), is central in the study of the phenomenon through the participants' everyday experiences. The lifeworld is the way a person relates to and interacts with the world. The concept of lifeworld visualizes how preservice teachers' experiencing during education together with their personalities are affecting their growing into a professional role.

A pre/school culture can become routinized and therefore rather invisible to teachers and students that are familiar with the culture. Such familiar cultures are characterized by a natural attitude (Husserl, 1995) and in this study, preservice teachers get in contact with cultures that are not familiar to them. A natural attitude in comparison with reflected cultures in pre/schools affect the preservice teachers' internship and their opportunities for academic

freedom. The interpretation of data is based on phenomenological concepts as lifeworld and natural attitude.

Data are derived from a study on professional ethics (Cronqvist, 2015) where interviews were conducted with ten preservice teachers in Sweden from second to fourth semester (first and second year) soon after their internship. They were asked to tell about lived experiences of ethics in situations with children/students. In this study, the experiences from eight of them are used. Nina, Eva and Ida were training for pre-school (age 1-6); Johan and Lena were specializing in Elementary school years 1-3 (age 7-9); Maria and Stina were studying for Elementary school years 4-6 (age 10-12); and Lisa was preparing to teach special subjects in Elementary school, years 7-9 (age 13-15). The participants were spread over different areas that had agreements with the university. In the interviews, attention is drawn to the phenomenon with the help of the open-ended question. In addition to the questions that direct the participants towards the phenomenon, follow-up questions to get explanations and examples are also frequent. During the interviews, the researcher's preunderstandings must be held back or bridled as Dahlberg et al. (2008) put it, in order to be open to the phenomenon. For example, in the current study participants describe how their teacher educators in the field limit their opportunities to make decisions and act on them in their teaching because the educators are still dominant as leaders in relation to the children. As a researcher, I cannot be content with such general statements even though I think it might be true. I need to ask follow-up questions about what happens in situations when the participants feel limited and ask them to give examples and explain in more detail. In this way, I hold back my initial impulse to confirm their statements immediately.

A phenomenological descriptive analysis needs to be open, bridled and reflected. This means that the process should be slow, characterized by curiosity, an open mind, a struggle to hold back preunderstandings and to move between the whole and different parts. The analysis process consists of three steps after reading data several times to get to know it. First, the text is scanned to find meaningful units that are marked or picked out in the margin. The units can consist of single words, sentences or whole paragraphs ('I only do what I am told'). Secondly, the meaning units are examined to see how the units can be put together in patterns, called clusters (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Different patterns are for example expectations, structures and limitations. Then, the last step means to find the essence of the phenomenon, a new whole from relating the clustered meanings to each other. This process is very time-consuming since you must find a reliable structure to understand the phenomenon and formulations that really capture the nuances of the essential meanings, the phenomenon's 'style of being' (Dahlberg, 2006, p.18). Initially in the results, the abstract essence of the phenomenon is formulated to give a picture of a new whole. Thereafter, the constituents of the essence, for example a consensus on fundamental values and educators as role models, are presented and described with contextual variations from data, exemplified with quotes.

Results

The essence of academic freedom in the tension between certainty and uncertainty means a consistency in fundamental values between preservice teacher and teacher educators, expressed in lived practice. This does not mean agreement on boundaries or judgments in all situations, but based on a consensus in general, a self-confidence and security is created in the preservice teacher despite different judgments in individual situations that arise. The energy does not have to be spent on questioning one's own fundamental values or oneself as a person, but focus can be on discussing and nuancing one's judgment. When the preservice teacher considers the educator as a role model because they have a consensus and notices that

the educator's teaching generally takes place in a way that is in line with their own ideals, the preservice teacher dares to discuss teaching situations critically and try own ideas. The teacher educator's support and openness to the preservice teacher's ideas is a prerequisite for the preservice teacher to dare to take on the challenge of acting autonomously in the meeting with the children/students. Sometimes, when different contradictions about teaching and gaps between theory and practice appear, preservice teachers feel insecure but with educators as role models, the space of not knowing means a freedom and encouragement to exercise judgment and develop autonomy. The essence is constituted by the following meaning elements, derived from the transcripts of the interview data:

Academic freedom means that

- preservice teachers and educators have a consensus on fundamental values
- preservice teachers have educators as role models
- preservice teachers are supported and get space to try their own ideas
- preservice teachers are able to develop a critical attitude
- contradictions and gaps in educational contexts give preservice teachers opportunities to exercise judgment and develop autonomy.

Consensus on Fundamental Values

Academic freedom means that a consensus to a certain degree, on fundamental values, gives the preservice teacher safety and self-confidence. A common ground gives a freedom to try different alternatives to act, to discuss critically without being questioned in any crucial aspect. Sometimes, differences or similarities in values do not become visible until they are embodied in the meetings with the students. Data includes descriptions of both having and lacking common values.

The interviews with Stina give a picture of how this common consensus, which contributes to academic freedom in her professional development, is first lacking but appears later on. During the first two semesters, her educators want her to be tough on the students and have a strict manner as well as give clear boundaries in the statements. Stina feels that her educators are communicating with the students in a way that is strange to her lifeworld. Her personality is not especially tough and she prefers to speak calmly to the students. At the same time, she is trying to understand the students, their difficulties and she struggles to find a way to approach them without judging them. The awareness of the educators' ideals makes her hesitate about her capability as a teacher but she is not willing to give up her ideal view of teaching. She says:

Maybe [I] need to do a little different with certain things but at the same time this is who I am and then I have to find a way that I can stand up for or so because I do not think I can stand up to be like that really.

Stina is nearly giving up her education but when I meet her for the third interview (her fourth semester) she has another placement and now, Stina and the teacher educator in the field have a consensus on fundamental values. Stina says:

Now I have not had really the same thoughts as I had before, it feels like, because it is another teacher, so it has not felt like I had to think the same, about what has felt right or wrong. It has felt as if the teacher has been quite, or I have felt quite confident in how that teacher works with the students.

For Stina, there is a significant difference in, as before, putting energy into understanding how the educator thought she should do or, as now, being able to focus on how she herself thinks she should do. Together with the new educator, Stina has the opportunity to

discuss various boundaries instead of getting ready-made solutions. When Stina asks about the noise level in the classroom, the educator supports her to reflect and take a position in different situations where she wants to draw the line and why. Such opportunities to discuss boundaries and nuances of judgment lead to the next meaning, when the educator functions as a role model.

Modeling

Academic freedom means that educators act as role models and that the preservice teachers observe a kind of teaching that they strive for themselves. Role models help students to see in which direction they want to develop but at the same time, the process must take place in harmony with their personalities and life worlds, to help them find themselves. Modeling can relate to various aspects like teaching methods, communication with students and communication with preservice teachers.

Some preservice teachers are referring to the educators as role models and some of them who are not, are still positive to how they teach while others, like Stina, struggle to understand or distance themselves from the educator's way of teaching. The preservice teachers experience the function as role model in different ways. To Lena, her educator is someone that really knows the students:

She obviously knows the children, knows who is a little messier and who is listening. Then you know how to deal with it, which I do not yet... I have not had much time to go in depth with each child getting to know them very well, so it is not so easy. Eh, she notices some children if someone might be tired that morning then maybe you should not go on so much, or something might have happened in the family.

Relationships with the students and an ongoing respectful dialogue with them both about what they do in school but also about what happens to them privately, is characterizing the modeling. Lisa experiences another kind of modeling when the educator deals with a situation where a student was questioning values about human rights:

I could imagine using her as a role model for my future work because she both took it in place and took it further and, as it were, drew the lesson plans into what had happened so that the school's values are not distinguished from the school subject Swedish. They are usually two different things otherwise. She pulled these together in such a nice way.

The teachers' competence to handle a difficult situation when a student questioned values about solidarity to other people, made Lisa realize that visualizing values through combining them with subject knowledge is crucial in teaching and for the teacher's function as a role model, not only to her but also to the students. The teacher opened up for discussion but was very clear about how some values are fundamental in a democratic society. Eva tells about another way to notice the educator's function as a role model, not related to teaching but to communication with the preservice teacher. Eva experiences that it is easier to

...discuss such things as, for example, how do I set boundaries. It will be somehow, it will be easier for me to bring up things, as I said. It was not that you could not do it with other educators, but when you are comfortable with... or you think in much the same way, then it is easier to bring things up.

Role modeling is helpful to preservice teachers in their education for several reasons. They get examples of how to deal with situations and they get ideas about how they want to teach. Furthermore, they feel a security to ask and discuss matters, without being questioned or seem challenging.

Support and Space to Try

Academic freedom means that preservice teachers receive support and space to try their ideas about what and how they want to teach. Some educators are open to their ideas and let them try but too often, they are limited by different restrictions, either because they do not feel free to try or because their educators are not inviting them to follow their ideas or take the lead. The preservice teachers want to try the profession as close to reality as possible and in their own way.

Ida's supervisor suggests that Ida should take the opportunity to have the role as the children's friend but Ida thinks it is strange because she wants to learn the teacher's role to prepare herself for what is coming. 'I also have to get this role which can be to give the children a reprimand sometimes because otherwise, it is difficult. I have become a friend more than a teacher.' The space to try means the ability to experience the professional role as it is really going to be. Maria explains how difficult it can be to enter the role of teacher for real:

I share the students' loyalty, maybe you can say. If I come into a classroom as a preservice teacher, I am not the teacher, the teacher is the one sitting in the corner, and so even though I will have the lesson, the students will still perceive that their teacher is their teacher.

Maria tries to explain how difficult it is to be accepted as the leader. Sometimes, educators give authority to preservice teachers, but very often, they remain the leader in the classroom. Maria gives a clarifying example of how she lacks authority. If she during a lesson notices that the students would need to stretch their legs, she does not feel free to suggest it without asking her educator even if she is the one leading the lesson. When the preservice teachers do not really have the leadership, it becomes problematic, as Johan puts it, to find their own style of being teachers: 'I absolutely think I must find my own way, I cannot copy somebody else's style straight off, how they do, and do like that, just because that is how my supervisor did.' Nina realizes that her thoughts on teaching are not very developed but she still has to try them: 'Maybe I have very naïve thoughts about how to work with children but to me, these thoughts are important right now and I stand up for them. I need to find out how I can develop them in my way of working.' Regardless of the quality of her thoughts, Nina needs to develop in her own way. She cannot be something that she does not work out for herself. What she needs from educators is support to follow her own ideas and to develop in her unique way, in her lifeworld. The educators must give preservice teachers space to figure out their own ways of becoming teachers and support them.

Critical Attitude

Academic freedom means opportunities to develop a critical attitude, to question and change given structures. The preservice teachers experience that they want to be critical but in many cases, they do not feel comfortable to be honest to their educators. One reason is the preservice teachers' dependence on getting good reviews from their educators. It is not at all obvious that a critical attitude is wanted.

Maria says that 'it is no good to argue with our educators, they get grumpy then... not all, but some of them, if you question them.' As part of a natural attitude among the staff of the preschool, routines make it difficult for Eva, who would like to come up with new ideas, to change something:

It works somehow but you should be able to change some part and try new things, because I think it is rather boring to be there knowing exactly what is

going to happen. When you are on campus, you read and discuss so many new ideas and ways to do things.

It is problematic to be critical in the sense of breaking routines because preservice teachers usually have short internships and thus have difficulty implementing a change properly. However, being critical mostly means to ask questions and Nina would have liked to question more: 'I wish I had been braver but I was not during my internship, and the reason for that was simply that I was afraid of not being approved.' The preservice teachers fear that the supervisors will perceive their questions as provocative, but since the data do not show the supervisor's perspective, it is not possible to know in which cases this is true. Stina's educator tells Stina how to treat a student and she feels that it is difficult to go against what the educator suggests: 'You are in a strange situation, telling her what you think but I looked another way and then she asked "Do you understand what I mean?" Then I said "but it is totally wrong".' Stina hesitates to tell her position to the educator because they have very different views.

Judgment and Autonomy

Academic freedom means that contradictions and gaps in educational contexts give preservice teachers opportunities to exercise judgment and develop autonomy. Some educators function as role models and are willing to discuss with preservice teachers and let them develop their judgment while other educators want to give solutions and tell the preservice teachers how they should do.

Both in pre/schools and on campus, educators have ideals in teaching that they advocate and Maria, who has many own ideas about her teaching, experiences collisions between ideals and would like to 'take what is good from the courses and what is good from internship and weave it together.' The gap between what educators advocate is a message to her that she needs to listen to her own ideas but at the same time she does not experience that she has opportunities to try them during her education.

Lena experiences another gap when a teacher talked about a student as 'hopeless'. She does not believe that students are hopeless because of a story she heard about how a 'hopeless' student could change class and got a kind of working relationship to the other teacher. Lena concludes: 'It simply worked.' Stina had a similar experience when she noticed that a teacher gave a different energy to the class since it was much calmer during her lesson. 'It felt like she talked with the students as they were adults and then they behaved based on that, I think.' Another reflection from Stina is that you could be satisfied if your teaching is good for most students, but you should not: 'Then you should not be content with... that it just flows on but then it is better that, eh when it is a bit of a struggle...' The students that are not so easy to deal with need the teacher, and the effort it takes to get their attention is worth the trouble, Stina thinks.

It is difficult to know how judgment and autonomy develop and Johan thinks it is a mix of experiences, what others have done and what worked in different situations. He says:

I have been with three different supervisors and they have been open to my suggestions, they have also been able to contribute with things [...] I have not felt that they have entered and taken over when I have said something

Apparently, Johan is satisfied with his possibilities to influence his teaching practice and to develop his judgment. Eva has experienced how the gap between campus courses and conditions during practice makes it difficult to use her judgment and adjust teaching to the students. She has an assignment in a course at the university and it 'must be performed on that particular day and then you cannot be as flexible as you wish you could'. Eva relates the

judgment to when a content should be presented while Nina is reflecting on what kind of judgment she needs to develop: ‘We talk a lot about how we should work with children and about mathematics and language, but very little about the child perspective and how to treat children.’ She experiences that the emphasis is on different methods and techniques in teaching, while attitudes and ethics are not so prominent.

Discussion

Through the phenomenological descriptive analysis of preservice teachers’ lived experiences, it is obvious that they have different conditions to develop in the teaching role. Already in the beginning, some of them have their own ideas about teaching and need space to try them while others feel insecure and want more support, and thus let teacher educators dominate. Added to this, educators in preschools and schools are more or less inclined to let preservice teachers handle the teaching (Altun, 2013) which can be an obstacle to academic freedom in teaching practice. Space to handle the teaching is not just a matter of being allowed to lead lessons or pedagogical activities but opportunities to exercise leadership for real, as it will be in the future professional practice. Leadership must include full responsibility for the students and the authority to make decisions in different situations, even if the teacher educator is present and should be able to intervene if it is necessary. However, preservice teachers need more or less support. Since the data does not include the supervisors’ perspectives, it is unclear in which situations the preservice teachers limit themselves. Individual differences related to preservice teachers’ life worlds require frequent and open communication between educators and preservice teachers about for example expectations, fundamental values, ideals and ideas to understand each other in the learning process. Good relationships are needed but problematic due to short internship periods.

Regardless of the individual differences, academic freedom in teaching practice means a consensus between educator and preservice teacher on fundamental values and that the educator functions as a role model. Shared fundamental values means that preservice teachers get ideas about their own values, develop a self-awareness about their beliefs (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015), which strengthens a confidence in themselves (Call & O’Brien, 2011; Misco and Patterson, 2007). They do not have to argue with themselves about their beliefs. Shared values support the learning process since it becomes easier to be open, honest and sincere towards the educator. A need to hide one’s own values creates facades and when one’s own personality and life world is hidden, it becomes more difficult to develop self-awareness and find a personal style. Open minds (Mihailova, 2014), pluralism and critical thinking (Misco and Patterson, 2007) are promoted through consensus in fundamental values which in turn allows differences in contextual values, the study reveals. Shared fundamental values do not necessarily mean that preservice teachers exercise judgment in the same way as the educators (Johnson, 2008). On the contrary, shared values promote creativity (Griffiths, 2014; Steinnes, 2011) and courage to make autonomous decisions. Differences in judgment do not give rise to conflicts but encourage discussion and critical thinking based on the situation, which in turn stimulates learning. Security through consensus provides an opportunity to discuss, criticize and question different aspects of teaching, which encourages the preservice teacher to not only imitate but also go “beyond” (Ledoux et al., 2010, p 250). In this study, going beyond means that preservice teachers have space to find their own ideals and try own ideas. In summary, the similarities become a security that enables differences although other obstacles such as strong cultures and short internship periods are present. A strong culture, dominated by the supervisor is problematic to preservice teachers’ learning (Altun, 2013) but considering the students’ perspectives, a

strong culture can be necessary to provide security for their learning, and the supervisor may end up in a dilemma of providing learning for both parties.

The function as a role model is twofold: the preservice teachers require teachers as role models and they themselves must develop as role models for the children. However, in previous research, it is unclear what modeling means (Carr, 2006; Osguthorpe 2008), how educators manage to model (Swennen, Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2008) and prepare preservice teachers to become models (Sanderse, 2013). The preservice teachers in this study usually do not mention the word modeling but when they admire something, they want to imitate educators' teaching and their way to relate to the children. The admiration often focus on aspects, not so easily captured in teaching, such as judgment, understanding children and visualizing values. Mainly, preservice teachers observe teaching, which they think works well and combined with a modeling, meaning that the educators are supervising in a way that allows preservice teachers to discuss openly, opportunities are provided to also understand aspects of teaching that can be difficult to express verbally. Nevertheless, this study does not clarify whether the supervisors are able to verbalize implicit aspects of the teaching, and further studies are required.

Judgment in teaching demands competence beyond what we understand as an instrumental teaching based on effective methods (Griffiths, 2014; Johnson, 2008; Ledoux et al., 2010; Steinnes, 2011). Reproduction and imitation is not enough but creativity and a transformative teaching is needed (Bhukhanwala, Dean & Troyer, 2017; Han, Blank & Berson, 2017; Molla & Nolan, 2020). The combination of uncertainty from gaps between different educators' views of teaching and the certainty that emerges from a consensus on fundamental values means that preservice teachers dare to try different ways to handle the situations. It is not enough to give them space in teaching if they have not been given opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-awareness. Then they risk falling back on mechanically use of methods that they have learned instead of being creative and develop autonomous thinking. Conclusions can be drawn that the educators need to function as role models both when it comes to visualizing functional or ideal teaching and inviting to open critical discussions about teaching. Common fundamental values between educator and preservice teacher provide a security that contributes to variations in teaching being valued in the development of an autonomous judgment. Preservice teachers' judgment must be developed during the internship and in follow-ups on campus through dialogue with educators, reflecting on perceived dilemmas. Based on these findings, further research is needed about implementation of role modeling among educators. Knowledge about how to express fundamental values and create safety through values is wanted.

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